



Report of the Southern Africa Sub-Regional Conference on Youth Employment:
The Youth Employment Challenge in Southern Africa – Policy Responses and
Programmes Targeting Young Women and Men at the National and Sub-regional
Level.

HARARE, 17- 19 October 2005

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1. Introduction

The Southern African sub-regional Conference on Youth Employment was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 17 to 19 October 2005.

The Conference was attended by 36 participants from 9 countries of the sub-region, of which 27 were tripartite delegates (9 representing governments, 9 representing employers and 9 representing workers), one keynote speaker from the private sector, two representatives of SADC Youth Associations, four from different Zimbabwe Youth Associations and two from youth organizations from Lesotho.

2. Opening Ceremony

ILO Sub-Regional Director for Southern Africa

In his welcome remarks, Mr Tayo Fashoyin, Director of the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa, pointed out that the ILO's work in the sub-region had been formulated within the context of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), which had been outlined in the ILO Programme and Budget Proposal for the Biennium 2006-07. He indicated that the Conference, which was organised by the ILO Sub-Regional Office in collaboration with ILO Offices in Lusaka and Pretoria, was taking place against the backdrop of numerous national, regional and international initiatives on youth unemployment, namely:

- (a) The UN Millennium Summit of Heads of State and Government which resulted in the creation of the UN Youth Employment Network (YEN);
- (b) The African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Reduction, held in Burkina Faso, where African governments committed themselves to the creation of employment and opportunities for young women and men to find decent work;
- (c) The Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment in 2004, in which the ILO was called upon to consider innovative ways of exchanging national experiences related to youth employment; and
- (d) The International Labour Conference of June 2005, which undertook a general discussion on the challenges of youth employment.

He outlined the general objectives of the Conference which are to share views on the scope, causes and characteristics of youth employment, and on practical strategies, methods and implementation of employment creation programmes for the youth; to situate youth unemployment within the wider context of national employment and development policy, emphasising the role of skills development in facilitating the transition to work; and to encourage ILO constituents and stakeholders to come up with practical and implementable action plans for youth employment in the sub-region.

The Director stressed that the Conference was intended to clearly identify operationalising measures and policies that would contribute to creating job opportunities for the youth in the Southern African sub-region. He further stated that on the basis of

conclusions of the Conference, the ILO would collaborate with stakeholders in developing specific plans of action at regional and national levels through the DWCP, within the context of national development frameworks such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Employment Policies and the Millennium Development Goals. To facilitate this process, the ILO prepared a background paper, which outlined the international, regional and national dimensions of the youth unemployment problem.

In conclusion, he emphasised the necessity for joint public-private partnership and the collaboration of development partners in achieving the goal of creating employment opportunities for the youth, taking advantage of each development partners' core competencies and past experiences.

The ILO Regional Director for Africa

In her address, Mrs Regina Amadi-Njoku, the ILO Regional Director for Africa noted that the youth employment challenge in the Southern African context was of significant importance not only for the sub-region, but throughout Africa, and conveyed the best wishes of the Director General of the ILO to the audience.

She indicated that a significant number of youth are either unemployed, seeking employment, between jobs or working in the informal economy. Others faced serious barriers to decent jobs for a variety of reasons such as discrimination, forced labour, work in hazardous occupations, extreme poverty, armed conflicts or HIV/AIDS. She went further to say that it was evident that the integration of youth into decent and productive work would depend largely on the rate of economic growth as well as on the employment intensity of such growth. This required an integrated and coherent approach that combined interventions at the macro- and microeconomic levels, which would focus on labour demand and supply and addressed both the quantity and quality of employment.

The Regional Director reiterated that decent and productive employment for youth was a commitment of the Millennium Declaration, and the ILO was playing a leading role in international action to promote youth employment within the framework of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), a partnership formed by the UN, the World Bank and the ILO. YEN is the first global alliance under the umbrella of the ILO's Global Employment Agenda.

She also reminded the Conference that the 10th African Regional Meeting (December, 2003) adopted a resolution on decent work for Africa's youth; and that the outcome of discussions during the International Labour Conference in June 2005, was a call for an ILO plan of action to promote youth employment that is practical and based on building knowledge; advocacy; the promotion of young workers' rights in line with international labour standards; and technical assistance. At the continental level was the African Union Summit held in September 2004, which positioned the political urgency of responding to the challenge of youth employment as a precondition for poverty eradication, sustainable development and lasting peace.

She further pointed out that the *Issues Paper* which was drafted by 15 UN Agencies for the Summit stressed that the creation of decent employment for young people should rank highest on the agenda of national decision-makers and that youth employment had to be addressed as part and parcel of the national employment policies. The Regional Director also indicated that in the recent AU/ILO/RECs/Partners consultative meeting, on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, it was agreed that the ILO sub-regional offices should support the coordination role of the Regional Economic Communities in the follow-up to the Summit. She then reaffirmed the ILO's commitment to support the process of the follow-up to the Summit at the national level; and that the ILO offices' workplans have been realigned to accommodate the Summit's outcomes and to develop national DWCP for 2006-07 biennium and beyond.

