



13th African Regional Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 November–3 December 2015

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Report of the 13th African Regional Meeting

Elections and appointments

1. The 13th African Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 November to 3 December 2015.
2. On behalf of the Government group, a Government representative of Zimbabwe put forward a candidate for the position of Chairperson of the Regional Meeting, and the Meeting unanimously elected Mr Abdulfatah Abdullahi Hassan, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, to this post. The Meeting unanimously elected Mr Grégoire Owona (Cameroon) as Government Vice-Chairperson, Ms Jacqueline Mugo (Kenya) as Employer Vice-Chairperson and Mr Mody Guiro (Senegal) as Worker Vice-Chairperson.
3. In accordance with the *Rules for Regional Meetings, 2008*, the Meeting appointed the members of its Credentials Committee as follows: Mr M. Khiat (Government, Algeria), Mr A.K. Mlimuka (Employer, United Republic of Tanzania), and Mr G. Nkiwane (Worker, Zimbabwe).
4. The Meeting established a Drafting Committee to prepare the conclusions of the Meeting, composed of five Government representatives, five Employer representatives and five Worker representatives, with the following members:

Government representatives: Egypt, Gabon, Malawi, Nigeria and United Republic of Tanzania

Employer representatives: Ms J. Mugo (Kenya); Mr S.H. Ladouyou (Côte d'Ivoire); Ms V. Phala (South Africa); Ms F. Awassi (Gabon); and Mr K. Ghariani (Tunisia)

Worker representatives: Mr M. Guiro (Senegal); Mr G. Mhotsha (Botswana); Mr B. Ntshalintshali (South Africa); Ms T. Lahrech (Morocco); and Ms A.M. Agnala Alagan (Togo)

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5. The Meeting suspended the application of certain provisions of the *Rules for Regional Meetings, 2008*, in accordance with article 8 of the *Rules*.¹

Opening addresses

6. The Chairperson of the Regional Meeting welcomed the tripartite delegations to the Meeting and to Addis Ababa. He thanked the Meeting for electing him as Chairperson. Ethiopia had hosted both the Tenth and 11th African Regional Meetings in 2003 and 2007, respectively. Ethiopia was therefore proud to host the 13th African Regional Meeting. This Regional Meeting was held shortly after the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, also hosted by Ethiopia, and the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) placing decent work as one of the goals. These developments highlighted the centrality of decent work and placed it as a key priority underpinning all development priorities.
7. African countries had achieved high economic growth rates over the past decade, and yet poverty and unemployment persisted. Ethiopia was one of the African countries which had attained such high growth rates. To address the challenge of continuing poverty, the Government had in 2015 developed the Growth and Transformation Plan 2 (GTP 2) aimed at generating sustainable economic and inclusive job-rich growth. Broad-based economic growth would be achieved through a focus on improved productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors.
8. To achieve the GTP 2 objectives, backward and forward linkages between agriculture and manufacturing, export promotion, structural transformation of the productive sector, infrastructure development, human capital investment, and support to small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development would be promoted. The discussions and conclusions of this Regional Meeting would pave the way for future ILO presence in Africa. Ethiopia was grateful for the immense contribution the ILO was making to Africa's development.
9. The Director-General of the ILO welcomed the delegates to the Regional Meeting. The Meeting came at a critical moment, with the adoption in September 2015 of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda and coinciding with the Paris Climate Change Conference. He thanked the President of Ethiopia for holding the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 and also for generously hosting the ILO Regional Office for Africa for the past ten years. His Report to the Meeting, *Towards inclusive and sustainable development in Africa through decent work*, had a straightforward purpose: to take stock of the experience of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa 2007–15 adopted at the 11th Regional Meeting in 2007 and to seek guidance from constituents in charting the road forward and planning the work of the ILO up to the next Regional Meeting, which would take place in 2019 – the year of the Organization's centenary.

¹ Article 11 of the *Rules* was suspended with regard to the functioning of the Drafting Committee on the conclusions of the Meeting, in order to allow it to fulfil its function efficiently and decide on its own modalities, and article 10 on the right to speak was suspended with regard to the organization of the High-Level Dialogue on “Decent work in Africa in the post-2015 context: Rights and social dialogue for inclusive and sustainable growth”, the special plenary debates and the special session on the “Promotion and application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa”, to allow greater flexibility in the organization of their work.

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- 10.** Key progress had been achieved: on average, people in Africa had incomes 15 per cent higher than in 2007; extreme poverty had fallen by 12 per cent since 1999; and Africa's middle class had grown by almost a half, while access to secondary education was up by more than a half since 2000. Technology was making a difference: Internet users had doubled in just three years; and enterprise creation was more dynamic in Africa than in any other region. These elements had underpinned a decade of sustained growth in Africa, 4.5 per cent on average, and the continent had weathered the global financial and jobs crisis better than most. Despite this good progress, the benefits of real economic dynamism were unevenly shared, with too many African citizens benefiting too little or not at all; Africa's recent growth performance, impressive as it had been, had not generated enough decent work. The massive potential development dividend of Africa's young population meant that from now until 2030 no less than one in three new entrants into the world labour market would be African. Twenty-five years previously the corresponding figure had been about one in six. Fifty-one of the 54 member States of the region had now mainstreamed decent work into national development strategies, making the ILO's Decent Work Agenda Africa's agenda.
 - 11.** The adoption by the African Union (AU) Summit in January 2015 of the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development showed that significant regional and global commitments to the Decent Work Agenda had been achieved. This Declaration and Plan of Action called on the ILO to work with the AU and other partners in a five-year priority programme to kick-start the continent's ambitious 50-year Agenda 2063 prioritizing prosperity for Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development realized through decent work. Africa had globally adopted a common position on the post-2015 development agenda and had thus played a major role in ensuring that decent work should lie at the centre of the outcome document entitled "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Goal 8 of this document aimed to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Moreover, the 2030 SDGs contained many further references to the Decent Work Agenda.
 - 12.** Lack of resources, lack of administrative and technical capacities, and lack of common purpose were three risks impeding achievement of the decent work goals set at the national, regional and global levels. More domestic and international resources should be allocated to promoting respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. More importance should be placed on social dialogue as a means of attaining unity of purpose. The Director-General highlighted the remarkable awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian workers and employers of the General Labour Union of Tunisia (UGTT) and of the Tunisian Industry, Trade and Crafts Union (UTICA).
 - 13.** ILO strategy was geared towards providing Africa with the institutional support it needed to achieve the goal of inclusive growth through decent work. In this, partnerships with African institutions like the AU, the African Development Bank and the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa were crucial to the ILO. The 14th African Regional Meeting would coincide with the Organization's centenary, which the ILO planned to link with a major in-depth reflection on the "Future of Work" culminating at the 108th Session (2019) of the International Labour Conference. The Director-General would be writing to all member States urging each one to conduct national Future of Work dialogues with full tripartite participation in 2016. Their outcomes would be presented to a high-level global commission to be established in 2017, which would in turn report to the centenary Conference. The purpose was to prepare and equip the ILO, as it moved into its second century, to fulfil its mandate for social justice under the conditions of deep and rapid transformation in the world of work. It was essential that Africa's voice be heard in this process.

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14. The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked the Employers' group for her election and the Government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality. Her group was in favour of any fruitful collaboration between employers and workers to better implement the 2007–15 Decent Work Agenda in Africa. This 13th Regional Meeting was the first to take stock and review progress made since 2007, with a view to mapping future action of the Organization in the region. Other speakers had highlighted the strong economic growth rate in Africa; the challenge was to sustain this trajectory and make it inclusive. The Decent Work Agenda in Africa was a key component of the SDGs. Based on a number of studies conducted by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other institutions, she stressed the competitive advantage of Africa in the agricultural sector. Investment should be made in this sector in order to help tackle youth unemployment, migration issues and to preserve peace. Unemployment and decent work deficits were considered to be the main root causes of migration in Africa.
 15. Other important areas for investment included agro-industry, SMEs, microfinance, infrastructure, skills and training, and social dialogue. Attention should be paid to the vision of the President of the African Development Bank of transforming African agriculture in order to fully exploit its potential for job creation in Africa. As part of this, a regulatory framework should be put in place that would facilitate a sustainable environment for job creation. Regional integration suffered from poor infrastructure. Accelerated and greater interconnectivity would greatly encourage better regional integration. Finally, she stressed that workers and employers had a number of common interests in the national development agenda and should therefore work together in the context of the Social Partners Forum.
 16. The Worker Vice-Chairperson expressed his group's belief in the vision of the social and economic development of the continent based on the huge potential of Africa in terms of natural resources. Africa had achieved an economic growth rate of 5 per cent over the past decade. However, the continent still faced numerous challenges before it could liberate its full development potential. The manufacturing sector accounted for only 6 per cent of employment; factories had not created enough decent work and African manufacturing had dropped from 12 to 11 per cent globally.
 17. In order to break out of this negative cycle, Africa needed to implement the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, the SDGs and the Agenda 2063; this would greatly assist the continent in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Social dialogue was of the utmost importance to this end. Regrettably, many countries in the region did not fully practice social dialogue and had failed in their obligation to implement fundamental ILO Conventions, in particular the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Special address by His Excellency, Dr Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

18. His Excellency, President Mulatu Teshome of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia welcomed all guests to Ethiopia. The hosting of the 13th African Regional Meeting, a platform for discussion and dialogue, was a privilege. The items on the agenda, including issues of decent work, informal economy and youth employment, were of key importance to Africa. In a continent with a large proportion of working poor, of which a significant number lived on less than US\$1 a day, decent work could contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty alleviation. All parties should be committed to implementing the conclusions that would be adopted by the Regional Meeting, as well

as supporting the outcomes of other meetings that had recently been held in Ethiopia, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2015, and the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa. Africa's growth, which had been high, on average, should translate into meaningful jobs and promote social transformation while paying due consideration to environmental protection. Sustainable development laid the foundation for lasting development. In view of this, it remained vital that mechanisms to protect the vulnerable were established, that public spending should be efficient and that efforts should be made for Africa to provide adequate financing for its youth. This would contribute positively to achieving the SDGs.

19. Ethiopia had made important strides in trying to cut unemployment, reduce poverty and transform the economy. The Government attached special importance to employment policies. Strategic policy guidance documents had been prepared. These strategies included the 2005–09 Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP); Ethiopia's 2010–15 five-year GTP, which aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The new GTP 2 would guide future development plans largely based on the experience of GTP 1, with a clear focus on ensuring that Ethiopia became a middle-income country. The Government's priorities included decent work, poverty alleviation, social protection, action on HIV in the workplace, promotion of rights and social dialogue. The partnership between the Government and the ILO had been exceedingly positive. The Organization had provided valuable guidance in eradicating poverty and promoting decent work through a number of successful projects under way in the country.

High-Level Dialogue: Decent work in Africa in the post-2015 context: Rights and social dialogue for inclusive and sustainable growth

20. The Meeting held a High-Level Dialogue on "Decent work in Africa in the post-2015 context: Rights and social dialogue for inclusive and sustainable growth". The dialogue was led by a panel, chaired by the Chairperson of the Meeting, Mr Abdulfatah Abdullahi Hassan, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and moderated by Mr Moussa Oumarou, Director, Governance and Tripartism Department, International Labour Office. The panel was composed as follows:

- Mr Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General;
- Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union Commission (AUC);
- Mr Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa;
- Mr Willy Makiashi, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Employment, Labour and Social Protection of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Mr Mansour Sy, Minister for Labour, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations and Relations with Institutions of Senegal;
- Ms Linda Kromjong, Secretary General, International Organisation of Employers (IOE);
- Mr Francis Atwoli, Secretary General, Central Organization of Trade Unions.

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- 21.** Mr Lopes said that African gross domestic product (GDP) had tripled in the last 15 years, but growth had not been accompanied by equality. Africa needed transformative growth, making society more inclusive and reducing poverty. While six of the ten fastest growing countries in the world were on the African continent, unfortunately six out of the ten most unequal States in terms of distribution of the benefits of growth were also in Africa. Inequality was growing in many countries in Africa. The structures of the economy had not allowed growth to translate into benefit for the majority. The continent depended largely on primary commodities and natural resources. Most exports were from the extractive industries, which absorbed 1 per cent of formal employment, while accounting for 85 per cent of exports. Africa needed to create jobs in industry, the manufacturing sector and benefit from its youth dividend. Its population was already 1 billion, and was projected to grow to 2 billion by 2050; this would make it the continent with the largest labour force. The majority of the workers were in the agricultural sector, which had low productivity. Young people were now moving to the service industry, the informal economy was growing and opportunities for industrialization were being missed. The link between industry and the agricultural sector was weak in most countries. To move forward, Africa needed to transform the economy from the current situation where growth was created through consumption. The new roads, bridges, airports and shopping malls gave a false impression that the continent was growing. There was need for a comprehensive, integrated plan for Africa, with more emphasis on value addition, manufacturing and industrialization. Labour market information was lacking in Africa with roughly 50 per cent of labour force surveys over ten years old. This posed challenges to policy-making. Transformative growth was needed to reduce inequality and poverty and generate employment. The time of celebrating potential was over; concrete action was required.
- 22.** Dr Kaloko said that decent work was a priority for AU member States. Some 90 per cent of the workers in Africa were in the informal and rural sectors, composed mainly of women and youth. Gender issues, particularly the empowerment of women, were therefore an AU priority. Indeed, this theme had been adopted by the AU for 2015, with a view to addressing imbalances in employment. Employment issues should be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner. The Agenda 2063 and the Common Africa Position had preceded the SDGs, but were in line with them. These recently adopted agendas were not new for Africa as they dated back to the Lagos Plan of Action, to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the 2014 Ouagadougou Plan of Action and Ouagadougou +10. What they brought was a change of narrative, with stress placed on spreading benefits more widely among people. Growth without ownership was unsustainable; Africa urgently needed development that was inclusive and sustainable. The AU was ready to work with long-standing partners such as the ILO and to use ILO competencies in the implementation of these agendas.
- 23.** Mr Makiashi said that most governments were deploying efforts to achieve the SDGs. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had developed a strategic plan to implement the SDGs as well as a national labour training programme. An effective mechanism to generate national statistics and establish development indicators was needed. His Government called on the ILO to provide technical and logistical assistance in implementing the plan and deliver results. Support was also needed to build institutional capacity to produce labour market information and to build the social partners' capacity to implement the agenda. The ILO should provide support to African countries in analysing the employment situation and in implementing international labour Conventions. This should be accompanied by advocacy, especially in respect of international development partners, to place employment at the core of their strategies and make decent work a reality. Some international development partners placed insufficient weight on employment issues.
- 24.** Mr Sy said that Senegal had recently published new employment data, which revealed an unemployment rate of 13 per cent, with 28 per cent of the population classified as inactive, with 2 million workers in the informal sector. Governments should develop effective and

inclusive strategies that targeted unemployment and reduced precariousness. Social dialogue was a key tool in developing and implementing these strategies, and should be at the heart of government efforts to achieve far-reaching reforms and sustainable development. Assistance should be given to workers in the informal economy to assist their transit to the formal sector. The Government of Senegal was attentive to the legitimate demands of the country's workers. The processes of addressing the challenges would continue through dialogue.

