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► Delivering social justice through inclusive labour market transformations in Africa

Report of the Director-General

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► Preface

The African Regional Meeting has always been more than a time to take stock. It is a forum where governments, employers and workers come together to examine the profound changes affecting the world of work, assess our progress towards decent work and build consensus on the way forward, grounded in the realities of Africa and in the values and international labour standards of the ILO.

Since the first African Regional Meeting in Lagos in 1960, these gatherings have guided the continent through successive periods of economic, social and political transformation. The 14th African Regional Meeting in Abidjan in 2019 took place at a moment when the global debate was focused on shaping the future of work. The Abidjan Declaration which emerged from that meeting set out an ambitious agenda for advancing social justice and realizing a human-centred future of work in Africa.

While the implementation of the Abidjan Declaration has taken place against a backdrop of significant challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple interrelated crises, geopolitical tensions and a constrained multilateral landscape, tripartite constituents have continued to advance key priorities. The progress achieved demonstrates our collective determination and enduring commitment to advancing decent work and social justice.

Seven years on from Abidjan, we meet in Windhoek in a very different context. The transformations we anticipated are no longer distant prospects. They are already reshaping the daily lives of Africa's workers, enterprises and communities. At the same time, we are navigating a period of global uncertainty and significant adjustments to the multilateral system, including the ILO.

The major labour market transformations driven by demographics change, the transition to environmentally sustainable economies, digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI) present significant opportunities. At the same time, these transformations are unfolding against a backdrop of widespread informality, persistent inequalities, limited social protection, skills and productivity deficits, enterprise sustainability challenges and a continuing shortage of productive and decent employment, particularly for young people and women. Without deliberate action, these transformations could deepen existing vulnerabilities rather than overcome them.

The central contention of this report is therefore clear: Africa must not simply adapt to transformation; it must shape it, with social justice as its organizing principle.

This is ultimately a question of choices and governance. As I have underscored in previous reports, transformations do not guarantee social justice. Outcomes will depend on the policies we adopt, the institutions we strengthen and the extent to which Governments, Employers and Workers are able to shape change together through social dialogue, guided by international labour standards.

The ILO and its constituents have strengthened important foundations since Abidjan. Windhoek should therefore mark a new phase of delivery and action. The choices Africa makes today will shape not only the continent's future of work but increasingly its place in the global economy.

Our objective must be clear: to turn transformation into productive and decent work, stronger enterprises and institutions, and shared prosperity for all – in short, to deliver social justice

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► 1. Introduction

Overview of Africa's labour market

1. Since the 14th Regional Meeting in 2019, Africa has demonstrated considerable resilience despite the profound disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent global upheavals including the Ukraine war and the Middle East crisis, rising debt vulnerabilities, climate-related shocks and persistent inflationary pressures. Economies have gradually stabilized, supported by the improvement of macroeconomic conditions, easing of inflation and sustained demand for energy, agricultural commodities and minerals. As a result, average real GDP growth is estimated to have risen from 3.5 per cent in 2024 to 4.4 per cent in 2025, making the continent one of the fastest-growing regions globally, alongside Asia. Growth is projected to ease slightly to 4.2 per cent in 2026, reflecting the anticipated impact of ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Around 40 per cent of African countries are expected to record growth rates above 5 per cent, and 12 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2025 were located in Africa.¹
2. Nevertheless, the outlook remains uncertain. Growth has been uneven and insufficient to generate broad-based improvements in productive employment and living standards. Persistent structural vulnerabilities, compounded by geopolitical tensions and volatile food and energy prices, continue to constrain investment, enterprise growth, and job creation. While Africa has shown resilience to shocks, the growing frequency and overlap of these disruptions underscore the urgent need to build economies capable of sustaining more resilient and employment-rich growth over the long term.
3. The labour market remains the clearest test of Africa's resilience. This challenge is becoming more urgent as the working-age population continues to grow rapidly. While employment has expanded, the quality remains a concern. In 2026, 39.4 million people are unemployed, representing an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent.² At the same time, an estimated 65.5 million people who want to work are not classified as unemployed, resulting in a jobs gap rate of 15.1 per cent³ and revealing substantial underutilization of labour across the continent.
4. These challenges⁴ are particularly acute for young people and women. A significant share (22.9 per cent) of young people in Africa aged 15 to 24 are classified as not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2026. Young women are considerably more likely to have NEET status (29.0 per cent) than young men (16.9 per cent),⁵ owing in large part to household and care responsibilities. Education and training outcomes also remain weak. Twenty-one per cent of youth (aged 15 to 29) in Africa have never attended school or have completed only pre-primary

¹ African Development Bank (AfDB), *African Economic Outlook 2026: Mobilizing Africa's Development Financing at Scale in a Fragmented World*, 2026.

² ILOSTAT, September 2026.

³ ILOSTAT, September 2026.

⁴ Some labour market indicators have, however, shown mild improvements or remained stable in parts of Africa or as presented in regional averages since 2010.

⁵ ILOSTAT, September 2026.

education.⁶ Only 46 per cent have completed primary or lower secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment.

5. Youth labour market outcomes differ starkly across the region. In North Africa, youth unemployment is among the highest of any subregion in the world – 22.3 per cent in 2026, and 35.6 per cent for young women. In sub-Saharan Africa, by contrast, youth unemployment is among the world's lowest (8.5 per cent in 2026) – not a sign of labour market health, but of the fact that few young people can afford not to work; the defining challenge there is underemployment and the poor quality of available work.
6. Informality remains one of the main structural barriers to advancing decent work in Africa. As of 2026, 84.3 per cent of workers are employed informally, rising to 87.4 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. Progress has been slow, with informality declining by less than 1 percentage point since 2015.⁷ Informality constrains firm growth, productivity, skills development and access to markets and resources, while limiting workers' rights and social protection and weakening public revenues.⁸
7. These labour market outcomes reflect broader structural constraints. Productivity gains remain concentrated in a small number of sectors such as transport and communication, construction, finance and business services that employ relatively few workers, while agriculture and informal services continue to absorb most of the labour force at low levels of productivity. Formal enterprises remain too few to absorb Africa's expanding workforce, and many micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) face persistent constraints related to finance, infrastructure, technology, market access, regulatory predictability and compliance capacity.
8. Persistent decent work deficits are compounded by limited social protection coverage. Only 19.1 per cent of Africa's population is covered by at least one social protection benefit, compared with a global average of 52.4 per cent.⁹ For many workers, particularly those in the informal economy, illness, pandemics, economic shocks or climate-related disasters can rapidly result in loss of livelihood, income insecurity and poverty. Expanding social protection is therefore both a social imperative and an economic investment in human capital development, labour market transitions, enterprise sustainability, formalization and resilience.
9. Fiscal pressures further constrain many countries' ability to respond to these challenges. Rising debt-service obligations have significantly reduced fiscal space,¹⁰ limiting public investment in education, health, infrastructure and social protection. Higher borrowing costs, exchange-rate volatility and elevated import prices have also weakened investment and employment creation.

⁶ Valentina Stoevska, "Empowering Africa's Youth: The Need for More Vocational Training and On-the-job learning", *ILOSTAT Blog* (blog), 11 August 2025.

⁷ ILOSTAT, September 2026.

⁸ ILO, *Outcome of the General Discussion on Addressing Informality and Promoting the Transition to Formality for Decent Work*, ILC.113/Record No. 7A, 2025.

⁹ ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition*, 2024. The region has, however, recorded modest progress over the years – from 15.2 per cent in 2015 to 17.4 per cent in 2020 and 19.1 per cent in 2023.

¹⁰ Debt service is estimated at about one third of government revenue in 2024, exceeding social sector spending in many countries. AfDB, *African Economic Outlook 2026: Mobilizing Africa's Development Financing at Scale in a Fragmented World – Highlights*, 2026.

10. These challenges are unfolding alongside three major transitions – demographic, digital and green which are reshaping Africa’s labour markets and development trajectory. Section 2 examines the opportunities and risks associated with each transformation and the policy responses needed to advance decent work and social justice.

