



Special sitting

Wednesday, 15 June 2011, 4.00 p.m.

President: Mr Nkili

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Today, we have the honour and the privilege to welcome Mr Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Mr President, welcome! You are a distinguished Head of State from Africa, and it is an honour and a privilege, for me and all of the delegates present, to welcome you this afternoon and to listen to your message, which I am sure will be very useful for us.

I give the floor to Mr Juan Somavia, Secretary-General of the International Labour Conference, to introduce our guest.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr President, *rafiki yangu, Rais Kikwete. Karibu sana Geneva!*

Sir, welcome to the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In you, Tanzania, Africa and the world are witnessing a new brand of leadership grounded in simplicity and sensitivity, conviction and compassion, fairness and effectiveness.

You have served your country in different government portfolios – energy, minerals and water development, finance and also foreign affairs – during which time I had the privilege of working closely with you.

At the 2005 general elections you won an overwhelming mandate. The people of the United Republic of Tanzania restated their confidence in you and acknowledged your achievements when they re-elected you as President last year. In recognition of your personal commitment to the stability and development of Africa, you were honoured by your peers when they elected you as Chairperson of the African Union in January 2008.

You have also been a strong advocate of regional integration and of a common market for eastern and southern Africa, acting as Chairperson of the East African Community between 2005 and 2010.

The ILO is honoured to accompany this process, particularly in the areas of social protection and migration.

Mr President, you are a key actor in Africa and on the international stage, in this new era of social justice that must emerge if we want a peaceful world.

Let me highlight here that your National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA)

focuses, among other things, on equitable and employment-generating growth and concentrates on sectors that have the potential to create productive and decent employment, “especially youth, women and disadvantaged groups”.

Allow me to praise your commitment to the promotion of youth employment, an issue of critical importance not only for Africa, as the African Union has highlighted, but for the world as well.

Your work as member of the Danish Africa Commission has conveyed a sense of hope and opportunity for the youth of Africa, and we are honoured that the Commission has asked the ILO to assist in the implementation of the report in the areas of entrepreneurship and skill development. Thank you for that trust.

We are also proud to be supporting your Government through the Tanzania Decent Work Country Programme. Your country, as with so many others in the world, is facing the structural problems of weak job growth.

Let me also mention that your action to extend social protection to the informal economy workers has been highly significant.

As a pilot country, Tanzania is enabling the UN system to act as a true family in your own country.

Mr President, you already honoured us when you addressed the 11th Regional African Meeting in Addis Ababa in April 2007. At that time, you spoke of “the necessity for a fairer globalization in the attainment of our development goals”.

Your words then augured many of the problems we are facing today. As we reach a turning point in the history of globalization and the development processes and growth patterns that we have had up to now, we very much look forward to listening to you again.

As we welcome you here today as the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, I want to recall that it was home to important freedom fighters during the difficult days of colonialism as well as a home to the spirit of pan-Africanism that was at the heart of the founding father of the nation, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

You are the heir and the contemporary expression of a powerful tradition in an Africa that is self-assured and has a conviction that will, by its own means, be able to go forward.

For all of these reasons, Mr President, thank you very much for being here with us.

It is now my honour to give the floor to His Excellency Mr Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr Jakaya Mrisho KIKWETE (*President of the United Republic of Tanzania*)

Let me begin by congratulating you, Professor Robert Nkili, Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Cameroon, on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would like to assure you of my personal support, as well as that of the Tanzanian delegation, in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation to the ILO Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Juan Somavia, for his kind invitation for me to address this historic 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I feel greatly honoured and privileged to be afforded the rare opportunity of being associated with such an important milestone.

Mr President, this year's session of the Conference is a very special one for the International Labour Organization and all its members. It marks an important milestone in its history. As we all know, the ILO was founded to eliminate all forms of exploitation of workers and labour.

During the past 99 sessions to this historic one today, the world has witnessed millions of workers being freed, social protection being advanced and labour standards being regularized and enhanced. It is indeed a milestone worth celebrating.

There is another reason for us to celebrate on this auspicious occasion. The ILO has proved itself to be a formidable organization. The Organization has shown an enormous degree of resilience. The ILO has not only survived but has actually grown from strength to strength amid this challenging, historic epoch.

Allow me also to mention another important factor that I appreciate about the ILO. This Organization has remained proactive and has always kept abreast of changing world circumstances.