25. Ms Kromjong said that having strong social partners began with a strong government, and good regulations that provided a basis for dialogue, transparency and predictability. Supply and demand issues were of key importance for effective social dialogue at national and international levels. On the demand side, governments needed to acknowledge that business was the engine for growth and recognize the important role of the private sector as the key driver for job creation. An enabling environment was essential, with an understanding of the importance of SMEs and entrepreneurship. A good education system also had to support development. Countries should identify their comparative advantages, and support sectors that created jobs. The focus should also be placed on transition from informal to formal economies, with women and youth playing a leading role.
26. On the supply side, Ms Kromjong pointed to addressing the skills mismatch, improving vocational training, improving soft skills, IT and communication and language skills, as well as learning to operate in a virtual world. Education and training should be lifelong processes, including at the workplace. There was a need to focus on disadvantaged groups, including disabled workers. She called for flexible labour policies, good public employment services and career guidance. To achieve these aims, and also in creating an enabling business environment, social dialogue was essential.
27. Mr Atwoli stressed the crucial role of social dialogue in realizing social justice. Where dialogue was not effective, countries experienced economic and political instability, particularly in the field of governance. Countries in need of political and economic stability should embrace social dialogue to address their problems. Africa was rich in green pastures but its lack of effective social dialogue had created economic and political instability. This led young men and women to think that pastures across the Mediterranean were greener. Governments should accept the trade union movements, and work closely with social partners, who provided political and social equilibrium. Freedom and independence in Africa had been attained through the trade union movement. In countries where there was good social dialogue, such as Kenya, governments listened to the social partners, and solutions to national development challenges were delivered. He stressed that economic plans should not be imposed on Africa from outside the continent and expressed appreciation to the ILO for the efforts that had led to the adoption of the SDGs and in particular Goal 8.
28. The Director-General noted that there was no disagreement between the panellists, but a consensual diagnosis of Africa's issues and a convergence on where change was needed. In responding to the points concerning Africa's experience of growth raised by Mr Lopes, the Director-General drew an analogy with a ride on a train, which had travelled far, but had lost control with a likelihood of crashing. The growth pattern was accompanied by high levels of inequality: the train had not taken everyone on board and was not inclusive. Moreover, the train was fuelled by commodities, a source that was coming to an end, placing Africa's growth trajectory in a vulnerable position. The process was neither satisfactory nor sustainable. Yet there was consensus on the need to change the narrative. A consensus to place emphasis and focus on industrialization, the rural economy, SMEs, social protection, skills development, social dialogue and transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. This shift faced a number of challenges:

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- The current model had deep roots, but provided major benefits only for a limited section of the population.
 - The global economy was changing; Africa’s position in this shift needed to be rethought.
 - Where would the necessary resources come from?
 - Weak labour markets and institutions.
 - Energy.
- 29.** Requests for support from the ILO were not new, and were fully justified. Mr Atwoli’s call for a narrative inspired and owned by Africa was important and should be heeded. The ILO had built partnerships with the AUC, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa on migration and youth employment. There was a need to further strengthen this partnership.
- 30.** The moderator highlighted the need for African ownership of the SDGs both at national and continental levels, again stressing that the economic model must change.
- 31.** A Government representative of Malawi (Minister for Labour, Youth and Manpower Development) concurred with all speakers in support of the 2030 Agenda, an ambitious plan with 17 goals. The achievement of these goals required an investment of resources. Already, achievement of the MDGs required resources, but to attain the 17 targets set out by the SDGs would require vast sums that governments alone could not raise. Partnerships, such as public–private partnerships (PPPs), would be important in achieving the SDGs. Extensive consultations and social dialogue were also critical in the elaboration and implementation of national development plans. The SDGs contained wide-ranging decent work-related elements, and support from the ILO and from other UN agencies and partners would be essential.
- 32.** A Government representative of Zimbabwe (Minister for Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare) said that the Regional Meeting was taking place at a critical moment, following closely on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and after the recent adoption of the Agenda 2063. The robust 2030 Agenda and Africa’s blueprint presented a challenging path for the tripartite constituents. The Director-General and all ILO field offices were to be congratulated for their efforts towards the adoption of SDG 8, which was at the core of the development framework, and to rooting out poverty, strengthening universal peace and promoting sustainable growth. Quoting the Preamble to the ILO Constitution, she stated that “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”. However, social justice required social cohesion: the tripartite constituents should work closely with other UN agencies and partners so that dialogue and rights did not remain purely ideals.
- 33.** The representative of the Arab League congratulated the Chairperson and the team for facilitating the high-level discussion. The subject was critical to Africa, but the Arab States faced the same issues. The 2030 Agenda and, in particular, SDGs 1, 7 and 8 were of critical importance. The ILO had a major role to play in Africa where youth constituted a very high percentage of the population. He questioned the Director-General on whether the ILO had undertaken a review of this issue and how the Organization would meet the expectations in Africa.

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34. A Government delegate of Algeria indicated the importance of social dialogue in achieving concrete results. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be developed to learn from experiences and achievements. Lifelong training was another area to which attention should be paid. The 13th African Regional Meeting provided an international forum for sharing country experiences across the region.
 35. The Workers' delegate of Cameroon said that social dialogue should be engaged to consider the question of the source of work. Below a certain threshold, a person could not be considered as a worker as a result of the obsolete Labour Code. The forestry sector, for example, faced particular difficulties, and wages in it were very low. Social dialogue should be used to ensure internal national consensus.
 36. A Workers' adviser of Senegal suggested that the Lagos Plan of Action should be revisited to look at different aspects of social dialogue. He wondered what would be the role of the social partners at international level, given that States imposed their own development plans in relation to the SDGs. Social dialogue was a work in progress and the social partners were making efforts to make it effective. Agreed frameworks to facilitate dialogue should be established.
 37. The Workers' delegate of Morocco stressed the importance of social dialogue in Africa to achieve the objectives of workers and contractors. Social dialogue had achieved tremendous results in various spheres and should be supported by all international and national institutions in order to attain the objectives that had been reached in other continents. On the subject of fostering development and funding development projects, he underscored the need for the former colonial powers to contribute, as well as international financial institutions, but also for reliance on self-financing and for greater international cooperation, in particular the strengthening of South–South cooperation between the countries of Africa.
 38. The Workers' delegate of Tunisia expressed gratitude to his colleagues who had received the Nobel Peace Prize. They had achieved much in the field of social dialogue. The implementation of the social contract agreed in Tunisia was an issue of great importance. However, security was essential to development and growth, and he called for support in the fight against terrorism.
 39. A Government delegate of Togo was concerned that a move had been made towards the SDGs without adequate analysis of the MDG agenda. There was a need for proper analysis of the MDGs which should be integrated into work towards the SDGs.
 40. The Workers' delegate of Sudan also stressed the importance of social dialogue in combating poverty and achieving other SDG objectives. Specific outcomes should be set if realistic action was to take place. He raised a question as to whether workers and unions in African countries played a negative or positive role in achieving regional or national objectives.
 41. The Workers' delegate of Nigeria said that meaningful dialogue was unattainable without the concomitant political will. In many cases, plans remained a dead letter with scant implementation. Governments must have the political will to implement social dialogue. Newly elected governments were abandoning many of the existing processes and goals with consequent negative impact within countries.
 42. Mr Atwoli noted that many interventions supported the key place of social dialogue in achieving the SDGs. In response to a question raised by the Workers' delegate of Sudan, he stated that unions in Africa were funded by workers. This was different in some developed economies, where unions were government-funded. Consequently, unions in Africa were free and independent and most definitely played a positive role.

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43. Ms Kromjong stressed the importance of investment, of reducing red tape, funding innovation, SMEs and promoting social dialogue. A “one-size-fits-all” approach would not work; there was a need to tailor according to needs. The means of measuring progress was lacking, as well as that of ensuring continuity.
44. Mr Makiashi emphasized the need for a more results-based approach, with emphasis on the important role of social partners in implementing the SDGs. Much could be learned from successful country initiatives and good practices. There was a need to strengthen the relationship between the ILO and the respective countries to achieve the SDGs.
45. Mr Kaloko re-emphasized the need for inclusiveness, with people-centred action in the implementation of the various policy instruments: the Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and Plan of Action, the Agenda 2063 and outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.
46. Mr Lopes said that the ten-year plan envisaged the creation of 122 million jobs. At the current pace, Africa would only create an estimated 54 million jobs. Imperatively, a mechanism must be found to fill the deficit. There was therefore a need for industrialization in Africa, even if other parts of the world were moving towards knowledge-based development. The situation, with its issues of trade relations, intellectual property and protectionism, was naturally highly complex. However, Africa’s problem was not financial. The challenge centred on the way resources were used and managed. The following factors were critical to Africa’s growth:
- rising labour costs in China and Asia were too high for low-production industries;
 - Africa could be a front runner in the renewable energy field, which would generate green jobs;
 - Africa itself was a huge market: internal trade needed to expand;
 - Africa could become a market leader in the technology platform; it was already a leader in phone banking and insurance;
 - Africa could learn from others.
47. The Director-General said that the ILO was conducting an ongoing internal reform that would reinforce its capacity to respond to the needs of its constituents. There was a need for coherence at all levels – local, regional and international, and an integrated approach should be adopted in delivering the 2030 Agenda. Social dialogue would be critical in this. Silo approaches should be replaced by the creation of new partnerships.

General discussion on the Report of the Director-General: Towards inclusive and sustainable development in Africa through decent work

Presentation of the Report by the Regional Director for Africa

48. The ILO Regional Director for Africa introduced the Report of the Director-General for the 13th African Regional Meeting focusing on the Report’s second part, which consisted of the review of the Decent Work Agenda in Africa (2007–15). He gave an overview of the

evolution of the concept of Decent Work and the development and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). The Decent Work Agenda for Africa was ambitious with 17 targets.

- 49.** The Report provided a detailed account of the achievements and shortfalls under each of the 17 targets. It highlighted the successes of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa as follows: job creation had been placed at the centre of national policies in all countries; and many African countries had adopted policies that extended a minimum of social protection to all, including the most vulnerable, advancing and extending social dialogue and tripartism. The ratification of the ILO's fundamental Conventions was almost universal on the continent; effective programmes were in place, progressively to eliminate child labour as well as forced labour. A vibrant domestic private sector was driving the continent's steady economic growth, creating jobs for millions of youths. The average GDP per capita in sub-Saharan Africa now stood at over US\$3,300, 28 out of 54 African nations were classified as middle or high income, with a rising African middle class.
- 50.** Many of the Decent Work Agenda targets had been achieved but several targets lagged behind: youth unemployment remained high on the continent, the informal economy remained and inequality continued to grow, while labour standards, although ratified, were not systematically implemented. Social protection coverage, although improving, was still far from universal; in several African countries, social dialogue suffered from the fragmentation and insufficient representativeness of social partners, and many African governments still lacked the institutional capacity to implement commitments and enforce legislation. Moreover, new challenges affected the continent: the catastrophic Ebola outbreak, state fragility, mass emigration of young Africans to wealthier continents and terrorist attacks.
- 51.** Despite these challenges, Africa had embarked on a structural transformation which should develop the continent into an economic giant of the future. Many industries were relocating to Africa, taking advantage of a large youthful workforce, the availability of natural resources, the proximity of major consumer markets and continuous improvements in infrastructure and communications. The continent's structural transformation would create massive job opportunities and greatly expand the country's fiscal space to finance social programmes.
- 52.** The Director-General's Report identified critical factors which facilitated the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, namely:
- national ownership of, and commitment to, the development process;
 - the domestic funding of the development process in addition to official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI);
 - the establishment of inter-ministerial task teams, multi-stakeholder alliances and comprehensive partnerships in support of decent work;
 - a focus on large-scale, long-term interventions rather than ad hoc projects;
 - the acceleration of regional integration across the continent.
- 53.** The ILO could achieve the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda alone, but must build a solid partnership with the AU. The conclusions of the 13th Regional Meeting must be closely aligned with the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda, which had recognized Decent Work as a key driver of development. The ILO must engage the entire UN development system around the

objective of decent work. A new generation of African DWCPs must be developed which are entirely owned by national constituents and to a large extent financed from domestic sources. This should also include the formulation of subregional decent work programmes pioneered by the Africa region.

Discussion of the Report

- 54.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson welcomed the Report. She appreciated its references to the importance of entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, as Africa was not short of entrepreneurs. Employers could play an important role in this regard by strengthening an entrepreneurship culture. She appreciated the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (ESEE) Toolkit used by many employers' organizations which analysed challenges for businesses and proposed recommendations. The Report recognized the need for inclusive growth. However, care should be exercised in increasing minimum wages too much to avoid increasing labour costs and making Africa uncompetitive. Productivity was of prime importance, and the ILO should support productivity growth by establishing and revamping productivity centres. The capacity of employers' organizations needed to be strengthened on technical issues, such as wage determination, social protection and occupational safety and health in order for employers' organizations to engage in evidence-based policy dialogue. In addition, the structure of employers' organizations should be strengthened, with the support of the ILO, to include technical subcommittees and branches at provincial levels. The ILO remained the employers organizations' principal partner in this regard. Employers supported the formulation and implementation of DWCPs, but there was room to improve employer involvement, including through the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) specialists. DWCPs could be vehicles to assist women in business associations and promote the extension of social protection.
- 55.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that the Regional Meeting was taking place in the context of rapid economic growth, of great potential for Africa, at the same time coinciding with the newly adopted SDGs, the AU Declaration and Plan of Action for Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, the Agenda 2063, and the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. These political declarations provided great opportunities for realizing decent work. Unfortunately, Africa was still a region with huge decent work deficits: one in four of the world's poor lived in Africa, inequalities persisted while precarious jobs were abundant, and wages rose by less than 1 per cent in 2014. Youth unemployment was high, and women still suffered from discrimination at work and from gender-based violence in the community. The Workers' group urgently appealed to constituents to meet the challenges to achieve social justice and decent work. Inclusive social dialogue should be promoted to allow the social partners to contribute to policies by respecting ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98 particularly. Member States needed to pursue social and economic policies centred on decent work. Trade unions must have full freedom to exercise their rights, including collective bargaining. Part II of the Report referred to a number of targets reached. However, some results remained only partial. The Report could have referred more to the difficulties in implementing the Decent Work Agenda for Africa. The group hoped that a strong political message would emerge from the Regional Meeting. DWCPs must be the drivers of change at the national level; they should systematically involve the social partners so that the principles of decent work were included.
- 56.** A Government representative of Zambia (Minister for Labour and Social Security) said that in his country decent work had been mainstreamed into the Revised Sixth National Development Plan (R-SNDP) and the National Strategy on Industrialisation and Job Creation launched in 2013. These overarching policy documents were operationalized by the National and Employment and Labour Market Policy currently being revised by the tripartite structures. The focus was on gaining maximum advantage from human and

natural resources and actively developing labour-intensive industries and enterprises that generated huge employment potential, especially in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing and tourism sectors. The target to create 1 million formal jobs by the end of 2016 was supported by ongoing efforts at national and local levels to build linkages between SMEs and the mining sector, and to promote fundamental principles and rights at work. In the construction sector, communication strategies had been put in place to ensure that minimum labour standards were met by all, including small-scale local contractors. The Social Cash Transfer Programme had been extended each year with the addition of new beneficiaries in more districts and greater budget allocation. The Tripartite Consultative Labour Council remained the key body for social dialogue in the country. In 2015, the Tripartite Partnership Committee for the mining sector was constituted; this focused on rights at work in the mining sector. Zambia was actively enhancing capacity in negotiation skills among the social partners through workshops in order to mitigate job losses in the mining sector. That Zambia had been instrumental in steering the campaign on combating forced labour was witnessed by the Government hosting the Subregional Conference on the Ratification and Implementation of the new ILO Protocol on Forced Labour (Lusaka, 17–18 November 2015), at which His Excellency, President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, accepted to champion the “50 for Freedom” campaign. Zambia’s current national action plan (2011–15) on labour migration provided a national multisectoral response to prevention, protection and prosecution. In 2012, Zambia had developed a national referral mechanism and guidelines for protecting and assisting victims of trafficking.

- 57.** The Government Vice-Chairperson noted that not all the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa had been achieved, despite the considerable efforts by the Director-General and the Organization to this end. Cameroon had benefited from the ILO’s support in implementing the Decent Work Agenda in four areas:
- Standards: Many Conventions had been ratified, the Labour Code had been revised, and a national DWCP had been signed.
 - Social dialogue: Various mechanisms for social dialogue had been established.
 - Social protection: The Government was working to extend social protection to the maximum number of people through a voluntary insurance system.
 - Employment: A national employment policy had been adopted and an SME promotion agency had been created; promotion of self-employment, vocational training and many other initiatives had been undertaken in order to stimulate job creation.
- 58.** A Government representative of Morocco (Minister for Employment and Social Affairs) drew attention to the current, very difficult international and economic context, riven with conflict and instability; peace was at risk, while unemployment was on the rise, with increasing labour migration, human and drug trafficking. To deal with these challenges Africa needed more inclusive development policies; South–South cooperation should be promoted. The Government supported the Report’s content and its recommendations; decent work should be mainstreamed in all programmes and policies in Africa. Morocco had revised its legislation and taken a number of initiatives to protect vulnerable workers such as domestic workers; it had established a programme to eradicate poverty, developed an employment strategy, strengthened social protection and increased retirement benefits. African countries should form wide partnerships and should support the ILO.
- 59.** The Workers’ delegate of Kenya pointed to rising unemployment as a key factor for migration. He appealed to employers to increase the minimum wage and to the ILO to assist the social partners in promoting respect for international Conventions. Although

Kenya had signed the ILO fundamental Conventions, in practice it did not respect them. More efforts should be devoted to mobilizing resources.

