



International  
Labour  
Organization

# Newsletter

April 2023 | Issue No. 12



## INSIDE STORIES

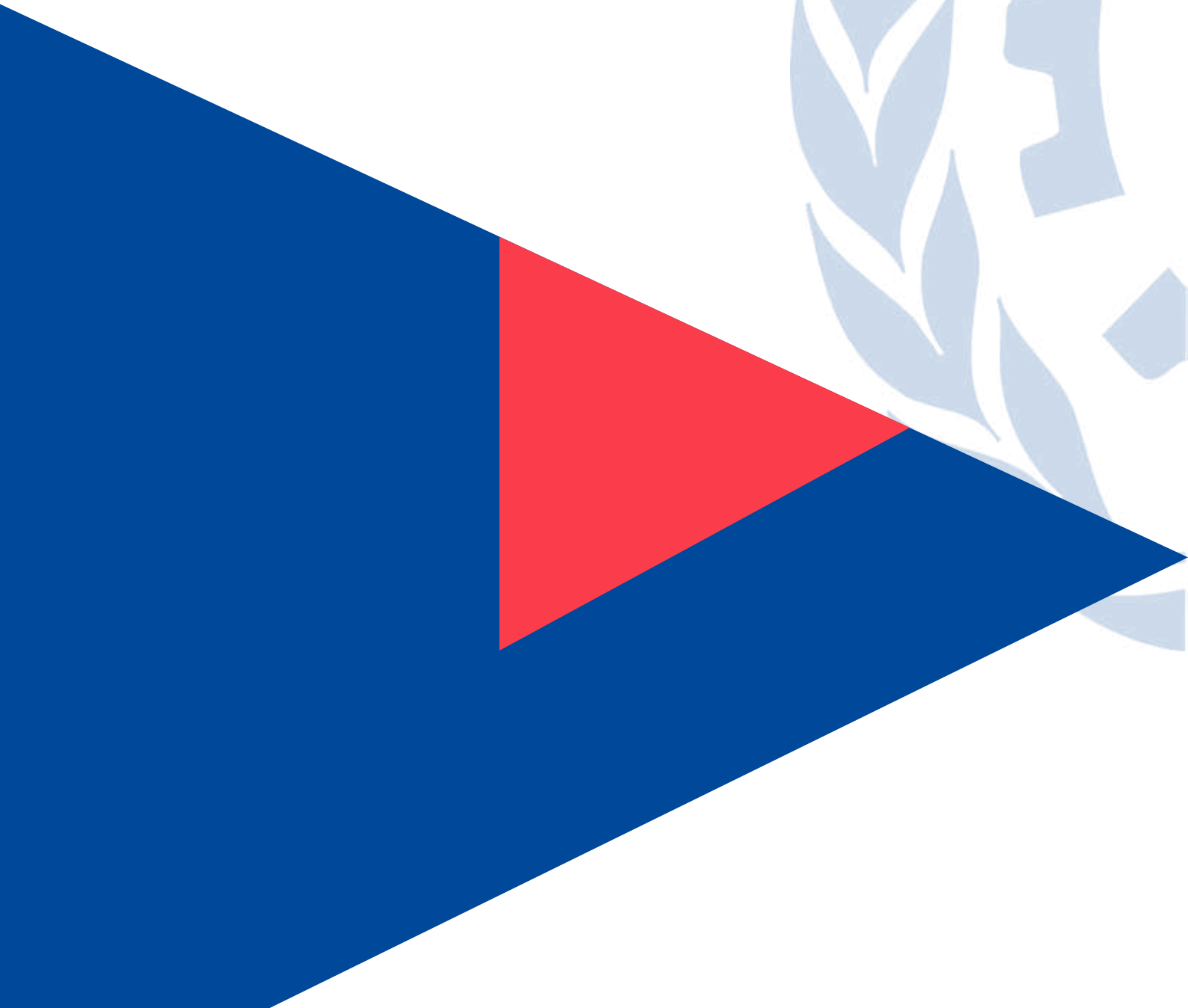
- ▶ **ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa visits Zambia ...as Lusaka hosts Africa Directors' Meeting**
- ▶ **Overcoming Gender Barriers - SESA Project Provides Scholarship to Women Engineers and Technicians**
- ▶ **30 SMEs participate in ILO's SIYB Training of Trainers**

Advancing Social Justice, Promoting Decent Work

## ▶ Vision of Country Office - Lusaka

---

- ▶ *A united team that delivers sustainable decent work results through strategic partnerships and increasing development cooperation portfolio*



# Content

---

- 2 Foreword
3. ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa visits Zambia ...as Lusaka hosts Africa Directors' Meeting
6. MITSS ponders Mozambique's Fifth Statistical Bulletin on Social Protection with ILO's Support
8. Eight Chiefs pledge to sensitise subjects on Disability Inclusion
9. Defying Age and Empowering Generations: The Inspiring Story of Getrude Mpandaguta and the ACCEL Project
10. From Child Labourer to Skilled Entrepreneur: The Inspiring Journey of Benson Panwell in Malawi
11. From Child Labour to Livestock Leaders: How the Kathakhola Club is Empowering Their Community
12. 30 SMEs participate in ILO's SIYB Training of Trainers
14. 30 People with Disabilities Complete Internship Programme
16. ILO urges Governments, workers and employers to support Coalition for Social Justice
18. Overcoming Gender Barriers - SESA Project Provides Scholarship to Women Engineers and Technicians
20. 16 Engineers undergo training in Power Quality and System Stability



## ► Foreword

After three years of the COVID-19 crisis, followed by increasing inflation, conflict, and food and fuel supply shocks in the three locations—Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique, hence the call for social justice. But the promises of renewal made during the pandemic, of ‘building back better’, have so far not been delivered for the great majority of workers worldwide.

In the three countries, real wages have fallen, poverty is rising, inequality seems more entrenched than ever.