In conclusion, Ms Amadi-Njoku reaffirmed the ILO's readiness to provide support in areas such as:

- Mainstreaming youth employment issues into the national employment and/or development policy frameworks;
- The development of a set of tools that could be used flexibly and adapted by member States in the formulation of youth employment policies and programmes to bring young people, including young migrant workers, into productive and decent employment; and
- The development of labour market information systems and the improvement of quality data as well as analytical capacity.

The UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

The representative of the Resident Coordinator for the United Nations Country Team in Zimbabwe, Mr Bernard Mokam, commenced with an acknowledgement of the call by political leaders worldwide of the need to give the youth a chance to find decent and productive work. He highlighted the changing context of youth unemployment as a consequence of the transformation of the economic and social environment brought about by the emerging global economy. He went on to say that the changing relationships within the tripartite forum have largely affected negatively key human dimensions; and, coupled with the lack of ownership of macro-economic policies, had resulted in fragile and generally weak policy formulation and implementation frameworks.

He also highlighted the issue of HIV/AIDS as impacting negatively on the youth; hence the efforts at international and national levels aimed at reducing vulnerability among women and girls. The lack of legal and other regulatory frameworks to protect the youth in areas like the informal economy, where most young persons have found work, was also mentioned.

In conclusion, Mr. Mokam emphasized the need to include the youth in policy formulation, and called for more funding and commitment to youth development, at the international, regional, and national levels.

Workers' Group Representative

Mr Chrispin Munyukwa, addressing the Conference on behalf of the Workers' Group, pointed out that youth unemployment was an issue of global concern. In the developing countries such as those in the Southern African sub-region, the problem was on a larger scale mainly because of slow economic and high population growth rates. He indicated that, increasingly, young people entering the labour market were not able to find jobs, and this had had negative implications for the labour movement in the countries of the sub-region. He emphasized that trade unions derive their membership from the gainfully employed workers, and with the current spate of company closures, leading to retrenchment of workers and the lack of job opportunities for the new entrants into the labour market, there had been a major decline in membership which had affected their strength.

He went on to express the trade unions' readiness to engage other stakeholders in addressing employment issues in general, and youth unemployment in particular, since unions view the youth as a building block of the labour movement in the future.

In conclusion, he thanked the ILO for having organized this Conference and expressed the sincere hope of the labour movements in the Southern African sub-region that this Conference would come up with concrete recommendations, which would meet the expectations of the youth and would not be just another 'talk shop.'

Employers' Group Representative

Mr. Douglas Verdeen, a representative of the Employers' Group, pointed out in his remarks that unemployment was rising in the sub-region, notwithstanding that in general the world economy was showing significant improvement. It was therefore imperative that the sub-region should initiate policies that would create new employment, particularly for the young generation, and also ensure the preservation of existing jobs.

He indicated that globalisation had opened up markets and this, to a large extent, had caught many enterprises unaware and the competition that came with this new phenomenon had thrown them off-guard. SADC had therefore to promote inter-regional trade, and as a trading block, it had to assist those of its members who were currently unable to effectively participate in the global market so that the sub-region as a whole could become a significant player on the global stage. He emphasized that in order to be competitive in the new system and be able to participate in the open market effectively; employers needed appropriate infrastructure for efficient operation. This had to be complemented by policies designed specifically to attract the elusive investment dollar into the sub-region.

He concluded by stating that SADC employers believed that the challenges the region was currently facing were transitory and could be overcome, whereby hunger and poverty would be reminiscent of the past.

AU Representative

In her address, Ms. Katrina Liswani, a representative of the African Union, thanked the ILO for its efforts in promoting decent work for the youth and commitment to the Ouagadougou Declaration. She lamented that despite high numbers of youth in Africa, there were no coherent policies for youth development.

She expressed the AU's commitment to youth employment, and indicated that this had been signified by the increasing number of African countries in the list of the UN Youth Employment Network lead countries. In conclusion, she joined those who had spoken before her calling on the Conference to come up with recommendations and pragmatic approaches.

The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

In his official opening address, the Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, the Honourable Nicholas Goche, acknowledged the youth and their role as assets for today and the future, as well as a group with vulnerabilities. The vulnerabilities manifest themselves in underemployment, job insecurity, lack of representation, insufficient remuneration, discrimination and lack of career development opportunities. He indicated that the various international initiatives to curb youth unemployment were clear indications of the urgent need to solve the problem, and that there was awareness at the top levels of governments on the need to address social development and poverty alleviation in a coherent and integrated manner. The Heads of State and Government had also registered concern on other vulnerabilities that the youth were facing such as lack of access to education, training, health and proneness to diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

He pointed out that resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly had encouraged countries to prepare national action plans on youth employment; and that the participation of youth in stakeholder meetings was identified as a precondition for successful formulation and implementation of interventions and strategies. The Minister reminded the participants that the youth conference was part of the ILO initiative to the follow-up to the AU Extra-Ordinary Summit. He acknowledged the role of the ILO in mainstreaming and providing technical assistance, and in placing decent work on the international development agenda, thus facilitating the sharing of country experiences, which promote the YEN initiative. He congratulated the ILO for its continued technical support.

In conclusion, the Minister urged the participants not to make the Conference a “talk show”, but use it as an opportunity for countries to share experiences and come up with practical programmes that would facilitate the creation of jobs for the youth.

