



**Consultation on child labour and forced labour in Sub-Saharan Africa
in view of the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child
Labour hosted by Argentina in November 2017**

22-23 June 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Statement by:

Aeneas C. Chuma

ILO Assistant Director-General and

Regional Director for Africa

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Politesse:

- *Honourable Abdulfatah Abdullahi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*
- *Honourable Matangaidze, Deputy Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe*
- *[Employers' representative on podium]*
- *[Workers' representative on podium]*
- *Excellencies, Ambassadors and representatives of the diplomatic community*
- *Representatives of the African Union Commission*
- *Representatives of ILO's social partners, employers' and workers' organizations*
- *Ladies and gentlemen, Dear colleagues,*

[Additional accolades to be confirmed]

Let me start by acknowledging the presence of our host, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Honourable Minister, it is good to be back in Addis Ababa. I extend my warmest appreciation to you and the Government of Ethiopia for your relentless commitment to making decent work a reality, not only in Ethiopia, but across the Africa region.

I also acknowledge the presence of senior representatives of the ILO's tripartite constituency from across the Africa region, including from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Deputy Minister Matangaidze, it is a pleasure to have you with us.

It is indeed testimony to the significance we attach to the topic at hand that you responded to our invitation to be here today with such overwhelming conviction.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The narrative of Africa's growth potential is well known to us all. The recently-launched African Economic Outlook 2017 predicts that with its dynamic private sector, entrepreneurial spirit and vast resources, the continent's average economic growth is expected to rebound to

3.4% in the course of 2017. The continent has the highest share in the world of adults starting or running new businesses. Things are looking up!

In December 2015, ILO's tripartite constituents from across Africa gathered here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the 13th African Regional Meeting. The Meeting reaffirmed our collective commitment to transform Africa through Decent Work.

The Meeting also recognized that, amidst sustained economic growth rates, Africa was facing obstacles in ratifying and implementing International Labour Standards concerning fundamental principles and rights at work.

Taking this message to heart, we are gathered here today to deliberate on a critical issue of our time: Ending child labour and forced labour.

With an estimated 1 out of 5 children in Africa engaged in the worst forms of child labour, we need a clear roadmap to tackle this problem at all levels – from household, to community, to city, to national and international levels. Moreover, with an estimated 3.7 million African men, women and children still trapped in forced labour, and working under coercion, largely in the informal economy, the African continent urgently needs practical and effective solutions to combat forced labour, including human trafficking and modern slavery.

Just over a week ago, on 12 June 2017, we celebrated World Day against Child Labour. Some of you were perhaps in Geneva to take part in the International Labour Conference and heard the ILO Director-General reaffirming our organization's unwavering commitment to working towards ridding the world of this curse. This commitment will also be carried forward to the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, which will take place in November, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This Conference will seek to consolidate global efforts to accelerate the pace of elimination of child labour, in order to secure its end.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through Goal 8, the Sustainable Development Agenda places social justice and decent work for all at the heart of Agenda 2030. This represents an ambitious trajectory towards sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

Target 8.7 of the Agenda calls on member States, social partner constituents and other relevant stakeholders collectively to eliminate child labour by 2025 and forced labour by 2030.

The adoption of Target 8.7 represents an unprecedented opportunity to promote greater coherence, synergies and collaboration among ILO constituents and other partners concerned with child labour and forced labour.

And the Target can be achieved! Provided that there exists a well-informed understanding of what is, and will be required to sustain and accelerate progress to end child labour in all its forms and to eliminate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking.

Achieving such an ambitious goal, however, requires an extraordinary level of mobilization of partnerships, which can harness energy, resources and strategic and political acumen to a maximum degree.

Alliance 8.7 was created to help achieve this. Alliance 8.7, which was officially launched in New York on 21 September 2016, is intended to realize ground-breaking ways of bringing multiple actors together for concerted and focused actions to help countries achieve Target 8.7. This will require the active involvement of all parts of society – governments, workers' and employers' organizations, the private sector, civil society and community organizations, faith-based groups, academia and those working in the arts and media.

In order to advance Alliance 8.7, we can no longer do business as usual. We cannot enact the same policies or implement the same programmes and expect different results. Alliance 8.7 calls for rethinking the way we work and engage across the board.

And this is why we are here in Addis Ababa this week! I welcome this consultation as a forum to provide concrete recommendations for taking forward Alliance 8.7 in Africa and to strengthen the capacity of participants through exchanges of experiences between countries.

And dear friends, Africa is NOT starting from scratch:

African countries, through collaboration between governments, employers' and workers' organizations, have already taken measures to eliminate child labour and forced labour, by strengthening their legislation, formulating national action plans on child labour and human trafficking and setting up coordination mechanisms.

The African Union's Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child regularly meets twice a year to discuss child rights and child protection issues.

Regional economic communities are also taking action. I mention ECOWAS, for instance, which has adopted subregional policies and guidelines on trafficking and child labour, with sets of actions for enhancing how member States address these problems.

We now need to consolidate and learn from these efforts, to show the world that Africa has the will and the means to end child labour, to put a stop to forced labour, and to manifest this in the declaration that will be adopted in Buenos Aires in five months' time.

This consultation thus, is not an isolated event. It is part of a larger effort, and we at the ILO are proud to be associated with this effort. We look forward to the outcome of your deliberations and to your ideas on how we can work together in this noble effort.

Thank you for your attention.