

Official closure of the Rural Youth Employment project in Burundi

City Hill Hotel, 20 July 2017

Remarks by Mary Kwar

Director, ILO

Hon Felix MPOZERINIGA, Minister for Public Service, Labour and Employment

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All protocol reserved

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the Official closure of the Burundi Rural Youth Employment component [Emplois des Jeunes Ruraux (EJR)] of the IFAD funded Program for the Development of Sectors (PRODEFI), a program that was launched in 2013. This event is part of a four day special training workshop to strengthen the capacity of 35 certified SIYB trainers from Burundi. The four-day trainer's workshop started yesterday (July 18), it is scheduled to continue this afternoon until tomorrow.

Through this training, the participants have had an opportunity to strengthen their capacity in the management of the training program, to validate adapted training material and to share some of the difficulties they encounter daily in relation to managing the GERME program. What we would like you to see today is what entrepreneurship development means for Burundi and how this relates to creating more and better jobs in an economy in transition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Youth employment is an absolute priority for the ILO. We focus on preparing young people to enter the labour market and to succeed in the labour market and the lack of trust of young people is a huge challenge which requires innovative solutions. Regardless of the time in which they live, the aspiration of youth is to have a life plan. We must listen to and involve young people as they are strategic actors, if we fail, our societies are going to have big problems.

Many youth are unemployed in Burundi, however, informality affects a big per cent of those who succeed in landing a job. We should aim for another level, moving from generic solutions to specific programs for youth.

The ILO's youth entrepreneurship program is part of a global Youth Employment Programme. Youth entrepreneurship development has been identified as one of the means of achieving the goal of decent work for women and men.

In this regard, ILO and the Government of Burundi through the IFAD funded Program for the Development of Sectors (PRODEFI) here in Burundi partnered to collaborate in the implementation of the Employment Component of Rural Youth. Under this project, the ILO was entrusted with the tasks of

- (i) Supporting the development of the national employment policy
- (ii) Adapting GERME training tools
- (iii) Training and monitoring in entrepreneurship program

The GERME / SIYB program is a management training program structured into four separate training modules: Find Your Business Idea "Trouvez Votre Idée d'entreprise (TRIE)", Create Your Business "Créez votre Entreprise (CREE)", Manage Your Business "Gérez Mieux Votre Entreprise (GERME)", and Expand Your Business "Agrandissez Votre Entreprise (AVE)" which are designed to meet the progressive stages of business development.

Using ILO's technical competencies in youth employment and its implementation experiences in youth entrepreneurship across Africa and the world, in partnership with governments, Employers' and Workers' organization and business development service providers the Rural Youth Employment project has supported a total of 35 trainers who were trained in GERME between 2013 and 2017 who in turn reached out to 2,000 young entrepreneurs for the creation of income-generating activities. More highlights of these top finding results will be discussed in the next part of this event.

As this pilot project phase comes to an end, we look forward to continuing efforts towards the promotion of youth employment and working with other partners to develop sustained, long term, multi sectoral and multi-level efforts and investments in young people so that young women and men can participate actively and fully in their society and economy as we see from the current interventions with IFAD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has changed and will change but ultimately what is required is the same: access to decent work and the possibility of developing a life project.

With these few remarks, I thank you for your attention, *Merci*.