Vote of thanks

In her vote of thanks, Mrs Judica Amri-Makhetha, Director of the ILO Office, in Pretoria, thanked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare for supporting the idea of the Youth Employment Conference from the outset as well as endorsing the choice of Harare as the venue for the Conference. She also thanked the Honourable Deputy Minister of Youth Development and Employment Creation for having ably directed the programme for the official opening. She reiterated the clear message from Workers calling for action on youth employment, and that of Employers who articulated their concerns and called for joint approaches in action through social dialogue.

She also thanked the ILO Regional Director for Africa, Mrs. Regina Amadi-Njoku, for her support and for reminding the Conference of the major challenges faced by the youth that needed to be addressed. She commended the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative for his statement and extended her appreciation to the Resident Coordinators and Representatives of UN Agencies from other countries of the sub-region, whose presence further demonstrated their commitment to an integrated approach to youth development and youth employment in particular. She finally thanked the Delegates who had prepared the country position papers which enabled the Conference to have substance and important background material that formed the basis of the discussions.

3. Election of Officers

The Conference elected as its Chairperson, Mr Ruben Makuvise, Government Representative from Zimbabwe and as its Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Dapther Zimbiri Namandwa, Employer Representative from Malawi, and Mr Chrispin Munyukwa, Worker Representative from Zambia. Mrs Neo Leping, Government Representative from Botswana, was elected as Rapporteur.

4. Session on Youth Employment in Southern Africa, trends and challenges

The presentation which was made by the ILO/SRO Senior Labour Market Policy Specialist, Mr. Rajendra Paratian, highlighted the salient issues facing young women and men in the sub-region. These were as follows:

- Unemployment and underemployment;
- Early entry into the labour market;
- Cyclical problems of unemployment and underemployment;
- The scaling down of job expectations;
- Decent work deficit related to rights, lack of social security, participation to social dialogue;
- Long-term unemployment and its consequences;
- HIV/AIDS; and
- Gender inequality.

The paper identified challenges as follows:

- Constraints to policy making and implementation;
- The mismatch between education, training and labour market needs; and

- Lack of institutional mechanisms.

The presentation also highlighted the need for policies and programmes for decent work for the youth to focus on:

- Active Labour Market Policies;
- Employment Intensive Growth;
- Entrepreneurial Development;
- Enhancing Employability;
- Labour Market Information Systems;
- Combating HIV/AIDS; and
- The Extension of Social Protection.

5. Presentation of Country Reports

Botswana

Labour Market Characteristics

The unemployment rate in Botswana grew from 1991. Facts on the ground show that there are high incidence of unemployment among the least educated youth, with also quite noticeable prevalence of unemployment among those with higher levels of education in the 20-24 age group.

In 2002/3, the labour force participation rates for males was 51.5 per cent and 48.5 for females.

Causes of Unemployment

Education in Botswana has followed formal paths, oriented towards academic achievement. This bias towards academic excellence and training that is not market-based has led to an increase in unemployment. There is a deficit of skilled labour characterised by the existence of unemployment side by side with vacant posts.

HIV/AIDS prevalence among young people aged 15 – 19 years old is 38.6 per cent, and 50 per cent among those aged 25 – 29 years old. Thus, generally, the youth are the most affected by the pandemic.

Policy Responses

Botswana has formulated policy responses to address the problem of youth unemployment and has initiated programmes that have been implemented to address employment issues of young people. The following policies were formulated: the National Youth Policy, the National Plan of Action for Youth, the National Vision 2016 and other national policies that include Science and Technology Policy, Land Policy, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Rural Development Policy of 2002, Tourism Policies and

Programmes, National Policy on HIV/AIDS, National Policy on Culture and the National Development Plans.

The review of the national youth policy proposes the following strategies amongst others:

- Sustainable and accountable micro-credit and saving schemes as well as a Youth Development Fund to provide business loans, training and advisory services; and
- Employment Policy to provide a national framework for employment creation.

Priority Sectors

Areas for youth employment were identified as tourism, performing arts and recreation, and arts and crafts.

Lesotho

Labour Market Characteristics

In 1999, total unemployment was 27 per cent while youth unemployment was 34 per cent. Rural youth are at a greater disadvantage when compared to urban youth. For example, only 7.9 per cent of employed males from urban areas did not have any education compared to 28.4 per cent of their rural counterparts. In 1999, unemployment rates for youth were 20.8 per cent for males and 34.2 per cent for females. Their labour force participation rates were 71.1 per cent for males and 58.5 per cent for females.

Causes of Unemployment

Retrenchment in the mining industry in South Africa, which has been the main source of employment, was identified as a major cause of unemployment. The high levels of unemployment among the youth has been attributed to the mismatch between education and labour market demands, resulting in low levels of employable skills. In addition, there is lack of credit services to assist those youth willing to start their own businesses.

HIV and AIDS prevalence is estimated at 31 per cent of the population. In this regard the youth have been the worst affected, with females being the hardest hit.

Policy Responses

Responses to the challenges faced by the youth in Lesotho have been sporadic and uncoordinated. Policies and programmes affecting youth employment include the Education Development Strategy, the Draft National Employment Policy, the Lesotho Vision 2020, Poverty Reduction Strategy and the National Youth Policy.

Sadly, it has been noted that only the PRS has come up with strategies that can be adopted in order to cater for the youth and other vulnerable groups of society.