► 2. Transformations in the world of work in Africa

2.1. Demographic transformation

The multidimensional nature of Africa's demographic transformation

11. Africa's demographic transformation is not a distant prospect; it is already reshaping the world of work. The continent's population has grown from some 230 million in 1950 to more than 1.5 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach about 2.5 billion by 2050. The working-age population (aged 15 to 64 years) is projected to almost double by 2050 ¹¹ (from 892 million in 2025 to 1.6 billion by 2050). The extended youth population (ages 15 to 34) accounts for about 60 per cent of the working age population, is growing rapidly and is expected to reach 846 million by 2050, an increase of more than 300 million young people over 2025. ¹²
12. Although Africa's demographic transformation is often framed through the lens of its growing youth population, it is a multidimensional process that extends well beyond youth. It encompasses changing age structures and declining fertility rates, evolving family and household structures, urbanization, internal and international migration, and the rising importance of both younger and older populations. Together, these forces are producing diverse demographic trajectories across countries, requiring inclusive and forward-looking policies. For instance, the number of persons aged 65 years and older is projected to grow rapidly, from 57 million in 2025 to 144 million in 2050, creating new demands on social protection, health and care systems and on labour markets – and making the care economy itself a growing source of employment.
13. The demographic transformation is also spatial. It is mediated through rapid urban growth, changing settlement patterns and the expansion of secondary cities, with major implications for jobs, housing, infrastructure and productivity. The rural economy nonetheless remains a major employment frontier, albeit one marked by high informality and climate vulnerability. Internal migration, regional mobility and international migration are further transforming labour markets and employment prospects for Africa's growing youth population.
14. Yet these trends vary across countries and contexts, reflecting different stages of demographic transition, levels of urbanization, and conditions in fragile, conflict-affected, and small island States. This diversity calls for tailored and context-specific policy responses. The central question is therefore how these different demographic trajectories can be translated into more productive and decent work, rather than into deeper labour market pressures and inequalities.
15. Africa's demographic transition could generate a major demographic dividend through stronger economic growth, productivity and structural transformation. But this outcome is not automatic. Whether demographic change becomes a dividend or a source of greater labour market pressure will depend on whether economies can create sufficient productive and decent jobs, improve the quality of work, equip people to navigate changing labour markets and provide the institutions

¹¹ See Nardos Bekele-Thomas and Snorre Westgaard, "Unlocking the Potential of Africa's Youth: Why Technical and Vocational Education and Training is Essential for Equipping Young Africans with the Skills Needed for a Thriving Society", *Africa Renewal* (United Nations), 4 October 2024 (accessed April 2026).

¹² United Nations, "World Population Prospects 2024".

and protection needed to support transitions. International labour standards and effective social dialogue provide an essential foundation for these choices.

Creating productive and decent jobs for a growing workforce

16. Youth employment is at the centre of this challenge. There can be no social justice when millions of young people are missing out on the opportunities of productive and decent employment.¹³ The AU-ILO Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa), 2025; the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019; and the ILO Abidjan Declaration, 2019, reiterate the commitment of Member States toward concrete actions to address the youth employment challenge.
17. The central labour market challenge facing young people across Africa is the absence of productive and decent jobs. Economic growth has not been sufficiently inclusive, and structural transformation has been too slow to shift young workers into higher-productivity sectors. Agriculture still employs about 60 per cent of youth in sub-Saharan Africa, while manufacturing remains stagnant at around 6 per cent. The limited growth of productive enterprises, coupled with persistent productivity and competitiveness constraints among MSMEs, restricts job creation at scale.
18. At the same time, weakness on the supply side compounds the problem. Skills mismatches persist, training systems remain weakly linked to employer demand, the digital divide hinders productivity, and young entrepreneurs face barriers to finance, land, networks and effective employment services. Youth employment also remains insufficiently integrated into macroeconomic, sectoral and investment policies.
19. Yet Africa's young people are not simply the subjects of this transformation; they are also important actors in it. Young Africans are already a driving force in the continent's digital, creative and green economies. The task of policy is to remove the structural barriers that prevent this potential from translating into productive and decent work at scale.
20. Employment is more than a source of income. It is a pathway to dignity, inclusion, participation in society and a foundation for young people to build their futures with confidence. This is why the youth employment challenge cannot be reduced to whether young people are in work or not: the quality, security and prospects associated with that work matter equally. As I have said previously, "a generation that cannot find decent work cannot build its future with confidence".

Breaking the cycle of informality and low-productivity work

21. For most young Africans, entry into the labour market takes place in the informal economy. Given its sheer size, the informal economy is not a peripheral phenomenon but represents the primary setting for most work, trade, production, innovation, and maintenance of livelihoods in Africa.¹⁴ The demographic transformation is therefore being mediated through informality. Informal employment is often not a transitional stage: entry into informal employment as a first job carries long-run costs, depressing earnings trajectories, delaying or foreclosing the accumulation of social protection entitlements, and trapping many in movement between one form of insecure work and another rather than progression towards decent work.

¹³ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024: Decent Work, Brighter Futures*, 2024.

¹⁴ Pierre Nguimkeu, "Rethinking Informality in Africa: An Economy Hiding in Plain Sight", *Brookings*, 14 May 2026.

22. The response must therefore operate on three fronts. First, raise productivity and earnings where most young people work, while extending social protection and strengthening rights and voice. Second, provide workers and economic units with practical and sequenced pathways towards formalization, consistent with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). Third, accelerate structural transformation and the creation of formal jobs, particularly through sustainable private sector development. Improving work where people are today and expanding opportunities for where they can move tomorrow must proceed in tandem.

Supporting transitions across the life course

23. Demographic transformation is not only about labour market entry, it also changes the nature and frequency of transitions across the life course. The priority is therefore not only to equip new labour-market entrants with the skills needed for emerging forms of work, but also to enable workers at different stages of the life course to adapt as technologies and occupations evolve.
24. This requires stronger connections between the education systems, employment services, employers, skills and lifelong learning, and social protection so that both younger and older workers can participate in, adapt to and help shape increasingly technology-enabled labour markets. Employment services, skills systems and social protection therefore need to work together rather than acting as separate policy domains.

Making Africa's demographic dividend a dividend of decent work

25. The first priority is to place employment at the heart of public policies, consistent with the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). Macroeconomic, sectoral, trade and investment policies should be assessed not only by their contribution to growth but also by the quantity and quality of the jobs they generate for young people. Structural transformation must be actively driven towards job-rich sectors, while young people are simultaneously equipped – through skills development and effective labour market services. Investment in skills pays off in particular where demand-side policies – such as investments in job-rich sectors and employment-responsive trade integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) – generate the jobs into which skilled young people can move. Moreover, labour market outcomes of the transformation are weakened if young women remain disproportionately excluded from education and access to opportunities.
26. YES-Africa provides an important continental framework for translating this approach into action. With (youth) employment strategies now in place across most of the region, the focus is increasingly on implementation: strengthening institutional capacities, financing and coordination so that well-designed strategies produce results at scale for young people.
27. A second priority is to build strong social protection systems across the life cycle. A large share of the youth population is facing difficulties in finding decent employment – and often find themselves in informal employment, without adequate social protection that could support them in better navigating work and life transitions. The ongoing changes in labour markets, in particular the rise of less secure forms of employment, such as temporary contracts, self-employment and platform work, increase the frequency of transitions, thereby increasing both opportunities and risks.
28. Third, young people must be actors in shaping policies. Meaningful youth engagement means involving young people throughout the full cycle of employment skills and social protection interventions, from design to governance, implementation and evaluation; strengthening the

capacities of youth organizations; and amplifying youth voice within established social dialogue structures. Young people have the right, the knowledge and the capacity to shape the decisions that concern them.

29. Delivering these responses requires more than job creation alone. The rapid demographic transformation is also a test of institutions. Governments need to connect employment, education, skills, enterprise and social protection policies while employers' and workers' organizations have a central role in anticipating changing skills and labour market needs and shaping responses through social dialogue.
30. Africa's demographic transformation will also be shaped by the changing nature of work itself. Rapid digitalization, the expansion of platform work, the spread of artificial intelligence (AI), and growth of the creative economy are already altering how jobs are created, how work is organized and which skills are valued. These changes can broaden access to work and markets, especially for young people, but may also create new barriers to entry, weaken career ladders and widen generational skills gaps. The next section therefore turns to the digital transformation and the choices required to ensure that technological change supports productive and decent work.

2.2. Digital transformation

Digitalization as a driver of structural transformation

31. Digital transformation is becoming one of the defining forces shaping economies, societies and labour markets around the world. Africa's digital economy already accounts for more than 5 per cent of the continent's gross domestic product, and its importance will continue to grow.¹⁵ For the ILO and its constituents, the digital transformation should not be understood simply as the spread of new technologies, including AI. It is redefining production, services, trade and employment, and creating new industries and occupations while transforming existing ones.
32. The potential gains are considerable. Digital technologies can raise productivity in sectors that continue to employ most African workers: improving agricultural production through climate information and precision farming; strengthening manufacturing, logistics and supply chains; expanding access to finance; and making public administration more effective. For MSMEs, digital tools can improve business management, open access to customers and finance, and facilitate participation in domestic, regional and global value chains. With the right policies and governance frameworks in place, digital technologies can also support decent work outcomes and transitions to formality by facilitating the registration of workers and economic units and broadening access to employment and business services, labour protections and social protection benefits.
33. Digital trade is creating new cross-border opportunities for African economies. E-commerce, digital payments, logistics, cybersecurity and communications are lowering transaction costs and broadening market access, including for enterprises previously constrained by geography and limited physical infrastructure. E-commerce is estimated to have reached more than 520 million online shoppers in 2025¹⁶ and generated up to 3 million direct jobs by 2025 in the region.¹⁷ A rise in online payments through digital trade has been directly associated with a significant rise in economic growth.¹⁸ Combined with the AfCFTA, these developments can support regional

¹⁵ International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Google, *E-Conomy Africa 2020: Africa's \$180 Billion Internet Economy Future*, 2020.

