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The background is a complex abstract design. It features a map of the African continent in the center, rendered in a vibrant rainbow gradient from green to red. This map is overlaid with a network of thin, glowing yellow lines that form a grid and circular patterns, suggesting a digital or technological theme. The entire composition is set against a dark brown background with large, flowing, wavy bands of orange and yellow. In the bottom left corner, there are three overlapping white squares of different sizes.

Advancing Social Justice

Shaping the Future of Work in Africa

**Advancing Social Justice:
Shaping the future of
work in Africa**

Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa

14th African Regional Meeting
Abidjan, 3–6 December 2019

Report of the Director-General

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| AAD | Addis Ababa Declaration |
| ACLAE | Arab Centre for Labour and Employment Administration |
| AfCFTA | African Continental Free Trade Area |
| ARLAC | African Regional Labour Administration Centre |
| ARM | African Regional Meeting |
| AU | African Union |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| BLMA | bilateral labour migration agreements |
| CCM | Commission for Conciliation and Mediation |
| CCMA | Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration |
| CMA | Commission for Mediation and Arbitration |
| CMAC | Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission |
| CRADAT | African Regional Centre for Labour Administration |
| DDPR | Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolution |
| DWCPs | Decent Work Country Programmes |
| EAC | Eastern African Community |
| EAEO | East African Employers Organisation |
| EATUC | East Africa Trade Union Confederation |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EESE | Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organisation |
| FDI | foreign direct investment |
| FOPAO | Federation of West African Employers' Associations |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| ICT | information and communication technology |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IOE | International Organisation of Employers |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ITUC | International Trade Union Confederation |
| JLMP | Joint Labour Migration Programme |
| KILM | Key Indicators of the Labour Market |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MNE | Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy |
| MUFIS | Malawi Union for the Informal Sector |
| NEDLAC | National Economic Development and Labour Council |
| NEET | not in education, employment or training |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| OATUU | Organization of African Trade Union Unity |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OTUWA | Organization of Trade Unions of West Africa |
| PAGE | Partnership for Action on Green Economy |
| PAPA | Pan-African Productivity Association |
| REC | Regional Economic Communities |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SATUCC | Southern Africa Coordination Council |
| SDG | (UN) Sustainable Development Goal |
| SMEs | small and medium-sized enterprises |
| SPIREWORK | Social Protection Plan for Informal Economy and Rural Workers |
| SPSF | SADC Private Sector Forum |
| SSE | social and solidarity economy |
| STC–SDLE | Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment |
| TVET | technical and vocational education and training |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNECA | UN Economic Commission for Africa |

| | |
|---------|--|
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNEP | United Nations Environmental Programme |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNIWA | Union of Informal Workers Associations |
| UNSDCF | UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |
| YEP | Youth Employment Programme |
| ZCIEA | Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations |

Introduction

1. The 14th ILO African Regional Meeting (ARM) brings together the tripartite constituents in this special Centenary year which also coincides with the 60th year of the ILO's presence in Africa. The timing of the Meeting is also particularly significant, coming as it does at the culmination of a process in which the Organization has been considering the transformative changes taking place in the world of work and how best to prepare itself and its constituents for its second century. These preparations were launched following the discussion of my Report to the 102nd Session of the Conference in 2013, *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*. As I said in that Report: "The lessons of the ILO's past are that its future depends on constant renewal in the face of evolving realities and the active commitment of its tripartite constituency to unchanging values and goals."

2. The ILO's Centenary has provided the opportunity for renewal, with special focus on and taking as its unifying theme the future of work – and for the ILO this means a future of work with social justice. This theme has resonated globally, including in the African region. Factors driving such interest have included the impact of technology, climate change and demographics on the nature and rate of change. At the same time, persistent issues such as informality and working poverty still demand attention, including by drawing on technology as an instrument of decent and productive work. Ultimately, in a world of change and flux, the ILO's objective remains clear: to steer a course towards a future with decent work.

3. The ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work was set up in 2017 to address future of work issues from this perspective and taking into account all key drivers of change. Chaired by the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven, it has been a driving force in putting the spotlight on the social and labour issues that require attention if the world of work is to play its part in assuring a better and brighter future. The Commission's report was launched in January 2019 and it sets out a vision of what needs to be done in the face of the major drivers of change impacting the world of work. Prior to the establishment of the Commission, the ILO's constituents undertook their own reflections on the future of work in a series of national dialogues which took place between 2016 and 2017, the output of which contributed to the work of the Commission. In the African region, 29 such dialogues were held.

4. Subsequently, in June 2019, the 108th Session of the Conference adopted the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (Centenary Declaration) for which the Commission's report was one source of inspiration. The Commission's report was also the subject of Conference plenary discussions where its recommendations found strong support, including from the African region.