The draft Employment Policy in line with the PRS will include clearly identified areas which have a potential to absorb the growing number of youth into sustainable employment. The youth would be included in the membership of the envisaged National Employment Council.

Priority sectors

Sectors with highest potential for employment creation were identified as the sand stone industry, agriculture and small animal production.

Malawi

Labour Market Characteristics

Since independence in 1964 to date, there has never been a survey on the rates of employment and there is no data available as to how many young women and men are unemployed in Malawi.

Causes of Unemployment

The educational system is tailored towards training for white-collar jobs. However, there are non-white collar jobs and the youth leaving school do not have employable skills.

More than half of the new HIV/AIDS infections occur among young people aged 15-24 years old, with teenage girls being far more likely to be HIV infected than teenage boys. There are three to four times as many females as males reported to have AIDS in the group aged 15-19 years old, while there are about one-third more females than males in the group aged 20-29 years old.

Policy Responses

Malawi has come up with a Youth Policy, the National Youth Council of Malawi, the Youth Livelihood Knowledge Network, the Malawi Entrepreneurship Development Institute, the Technical Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training policy. The Vocational Training Institute was established with the assistance of the ILO.

Priority Sector

One priority sector for youth employment was identified as agriculture.

Mozambique

Labour Market Characteristics

500 000 youth enter the labour market annually.

Causes of Unemployment

There is a mismatch between education, training and labour market needs. There is low level of job creation, low educational levels and low work skills, while retrenchments from South African mines have exacerbated the unemployment problem.

Agriculture was said to employ 89 per cent of females and 63 per cent of the males.

Policy Responses

There has been the establishment of National Youth Council, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, War Demobilized Integration Programme, the Employment and Vocational Training Strategy and the expansion of the school network.

Priority sector

Agriculture has been identified as a priority sector for employment creation.

Namibia

Labour Market Characteristics

The unemployment rate was estimated at 33.8 per cent, with 8,000 youth entering the labour market annually.

Causes of Unemployment

There are low levels of education and lack of work experience in Namibia. There is also a skills deficit and very little private sector involvement. Namibia experiences both gender disparity and a racial divide, which shows zero unemployment levels among white youth.

Policy responses

Responses have included national youth policy, national youth service, junior achievement, affirmative action and the national policy for SME's, among others.

Priority sectors

For creation of employment for the youth, the following sectors were identified: textile industry, manufacturing, fishing and agriculture.

South Africa

Labour Market Characteristics

Youth constitute 40 per cent of the total population. The national unemployment rate stood at 26.5 per cent in March 2005, with the youth making up 75 per cent of the total unemployed, of whom 54 per cent are male and 46 per cent female.

Causes of Unemployment

- Lack of demand for labour;
- Lay-offs which have affected most of the youth because of the relatively less cost associated with doing so;
- High wages demanded by youths entering the job market;
- Lack of relevant education and job related skills and experience;
- The size of the youth population also directly translates to high unemployment; and
- Lack of adequate labour market information.

Policy Responses

The main policy responses have been targeted at increasing the labour absorption capacity for young people through:

- *Skills Development* - The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) seeks to link skill formation to the requirements of a growing economy and extends education and training to people both within and outside formal employment.
- *Cooperatives* - The South African government has promulgated the Cooperatives Act in June 2005, for which an implementation strategy has been developed and various funds made available. The newly established Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and other relevant institutions have been mandated to support cooperatives.
- *National Youth Service* - The National Youth Service (NYS) programme has been established and its goal is to increase the quality and scope of government service delivery, by harnessing the potential of young people, and in turn, to increase their employability.
- *Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)* - This programme was launched primarily to cushion the negative effects of unemployment and also to impart relevant skills to potential job-seekers. The EPWP is seen as a key short-term mechanism to increase employability, provide work experience and create value chains through entrepreneurship.
- *Youth Business development* - The drive to develop young entrepreneurs is largely being spearheaded by other existing policy frameworks and builds upon the work that is done by other NGO's. The following initiatives have been put in place to stimulate and promote youth entrepreneurship:

- Micro loans for young entrepreneurs;
- Creation of a venture capital fund underwritten by a mainstream bank; and
- Development of a voucher programme to access business development service.

Swaziland

Labour Market Characteristics

The youth constitute about 37 per cent of the total population. Unemployment for the youth under 20 years is 60 per cent and those between 20-30 years is 40 per cent (2002)

Causes of Unemployment

- Slow economic growth as compared to the growth of the labour force;
- Lack of skills and inexperience to compete on the labour market;
- Lack of finance and capacity to start self help projects; and
- Inappropriate education system that is oriented towards academic achievement rather than employment creation.

Policy Responses

Presently, Swaziland has no explicit national employment policy. However, there are policies and strategies that address the unemployment crisis, as captured in the National Development Strategy (NDS), the Smart Programme on Economic Empowerment and Development (SPEED), the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP), and the National Youth Policy.

There are also a number of employment creation initiatives which are the following: The Emalangenzi Fund to create 50 000 jobs; Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority; the establishment of an SMEs unit; a Micro-Projects Programme; the Swaziland Enterprise Fund; and the Swaziland National Youth Council Programmes.

Priority Sectors

The following were identified as sectors with a potential for employment creation for the youth:

- Agricultural sector, particularly irrigation;
- Manufacturing and processing;
- SMEs; and
- Tourism.