¹⁶ IFC and Google, *E-Conomy Africa 2020: Africa's \$180 Billion Internet Economy Future*.

¹⁷ Patrick Dupoux et al., *How Online Marketplaces Can Power Employment in Africa* (Boston Consulting Group, March 2019).

¹⁸ Purva Khera et al., *Is Digital Financial Inclusion Unlocking Growth?*, IMF Working Paper No. 2021/167 (IMF, 2021).

integration, entrepreneurship and more diversified economic activity. Mobile technologies and digital platforms are also broadening access to banking, training, business services, information and civic participation. Digital transformation is thus both an economic and a social process.

34. The rapid rise of AI, particularly generative AI tools, builds on the earlier waves of digital transformation and has already gained significant footholds in several African markets, with some emerging among the world's most active users. Yet the availability of AI alone will not make the technology a driver of structural transformation and decent job creation. This requires adoption and integration of technologies, particularly in small businesses and start-ups, through the availability of affordable applications and models that can operate on existing infrastructure and widely available devices, and draw on locally relevant data across African languages. At the same time, further investments in Africa's digital and AI infrastructure will be needed. Ensuring that AI contributes to decent work will therefore depend on whether it is embedded in high-growth sectors in ways that create quality employment, raise productivity and expand opportunities for African businesses and workers.

Closing digital divides and building capabilities

35. To maximize the benefits of the current wave of digital transformation, Africa needs to overcome significant structural constraints, including gaps in connectivity, high technology costs, limited access to finance, gaps in digital and managerial skills and limited cybersecurity capabilities constraining adoption, particularly among MSMEs. These barriers limit the ability to translate technological progress into productivity gains and risk widening gaps between countries, enterprises and workers.
36. Connectivity has become a gateway to employment, entrepreneurship, education, finance and public services. Yet large gaps remain in reliable, fast and affordable internet access^{19, 20} electricity, affordable devices, locally relevant content and digital literacy, particularly between urban and rural areas.²¹ Women,²² young people, persons with disabilities and workers in the informal economy often face additional barriers. As economic activity and public services move online, digital exclusion increasingly turns into labour market and social exclusion. Closing these divides is therefore an essential component of social justice.
37. Skills are equally decisive. By 2030, around 70 per cent of digital skills demand in Africa is expected to consist of basic competencies, while a further 23 per cent will require intermediate skills.²³ Yet evidence from 15 African countries indicates that only a small minority of young people possess

¹⁹ In 2024, average broadband download speed in Africa was 23 Mbps, far below 78 Mbps in Latin America and the Caribbean and 54 Mbps in developing Asia. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and African Union, *Africa's Development Dynamics, Dynamics 2024: Skills, Jobs and Productivity*, 2024.

²⁰ It is estimated that if internet use across Africa could be expanded at a rate similar to high-income countries, potentially 140 million new jobs would be created and US\$2.2 trillion would be added to the continent's GDP. See Alistair Tempest, *The Digital Economy and Ecommerce in Africa: Drivers of the African Free Trade Area?*, Special Report (South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), 2020).

²¹ World Bank, *"From Connectivity to Services: Digital Transformation in Africa"*, Results Brief, 26 June 2023.

²² International Telecommunication Union (ITU), *"The Gender Digital Divide"*. The gender digital divide is one of the widest in the world. In 2023, 42 per cent of men used the internet compared to 32 per cent of women. In 2024, the gender gap was 29 per cent in mobile internet adoption; 13 per cent in mobile ownership; and 25 per cent in smartphone ownership. See: GSM Association (GSMA), *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2025*, 2025.

²³ OECD and African Union, *Africa's Development Dynamics 2024: Skills, Jobs and Productivity*.

even basic digital capabilities. Digital skills are increasingly required across the economy, but Employers typically need them alongside technical, cognitive and socio-emotional capabilities.²⁴

38. This calls for stronger and more flexible lifelong learning systems, better-quality technical and vocational education and training, including work-based learning arrangements, recognition of skills acquired through informal learning, and continuous opportunities for upskilling and reskilling. Skills policies must therefore be integrated with employment, industrial and enterprise development strategies that generate productive opportunities in which those capabilities can be fully used.²⁵

Harnessing artificial intelligence

39. The rapid advance in AI is creating new opportunities and challenges around the world. As I emphasized in my report to the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference *A moment of choice: Harnessing artificial intelligence for decent work*, whether AI raises productivity and improves livelihoods while advancing decent work is a matter of policy and institutional choice, not technology alone.
40. For Africa, the immediate challenge is likely to be less widespread job displacement than the uneven effects of AI on job quality, skills demand, work organization and productivity. ILO research shows that Africa remains the region in which the share of employment exposed to generative AI is lowest – 19 per cent of employment is estimated to be exposed to generative AI (compared to 24 per cent globally) with only 2 per cent showing significant and high exposure with a larger share of tasks at risk of being automated (compared to 8 per cent globally).
41. For young people, emerging global evidence suggests that junior and entry-level positions, usually providing opportunities²⁶ for new labour market entrants in highly digitalized sectors, are potentially exposed to AI-driven automation, as they often involve routine cognitive tasks. Where such roles serve as entry points for skills acquisition and career progression, their reduction can weaken career ladders and limit opportunities for young workers²⁷. This dimension deserves careful monitoring so that AI adoption does not further weaken entry points into an already difficult labour market for young people.
42. AI is also beginning to show an impact on creative industries, such as media, design, advertising, music, film, gaming, content creation and digital arts spheres, where young people often make up a large share of the workers. The effects can be both positive and negative, creating new opportunities while also disrupting traditional career pathways for youth. While AI is unlikely to eliminate creativity altogether, it is transforming how creative work is produced and valued.
43. Older workers may face different challenges, particularly where generational gaps in digital skills make adaption to AI-driven work more difficult. This reinforces the need for lifelong learning systems and retraining systems that support workers through their careers. It also requires stronger links between formal education, vocational training and work-based learning, as well as better integration with employment services and active labour market policies.²⁸

²⁴ ILO, *Lifelong Learning and Skills for the Future: Insights for Africa*, Regional Research Brief, 2026.

²⁵ ILO, *Lifelong Learning and Skills for the Future: Insights for Africa*.

²⁶ Digital services and business process outsourcing have provided formal employment opportunities for educated young people.

²⁷ ILO, *A Moment of Choice: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Decent Work – Report of the Director-General*, ILC.114/IB, 2026.

²⁸ ILO, *A Moment of Choice: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Decent Work*.

44. Governments around the world are responding to this transformation through new AI policies and strategies, though comprehensive regulation remains largely concentrated in high-income countries. Across Africa, national AI strategies increasingly emphasize responsible innovation, economic development, improved public service delivery and digital inclusion. Countries including Rwanda, Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria have adopted national AI frameworks, while the African Union Continental AI Strategy, adopted in July 2024, positions AI as both a development and governance priority. The opportunity now is to ensure that decent work is fully integrated into these strategies.
45. While the ILO does not have standalone standards on AI, the Organization's policy advice can draw on existing international labour standards along with recent developments in standard-setting and tripartite discussions. The Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169), for example, highlight the importance of adapting employment policies to technological change. The conclusions and recommendations of the technical meeting on challenges and opportunities for promoting decent work, productivity and a just transition arising from artificial intelligence in the manufacturing industry are also relevant.²⁹ In 2027, the general discussion on technology, productivity and structural transformation will provide a comprehensive framework to discuss and follow up on key issues relating to AI and decent work.
46. Job quality matters as much as job quantity when it comes to assessing the impact of technology. AI can complement workers, improve access to information, support decision making, strengthen public services and help enterprises adopt more productive practices. But it can also intensify work, reduce autonomy through algorithmic management, widen gaps between firms and workers, and reinforce inequalities where access to infrastructure and skills is uneven.
47. For Africa, the challenge is therefore twofold: to harness AI to increase productivity and economic transformation while ensuring that the continent's rapidly growing workforce acquires the skills and opportunities needed to participate in an AI-enabled global world of work. For enterprises, particularly MSMEs, realizing this potential will require better access to affordable technologies, finance, reliable and affordable digital infrastructure and the skills needed to adopt and use AI effectively.

