



## 13th African Regional Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 November–3 December 2015

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### Addis Ababa Declaration

## Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development

### Frameworks and prospects for inclusive and sustainable development

1. Meeting in a year which has marked significant progress in the establishment of comprehensive continental and global agendas for action on inclusive and sustainable development, Government, Employers' and Workers' delegates from 45 African countries noted with appreciation the inclusion of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda in these new frameworks for development. Since 2007 when the 11th African Regional Meeting adopted the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, 51 of 54 States have mainstreamed decent work into their national development strategies.
2. This progress at national level is further amplified by significant regional and global commitments. In January 2015, the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa adopted a Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development that calls on the ILO to work with the African Union and other partners on a Five-Year Priority Programme. This programme kick starts the African Union Agenda 2063 which includes at the top of its priorities a prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development realized through decent work.
3. Furthermore, Africa played a major role in ensuring that Goal 8 which aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all is at the centre of *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals contain many further references to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.
4. The recognition of the central importance of full and productive employment and decent work for inclusive and sustainable development creates new expanded opportunities and responsibilities for constituents and the Organization as a whole in national, regional and global policy-making.
5. Over the last decade many African economies witnessed sustained economic growth rates and reduction in absolute poverty. Six of the world's fastest growing economies were in Africa. However, progress in diversifying productive capacity has been limited, inequality has been increasing in many countries and Africa has the highest incidence of poverty.

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6. The immediate economic outlook for Africa is weakening, raising concerns for reduction in poverty and reversing the trend towards increased inequality. Slower global growth has once again exposed the dependence of the continent on exports of raw materials.
  7. Nevertheless, African countries have the resources of a young workforce, strong entrepreneurial spirit and a dynamic private sector as a foundation for a stronger and more integrated continental strategy for prosperity and sustainability. Africa's public sector and social economy can also play important roles in the transformation process. Key elements in releasing this potential are the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, strong labour market institutions, the promotion of social dialogue, and full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work.
  8. The Meeting recognizes terrorism as an obstacle to sustainable development in Africa and everywhere and condemns it unequivocally.

### **World of work policy priorities**

9. Although significant progress has been made on the policy priorities identified by previous ILO African Regional Meetings, the Decent Work Agenda in Africa remains unfulfilled. The necessity to integrate decent work more fully into national sustainable development strategies, as well as regional and global frameworks, enables the Organization to build stronger partnerships for further progress.
10. Africa is approaching universal ratification of all the ILO's Conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work – a target that is expected to be achieved by the next African Regional Meeting in the year of the ILO's Centenary, 2019. Yet full application of these standards is by no means universal. Governments, employers' organizations and trade unions commit to make full use of the ILO's supervisory machinery to enhance the application of international labour standards with particular emphasis on full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work which is the foundation for effective social dialogue and labour market institutions.
11. The overarching priority for the ILO's constituents in Africa is building and strengthening labour market institutions that enable the realization of the goal of decent work for all. To this end, and in consultation with constituents, the ILO will help to develop programmes to strengthen their capacity to engage in the new regional and global development frameworks. A renewed emphasis on promoting effective social dialogue and tripartism will strengthen constituents' contribution to the implementation of the new regional and global sustainable development frameworks.
12. There is need to transform and diversify African economies through accelerated industrialization, investment in infrastructure and new technologies as well as increased agricultural productivity. This will lead to a more inclusive growth and the creation of decent job opportunities.
13. Continent-wide policy priorities include:
  - (a) creating decent jobs for all, with particular emphasis on youth, women and persons with disabilities;
  - (b) promoting effective social dialogue and tripartism;
  - (c) strengthening labour market institutions;