Zambia

Labour Market Characteristics

The total labour force stands at 4.7 million with youth constituting 70 per cent of the total, and 15 per cent of these are known to operate in the formal economy. There are 300,000 new entrants into the labour market each year.

Causes of Unemployment

The following factors have contributed to youth unemployment in Zambia over the past few years:

- Economic decline, coupled with economic and public sector reforms. This has led to increased job losses particularly among the youth, since they lack the requisite experience;
- Mismatch of the education system, i.e. the education system is oriented towards academic achievement as opposed to employment creation;
- HIV/AIDS as breadwinners die early, thus depriving the youth of opportunities for further education and training;
- Lack of access to land and capital and inadequate infrastructure; and
- Population growth which has not been matched with economic growth.

Policy Responses

In addressing these challenges, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has put in place and implemented integrated policies and programmes to curb the unemployment problem. Although the country has not yet developed a national employment policy, the existing framework has some areas which are specific to the youth, such as the National Youth Policy and other policies. The following make up the said policy framework:

- National Youth Policy of 2005 - The policy seeks to promote self-employment for the youth through entrepreneurship development and provision of basic skills training facilities;
- Commerce, Trade and Industry Policy of 1994, Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Policy of 1996 and National Education Policy of 1996 - These policies focus on both formal and informal economy activities, through skills development for employment creation;
- Youth Development Programmes - These have generally taken the form of skills training, informal economy employment promotion, and facilitation of identifying viable business opportunities, business management training, business advisory services and access to loan facilities, through the Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

Other initiatives have included Women's Finance Cooperatives and other micro-finance arrangements provided by state owned banks and the Youth Enterprise

Development Fund. In addition, there is a large number of community-based organizations addressing issues affecting the youth unemployment problem.

Priority Sectors

The following sectors were identified as having the most potential to create employment for the youth:

- Agriculture;
- SMEs; and
- Public works programmes since there is need to develop the national infrastructure in order to exploit the above sectors.

Zimbabwe

Labour Market Characteristics

The national youth unemployment rates have steadily increased over the years from 9.3 per cent in 1994 to 16.5 per cent 1997. According to recent estimates the national unemployment rate oscillates between 50 to 70 per cent, excluding the agricultural sector, where unemployment is estimated at about 35 per cent.

Causes of Unemployment

- Lack of experience;
- Mismatch of skills between supply and labour market needs
- Inadequacy of wage employment;
- Low levels of education;
- Low aggregate demand for labour due to rapid economic decline; and
- Discrimination, nepotism and favouritism.

Policy responses

Zimbabwe is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive national employment policy. The broad policy intervention seeks to enhance the quality of education and training in line with the needs of employers, so as to enhance the employment prospects of graduates. It also seeks to strengthen the entrepreneurship component of training to enable graduates to generate their own employment and to enhance life-skills education. Some of the adopted policies are aimed at enhancing youth employability, through increasing access to quality education, upgrading technical colleges to degree-awarding institutions that produce Bachelor of Technology graduates, in order to meet the needs of the labour market.

The indigenisation programme has focused mainly on small and medium enterprises in an endeavour to widen the strategies to promote employment creation opportunities. The

recently completed Land Reform Programme is a positive development that provides an opportunity for youth employment.

Vocational and technical education and training are provided for within several Acts of Parliament, which include the National Manpower Planning and Development Act (1984 and 1994), the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Act (1991), and the Vocational Education and Training Act in (1998).

The progressive decline of the formal industrial sector, due to the general decline of the Zimbabwean economy in the new millennium, led to the corresponding decline in the recruitment of apprentices by industry, with 2003 recording the lowest number of apprentices, since independence in 1980.

Several programmes are in place to support the young people's initiatives. These include setting up of Ministries supporting the Micro, Small to Medium Scale Enterprises, Youth Development and Employment Creation. The two Ministries have special revolving loan funds, targeted at promoting enterprise development.

Other initiatives include provision of micro-finance facilities to community organizations, such as cooperatives, sectors in construction (housing cooperatives), fishing, mining, agriculture, manufacturing and services.

Priority Sectors

The following were identified as sectors with a potential of employment creation:

- Agricultural sector;
- Mining; and
- SMEs.

6. General Discussion on the Country Reports

The general discussion stressed the need to emphasize the priority sectors for youth employment so as to come up with an Action Plan. Identifying priority sectors was viewed as the first step towards developing interventions that could meet the youth employment challenge in each country. To achieve this, the existing structures needed to involve the youth in the development of national action plans. It was felt that there is a need to start at the workplace.

Part of the discussion highlighted the need to move away from over-reliance on the traditional employment sectors of agriculture to find a niche in the hi-tech and manufacturing industries. To achieve this, it was suggested that there is need to start being proactive in developing "brain-based activities". Some countries in the sub-region have already engaged in such activities.

Participants also noted that lack of experience and the mismatch of education and labour market needs have always been a barrier to youth employment. It was underlined that entrepreneurship and SME's have a great potential for youth employment.

In addition, the following observations came to the fore:

- Employers needed to participate in youth skills training which are responsive to labour market needs;
- Internships were seen as a valuable way of introducing youth to the world of work. Youth voluntary work and internships needed to be included and recognized in CVs;
- Ways in which employers encourage the participation of youth in their enterprises should be more visible; and
- Industries such as construction and mining need to change their images to be more appealing to the youth.

