

SIGNING CEREMONY

Comoros Decent Work Country Programme

4 May 2015

Address by Mr Aenaes Chapinga Chuma

ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa

- Your Excellency Dr Ikililou DHOININE, President of the Republic of the Comoros;
- Honourable Nourdine BOURHANE, Vice-President in charge of the Ministry of Regional Development, Infrastructure, Urban Planning and Housing;
- Honourable, Mohamed ALI SOILHI, Vice-President in charge of the Ministry of Finance, Economy, Budget, Investment and Foreign Trade in charge of Privatization;
- Honourable Bourhane HAMIDO, President of the National Assembly;
- Honourable Idarousse ALLAOUI, Minister of Employment, Labour, Vocational Training and Women's Entrepreneurship;
- Honourable Ministers here present;
- Ms Farahate HOUSSEIN, President of *Mouvement des Entreprises Comoriennes*;
- Mr SALIM SOULAIMANA, General Secretary of the *Confédération des Travailleurs Comoriens*;
- Mr Christian NTSAY, Director of the ILO Country Office for the Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles;
- Esteemed colleagues from the United Nations family;
- Distinguished guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to represent the ILO at this important event. For the first time since the ILO established a presence in the Indian Ocean Sub-Region, 40 years ago, a Regional Director is visiting the Comoros and I am delighted to make this first visit! Let me express my profound gratitude for your warm welcome. It is truly appreciated.

The presence of high level national authorities at this signing ceremony is testimony to the will and commitment of your country to put Decent Work at the heart of its development strategy and make it a national priority for poverty alleviation. The Comoros was the first country to sign a Decent Work Country Programme in the Sub-Region and now, the Comoros is the first country to sign a second generation Decent Work Country Programme. You should be proud of your tremendous achievements. I extend my congratulations to you, our tripartite constituents, as well as to all stakeholders who are the joint owners of this programme.

Your Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ever since the ILO first set up a presence in your sub-region, the ILO has been proud to bring technical support to the Comoros, to its constituents and population, and I am pleased to see that tangible results have been achieved

I would like to highlight the establishment of the Consultative Council of Labour and Employment; the elaboration of the National Employment Policy and the Plan for Youth Employment; the implementation of technical cooperation projects to fight child labour and promote youth employment; the institutional support and capacity building made available to government and social partners; the creation of the “Employment House”; and the mainstreaming of employment in the national development framework entitled “Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy”.

All these achievements, supported by the ILO, will continue to facilitate the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme 2015-19 and demonstrate the commitment of the ILO to support your country in delivering on its ambitions and commitments.

I am pleased to note that you have chosen “employment promotion” as the first priority of your Decent Work Country Programme.

According to the ILO report “World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015”, unemployment will continue to rise in the coming years, resulting in widening inequalities.

Sub-Saharan Africa is amongst the regions in the world with the most vulnerable employment, and the employment situation has not improved much despite significant economic growth rates. Many countries across Africa face significant income inequalities, unemployment, underemployment and social volatility.

This is also a reality in the Comoros where, in spite of a positive recovery from the 2008-09 economic and financial crisis, unemployment rates remain high and are rising – from 10.4% in 2010 to 14.3% in 2013. The youth unemployment rate in 2013 stood at 34%. There is also an increase in informal employment, characterized by precarious working conditions. Thus, recovery and growth has remained jobless.

That is why this second generation of the Decent Work Country Programme becomes even more relevant. Implementing the Programme entails leading the country into a job-rich and inclusive recovery through addressing key social and economic challenges. The Decent Work Country Programme provides a tool for attaining poverty reduction, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development.

It is well recognized that quality growth and job creation remains central to a new development framework beyond 2015. Proposed Sustainable Development Goal number 8 sets out to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The Goal has been defined so as to respond to the concerns of constituents and the demand of people.

Distinguished Guests,

Social protection is the second priority of the Comoros Decent Work Country Programme. Social protection is essential for realizing the human right to social security for all, reducing poverty and inequality, supporting inclusive growth, promoting peace and social justice.

The World Social Protection Report 2014-15 states that only 27% of the global population enjoy access to comprehensive social security systems, whereas 73% are partially covered or not at

all. The lack of access to social protection constitutes a major obstacle to economic and social development.

The Comoros also face difficulties in this area even if few initiatives were taken in the past to tackle social protection issues. Therefore, it's time to take useful measures by strengthening and extending social protection in the country according to the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) that reflects a consensus on the extension of social security reached among governments and employers' and workers' organizations from 185 countries (including the Comoros) at all levels of development.

These two main priorities are complementary and the achievement of the related outcomes on skills matching, institutional capacity building, creation of quantity and quality jobs, improvement of social protection, mainly for vulnerable groups (women, youth), would lead the country into a real and inclusive growth. Actually, the DWCP addresses national real needs and provides Decent work opportunities. Thus, its various objectives and outcomes are mainly focused on creating productive, sustainable and full employment. Quantity and quality of jobs are fully considered.

Your Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to reassure you that the ILO remains available to uphold its continuous support to the Comoros and stands ready to accompany its tripartite constituents and the population of the Comoros in the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme 2015-19. Together, we can achieve results! I urge you to foster broad national ownership over the Programme as an important determinant of its success. Tripartite constituents, through the Decent Work Country Programme monitoring committee, were closely involved in all steps of the formulation process. This mechanism should be reinforced to ensure efficiency in the implementation of the Programme.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my sincere thanks to all distinguished guests for your presence at this signing ceremony.

Who does not aspire to a decent job? Who does not wish to see the Comoros enjoy a job-rich growth? I join you all in saying: “Decent work for all Comorians!”

Thank you very much for your attention.