Enterprises have been hard hit. Many could not cope with the cumulative effects of recent unexpected events. Small and micro-enterprises were particularly affected, and many have ceased operations.

People feel that the sacrifices they made to get through COVID-19 have not been recognized, let alone rewarded. Their voices are not being heard clearly enough. This, combined with a perceived lack of opportunities, has created a disturbing level of mistrust.

It doesn't have to be like this. We are still the masters of our fate. However, if we are to shape a new, more stable, and equitable world, we must choose a different path. One that prioritizes social justice.

There is need to make national policies and actions human-centred, to allow people to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, economic security and equal opportunity.

This means focusing on inequality, poverty alleviation and core social protection. The most effective way to do



this is by providing quality jobs so that people can support themselves and build their own futures – ‘Decent Work for All’, as Sustainable Development Goal 8 terms it.

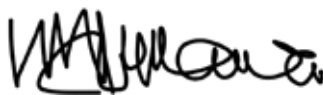
This is exemplified in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in each country to guide the work of the UN system over a given period. It represents a joint commitment by governments in the three countries and the UN system to work in close partnership to achieve national priorities guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international human and labour rights commitments. The collective results from these Cooperation

Frameworks are expected to change the people's lives—live longer, healthier, and more prosperous and secure lives.

It means realistically addressing the long-term structural transformations of our time; ensuring that new technology creates and supports employment; pro-actively facing the challenges of climate change and ensuring we offer the jobs, skills training and transition support necessary for workers and businesses to benefit from the new low-carbon era; treating demographic changes as a ‘dividend’ rather than a problem, with supporting action on skills, migration and social protection, to create more cohesive and resilient societies.

We have the chance to reshape the world we live in – economically, socially and environmentally. Let us take this opportunity and move forward to build the equitable and resilient societies that can underpin lasting peace and social justice.

Ms. Peneyambeko Alina Munkawa



**Officer-in-charge  
International Labour Organization  
Country Office for Zambia, Malawi  
and Mozambique**



ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon with Vice-President Mrs. Mutale Nalumango at her office.

## ▶ ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa visits Zambia ...as Lusaka hosts Africa Directors' Meeting

By ALLAN MULENGA

From 15 to 20th January 2023, International Labour Organization (ILO) Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon was in Zambia to engage with the Government and stakeholders, as well as attend the annual Retreat for ILO Directors in Africa, which was held at Lusaka's Ciela Resort & Spa from 18 to 20 January 2023.

Prior to the Retreat, which was held under the theme: *'Delivering of the 2019 Abidjan Declaration for ILO constituents in Africa and implementation of the Global Coalition on Social Justice'*, Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon held high-level meetings with the acting Republican President and Vice-President Mrs. Mutale Nalumango, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Mrs. Brenda Tambatamba, representatives from the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon also held a joint press briefing with Hon. Tambatamba at her Ministry to enhance the partnership with the media as part of her continued engagement before undertaking a site visit to the Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone (LSMFEZ), which is an ILO's Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project intervention area.

During the meeting with the Vice-President, the duo

discussed the regional Decent Work Agenda and the progress made towards the implementation of the 2019 Abidjan Declaration for ILO constituents in Africa, as well as the Global Coalition for Social Justice.

Mrs. Nalumango commended the ILO for its contribution towards the advancement of the social justice and promotion of decent work in the country.

"We are very happy that the ILO in Zambia has been providing technical and financial support the Government in various areas in realising its Decent Work Agenda. We will continue to work with the ILO, so that we can develop the country," she said.

The Vice-President reiterated her government's resolve to improve social protection systems for its citizens, stating that the New Dawn Government was committed towards extending social protection coverage to the informal sector such as marketeers, who have been already placed on the National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) scheme.

"We are happy to learn from ILO by adopting international best practices in the labour sector. It is also gratifying that the ILO is having Zambian presence on its governing council," said Mrs. Nalumango.

In response, Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon assured the Zambian government of ILO's support in realizing its development agenda. She said Zambia is on the right

track regarding provision of comprehensive social protection coverage, adding that social protection system is important for cushioning economic shocks for the less privileged.



ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon with Minister of Labour and Social Security Hon. Brenda Tambatamba at her office.

"The ILO is in full support of Zambia's Vision 2030 Agenda of becoming a lower middle-income country. The ILO will support the Zambian's government in developing well researched labour policies," said Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon.

Later at a joint press briefing with the Minister of Labour and Social Security Hon. Tambatamba, the ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa said ILO is also proud that Zambia has made some progress in terms of gender equality but that more effort is needed.

"I am proud that the Vice-President is a woman. I'm proud that the Minister of Labour and Social Security is a woman, but we need to do more in terms of gender equality both within our structures and also in our interventions," she said.

Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon said Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is also one of the issues that need to be tackled in line with ILO convention 190.

She said in line with the Abidjan declaration, it is important to focus on shared prosperity through social justice and that Zambia is already on track.

"It is our hope and trust that this agenda will result in the creation of decent jobs," Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon said.