5. The Centenary Declaration calls on the ILO to carry forward "with unrelenting vigour, its constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human-centred approach to the future of work which puts workers' rights and the needs, aspirations and the rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies". The ILO will aim to realize the vision of the Centenary Declaration through its programmes of work in subsequent biennia.

6. The 14th ARM needs to shape a regional vision and agenda to guide such action. This regional agenda should be informed by the following considerations.

- First, the overall institutional context. The ILO Governing Body approved the ILO's budget for the 2020–21 biennium in March 2019. This was adopted in June 2019 at the Centenary Session of the Conference. Programme proposals were subsequently developed – guided by the Centenary Declaration – for discussion by the Governing Body at its 337th Session (October–November 2019). At the same time, the broad objectives of the ILO's Strategic Plan 2018–21 remain relevant.
- Second, the Organization needs to be “future ready”. The ILO is embarking on its second century in highly challenging circumstances at the global, regional and national levels. The importance, the value and the relevance of the ILO has been underscored in different forums throughout its Centenary year. Expectations are high and institutionally it must be up to the task. To this end, the Office, including in the African region, needs to sharpen its own intellectual and technical capacity, tap relevant sources of knowledge and also be at the leading edge of knowledge management and knowledge sharing. At the same time, it must continue to strive to enhance efficiency, as well as how we engage with and support our constituents.
- Third, assuring that our tripartite constituency has the capacity to meet the challenges ahead is key in order to maintain the foundation of the ILO's comparative advantage. The Centenary Declaration highlights the importance of strong and representative social partner organizations, capable of engaging in all relevant processes and advancing the fundamental values of the ILO through strong, influential and inclusive mechanisms of social dialogue. Such representation and dialogue contribute to the overall cohesion of societies and are crucial for a well-functioning and productive economy. It is both a matter of public interest and a public good. Addressing the challenges that lie ahead requires the fullest engagement of the ILO's constituents.

As the primary actors in the world of work, they will need to champion a human-centred approach to the future of work “with unrelenting vigour” at the local, national, regional and global levels. Efforts to build the capacity of constituents – an established organizational priority – need to feature centrally in the regional agenda.

- Fourth, as the ILO strives to realize its social justice mandate reflecting the universality of its membership, it will be essential that the commitment of constituents to “definitively democratize the functioning and composition of the governing bodies of the ILO” as set out in the resolution accompanying the Centenary Declaration be given concrete expression.
- Fifth, the commitment to multilateralism expressed in the Centenary Declaration will need to be given life in shaping a future of work with social justice. Dialogue and partnerships, including to scale up work and results, will need to be pursued systematically at national and regional levels, involving, as appropriate, regional organizations, the UN system and international financial institutions.

7. At the continental level, the outcome of the 14th ARM must support the realization of the relevant objectives of major frameworks such as: the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063; the African Union Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (“Ouagadougou +10”); the African Union Free Movement Protocol; the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement; and the Global Compact

for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Global Compact for Migration) adopted in December 2018.

8. At the same time, countries of the region are also committed to meeting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and they are committed to meeting the associated Goals. This ARM takes place at a critical juncture because by the end of 2019 there will barely be ten years to go until the target date for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet evidence to date indicates that, overall, progress is less than adequate. It is therefore timely to assess the situation and renew efforts to assure a solid world of work contribution to the SDGs in the next decade.

9. The decent work goals are at the heart of the SDGs so steady progress towards decent work goals will also be a major contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, which African governments have pledged to realize. Most have launched a formal process to map the alignment of existing strategies with the SDGs, and identified key national priorities for implementation. However, there is still some way to go in terms of the inclusion of fully-fledged measures to pursue the SDGs in national strategies within a framework of accountability – from planning to implementation.

10. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has convened summits in the context of the General Assembly of September 2019 with the aim of accelerating action on pressing global issues, including climate change and the situation of small island developing States. It can be expected that the outcomes will also have implications for the world of work in the region. Meanwhile, the UN reform process has been gathering momentum on the ground thereby offering further opportunities for enhanced ILO engagement in Africa as part of the UN development system. The ILO and its constituents must be able to seize these opportunities.

11. Given its timing, this ARM can benefit from the fruit of the reflections on the future of work in which the tripartite constituents of the region have been actively engaged, as well as the outcomes of developments in the ILO and the multilateral system and in regional and global contexts in the course of the Centenary year.

12. To facilitate the task of charting a course for ILO action in the region for the coming years, my Report sets out perspectives for a future of work with social justice in the region. It takes into account the messages of the African future of work dialogues and the regional contributions to the Centenary Session of the Conference as well as the decent work contribution in support of continental objectives including that of structural transformation that yields a better and brighter future for all Africans.

