

Ministerial Breakfast
Realizing Decent Work for Sustainable Development:
Country Strategies
31 April 2015, 8:00 – 9:45, UNHQ, Room 8 (CB)

Opening remarks by the ILO DG, Mr. Guy Ryder

Proposed speaking points (7-8 minutes)

Dear co-chairs,
Ministers,
Excellencies,
Delegates,

I thank Angola, Belgium and the EU for co-organizing this important event.

In particular, I would like to express our gratitude to Ambassadors Frankinet of Belgium and Gaspar Martins of Angola for their leadership in championing Decent Work for Sustainable Development as co-chairs of the Group of Friends.

It is impressive to witness such a varied number of countries from all regions and in all stages of development united around a common challenge: the quest for decent jobs.

The inauguration of the Group of Friends in September 2014 coincided with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the outcome document of the Open Working Group including the Goal 8 on *Inclusive Growth and Decent Work for All* and set of decent work targets mainstreamed across various goals. At that time we were concerned about ensuring that decent employment and social protection issues would be duly reflected in the final outcome.

Now, as the Post 2015 sustainable development agenda is taking shape, all the attention has shifted to implementation and this is what has brought us together here today.

In this respect, dear co-chairs, colleagues, I should first share with you that the Governing Body of the ILO is fully engaged and supportive of aligning our work with the implementation needs of the Post 2015 sustainable development agenda. The members of the Governing Body have included discussions on the process and needs of the new sustainable development agenda and the implications for the ILO

at each of its sessions these last two years. Let me highlight six venues in which the ILO can support the realization of Decent Work in the Sustainable Development Agenda:

The first one is on **measurement**. We are working in close collaboration with National Statistical Offices and the UN Statistical Commission to make sure that a core set of decent work indicators will be included as part of the list of global SDGs' indicators. There is a very well established statistical framework of labour and employment. All definitions and methodologies are agreed by member states at the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians and data are widely available for core indicators. Some of them are already been collected as part of the MDGs and should definitely be integrated into the new framework to guarantee continuity.

Second, **on monitoring**, the ILO is well positioned to support the reporting, monitoring and follow up of the decent work targets. Many of the proposed indicators are already been compiled in international datasets and published recurrently by the ILO in flagship reports. Similarly countries report regularly on the implementation of international labour standards and an independent supervisory mechanism is in place to monitor progress. All these existing mechanisms can be used to assess progress on the decent work targets and feed the global reporting and follow-up apparatus leading to the High Level Political Forum.

Third, for each and every decent work target **there is a full body of internationally agreed labour standards and policy packages** that could frame the design and implementation of nationally-defined solutions. As for example, the ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors can be useful in implementing targets 1.3 on extension of social protection and 10.4 on income inequalities. The ILO Call for Action on the Youth Employment is a reference for target 10.5 on reducing the number of young people not in employment, education and training. Similarly, targets 8.7 on eradication of child and forced labor and 8.8 on respect to labor rights are grounded in widely accepted and endorsed fundamental rights and standards. In working with the rest of the UN family to become fit for purpose to deliver on the agenda, the ILO is insisting on the need to link the operational activities to the normative international agreements. This is certainly a core value added in the process.

Fourth, **partnership is our name**. In 2019, the ILO will complete a hundred years of a partnership between governments, business and labour that will be an essential

element of the means of the implementation of the decent work goal and targets. It is our mandate to engage social partners in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the agenda to enhance impact and guarantee legitimacy and sustainability.

Fifthly, **on financing for development**, we are looking forward to supporting you in the preparations of the Addis Ababa Accord. Amidst tightening ODA budgets, the future of many developing countries will rely on domestic resources mobilization. Labour and social protection policies can address structural challenges and expand domestic resources. Work that is productive and fairly remunerated can boost consumption and enhance tax revenues. Similarly, the transition from informal to formal employment means expansion of the fiscal frontiers and outcomes and the extension of social protection floors is an investment that pays by itself given its multiplying effects on GDP growth and tax revenues. We are ready to support the Group of Friends in considering the decent work elements already included in the zero draft of the Accord.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that we are in process of finalizing the **ILO preparedness plan to support the implementation Post 2015 sustainable development agenda**, involving all managers both at headquarters and field offices. Last week, we were thrilled to hear that many countries are already integrating the SDGs into their planning processes and getting ready to start delivering. We are on same pathway and as of 1st January 2016 will be ready to support member states and social partners in pursuing their objectives on employment and social protection.

I thank you.