As a result, the ILO has remained relevant at all times and the unwavering bulwark of workers' rights and advancement. It was no surprise to me, therefore, that the ILO was among the first international organizations, if not the first, to raise the alarm on the negative trends of globalization.

No wonder the ILO introduced the Decent Work Agenda to respond to the call for social justice to millions of workers in the wake of globalization.

This Organization has been at the forefront of advancing the agenda for the protection of the vulnerable, particularly women and children the world over.

I consider the theme of this session very opportune indeed, given the high levels of unemployment and the challenge to the working environment facing many workers.

By focusing on the new era of social justice, the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference addresses the all important matter of ensuring basic services and safeguards for the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized.

It also puts emphasis on the importance of creating opportunities for decent work which, by definition, means availability of jobs that are productive

and secure, jobs that ensure respect for labour rights, jobs that provide adequate income to the workers, offer social protection and allow social dialogue and bargaining.

This meeting is taking place at a time when globalization continues to pose challenges and present opportunities for countries, as well as for the work of the International Labour Organization.

The relationship between globalization and labour is that of interdependence. Globalization depends on labour for its success. As a result, a crisis in globalization inevitably results in worsening conditions of labour, even though its prosperity does not mean social justice.

The recent economic and social crisis has posed new challenges to the realization of the Decent Work Agenda and threatens to erode some of the lofty gains the world has made in the past decades.

These new challenges demand new approaches. The ILO Director-General's Report speaks volumes about this and provides us with a new yardstick for viewing the global challenges. It calls for the transformation of existing patterns of growth to make them economically more efficient, socially stable, environmentally friendly and politically sustainable.

The Report's message is timely because it challenges us all to rethink how we conduct socio-economic affairs. This Report gives credence to the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization which my immediate predecessor, His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa, had the opportunity to co-chair with the President of Finland, Her Excellency Tarja Halonen.

The Commission affirmed the existence of unfairness in globalization and proposed ways to redress the situation. There are, in our globalized world, patterns of growth that are skewed against developing nations. This is not right; it is neither acceptable nor is it sustainable.

Globalization therefore demands an objective and transformative leadership that can respond to these myriad challenges by designing and promoting policies that can steer the world economy to a more just, equitable and sustainable development.

We highly appreciate the ILO's leadership role on this important matter, and Ambassador Juan Somavia will always be remembered for his invaluable contribution in this regard.

Achieving social justice and decent work in a globalized area has proven to be a daunting task for many developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of the poor nations are.

There are several reasons for this state of affairs: firstly, in the quest to attract foreign investments countries are compelled to create a conducive investment environment. Unfortunately, in many countries this has been done at the expense of great labour, social and environmental costs.

As we all know, and ironically so, foreign direct investments are attracted to places where there are low wages, to places where there are lower taxes and to places where there are fewer environmental regulations. Clearly these trends, which are the current expression of globalization, are at odds with the ILO's goal of securing decent work and environmental protection.

Difficult as it may seem, it is imperative for developing countries to design policies that promote efficient growth patterns that are inclusive, environmentally friendly and sustainable. After all, sus-

tainable development calls for a balance between profits, people and the planet.

Secondly, the majority of the people in Africa – 70 per cent or more – are employed in agriculture, which by and large remains traditional and subsistence. Unfortunately there is little use of modern science and technology in agricultural production and there is over-dependence on seasonal rainfall patterns. With climate change, frequent droughts and unpredictable floods, things have become very difficult for the agricultural sector.

As a result, both productivity and production in many places are very low. This, coupled with the volatility of markets for agricultural commodities, makes engaging in agriculture less rewarding and creating decent work a serious challenge.

Despite these challenges there is hope that, with the appropriate policies and innovating interventions, African agriculture can be transformed, can become more productive and can guarantee decent work. We have to modernize production methods. We have to establish agro-processing industries. Why should we continue to be exporters of primary commodities? Why should we continue to export jobs to the developed countries? Why not create those jobs in Africa, improve domestic markets, increase access to international markets and get fair prices on both local and global markets?

It defeats the purpose to talk of social justice if one does not take into account the fate of the poor farmers who form the majority of the labour force on the African continent.

We also need to address the problem of unemployment and underemployment which is ever increasing, particularly among the youth in developing countries. This is a constant and serious challenge with undeterminable consequences. Addressing this problem effectively is not so very easy for most countries, given the low level of development of our economies.

Therefore joint, collaborative efforts are needed. This would involve governments, local and international businesses, civil society organizations and development partners to jump-start and increase the speed of job creation in developing countries.