13. The Report also contains a review of key regional trends and an assessment of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration (AAD) adopted at the 13th ARM.

Chapter 1. Shaping an African Decent Work Agenda 2020–30

Realizing the potential for a future of work with social justice

14. With its 1.3 billion inhabitants – a largely young and energetic population – the continent’s steady economic growth has been, and is, driven by the dynamism and vigour of its people, displaying immense diversity, creativity and innovation. The continent is also endowed with a plethora of natural resources. The African region today is home to a labour force that is almost 500 million strong.¹ However, by 2030, the size of the labour force will have grown to 676 million, a staggering 40 per cent increase, driven by the rapidly growing number of youth labour market entrants. Africa is currently the world’s youngest region; and young people under 25 years old constitute 60 per cent of the population. By 2030, almost one fifth of the global labour force – and nearly one third of the global youth labour force – will be from this region. Given these numbers, any discussion on the future of work must necessarily be closely tied to the future of work in Africa.

15. Average levels of education have steadily risen. Economic growth has been good overall, and macroeconomic conditions have been stable. While conflicts continue in parts of the continent, they have diminished in the past few years. The region continues to be rich in natural resources and is a major destination for foreign investment. As the region grows, there are also calls for deepening economic integration among African countries to ensure the continent builds on its strengths and countries support each other to create jobs, stimulating a virtuous spiral of growth in output, income and employment. The AfCFTA Agreement that entered into force on 30 May of this year is one such example of deepening African economic integration that is likely to have an impact on decent work in the continent.

16. The challenges for realizing decent work for all, today as well as in the future, are daunting nevertheless. Some 252 million people are working but poor. Approximately 54.5 million young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and in North Africa the youth unemployment rate is more than 30 per cent; over 40 per cent for young women, which is higher than anywhere else in the world. Informality is pervasive involving 85 per cent of all workers and 95 per cent of young workers; 72 million African children are working, accounting for almost half of child labour globally; and the gender pay gap in many African countries is as much as one third or more of male hourly earnings. Low-productivity agriculture remains the main sector of employment for most workers. However, the decline in agriculture’s share coupled with growth in industry and high value-added services being less than desired implies a rather slow pace of structural transformation. Where employment in agriculture has fallen, it has been compensated by growth in low-productivity services. Employment in the manufacturing sector is on average only about 6.2 per cent of total employment. Moreover, many of the labour market institutions are relatively weak and labour market governance is a concern.

¹ Precisely 498.4m in 2019, latest ILO modelled estimates (July 2018).

17. Environmental and technological challenges will also have consequences for the world of work. Environmental challenges are particularly acute. African countries, which are least responsible for global CO₂ emissions, are likely to be among the most affected. It is estimated that by 2030, the cost of climate change and air pollution combined will rise to 3.2 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), with the world's least developed countries (most of which are in Africa) forecast to bear the brunt, suffering losses of up to 11 per cent of their GDP. Over the coming decades, climate change is expected to increase the incidence of acute disasters, livelihood loss and social disorder.² The consequences of climate change for agricultural production were a key concern expressed in the national dialogues on the future of work in Africa.

18. A thorough understanding of the interdependencies between the environmental, the social and the economic spheres is key to developing coherent and integrated policies intended to determine win-win-win situations for people, business and the environment towards limiting or mitigating potential negative trade-offs.

19. As regards technological change, Africa is in a position to reap many of the gains and technology has great potential to contribute to growth and employment as well as to other decent work objectives. The ability of technology to create and destroy jobs has recently been the focus of much debate. Fears of job losses associated with the automation of production are unlikely to be of major concern in the region at present but labour market disruptions are certainly a possibility in the future. Much of the continent's employment is labour-intensive and of a less-skilled nature, with a number of jobs being susceptible to computer algorithms that can substitute for human labour. On the other hand, automation is expensive and businesses will only introduce it if the associated productivity gains exceed current labour costs – which is unlikely to be the case at present in most African countries.³ While the cost of new technology could also be seen as a deterrent to the creation of new jobs, offsetting this is the fact that the Internet lowers transaction costs and allows more informed decision-making throughout the economy.

20. Virtually all jobs, even in low-income countries, can be made more productive through various degrees of information and communication technology (ICT). Studies suggest four key drivers that are likely to determine the rate of technological transformation of work in Africa: a growing consumer market focused on efficiency and competitiveness; cost considerations in high-wage economic activities; labour market policies unintentionally favouring automation; and lack of skills that can be offset more easily by automation than by training. However, the prevailing scenario is that automation is constrained by infrastructure limitations; there is a widespread lack of capital to fund automation technologies; an abundance of labour and low wages; and a lack of industrial policies promoting automation technologies. Ultimately, national and sectoral outcomes will depend

² African Union: *The future of work in Africa: Challenges and perspectives of African labour markets*, 2017.