- 60.** A Government representative of Namibia (Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation) informed the Meeting that his Government was implementing a “nobody should be left out” policy centred on inclusive development. The Namibian DWCP was in place and was the vehicle for strengthening the Decent Work Agenda in development policy, reinforcing social dialogue, extending social protection to the vulnerable, providing a regulatory framework that guaranteed rights for all workers, especially the most vulnerable, and for the introduction of employment services legislation that compelled all employers with 25 or more employees to declare their job vacancies to the Public Employment Services for recruitment purposes. This legislation aimed to address the excesses of the labour brokers. Namibia had launched a national productivity unit; introduced a solidarity tax; a minimum wage for domestic workers; and universal free primary and secondary education. Namibia worked within the Agenda 2063 policy framework and ILO international labour standards and believed that Africa could rise through its own resources. The Government aimed to eradicate poverty by 2025.
- 61.** A Government representative of Egypt (Minister for Manpower) stressed the importance of decent work for Egypt as a vehicle to overcome the challenges faced by the country. Egypt had developed and was implementing initiatives to address the informal economy, it had elaborated a national labour plan for youth and a training programme for youth which took account of labour market needs, placing the focus on agriculture. Egypt was promoting value-added production rather than commodity exportation.
- 62.** A Government representative of Comoros (Minister for Employment, Labour, Vocational Training and Women Entrepreneurs) said his Government had signed a DWCP. Comoros had developed regulations and labour law to meet its obligations under international labour Conventions and to protect its workers. A plan had been put in place to create 5,000 jobs by 2016. To this end, a youth fund had been established, with ILO support. This was part of the Government’s emergency plan for job creation. Comoros promoted decent work and international labour standards with ILO support and was moving towards the ratification of international instruments in the field of social protection and labour administration. Particular account should be taken of the specific context of Small Island States in the face of climate change. The Government would welcome ILO support in this.
- 63.** A Government representative of Sudan (State Minister for Labour and Administrative Reform) stressed the critical importance of the objectives set out in the Director-General’s Report and those set by the SDGs for Africa. Decent work was also critical for Africa’s future. There was need for a new growth model for Africa, which would be consistent with the 2030 Agenda, and in particular with its Goal 8. Sudan had attained 3.5 per cent growth in 2014 and planned to reach 7 per cent over the next three to four years. Economic liberalization and industrial diversification were key strategies in combating unemployment. Sudan was promoting investment aimed at generating decent work for its entire population – ensuring equality for women and promoting transformation from informal to formal enterprises. The Government would welcome support from the ILO in these areas. Sudan was also working hard to promote reconciliation so that all people could participate in development. Social dialogue had been engaged to bring about reconciliation. Sudan had reviewed the laws and legislation intended to ensure equality between men and women, as provided for in the national Constitution.
- 64.** A Government representative of Senegal (Minister for Labour, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations and Relations with Institutions) pointed to an overall global situation characterized by inequalities and imbalances. He supported the emphasis placed in the Director-General’s Report on the need for social security. Africa was truly a land of opportunities, but workers’ rights were not fully respected. The Government had taken

action to remedy this situation in Senegal, and policies to strengthen workers' rights had been promoted by the President. By this means the Government sought to improve the living and working conditions of the population, basing its action on the ILO's four strategic objectives. The President supported recent initiatives taken in Senegal in the field of social dialogue. The ILO should provide support in this area.

- 65.** A Government representative of Zimbabwe (Minister for the Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare) noted that the Report provided an evaluation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, and showed that there was room for optimism. Ratification of fundamental Conventions had been successful, and other achievements were to be commended. However, despite economic growth across the continent, poverty continued to be entrenched in Africa. One of the barriers to sustainable development was a lack of inclusiveness. In Zimbabwe, the social partners were implementing the third cycle of the DWCP in which social dialogue and tripartism continued to be the cornerstone, culminating in the establishment of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum. The challenge was to overcome the inability to create employment, especially for the young. Zimbabwe had accordingly elaborated a development agenda aimed at galvanizing economic inclusion. The Government believed that the pursuit of decent work should be anchored in the Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and Plan of Action.
- 66.** A Government delegate of Mozambique emphasized the importance of achieving social justice through decent work. The Report highlighted the importance of strategic, inclusive and sustainable development. Mozambique was developing strategies for vulnerable groups, including women and youth. On 25 November 2015, Mozambique had established a national employment programme to promote investment for decent jobs, and the Government was now putting in place a compulsory social security system for the self-employed. Considerable efforts were being made to improve the situation in the labour market, participation of women and working conditions in general. Social dialogue was essential in promoting sustainable development and decent work. A Consultative Commission had been established to engage the provinces in dialogue and the Government hoped the ILO would provide support to promote social dialogue and the collection of labour statistics. Mozambique supported the Director-General's call for social justice and decent work and asked all participants to reflect on the World AIDS Day.
- 67.** The Workers' delegate of Sudan explained how workers' organizations in Sudan were implementing various workers' education programmes to help defend workers' rights, and engaged in social dialogue with the Government. Workers' organizations were represented in most relevant bodies, national institutions and structures in the country, and, through those, they participated in decision-making on issues affecting labour and employment in the country. The workers in Sudan had created an annual festival for workers, commemorated on 21 May each year through cultural events, different awareness-raising activities as well as seminars to articulate and defend workers' rights. Specific sessions were organized on topics such as safety and health, transition to the formal economy and wider social security coverage. Social dialogue with the Government took place through the Ministry of Employment. All partners worked together to promote decent work and national economic development.
- 68.** The Employers' delegate of Senegal referred to a number of issues affecting the private sector in Senegal, which impacted negatively on the achievement of sustainable development. While Africa was rich in resources, with all accounts pointing to it as the future of the world, it still registered shortfalls in employment. Corruption was largely responsible for this, hindering economic development, private sector development and job creation. Efforts should be made to combat corruption, and encourage governments to support private sector development through social dialogue. He also highlighted the important role played by women through their associations and individually as entrepreneurs, and noted that, in Senegal, the Government had supported the formation of

an association of women which now had more than 20,000 members, partly through ILO support. ILO DWCPs were an important tool to promote more inclusive growth and obtain information from the social partners.

- 69.** The Workers' delegate of Egypt stated that sustainable development and decent work should be at the heart of all development efforts. While the African continent was rich in natural resources and minerals, it still faced poverty and inadequate resources to finance development. This could partly be attributed to the efforts by former colonial powers to monopolize access to these resources. In October 2016, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) would hold its meeting in South Africa and some of the topics to be discussed related to the fight against poverty, promotion of decent work and expansion of social protection. Migration was a growing phenomenon and should be discussed as an important topic, given the trend of many people leaving Africa and other countries for Europe. The discussion should focus on what needed to be done to stem this flow of migrants, the drivers of the movement – poverty and unemployment – and how to promote the creation of opportunities that would reduce the trend. This was linked to the brain drain that was affecting the African continent. Certain multinational companies were taking advantage of the lack of knowledge and inadequate social justice laws and systems in Africa. They failed to respect trade unions and ultimately exploited workers, reducing levels of decent work.
- 70.** The Employers' delegate of Côte d'Ivoire observed that the employment creation problem should be seen within the context of demographic growth, not on its own per se. Africa thus needed to aim for higher rates of economic growth than, for instance, China. It was important to develop socio-economic policies which could result in economic growth and job creation. Governments therefore needed to do more to stimulate enterprises and to provide more resources in order to have a strong private sector.
- 71.** The Employers' delegate of Namibia noted that while the private sector was generally considered as the engine for economic growth, government had a very important role to play in encouraging employment creation by the private sector. This could be achieved through social dialogue, and paying due attention to suggestions from the private sector. The dialogue should address constraints faced by private sector and aim at reducing the many regulations or red tape, and move towards “smart” regulations. Regulations should not be a “one-size-fits-all” and should address key issues faced by different sectors, such as business registration procedures, tax regulations and land legislation. The review of regulations should not affect international labour standards and workers' rights, and should be in line with DWCPs. The EESE Toolkit should be applied to assess the business environment and to generate recommendations as to how the constraints could be addressed. Governments should approach the issue of granting tax breaks with care. Citizens as well as companies and enterprises expected services from government, and this had a cost. Everyone should pay their share to facilitate provision of public services by government.
- 72.** The representative of HelpAge International highlighted the role, contribution and constraints faced by older persons in labour force participation. The number of older persons in the labour force currently stood at 60 million and by 2050 the number would be about 215 million, making this a significant population group. Some 52 per cent of older men and 33 per cent of older women, above the age of 65, were active in the labour force, mainly in the informal sector. There was thus an economic imperative not to exclude these workers. Older persons contributed to economic growth, experience sharing and knowledge transmission but they faced constraints and inequalities in the labour market arising from poor health, age-based discrimination, relatively lower incomes and violation of land rights. The social partners should apply the provisions of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), following the excellent example of such member States as Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles, which had shown that pension and

social security coverage for the elderly could approach 100 per cent. The results from these countries showed that, due to this coverage, wider benefits were being realized at household and societal levels, reaching even into such areas as improved school enrolment. Moreover, the extension of pension and benefits to the elderly was in line with a number of indicators in the SDGs. The Meeting should consider the possibility of introducing legislation to prevent age discrimination and to protect the rights of older persons, the expansion of social protection coverage to older persons and to ensure the provision of age disaggregated data.

- 73.** A Government delegate of Algeria said that sustainable development in Africa must come through inclusivity based on the Decent Work Agenda. Africa was rich in human and material resources and wished to put these at the service of inclusive development. The ILO had a key role in assisting member States to implement the Decent Work Agenda through sharing best practice. The Decent Work Agenda had been mainstreamed in the development strategy in Algeria and was being implemented through the employment policy. Unemployment had dropped from 30 to 10 per cent since the implementation of the employment policy. With particular focus on the informal economy, incentives had been put in place to facilitate the transition to formality. Tax incentives and other administrative reforms had been designed to facilitate the promotion of decent work. Social dialogue remained a key pillar of the promotion of decent work. Finally, he recalled that Algeria continued to support South–South cooperation and had just made available to the ILO the means of sharing its experience in social dialogue and social protection through an agreement signed by the Director-General of the ILO in October 2015 at the 18th national tripartite meeting (Biskra, Algeria, 14 October 2015). Moreover, the Higher School of Social Security that had recently opened in Algiers would reinforce this South–South cooperation, in particular through providing human resources training in the countries of North Africa and in francophone Africa.
- 74.** The Workers’ delegate of Morocco referred to a 2014 report issued by the African Development Bank on integrated and sustainable development in Africa, which listed Morocco as a vulnerable African country in terms of integrated development. Although Morocco had realized significant economic growth over the past years, there had been no trickle-down effect. National social dialogue remained fragile despite an agreement signed in the wake of the Arab Spring. There was an alliance of trade unions bargaining collectively together to ensure rights and attain decent work. Faced with a de facto decision to fully liberate prices and dismantle the clearing system (support price), in exchange for a wage freeze, and, in the context of freedom of association, the unions decided to intensify their efforts in defence of workers’ rights and the promotion of social dialogue. On 29 November 2015, a labour march took place in Casablanca that would be followed by a commemoration of the martyrs of the Moroccan working class uprising against the colonial power on 8 December 1952, and then by a national strike on 10 December. Any possible further action would depend on the Government’s response to the workers’ demands.
- 75.** The Employers’ delegate of Chad agreed with the ILO Director-General’s view on sustainable enterprises in Africa. Investment was needed to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. Assistance should be given to young people coming out of university in mounting their projects. One challenge was their lack of even minimum resources for this, including lack of access to microfinance. To invest in young women and men was a true investment. The Meeting should make a strong recommendation that governments should provide loans of this sort, even if there was a 20 per cent level of non-repayment. With 80 per cent of the population employed in the informal economy it was worth risking an investment in young people, both in urban and rural areas.

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- 76.** A Government representative of Malawi (Minister for Labour, Youth and Manpower Development) stated that Africa needs inclusive and sustainable development through decent work. He praised the achievements of the ILO and member States in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa. Malawi subscribed to the fundamental principles and rights at work. The country had scaled up efforts to implement international labour standards, notably the eight core Conventions. Malawi would ensure the enforcement of legislative provisions and implementation of plans of action on HIV and AIDS, discrimination, forced labour, trafficking and child labour. The country would also initiate programmes on fair migration. Widely appreciated action taken by the Ministry of Labour, Youth and Manpower Development to promote decent work had resulted in an increased financial allocation for the Ministry in the national budget. The Government was grateful for the ILO's support of its skills development plan. The Government was providing financial support through start-up capital, tools and equipment to enhance self-employment for graduating students. Malawi had made remarkable progress in the implementation of its DWCP, mainstreaming employment and labour issues in its growth and development strategy. The country continued to invest in social protection packages to promote social inclusion, through the public works programme and social cash transfers. The Tripartite Labour Advisory Council had been relaunched to reinforce social dialogue.
- 77.** A Government representative of Nigeria (Minister, Federal Ministry of Employment and Labour) referred to the huge decent work deficits in Africa, associated with high unemployment and underemployment, and hence the relevance of the theme of the Meeting. Nigeria had shown strong commitment to the realization of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa and had made significant progress in closing the skills gap. Working through both the National Board for Technical Education and the Industrial Training Fund, the Government had established skills-upgrading centres as well as the National Directorate of Employment. More substantial progress has been made through the National Planning Commission, the National Bureau of Statistics and the National Electronic Labour Exchange. The Decent Work Agenda for Africa was paving the way for the SDGs, especially SDG 8. In order to achieve these Goals, Nigeria would work with the ILO to: rehabilitate and train over 20 million internally displaced people affected by the insurgency in North-East Nigeria; build the capacity of the tripartite partners on policy development and implementation of DWCPs; and provide technical assistance on labour administration policies. The President of Nigeria was strongly committed to addressing unemployment through various strategies such as the revival of the agricultural sector, and providing loans for SMEs. Finally, Nigeria reiterated its request for a fully-fledged ILO office in the country.
- 78.** The Workers' delegate of Zambia suggested that the Meeting should consider building partnerships in order to access finance to attain the SDGs in general and SDG 8 specifically. African workers recognized the importance of the private sector but a true partnership was not balanced, and did give priority to business. The UN Secretary General had referred to 2015 as a golden year, with a concurrence of very important international meetings, including the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the UN Summit on Sustainable Development and the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21). There was also the upcoming World Trade Organization meeting in Kenya in December 2015. Efforts should be made to promote genuine development without exploitation in the context of the ILO Social Justice Declaration of 2008. There was a need to build the capacity of the social partners to enable them to become better partners in attaining the SDGs.
- 79.** A Government representative of Mauritania (Minister for the Civil Service, Labour and Modernisation of the Administration) said that the President of Mauritania promoted sustainable development through decent work by implementing a number of projects and reforms to improve working conditions through the national development strategy.

Examples of this included the implementing of a national plan to end child labour that had been approved by the Government following negotiations with the social partners. Praise was given to the ILO for its assessment of the national programme to promote decent work. The Government looked forward to renewing the programmes for the three coming years at the end of the assessment, and requested the ILO regional director to provide technical support in the transition from the informal to the formal economy, in view of the positive impact that such support would have on the national economy.