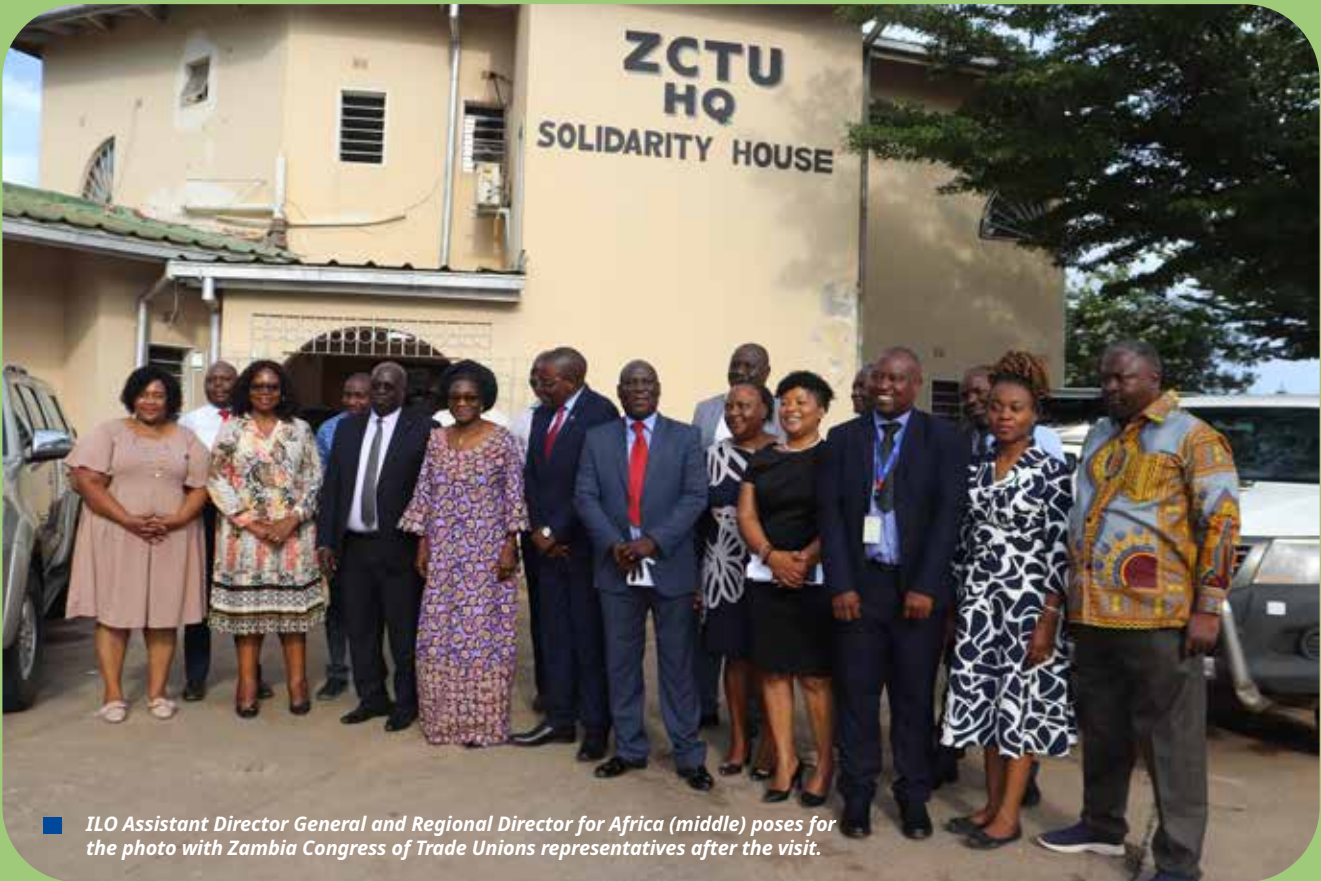
She said ILO has been nominated by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to chair the Global Accelerator on Jobs and



ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon (middle) during the site visit at the Bangweulu Solar Plant in Lusaka.



ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon (middle) pauses for a photos with ILO Country Offices Directors, Regional Office staff and United Nations Resident Coordinator Beatrice Mutali.



■ ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa (middle) poses for the photo with Zambia Congress of Trade Unions representatives after the visit.

Social Protection for Just Transitions, stating that the focus is on the need to make progress on social protection, employment, digital transition, just transitions, including energy.

Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon added that ILO will continue supporting Zambia in many spheres that fall within its jurisdiction, including through innovative programmes like the one on energy transitions and skills.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Tambatamba said the ministry is committed to promoting Decent Work Agenda through strategic intervention guided by policies and national Laws.

She said Zambia is committed to the economic agenda and job creation, including human social development pillars in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

Earlier, Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon paid separate courtesy calls on the representatives from Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), calling on the Employers' and Workers' Organisations to initiate strategies aimed at making them relevant to the country.

She urged the two institutions to invest in research in providing credible checks and balances to the Government, as well as provide evidence-based policy formulation suggestions to policy makers.



■ ILO Assistant Director General and Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon (middle) with ILO Lusaka-based staff at the office.



■ Rubén Vicente (right), ILO's Social Protection Programme Manager, delivers one of the laptops donated by the ILO through the ACTION/Portugal project to Celio Langa (left), Statistical Technician at MITSS

## ▶ MITSS Organises Mozambique's Fifth Statistical Bulletin on Social Protection with ILO's Support

By LUIS COTINGUIBA

**S**ocial protection statistics provide a comprehensive picture of social protection in a country, thus being essential for keeping track of the progress, gaps, policy formulation and trends towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1.3 on the implementation of social protection systems and floors in countries.

To ensure the availability of high-quality, robust, and reliable statistics on the situation of social protection in Mozambique, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MITSS) convened a technical retreat dedicated to the production of the Fifth National Statistical Bulletin on Social Protection.

Supported by the ILO through the ACTION/Portugal project, the technical meeting provided the occasion structure of the forthcoming publication as well as consolidating and harmonizing the statistical data provided by national institutions engaged in the Inter-Ministerial Group on Social Protection Statistics (GITEPS).

Participation was drawn from MITSS (the group's focal point and coordinator), the Ministry of Gender, Child

and Social Action (MGCAS), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Social Action (INAS), the National Institute of Social Security (INSS), the National Institute of Social Providence (INPS), and the National Institute of Statistics (INE).

The meeting included training on the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) on the production of coverage maps, conducted by the Mozambican National Agency for Geo-Spatial Development (ADE) to improve geographical analysis of statistical data in social protection, an element that was first integrated to the Fourth edition of the bulletin in 2022. A training session on ILO's Social Security Inquiry (SSI) and SDG indicators on social protection was also delivered by officials from ILO-HQ and ITC-ILO.