³ The “hourly wage” of a robot in the United States has been estimated to be between US\$10 and US\$20. In the US labour market this hourly wage makes robotics or other forms of applied algorithms an economically feasible choice. The same is not true for most developing countries where surplus labour still exists and where therefore human labour is substantially less expensive than its replacement by computers. D. Campbell, P. Egger and P. Ronnås: *Addressing the challenge of productive employment in sub-Saharan Africa today and tomorrow*, Employment Working Paper (ILO, forthcoming).

on the interaction of various factors, including the dynamics of the working-age population, the policy and regulatory environment, and the quality of education.

21. The capacity of technology to redefine the very nature of work is already evident, raising many questions and stimulating a range of policy responses. In certain countries, particularly those with comparatively large formal economies, labour market regulations have slowed down the uptake of automation to reduce job losses and limit working poverty.⁴ Such situations suggest that the starting point must be to decide on the world of work we want and to develop policies that harness technology to serve those ends. Such policies would also need to focus not only on promoting diverse job opportunities but also on addressing the support and protections that people need to face effectively the risks and uncertainties of a changing world of work.

22. Clearly, unleashing Africa's vast potential and ensuring inclusive growth will require strong political commitment and innovative policies in recognition of this. The African Union Declaration in 2015⁵ and its Agenda 2063 have set ambitious goals calling on African leaders to make bold decisions, including making decent work a central goal of economic and social policies.

23. If these goals are to be realized and no one left behind it cannot be business as usual. Guided by the social justice vision there will need to be sharp focus, prioritization and a recognition of the interdependence of policies.

The ILO Centenary Declaration and the future of work dialogues in Africa

24. The Centenary Declaration provides a framework for future ILO action on the basis of which priorities for successive programmes of work will need to be identified.

25. In Part III of the Declaration, the Conference calls upon all ILO Members to further develop a human-centred approach to the future of work through action on three key pillars:

- (i) Strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work.
- (ii) Strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers, and reaffirming the continued relevance of the employment relationship as a means of providing certainty and legal protection to workers, while recognizing the extent of informality and the need to ensure effective action to achieve transition to formality.
- (iii) Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

⁴ In terms of worker protection laws, 34 out of 54 African countries surveyed by the World Bank for their *Doing Business Report 2018* require third-party notification if a worker is to be dismissed.

⁵ AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development.

26. The foundation for action continues to be tripartism and the ILO's international labour standards and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work with an institutional commitment to ensuring a relevant, authoritative and transparent standards system.

27. At the same time, recognizing that the world of work is changing, we need to find new ways of navigating economic, social and environmental transformations by further developing the human-centred approach of the Decent Work Agenda as called for in the Centenary Declaration. The Centenary Declaration reaffirms the commitment to full and productive employment through macroeconomic, trade, industrial, sectoral, enterprise and infrastructure policies that enhance innovation and productivity. It highlights the need for transition from the informal to the formal economy, and policies that promote the alignment of business practices with the Declaration's objectives. It also points to the need for measures that ensure appropriate privacy and personal data protection, and respond to challenges and opportunities in the world of work relating to the digital transformation of work, including platform work.

28. In this context, it is expected that a major demand will be for support to constituents as they pursue the policy implications of the imperative of lifelong learning, ensuring that the need for new skills is anticipated, and that training and education are matched to the new forms of work that are emerging. A renewed thrust to promote gender equality through a transformative agenda for change is also required. The effective protection of workers remains at the heart of the Declaration and there is a need to reaffirm the continued relevance of the employment relationship as the means of providing legal protection to all workers. At the same time, there is a need to recognize the extent of informality and the challenges presented by new forms of digitally mediated work require effective action to achieve the transition to formality and to ensure the adequate protection of all workers that underpins social coherence and stability.

29. The ILO's Centenary Declaration echoes and reiterates many of the issues identified during the African national dialogues on the future of work. Those dialogues highlighted the following:

- The need for ***policy coherence***. The goal of poverty reduction (or eradication) through full employment should guide the formulation of *all* macro policies, including finance, trade, investment and business; consequently, the pursuit of this goal needs to involve all line ministries, not just the ministry of labour.
- The need to ***reform education and vocational training systems and curricula*** to bring them in line with the requirements of the labour market.
- ***The role of sectoral development and structural transformation***. Moreover, particularly in the case of agriculture, countries should adopt a value-chain approach to benefit from the upstream and downstream employment effects.
- The need to ***extend social protection to all***, including those in the informal economy, to protect labour rights, to ensure occupational safety and health, to properly implement labour laws, and to strengthen labour inspection.
- The need for ***fairer globalization*** going beyond the narrow profit maximization objective, taking into account the imperatives of social justice and environmental sustainability.

