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Malawi's Tripartite Labour Advisory Council deliberates on child labour

Lilongwe, 21 September 2020 – The Honourable Ken Kandodo, M.P. Malawi's Minister of Labour, opened a meeting of the country's Tripartite Labour Advisory Council (TLAC) on Thursday 17 September 2020 stating that: *"The role of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Council is perhaps more important now than ever before, given its linkage to decent work and the 2030 Agenda. In the context of COVID-19, the Council can guide our recovery plans with inclusive, informed solutions for the benefit of our country"*.

The Tripartite Labour Advisory Council (TLAC) is mandated by the Labour Relations Act of 1996 to advise the Minister of Labour on all issues relating to labour and employment, including the labour market, human resources development, promotion of collective bargaining, and review of the operation and enforcement of legislation relating to employment.

"The meeting gives employers great confidence in the Minister's leadership. Social dialogue is the bedrock of labour and employment. When social dialogue takes place reliably and consistently, this can contribute greatly to the development of the country. Social dialogue is one of the processes that Malawi needs if we are to become a middle income country, and the involvement of the social partners is a prerequisite for the creation of sustainable jobs," stated the **President of the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)**, Mr. Buxton Kayuni.

President of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU), Mr. Luther Mambala stated that: *"As workers' representatives, we welcome this meeting of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Council. Amongst the priorities that we hope that the Council can help to address are child labour including hazardous child labour, forced labour, high unemployment, especially amongst the youth, enforcement of labour laws, and the denial of the right of workers to join trade unions and engage in collective bargaining"*.

The Council convened during 17 to 18 September 2020 with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s ACCEL Africa project.

"Through the support provided by our ACCEL Africa project, we stand ready to work closely with the Government, trade unions and employers in Malawi to advance key national priorities including timely adoption of the pending National Child Labour Policy, and effective implementation of the National Action Plan on Child Labour, in line with Malawi's voluntary commitment to lead by example in the fight against child labour as an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country," said the Director of the ILO's Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, Mr. George Okutho.

During its deliberations, the Council discussed, amongst others, the draft National Child Labour Policy, the recently launched second National Action Plan on Child Labour (NAP-II 2020 – 2025), the National Child Labour Mainstreaming Guide, Malawi's second Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP-II), and the country's ratification in November 2019 of three ILO Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Conventions and the ILO Forced Labour Protocol.

Malawi's most recent National Child Labour Survey, conducted in 2015, found that 38 per cent of children in Malawi who are 5 to 17 years of age are involved in child labour. This amounts to some 2.1 million children, more than half of whom are engaged in hazardous work.

"The ILO is proud to have been able to support this important meeting of the Tripartite Labour Advisory Council, which is Malawi's foremost social dialogue institution," concluded Mr. Okutho.

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