Three priority areas for action were identified, and these were:

- HIV/AIDS;
- Sustainable livelihoods and increasing food security; and
- Capacity in institutional delivery.

It also emerged from the participants that politics of the day contributed in many ways as a constraint to development. They urged the different players to view social dialogue as a tool for progress and not to exploit it as a platform for out-classing one another.

7. Remarks by Guest Speaker from Private Sector - Zimbabwe

The keynote speaker for the evening reception was Mr Luke Ngwerume, Chief Executive Officer, Old Mutual, Zimbabwe. Focusing his presentation on the role the business community could play in the creation of youth employment, Mr Ngwerume highlighted the importance of youth employment for the achievement of socio-economic cohesion and stability in any particular country, a factor that is particularly important when it comes to attracting investors. He emphasized that the creation of employment for young people increased the size of markets for business and avoided inefficiencies in economic systems that are usually associated with unemployment. The business community was urged to take keen interest not only in the discussions of youth unemployment in the region, but to also implement effective practical projects that are geared towards solving the problem.

Drawing from the experience of Old Mutual and other companies, Mr. Ngwerume gave the following examples of how socially responsible companies could contribute to creating youth employment:

- (i) Supporting the development or enhancement of educational infrastructure;
- (ii) Supporting the development of skills and raising the awareness of professional opportunities; and
- (iii) Supporting activities that create employment for youth.

Mention was made of the numerous opportunities that existed for the business community to support the ILO agenda, as part and parcel of corporate social responsibility. For example, the financing of initiatives that create employment for the youth, through business activities that include investments in venture funds, student attachment programmes or job development programmes.

Mr. Ngwerume concluded his presentation by urging the business community to support the ILO agenda. He also called upon governments to continue to work on creating conducive environments in which companies could prosper. The stronger the companies, the easier it was for them to assist the ILO with the funding of activities that create employment for young people.

7. Panel with Youth Organizations

The Panel of Youth Organizations was opened by its chairperson, Mrs Neo Lelang, Government Representative from Botswana. She underlined the major objective and *raison-d'être* of the panel, which was to offer a platform for the youth to express their concerns and challenges regarding youth employment in Southern Africa, and outlined the various global initiatives that have echoed youth employment challenges as a priority.

Major issues regarding youth employment raised by the panellists were:

- Their non-involvement in policy-making;
- Lack of voice representation;
- Poor policy implementation;
- Poor quality of jobs offered to them;
- Political exploitation; and
- High incidence of HIV/AIDS among them.

In essence, they saw the youth as being excluded from decision-making and policy formulation processes, which made policies implemented by governments and other social partners not representative of their views and aspirations. Youth participation in international and national fora was viewed by the youth as mere “tokenism”, which made it difficult for them to claim ownership of the results of such “consultations”. Another observation made was that informal economy producers, who are predominantly the youth, were not represented in any kind of social dialogue institution, which pre-empts youth perspectives from being taken into account in policy-making and implementation.

The panellists also reiterated the fact that youth unemployment was not an isolated problem and that it had to be viewed in the broader context of social development and economic growth. There was also the need for the educational systems to adapt their curricula to labour market needs, and invest on skills development through vocational training.

They identified the sectors with the highest potential for employment creation as: agro-processing, sub-contracting of SMEs by huge local and international companies, and sports development.

The fact that there are no clear entry points for the youth in broad policy formulation and implementation frameworks was highlighted. The need to place youth employment as a priority, involving government, the social partners and the private sector's corporate social responsibility role was emphasized. There was call for genuine youth involvement and participation to remove barriers that preclude youth entry into the labour market and not involve them for political expediency. Governments were urged to play a leading role in employment creation with the full participation of the youth in the sub-region.

The need for an index to measure progress towards reducing youth unemployment in the sub-region was also highlighted as a way of making sure that action plans can be monitored and evaluated.

The ILO Sub-Regional Director assured the youth of ILO support and urged constituents to involve the youth in the development and implementation of national action plans. He prompted the youth to share their medium to long-term plans with all stakeholders so that the governments and other social partners would be in a better position to initiate appropriate intervention strategies. A point was raised that youth groups were generally fragmented and uncoordinated, a point which the panel agreed to, in relation to which it was explained that consultations were currently taking place to unite the youth movements in the sub-region.

9. Elements for Action Plans on Youth Employment

Group activities were set-up to brainstorm on the youth employment challenges and responses. Three-mixed groups of participants, composed of tripartite constituents and youth organizations representatives, were set up. The groups presented proposals and orientations for national action plans on youth employment, which constitute the main conclusions and recommendations for the Conference. This is presented in Annex 1 of this Report.

10. Closing Ceremony

The ILO Sub-Regional Director for Southern Africa, Mr. Tayo Fashoyin, stated that youth employment will be the main thrust of the ILO Decent Work Country Programme over the next biennium and this was in line with the follow-up to the Ouagadougou Summit. The ILO will mobilise resources to continue its work in this area. He pointed out that the "Elements of an Action Plan" identified by this Conference were key issues that were of paramount importance to developing national action plans. The Director stressed that the elements were a starting point for developing national action plans, and that individual countries could now identify and choose the specific areas that fitted into their national priorities. The ILO was ready to provide technical assistance for the drafting of National Action Plans on youth employment, upon request from constituents.