- The importance of having *effective labour market institutions*. Moreover, the proliferation of “atypical” employment relationships will require tripartite examination and adaptation of labour laws and institutions so that they ensure adequate protection of all workers.
- The need for concrete measures to further *social dialogue* was emphasized, including awareness raising on the benefits of social dialogue and the need to review social dialogue institutions to enhance participation and bring other stakeholders to the negotiating table, particularly for the protection of the fundamental rights of migrant workers, workers in the informal economy and workers in rural areas.
- *The importance of the ILO in ensuring effective governance* at the international level.

30. The 14th ARM is tasked with the challenge of defining a regional path towards decent work and social justice through investments in people, institutions, and full and productive employment. The resulting strategies at the national level will have to respond to the specificity of national contexts while cognizant of the realities of an interconnected world.

The way forward: Advancing decent work and social justice in Africa

31. The future of work in Africa will depend on the choices made and actions taken today. The Centenary Declaration calls on all stakeholders to take responsibility for building a just and equitable future of work. It will require building strategic partnerships at the national, regional and international levels with good quality data for monitoring and evaluation of progress.

32. Analysis of the regional context and of the issues raised by the ILO’s constituents suggests the following areas of focus in shaping the future of work in Africa.

1. *Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*

The rapidly expanding labour force represents an opportunity ...

33. In contrast to other regions, the labour force as a whole and the youth labour force in particular in the continent are growing rapidly and are expected to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. One implication is that the dependency ratio is also falling; the number of people each person of working age supports is, for the time being, declining. This represents a clear opportunity to increase the level of incomes through the expansion of decent work. Increasing employment among the working-age population is the main avenue for reducing poverty as well as for increasing productivity, not least by ensuring existing jobs become more productive.

... but that opportunity must be realized ...

34. Employment creation has been identified as a high priority across the region. Concerted efforts on the part of governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations will be required to ensure that the potential becomes realized. According to recent ILO estimates, the number of productive jobs in the continent would have to increase by over 300 million – or some 26 million per year – until 2030, more than doubling the number of existing

productive jobs to reach 579 million by 2030.⁶ Around half of these – 13 million per year – would need to be in the form of new jobs to provide productive employment for the large number of net entrants into the labour market each year. An additional 2.2 million new productive jobs would need to be created annually to eliminate unemployment. Lastly, approximately 10.6 million productive jobs annually would be needed to eliminate working poverty, either by increasing the productivity and incomes of the working poor in their current jobs or by enabling them to move to more productive jobs.

35. This would mean, in practice, almost trebling the current annual growth of productive jobs of 9.5 million per year (between 2010 and 2017) to over 26 million per year until 2030.

... driven by appropriate forms of structural transformation ...

36. These high rates of job creation accompanied by productivity improvement will require sustained and substantial balanced economic growth based on country-specific strategies for structural transformation. What this implies is the gradual transfer of labour from low-paying, unproductive occupations into gradually more productive and formal *wage* employment.

37. Africa is the least industrialized region of the world with the lowest value addition in manufacturing. As noted earlier, only around 7 per cent of wage employment is in the manufacturing sector.

38. Most African economies are still to a large extent primary sector economies, where extraction of natural resources and farming are the key drivers of GDP creation and employment.⁷ It is likely that automation will have a very limited impact on non-commercial farming across Africa in the short run and, in turn, few direct consequences for the majority of those seeking or finding work in the agricultural sector. It is possible, however, that this situation will change if and when commercialized farming increasingly takes hold and – besides requiring less overall labour – begins competing on price with small-scale farmers attempting to earn a living.

39. Therefore, the full potential of sectoral approaches to identify and support the most employment-intensive industries will need to be explored. The precise mix of sectoral strategies will vary across countries but will typically include the transformation of agriculture. For example, a reduction of working poverty primarily in rural areas might be achieved by a change in prevalent models of subsistence farming to more productive and environmentally sustainable strategies. This would be part and parcel of a transformation and intensification of agriculture that might also include increased use of yield-enhancing cash inputs, improved production methods and crop mixes. Moreover, a value-chain approach may serve to enhance the upstream and downstream employment effects. Low returns to labour and land in agriculture is a major cause of working poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. A determined and systematic approach will be required to set in motion a range of measures to put agriculture on a path of dynamic growth, including not least of all improved infrastructure, in itself a generator of jobs. Development of natural resources, the service

⁶ The authors estimate that currently a little under two thirds (63 per cent) of existing jobs are productive in this sense.