- 80.** The Employers' delegate of Malawi encouraged the Meeting to pursue inclusive business in companies' value chains. Knowledge and skills were needed to increase employment and raise living standards. This required the commitment of the social partners. There was also a critical role for government for this to succeed, including though incentives to businesses to become more inclusive. Job creation, new technology and labour migration were all examples of direct interventions that contributed to decent work. The benefits were several: supporting linkages between SMEs and larger enterprises; and addressing challenges to business, such as low productivity, lack of skills and a growing youth population. Employable skills were needed to meet the needs of youth.
- 81.** A Government representative of Lesotho (Minister for Labour and Employment) said that considerable progress has been made in his country that would provide a basis for future work. The Decent Work Agenda for Africa was one of the principle means of working towards attaining the SDGs. Labour standards were of critical importance: the inclusion of decent work in the SDGs strengthened this principle. There was a need to reinforce social dialogue institutions and processes. Lesotho welcomed migration as a key factor contributing to economic development. If left unattended, youth unemployment could become a social and economic time bomb. African economies were characterized by a large informal economy, compromising the four pillars of decent work. The ILO's Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), provided a path towards the formal economy. The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) was an essential tool to maximize the potential of FDI. Lesotho strongly supported the MNE Declaration. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region had developed a Protocol on Labour and Employment to harmonize labour standards in the region for fair competition.
- 82.** A Government representative of Gabon (Minister for Labour and Employment) concurred with earlier speakers in respect of growth in Africa and its impact on the population, particularly youth. The Government had taken certain actions: it had reformed governance structure to better share national resources, leading to job creation. Decent work promotion was high on its agenda. The Labour Code and Social Protection Code had been revised following consultation with the social partners and with the support of the ILO. In respect of social protection, the extension of the system had enabled a basic level to be put in place taking account of economically weak populations, workers, civil servants, students and school pupils, as well as independent workers. The National Employment Office had been restructured with the creation of agencies in the provinces previously not covered. Likewise, the resources of the Entry to Employment Aid and Re-employment Fund had been substantially increased. In order to combat youth unemployment and ensure youth employability, a social responsibility pact had been agreed between all parties concerned with youth employment. A youth apprenticeship contract had been instituted in all enterprises with more than 50 employees.
- 83.** A Government representative of Djibouti (Minister for Labour and for Administrative Reform) stated that decent work was a priority today for most African countries. Djibouti had demonstrated its willingness to implement the Decent Work Agenda, achieving many objectives, including:

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- Modernization of its labour laws to increase the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises, through the enactment of a new Labour Code.
 - Promoting social dialogue and tripartism, through the establishment of the National Council of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training (CNTEFP), a permanent forum for consultation, which opened up opportunities for constructive tripartite social dialogue on all issues concerning labour relations.
 - Revision of sectoral collective agreements or corporate agreements, which helped to raise salaries, improve living conditions and increase purchasing power, and protect the most disadvantaged.
 - The formulation of a National Employment Policy on 21 September 2014 for the period 2014–24, and its 2014–18 Action Plan. This National Employment Policy was formulated using a participatory approach, based on a preliminary diagnostic analysis of the employment situation, and resulted in a National Employment Strategy, including vocational training, employment, labour regulation, social dialogue and social protection. The National Employment Policy, based on commitments by the country at African and international levels has consolidated actions contributing to the development of decent work and contributed to economic and social development, promoting training and employment suitability, a decent pro-jobs economic growth, effective governance of the labour market and the extension of social protection.
 - The adoption of a universal health insurance, on 5 February 2014, based on national solidarity and establishing equal access to care for all citizens. To face food insecurity and other risks, the Government had made significant budgetary efforts to implement social safety net programmes, executed by public agencies, targeting the most vulnerable groups.
 - The promotion of a viable private sector: adoption of two sectoral national strategies, one for the development of crafts and the other for trade development. A new Commercial Code was created to improve the legal environment for business and enhance the country’s competitiveness, as evidenced by the massive influx of foreign investment, which reached 22 per cent of GDP, on average, between 2005 and 2013.
 - The Observatory of Employment and Skills, established on 21 September 2015, sought to improve information availability for policy elaboration.

84. The Employers’ adviser and substitute delegate of Egypt stressed that there could be no development without investment and no investment if there was no security. The lack of security and the spread of terrorism in many African countries posed a threat to investment and, consequently, to sustainable development. The lack of opportunities for decent work led young people to migrate to the West, which had been refusing them entry. Western nations should support training centres in sub-Saharan Africa to train African youth. The speaker evoked the memory of great African leaders of the past including Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela and others. The social partners in Africa should work together to protect the children of Africa.

85. A Government representative of Côte d’Ivoire (Minister of State, Minister for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training) said that Côte d’Ivoire adhered to the recommendations of the Report and supported the Director-General’s analysis on the need to promote growth that generated employment and provided benefits for the poorest of the population. The Ivorian Government had committed to action in this sense and had sought to carry out the following reforms:

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- Governance: tripartite consultations had just led to a consensus on a new Labour Code. This sought to increase the employability of youth and improve worker protection, including health and safety at work, without losing sight of the imperatives of competitiveness and of growing the economy.
 - Employment: the Government had reformed the training system to adapt to labour market needs. An annual job survey had also been put in place. A ministry and an agency specifically dedicated to youth employment had been created in order to meet the needs of many beneficiaries in terms of funding and training.
 - Better redistribution of the benefits of growth: Côte d’Ivoire had increased minimum wages on the basis of a consensus between the social partners.
 - Social protection of workers: with extension of coverage to the informal sector which was the largest segment and that most exposed to risk. With the implementation of universal health coverage, now being deployed, Côte d’Ivoire considered investment in human capital as an essential lever to obtain decent work.
- 86.** A Government representative of Burundi (Minister for the Civil Service, Labour and Employment) said that his country had adopted the Second Strategic Framework in order to combat poverty. Under the framework, a national employment policy had been put in place. This policy focused on job creation in agriculture, mines and tourism. Numerous policies had been adopted including social protection, vocational training and the tripartite Social Dialogue Charter. An investment promotion agency had been created. The Government looked forward to ILO support in addressing the challenge of implementing the policies.
- 87.** A Government representative of the Central African Republic (Minister for the Civil Service and Administrative Reform) acknowledged that his country was in crisis, with concomitant effects on sustainable development and the promotion of decent work. Nonetheless, the national development strategy had mainstreamed employment. A national Decent Work Forum was conducted which focused on three main issues: employment promotion, vocational training and social promotion. The DWCP had been developed with two priorities: youth employment and social priority, but it had not yet been endorsed. In view of the crisis it would have to be reviewed. To combat poverty, the Ministry of Labour had started a project on vocational training and apprenticeship for youth as part of the reconciliation process. A diagnostic study had been undertaken on youth employment in post-crisis situations, which focused on creating job opportunities for former soldiers. A new Labour Code had been developed.
- 88.** A Government delegate of Kenya noted that Africa was currently one of the fastest growing regions of the world and that the economies were, on average, growing at a similar or higher pace in comparison to the rest of the world. However, despite this economic growth, there was still a jobless growth to which the high prevalence of informal employment, vulnerable jobs, working poor and an increasing number of youth entering the informal sector bore witness. The challenge for Africa, therefore, was to transform its economies in an effort to generate more and better jobs for inclusive growth and development. There was need to ensure that social dialogue and tripartism, through the tripartite National Labour Board (NLB), was used more effectively to ensure that the policy space was indeed used to advance decent work and productive employment objectives. Kenya urged promotion of Recommendation No. 204 as it represented a powerful policy tool for transition into formality in fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, SDG 8 as it was the first ILO instrument to address the informal economy in its entirety. The Constitution safeguarded the right of workers to collective bargaining, social security, freedom of association and, indeed, the right to strike, among other principles that were enshrined in national labour law. Emigration rates in Africa were the highest among

all regions and there was evidence that lack of decent work opportunities – rather than low economic growth – was a major determinant of involuntary migration. Furthermore, remittances accounted for a significant share of GDP but their impact on local development was often weak. The case of M-PESA, a mobile money transfer service in Kenya, provided a valid example of innovation in finance and modern technology which had significantly improved access to credit, especially for the hitherto unreached rural areas. In conclusion, Kenya was optimistic that Africa would one day live to its full potential and strength.

89. A Government delegate of Ethiopia said that Ethiopia had developed and implemented its DWCP since 2008. Within the context of that, Ethiopia had mainstreamed decent work in its national policies, plans, strategies and programmes to achieve decent work. This included some legislative and policy measures taken, including on promoting international labour standards, and reviewing national policies and also the Constitution to safeguard rights, including migration policy, social protection and social security, occupational safety and health, the national employment policy, national development plan, plan of action on prevention of the worst forms of child labour and the youth development package. While progress had been noted in achieving some targets set under the DWCP, there were still some challenges that hindered the realization of full decent work. These included weak institutional capacities to coordinate and monitor the DWCP and mobilization of the needed resources. Other challenges included growing youth unemployment, inadequate social protection coverage and the effects of climate change. The ILO should provide more support to ensure decent work deficits were reduced.

90. A Government adviser and substitute delegate of Tunisia thanked the Director-General for the kind words given in his opening remarks, and noted that promotion of decent work would help counter the challenge of inclusive and sustainable development. Appreciating that decent work was firmly part of the 2030 Agenda, he noted that Tunisia had taken a number of measures to promote decent work as follows: promotion of inclusive social dialogue, involving different industrial associations and also extending to civil society; approval by the tripartite partners for the establishment of a tripartite council, which was signed in January 2013, with all parties agreeing to the social contract; consultations that were held with trade unions in various sectors, including those in farming and fishing sectors; promotion of self-employment as a way of reducing unemployment, as well as supporting institutions that promoted youth employment; promoting the expansion of social protection schemes, including health insurance coverage and provision of free housing; and supporting activities in the informal sector. Tunisia supported inclusive social dialogue, hence the recognition through the Nobel Peace Prize award recently received.

Statement on participation in the African Regional Meeting

91. Ms Prisca Mupfumira, the Minister for Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe, read a statement on behalf of the members of the Government group from the following countries: Botswana, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, on the rules governing the participation in the African Regional Meeting. The statement requested that a process be commenced to review the rules governing the participation in the African Regional Meeting and requested the Regional Coordinator of the Africa Group of the ILO to proceed accordingly and report on progress during the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2016.

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92. Mr Moussa Dosso, Minister for State, Minister for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training of Côte d'Ivoire, speaking on behalf of: Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco, Mali, Congo, Comoros, Djibouti, Cameroon, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Gabon and Libya, took note of the positions expressed in the statement made by the Minister for Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe. Given that the opinion expressed would have required a consensual statement made by the Government group, and that the question did not feature on the agenda of the Regional Meeting, he considered that the best course of action would be to refer the question to the Regional Coordinator for Africa, with a view to engaging further consultations, in full respect of the rules in place and of due process, leading to a consensual decision of the entire group.
93. The Chairperson of the Regional Meeting stated that note had been duly taken of these two interventions and that appropriate follow-up would be given.

Resumption of the general discussion

94. A Government delegate of Angola noted that the Report resonated well with certain observations made in a speech by the Vice-President of Angola highlighting issues on inequalities, environmental degradation and migration challenges. Decent work had an important place within the 2030 Agenda, and the ILO had the responsibility of helping to achieve the goals by promoting integrated and coherent social and economic policies at national level. There was a need to promote decent work opportunities especially for youth and also women. If the expectations, particularly for youth, were not met there could be negative consequences with unrest and an increase in the migration trend. Member States should develop national initiatives on the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda to achieve sustainable national development. The Government of Angola had elaborated the 2025 development agenda for his country, as well as a medium-term poverty reduction strategy. These measures were all aimed at combating insecurity, enhancing infrastructure development, achieving food security and promoting vocational training. More resources should be put into training, capacity development and enhanced social protection aimed at reducing poverty.
95. The Workers' delegate of Côte d'Ivoire noted that the theme of inclusive development was in harmony with decent work. Africa was a rich continent, but its development agenda required to be rethought. While the continent faced a number of challenges, including famine, civil unrest and migration, hope for the future hinged on the fact that more than 35 per cent of the world's resources lay in Africa. There was therefore need to ensure cooperation between private and public sectors to harness these resources, and for partners to have a common agenda to fight corruption and promote respect for social justice. This should be extended to stemming capital flows and money laundering. Research which showed that more than US\$700,000 million had been lost by the continent in the course of the past four decades, presenting a compelling case for better management of resources. The continent, nevertheless, had the means to manage its resources well. Inclusive and sustainable development needed to take root in Africa: all parties should play a role in this. There was a need to cooperate together and safeguard the continent's heritage.
96. The Workers' delegate of Angola noted that decent work was now a global concept accepted by all, since its adoption by the Tenth African Regional Meeting in 2007, with Africa setting an objective of achieving decent work by 2015. However, in Angola and in Africa in general this noble goal had not been achieved. Countries in the continent had faced political challenges, economic problems as well as food crises. There were several challenges, such as violations of labour rights, including the right to freedom of association and to collective bargaining, resulting in the lack of decent and productive work. There had however been some progress particularly in relation to social dialogue. An important

challenge was gender inequality, which still persisted, with factors such as the low participation of women in meetings and conferences, and the persistence of violence against women. Countries were still far from achieving gender equality, and women workers formed the majority of workers in the informal sector, characterized by precarious work with no or inadequate social protection. While there were excellent protocols on gender equality, these had not been locally reflected in a number of areas. Gender-based discrimination still persisted in wage employment, and also in representation in international bodies, including the ILO Governing Body and other structures. It was time to move from theory to practice, for example by setting gender targets at 40 per cent representation of women, and investing in education and capacity building. She applauded the ILO's Turin International Training Centre for coming up with the first academy for women's trade unions. More gender equality policies should be adopted: there could be no sustainable development while women were left behind.

- 97.** A Government delegate of Uganda noted that decent work was now widely accepted as a contributor to economic growth by raising labour productivity and enhancing social stability, including citizens' right to social protection. The Government of Uganda had adopted the first DWCP (2007–10), which had the following priorities: industrial relations and productivity; international labour standards; promotion of youth employment; and promotion of social protection, especially for vulnerable groups. The formalization of the informal economy had massive importance in the world of work, as between 40 and 80 per cent of the global labour force was in the informal sector. However, the informal economy played an important role in the economy and labour market by contributing to employment creation, national production and income generation. In Uganda, the informal economy employed over 1.8 million households; for this reason, the Government had adopted the informal sector strategy to facilitate formalization.
- 98.** A Government delegate of Niger noted that the Decent Work Agenda 2007–15 adopted by the 11th African Regional Meeting (2007) was soon coming to its end and the time had come to take stock of the progress made in making decent work a reality. There had been some achievements, but much remained to be done. Now it was time to define new orientations in order to tackle problems such as poverty, unemployment, underemployment, precarious jobs and inequalities, etc. Niger was making considerable efforts to promote decent work, creating employment, advancing social protection and social dialogue. The DWCP adopted in 2012 as part of the economic and social development plan for 2012–15 was an implementation tool of the programme of the President of Niger. An important project was the ongoing establishment of universal health coverage and of a national social protection floor. In the field of employment, almost 700,000 jobs had been created from 2011 to 2014, compared to an initial objective set by the Government of 200,000 jobs. The National Employment Policy and its Action Plan were being reviewed and two major youth employment programmes had been initiated. Concerning industrial relations, social dialogue, which was a privileged means of solving social conflicts, had made important progress and would be reinforced by the process of trade union elections to determine the most representative trade unions. Niger had ratified all eight fundamental Conventions of the ILO and had just ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and a number of other ILO instruments. The Government was elaborating an inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy for 2016–35 as well as a new Economic and Social Development Plan which would provide a framework for the implementation of decent work. Niger approved the strategic recommendations on the way forward as proposed in the Director-General's Report. In particular, the recommendation to realign the Decent Work Agenda for Africa targets with the key priority areas of the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development was of special importance, as it would ensure the necessary coherence between AU and ILO action, thus enhancing implementation.

99. A Government delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted the objectives that had not been met, including youth unemployment, social protection coverage and persistence inequalities. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had placed employment at the heart of its macroeconomic policies, and much effort had gone into increasing the quantity and quality of employment; the National Policy of Employment and Vocational Training (PNEFP) had been adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2015; and the country had become a member of the Organization for the Harmonization of African Business Law (OHADA). Effective and accountable institutions in the field of work had been established or enhanced including the labour courts and the commercial courts, the Economic and Social Council, and the Steering Committee for Reform of Public Enterprises. The following measures had also been implemented:

- establishment of a one-stop shop for business creation (GUCE) to improve the investment process and creation of businesses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- improving the business climate by various reforms, including membership in the SYSCOHADA accounting system;
- the creation of the tax and employers’ contributions collection system on single declaration;
- national coverage of the National Employment Office through its provincial offices now operational in all the provinces and some districts.

