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*Original Portuguese: Mr GUEBUZA (President of the Republic of Mozambique)*

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We extend greetings and congratulate the ILO on the celebration of its 90th anniversary, which represents 90 years of fierce struggle to achieve social justice and economic progress for our countries and peoples. We also wish to reiterate our congratulations to Dr Juan Somavia on his re-election to one more mandate leading the destiny of our prestigious Organization. His re-election to this important position expresses, we feel, the very positive attitude that member States have towards his commitment and his work and our trust and confidence in his ability to continue putting the ILO at the very centre of the world's attention.

Using the synergies that derive from its tripartite structure, the ILO has, in recent years, succeeded in placing and keeping the issue of decent work on the international agenda as part of the promotion and preservation of human rights, as set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed 60 years ago last December. It is in the crystallization of these rights that the ILO has also shown clearly and actively that it is an Organization dedicated to promoting programmes aimed at preventing and combating HIV/AIDS in the world of work, strengthening and developing policies on labour administration and designing policies and strategies to promote decent work and social justice. This same context serves as the foundation for the ILO's role in strengthening the tripartite model as a basis for establishing social dialogue, furthering trust between partners and mobilizing parties so that they can work even more wholeheartedly to achieve sustained development in the countries of the world.

Mozambique welcomes the ILO's agenda, which it is proud to have helped formulate, as a member State of the Organization. This is an agenda which reflects and expresses the social and labour policies enshrined in our Constitution, which are translated, in particular, into the Labour Act and the Act regulating labour relations within the civil service. These and other laws defend the principles of promoting the right to work and workers' rights. It is also within this area that Mozambique promotes and applies the principle of tripartite social dialogue, structured around partnership and with multisectoral activities to promote jobs and vocational training. One of these valuable instruments is our national employment and vocational training strategy for 2006–15, approved by the Government, which is the fruit of joint work with the social partners, undertaken with technical assistance from the ILO, and we would again like to thank the Organization for the support given.

Other positive developments in this area can be seen in our new Labour Act, the Social Protection Act and, very recently, our new general statute for the civil service. For example, social protection has become more comprehensive and civil servants are now able to form trade unions, one of several rights they have received as a result of this new civil service statute. Indeed, all of these actions have to a large extent contributed to strengthening tripartism and permanent dialogue as a means of achieving the objectives of social justice.

Staying within the framework of partnership, tripartite dialogue is being consolidated in Mozam-

bique. One of the high points of this partnership are our working sessions, in which the Government, employers and unions sit down at the same table to assess the performance of the economy and to agree a set of principles for improving development indicators and mechanisms for fair and sustainable distribution of the wealth generated by the national economy. The annual conference of the private sector brings together the Government and employers and, at this conference, the implementation of plans agreed the previous year is assessed to ensure continued improvement of Mozambique's business climate. The fact that this Conference has been held for over ten years is a sign that it is a relevant and valuable instrument in enhancing dialogue between the parties, building consensus and monitoring decisions.

With this range of policies and legislative practices, we have extended the possibilities for greater flexibility of the labour market. We have created conditions for further improving the quality of services rendered by the labour administration to our citizens, and we have strengthened the foundations for comprehensive and inclusive economic growth, based on the principles of partnership, with advantages for all players, which has an impact on attracting investment, improving job opportunities, improving the well-being of our people, and protecting our country as a land of many opportunities and much potential and one which is safe for domestic and foreign investment.

In Mozambique, the fight against poverty is waged by Mozambicans under the leadership of their Government and according to their own national agenda. The country's five-year programme for 2005–09 therefore plays an important role in making it possible to achieve the commitments enshrined in the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) and the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving either of these things relies on strong partnership with civil society organizations, including employers and unions.

In the context of fighting poverty, the Government has taken a firm decision to allocate two-thirds of its budget to the areas of education, health, agriculture and rural development, basic infrastructure, good governance, and macroeconomic and financial management. Measures have also been adopted to stimulate the private sector to accelerate job creation and to participate in generating opportunities for self-employment.

