

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY H.E. JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE 100TH
SESSION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE,
GENEVA, 15TH JUNE, 2011

Congratulations and Appreciation

Mr. President;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Let me begin by congratulating you Honourable Professor Robert Nkili, the Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Cameroon, on your well deserved election as President of the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to assure you of my personal support, as well as that of the Tanzanian delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation to the ILO Director General, H.E. Ambassador Juan Somavia for the kind invitation for me to address this historic 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I feel greatly honoured and privileged to be afforded with this rare opportunity of being associated this important milestone.

Significance of 100th Session

Mr. President;

~~This year's conference is a very special one for the International Labour Organization and all its members. It marks an important milestone in its history. As we all know, the ILO was founded in 1919 for the purpose of eliminating all forms of exploitation of workers and labour. During the period of the past 99 sessions to this historic one today, the world has witnessed millions of workers being freed, social protection being advanced and labour standards being regularized and enhanced. It is indeed, a milestone worth celebrating.~~

There is another reason for us to celebrate on this auspicious occasion. The ILO has proven itself to be a formidable organization. Our organization has shown enormous degree of resilience. The ILO has not only survived, but has actually grown from strength to strength amidst challenging historic epochs.

Mr. President;

Allow me also to mention another important factor that I appreciate about the ILO. This organization has remained proactive and has always kept abreast with changing world circumstances. As a result, the ILO has remained relevant at all times

and the unwavering bulwark supporter of workers' rights. It was, no surprise to me, therefore, that the ILO was among the first international organizations to raise the alarm on the negative trends of globalization. It introduced the agenda for decent work to respond to the call for social justice to millions of workers in the wake of globalization. This organization has been at the forefront in advancing the agenda for the protection of the vulnerable particularly women and children.

Mr. President;

I consider the theme of this session very opportune indeed given the high levels of unemployment and the challenging working environment many workers find themselves in. By focusing on "New Era of Social Justice", the 100th Session of ILO addresses itself to the all important matter of ensuring basic services and safeguards for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. It also puts emphasis on the importance of creating opportunities for decent work, which by definition means availability of jobs that are productive and secure; jobs that ensure respect for labour rights, provide adequate income to the worker, offer social protection and allow social dialogue and bargaining.

Global Challenges

Mr. President;

This meeting is taking place at a time when globalization continues to pose challenges and presents opportunities for both countries as well as for the work of ILO. The relationship between globalization and labour is that of interdependence. Globalization depends on labour for its success. As a result, a crisis in globalization inevitably results in worsening conditions of labour, even though its prosperity does not necessarily mean social justice. The recent world economic and financial crisis has posed new challenges in the realization of the decent work agenda and threatens to erode some of lofty gains that the world has made in the past decades. These new challenges demand new approaches. The ILO Director General's report speaks volumes about this and, provides us with new lens for viewing the global challenges. It calls for transformation of existing patterns of growth to make them economically efficient, socially stable, environmentally friendly, and politically sustainable.

Mr. President;

The report's message is timely because it challenges us all to rethink about the way we conduct our socio-economic affairs. This report gives credence to the work of the World Commission on Social Dimension of Globalisation, which my immediate predecessor, H.E Mr. Benjamin Mkapa had the opportunity to Co-Chair with the President of Finland H.E Tarja Harlonnen. The Commission affirmed the existence of unfairness in globalization and proposed redress.

There are, in our globalised world, patterns of growth that are skewed against developing nations. This is not right, it is neither acceptable nor is it sustainable. Globalisation, therefore, demands an objective and transformative leadership that can

respond to these myriad challenges by designing and promoting policies that can steer the world economy to a more just, equitable and sustainable development. We highly appreciate ILO's leadership role on this important matter. Ambassador Juan Somavia will always be remembered for his invaluable contribution to this organization.

Challenges of Achieving Social Justice in Developing Countries

Mr. President;

Achieving social justice and decent work in a globalized era has proven to be a daunting task for many developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are several reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, in the quest to attract foreign investments, countries are compelled to create conducive investment climate. Unfortunately, in many countries this was done at great labour, social, and environmental costs.

As we all know and ironically so, that FDIs from developed countries, are attracted to places where there are low wages, lower taxes and less environmental regulations. Clearly, these trends, which are the current expression of globalization, are at odds with ILO's goal of securing decent work and environmental protection.

Difficult as it may seem, it is imperative for developing countries to design policies that promote efficient growth patterns that are inclusive, environmentally friendly and sustainable. After all, sustainable development calls for a balance between profits, people and the planet—*mother earth*.

Secondly, Mr. President, the majority of the people in Africa (70%) are employed in agriculture which by and large remains traditional and subsistence. Unfortunately, there is little use of modern science and technology in agricultural production and overdependence on seasonal rainfall patterns. As a result, both productivity and production are low. This, coupled with the volatility of markets for agricultural commodities makes engaging in agriculture less rewarding and creating decent work a serious challenge.