100. Despite many efforts to combat it, youth unemployment remained a concern. Statistics indicated that the youth unemployment rate for 2014 was 24 per cent. This meant that all programmes and projects implemented had not yet succeeded in reducing the unemployment rate. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had now signed agreements with the African Development Bank for three important projects, including the Employment Programme for Graduates, which would allow the insertion of 10,000 young jobseekers into various workplaces in professional internships, allowing them to acquire a first professional experience.

101. The Workers’ delegate of Botswana stressed that a better future was possible if SDG 8 was taken with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Agenda 2063, as they all placed full, productive and decent employment for all as the central objective for national development strategies. To ensure the successful implementation of these goals in the next 14 years would require collective action to strengthen labour legislation, increase communication of, and advocacy for, the Agenda 2063, by strengthening national, regional and international partnerships for its implementation. Pragmatic measures based on practical experience should be adopted. Some possible interventions to promote sustainable growth with decent work included:

- delivery of high-quality public services, especially in the areas of free and universal education, access to drinking water, health and sanitation, and support for nutritional well-being. This also includes the urgent need to implement national social protection floors;
- Ministries of Labour and Employment, together with social partners, should be given the support needed for them to execute their duties, including giving substance to the objectives of SDG 8;

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- national partners must commit to genuinely respect, preserve, protect and promote rights at work, especially freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;
 - the adoption of a progressive and fair tax administration to ensure growth of the national revenue base, with an equitable redistribution of gains.

102. A Government delegate of Burkina Faso observed that the aim of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action was to reduce the increasing trend of poverty and unemployment, on the basis of a more participative global governance system and a more inclusive globalization. Following the First African Decent Work Symposium held in 2009, which sought solutions leading to sustainable economic recovery and sustainable development guaranteed by decent work, Burkina Faso had designed and adopted its DWCP to be the implementing mechanism of the 2009 Global Jobs Pact, through the application of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The initiatives undertaken to overcome the challenges posed by employment and social and economic development were:

- the adoption of national policies in the fields of employment, labour, technical and vocational training and education;
- the adoption of national social protection policies giving priority to the protection of vulnerable groups;
- the creation of a special programme for youth and for women;
- the creation of several national funds for youth and for women;
- the launching of the revision of the national employment policy accompanied by its plan of action.

103. All action and policies put in motion were based on constructive national social dialogue.

104. The Workers' delegate of Mauritania praised the Director-General for his determination and that of his staff to promote social dialogue in Africa. This was having an important impact on decent work on the continent. Migration was the result of youth being deprived of adequate employment opportunities. Unemployment certainly increased tendencies among youth towards radicalization. It was to be hoped that the Meeting's decisions would help support marginalized groups through social policies and decent wages, and the promotion of social security and health insurance. It was important that workers should not become the weakest link in the development process. Mauritanian trade unions upheld workers' rights and the principles of ILO international labour Conventions. Through forming partnerships, Mauritanian trade unions had been able to establish a coordinating body, known as the Mauritanian Workers' Coordinating Trade Union, which encompassed 16 out of 25 trade unions. The Mauritanian trade union movement engaged in social dialogue with the Government, and the principles of dialogue and representation were widely shared between the Government and the social partners. The workers of Mauritania appreciated the action taken by the Government in relation to minimum wages and older workers, but called on the Government to take further action, in particular with regard to developing trade union capacity, enhancing social dialogue and promoting decent work for workers in all sectors. He called on the Director-General to lend the ILO's support to the Mauritanian Workers' Coordinating Trade Union, in particular with regard to training in the areas of collective negotiations between partners, decent work and systems for the regulation of uncategorized sectors.

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- 105.** The Workers' delegate of Nigeria commended the progress being made in Africa towards the consolidation of constitutional multi-party democracy. He acknowledged the efforts of African workers, especially in Burkina Faso and Tunisia, in ensuring the attainment of democracy for their respective countries. The achievement of decent work in Africa would require respect for the principles of accountability and transparency, and genuine, effective and participatory social dialogue practices, both bipartite (collective bargaining) and tripartite at national level. Organized labour had resolved to practice what it preached in terms of freedom of association. Organized business should also commit towards ethical and responsive business practices and this could be demonstrated through their denouncing tax dodging and mispricing practices. There was a need for governments to demonstrate sincerity in cutting down on the cost of governance while maintaining quality public services. Governments should make all efforts to block leakages and defeat public corruption by committing to the effective implementation of the Mbeki panel report on halting illicit financial flows from Africa. The ILO should work with labour and finance ministries to promote policy coherence. Only by doing this could Africa take advantage of the opportunities for mobilizing the resources needed to finance the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa in order to achieve growth and inclusivity.
- 106.** The representative of the Arab League of States commended the continuation of high-level dialogue on rights and social dialogue as a means of achieving inclusive and sustainable growth on the continent of Africa. The Arab League was contributing to the sustainable development effort which would lead to national development through the setting up of trust funds and development cooperation. Specifically, the league was working by supporting policy development and implementation through a well-defined global partnership. There was clear consonance between the Decent Work Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, in particular with respect to SDG 8. Decent work was part of a sophisticated vision of the future. The Arab States would continue to work with the ILO on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular with regard to enhancing productivity and providing decent and productive employment opportunities and to promoting SMEs. He recalled the suffering of the Palestinian people, including workers, farmers and businessmen, and called on participants in the Meeting to renew their solidarity with the Palestinian people and workers by requesting the occupying authorities to desist from their policies and practices that were incompatible with international customs, laws and legitimate resolutions, and with human rights and international humanitarian law.
- 107.** The representative of UNI Global Union commended the ILO for its work towards promoting inclusive growth through its interactions with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Decent work was critical in ensuring economic growth and reducing the levels of inequality. Despite the progress achieved at national level, some objectives had not been reached as a result of the lack of jobs and of inequality. There was a need to acknowledge demographic trends and their impact on the youth of Africa. Africa should therefore put relevant policies in place in order to develop production, training and job opportunities for workers, and thus dissuade them from migrating. In order to achieve decent work, Africa had to overcome youth unemployment, disease and natural calamities including those brought on by climate change. Decent work could only be achieved with the participation of national partners; it should not be left to multinationals in the name of FDI. Governments must ensure that agreements with multinationals included protection of workers' rights. The Director-General should take all steps to ensure that the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 were implemented. In this regard, employment promotion should be at the forefront of these efforts. Efforts should also be made at improving standards of work, especially in security companies which were known for not respecting the use of social dialogue.
- 108.** The representative of the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) noted that the Report of the Director-General took stock of the opportunities created for the ILO with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and its consonance with the ILO's Decent

Work Agenda in terms of promoting sustainable development. The ILO had a genuine role to play especially in relation to SDG 8 and its attendant targets. All stakeholders should have the same understanding when it came to measuring progress. It was of concern that workers were usually left out in the preparation of these progress reports and only came to subsequently hear of them at meetings. This practice should end, and the ILO should provide capacity-building support towards the development of appropriate, practical, workable monitoring and evaluation tools. The SADC had taken an important step with the endorsement of the Protocol on Employment and Labour by Heads of State in 2014. This was a major milestone towards the commitment to decent work by the region.

Special plenary debates

- 109.** The Regional Meeting held two special plenary debates, the first on “Transition from the informal to the formal economy in Africa: The way forward”, and the second on “Employment and new technologies: Opportunities for Africa’s youth”.

Transition from the informal to the formal economy in Africa: The way forward

- 110.** Mr Grégoire Owona, Government Vice-Chairperson of the Regional Meeting chaired the special plenary debate, which was moderated by Ms Sunita Pitamber, Director, Social and Human Development Department, African Development Bank. The panel was composed as follows:

- Ms Mildred Oliphant, Minister for Labour, South Africa;
- Mr Moussa Dosso, Minister for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training, Côte d’Ivoire;
- Ms Wenyan Yang, Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
- Ms Vanessa Phala, Director, Business Unity South Africa;
- Mr Eric Mwezi Manzi (Secretary General, Confederation of Trade Unions of Rwanda (CESTRA));
- Ms Azita Berar Awad, Director, Employment Policy Department, International Labour Office.

- 111.** Ms Awad introduced the topic by highlighting the challenge of the informal sector in African economies, and the new opportunity and momentum that was created by the adoption of Recommendation No. 204 at the 2015 International Labour Conference for scaling up action and setting up integrated strategies for transition to the formal economy.

- 112.** Globally, one half of the workforce worked or produced goods and services in conditions of informality. In Africa, on average 66 per cent of workers in non-agricultural employment worked in the informal economy, and if subsistence agriculture were taken into account, the percentage of informal employment rose to as high as 80–90 per cent. Self-employed, own account workers, and micro- and small economic units had the largest share, in addition to the 10–30 per cent of informal employment in the formal segment of the economy.

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- 113.** The share of young women and men in informal employment was particularly high: eight out of ten employed young persons found their first job in the informal economy and most remained trapped. Women, wage earners and those in self-employment, outnumbered men in the informal economy in most African countries. Informality represented a suboptimal solution for all: governments, employers and workers, and, in the African context, action needed to address both the economic and developmental challenges by unlocking the low productivity trap and accelerating structural transformation, as well as the social inclusion and rights challenge by addressing deficits in social protection, rights and representation.
- 114.** Various policy initiatives were taken in African countries focusing on local economic and employment promotion; registration and one-stop shops for SMEs; tax facilitation; contributory and non-contributory social protection for access to health insurance and pensions; labour inspection; access to finance; and formal recognition and certification of skills acquired in the informal economy. However, these approaches were often fragmented, had limited outreach and lacked a coherent overall enabling framework. The new Recommendation No. 204, adopted this year at the International Labour Conference with strong tripartite support, generated a new momentum and opportunity for scaling up action on transition from the informal to the formal economy in Africa. This was the first international standard that provided both a normative and developmental framework, focusing on the informal economy in its entirety. It provided clear orientation and practical guidance.
- 115.** Recommendation No. 204 was of particular relevance to the African context, given that most people entered the informal economy not by choice but by necessity due to a lack of opportunities. In the process of transition to the formal economy there was a need to preserve and improve existing livelihoods, entrepreneurial potential, skills and creativity of those in the informal economy.
- 116.** Recommendation No. 204 invited Members to initiate integrated strategies to address the threefold interconnected objectives of formal job creation, prevention of further informalization and transition of those in the informal economy. These integrated strategies cut across several policy areas; in particular, employment policies by promoting formal job creation opportunities and supporting high-productivity structural change, and by extending social protection and rights to those who have the most serious deficits through enabling legal and policy frameworks.
- 117.** Recommendation No. 204 provided practical guidance to ensure transition through an integrated and coherent tailor-made strategy, recognizing the diversity of national circumstances in Africa. The approach should be balanced combining incentives and compliance.
- 118.** Coordination and coherence of action at all levels of government, across ministries and agencies were key. Ministries of labour had a key role to play in this process of coordination and coherence building. Social partners had a key role to play to ensure inclusive tripartite policy dialogue and to include those in the informal economy in the process of dialogue. Recommendation No. 204 recognized the importance for those in the informal economy to enjoy freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
- 119.** The Office strategy for support to constituents' action, approved by the Governing Body at its 325th Session (November 2015) over the next six years included four interrelated components:
- Promotion, awareness raising and advocacy.
 - Support for integrated action at county, regional and subregional levels.

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- Knowledge and tools development, sharing and dissemination.
 - Partnerships and international cooperation: in particular, the adoption of SDG 8 on full, productive employment and decent work, and target 8.3 on formalization provided an excellent opportunity to apply Recommendation No. 204.

120. Ms Oliphant said that Recommendation No. 204 was a powerful tool to use in achieving the SDGs and in particular SDG 8. South Africa had adopted an integrated strategy towards formalizing the informal economy. There was, however, a need for analysis of the process, and ILO assistance would be welcome in assessing the policy gaps. The approach should be an integrated one, providing support to raise businesses focused on women entrepreneurs and persons with disabilities, and including enterprise training, skills development and good intergovernmental relations across all spheres. Much could be gained and learned from exchanging experiences and good practices from countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. There was a need for country-specific plans, driven by each country's interest in achieving the transition to formality.

121. Mr Dosso said that Côte d'Ivoire had achieved 9 per cent growth over the last three years and had been recognized as the tenth best reforming country in the world; the Government was genuinely committed to promoting decent work. There was a need for a clear understanding of the informal sector and for the elaboration of country-specific approaches to address the issue. The following measures were of importance:

- better governance;
- development of support services;
- strengthen capacity of workers in the informal sector;
- have legal means for the transition;
- Africa had some experience and good practices to share on the transition to formality; the ILO should support experience sharing and learning by setting up a database of relevant projects.

122. Ms Yang said that Africa needed to promote structural transformation of its economies to expand employment opportunities in the better-paying, higher-productivity formal economy. Barriers to formalization should be addressed through strategies that integrated macroeconomic, industrial, trade and social policies, as well as growth and investment strategies aimed explicitly at promoting productive employment creation and structural transformation. There is a Chinese proverb that says "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." Now was the moment to take that step. The following measures should be put in place to tackle the issues:

- extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy;
- support to increase productivity in the informal sector;
- promotion of cooperatives to organize and empower workers in informal employment;
- support micro- and small enterprises, especially those operated by women and youth;
- efficient and responsive public administration to support entrepreneurship/innovation;
- promote better opportunities for skills and training;

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- support small farmers;
 - certification of knowledge and skills.
- 123.** Ms Phala gave her full support to Recommendation No. 204, and said that it should be translated into tangible and measureable outcomes; adequate research was required to fully understand the informal economy to allow the programme to be put in place to be demand driven. There was a need to address the barriers to formalization and to establish an enabling legal environment for the transition to formality. In this regard, it was important to stimulate economic growth and promote the expansion of the formal economy, promote a business investment environment conducive to formalization, and to guarantee land and property rights. Care should also be taken to ensure that the formal economy stayed formal.
- 124.** Among the barriers to formalization, noted following a survey conducted in South Africa, were:
- formalization was costly – taxes were too high;
 - difficulties in obtaining a business licence;
 - formalization procedures were too complex;
 - problems in hiring staff;
 - formalization process too lengthy.
- 125.** There was a need to understand the sector and the barriers to formality in order to be able to design and implement appropriate tailor-made interventions.
- 126.** Mr Manzi said that African States were committed to implementing Recommendation No. 204, which represented a genuine opportunity for Africa. The high economic growth in Africa was not reducing poverty; governments should pay greater attention to this issue. Recommendation No. 204 could be a powerful tool in achieving the SDGs and especially SDG 8. The transition to the formal economy could be difficult, but it should be achieved through inclusive social dialogue, and with the participation of workers from the informal sector. Recommendation No. 204 would prove an excellent driver of inclusive growth, and the ILO should support its implementation across Africa.
- 127.** The Chairperson then opened up the discussion to the floor.
- 128.** A Government representative of Côte d’Ivoire (Minister of State, Minister for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training) said that with the implementation of Recommendation No. 204 there would be a need to strengthen youth access to finance. In this regard, Côte d’Ivoire had established a platform for financing youth with a view to boosting entrepreneurship and promoting formalization. There was a vital need for a new policy structure to ensure that the young had access jobs; could enter into productive employment; were trained adequately; and that, in general, the worst forms of informal economy were eliminated. There was also a need for incentives to encourage businesses to register formally and join the domain of decent work.
- 129.** A Government representative of Namibia (Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation) welcomed Recommendation No. 204. A number of strategies had been put in place to combat informality in his country and his country had presented its candidature to champion the implementation of Recommendation No. 204. In particular, practical endeavours had been undertaken including, but not limited to:

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- statistical research on the particular characteristics of the informal economy;
 - surveying all existing governmental and non-governmental programmes that addressed any aspect of upgrading the informal economy with a view to fostering an integrated approach;
 - conducting broad multi-sectorial stakeholder workshops to follow up on Recommendation No. 204 with a view to determining priorities;
 - research commenced on measures to extend social protection to the informal economy in respect of maternity, sickness and disability protection.