Digital platforms and the platform economy

48. The platform economy is one of the significant visible manifestations of the digital transformation – connecting people directly to opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, income, flexibility and increasing access to international labour markets. Major sectors include ride-hailing, delivery, digital trade and online labour platforms that offer gig and freelancing jobs ranging from software development and data analysis to translation, design and administrative support.
49. Work on platforms has been a source of employment opportunities for young new labour market entrants, who would normally experience difficulty accessing employment, in particular in the formal economy. The quality of platform work, however, is uneven. ILO studies point to earnings that in some sectors fall below the applicable minimum wage, alongside long or unpredictable hours and gender pay gaps, limited social protection coverage, and safety concerns in location-based services such as ride-hailing and delivery.

²⁹ ILO, [Conclusions and recommendations](#), Technical meeting on challenges and opportunities for promoting decent work, productivity and a just transition arising from artificial intelligence in the manufacturing industry, 2026.

50. The recently adopted Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026 (No.193), marks a milestone in the development of international labour standards to promote decent work in the platform economy underpinned by adequate protections and respect for fundamental rights. Its standard-setting process featured the active participation of African national tripartite constituents.

Digitalization of labour-related and labour-governance services

51. Digital technologies, including AI, can strengthen labour market governance and service delivery by improving labour market information, employment services, labour inspection, compliance and support from workers' and employers' organizations. Integrated digital identification, administrative and payment systems can expand access to social protection and increase efficiency. Better data can support skills planning and help Governments, Employers and Workers manage employment transitions. When effectively implemented, these tools can reduce costs, streamline processing, improve information sharing, enhance accessibility and support labour market formalization.
52. Digital public services must nevertheless be inclusive, accessible and accountable. No worker or enterprise should be excluded because of limited connectivity or digital literacy, lack of documentation, disability or inability to afford an appropriate device. Digital channels should complement, rather than replace, face-to-face services, particularly for groups that continue to depend on them.³⁰ Trust in digital services requires not only efficiency, but also transparency, privacy, accessibility and effective avenues for redress. Designing and implementing digital services also requires clear guardrails in the areas of data protection, transparency, non-discrimination, sustainability and human oversight.

Social dialogue for a human-centred digital future

53. Ultimately, governing digital transformation is as much an institutional challenge as a technological one. Labour market institutions must evolve alongside technological change so that innovation supports productive employment, contributing to productivity growth and its fair sharing, promotes adequate wages and labour incomes, protects workers' rights and strengthens decent work. This includes developing appropriate frameworks for data governance, privacy, algorithmic transparency and accountability while ensuring that workers retain a meaningful voice in decisions affecting their work. It also requires strengthening the capacity of ministries of labour, employers' organizations and workers' organizations to engage with technological change and contribute to its governance, including in policy development, through effective wage-setting institutions, collective bargaining and tripartite social dialogue. With the right capacity, constituents can better engage in broader digitalization and AI-policy processes that are pursued by governments.
54. Tripartism and social dialogue should remain central to this process. Decisions regarding digitalization cannot be left solely to technology firms, regulators or ministries responsible for communications and innovation. Ministries of labour, employers and workers have indispensable roles in shaping policies that balance innovation with rights, productivity with inclusion and

³⁰ The ILO emphasizes that technology is not a uniform solution: inclusive delivery often requires a hybrid model combining online, telephone and face-to-face channels, particularly for users with limited connectivity, documentation or digital skills. ILO, *Global Report: Technology Adoption in Public Employment Services – Catching up with the Future*, 2022.

technological progress with decent work. Collective-bargaining and wage-setting institutions are important in ensuring that productivity gains translate into better wages and working conditions.

2.3. Green and climate transition

Making the transition to environmentally sustainable economies an inclusive pathway to decent work and social justice

55. Climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation and pollution are urgent environmental concerns for Africa. For the ILO and its constituents, this is not only an environmental agenda. They are already transforming labour markets across the continent. They are changing where work is possible, how it is organized, how productive workers and enterprises can be, and which sectors can sustain livelihoods. At the same time, the ecological transition presents a potential to advance job-creation, social justice and drive a transformation that works for people.
56. The evidence is clear. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent.³¹ In 2025, floods accounted for more than half of reported weather-related events in Africa, while drought affected more than 8.5 million people in East Africa.³² Heat stress, caused by the warming of temperatures, alone could cost Africa 2.3 per cent of working hours by 2030, more than 14 million full-time jobs, and closer to 5 per cent in West Africa.³³ Land degradation, biodiversity loss and rising air and plastic pollution in fast-growing cities are compounding these pressures on farms, fisheries, forests and informal urban livelihoods alike. These are not abstract numbers, they are felt by farmers, street vendors, transport and construction workers, and the small enterprises that anchor local economies.
57. The financial challenge is equally significant. The region, despite minimal historical responsibility for climate change, and significant development needs, faces a costly transition with limited fiscal space, and insufficient international support. In 2022, the continent lost about US\$9 billion in loss and damage and over 5–15 per cent of GDP per capita to rebuild.³⁴ Estimates indicate that African countries require around US\$2.8 trillion between 2020 and 2030 to implement their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), yet current climate finance falls far short.³⁵ However, climate and environmental action can also drive employment, enterprise development, productivity growth and structural transformation.
58. The question before governments, employers and workers is whether the transition towards environmentally sustainable economies will deepen existing vulnerabilities, or whether it can become a pathway to decent work and social justice.

Adaptation as employment, enterprise and resilience policy

59. For Africa, adaptation is central to the future of work as the continent's labour markets remain highly exposed to environmental change. Agrifood systems account for 64.5 per cent of

³¹ World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects: June 2025*, 2025.

³² World Meteorological Organization (WMO), *State of the Climate in Africa 2025*, 2026.

³³ ILO, *Working on a Warmer Planet: The Impact of Heat Stress on Labour Productivity and Decent Work*, 2019.

³⁴ AfDB, "Africa loses up to 15% of its GDP per capita annually because of climate change – African Development Bank Acting Chief Economist Kevin Urama", 12 September 2022.

³⁵ Sandra Guzmán et al., *The State of Climate Finance in Africa: Climate Finance Needs of African Countries* (Climate Policy Initiative, 2022).

employment, leaving millions of workers and households dependent on climate-sensitive resources and activities.³⁶ In many rural areas, livelihoods remain closely tied to rainfall, land, water, livestock, forests and fisheries.

60. Adaptation should therefore be understood not only as protection against loss, but as employment, resilience and enterprise policy – an opportunity to be harnessed, not merely a response to risk. Investments in climate-resilient agriculture, irrigation, water management, flood protection, coastal resilience, ecosystem restoration, sustainable land management and resilient roads can protect livelihoods while creating decent work. Public employment programmes can help communities build climate-resilient infrastructure while providing income support, skills and local assets. Urban adaptation offers similar opportunities through resilient infrastructure, sustainable transport, efficient buildings, drainage and waste services.
61. But these opportunities will not automatically benefit the workers and enterprises most in need. Many climate-exposed workers remain in the informal economy, where limited labour and social protection constrain adaptation. Policies should therefore combine adaptation with formalization incentives, social protection and occupational safety, while considering MSMEs' compliance capacities. Targeted support for MSMEs, which provide most employment but often face constraints, should strengthen access to finance, technology, climate information, skills and technical assistance, alongside resilient infrastructure and business development services that enable adaptation investment.
62. Workplaces are also exposed to environmental change. Heat stress, extreme weather events, air pollution, vector-borne diseases, ultraviolet radiation and exposure to agrochemicals are changing the risk profile of work across the continent. Recent ILO analysis shows that 92.9 per cent of workers in Africa are exposed to excessive heat, compared with 71 per cent globally.³⁷ Stronger national occupational safety and health (OSH) systems should integrate climate risks through heat-action plans, risk assessments, labour inspection, access to water and rest, and adapted working-time arrangements where necessary, consistent with the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

Unlocking the potential for green and decent jobs

63. The greening of economies has significant employment potential. Sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable construction, public transport, climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem restoration, recycling and environmental services can generate large numbers of jobs while supporting more sustainable enterprises. Renewable energy employment reached 16.6 million jobs globally in 2024, but only about 344,000 in Africa.³⁸ Yet Africa possesses 60 per cent of the world's best solar resources and substantial potential across other green sectors.³⁹
64. This gap represents a significant opportunity. Africa's green transition could create up to 3.3 million direct jobs by 2030 and as many as 84.5 million by 2050 if investment, skills

³⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "FAO Adds to Data Coverage of Employment in Agrifood Systems", 1 November 2024.