⁷ On average, 57 per cent of the population work in the agricultural sector. More than 80 per cent of the labour force in some countries such as Burkina Faso, Burundi and Madagascar work in agriculture.

sector as well as the green economy will also be called into play. At the same time, there must be a clear strategy towards creating productive employment opportunities outside of agriculture, taking advantage of the opportunities in Africa for expansion in the digital, creative, and care work areas, as well as other areas.

... as part and parcel of an overarching development strategy

40. It is clear that such a transformation will demand a new or renewed commitment to *policy coherence around development goals*.

41. Poverty reduction (or eradication) through full employment and decent work for all including young people, women and the disabled should guide the formulation of *all* macro policies in areas such as finance, trade, investment and business; consequently, the pursuit of this goal needs to involve all line ministries, not just the ministry of labour. This means that national economic policies will need to enhance the employment intensity of economic growth. Moreover, in addition to effective coordination and harmonization of employment promotion policies and programmes, employment policies will also need to be synchronized with other relevant policies, such as social protection, migration and formalization.

Promoting productive employment means accelerating the transition from the informal to the formal economy ...

42. Pessimistic job loss scenarios do not fully take into account the particular economic structures found in many African countries, which are highly localized, with informal businesses characterized by single entrepreneurs, small firms or family businesses. The extent of the informal economy makes this a major and urgent challenge.

43. One obvious – and significant – means of promoting productive (i.e. higher productivity) employment is through actions to combat informality. Low productivity is one of the key root causes of working poverty. ICT can facilitate the promotion of decent work. In particular, it can and has been used as a powerful tool to aid in the formalization of employment. It simplifies the registration of businesses, workers and transactions. It can also be used to facilitate access to social protection, simplify regulation, increase productivity, support inspection and compliance with laws, and give a voice to those working “underground” or in the shadows.

... as well as improving the environment for sustainable enterprises ...

44. Enterprises generate jobs and, consequently, support for enterprise development needs to be an integral part of strategies for inclusive growth and transformation. It means fostering a favourable environment guided by the application of a human-centred approach, which permits enterprises to develop in a manner consistent with the fundamental values and principles that respect human dignity and environmental sustainability. Several countries in the region are also promoting alternative models of collective entrepreneurship, including co-operatives, and some are putting considerable emphasis on the promotion of the wider social and solidarity economy (SSE), including through new policies and legislation.

... and promoting a just transition

45. The impact of climate change will be particularly severe in African countries, which are already being adversely affected by a higher frequency of droughts and floods. Climate change could exacerbate the existing food security and rural poverty challenges. All African countries are likely to experience a decline in agricultural production due to climate change. Globally there is an urgent need to implement existing tools for managing a just transition to a low-carbon, sustainable future. ILO research suggests that the greening of economies could potentially create 24 million new jobs worldwide. The continent will also need to fulfil its responsibilities in managing this transition to ensure that the most vulnerable do not pay the highest price.

2. *Strengthening the institutions of work*

46. The institutions of work – regulations, agreements, processes and organizations – are key to shaping the quality of work. Vibrant institutions that remain resilient, true to the principle and capable of responding to the changing world of work will underpin just and balanced outcomes.

Fundamental principles and rights at work are enabling conditions for advancing decent work and social justice in Africa

47. Building an agenda for decent work in Africa means building on a platform of sustained action to assure freedom from child labour and forced labour, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. These universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights are at the same time enabling conditions for decent work and sustainable economic growth. Together, they are the foundation for empowerment, representation and effective social dialogue permitting better outcomes for workers, enterprises, economies and societies.

48. The fundamental Conventions are close to universal ratification in Africa but member States face challenges in their effective application. Building and reinforcing national legal and policy frameworks and robust and accountable public institutions for enforcement will demand attention. Strategies to respect, promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work in Africa need to target in particular the most vulnerable who live and work in the rural and informal economies as well as women, migrant workers, refugees and displaced people, indigenous and tribal peoples, and children.

There is a need to review and renew labour market institutions for improved governance ...

49. Labour laws in some African countries are often outdated and are – according to views expressed during the national dialogues – all too often no longer fit for purpose. Even in countries with up-to-date labour laws, issues of implementation all too often arise due to weak administration and inspection structures and insufficient technical capacity. Moreover, the emergence of diverse work arrangements – as characterised by gig and platform economies – will increase pressure for their tripartite review and revitalization to ensure adequate protection to all workers.