During the event, the ILO donated, through the ACTION/Portugal project, informatic equipment to the GITEPS' institutions so as to provide them with the means necessary to ensure the continuity of the production and treatment of solid social protection statistics.





■ Group picture of representatives of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Social Protection Statistics and ILO officials.

Mozambique's Social Protection Statistical Bulletin is an annual publication that was first published in 2018 and presents relevant statistical data and indicators on the coverage, adequacy, and expenditure of the national social protection system (including both contributory and non-contributory).

The bulletin also promotes transparency and supports better policy and decision-making through statistical evidence, enabling the monitoring of the progress towards social protection extension. Mozambique's experience in the field of social protection statistics and its capacity to ensuring the publication of annual bulletins has become an example to other countries in Africa and beyond.

The ILO will continue supporting the Government of Mozambique in finalizing, publishing, and disseminating the forthcoming Fifth Statistical Bulletin on Social Protection, which is expected to be launched during the Social Protection Week planned for the second semester of 2023.



[1º Boletim Estatístico sobre Protecção Social](#)



[2º Boletim Estatístico sobre Protecção Social](#)



[3º Boletim Estatístico sobre Protecção Social](#)



[4º Boletim Estatístico sobre Protecção Social](#)

# ▶ Chiefs pledge to sensitise subjects on Disability Inclusion

By MUYA MWIYA



The International Labour Organization (ILO) through the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection Phase II (UNJP-SP II) in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services has embarked on sensitization exercise on disability inclusion among traditional leaders across the country.

So far, eight traditional leaders have been reached as disability inclusion champions to help raise awareness on disability inclusion and demystify the myths surrounding Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in their chiefdoms.

During the field visit, Senior Chief Sali of Chipata District in Eastern Province observed that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are often subjected to discrimination and stigma in society, hence the need to sensitise the public on disability inclusion and rights of Persons with Disabilities in the communities.

He added that much of the stigma is fuelled by a lack of understanding by society of what some of the causes of disabilities are and how to address the consequences.

“Rather than looking at environmental barriers and enablers, the focus is commonly set on the limitations, which are then amplified to define an entire person and treat them like victims or unable to perform social functions such as work, care, relationships, and participation,” said the traditional leader. “Such misconceptions about disability have devastating consequences, including a perpetuation of stereotypes about Persons with Disabilities and their continued non-acceptance in the communities they live.”

The country has witnessed a spate of attacks on persons with albinism in Eastern, Northern, and Western provinces, hence the decision by the ILO through UNJP-

SP II working with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to embark on disability inclusion awareness campaign, targeting traditional leaders, who are the gatekeepers in the communities in six districts namely, Chipata, Lundazi, Mongu, Sioma, Kasama and Mbala.

During the campaign six chiefs have been trained on disability inclusion which subsequently led to the development of Action plans for all chiefdoms in Chipata and Lundazi districts.

Meanwhile, Paramount Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni people said there was need to accord respect and dignity to Persons with Disabilities, stating that their rights need to be upheld and protected in the communities.

“This initiative is welcome as our subjects will receive the necessary support to protect them harm and accord dignity and human rights they deserve. All persons are created in the image of God and it’s not right to discriminate someone based on their appearances,” said the traditional leader.

He has since commended the ILO and the Government for coming up with the initiative, stating that he

was happy to be identified as one of the disability inclusion champions.

And Eastern Province Social Welfare Officer Kennedy Kasonde said there was need to sensitise the public in the area on the rights of Persons with Disabilities, stating that there were high divorce rates among couples with children with disabilities.

“We shall see how we may evoke the provisions of the Child Code Act, so that parents or guardians that desert children born with disabilities will held liable to the provisions of the law,” said Mr. Kasonde during the tour of chiefdoms.





## ▶ Defying Age and Empowering Generations: *The Inspiring Story of Getrude Mpandaguta and the ACCEL Project*

By STAFF REPORTER

**G**etrude Mpandaguta, a 66-year-old widow and breadwinner, has defied the odds and proved that age is just a number. Thanks to the International Labour Organization's ACCEL Project, Ms. Mpandaguta has been empowered to become a successful goat farmer and businesswoman.

Ms. Mpandaguta is a member of the Chisomo club, a group of three individuals who were supported by ACCEL project with five goats as part of their start-up package.

Upon receiving the assistance, the group has been employing integrated agriculture, which involves selling animals to sponsor their children's education and using the manure collected from the goats to augment their coffee and maize fields.

The project has been life changing for Ms. Mpandaguta. She has been able to provide for her four grandchildren, whom she is sponsoring through school, and has withdrawn them from child labour activities at her farm.

"For me to send my grandchildren to school, there

is so much that goes into it," she says. "The school is close by, but for them to go they need soap to bathe, exercise books, pens and enough food, which is hard for me to provide. At the same time, I'm also to ensure everything at the farm is going well of which I cannot do on my own and still need help from my oldest grandchild."

Thanks to ACCEL project, Ms. Mpandaguta has not only been given goats but has also been trained in business management, entrepreneurship, livestock management, and child labour training. The training has helped her to diversify her income streams and provide for her household's basic needs. She has also been able to outsource farm labour and care for her livestock without hindrances.

"I am hopeful that by June-July, I'll have started reaping the fruits of my business," says Ms. Mpandaguta. "I am happy and grateful to the ACCEL project; my life has surely changed for the better." This is a true success story, and one that deserves to be celebrated and shared with the world.



■ Benson Panwell at the Aseliano Carpentry and Joinery Shop

## ► From Child Labourer to Skilled Entrepreneur: *The Inspiring Journey of Benson Panwell in Malawi*

By STAFF REPORTER

**B**enson Panwell, a 17-year-old from Chawala Village in Malawi, was like many other youths who had to work in the coffee fields to support his family after dropping out of school due to lack of sponsorship.