³⁷ ILO, *Heat at Work: Implications for Safety and Health – A Global Review of the Science, Policy and Practice*, 2024.

³⁸ International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and ILO, *Renewable Energy and Jobs: Annual Review 2025*, 2026.

³⁹ Victoria Masterson, "Africa is Leading the Way in Solar Power Potential", World Economic Forum, 23 September 2022 (citing the International Energy Agency (IEA)).

development and enterprise growth keep pace.⁴⁰ This is not a distant promise. Governments are already acting. South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership, Namibia's recently adopted long-term low-emission development strategy, and national green growth and just transition strategies in Morocco, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and elsewhere are translating ambition into concrete renewable energy, biodiversity and resource-efficiency opportunities. Investment in nature is moving too, from wildlife bonds to biodiversity credits, signalling that protecting ecosystems and creating jobs can go hand in hand.

65. Expanding green sectors alone will not be enough. Africa must also ensure that workers, enterprises, and communities capture a larger share of the employment, productivity and development gains created by the green transition. Despite growing energy investment, Africa still attracts only about 2 per cent of global clean energy investment,⁴¹ underscoring the need to scale financing and stronger local value addition. The scale of employment gains will depend on investment levels, enterprise development, productivity growth, technology adoption, and the competitiveness of African firms in emerging green markets.
66. Green jobs, however, are not automatically decent jobs. Green employment strategies must address key issues of wages, working conditions, rights at work, occupational safety and health, skills, social protection, gender equality, youth employment, enterprise productivity, pathways to formality, and a just transition for workers and enterprises in sectors that are carbon-intensive, climate-vulnerable or likely to be reorganized by new technologies and regulations.
67. The circular economy also illustrates both the opportunity and the challenge. Repair, reuse, recycling, remanufacturing and sustainable waste management can reduce resource use and pollution while creating employment. Recent estimates suggest that between 121 million and 142 million people are employed globally in circular economy activities.⁴² Based on such estimates, Africa has at least 12.9 million people employed in the circular economy, representing 5.6 per cent of total employment in the region excluding agriculture. Yet many of these jobs, especially in waste picking and recycling, are informal, stigmatized, low-income and exposed to serious occupational safety and health risks as about 80 per cent of the region's circular economy workers, around 10.3 million people, work in the informal economy. Circular economy policies should therefore be conceived as decent work, enterprise development and formalization policies. Such policies should recognize and organize waste workers, support cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy entities, strengthen OSH standards, extend social protection, enhance recycling standards, and create pathways to more productive, secure, and better-protected employment across the circular economy. They should also attract private investment in recycling and remanufacturing value chains and be accompanied by measures that enhance working conditions and encourage formalization.

⁴⁰ FSD Africa, "New Research Suggests Africa's Green Economy could Create More Than 3 Million Direct Jobs by 2030", Press Release, 24 July 2024; FSD Africa, Shortlist and Boston Consulting Group, *Forecasting Green Jobs in Africa*, 2024; Shell Foundation, "Africa's Green Transition to Create up to 84m Jobs by 2050 but it Risks Embedding Inequality Without Urgent Action, says Report", Press Release, 16 June 2026; FSD Africa, Shell Foundation and Shortlist, *Unlocking Africa's Green Transition: Opportunities Towards a Green and Inclusive Workforce*, 2026.

⁴¹ IEA, *World Energy Investment 2025*, 2025.

⁴² Circle Economy, ILO, World Bank and Partnership for Action on Green Economy, *Employment in the Circular Economy: Leveraging Circularity to Create Decent Work*, 2025.

Critical minerals – Africa’s strategic potential in the global energy transition

68. Critical minerals and green industrialization are another opportunity. Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to hold about 30 per cent of the world’s proven critical mineral reserves, placing the region in a strategic position in the global energy transition.⁴³ Cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, graphite, nickel and rare earths are essential for batteries, renewable energy systems, grids and electric mobility.
69. But critical minerals should not be framed only as inputs for global decarbonization or technological advancement. The growing demand for critical minerals can support structural transformation by promoting higher value-added activities beyond extraction, skills development, local enterprise development, regional value chains, economic diversification, and expanding employment opportunities. In this sense, they are a labour market issue as much as an industrial development issue. The question is whether emerging discourse on critical minerals wealth will reproduce patterns of primary commodity dependence, and amplify decent work risks, such as unsafe and unhealthy working environments, weak regulatory enforcement, and informality, or support structural transformation. The African Union’s Africa Green Minerals Strategy points in this direction by emphasizing local beneficiation, regional industrialization, job creation and economic diversification.⁴⁴ Delivering it will require investable projects, predictable regulation, infrastructure and energy, geological information, skills, competitive logistics and responsible private capital.
70. As the demand for critical minerals grows, labour rights and fundamental principles at work must remain central. Combined with investments in employment and skills development, strengthening governance, effective labour market institutions, and inclusive processes that promote social dialogue, gender equality, non-discrimination and community engagement, can ensure that critical mineral supply chains deliver both decent work and sustainable development outcomes.

The twin transition and skills

71. The green and digitalization transitions intersect. Digitalization can support climate adaptation, efficient transport and energy systems, precision agriculture, disaster preparedness and more sustainable production. Yet it is not environmentally neutral – data centres, electronic devices, critical minerals and e-waste⁴⁵ create new demands on energy and natural resources. Digital and environmental policies must therefore be designed as mutually reinforcing elements of a just transition.
72. The ILO highlights that the green and digital transitions are reshaping skills demand and reinforcing the need for lifelong learning systems that support adaptation and fair access to new opportunities⁴⁶. Across Africa, climate adaptation and mitigation are already reshaping the skills

⁴³ Wenjie Chen et al., “Digging for Opportunity: Harnessing Sub-Saharan Africa’s Wealth in Critical Minerals”, *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa*, Analytical Note (International Monetary Fund, 2024).

⁴⁴ African Union, *Africa’s Green Minerals Strategy: African Union’s Mineral Resources Strategy for the Just Transition and Decarbonising Future*, 2024.

⁴⁵ Cornelis P. Baldé et al., *The Global E-waste Monitor 2024*, (ITU and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 2024). Africa generated an estimated 2 billion kilograms of e-waste in 2022, while only 0.7 per cent was formally collected and recycled, compared with a global recycling rate of 22.3 per cent. It also reports that only 12 countries in the region had a national e-waste policy, legislation or regulation in place.

⁴⁶ ILO, *Lifelong Learning and Skills for the Future: Insights for Africa*.

required in agriculture, water management, construction, energy, fisheries, forestry, transport and waste management. Yet preparing workers for greener economies is not only a matter of imparting narrow environmental or technical competences, as evidence from African labour markets shows that employers increasingly seek rounded skill profiles, combining technical capacities with cognitive, socio-emotional, digital, managerial and problem-solving and productivity skills.

73. However, workers who are most exposed to climate risks, especially in the informal economy, are often least able to access structured learning. If skills policies reach only formal firms, formal training institutions or workers already in wage employment, they will miss the majority of African workers. Lifelong learning must therefore be treated as a core element of just transition policy. This means connecting formal, non-formal and informal learning, recognizing skills acquired through work and informal apprenticeships, providing flexible pathways for workers who face income, time and care constraints, and aligning training with national strategies for green industrialization, climate resilience and decent work. It also means investing in labour market information systems, skills anticipation, career guidance, quality assurance, financing and social dialogue.

Climate finance and nationally determined contributions

74. Climate finance is often discussed in terms of the volume of resources mobilized. Volume is certainly essential, but it is not enough. Climate finance should also be assessed by its social, labour market and enterprise development outcomes – whether it creates decent jobs, protects workers and communities from climate shocks, enables local enterprises and MSMEs to invest and participate in green value chains, expands access to energy, infrastructure and essential services, supports women, youth, rural and informal workers, and reduces inequalities across countries, sectors and communities.
75. Likewise, NDCs, national adaptation plans, energy strategies and green industrial policies should be viewed not only as environmental or investment frameworks. They are also employment, skills, enterprise and social protection plans, incorporating labour market impact assessments, sectoral employment strategies, skills anticipation, support for MSMEs, social protection measures, labour clauses in climate-related investments, labour clauses in trade agreements, green public procurement, local content provisions, and mechanisms to promote formalization and decent work.