130. The Employers' delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo spoke in favour of Recommendation No. 204, which would make a valuable contribution to the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Social dialogue should play its part in this. An investment-conducive climate was vital for businesses to flourish. Tax pressure and the weight and complexity of administrative procedures were a strong drag on the transition to formality. Some experiences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could serve as an example:

- The PPP, brought into being under a regulatory law signed by the Prime Minister for the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2011, allowed any economic actor affiliated to a professional organization of employers to benefit from lower taxes and other advantages.
- Tripartite social dialogue in the National Labour Council in August 2015 was in favour of promoting entrepreneurial spirit through the creation of enterprises (e.g. Social Secretariat and Private Placement Service) that were affiliated to one of the professional organizations of employers for their administration and for recognition by the State.
- The organization in September 2015 of the national round table on the adoption of the social protection policy and its strategy with a view to extending coverage of social benefits to the informal sector.

131. Genuine tripartite engagement in the process had a positive influence on formalization and the effective identification of all obstacles to this formalization remained a crucial issue.

132. The Workers' delegate of Sudan acknowledged the dynamic nature of the informal sector which contributed about 60 per cent of GDP in Sudan. While efforts to transition from the informal to the formal economy had been made, it had not been easy to make progress in the short time available. To move further, it would be necessary to understand the root causes of the problem of informality. These included precarious employment and conflict. In this connection, Recommendation No. 204 could prove a valuable tool in this regard. The ILO should imagine ways of supporting countries and regions in their quest to transition to formality. Priority issues could include: capacity building; improving job security; social protection; reducing youth and women unemployment; promoting cooperatives; and helping new entrants into employment.

133. The Workers' delegate of Cameroon informed the Regional Meeting that Cameroon had a new decent work programme with the potential to contribute effectively to the transition from the informal to the formal economy. A failure by stakeholders to accept their responsibilities contributed to the maintenance of the informal economy. As a sector, it was discriminated against, and this was compounded by a failure to understand the contribution that the sector could make, especially in respect of poverty reduction. There

was a need to develop infrastructure to support the informal economy and to strive to improve standards and decent work.

134. An Employers' adviser and substitute delegate of Egypt regretted the lack of solutions to the problem of the informal economy, despite a myriad of meetings and conferences over the years, as well as research in the area. The main issue was insufficient evidence of the clear benefits of formalization. In Egypt, even graduates had resorted to informal employment because in some cases they could earn a higher wage than in formal employment. The social protection strategies implemented in some sectors, such as agriculture and construction, were bearing some fruit but nevertheless the transformation of a large workforce into formality would, in reality, be a slow process.
135. A Government representative of Zimbabwe (Minister for the Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare) said that a significant proportion of the youth of Zimbabwe was working in the informal sector and lacked skills. The Government had adopted an SME policy which made provision for transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. A great deal of effort had also been put towards the finalization of strategies to formalize informal employment. Genuine engagement of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders was required to effectively promote formalization.
136. A Government delegate of Uganda said his Government had made a commitment to support vulnerable groups. There was a critical need to provide infrastructure; invest in agriculture and rural development, in skills development, to support enterprise development and promote access to finance, as well as support the growth of local businesses.
137. The Workers' delegate of Burkina Faso highlighted the need for a strong national policy on taxation and the efficient utilization of resources. Tax evasion by some employers compounded the situation. A specific banking system should be established to service the informal sector. The industrial sector should be developed to provide decent work for those currently in precarious employment. Education systems should be improved and upgraded, and effective efforts should focus on improving the informal sector.
138. The representative of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity stressed that the exportation of natural resources was a suboptimal exercise. Political will was required at national and regional levels to formalize the informal economy. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) had generally failed to boost African economies – carefully crafted measures were the only way to ensure the goal of formalization was attained. True social dialogue was called for, as were the mechanization of agriculture, the improvement of education systems and the combat of illegal loss of revenues.

Remarks by the Director-General on World AIDS Day

139. The Director-General reminded the Regional Meeting that 1 December was World AIDS Day. He observed that the day came at the right moment as in a month's time the MDGs would come to an end, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would begin. Good progress had been made in MDG 6, as 50 million people currently had access to antiretroviral therapy. Furthermore, new infections and deaths had continued to fall. He informed participants of the 90-90-90, an ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic which stated:

By 2020, 90 per cent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status. By 2020, 90 per cent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy. By 2020, 90 per cent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

Employment and new technologies: Opportunities for Africa's youth

140. Ms Jaqueline Mugo, Vice-Chairperson, chaired the special plenary debate, which was moderated by Mr Mamadou Biteye, Managing Director, African Regional Office, Rockefeller Foundation. The panel was composed as follows:

- Ms Anna Mugabo, Director-General of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Public Service and Labour, Rwanda;
- Ms Amrote Abdella, Regional Director, Microsoft's "4Afrika" initiative;
- Mr Beyani Munthali, Executive Director, Employer Consultative Association of Malawi;
- Mr Eric Mwezi Manzi (Secretary General, Trade Unions Central of Rwandan Workers (CESTRA));
- Ms Irmgard Nübler, Senior Economist, ILO.

141. The moderator explained the mission of the Rockefeller Foundation and highlighted its major areas of work. He said that the Foundation tried to identify and work on issues of global importance, and that unemployment, especially youth unemployment, was one of these. Transformations brought new jobs that were cost-effective, and a digital revolution was required to create jobs and train those who would otherwise be left behind.

142. Ms Nübler stated that new production technologies and the development of new products might destroy, create or transform the nature of existing jobs. This implied that the pattern of technological and structural change determined both the quantity and quality of jobs. She highlighted the fundamental challenge for African countries in steering technological development and promoting patterns of technological innovation that generated jobs and, in particular, jobs that met people's needs and aspirations.

143. She indicated that many African countries still faced low levels of technology and low dynamics in technological change. Production technologies in agriculture and the informal economy demonstrated these low levels of sophistication, which led to low job productivity and low wages, which negatively impacted workers' health and well-being. The share of manufacturing in GDP was still low, as was the share of medium- and high-technology products. This was a critical issue, as industrial development had been identified as the engine of technological progress in low-income countries. Technological upgrading in industries could substantially spill over into agriculture and the informal economy.

144. She presented the case of a number of African countries that had demonstrated high dynamics in the transformation of jobs and occupational profiles, significantly changing the share of low-, medium- and higher-skill occupations among the workforce. This was indicative of technological and structural transformations. However, no systematic analysis of observed patterns of change in occupational profiles had been undertaken to date. There was a need to better understand the nature of technological and structural change and how it had shaped new occupational profiles in the workforce.

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- 145.** The success of countries like China, the Republic of Korea and Singapore could provide interesting lessons. Policy-makers needed to formulate a long-term strategy of technological and structural transformation, with a clear vision of the goals to be achieved. She pointed out that inclusion was required of all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, the craft sector, agriculture and services, in both urban and rural areas, into a strategy of technological transformation. Experience from other countries showed that successfully managed technological development involved a two-pronged strategy: an incremental catching up from low- to medium- and to high-technology products, as well as leapfrogging into cutting-edge technologies. The incremental catching-up process implied a learning process which increased the capacity of the labour force and enterprises to innovate and to leapfrog.
- 146.** There was no one-size-fits-all policy approach and policy-makers needed to develop country-specific strategies. Governments should develop a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated package of policies that included investment, trade, technology, education and training policies, supported by macroeconomic, financial and labour market strategies combined with investment in infrastructure. These policies required effective institutions for overall coordination purposes, as well as to ensure that learning, investment and innovation went hand in hand.
- 147.** Ms Mugabo indicated that changes needed to be examined within the context of: why new technologies were wanted; why would new technologies be adopted; what policies existed; what skills existed to use the new technology adopted; and what were the real needs of the population. There was strong demand for these changes in the agricultural sector to help people move out of poverty. One size did not fit all and it would also be crucial to look at the cost of technology. The required skills had to be assessed; training had to be administered; and technology utilization had to be simplified so that it was easily adopted. It was vital to promote social dialogue in this context and to mainstream technological change into national development strategies. In this way, the population would fully embrace technology.
- 148.** Ms Abdella reported that Microsoft's 4Afrika initiative was established in February 2013 with the aim of driving innovation to grow locally-owned enterprises, promoting training in world-class skills for the private sector, and supporting connectivity through affordable access. The initiative addressed issues of employability, competitiveness and productivity not only in affluent markets but also in more remotely located areas, targeting farmers. She made reference to the Feature Nokia Phone Project in Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe designed to promote access and higher productivity through Internet connectivity. Microsoft had invested significantly in the continent and was looking for partnerships on the ground at national level.
- 149.** Mr Munthali set the context in five areas – skills, education, new markets, government regulation and employment creation. With regard to skills, there was a need to tailor technologies to the national context, as well as for more sustainable initiatives like those of Samsung, Microsoft's 4Afrika initiative and e-Ghana. He noted that, while businesses were adapting to new technology, the education sector was not responding or being proactive at the same pace. Hence, innovation fostered or incubated in the education system was crucial. He indicated that the ILO could assist countries to identify skills gaps and adapt to training needs, to create linkages between education and training and enterprises, to help countries to develop training programmes in new technologies both at school and in professional training institutions, and encourage investment in infrastructure.
- 150.** With regard to new markets and enabling environments, there was a need for business partnerships and the creation of SMEs. This called for social dialogue and for the social partners to discuss sustainable technologies. The ILO could assist countries to identify areas for the use of new technologies, to encourage local and foreign investment, and to

promote the creation of new technology enterprises. It should encourage regional cooperation to boost investment, especially in fibre-optic access. It could also support enterprises in developing their own training in new technologies and lifelong learning enabling workers to change jobs.

- 151.** Mr Manzi echoed the need for African countries to take up technological change that required innovation. However, the informal and agricultural sectors were characterized by poor productivity and low wages and limited access to digital technologies. Industrialization was required to create opportunities. If new technologies were used well, they resulted in productive employment. Educational and professional institutions needed to be reformed in innovative ways.
- 152.** There was a need for countries to step up industrialization, introduce new mobile technologies and to secure easy access to the Internet. There were challenges connected with energy supply, skills enhancement, investment promotion and ensuring social dialogue in the appropriate policy environment. There was a need for an integrated approach, the coordination of programmes and policies at national level and effective social dialogue. Resources, political determination and ILO technical expertise would be required.
- 153.** A Government representative of Ghana (Deputy Minister for Employment and Labour Relations) stated that Africa should import technology that promoted opportunities for youth employment. Countries should not accept technology, even if it was free, if it did not contribute to employment, as it could be redundant. Ghana imported technology that was linked to specific sectors of the economy. African countries should receive technologies that were pertinent to their particular needs.
- 154.** A Government representative of Sudan (State Minister for Labour and Administrative Reform) informed the Meeting that his country wished to reduce youth unemployment as a way to address the economic challenges the country was facing. He called for increased ILO support to developing countries, and for the ILO to assist in opening doors for young people on the continent. Additional efforts were therefore needed to promote cooperation and partnership for linking information and communications technology (ICT) to youth employment.
- 155.** A Workers' adviser and substitute delegate of Morocco stated that the link between youth and technology lay with education. Young people added value to the economy and this was enhanced through increased focus on professional training for young people. African governments needed to give greater attention to youth, by adopting education policies that responded to labour market needs. Governments should import technology in a way that supported industrial development, sustainable development and youth employment. Africa's youth should take advantage of technological development to gain exposure and it should learn from other regions including from Asia. Countries should allocate resources for scientific research, acknowledging that Africa contributed only 1 per cent to scientific research.
- 156.** The Employers' delegate of Gabon said that it was important to highlight the major role for the private sector of ICT in sustainable development. Countries were encouraged to support SMEs that needed new technology, especially for communication. Capacity building was key, with a recommendation for the ILO to strengthen its capacity-building efforts in Africa. The ILO was further requested, working with Business Africa, to support employers' organizations and SMEs in the informal economy to access ICT.
- 157.** The Employers' delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo appreciated new technologies, while noting that there were also challenges. Countries should look at the labour-intensive aspect of the technology and have their education and training aligned to

it. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had signed two partnership agreements in 2010 and 2011, between, on the one hand, employers and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Vocational Training, and, on the other hand, employers and the Ministry of University and Higher Education, with a view to ensuring a closer fit between training and employment.

- 158.** A Workers' adviser and substitute delegate of Sudan said that employment and new technology were very important and all closely linked to the needs of young people. He added that Africa was rich in natural resources but needed to acquire new technology to support the skills required by the labour market, including in the agricultural and livestock production sectors. While Africa was rich in educated youth, it was also necessary to adapt the supply of education and training to the requirements of industry. The use of new technology should be built into curricula. Finally, he was of the opinion that social dialogue and equity needed to be actively promoted.
- 159.** The Employers' delegate of Zambia acknowledged that the Internet constituted a vast source of information and should be accessible to all, including young people, women and those at the bottom of the pyramid, enabling them to benefit from education, as well as economic and social development. He noted that there were two barriers hampering access to information technology: a digital and a language divide. The digital divide resulted from not being able to afford the technology, as well as from the challenges of connectivity. The language divide came about through people not being able to understand the languages most commonly used on the Internet, with 70 per cent of content being in English. These challenges were encountered in his country and Africa at large. He requested the ILO to seek out appropriate enabling technologies that would help ICT to become a key driver of economic development.
- 160.** The Employers' delegate of Congo highlighted the linkages between technology and youth employment. His country had experienced high economic growth driven by the oil industry. Private companies in Africa imported new technologies that required new skills, and such skilled labour was also imported despite high levels of unemployment. This led to social tensions, as the local population had no access to jobs at a time when the country was experiencing economic growth. Clearly, education lagged behind the needs of the labour market.
- 161.** The Employers' delegate of Côte d'Ivoire stated that information technology offered new opportunities for growth and profits. There was a need for the acquisition of new skills to match the technology and to support and promote SMEs. New technology constituted an opportunity to transform African enterprises. He indicated that governments were generally slow to react, in particular when it came to education and training or the elaboration of policies to encourage entrepreneurship in young people. He emphasized the role of social dialogue in the discussion of new technology and youth employment.
- 162.** Responding to the discussion, Mr Manzi agreed that countries should carefully evaluate the risks and opportunities that new technologies brought to Africa. Social dialogue therefore played a key role in addressing both the hazards and advantages in endeavours to ensure that the right policies were adopted and that youth employment and underemployment were part of the discussion.
- 163.** Mr Munthali noted that new technology also presented challenges of a legal nature and pointed out the need for legislation both to protect and promote their utilization. He recommended apprenticeships and traineeships as opportunities to address youth employment and adaptation to technology.

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- 164.** Ms Abdella endorsed the proposal of Mr Munthali and agreed that on-the-job training in the use of new technologies was highly important. She noted that innovation and entrepreneurship were impacted by the education system, and concluded by calling for a change in mindset in Africa that would encourage young people to take risks and the authorities to accept that sometimes mistakes would be committed.
- 165.** Ms Mugabo noted that insufficient infrastructure and a shortage of skills were major handicaps in connection with new technology.
- 166.** Ms Nübler appreciated that new technology could destroy jobs; at the same time, they were capable of triggering off a process of product innovation and diversification into new industries, thereby creating productive jobs and productivity growth in Africa. New technology should also be seen in the broader context, taking into account new information and communication as well as production technologies.
- 167.** The moderator summarized the session with the conclusion that new technology was not a panacea but should rather be viewed as an enabler for innovation and transformation. He emphasized the need to adapt the technology to the needs of the country. He called upon countries to train young people for the jobs of the future, not those of the past. He went on to recommend that the ILO continue to play a leadership role in driving well-integrated action programmes that accounted for the needs of the private sector, employers and workers. The programmes should stimulate the private sector to facilitate jobs and the development of SMEs. The ILO should also facilitate a platform for the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Special session on the promotion and application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa

- 168.** The Regional Meeting also held a special session on the promotion and application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa. The session was chaired by Mr Grégoire Owona, Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting, and moderated by the ILO Director of the Sectoral Policies Department, Ms Alette Van Leur. The panel was composed as follows:
- Mr Ts’oeu Mahlakeng, Minister for Labour and Employment, Lesotho;
 - Mr Edouard Ladouyou, General Confederation of Côte d’Ivoire Enterprises and Business Africa;
 - Mr Bheki Ntshalintshali, General Secretary, Congress of South African Trade Unions.
- 169.** The moderator recalled that this session was organized as part of the new follow-up mechanism of the MNE Declaration adopted by the ILO Governing Body in 2014. The three objectives of the session were to share the main points of the report *Multinational enterprises, development and decent work: Report on the promotion and application of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa* produced with direct inputs by tripartite constituents from the member States in Africa, to share experiences on opportunities and challenges related to the implementation of the MNE Declaration in the region and to formulate recommendations for more effective promotion of the instrument in Africa.