In terms of integrated rural development, we have defined rural areas as our focus for development and the advisory councils at various levels as the mechanisms for coordinating this development and decentralizing human, financial and material resources as a factor which will speed up implementation of these decisions. Rural areas are where the majority of our people live, and also where the majority of our natural resources are to be found. It is, nevertheless, in rural areas that poverty is most pronounced and where the majority of the signs of poverty, including hunger and endemic diseases, are most acute.

The decision to set up advisory councils, which are bodies comprising local citizens elected for their exemplary behaviour, credibility and integrity, was intended to change our development paradigms. Our feeling is that, through these bodies, it will be

possible to ensure that the beneficiaries of our development actions take an active part in the decision-making process that precedes the implementation of programmes and projects. As far as we are concerned, the creation of well-being is as important as the process that leads us to that goal. We are therefore giving special attention, through the advisory councils, to the need to ensure that the beneficiaries of development understand and participate in identifying problems and opportunities and in finding solutions and using the resources made available to them to promote local development. They are therefore being called upon to prioritize various competing local needs. As we know, prioritizing is a complex exercise and, in the case of the advisory councils, involves reaching consensus among their members. Through this exercise of setting priorities and allocating and monitoring the use of resources, our people's awareness of their responsibilities is increased by guiding and leading local development. They have to recognize what local development is; they have to set the pace and define its form; and they must create a platform for fruitful interaction between their age-old knowledge, the heritage of our people, and new knowledge and experience.

One of the most immediate and direct effects of decentralizing resources, which I referred to earlier, is the creation of new jobs, particularly in agriculture, the building sector, building materials production, and rehabilitation of public and private infrastructure. Even more important is that local capacity is strengthened, which means that new jobs result in other new jobs and conditions are created whereby more Mozambicans can be actively involved in national wealth generation.

In order to ensure that more Mozambicans are able to take advantage of these innumerable new opportunities to create jobs for themselves and others, we have launched an integrated programme to reform vocational training. This programme was designed with the active participation of employers, the unions and other civil society organizations. Its implementation is set to increase the number of vocational education establishments, from basic to higher level, and it is hoped that graduates from these courses will create more jobs, particularly in rural areas.

The *Férias Desenvolvendo o Distrito* (holidays developing the districts) programme, which encourages students to use their vacations to participate in rural development, is prompting more young people to settle in the various regions of our country. This process is being strengthened by the decentralization programme that we are carrying out. These young people find better jobs in the civil service and in the private sector, which is responding well

to this challenge that the Government has laid down. We see most progress in the banking and agricultural sectors, which have benefited from the Government's programme for rural electrification, improvement of roads and bridges, and the extension of the mobile and fixed telephone networks. All these initiatives are together creating many more jobs in rural areas.

In urban areas, we support spontaneous incipient initiatives being made by street vendors, as we feel that these initiatives could be transformed into more organized projects to generate wealth, economic growth and prosperity for our citizens. There are opportunities for strong partnership between local authorities and local residents, taking as a starting point the main responsibilities of local government, including basic drainage and sanitation, hygiene systems, cleaning and solid refuse collection. In this regard, it is even possible to imagine operators who started off as street vendors moving up into the category of small traders and then becoming important market operators.

The international financial crisis could have very negative repercussions on the labour market, thereby destabilizing our societies. We have full confidence that the ILO, as the main repository of specialist knowledge in labour matters, will be able to lead us in developing actions to reduce the negative impact of the crisis. It has the great advantage of its tripartite dialogue model, which will be an important ingredient for its success in this mission. Over and above complying with its mandate as supervisor in the contemporary world of work, the ILO, through its standard-setting activities and mechanisms for monitoring and applying those standards, must act as humanity's social conscience against injustice. Truly, all the Conventions and decisions of which it is guardian are, above all, important instruments for attaining social justice.

We wish to reiterate our thanks to the ILO and to its Director-General for the support that Mozambique has received in promoting decent work for all. With decent work, we can encourage the payment of fair wages, guarantee jobs and safeguard the social security of workers and their families. In the development of individual capacities, we are guaranteeing the exercise of freedom of expression and creating conditions so that more development players can take part in the decision-making process on various matters that have an impact on the creation of national wealth.

We are sure that, with our total commitment, with our wholehearted commitment, with our desire, all of us together can give this world a true dimension of social justice, without poverty, with more jobs and with the prosperity that comes from a just society.