Despite being underage, Benson had to work long hours in the coffee fields to earn enough money to buy basic needs for his family.

However, his life took a positive turn when he was identified and withdrawn from child labour activities by the International Labour Organization's ACCEL Project.

Benson was among 150 youths who were supported by the ACCEL Project to undergo a three-month training program in Carpentry and Joinery at Bowe Technical College.

Besides vocational skills training, he received training in business management and entrepreneurship, financial management, and child labour and related laws. The training program aimed to equip young people with knowledge and skills in business management to prevent them from engaging in vices such as child labour.

"I started working as casual labourer in coffee fields when I was 15 years old. The money I was getting was used to buy basic needs and support my parents. However, the money was not enough to sustain our lives in relation to the intensity of the work done in

coffee fields," he says.

Today, Benson is doing an attachment at Aseliano Carpentry and Joinery shop in his area, earning a minimum of K5,000 (about USD 4.83) per day. In a busy month, he can earn K110,000 (about USD 106.15) compared to the earning of coffee field work, which was K53,000 (about USD 51.15) per month in only three months of the coffee season.

The ACCEL Project has improved the livelihood of Benson and his family as he is now able to buy basic needs and provide financial support to his family.

Benson is grateful to the ILO for initiating the ACCEL Project, which is empowering youths with vocational skills to increase economic opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

Benson now hopes to employ fellow youths at his Carpentry and Joinery shop and equip them with skills to run their own companies.

Benson's success story is a testament to the transformative power of vocational skills training in eradicating child labour and creating sustainable livelihoods for youths in Malawi. With more initiatives like the ACCEL Project, we can ensure that no youth must suffer the indignity of child labour and instead have the opportunity to achieve their dreams and aspirations.



## ► From Child Labour to Livestock Leaders: *How the Kathakhola Club is Empowering Their Community*

By STAFF REPORTER

Meet the Kathakhola club in Malawi, a group of farmers who have turned their goat farming business into a way of eliminating child labour in their community. Before, they used to employ their own children on their coffee farms to cut down production costs and increase yields. But, they realized that this practice was affecting their children's education as absenteeism and dropouts increased.

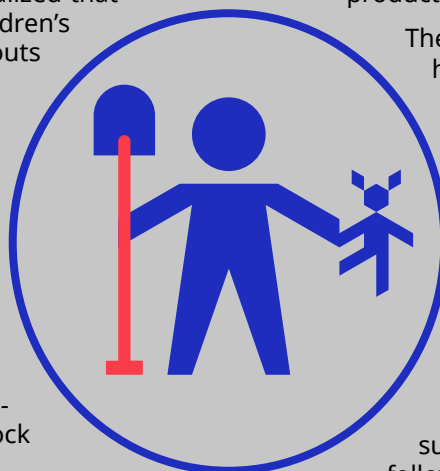
To diversify their income and be less dependent on coffee farming, the club joined the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply Chains in Africa (ACCEL) Project.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) supported the club with eight goats and funds to construct a brick wall and grass-thatched pen to kick-start their livestock production.

The members also received trainings in goat management, business management, child labour and financial literacy.

The results speak for themselves! - The Kathakhola

club now has the highest number of livestock in the area, and their animals are well taken care of. They have also embraced integrated agriculture, where they sell manure and livestock to surrounding communities, leading to an increase in coffee production.



The success of the Kathakhola club highlights the power of collaboration and dedication to a shared goal. They have applauded the ILO through ACCEL Project for the support provided towards the elimination of child labour and attainment of economic empowerment in their communities.

The members are proud of the progress they have made and hope to serve as an example and support other farmers in the area to follow their lead.

This inspiring story is proof that with determination and support, we can make a positive impact in our communities and create a brighter future for our children.



■ Participants follow through during SIYB Training of Trainers at Zanaco Innovation Hub in Lusaka.

## ▶ 30 SMEs participate in ILO's SIYB Training of Trainers

By ALLAN MULENGA

Over 30 Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) have successfully completed the first training of trainers (ToTs) in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) package for 2023 held at Zanaco's Innovation hub in Lusaka.

The training programme was organized by Knutberry Trees Consultancy Limited in partnership with Zanaco Bank Plc.

Meanwhile, out-going ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Mr. George Okutho says ILO has been providing support to SMEs to flourish by providing training at all levels, supporting entrepreneurship, fostering an enabling environment and creating market access for vulnerable populations.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Mr. Okutho said the ILO has developed appropriate tools that being used to support entrepreneurs to Start and Improve Business, Women's Entrepreneurship Development, Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises, Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises and Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises that could be adapted to suit

a particular audience and enterprises.

"The future is SMEs, the future is beautiful. Leaving SMEs behind is not an option. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development certainly cannot be achieved without them. Given their global prevalence, and their huge importance to social, economic and environmental development, the future of work will be leak if we start talking big steps to support small enterprises, the future looks bright and beautiful indeed," he said.

Mr. Okutho commended Zanaco for rendering support towards the growth of SMEs in the country, stating that there was need for more private institutions to partner with the ILO in unlocking the potential of SMEs in the country.

And Knutberry Trees Consultancy Director Ms. Jessie Nyirenda explained that Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) package is an effective tool used to empower entrepreneurs with business management skills.

"SIYB package comprises a range of material based, short, modular management training courses for SMEs. The package comprises of three packages each specifically targeting those intending to generate



“**Mr. Okutho commended Zanaco for rendering support towards the growth of SMEs in the country, stating that there was need for more private institutions to partner with the ILO in unlocking the potential of SMEs in the country.**”

a concrete business idea, those ready to start their business and those already in business with needs to improve their operations,” said Ms. Nyirenda.

She has since appealed to private institutions to partner with her

organization to train SMEs in SIYB package across the country.