Just transition governance

76. A just transition will not happen by intention or plans alone. It requires institutions, financing and governance arrangements that deliberately place people, rights and decent work at the centre of climate action. The ILO *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all* provide a clear normative compass, linking environmental sustainability with decent work, social justice, social dialogue, social protection, rights at work, skills development, occupational safety and health and sustainable enterprises.⁴⁷ For Africa, this is particularly important because transition actions must advance environmental objectives while supporting job creation, poverty reduction, structural transformation and social justice.
77. Social dialogue is central to achieving this balance. Governments, employers and workers bring complementary knowledge of sectors, workplaces and communities and should therefore be

⁴⁷ ILO, *Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All*, 2015.

involved upstream in the design of climate, investment and industrial policies, not only in managing their labour market consequences. Meaningful participation also requires an enabling environment, respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining, effective labour administrations and labour inspection, and access to remedies.⁴⁸ Just transition governance must also reflect the structure of labour markets. It cannot be limited to formal wage employment or large enterprises. It must also include informal workers, own-account workers, rural producers, waste pickers and transport workers, particularly in a labour market dominated by informality. Social protection is another essential pillar, helping workers and households to manage climate shocks, temporary income losses and transitions between jobs, sectors and locations.

78. For the ILO and its constituents in Africa, the priority is to make just transition governance operational through effective tripartite and broader consultative mechanisms, stronger labour market information systems, employment-centred climate planning, social protection systems that can respond to climate risks, and financing that incentivizes decent work outcomes. Shaped through social dialogue and grounded in rights, skills development and social protection, climate action can become a pathway to resilience, productivity, sustainable enterprises and social justice.

2.4. The path ahead – Delivering social justice through inclusive labour market transformations in Africa

79. Africa's labour market transformation is already underway. The challenge is not to slow this process, but to govern it effectively. As the preceding discussions show, the transformations will not be socially neutral. The choices made today will determine whether they deepen exclusion or drive structural transformation, decent work and social justice. This leads to a central conclusion: social justice must be the guiding principle, rather than an outcome we hope for at the end of the process. With this in mind, I offer some reflections on the path ahead.
80. First, place productive and decent employment, especially for the growing and young labour force at the centre of the transformations. Macroeconomic, sectoral, trade, industrial, investment, climate and digital strategies should be assessed by the quantity and quality of employment, incomes and productive capacities they generate, and by their capacity to extend rights and opportunities. Employment objectives should be embedded across public policy, planning, budgeting, and project appraisal, guided by international labour standards and supported by strong institutions, coordination and measurable targets.
81. Second, strengthen the foundations for sustainable enterprises while delivering a fair transition to formality. Enterprises are the primary source of jobs and livelihoods. Creating the enabling conditions in which enterprises can start, invest, innovate, be productive, grow, compete and generate decent employment is critical. This is particularly important for MSMEs, which employ the majority of workers, but often face constraints related to finance, infrastructure, technology, skills, market access and regulatory certainty. Policy should address these barriers while improving productivity, resilience and working conditions. At the same time, social justice requires recognizing the reality that most African workers earn their living in the informal economy. Extending rights, protection, and opportunities cannot wait for formal jobs to emerge. Improving work where people are must go hand in hand with creating pathways to where they can go. The path ahead must combine immediate improvements in productivity, earnings, occupational

⁴⁸ ILO, *Navigating Change through Inclusive Social Dialogue: A Recurrent Discussion on the Strategic Objective of Social Dialogue and Tripartism, under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008, as amended in 2022*, ILC.114/Report IV, 2026.

safety and health, social protection and voice in the informal economy, while creating practical and gradual pathways to formality and decent work.

82. Third, equip people and enterprises to navigate change. No transformation can be inclusive if people bear its risks alone. Universal social protection must become the cornerstone of transformations. Young people entering the labour market, workers affected by climate shocks or technological change, women whose economic opportunities are constrained by unpaid care responsibilities, and workers moving between jobs and sectors all need protection that adapts to changing realities. Social protection systems must extend across the life course and reach informal, self-employed, migrant and platform workers. Equally important is building relevant skills. Skills policy must also be closely connected to employment and industrial policy. Africa needs inclusive lifelong learning systems combining foundational, technical, digital, green, cognitive and socio-emotional skills; recognizing learning acquired through work and informal apprenticeships; and expanding quality apprenticeships, work-based learning and recognition of prior learning. However, skills alone are not enough. Training must be linked to productive investment, effective employment services and reliable labour market information.
83. Fourth, make the green and digital transitions human-centred and just. Climate action should be designed not only as environmental policy but as employment, enterprise and social policy. Adaptation plans, energy strategies and green industrial policies should include measures on decent jobs, skills, occupational safety and health, social protection, local enterprise development and formalization. Similarly, digitalization and AI should augment human capabilities, raise productivity and broaden access to markets and services, while being governed by safeguards for privacy, transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and human oversight. The gains from technological progress must be fairly shared through better wages, working conditions and social dialogue.
84. Fifth, ground transformation in rights, equality and inclusion. Young people must have a meaningful voice in policies shaping their future. Women's participation requires action on discrimination, unequal care responsibilities, violence and harassment, alongside investment in the care economy. Rural producers, informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, small enterprises and climate-affected communities must be represented in decision-making and be able to access emerging opportunities. International labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work provide the foundation for inclusive transformation, alongside effective wage-setting institutions and adequate wages.
85. Sixth, strengthen institutions, social dialogue and the capacity to deliver. The transformations under way will not wait for institutions to catch up; they require strong and capable institutions. Ministries of labour, employers' and workers' organizations, labour administrations, inspection services and social dialogue institutions must be equipped to anticipate change, negotiate transitions and enforce rights. Tripartite dialogue should begin upstream, where economic, climate, technology and investment choices are made, and be complemented by mechanisms reaching beyond the formal economy. Delivery will require sustained national financing, stronger implementation capacity, better labour market data and renewed partnerships and cooperation. Actions should build on regional and global frameworks, in particular the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The runup to 2030 and the post-2030 engagements provide important opportunities to further position decent work and social justice. The Global Coalition for Social Justice can help mobilize collective action. The task is to shape them now, so that Africa's workers, enterprises and communities can better govern change, adapt with security and dignity, and share fairly in the prosperity and progress it can bring.

- 86.** The foregoing priorities are mutually reinforcing. Investment will not deliver widely shared employment without capable enterprises; skills will have limited value without labour demand; technology can deepen divides if safeguards are not in place; and climate action will lose legitimacy if its costs and benefits are unfairly distributed. The path ahead therefore requires policy coherence, sustained financing, stronger implementation capacity and renewed cooperation among governments, social partners, African institutions, development partners and the multilateral system. My vision is of an Africa that does not simply undergo transformation but shapes it, enabling workers, enterprises and communities to influence its direction and share fairly in the value, progress and opportunities it creates.

► 3. Key actions undertaken to implement the Abidjan Declaration, 2020–2026

- 87. The 14th ILO African Regional Meeting held in Abidjan in December 2019 adopted the Abidjan Declaration – Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa.
- 88. This section presents a non-exhaustive summary⁴⁹ of the key actions undertaken in the implementation of the seven work areas of the Implementation Plan supplementing the Abidjan Declaration from 2020 to 2026 based on successive programme implementation reports for Africa.
- 89. Implementation unfolded under changing conditions. The 2020–21 biennium was dominated by the impact of COVID-19, while 2022–23 focused on recovery efforts and responses to multiple interconnected crises. Progress resumed during 2024–26 despite geopolitical and economic pressures and constraints on the multilateral system. Increasingly action shifted from crisis response to institution-building, policy coherence, consolidation and continental scale-up. Implementation was strengthened through coordinated action and partnerships with the African Union, African Economic Community (AEC), African Development Bank (AfDB), and regional economic communities.
- 90. Independent evaluations of the ILO's interventions in Africa between 2020 and 2026, together with the high-level evaluations of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) strategies confirm that interventions have been relevant and strongly aligned with the Abidjan Declaration. Overall effectiveness was positive, particularly where interventions have emphasized inclusion, capacity-development, tripartism and social dialogue. However, achieving a sustainable and transformative impact is shown to require stronger national ownership and financing, institutional capacity, and the systematic integration of labour standards.

3.1. Decent jobs for Africa, in particular for young women and men

- 91. Employment creation remains a central regional priority and has become more firmly embedded in national development plans, sector strategies, public investment programmes, policy processes and budgets.
- 92. The development and implementation of a new generation of national employment policy (TVET NEP) frameworks in more than 19 countries⁵⁰ have strengthened policy coherence, institutional coordination and delivery of employment programmes. The emerging policies and programmes adopt an integrated approach that combines employment planning, active labour market measures, rural job creation, and just transition strategies. Aligned with structural transformation objectives, they also address barriers faced by women, youth, persons with disabilities, and workers in informal and rural economies.

⁴⁹ Detailed implementation reports are available at <https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo#results>.