50. The ILO's founding Constitution recognized that all workers should have the guarantee of safe and healthy workplaces – a principle strongly reaffirmed in the Centenary Declaration. The importance of occupational safety and health is widely recognized in the continent and there have been notable initiatives from governments and business. Yet, by and large, the regulatory mechanisms for occupational safety and health remain weak, under-resourced and limited in scope. This is compounded by ineffective occupational safety and health inspection and inadequate investment in occupational safety and health professional development. The occupational safety and health challenges in the informal economy as well as in formal sectors will require attention. The absence of an effective response will be at a high cost in terms of lives, injuries and productivity.

... and fair and effective labour migration governance must be promoted

51. International migration is a global phenomenon of growing volume and complexity linked primarily to the search for better jobs and wages. The high level of youth unemployment is a key driver of migration within the continent as well as to countries outside the region and the migration of low-skilled female domestic workers within the continent reflects the extensive poverty and lack of opportunities there. Many countries are now simultaneously origin, transit and destination countries for migrant workers. While migrant workers contribute to growth and development in their countries of destination and origin, the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of governance, migrant workers' protection, migration and development linkages, and international cooperation. In addition, the last five years have seen an increase in the numbers of refugees and forcibly displaced persons involving millions of people from crisis-affected countries.

Tripartism and social dialogue need to be strengthened and made more effective in order to support the process

52. The need for concrete measures to further social dialogue and tripartism was emphasized in the national dialogues on the future of work. Tripartite social dialogue can promote social peace and facilitate the development and implementation of public policies and programmes and the transition to formality. Collective bargaining is likely to be key in addressing the adoption and adaptation of new technology and the future world of work. There is a need to review the institutions of tripartite social dialogue in order to enhance participation and forge alliances with other stakeholders to advance the protection of the fundamental rights of migrant workers, workers in the informal economy and workers in rural areas.

3. *Strengthening the capacities of people*

Tackling gender inequality in the world of work is a necessity

53. The expansion of productive employment and the reduction of poverty calls for the removal of obstacles for women to enter the labour market and creating equal opportunities for women and men to participate. With two workers instead of one in a household, the income that each employed household member needs to earn to bring the household out of poverty is sharply reduced. This would typically require a reduction of the (unequal) burden on women of care and household responsibilities as well as addressing occupational segregation and other forms of gender discrimination in the labour market.

Education and training will be key ...

54. There is no doubt that skills gaps and mismatch and, more generally, issues concerned with the quality of education and training systems in the continent are of central importance to the future of work in Africa. This concerns both the overall level of preparation but also the appropriateness of the competencies imparted through education and training. Recent Office research shows that NEET rates among the most educated are increasing in the continent – in contrast to what one might expect, and what one sees in other regions.⁸ This suggests insufficient job opportunities for graduates, but could also be indicative of a lack of relevance and/or quality of education in the continent. Moreover, the profound transformations taking place in the world of work require strategies for supporting processes of lifelong learning.

... and there has been much improvement ...

55. Education and training in Africa have seen major improvements in recent decades, however, it is also evident that much can still be improved, inter alia, purposive skills development with a keen focus on new sectors and occupations, accompanied by the creation of social protection systems for vulnerable groups.

... but systems suffer all too often from a lack of social partner involvement ...

56. Many of the continent's skills systems suffer from low involvement by the social partners, leading to supply-driven skills development, misaligned with development aspirations of the country, and creating barriers to sustainable funding mechanisms. Developing better performing skills systems through active social dialogue at national, sectoral and local levels, and improving their alignment with economic development and employment creation, is key.

... and a lack of effective policy coordination

57. The dearth of good skills systems is also, in great part, due to a general lack of policy coordination. Employment policies, for example, are usually not designed to accommodate skills aspects and do not promote coordination between the development of sectors that could add more value to the economy and the specific skills that support their development.

Inequality in access and quality affects young people in rural areas ...

58. Access to quality and relevant skills development remains another issue, in particular for many African youth in rural areas, who find themselves in low-paying, low-productivity jobs in the informal economy. Informal apprenticeships continue to be the major source of skills development, and, in some countries, account for over 90 per cent of the training of young workers. While embedded in social norms and traditions, the system underperforms in a number ways: outdated skills get perpetuated, skills recognition is low, and apprentices might experience unacceptable forms of work.

⁸ ILO: *Global employment trends for youth 2019* (Geneva, forthcoming).

... above all for young women and minorities ...

59. Women and also minorities are at a significant disadvantage with respect to access to proper education and skills development and principally in rural areas. In many countries, this access is denied to them due to, for example, cultural issues or poverty. Young women all too often are exclusively engaged in domestic chores and grow older without having an opportunity to enrol in the education system. Many families living below the poverty line, in particular in rural areas, are faced with the challenge of having to send their young boys to the educational system while leaving the girls behind.