Mr Fashoyin thanked and congratulated all the countries and participants for helping to enrich the Conference. He thanked the ILO Regional Director for Africa, Mrs. Regina Amadi-Njoku, for her commitment to the Conference and the youth employment challenge which was demonstrated by her presence at the Conference. He expressed his desire to continue working closely with the Regional Office, on the youth challenge, as a follow-up to the Conference.

The Director recognised the commitment of the government of Zimbabwe and in particular the commitment of the Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, the Honourable N. Goche, for his enthusiasm to work with the ILO. He stressed that the role of governments, in addressing the youth employment challenge, could not be over-emphasised. He further stressed that the continued work of the tripartite constituents and all stakeholders was of paramount importance in the next phase of the action plans.

He also thanked the African Union, SADC, UNDP and the development partners for their valued participation at the Conference and commitment to the outcomes of the Conference. The workers, employers and youth representatives were thanked for their time and input into the Conference.

Mr Chrispin Munyukwa, who spoke on behalf of the Workers' Group, pointed out that while the Conference addressed the youth unemployment challenge, it was now important to take concrete steps towards addressing this issue. He reiterated his earlier call during the opening ceremony for more action and less talking by all stakeholders. He further said that national action plans needed to be drawn up and acted upon immediately, and that government and business needed to show their commitment to this challenge. He reiterated that trade unions were ready to engage other stakeholders in addressing employment issues in general and youth unemployment in particular, since they viewed the youth as a building block for the labour movement in the future.

In the Employers' Representative concluding speech, Mr. D. Z. Namandwa thanked the ILO for organizing the Conference and the opportunity to exchange views and ideas on creation of employment for the youth. He highlighted the following as challenges: Poverty, HIV/AIDS, slow/negative growth and inflation. He noted that from the Employers' perspective, the primary objective of any business was to make money first, then create jobs. He called upon governments to create conducive macroeconomic and political environments that would facilitate business and enterprise development because successful businesses would create jobs.

On the issue of education and training, he reiterated the need for governments and training institutions to involve employers in the development of curricula, in order to address the mismatch between demand and supply of skills. He pointed out the need for the youth to work towards making themselves employable by acquiring skills that would make them versatile and marketable, as well as skills that would render them self-employed. Finally, he called upon all stakeholders to come up with action plans that are

feasible for the respective countries and suggested that the next meeting should be reporting on progress the different countries would have made on the action plans.

The ILO Regional Director for Africa, Mrs. Regina Amadi-Njoku's concluding speech commended the active and tripartite participation, frankness and constructive engagement in the Conference. She noted that creating jobs in Africa would depend on accelerating economic growth, but that growth alone would not always translate into jobs. New, innovative and direct interventions were necessary for job creation. The Regional Director pointed out that the youth panel raised some crucial issues including the need to do more than simply pay lip service to the youth challenge.

She stressed that the African governments would have to practically take up leadership in explicitly promoting youth employment in their policies. On this regard, the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans was a key factor. She highlighted the role played by the Youth Employment Network (YEN) in supporting and promoting national level strategies for youth employment. As countries draw up national plans, the action plan elements thus identified on youth employment had to also feed into the follow-up to the AU Summit.

She concluded by reiterating the ILO's commitment in concert with UN agencies and development partners, and particularly the private sector, to support youth employment in the context of the AU Summit follow-up on Poverty and Employment Alleviation. The ILO would always be available to provide support to mainstream youth employment issues in the national employment and/or poverty reduction strategies and other development policy frameworks.

In his closing remarks, the chairperson, Mr Ruben Makuvise, acknowledged that the presentations addressed the challenge of youth unemployment through various initiatives and international efforts and, particularly, the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action and discussions at the International Labour Conference in June 2005. He acknowledged that through group work, priority sectors and programmes with the highest potential to create employment for the youth in the region had been identified and the entire process culminated in the discussion and adoption of the "Elements for Action Plans on Youth Employment" at national and regional levels. The Chairperson urged the participants to take this report seriously for follow up at national and sub-regional levels.

“Elements for Action Plans on Youth Employment”

a. Introduction

in Harare, from 17-19 October 2005.

Having regard to the Resolution concerning Youth Employment adopted at the International Labour Conference in June 2005, the relevant Millennium Development Goals, the Plan of Action of the AU Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, the Youth Employment Network, existing programmes of regional organizations such as SADC, the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa, organized a tripartite sub-regional Conference, on Youth Employment Challenge in Southern Africa, to focus on how to advance youth employment in the Southern African sub-region.

A conducive economic climate, increased investment and a strengthened role for the private sector are essential for creating decent and secure employment generally and particularly for the youth.

Meeting the youth employment challenge at the national level calls for an integrated approach, within the framework of a comprehensive national employment strategy, an element of which is sectoral policies. Accordingly, the ILO proposed that a sectoral approach could be an innovative and practical means to make rapid and concrete progress in improving youth employment. The Conference identified five major sectoral items and several cross-cutting issues that form the elements for action programmes on youth employment.