Meanwhile, Zanaco Head SME Banking Ms. Nyangu Mwansa said her organization was pleased to partner with ILO in the provision of SMEs training using Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) package, stating that SMEs are a catalyst for growth as they produce goods and services, create employment and area source of income



■ *Participants follow through during SIYB Training of Trainers at Zanaco Innovation Hub in Lusaka.*

for many people.

“Our support to SMEs goes beyond providing financial services as we also offer capacity building to SMEs through alliance partners. Through such interventions, it is our hope that we will help to change the narrative around SMEs remaining stagnant and not being able to create jobs and wealth due to lack of access to finance and capacity building,” said Ms. Mwansa.

# ▶ 30 People with Disabilities Complete Internship Programme

By MU YA MWIYA



■ Mr. Bright Kasomaila during the internship programme

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) through the United Nations Joint Program on Social Protection Phase II (UNJP-SP II) has successfully completed a pilot internship programme involving 30 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) as a model to promote inclusivity in the labour market.

The interns, who were placed for five months from August 2022 to December 2022 mainly in the private sector, focusing on education, manufacturing, communication, and food processing sub-sectors, had their allowances paid for under the UNJP-SP II during the attachment.

The United Nations Joint Programme for Social Protection Phase II is being implemented by four United Nations (UN) Agencies- ILO, WFP, UNDP, and UNICEF- with financial support from Government of

Ireland, Swedish Government, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Through UNJP-SP II, the ILO is providing technical support to the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) to not only improve employability, but also support inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the labour market.

The private sector employers, who are ZFE affiliate were requested to express interest in hosting interns with disabilities. This resulted in over 30 companies and employers expressing interest in hosting them.

Among the companies that were willing to take up the challenge were Coca-Cola, Varun Beverages Zambia, Zamtel, Airtel, Fringilla, Trade Kings, Zambia Association of Manufacturers, Yalelo and Rhodespark schools among others.

Prospective employers were trained on Disability Equality Training (DET). The training focused on empowering the employers with skills on how they





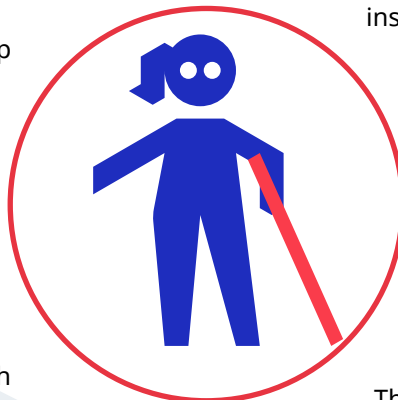
■ Ms. Christine Chiwanga during the internship programme in Lusaka

“ **Employers had testimonies that spoke to the abilities of Persons with Disabilities. For instance, one employer who had placed Persons with Disabilities who are deaf on the assembly line realized that their quality control improved while the other employer noticed that the interns with disabilities were putting twice their efforts.**

could provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.

Throughout the internship period, Persons with Disabilities demonstrated themselves as productive members of the labour force. This project had an initiative of promoting diversity in the labour force by employers opening opportunities marginalized persons.

Employers had testimonies that spoke to the abilities of Persons with Disabilities. For instance, one employer who had placed Persons with Disabilities who are deaf on the assembly line realized that their quality control improved while the other employer noticed that the interns with disabilities were putting



twice their efforts.

“All the interns turned up for the work as expected and never missed work. Their attendance and commitment to work was second to none,” said the employer.

This model is being used for advocacy for increased employability and promoting reasonable accommodation for PwD.

So far, 12 interns have been given an opportunity to become full-time employees with access to social security such as pension and national health insurance.

Following the successful completion of internship programme, the employers have since formed the Zambia Business Disability Network (ZBDN), which is linked to the ILO Global Business Disability Network, a network of employers championing employment of Persons with Disabilities in the private sector.

This network is employer-led and championed by business owners. On 24th February 2023, Zambia Business Disability Network was formed, and Airtel Zambia was elected to lead the executive board as the chairperson of the group.



Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of Malawi join workers in the International Labour Day celebrations held in Mzuzu.

## ▶ ILO urges Governments, workers and employers to support Coalition for Social Justice

By ALLAN MULENGA

On May 1 every year workers across the world join hands to commemorate the International Labour Day.

The Day, popularly known as 'May Day' is also used to honour the achievements of workers and encourage them to be aware of their rights and show solidarity.

In Zambia, this year's international labour day was commemorated under the theme: 'Accelerating job creation for economic growth'.

Lusaka-based workers thronged the Freedom Statute to participate in the march past mounted for Republican President Mr. Hakainde Hichilema and witnessed by Minister of Labour and Social Security Ms. Brenda Tambatamba, as well as Employers' and Workers' Organizations representatives.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Officer-in-charge Ms. Peneyambeko Munkawa has urged governments, workers and employers to support the formation of a Coalition for Social Justice.

Addressing the gathering, Ms. Munkawa added that once established a Coalition for Social Justice would create a

platform to bring together a range of international bodies and stakeholders.

"It will position social justice as the keystone of the recovery, so that it is prioritized in national, regional and global policies and actions. In sum, it will ensure that our future is human-centred," she said. "We have the chance to reshape the world we live in – economically, socially and environmentally. Let us take this opportunity and move forward to build the equitable and resilient societies that can underpin lasting peace and social justice."

Meanwhile, Mr. Hichilema emphasized the importance of investing in the future, urging beneficiaries of the 20 percent partial withdraw from National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) to carefully consider their investment options.

The President commended the Government's decision to implement this initiative, which aims to help beneficiaries secure their financial future, as well as that of their children.

"Let us work together to educate, to encourage the owners of the money, we don't own it, we can only encourage them to invest at least something out of that



■ *President Hakainde Hichilema arrives at this year's International Labour Day celebrations held at Freedom Statue in Lusaka.*



■ *Ms. Penyambeko Alina Munkawa speaks during the International Labour Day celebrations held in Lusaka.*

“ Meanwhile, Mr. Hichilema emphasized the importance of investing in the future, urging beneficiaries of the 20 percent partial withdraw from National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) to carefully consider their investment options.