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- 170.** Ms Roelans, Head, Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit, introduced the discussion by referring to a number of priority issues for Africa that had been highlighted in the previous sessions, such as the need for structural transformation, the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and the role of social dialogue in inclusive and sustainable development. A delegate had previously mentioned that the private sector was the engine for job creation and that government put the oil through legislation, appropriate policies and social dialogue. The ignition often was FDI and trade. Governments indeed attracted FDI on the expectation that it would lead to local job creation, economic diversification and eradication of poverty. The 2030 Agenda and the Financing for Development Conference had underlined the role of the private sector in development and called for a closer alignment of private sector policies with national development goals.
- 171.** The MNE Declaration, as the tripartite-adopted global and rights-based instrument to harness operations of multinational enterprises (MNEs) for inclusive socio-economic development, had gained importance in view of the ever-increasing economic globalization and the 2030 Agenda. Its core features were the need to strengthen policies, to closer align private sector action with national development priorities and to stimulate industrial relations, national tripartite dialogue and dialogue between home and host countries.
- 172.** The main elements of the report comprised an overview of the regional trends in FDI and an analysis of the responses received from governments, employers and workers of the member States in the region on the promotion and application of the MNE Declaration. In the past decade substantive economic growth had been registered in Africa, partly stimulated by a large increase in FDI flows. The FDI was no longer limited to natural resources and commodities but now increasingly also in services and manufacturing, sectors that provided more opportunities for job creation. Investments from emerging economies were on the rise as well as increased African cross-border investment due to the emergence of African multinational enterprises. However, despite GDP and FDI growth, this growth had been largely jobless. The question that must be asked was how to increase shared benefits. Twelve countries were currently revising their investment strategies and policies offering the opportunity to closer link investment to inclusive development. The momentum and policy space were there to further harness investment for decent work and inclusive growth.
- 173.** The most salient elements of the analysis of the responses received from the tripartite constituents. The areas that were considered most relevant included the employment creation, training, conditions of work and collective bargaining chapters of the MNE Declaration. In each of these areas, challenges and opportunities related to FDI and operations of MNEs had been indicated. Dialogue platforms for discussions on, and with, MNEs existed in most of the responding countries and could be further strengthened.
- 174.** Lastly, she shared some of the suggested actions to further improve the application of the principles of the MNE Declaration, such as the strengthening of existing tripartite structures in discussions on FDI and investment policies, the further capacity building of tripartite constituents, increased international cooperation, sectoral attention and more ILO forums involving MNEs so that constituents would also learn more about the MNE Declaration and incorporate the principles into their operations. Tripartite constituents had also clearly indicated the need for increased ILO technical assistance to better equip them for policy formulation and dialogue in their countries.
- 175.** Mr Mahlakeng shared the experience of his country in harnessing foreign investment for inclusive growth and job creation, and formulated suggestions on ways to further promote the MNE Declaration in the region. He reported that Lesotho attached great importance to the MNE Declaration, as was indicated by the fact that all tripartite constituents had completed the questionnaire in preparation of the regional report. Lesotho has also ratified

all ILO core Conventions and was thus in a good position to apply the principles of the MNE Declaration. It had, for example, promulgated the Children Protection and Welfare Act, adopted a National Strategic Development Plan, industrial policy, investment policy and the draft national employment policy was ready for Cabinet approval. All of these measures were intended to improve the investment environment.

- 176.** In addition, a One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre had brought together the units of several ministries responsible for various approvals and procedures, thus facilitating the process of establishing and running an enterprise. Lesotho had also participated in the ILO Better Work Programme.
- 177.** In terms of challenges faced by Lesotho, the speaker observed that in Lesotho many investors did not sufficiently value social dialogue. There was also a language barrier as well as a lack of technical skills transfer. MNEs were moreover often reluctant to reinvest their profits in the country of operations.
- 178.** As the way forward, the MNE Declaration should be widely disseminated and mainstreamed in national development strategies. Moreover, social dialogue should be strengthened. Member States should report on progress made on a two-yearly basis. This could be done for example in the context of the AU's Socio-Economic Commission. There were clear linkages between the MNE Declaration and the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.
- 179.** The ILO should provide further support on the MNE Declaration, including: supporting the mainstreaming of the MNE Declaration into development and sectoral policies; disseminating best practices; and conducting research on the impact of MNEs on economic growth, employment creation and skills transfer.
- 180.** Mr Ladouyou shared the very positive experience in Côte d'Ivoire in engaging MNEs on the national priority of youth employment in the post-crisis years. An ILO study conducted in 2010 on youth employment had led to a high-level dialogue and the establishment of a tripartite working group comprised of the Government, employers and trade unions. Further studies were conducted on the basis of the MNE Declaration in different sectors to identify possibilities of increased linkages between MNEs and local SMEs and the barriers to such linkages. Subsequently the working group adopted a plan of action.
- 181.** The MNE Declaration was largely unknown and the employers' organizations were working with the Ministry of Employment on ways to better promote the MNE Declaration among new investors coming to Côte d'Ivoire, so that the principles were immediately incorporated into their policies and practices. There was a need for MNEs to become members of the national employers' organizations so that further training could be organized for them on the MNE Declaration and MNEs could also share their expertise in certain areas with local enterprises. He formulated the request for further training on the MNE Declaration for the members of the tripartite working group.
- 182.** Mr Ntshalintshali commented on the need to build strong and vibrant trade unions as no employer would voluntarily implement the principles of the MNE Declaration. He reported that the Workers welcomed the Report and agreed with what had been identified as the negative aspects of the FDI. He raised the problem of the limited number of responses to the questionnaire, stressing that it was important to have data and facts to inform an evidence-based dialogue. The FDI was generally welcomed but experiences had been mixed as often MNEs destroyed jobs instead of creating them and had a negative impact on the environment and communities. There was also the problem of tax evasion and union-free arrangements often undermining national legislation. There was a need for capacity building of tripartite constituents and a stronger monitoring of how the principles were applied. The development model should be rethought to enhance the benefits for the host country and move away from the export-oriented model that did not add value in the

host country. The rights to organize and collective bargaining should be promoted and the ILO had an important role to play in this respect.

- 183.** The panel discussion was followed by interventions from the delegates.
- 184.** A Government representative of Côte d'Ivoire reported that tackling the youth unemployment challenge was a government priority in Côte d'Ivoire and that a specific Youth Employment Agency had been established to that effect. He noted that FDI has been increasing over the years as the result of the reforms of the business environment in the country. A new Investment Code had been adopted, as well as a new framework for private sector dialogue and PPP. The objective had been to come to a better sharing of the benefits of FDI. He reiterated the need to further promote the update of the principles of the MNE Declaration and engage enterprises in job creation for youth. He concluded by stressing the need for tripartite commitment, increased business linkages between MNEs and local SMEs, for studies on the impact of MNEs on job creation and the development of a resource kit which included examples of good practices. He commended the experience in Côte d'Ivoire of working with MNEs on the basis of the MNE Declaration and requested continued ILO support in this area.
- 185.** A Government delegate of Zambia reported that Zambia viewed FDI as an avenue for job creation. Zambia had therefore introduced reforms to improve the investment climate and established the Zambia Development Agency as the one-stop shop for international investors. Further reforms were under way to enhance the country's capacity for economic development. He provided an overview of the laws affecting FDI, as well as current efforts to harmonize employment.
- 186.** A Government delegate of Niger welcomed this special session on the MNE Declaration on the agenda of the African Regional Meeting, underlining that as a member of the ILO Governing Body, Niger had supported the new implementation strategy on the MNE Declaration. He was therefore pleased to see the progress made. He requested ILO capacity-building support in his country to be in a better position to further stimulate the uptake of the MNE Declaration.
- 187.** A Workers' adviser of Sudan stressed the important link between MNEs and inclusive and sustainable development. He observed that MNEs in Sudan seemed to go into sectors with specific skills requirements such as telecommunications but did not create enough jobs. One distinct challenge was the fact that MNEs did not fully respect the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Governments should be accountable for ensuring that MNEs could not take advantage of loopholes in legislation. MNEs were rarely driven by social goals but rather by profit-making. It was therefore important that governments put in place appropriate legislation and focused on attracting investment that effectively contributed to decent work.
- 188.** The Employers' delegate of Swaziland supported the MNE Declaration as it encouraged MNEs to comply with host country policies and principles of good governance. In Swaziland, measures had been taken to ensure transparency in government contracts and attract investment. However, these government agencies often were not sufficiently aware of the MNE Declaration, although they were the focal points for MNEs in the country. She highlighted the need, therefore, to reach out to these agencies and other ministries to enhance national policy coherence and the roles that each of them could play. There was a need to mainstream the MNE Declaration in other policy areas.
- 189.** The Workers' delegate of Morocco welcomed this session in the agenda of the African Regional Meeting. Many governments tried to attract FDI but the question remained whether these MNEs were effectively contributing to decent work and national development priorities. Some MNEs restricted membership to labour unions, discriminated

in terms of salaries between locals and expatriates, and discouraged collective bargaining and freedom of association. The ILO should organize workshops to enhance the awareness and uptake of the MNE Declaration in Morocco.

- 190.** A representative of the IOE emphasized how MNEs were assisting SMEs in upgrading and in formalization. An increasing number of MNEs were aware of their role in society and embracing corporate social responsibility. Many of them were also working with SMEs to improve compliance with national laws and principles of international labour standards. There should however be no confusion over roles and responsibilities: it was not up to the MNEs to take over the role of government. The IOE was committed to the further promotion of the MNE Declaration and close collaboration with the ILO had been established in this regard.
- 191.** Mr Ntshalintshali found it very encouraging that all speakers had recognized the relevance of the MNE Declaration. Its further promotion and application should therefore be supported. MNEs could indeed make an important contribution to job creation and inclusive growth. Ethical behaviour should be further encouraged through compliance with legislation, elimination of discrimination and promotion of local employment.
- 192.** Mr Ladouyou highlighted the need to encourage MNEs to become members of national employers' organizations and to further promote the MNE Declaration, repeating the request for continued ILO support.
- 193.** Mr Mahlakeng aligned himself with the many comments made by delegates and requested further ILO support.
- 194.** Ms Roelans welcomed the active participation of the delegates and the many suggestions. She would take away from the Meeting the call to further mainstream the MNE Declaration in other policy areas and the call for increased ILO support. A regional action plan would be developed to this effect in line with DWCPs.
- 195.** Ms Van Leur summarized the session by highlighting that the delegates had expressed wide support for the MNE Declaration and that FDI must contribute to decent work and inclusive and sustainable growth. To this effect, national policy coherence and inter-ministerial collaboration should be stimulated and supported. The session had identified skills development and transfer, training and increased capabilities as very relevant areas of the MNE Declaration. In support of the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063, tripartite constituents requested further capacity building and technical support at the national and regional levels.

Consideration and adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration

- 196.** The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee on the conclusions (Government, Nigeria) said that the Addis Ababa Declaration, "Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development",² clearly addressed the concerns and aspirations of the Regional Meeting in its three parts: "Frameworks and prospects for inclusive and sustainable development"; "World of work policy priorities"; and the "ILO role in promoting decent work and inclusive development". It clearly identified new opportunities and areas for action by the ILO and by the Organization's constituents, ascribing responsibilities accordingly.

² AFRM.13/D.8.

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- 197.** The Employer and Worker representatives of the Drafting Committee on the conclusions supported the Addis Ababa Declaration. The Employer representative noted that the Office might wish to make some linguistic adjustments to the translations to ensure the language versions were perfectly aligned. This suggestion was supported by other delegates present.
- 198.** Speaking for the Workers' group, the Workers' delegate of Algeria proposed the addition of a paragraph in the Addis Ababa Declaration expressing the solidarity of all ILO constituents with the workers in the occupied Arab territories, and calling on the Director-General to do all he could for these workers. The Governments of Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia supported this proposal.
- 199.** The Director-General explained that the inclusion in the Addis Ababa Declaration of a paragraph expressing solidarity with the workers of the occupied Arab territories was not possible as this issue had not been discussed during the Regional Meeting. However, the report of the Meeting would reflect the views put forward.
- 200.** *The Meeting agreed with this course of action.*
- 201.** A Government delegate of Morocco noted that the Regional Meeting was taking place in the context of terrorist activities. A specific paragraph should be added to the Addis Ababa Declaration denouncing these activities, as decent work could not exist unless the fight against terrorism succeeded. This was a point that had been made by the Employers' substitute delegate of Egypt during the discussion of the Director-General's Report.
- 202.** The Director-General proposed the following wording to be added to the Addis Ababa Declaration as a new paragraph 8: "The Meeting recognizes terrorism as an obstacle to sustainable development in Africa and everywhere and condemns it unequivocally."
- 203.** *The Meeting supported this proposed amendment and a number of further textual adjustments included in the final text. It entrusted the Office with the task of ensuring the alignment of the language versions and unanimously adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration: "Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development".*

Presentation of the report of the Credentials Committee

- 204.** The Chairperson of the Credentials Committee pointed to the record participation at the Regional Meeting. Over 400 delegates had been registered, including 40 ministers or vice-ministers of labour, as well as a very high number of international and regional organizations. The greater use of electronic means of communication in the preparations for the Meeting had been particularly appreciated. Participation by women had increased since the 12th African Regional Meeting, in line with the ILO's push to achieve gender equality. Finally, there had been a reduction in matters to be dealt with by the Credentials Committee, as only two issues had been submitted for its consideration, and neither of these was a complaint.
- 205.** *The Meeting took note of the report of its Credentials Committee.*³

³ AFRM.13/D.9.

Adoption of the report of the Meeting

- 206.** The Chairperson informed delegates that they could make amendments to the summary of their own interventions in the report of the Meeting by submitting these in writing to the secretariat. A number of amendments were handed in.
- 207.** The Employer spokesperson welcomed the report, which she believed accurately reflected the discussions. Her group did not have any substantive amendments to make to the text, which she recommended to the Meeting for adoption.
- 208.** The Worker spokesperson also commended the report. The Meeting had given constituents the chance to carefully examine the mandate of the ILO in Africa and provide considered guidance on future directions that the Organization should take. During the discussions divergent approaches had been voiced, but the proceedings had been constructive and respectful. His group also recommended that the Meeting adopt the report.
- 209.** *The Meeting unanimously adopted its report.*

Closing ceremony

- 210.** The Government Vice-Chairperson noted that Africa had great potential and that this could be transformed into reality. To achieve this it was essential to overcome differences and work together; in this, he evoked the memory of Nelson Mandela and his message of love and understanding. Many ideas had been put forward by delegates, and many were suggested in the Report of the Director-General to the Meeting which had met with strong approval. The ILO must help strengthen institutional mechanisms through a multidimensional approach, including social dialogue, educational and vocational training, lifelong learning, strategies for employment, macroeconomic policies and structural adjustments. Through the ratification of Conventions, ambitious programmes to combat poverty and by widening social security coverage, Africa had already come a long way. While this did not suffice, it nonetheless represented progress. The times were troubled, with an increase in violence and terrorism, but the message of the Meeting was that dialogue and partnerships would win through. Indeed, dialogue was of the utmost importance in the search for solutions, and Africans were gifted at dialogue. The key words at the Meeting had been coherence, partnership, integration, collaboration, union and dialogue.
- 211.** Speaking for the Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Employers' delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania noted that the 13th African Regional Meeting coincided with the adoption by the international community of the 2030 Agenda. The AU had also adopted its Agenda 2063. The Employers' group welcomed SDG 8 on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and which was of particular relevance to the ILO and its constituents. The Addis Ababa Declaration also placed decent work and social protection at the heart of development policies. The 2030 Agenda should be integrated into national development frameworks through a process of national consultations that took account of national characteristics. The private sector had a pivotal role to play in attaining the SDGs in partnership with governments. Sustainable development should be at the core of national policies; institutions should be effective, open and accountable; and better basic infrastructure should be put in place, ensuring an improved business environment, integrating the informal into the formal economy. Reform of African economies could only advance through social dialogue, and governments should ensure the institutional framework was in place to allow employers' organizations to engage effectively in the implementation of

SDGs at national level. The ILO had an important role in capacity building, focusing on improving employers organizations' ability to influence policy.