The key priority considerations include economic sectors with the highest employment potential for the youth; innovative employment creation programmes for the youth; the respective roles of the main stakeholders; the different levels of intervention – from local, national, sub-regional to international and; the time frame for interventions.

The principal cross-cutting issues that need to be integrated at every stage and at each level of programme development and implementation are: education and lifelong learning; equal opportunity; HIV/AIDS; and the need to fully involve the youth and their representatives from the conception, implementation and monitoring stages to the review of policies and programmes that affect them. Youth involvement is particularly important if the youth concerned are to be convinced that, for vital issues that affect them, their voice is being heard and

taken into account. Of equal importance is the need to strengthen social dialogue amongst the relevant stakeholders in all the processes.

b. Developing Action Programmes

When developing action programmes in accordance with the above-mentioned sectoral and crosscutting issues, the Conference agreed that the following elements should be taken into account, having regard to national and sectoral peculiarities.

c. Priority sectors with the highest employment potential for youth:

- 1) Agriculture;
- 2) Tourism;
- 3) Mining;
- 4) Manufacturing; and
- 5) Enabling sectors:
 - i. Infrastructure development
 - ii. Extension services

d. Employment programmes for youth

1) Employability

- Innovative gender-sensitive training and skills development programmes, such as apprenticeship programmes, mentorship, business incubators, promoting culture of entrepreneurship, etc;
- Vocational training programmes designed and implemented in partnership with the private sector; and
- Basic education programmes for school-drop outs.

2) Employment creation

- SME and cooperatives promotion and development;
- Labour-based public works;
- Public and private employment intensive investment programmes;
- Business linkages;
- Self-employment programmes;
- Service provision in fields such as HIV-AIDS, waste management and environmental protection, through public/private partnership; and
- Community-based service provision such as access to micro-credit.

3) Equal Opportunity

- Reintegration of ex-combatant youth;
- Promoting the employment of young women;

- Programmes targeting youth with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

e. Respective Roles of the Principal Stakeholders

Government:

Governments need to create a conducive and enabling environment through an integrated policy approach that includes, among others, the following:

- Political will and commitment to making youth employment a national priority by increasing resource allocation to youth development;
- Placing youth employment at the heart of national policy and all other employment and development policies;
- Review/formulation of relevant legislation under existing institutional arrangements;
- Involvement of the tripartite constituents and other partners including youth organisations' in all the processes of decision making, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes;
- Provision of adequate infrastructure;
- Provision of access to financial services.

Workers Organizations:

- Extension of representation to the informal economy;
- Support to youth organisations and initiatives;
- Participation in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Private Sector:

- Investment in youth development;
- Encouraging forward and backward linkages of business, for example through subcontracting;
- Development of mentorship arrangements for Small to Medium Enterprises;
- Provision of youth-oriented training programmes (apprenticeships, learnerships and internships);
- Participation in curriculum development;
- Development and expansion of marketing strategies;
- Provision of access to financial services;
- Participation in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Youth:

- Advocacy and lobbying for the youth challenge to be placed at the centre of development policies and programmes;
- Development of strong united youth associations and networks;

- Participation in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Local Communities:

- Mobilisation and allocation of local resources;
- Participation in skills development;
- Initiating awareness raising campaigns;
- Participation in policy formulation implementation monitoring and evaluation;
- Ensuring ownership of initiatives;
- Need for local governments, workers, private sector, youth and NGO's to combine efforts to improve resource mobilisation and utilisation.

f. Interventions at local, national, sub-regional and international levels

Local:

- Mobilisation of the community to take ownership of the youth employment challenge;
- Provision of appropriate support structures;
- Development of employment promotion programmes;
- Promotion of local economic development.

National:

- Review/formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment policy;
- Coordination of policies and programmes in a coherent and integrated manner;
- Development of employment promotion programmes;
- Provision of training and capacity building;
- Provision of support systems for access to financial services, procurement, etc.;
- Development of an effective labour market information system.

Sub-regional:

- Establishment of a coordination and monitoring mechanism;
- Facilitating the exchange of information, innovative experience and best practices;
- Harmonisation of policies and practices;
- Development of a sub-regional database on labour market information.

International:

- Dissemination of best practices and exchange of information.

g. Time frame for interventions

Short Term (1 year)

- Formulation of innovative programmes on skills development;
- Development of innovative pilot programmes in different sectors;
- Identification of sectors with the highest employment creation potential;
- Mobilisation of resources.

Medium Term (2-5 years)

- Implementation and monitoring of employment promotion programmes;
- Implementation of skills development programmes;
- Replicating and upscale of pilot programmes.

Long Term (+5 years)

- Ensuring programme sustainability;
- Monitoring and evaluation of programmes;
- Ensuring transition from self-employment to employment creation;
- Upgrading the informal economy.

h. Role of the ILO

The Conference urged the ILO, on request and subject to the availability of resources, to assist government authorities and the social partners, country-level representative groups, either existing ones or groups created for the purpose, to formulate action programmes for the sector(s) concerned, to implement and review them, draw lessons learnt and facilitate exchanges of experience at tripartite sub-regional meetings, with participation of relevant intergovernmental and other organizations, including AU, SADC, NEPAD and UN agencies. Countries need to report on what they have done with their National Action Plans, in-line with the resolution on follow up mechanisms of the Ouagadougou Summit.

Annex 2

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