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Press Release

Malawi's Ministry of Labour pledges to accelerate efforts for the eradication of child labour

Lilongwe, 31 March 2021 – The Deputy Minister of Labour, Malawi, Honourable Vera Kamtukule today joined the African Union and its Member States, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other stakeholders in adding her voice in pursuit of the global target to eliminate child labour in all its forms by 2025.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Malawi, the Deputy Minister pledged that Malawi will move faster than the rest in achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. She was speaking at the African regional launch of the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, organized by the African Union with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on Wednesday 31 March 2021.

“Malawi is privileged to be one of the few countries on the African continent to have been admitted as a Pathfinder Country under the Alliance 8.7 initiative. This means that Malawi has pledged to move faster than the rest in achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, so that others may learn from us. Furthermore, as a member of the International Labour Organization, Malawi, has ratified all eight of the fundamental international labour conventions and has further ratified the Forced Labour Protocol”, stated the Deputy Minister.

“In order to fulfil this role, we are under taking a number of initiatives and actions. Amongst others, we launched in June 2020 the new National Action Plan on Child Labour and the National Child Labour Mainstreaming Guide. These frameworks are particularly useful in involving more stakeholders in our national efforts to eradicate child labour. In addition, we are in the final stages of developing the Labour Market Information System that will enable systematic collection and reporting of administrative data, including in respect of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking”, elaborated the Deputy Minister.

She explained that the recently launched Malawi Vision 2063 emphasises access to education for every child up to secondary school level, which would help in the reduction of child labour, adding that the Government's flagship programme of Community Technical Colleges was expanding access by youth of legal working age to technical and vocational training, thereby improving employability of youth in decent work.

The Deputy Minister added: "The Government is moving towards the abolition of the tenancy labour system used in tobacco growing, which is associated with serious decent work deficits, including child labour".

Director of the International Labour Organization's Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Mr. George Okutho, said that the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, 2021, declared by the United Nations General Assembly, is a historic opportunity to reaffirm commitments, take action and inspire broad partnerships to preserve the progress made on child labour and related issues such as social justice, inclusion and the reduction of inequalities.

"Child labour is widespread in Malawi. The most recent National Child Labour Survey, conducted in 2015, shows that 38 percent of children aged between 5 and 17 in Malawi are involved in child labour, the majority of whom are working in the agriculture sector, and approximately half of whom are engaged in hazardous child labour", said Mr. Okutho. "In 2021, while fighting child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery, Malawi and the global community will need to address the challenges posed by COVID-19", added Mr. George Okutho.

In February 2020, African Heads of State adopted the African Union Ten Year Action Plan to Eradicate Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Africa (2020 – 2030). The Action Plan provides an immediate framework for mobilizing African Union institutions, Member States, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and other partners on the continent to scale up efforts and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the African Union Agenda 2063 and SDG Target 8.7.

The ILO is a United Nations agency founded in 1919 that brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 countries to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. Malawi has been a member of the ILO since 1965.

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