The third reason is the presence of a large informal sector in Africa. Many people enter the informal sector, not as a matter of choice, but because of the need to survive. In situations of extreme poverty and high employment, the informal sector becomes the saviour. It offers ease of entry, as it is less regulated and has relatively low requirements in terms of education, skills, technology and capital.

However, most jobs in the informal sector fail to meet the requirements of decent work. Therefore, the challenge before us is to strike the balance between the need for work and the pronounced deficits in the informal sector. This is a challenge for all of us to find a suitable answer. If successful, it could allow millions of workers in Africa to make a living. Millions could lift themselves out of poverty and into working conditions that are decent.

I welcome the decision to include in the agenda of this 100th Session the issue of decent work for domestic workers. There are millions of people around the world, particularly women and children, who are engaged in this type of work to provide a living for themselves and for their families.

Unfortunately, despite the important services they render to their employers and their households, domestic workers are among the most exploited and

most abused worldwide. Worse still, they usually receive scant attention from policy-makers. Fortunately for us in the United Republic of Tanzania, they are recognized by law and they are well anchored in our basic rights provision.

All of us here know about the global campaign on social protection and coverage for all which was launched in 2003 to promote and extend social security to all with interactive strategies.

We are aware, in this regard, of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and I would like to use this opportunity to express the United Republic of Tanzania's gratitude to the ILO for the technical and financial support provided to its constituents. Indeed, the extension of social security can be achieved through tripartite collaboration and adherence to international labour standards. Nevertheless, innovative policy mechanisms and dialogue between employer, employee and government are essential.

The United Republic of Tanzania has a number of social security schemes which are either contributory or non-contributory. They provide short- and long-term benefits for health care, education, maternity leave, employment injury, retirement and survivors' benefits and patients. Yet to a great extent these schemes are still limited in scope, since only 5.4 per cent of the total workforce of 16 million Tanzanians is not covered. It is only 5.4 per cent covered so the remaining nearly 95 per cent is not covered.

The remaining members of the labour force in the informal sector are not covered. They therefore turn to family and community-based social support systems which, to say the least, are inadequate and unpredictable. This is far too low a coverage and a serious deficit that we have resolved to overcome. I am glad to say that work has already started. We are exploring the possibilities of relaxing criteria for qualifications so as to enable workers in the informal sector to access and benefit from social security schemes. Some of the social security schemes have already developed programmes whereby individuals in the informal sector can voluntarily register with them. I am sure their success will encourage the others to do the same.

I am also pleased to inform this august assembly that we have delivered on the promise of establishing a social security regulatory authority. The institution is already in place and performing its functions of oversight, regulation and harmonization of social security schemes. Besides that, the regulatory authority is also charged with the task of developing strategies to extend social security coverage to as many people as possible. We hope, in this regard, that the elderly, the vulnerable and those working in the informal sector will be covered and benefit from it.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words to acknowledge social dialogue is an important pillar for attaining conditions of decent work. I say so from first-hand experience of the Tanzanian workplaces. Where this pillar has been well established, it has served well to improve work relationships, thus promoting harmony, enhanced productivity and economic growth. Social dialogue creates a space for reflection instead of negotiations driven by emotions. It can therefore replace adversarial relationships with collaborative partnerships, develop a shared understanding of problems and fa-

facilitate constructive discussions on policy formulation.

The United Republic of Tanzania remains committed to enhancing social dialogue at all levels. This has proved to be of great value in harnessing and improving industrial relations in the country. We see to it that all the established organs of the ILO function properly and deadlines are met.

We in the Government, on our side, will not falter in meeting our obligations and commitments. I am happy that we have maintained the planned meetings with trade union leaders during the budget preparation processes. The dialogue has helped us to find common understanding of a number of pressing issues that upset the workers and affected their welfare. I personally maintained regular meetings with trade union leaders some days before our May Day celebrations. At our last meeting this year, we agreed to increase the frequency of these meetings, preferably to three times a year. We are com-

mitted to ensuring that we deliver on this promise. This dialogue has again proved useful, and it is in the interests of all of us to ensure that it continues and endures.

Let me conclude by once again saying thank you for availing me with this rare opportunity to address the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference. I join hands with all of you in celebrating the great successes of this Organization that have been achieved over the many years. We look forward to a future full of optimism that social justice for all will be realized.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Your Excellency, Mr President, we thank you very sincerely for your message, which holds many lessons for the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 4.25 p.m.)

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