20 percent,” Mr. Hichilema said.

He also acknowledged the need to identify areas that may be giving people problems during the application process and address them accordingly.

Meanwhile, Minister of Labour and Social Security Ms. Brenda Tambatamba highlighted the Ministry's efforts to harmonise the labour industry.

Ms. Tambatamba said her ministry has also embarked on various radio and television programmes to sensitize players in the labour industry on the need for a harmonized work environment.

And the Zambia National Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President Blake Mulala called on the government to consider creating decent jobs.

Meanwhile, the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) President Myra Ngoma urged the Government to formulate policies that would contribute to economic growth and job creation among Zambians.

## Chibebe is new ILO Country Office Lusaka Director



BY ALLAN MULENGA

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo has appointed Mr. Wellington Chibebe- the ILO Director for East Africa as ILO Director Country Office for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique taking over from Mr. George Okutho.

Announcing the changes, Mr. Houngbo stated that Mr. Chibebe's appointment takes effect from 01 May 2023.

Mr. Okutho, whose tour of duty came to and end on 31 March 2023, has been at the helm of the office since January 2019.

# ▶ Overcoming Gender Barriers - SESA Project Provides Scholarships to Women Engineers and Technicians

By ALLAN MULENGA AND SIMON LONGA

Despite engineering being a lucrative profession, women are often underrepresented in the field, both in academia and the professional arena. In Zambia, the gender gap in engineering is evident in the number of female engineers registered under the Engineering Institute of Zambia, where only 8 percent of all registered engineers are women. However, some female engineers have defied the odds and made significant strides in engineering.

To address the gender gap and related stereotypes in the field of engineering, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is implementing the Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project, which is funded by the Swedish government and co-implemented by the Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC).

The project is helping to increase the deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and regional energy integration technologies through skills development in the SADC region, using a Public Private Public Development Partnership (PPDP) approach.

It is targeting to train over 1,600 engineers, power technicians, and energy managers, with at least 240 being female. The SESA Project has so far developed 17 quality courses, delivered 15, and trained 277 engineers, power technicians, and energy managers, with 128 being female.

The project recently offered scholarships to female engineers in renewable energy from different companies to undertake short courses in various engineering fields.

The SESA project team caught up with some of past-trainees at the Copperbelt Energy Corporation (CEC) who expressed gratitude for the sponsorship awarded to participate in various short courses at KGRTC.

One of the past-trainees, 28-year-old Natasha Mulenga-Sakala, who graduated in the Off-grid design and installation course, said the training has greatly contributed to bridging the gender gap in the renewable energy sector.

Natasha, who is an electrical engineer-solar projects under the business development department at CEC stationed at the 34 Mega Watt Riverside Solar Plant, added that the course has made her more productive and efficient at work.

Natasha also noted that the scholarship program has helped to bridge the gender gap because most trainees were women. In her class, there were 14 female engineers and four male engineers, which shows that females are willing to take up engineering-related careers, especially in renewable energy, which is still in its infancy.

She commended SESA project for its great initiative and for bridging the gender gap in the renewable sector.



■ *Natasha Mulenga-Sakala*



■ Marvis Muyamwa

Natasha, who is also Bachelor of science in electronics and electrical engineering graduate at the Copperbelt University, related that the course was beneficial as it combined the theory with practical sessions.

"We would physically connect solar panels in parallel and in series. That was great experience for me because I had a practical feel in that area. We had an education tour to Pemba to see the Off-grid solar plant at Moyo clinic, which is a 50-Kilowatt Solar Plant. This made the experience to be real to me. I was able to relate the theory part of the course to practical," she narrated. "I can apply some of the concepts in my day-to-day work except that I am dealing with On-grid system, but I did a course in Off-grid system. Still, the design concepts are the same."

Natasha has since advised young people to venture into renewable energy sector, stating that globally, there is so much emphasis on new technologies that are environmentally and climate friendly.

Meanwhile Marvis Muyamwa, who is an assistant surveyor at CEC and holds a diploma in land survey at Copperbelt University (CBU), explained that the Geo Information System (GIS) for renewable energy planning course has been instrumental in her work as an assistant land surveyor at CEC.

She added that the course has helped her to understand the concepts of renewable energy planning and how GIS



**So far, the project, has developed 17 quality courses, delivered 15 and trained 277 engineers, power technicians, and energy managers, with 127 being female.**

can be used to plan for the deployment of renewable energy technologies.

"The course was well-structured, and the trainers were knowledgeable. The practical sessions were particularly helpful, as we were able to apply the concepts learned in the classroom to real-world scenarios," she said.

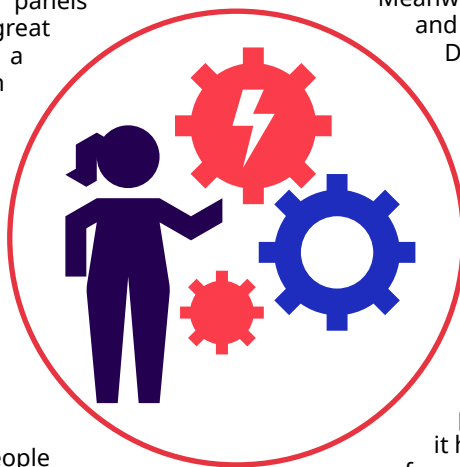
Marvis further explained that the knowledge gained from the course has enabled her to provide valuable insights to her team in the land surveying department on how to integrate GIS in their work.

She believed that the course has not only equipped her with the necessary skills but has also opened up new opportunities for her.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have been sponsored by the SESA project to undertake this course. I encourage other young people, especially women, to take advantage of such opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge," she added.