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- (d) accelerating the transition from informal to formal economy based on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204);
  - (e) improving the environment for sustainable enterprises especially micro-, small and medium-sized businesses and providing them with necessary incentives to grow;
  - (f) promoting a conducive business and investment environment;
  - (g) fostering an entrepreneurial spirit;
  - (h) extending social protection by establishing and maintaining national social protection floors based on the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202);
  - (i) promoting employability through investing in education, skills development, lifelong learning, vocational training, apprenticeships and internships;
  - (j) promoting productivity through a reinvigoration of productivity centres and linking productivity with improvements in working conditions and earnings;
  - (k) tackling gender inequality in the world of work;
  - (l) enhancing labour migration governance at national, subregional, regional and international levels, and developing policies that take into account labour market needs, based on relevant ILO standards and in accordance with the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration;
  - (m) promoting a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all based on the ILO guidelines;
  - (n) enhancing policy coherence and inter-ministerial coordination.

## **ILO role in promoting decent work and inclusive development**

- 14.** We are building on a strong African and global set of commitments to the Decent Work Agenda. We have a responsibility to work together through tripartite social dialogue to make our aspirations a reality. Governments should develop and review their plans and strategies to take into account the call in the 2030 Agenda for national sustainable development strategies. It is vital that labour, employment and social affairs ministries are an integral part of decision-making. Social partners should be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of those plans and strategies.
- 15.** Upon request by constituents, the Office will consider supporting national tripartite dialogues with a view to identifying country-specific policy priorities in the light of the new opportunities provided by the regional and global sustainable development frameworks and the ILO's global discussion on the Future of Work.
- 16.** The Office will play its full role in the UN Country Teams which will be supporting the national strategies through the next generation of Decent Work Country Programmes to be developed in full consultation with the social partners and based on the integrated approach to decent work as called for by the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. The Office will facilitate the engagement of ILO constituents in the work of UN Country Teams.

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**17.** To realize the aspirations of this Declaration, we request the Office to:

- (a) align its programme in Africa to the African Union Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development as well as the African Union Agenda 2063;
- (b) promote synergies with regional organizations and institutions, particularly the African Union Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the African Development Bank, on macroeconomic, labour market, employment, social protection and labour rights issues;
- (c) work with the regional and subregional employer and worker organizations on the new development frameworks;
- (d) engage with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with a view to achieve policy coherence on Decent Work for Sustainable Development;
- (e) contribute to regional economic integration by providing advice and support to the African Regional Economic Commissions on issues such as trade and investment, free movement of persons, the portability of social protection benefits, skills recognition and labour standards;
- (f) facilitate the implementation of the Joint AUC/ILO/IOM/ECA Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP);
- (g) provide evidence-based research, analysis and technical advice to constituents on issues related to the Decent Work Agenda, such as the EESE (enabling environment for sustainable enterprises) methodology;
- (h) promote South–South cooperation as a means to facilitate the exchange of experience, the sharing of good practices and mutual learning between countries of the region, and in cooperation with other regions;
- (i) build capacity of constituents to effectively contribute to decent work for sustainable and inclusive development through enhanced social dialogue, collective bargaining and other policy issues, using institutions such as the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin;
- (j) promote the ratification and implementation of the Conventions concerning fundamental principles and rights at work, the ratification of other up-to-date ILO Conventions, as well as the application of all other ratified ILO Conventions, through action programmes, development cooperation and advocacy campaigns;
- (k) step up its efforts to promote the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy with a strong emphasis on supporting the tripartite constituents at the country level, partnerships with other relevant actors and facilitation of the exchange of experiences;
- (l) develop and implement, in consultation with the constituents, a new generation of Decent Work Country Programmes that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the African Union Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development;

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- (m) expand its development cooperation programme on the continent, and reinforce its resource mobilization efforts, including through domestic resource mobilization;
  - (n) expand the Office's engagement in Africa's fragile States on the basis of the framework strategy presented at the 13th African Regional Meeting which calls for the promotion of institutions and mechanisms for quality employment and livelihoods creation, and the promotion of social protection and the advancement of equity and rights at work.
- 18.** The Office will prepare a report on the implementation and impact of this Declaration for review by the 14th African Regional Meeting (2019).