⁵⁰ Including Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

93. In addition, several countries, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mozambique and Namibia, adopted pro-employment budgeting approaches, strengthening the alignment between employment objectives and national budgeting and planning systems through close collaboration with ministries of finance and planning. At the subregional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) advanced regional NEP guidelines with ILO support. In July 2026, the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration tasked the ILO and the African Union with continuing to institutionalize pro-employment macroeconomic policies.
94. Furthermore, countries including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Rwanda leveraged Employment Impact Assessments (EIAs) to strengthen the job-creation potential of public investment programmes.
95. Youth employment interventions expanded and generated innovation. By 2024, 37 of Africa's 54 countries (nearly 70 per cent) had active youth employment strategies in place. These interventions covered the traditional policy areas of education, training, skills and enterprise development as well as the emerging areas of labour demand measures, labour law, and macroeconomic and sectoral policies.
96. Delivering on a key commitment of the Abidjan Declaration, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State adopted YES-Africa in February 2025 as a continental framework to promote decent jobs for young people. Building on YES-Africa, the ILO Africa Youth Employment Action Lab provided a platform for innovation and exchange for eight countries in 2025. The joint ILO/International Telecommunication Union/African Union programme on youth jobs in the digital economy supported 15,000 young people in accessing employment in the digital economy across nine countries, while the Dakar Youth Compact established a shared framework for promoting youth employment in fragile contexts.
97. Collaboration with the AfDB on decent jobs marked a significant milestone with the piloting of the Youth, Skills and Jobs Marker System in 2025, an integrated tool designed to embed jobs-focused decision-making across AfDB operations. The ILO is also collaborating with the AfDB on the flagship report *Unlocking Africa's Job Potential through Strategic Investments*.
98. The employment agenda expanded to the cultural and creative industries, recognizing their role in economic diversification, youth employment and labour market transformation. In 2025, seven countries prepared road maps to unlock job-creation potential in these sectors.
99. Labour-based public works and employment-intensive infrastructure programmes continued to generate substantial work opportunities. In 2025, these interventions generated 984,001 workdays across 15 countries, with women accounting for 40 per cent of the beneficiaries.
100. At least 68 per cent of countries in Africa now include just transition principles in their NDCs, recognizing that climate policies should also support jobs, skills, businesses, and social protection. Increasingly, DWCPs explicitly incorporate elements, outcomes or outputs on just transition, the blue economy, green jobs, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and climate-responsive employment policies.

3.2. Improved skills and technology

101. Since 2020, skills development interventions in Africa have evolved markedly, shifting from stand-alone policy interventions and traditional capacity-building and training activities towards more coherent and integrated approaches reflecting a stronger integration between skills policies, labour market information systems, digital transformation and regional integration frameworks.

Overall, 24 countries were supported in developing integrated and inclusive national skills policies or strategies. Skills development was elevated as a national investment priority, unlocking public financing, and strengthening private-sector engagement.

- 102.** Data and monitoring improved. Forty-one countries reported harmonized indicators on TVET completion, while 31 collected work-based learning data. Several countries developed digital training modules strengthening the evidence base and accelerating the digital transformation of TVET systems.
- 103.** Through the ILO Global Skills Programme, the Africa Skills Hub scaled innovation, partnerships and lifelong learning across 30 countries in 2024, targeting youth, women and vulnerable groups, and directly contributing to SDGs 4 and 8. The standard-setting process and subsequent adoption of the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208), led to increased policy attention being paid to system reviews and strategy development. At least 17 countries have made progress on expanding opportunities for young people through improved apprenticeship systems in both formal and informal economies.
- 104.** Support to regional economic communities strengthened regional collaboration, leading to the adoption of the SADC TVET Strategy 2025–34 and improved skills portability frameworks. Labour migration programmes and regional initiatives enhanced skills recognition, mobility and joint standards across countries. At the national level, expanded recognition of prior learning in at least 12 countries improved inclusion for informal workers, migrants and displaced populations.
- 105.** Digitalization continued to transform skills systems by integrating digital and AI-related competencies and expanding digital training and work opportunities across several countries. In Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa, targeted interventions informed by digital skills assessments addressed the specific skills demands of the platform economy, enabling workers and young people to access and benefit from digital work opportunities.

3.3. Inclusive transformation for decent work in the informal and rural economy

- 106.** The transition to formality and the strengthening of rural livelihoods gained renewed impetus following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed structural vulnerabilities and disproportionately affected workers in the informal economy and MSMEs, reinforcing the need for the implementation of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). Cameroon, Chad, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Zimbabwe developed national road maps and sectoral strategies to support the transition from the informal to the formal economy.
- 107.** At least 15 countries integrated decent work into policies and programmes for informal and rural employment. National frameworks increasingly recognized informal workers as a priority group within employment, rural development and sectoral strategies, ensuring that interventions addressed informality through rights-based, inclusive and gradual approaches.
- 108.** Employment policies translated this approach into targeted job-creation measures, including employment-intensive investments, rural development initiatives and interventions in fragile settings. In Madagascar, between 2020 and 2023, ILO-supported Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) interventions rehabilitated over 100 kilometres of rural roads and irrigation systems and built over 50 schools, generating more than 4,700 jobs. EIIPs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Niger created thousands of short-term rural jobs while improving local infrastructure, service delivery and community resilience. Rural economy interventions in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe integrated value-

chain development, infrastructure, skills development, market access and finance, supporting diversification, productivity and sustainable livelihoods while strengthening linkages between local production systems, enterprise development and national employment objectives.

109. Guided by the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and the ILO Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), the ILO has expanded its engagement in crisis- and conflict-affected settings across Africa. In countries such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and South Sudan, the ILO strengthened resilience, livelihoods and social cohesion in affected populations. In Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda, through the PROSPECTS programme, the ILO has promoted the economic inclusion of forcibly displaced populations by improving access to employment, entrepreneurship and labour markets.
110. Interventions under the Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy⁵¹ and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions supported reforms to address barriers to coverage and support transitions in informal and rural economies. Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana, for example, introduced tailored mechanisms for contribution collection and the registration of informal workers.
111. With ILO support, an increasing number of African countries, including Angola, Djibouti, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, have aligned their statistical systems with the resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy adopted by the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), 2023,⁵² improving the quality and comparability of data used to inform policies and strategies on formalization and inclusive labour market transformation.

3.4. Sustainable enterprises

112. Business environment reforms advanced across the region. In Burkina Faso, enterprise formalization centres register approximately 5,000 businesses annually, while the United Republic of Tanzania and other countries introduced one-stop shops and streamlined business registration procedures. Several countries developed national road maps to support the transition from the informal to the formal economy (see section 3.3), including measures to improve access to employers' and business membership organizations. The Formalise Your Business Training programme supported implementation efforts in multiple countries. Guinea introduced and implemented fiscal, monetary and administrative reforms, while Mali and the Central African Republic established public-private dialogue platforms. Cameroon adopted and enacted legislation on responsible subcontracting, creating new opportunities for MSMEs. In addition, Congo, Egypt and Kenya adopted national MSME policies, while Namibia, Uganda and Zambia are in the process of developing national productivity policies.
113. Responsible business conduct systems were strengthened through national focal points for the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022 (MNE Declaration) in nine countries.⁵³ Sector-specific support reached micro

⁵¹ Social protection is covered in detail in section 3.6.

⁵² ILO, [Resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy](#), 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians, ICLS/21/2023/RES.I, 2023. The framework covers all forms of work, improves the measurement of informal jobs and enterprises, captures working conditions and drivers of informality, and supports the analysis of transitions between the informal and formal economy.

⁵³ Botswana, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

and small enterprises in at least 13 countries⁵⁴ across agro-industry, automotive, garments, leather and footwear, marble, climate-resilient construction and the digital economy.

114. Partnerships with over 585 institutions and business development and financial service providers, reached over 71,000 entrepreneurs, MSMEs, cooperatives and social and solidarity economy (SSE) entities, including women, young people, refugees and migrants. Interventions generated over 78,348 direct and 92,500 indirect jobs, improved working conditions, supported over 25 enterprise-related policies, and supported capacity development for over 300 tripartite constituents.
115. Promoting productivity ecosystems for decent work has emerged as a central pillar of ILO support to sustainable enterprises in Africa, recognizing that productivity gains depend on the effective interaction of policies, institutions and actors across macro, meso and micro levels. Countries such as Ghana, Ethiopia, Egypt, Lesotho, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have implemented productivity interventions aligned with the ILO productivity ecosystem approach, often anchored in or supported by national productivity organizations. These interventions contributed to strengthening coordination across ministries, enhancing institutional capacities, and fostering social dialogue around productivity and decent work. At the regional level, collaboration with the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA) was further strengthened, supporting knowledge-sharing and peer learning among national productivity institutions. This engagement also contributed to increased participation of African countries in global competitiveness benchmarking, with Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria joining the World Competitiveness Ranking, bringing the total number of African economies represented to six.
116. The SSE has gained strong momentum across Africa following the adoption of the resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy by the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2022, culminating in the adoption of the Ten-Year SSE Strategy and Implementation Plan (2023–32) by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in February 2025. This milestone has accelerated legislative and policy reforms in numerous countries, including Kenya's Cooperative Transformation Strategy, as well as SSE-related reforms in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda.
117. Research, diagnostics and assessments have played a central role in strengthening evidence-based policymaking and advancing an integrated sustainable enterprise agenda. Sectoral productivity diagnostics, market systems assessments, and institutional and enterprise-level analyses conducted in more than 25 countries and regional assessments undertaken with the African Union Commission have provided critical insights to guide targeted interventions, strengthen policy coherence, and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of enterprise development strategies across the region.
118. Investment uncertainty, regulatory predictability, the cost of doing business and access to finance remain significant challenges. Compliance capacity is a further constraint for African private sector actors, especially SMEs seeking access to global supply chains. Capacity development, risk-based and proportionate due diligence, interoperability of standards and streamlining reporting requirements remain key priority areas.