35-year-old Bupe Chama, an environmental coordinator under the health environment safety and risk department at CEC, related that she has greatly benefited from the Environmental impact assessment for renewable energy course, stated that the course has broadened her understating of the work.

Bupe, who holds a bachelor's degree in natural resources graduate at the University of Zambia, added that: "We do carry out environmental impact assessment, so, it has added to what I am already doing. It has added the meat to the skeletons."



Meanwhile, CEC's Senior Manager for Talent and Organization Development, Mr. Brian Daka, has expressed his appreciation for the SESA scholarship program, stating that it has greatly benefited the company by enhancing the performance of all the engineers who participated in the program.

Mr. Daka hoped that the partnership with the SESA project will continue as it is beneficial to CEC, which is transitioning into renewable energy.

He believed that the SESA scholarship program has come at the right time as it has helped to build the competences of female engineers.

Mr. Daka further hoped that there will be more initiatives to build capacity in women, and as a company, CEC is moving towards renewable energy, so the skills imparted by SESA to female engineers are very beneficial to them.

He pointed out that when they look at the annual performance, especially for the female engineers who were sponsored on various courses, they have noticed an improvement, and they can see the value in the SESA scholarship program.

"Overall, the SESA project's efforts to bridge the gender gap in the engineering sector in Zambia through its scholarship program are commendable. By equipping female engineers with the necessary skills and knowledge in renewable energy, the project is not only empowering women but also contributing to the development of the country's energy sector," he said.



■ Participants of the Power Quality and System Stability follow through the training at Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre.

## ▶ 16 Engineers undergo training in Power Quality and System Stability

By MUSOLI KASHINGA

Over 16 engineers drawn from Kenya, Namibia and Tanzania have successfully completed on campus training course in Power Quality and System Stability Training (PQSS) at the Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) in partnership with Unipower AB of Sweden.

The training programme was facilitated by Dr. Ebrahim Balouji of Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden and Mr. Russom Kebedom of Unipower.

Having completed the training programme, participants developed skills in monitoring power quality and managing power system disturbances.

The engineers are now able to configure and set up power quality analysers on their respective electrical networks.

The programme is under the Swedish government-funded Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) Project, a three-and-a-half-year intervention with an overall development objective of contributing towards increasing the uptake of renewable energy, energy efficiency and regional energy integration through skills development in Zambia and the SADC region.

Through such training programmes, KGRTC is helping players in the power sector build capacity in the use of technology that helps contribute to power system reliability.





## TIME TO PRIORITIZE SOCIAL JUSTICE



*Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization*

**M**ay 1st is widely known as Labour Day, a day when we celebrate the contribution of workers worldwide. It is a moment for pride, celebration and hope.

After three years of the COVID-19 crisis, followed by inflation, conflict, and food and fuel supply shocks, we badly need this. But the promises of renewal made during the pandemic, of 'building back better', have so far not been delivered for the great majority of workers worldwide.

Globally, real wages have fallen, poverty is rising, inequality seems more entrenched than ever.

Enterprises have been hard hit. Many could not cope with the cumulative effects of recent unexpected events. Small and micro-enterprises were particularly affected, and many have ceased operations.

People feel that the sacrifices they made to get through COVID-19 have not been recognized, let alone rewarded. Their voices are not being heard clearly enough. This, combined with a perceived lack of opportunities, has created a disturbing level of mistrust.

It doesn't have to be like this. We are still the masters of our fate. But if we are to shape a new, more stable, and equitable world, we must choose a different path. One that prioritizes social justice.

I believe this is not only do-able but essential for a sustainable and stable future. So, how do we get there?

First and foremost, our policies and actions must be

human-centred, to allow people to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, economic security and equal opportunity. This approach is not new, it was set out and agreed in the aftermath of World War Two, when the ILO's international membership signed the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia.

This visionary document set out guiding principles for our economic and social systems, that they should not be turned exclusively to hitting specific growth rates or other statistical targets, but to address human needs and aspirations. This means focusing on inequality, poverty alleviation and core social protection. The most effective way to do this is by providing quality jobs so that people can support themselves and build their own futures – 'Decent Work for All', as Sustainable Development Goal 8 terms it.

It means realistically addressing the long-term structural transformations of our time; ensuring that new technology creates and supports employment; pro-actively facing the challenges of climate change and ensuring we offer the jobs, skills training and transition support necessary for workers and businesses to benefit from the new low-carbon era; treating demographic changes as a 'dividend' rather than a problem, with supporting action on skills, migration and social protection, to create more cohesive and resilient societies.

We also need to reassess and refashion the architecture of our social and economic systems, so that they support this change of course towards social justice, rather than continuing to channel us into a policy 'doom loop' of inequality and instability. We must reinvigorate labour institutions and organizations so that social dialogue is effective and vigorous. We must review laws and regulations affecting the world of work, so that they are relevant and up-to-date and able to protect workers and support sustainable businesses.

To make all this happen, we need to recommit to international cooperation and solidarity. We must enhance our efforts and create greater policy coherence, particularly within the multilateral system, as the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres calls it.

This is why we need a Global Coalition for Social Justice. This Coalition will create a platform to bring together a broad range of international bodies and stakeholders. It will position social justice as the keystone of the global recovery, so that it is prioritized in national, regional and global policies and actions. In sum, it will ensure that our future is human-centred.

We have the chance to reshape the world we live in – economically, socially and environmentally. Let us take this opportunity and move forward to build the equitable and resilient societies that can underpin lasting peace and social justice.

ILO Country Office for Zambia,  
Malawi and Mozambique  
4536 Lubwa Road, Rhodespark,  
PO Box 32181,  
Lusaka, Zambia

T: +260-211-252779

E: [lusaka@ilo.org](mailto:lusaka@ilo.org)

[www.ilo.org/lusaka](http://www.ilo.org/lusaka)

**Facebook:** ILO Country Office for  
Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique

**Twitter:** @ilolusaka

