



**OPENING STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXIO MUSINDO, ILO COUNTRY
DIRECTOR FOR TANZANIA, KENYA, RWANDA AND UGANDA AT
THE OCCASION OF
THE OPENING OF THE LABOUR AND INDUSTRIAL COURT JUDGES
AND REGISTRARS REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENDER EQUALITY
IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

Venue: New Arusha Hotel

Date: 7th October, 2013

Hon. Mathias Chikawe, Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs,

**Honourable Judges In Charge of the industrial/labour courts in Mainland Tanzania,
Zanzibar, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda,**

Honourable Judges,

Honourable Registrars,

Honourable Deputy Registrars,

Labour Commissioner, Uganda,

Principal Labour Officers,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you all for accepting our invitation for this workshop, on professional upgrading on gender equality for labour courts in East Africa. In particular, we are honoured by the presence of Hon. Mathias Chikawe, the Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, United Republic of Tanzania. We thank you, sir, for accepting our invitation to be with us and share your thought on the subject of the five days. I want also to thank honourable judges and registrars and all participants for dedicating your time to attend this workshop.

Hon. the Guest of Honour,

The primary objective of the ILO is to promote social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. Since our establishment in 1919, we continue to pursue our founding mission, that labour peace is essential to prosperity.

Our focus remains the same , create opportunities for decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. With the Decent Work Agenda, we promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issue.

All these are underpinned by international labour standards, that Member States in East Africa have now domesticated at national level.

In the process of domesticating the standards, ILO has continued to support its constituents with knowledge development, providing services and advocacy in the world of work with an objective of contributing significantly to improved wellbeing of an individual and society at large. ILO's strategic objectives clearly testify our commitments towards building an environment in which every woman and man exercises their right to work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Hon. the Guest of Honour,

At the heart of our efforts in promotion of gender equality and equal treatment in work place, the ILO works closely with the industrial/labour courts to ensure that they deliver their services in accordance with international labour standards through national labour laws and practices. This training is one such services ILO provides to Member States.

During the week, you will be sharing experience on handling contemporary issues on gender equality at the workplace. Specifically, the training will cover ILO principles and standards on gender equality and equal treatment in the workplace. While all ILO Conventions address issues of gender equality, two of the ILO's 'fundamental' conventions are of particular relevance: the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), both of which have been ratified by all countries represented at this workshop. Other instruments of particular relevance are the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

Despite the fact that issues of maternity protection and work-family balance are of relevance to evolving jurisprudence on gender equality in the workplace, none of the East African countries has ratified Conventions 156 and 183; however, I wish to encourage you to venture into integrating the principles enshrined in these instruments yet to be ratified by your countries into national jurisprudence as guidance towards realizing decent work that takes cognizance of gender equality. Similarly, you will also discuss Convention No. 189 and Recommendation 201 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (adopted by the ILC in 2011), yet to be ratified in East Africa.

Hon. the Guest of Honour and distinguished participants,

It is our hope that at the end of this workshop the participants will have acquired or increased knowledge of international labour standards on gender equality. Therefore, it is expected that the participants will: better appreciate the ILO's standard setting function and supervisory machinery and its potential for enforcing national laws on gender equality; handle gender-related concepts and principles as they relate to their professional roles; avail themselves of updated knowledge in relation to gender-related ILO Conventions and Recommendations; and apply their knowledge and skills in using international labour law to resolve disputes related to gender equality in their jurisdictions.

It is also expected that this workshop will promote and develop further a close working relationship between the ILO and the judiciaries in East Africa. Let me assure you that the facilitators of this workshop are going to do everything they can to make the learning environment a breathtaking throughout the five days. We have a strong team from the ILO HQ in Geneva, our training centre in Turin, our technical team in Pretoria and my colleagues from Dar es Salaam, all here to ensure that the workshop delivers on its desired results.

While my colleagues will facilitate the workshop, I always believe the greater part of the learning will be amongst yourselves, sharing experiences, challenges and how to address them

I would like at this point to introduce and invite Ms. Jane Hodges, who is the chief facilitator to introduce the workshop, objectives and orientation.

Thank you for your attention.