⁵⁴ Algeria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

3.5. Effective and inclusive tripartism and social dialogue

119. Africa continues to record one of the highest shares of permanent national social dialogue institutions globally, continually being strengthened to provide key platforms for tripartite consultation and consensus-building – despite significant differences in mandates, composition, effectiveness and technical capacity.
120. The Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), has reached near-universal ratification, with 47 out of 54 African countries having ratified it, including Somalia, Sudan, Angola and Cabo Verde between 2020 and 2026, providing a strong normative basis for institutionalized tripartism and structured engagement among governments and social partners to advance decent work. Several countries strengthened or reconfigured social councils and labour advisory boards. Labour governance reforms in several countries, including Ethiopia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Togo, increased the visibility and operational role of dialogue institutions.
121. Following the important milestone of the adoption of the conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Wage Policies, including Living Wages in March 2024, the ILO expanded its support to African governments and social partners to strengthen wage-setting institutions, collective bargaining, social dialogue and data. Forty-two African countries now have functioning minimum wage systems, while Namibia and Zimbabwe introduced national minimum wages in 2025. Living wage estimates have been developed for Egypt's jasmine sector, while work in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Uganda is expected to inform wage-setting and social dialogue.

3.6. Social and labour protection for all

122. Social protection remained a key priority in Africa, underscored by the coverage gaps exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the ILO Regional Office for Africa and regional partners launched the Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy (2021–25) to accelerate the expansion of coverage. While progress has been gradual, coverage increased from 17.4 per cent in 2020 to 19.1 per cent in 2023,⁵⁵ measured by SDG indicator 1.3.1 (the share of the population receiving at least one social protection benefit). Notably, about half of the total increase recorded since 2015 occurred after 2021, reflecting stronger political commitment and sustained efforts to expand social protection coverage in the past six years.
123. At least 22 countries⁵⁶ implemented reforms to extend coverage, strengthen contributory schemes, and improve benefit adequacy and services, including for informal workers. Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal and Sierra Leone received support to improve benefit design and expand protection.
124. At least 32 countries improved OSH governance through national policies and legislation, OSH committees, profiles and action plans, and measures addressing emerging workplace risks. Interventions covered the formal and informal economies, emphasizing prevention, capacity and compliance with ILO Conventions Nos 155 and 187.
125. The role of data and statistics in policy design, measurement and monitoring was underscored in the implementation of social protection actions. Capacity strengthening was recorded in at least

⁵⁵ ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–22: Social Protection at the Crossroads – In Pursuit of a Better Future*, 2021.

⁵⁶ Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Togo and Zambia.

30 countries in the areas of social protection data and SDG monitoring, while selected countries ⁵⁷ advanced reforms in social protection statistics, publications, management information systems, digital strategies, monitoring mechanisms and the inclusion of social protection modules in national surveys.

126. Through the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, eight pathfinder countries ⁵⁸ are implementing transformative interventions focused on decent job creation and universal social protection, including the formalization of informal economic units and employment. Recent initiatives in Namibia, Rwanda and Malawi show a shift towards linking employment creation and social protection with sectoral strategies, and whole-of-government policy integration and coordination.
127. Labour migration governance gained momentum through support from regional programmes, in particular the Joint Labour Migration Programme for Africa, and subregional projects such as Southern Africa Migration Management, Better Regional Migration Management and Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the IGAD Region. Technical support contributed to greater regional cooperation on labour mobility, including the adoption of the SADC Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits in 2020. Contributions to key regional migration policy frameworks included support to the African Union Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2021) and the African Union Guidelines on Developing Bilateral Labour Agreements (2021). The ILO's support led to an increased number of ratifications of ILO instruments on labour migration in Africa as well as supporting the revision and adoption of labour migration policies and legislation (for example, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana). The adoption of the Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy for Africa and the Doha Declaration on Labour Mobility further reinforced policy frameworks for the protection of migrant workers' rights.

3.7. Effectively applied up-to-date labour standards and promotion of gender equality

128. The region has made significant progress regarding ratification, with 97 ratifications registered since 2020 (92 concerned Conventions and 5 concerned Protocols), ⁵⁹ reaffirming the importance of international labour standards as underscored in the Abidjan Declaration. Notable advances include ratifications of the most up-to-date instruments by Member States previously bound by outdated instruments (where inaction would have resulted in either a protection gap or its continuation), following Governing Body decisions. ⁶⁰ Such was the case with the ratification of Conventions Nos 155 and 187 by Angola, Sierra Leone and Somalia; the ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), by Angola, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Sao Tome and Principe; and the ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), by Angola, Egypt, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau. Both the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), are only one ratification short of reaching universal ratification on the continent. ⁶¹

⁵⁷ For example, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, and Mozambique.

⁵⁸ Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia.

⁵⁹ The cutoff date for reporting on ratifications for this report is 30 September 2026.

⁶⁰ Following recommendations by the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG) and the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

⁶¹ The five fundamental Conventions that have been ratified by all 54 Member States are: the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention,

The number of ratifications deposited concerning fundamental instruments reflects the sustained commitment by constituents across the region to core labour rights.

129. More importantly, countries in the region have taken measures which that have positively impacted the application of ratified instruments, following comments by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). These measures, noted with satisfaction by the CEACR, may have taken the form of law reform or changes to national policy or practice, as in Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Additionally, some of the progress noted may concern compliance with standards-related obligations, such as submitting instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference to the competent authorities, as was the case for Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and Togo.
130. The ILO continues to support Member States to fulfil their standards-related obligations, namely in applying the provisions of ratified instruments, including via the follow-up to the CEACR comments and the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards' (CAS), and in preparation for upcoming CAS discussions; complying with their reporting obligations in a comprehensive and timely manner; and in submitting outstanding instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference to the competent authorities. It has also provided technical support to the national social partners so that they can actively contribute to the application and promotion of international labour standards and the proper functioning of the ILO regular supervisory system. Lastly, it has accompanied Member States in following up on the SRM TWG recommendations concerning outdated instruments, as well as in assessing their preparedness to ratify instruments identified as a priority.
131. Progress towards the elimination of child labour continued through stronger laws, monitoring, interventions and support to Alliance 8.7 countries. Child labour prevalence fell by 1.8 percentage points over four years, and hazardous child labour also declined. Nevertheless, Africa still has 94.5 million children in child labour – 19.8 per cent of children in the region – and population growth has increased the absolute number of children affected. Weak education systems, limited social protection, conflict, climate and economic shocks, limited decent work opportunities for adults, financing gaps and poor coordination remain major constraints.
132. The ILO expanded gender mainstreaming in employment policies and supported gender-transformative action plans. It contributed to the adoption of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in February 2025, and the Pan-African Parliament's Model Law on Gender Equality and Equity in 2025. Several countries have reviewed legislation in line with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No.183), and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).
133. Africa was among the earliest regions to ratify Convention No. 190, with the number of ratifications now standing at 12. At the national level, the ILO is developing the capacity of Member States through implementation tools on equality and OSH, including standard codes, training packages and manuals. Building on this work, statistics on prevalence and frequency were produced in three African countries, contributing to global work with the ICLS. Care policies

1957 (No. 105), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

also advanced, including Kenya's 2025 National Care Policy, the United Republic of Tanzania's domestic work programmes and the African Union's work towards a Convention on care.

- 134.** Member States strengthened OSH frameworks, notification systems, occupational health services and labour inspectorates. OSH reforms in the Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Congo and Gabon improved risk prevention and data collection. However, Africa accounts for nearly 18 per cent of global fatal occupational accidents.
- 135.** Labour data quality improved, with 94 per cent of African countries reporting to ILOSTAT. International standards were increasingly integrated into surveys and censuses, while labour market information systems advanced, particularly in Southern Africa.