- 212.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that Africa had the potential to drive employment creation and generate decent work. But the continent's growth was not inclusive. He noted the commitments made within the AU to make decent work a reality and reaffirmed the support of the Workers' group for the Addis Ababa Declaration. Governments should strive to reinforce social dialogue and work to transform the economy by introducing diversification and industrialization: this would attract investment. The ILO should supply a roadmap to enable the tripartite constituents to implement and realize the aims of the Addis Ababa Declaration.
- 213.** The Director-General of the ILO recalled that in his opening remarks to the Meeting he had stressed the importance of Africa making its voice heard. This had been resoundingly the case, as the Addis Ababa Declaration set out the challenges, recommendations and expectations of the continent. Ownership of action in the region had been asserted and the ILO had been given a clear mandate. Africa's voice was powerful: no less than 400 delegates and advisers had attended the Meeting, including 40 ministers or vice-ministers, exceeding participation at the 12th African Regional Meeting. He reminded participants that the review of the functioning of ILO Regional Meetings, including the *Rules for Regional Meetings, 2008*, had been included in the mandate of the Governing Body Working Party on the Functioning of the Governing Body and of the International Labour Conference, and that the Working Party would shortly take up this task.
- 214.** The Meeting had achieved clear and striking consensus on decent work for sustainable growth and the emphasis was now not on what needed to be done, but more on how to do it. The strong alignment of African, regional and international frameworks that had recently occurred offered an unprecedented opportunity to make progress. The ILO and its tripartite constituents must bear their responsibilities and all must play their part. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its alignment with African development strategy, the Agenda 2063 and the ILO's own strategy in the region now lay ahead.
- 215.** The Chairperson noted the spirit of consensus and agreement that had guided the discussions of the Regional Meeting over a period of four very concentrated days. He thanked the participants, the Director-General and the Regional Director for Africa for their commitment and expressed gratitude to the ILO staff from the Africa region as well as the staff members in Geneva who had all worked to ensure that the Meeting achieved its very successful end.

Appendix I

Information session on the “Joint Labour Migration Programme”

1. Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon (ILO) introduced the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) by emphasizing that it was a practical demonstration of effective policy implementation support. Most migration today was related to employment. In 2013, it was estimated that there were 18.6 million migrants in Africa and 31.3 million African migrants, many of whom were women. It was noteworthy that half of African migrants stayed in Africa (15.3 million), with 80 per cent of migrants in West Africa staying in the subregion.
2. The key drivers of migration included demographic pressures, Africa’s growing youth population, jobless growth and a dearth of decent work opportunities in many countries. This was worsened by rising inequality and exclusion, state fragility as well as a global skills shortage.
3. There was increasing evidence of the benefits of migration to workers, their families as well as the countries of origin and destination. World Bank reports showed that 2013 remittance inflows to Africa totalled about US\$61 billion; compared to FDI of US\$59 billion, and ODA of US\$46 billion. Moreover, remittances contributed significantly to countries’ GDP. Despite these contributions, migrant workers were not well protected and several challenges persisted: security agendas often limited the broader understanding of labour migration as a fundamental issue for development; there was inadequate and comprehensive data; plus lethargic implementation of free movement protocols.
4. Relevant AU policies existed to address some of these challenges, including: the AU Migration Policy Framework (2006); the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, which prioritized labour migration as a key priority area for inclusive development (2015); and the 2015 AU Declaration on Migration. The 2030 SDGs also included targets which promote effective labour migration governance (targets 10.7, 8.8 and 10.c).
5. The JLMP provided a new orientation to transformative and longer-term development cooperation. It was developed by Africa for Africa, adopted by the 24th AU Assembly and focused on supporting effective implementation of adopted policies to foster rights-based labour migration governance, thereby reducing irregular migration. It was the first AU-led programme on migration, which engaged all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as employers’, workers’ and diaspora organizations. The JLMP promoted international labour standards, social dialogue, social protection and employment, particularly for youth. The ILO coordinated the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) – an exemplary collaboration between organizations.
6. The JLMP’s objective was to strengthen the effective governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa to foster development and regional integration with the involvement of key stakeholders. Core results would be delivered on the ratification/implementation of labour standards, capacity building for stakeholders, enhanced tripartite labour migration dialogue, labour migration statistics, skills mobility, protection of the rights of migrants, and the access and portability of social security benefits.
7. Despite the absence of donor funds so far, the JLMP had delivered several results with Regular Budget Supplementary Account/regular budget/regular budget for technical cooperation (RBSA/RBTC) funding. These included: establishment of the first tripartite continental Labour Migration Body; policy input to the 2015 AU Declaration on Migration; social partners’ participation in regional migration consultations; and the preparation of the first Labour Migration Statistics Report for Africa.
8. The only missing link for fast-tracking the delivery of this important initiative was the need for donor funding. Hence, Ms Samuel ended the presentation with a quotation from the AUC Chairperson’s statement to the Valletta Summit: “We would therefore like to invite our partners to support and provide concrete financial commitments to the AU Joint Labour Migration Programme.”

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9. Ambassador Maiyegun (AUC) expressed great appreciation to the ILO and all the partners for supporting the JLMP, the AUC's flagship programme on labour migration. He insisted that beyond the financial support required to fast track implementation, constituents should promote free movement of persons in Africa. He stated that the 2015 AU Declaration on Migration had prioritized this; an important step for facilitating labour migration.
 10. Ms Achieng (IOM) noted that the IOM believed that migration was not a problem, but an opportunity. She recommended the need to change the narrative, focusing on the benefits of migration. This reiterated the need for the bold JLMP initiative to facilitate labour migration governance.
 11. Mr Faye (Employer representative) welcomed the JLMP as a means to promote the development benefits of migration. Employers need skilled workers who could be flexibly sourced and deployed through effective arrangements which facilitated labour migration.
 12. Mr Mhlanga (Worker representative) stated that labour migration was influenced by the quest for economic opportunity and survival. The implementation of neo-liberal policies by governments exacerbated poverty and inequalities. The current migration across the Mediterranean was symptomatic of government failures to address inequalities. He reiterated workers organizations' commitment to JLMP implementation.

Plenary debate

13. A Government delegate of Sudan spoke of the link between migration and unemployment in Africa and the migration of engineers to France.
14. A representative of ITUC–Africa identified “Voice” as crucial and confirmed ITUC's plans to organize migrant workers. Furthermore, he called on the constituents to take full responsibility for JLMP implementation. He expressed ITUC–Africa's resolve to campaign and support governments to ratify/implement relevant Conventions on migration. He raised concerns over the agreements between countries in Africa and the Gulf States and the treatment of workers. He requested a tripartite interregional forum to address these issues.
15. A Government delegate of Morocco welcomed the plan to promote regular migration. He encouraged all countries to ratify UN Conventions on migration.
16. A representative of the WFTU emphasized the need to protect migrant workers from abuse like the European Union Frontier Programme. She reiterated the WFTU's commitment to promote the rights of migrant workers.
17. The Workers' delegate of Mauritania noted that lack of social justice, and inadequate health and education facilities contributed to migration.
18. A Government delegate of Rwanda emphasized the challenges of movement within Africa. She explained that Rwanda accorded all Africans the privilege of visa on arrival. This had not resulted in increased crime and terrorism. Constituents should therefore support JLMP implementation.
19. A Government delegate of Morocco stated that migration was a result of a demographic explosion and the role of the media in enticing young Africans to cross the Mediterranean. He appealed for appropriate measures to stop the trafficking of persons into Europe.

Conclusion

20. The Chairperson welcomed the commitment expressed for the implementation of the JLMP and noted that the key issues which were raised by the delegates perfectly aligned with the planned results of the programme.

Appendix II

Information session on “Engagement in fragile States in the Africa region”

1. The information session was chaired by Mr Aeneas Chuma, ILO Regional Director for Africa, and included as panellists: Mr Jürgen Schwettmann, consultant and former ILO official; Dr Helder da Costa, Secretary General of the G7+ Group of Fragile States; Mr Seitchi Ali Abbas, Employer representative (Chad); and Mr François Adjia, Worker representative (Chad).
2. Mr Chuma in his opening remarks recalled that the promotion of decent work in fragile States, or rather in countries in a state of fragility, was one of the priorities of the ILO in the Africa region over the coming years. The ILO Regional Office for Africa had decided to launch the preparation of a regional framework strategy to guide its engagement in fragile States in the Africa region. The information session had the purpose of presenting the draft strategy and seeking feedback and comments from constituents.
3. Mr Schwettmann introduced the draft strategy which included: a definition of the term “fragility”; the rationale for the ILO’s involvement in fragile States; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis referring to this involvement; a description of the ILO’s main technical areas of work in fragile States; and a summary of the positive and undesirable aspects of the ILO’s involvement in these countries. He provided an overview of the proposed policy orientations, implementation modalities and objectives of the ILO’s proposed future strategy in fragile States, namely the promotion of institutions and mechanisms for quality employment and creation of livelihoods, the promotion of social protection and the advancement of equity and rights at work.
4. Dr da Costa explained the origins and objectives of the G7+ Group with which the ILO had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2014. He briefly introduced the “New Deal” for engagement in fragile States with its five “Peace and Statebuilding Goals”, one of which called for the building of economic foundations through job creation. Dr da Costa emphasized that fragile States do not need more resources, but longer-term commitment and true partnerships from donors. He praised the partnership with the ILO, and called upon the ILO to enhance its support to fragile States with “courage, passion and partnership”. He stressed the importance of country ownership and the need to use national systems, even though they might be weak. Dr da Costa informed the audience that the Parliament of Timor-Leste, his home country, had passed a resolution committing his country to the achievement of the SDGs during the next 15 years.
5. Mr Abbas pointed out that any form of fragility impacted very negatively on the social partners. He called for good governance at all levels as a prerequisite for stability and the best recipe to prevent fragility. Social partners had an important role to play in ensuring such good governance; hence the ILO should focus on building the capacity of social partners, in particular in situations of fragility.
6. Mr Adjia recalled that the objective of peace building had been central to the ILO since its foundation right after the end of World War I. Building on Mr Abbas’ remarks, he pointed out that social partner organizations had difficulty in operating properly in fragile situations, and that they were sometimes misused for political purposes. He stressed that social dialogue had an important role to play in restoring peace and stability and therefore called for greater efforts to strengthen social partner organizations. He further established the link between fragility, unemployment, migration and radicalization of youth. Finally, while stressing the importance of the ILO’s action in fragile States he deplored the fact that the Organization was not resident in most of them.

Plenary debate

7. A Worker representative from Cameroon remarked that fragility often extended beyond national borders, so that it would be more appropriate to talk about fragile “zones” or regions, and to adopt a subregional approach.
8. An Employer representative from Sudan noted that peace and job creation were mutually reinforcing phenomena; moreover, job creation needed investments, and investments required stability. Employers’ organizations had a key role to play in this connection, and deserved greater ILO support.

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9. A representative of ITUC–Africa asked whether the ILO was implementing its programmes in fragile States in synergies with other UN agencies. He also pointed out that climate change could exacerbate fragility in certain regions of Africa.
 10. A Worker representative from the Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterated the importance of social dialogue in fragile situations, including the setting up of national social dialogue institutions.
 11. A Worker representative from Morocco pointed out that fragility was not a permanent situation, and that fragility in Africa was partially caused by the continent’s colonial past. He called for pre-emptive measures and anticipation to prevent countries and regions from becoming fragile.
 12. In view of time constraints, the Chairperson closed the plenary debate despite several more delegates having asked for the floor. Responding to a question raised by a participant, he called upon Ms Berar Awad, Director, ILO Employment Policy Department, to explain the process towards the revision of the ILO’s Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71), by the International Labour Conference in 2016 and 2017. Dr da Costa, in his brief reply, stressed the importance of sound management of public finance and national resources in fragile States, because the unregulated exploitation of natural resources could contribute to fragility. He praised once again the strong partnership between the G7+ Group and the ILO, and expressed the hope that this partnership would develop further.

Appendix III

Information session on the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy

Ringling in a new era of development cooperation

1. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, decent work had become a universal objective underlying many other SDGs. Recently, in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis, an increased sense of urgency had been seen among policy-makers to deliver quality jobs along with social protection and respect for rights at work, so as to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth and eliminate poverty. These concerns aligned well with the substantive areas identified by constituents as being particularly urgent for Africa, including those on the formalization of the informal economy, promoting sustainable enterprises, creating and extending social protection floors and decent work in the rural economy.
2. At the same time, the global context for development cooperation was changing profoundly. Along with the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, new ways of resourcing development cooperation and partnerships were emerging.
3. With this in mind, the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy (2015–17) – with increased focus, re-emphasized effectiveness, updated capacity development and partnership and resource mobilization approaches – had been developed in full consultation with the ILO's Governing Body. These building blocks would be applied in all of the ILO's development cooperation work.
4. **Focus on priorities:** By transitioning towards greater focus and fewer outcomes, the ILO would become more agile and better able to concentrate its attention on those areas that had the most impact for the largest number of people or that yielded deeper results and long-term impact. Flagship programmes would enable the Organization to work more efficiently and scale up the impact of its development cooperation efforts. ILO development cooperation operated in least-developed countries, in countries facing fragility, and labour crises, and collaborated in UN responses to natural disasters.
5. **Effectiveness for impact:** The ILO's development cooperation was managed for results and cost and value conscientiousness. This was achieved by relying on national systems and expertise in the Organization's development cooperation operations and by pursuing value for money principles. Improved accessibility to data on the ILO's development partners and on ILO spending (where, when and how) was part of its transparency efforts. ILO investments in capacity building of staff in the field and at headquarters also increased effectiveness.
6. **Capacity development for policy change:** Capacity development was critical for sustaining development cooperation operations, as it placed constituents in a position to influence national policies. Therefore, dedicated capacity-building programmes and a holistic approach that simultaneously addressed technical, organizational and institutional competencies would enable constituents and other players in the world of work to translate the SDGs into achievable national actions. The ILO's Turin International Training Centre offered long-standing know-how, and innovative learning approaches and paths. Bottom-up and needs-based approaches were vital to sustain impact. Strengthening national statistical capacities was paramount to keeping track of achievements. The ILO was more than ready to engage in this effort.
7. **Shared resources and partnerships:** By sharing funding, expertise, knowledge and other resources with development partners, much more became possible. In 2014, the ILO received US\$269 million in voluntary funding from development partners, of which US\$32 million were fully un-earmarked core resources. In past years, voluntary funding had accounted, on average, for 43 per cent of overall ILO resources.
8. The ILO had entered into partnership with multi-bilateral donors, the UN, the European Commission and other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, non-state actors and civil society, as well as with social partners at the global, national and local levels. Domestic development funding was growing with more member States committing their own resources to partner with the ILO. Furthermore, the ILO gave full support to South–South and triangular cooperation.

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9. In Africa, voluntary contributions to the ILO's development cooperation showed an increasing diversity with new partners coming on board. Especially domestic development funding and PPPs demonstrated a promising potential that could be further promoted in collaboration with ILO constituents.

Development cooperation central to the realization of decent work

10. Development cooperation would be central to the realization of decent work outcomes in Africa within the framework of the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development and the 2030 Agenda. As outlined in the Report of the Director-General, DWCPs were the main vehicles for resource mobilization and partnerships. Substantive efforts from member States to move beyond individual donor-supported projects to the implementation of various policy frameworks on a national scale, an enhanced ILO focus on national ownership of the programmes and projects and institution building, as well as ILO reorientation for better collaboration in programme development would lead to transformational change and sustainable national decent work outcomes.