Mr. President;

Despite these challenges, there is hope that with appropriate policies and innovative interventions African agriculture can be transformed, become more productive and decent work secured. We have to modernize production methods, establish agro-processing industries, improve domestic markets, increase access to international market and get a fair price at both local and global markets. It defeats the purpose to talk of social justice without taking into account the fate of poor farmers who form the majority of the labour force in Africa.

Mr. President;

We also, need to address the problem of unemployment which is ever increasing, particularly among the youths in developing countries. It is steadily becoming a serious challenge with an undeterminable consequences. Addressing this problem effectively

poses a big challenge to our countries in view of the low levels of development of our economies. Joint collaborative efforts are, therefore needed. This should involve governments, local and international business communities, civil society, and development partners to jumpstart and increase speed of job creation in developing countries.

The third reason, Mr. President, is that of the presence of a large informal sector in Africa. Many of our people enter the informal sector not as a matter of choice, but as a need to survive. In situations of extreme poverty and high unemployment, the informal sector becomes the saviour. It offers ease of entry due to being least regulated and having relatively low requirements for education, skills, technology and capital. However, most jobs in the informal sector fail to meet the requirements of decent work. Therefore, the challenge before us is to strike a balance between the need for work, and the deficits pronounced in the informal sector. This is a challenge for all of us to find a suitable answer. If successful it could enable millions of workers in Africa make a living and lift themselves from poverty under work conditions that are decent.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Standards on Domestic Workers

Mr. President;

I welcome the decision to include on the agenda of this 100th Session the issue of decent work for domestic workers. There are millions of people, particularly women and children, around the world who are engaged in this type of work to provide a living for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, despite the important services they render to their employers and their households, domestic workers are among the most exploited and abused worldwide. Worse still they usually receive policy maker's faint attention.

Social Protection and Coverage

Mr. President;

All of us here know about the Global Campaign on Social Protection and Coverage for all which was launched in 2003 aiming at promoting and extending social security to all with interactive strategies. We are also aware, in this regard, of the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. I would like to use this opportunity to express Tanzania's gratitude to the ILO for the technical and financial support provided to constituents. This has proved that, extension of social security can be achieved through tripartite collaboration and adherence to international labour standards. Nevertheless, innovative policy mechanisms and dialogue between employer, employee and government are essential.

Mr. President;

Tanzania has a number of social security schemes which are either, contributory or non-contributory. They provide short and long term benefits for health care, education, maternity leave, employment injury, retirement and survivors' benefits and pension. Yet, to a greater extent these schemes are still limited, since the majority of the

labour force is in the informal economy. Only 5.4% of the total labour force of 16 million people in Tanzania is covered by the social security schemes. The remaining labour force find their refuge in family and community based social support systems which to say the least are inadequate and less predictable.

This is far too low coverage and a serious deficit that we have resolved to overcome. I am glad to say that work has already started. We are exploring possibilities of relaxing criteria for qualification so as to enable workers in the informal sector to access and benefit from social security schemes. Some of the social security schemes, for example, have already developed programmes whereby individuals in the informal sector can voluntarily register with them. I am sure their success will encourage the other to do the same.

Mr. President,

I am also pleased to inform this august assembly, that we have already established a Social Security Regulatory Authority. This is a matter that we promised a few year's back. Besides oversight and harmonization of social security schemes the regulatory authority is also charged with the task of developing strategies to extend social security coverage to as many people as people. We hope in this regard, the elderly and those working in the informal sector will benefit.

Social Dialogue

Mr. President;

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words to acknowledge social dialogue as an important pillar for attaining conditions of decent work. I say so from firsthand experience of Tanzanian work places. Where this has made use of it has served to improve work relationships, promote industrial harmony, enhance productivity and stimulate economic growth.

Social dialogue creates space for reflection instead of emotive driven negotiations. It can, therefore, replace adversarial relationships with collaborative partnerships, develop a shared understanding of problems and facilitate constructive discussions of policy formulation.

Mr. President;

Tanzania remains committed to enhancing social dialogue at all levels. It has proven to be of great value in harnessing and improving industrial relations. We will see to it that all the established organs of dialogue function properly and calendars are observed. We in government, on our side will not falter on our obligations. I am happy that we have maintained the meetings with trade union leaders during the budget preparatory processes to dialogue with them and find common understanding on a number of pressing issues that affect the welfare of the workers. I also regularly meet with trade union leaders some days before May Day celebrations. At our last meeting we agreed to increase the frequency, preferably three times a year. We both

agreed to try to meet that commitment. This dialogue has proved useful, it is in our interests to ensure that it continues.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by once again thanking you for availing me this rare opportunity to address the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I join hands with all of you in celebrating the great successes this organization has achieved over the many years. We look forward to a future, full of optimism that social justice for all will be realized.

I thank you for listening.