... and these issues are compounded by fragility and conflict

60. Countries affected by political instability and/or climate change face the biggest challenges. In many countries, including in Africa, these situations lead to displacement of the population, to conflicts, erosion of socio-economic institutions, and in some cases destruction of infrastructure. This can contribute to an even more challenging scenario for young people in an environment that does not offer training or employment opportunities and is aggravated by insecurity and constant conflicts. Providing local and targeted skills development and reinvestments in infrastructure and institutions contributes to reduce vulnerability and, at the same time, would foster more sustainable development for these countries.

Improving quality and ensuring relevance of skills development systems can contribute much ...

61. Strengthening quality apprenticeship, upgrading informal apprenticeship, and increasing other types of work-based learning programmes could enhance the employability of youth by providing them with practical work experience and the skills needed in the labour market. This would reduce skills mismatch and improve their transition from school to the world of work. Upgrading informal apprenticeships would also improve linkages between informal apprenticeship and formal systems and promote formalization of the informal economy.

... as many countries in the region have recognized

62. The importance of promoting the acquisition of appropriate competencies and combating skills gaps and mismatch, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is higher on African member States' agendas than ever before. There is now growing acknowledgement among diverse salient stakeholders (such as, the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU Member States and governments, and continental development partners) of the importance of TVET to foster youth employment, contribute to the economic development of African countries, and to gain competitiveness in the global market. An important goal of the African TVET systems is thus to ensure that TVET institutions focus on developing skills that are relevant, up to date, sought after in the job market, and, ultimately, help their trainees to find employment or become successful entrepreneurs (see the African Union Continental Strategy for TVET to Foster Youth Employment).

Extending social protection – key to a brighter future for all

63. There is a need *to extend social protection to all*, including those in the informal economy, while protecting existing labour rights, ensuring occupational safety and health as well as finding ways to effectively implement labour laws and strengthen labour inspection. Most African countries have in recent years made efforts to extend social security coverage to informal economy workers and the rural population through a variety of initiatives. These efforts need to be extended and multiplied, including effective measures to support people through the transitions they will face throughout their working lives.

64. There are essentially three options for extending the coverage of social security in Africa that can be combined to form pluralistic national social security systems: extending existing social insurance schemes; building community-based or occupation-based insurance schemes on a voluntary or collective bargaining basis; and introducing basic tax-financed benefit systems. One way to extend coverage in this area is through non-contributory, tax-financed cash transfers delivered in various forms: universal social pensions paid to the elderly; cash benefits paid to families with children conditional on school attendance or participation in public health programmes; categorical benefits aimed at persons with disabilities, orphans and other vulnerable groups; and targeted social assistance programmes.

Time for action: Shaping an African Decent Work Agenda

65. With its rapidly expanding labour force and young entrants eager to work and build a brighter present and future of work in Africa, governments, workers' and employers' organizations, the Office and development partners all play a role in realizing the great potential that exists. The factors that will drive and influence the future of work – the large and growing youth population, new technologies including far-reaching digital technologies, regional integration and climate change – will create uncertainties, and carry with them risks of increasing disparities within and between countries, unless we act decisively today. The National Tripartite Dialogues on the Future of Work and other dialogues at the national and regional levels have reaffirmed the need to create decent jobs with the extension of protection to all Africans. Constituents reiterated these calls at the Centenary Session of the Conference. They reaffirmed support for the decent work approach built on labour standards and social dialogue in pursuing policies for inclusive and sustainable growth with social justice.

66. To facilitate analysis and selection of policy choices, more detailed information on the drivers of change in specific countries or sectors needs to be compiled.

67. Second, such information can help to shape policies specific to Africa that will maximize the benefits of transformation and minimize its risks.

68. Third, policy discussions will benefit from an inclusive approach involving employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, think tanks and universities.

69. Much has been learned from the projects and programmes and other action to date to promote the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda individually and as a whole. Now, all stakeholders are called upon to take concerted action on an integrated agenda investing in the capabilities of people, in institutions of work, and in decent and sustainable work, backed by relevant research and knowledge. This approach offers the prospect of achieving an impact that matches the scale of the challenge and overcoming

recurring patterns of poverty, inequality and inequity. Components of this approach could include:

- promoting effective social dialogue and tripartism;
- drawing on international labour standards and respecting fundamental principles and rights at work;
- commitment to full productive and freely chosen employment for all, especially for young women and men;
- strengthening education, training and skills systems, assuring relevance and inclusiveness;
- improving productivity and the environment for sustainable enterprises with a just transition towards environmentally sustainable strategies;
- promoting transition to formality;
- supporting the rural economy;
- extending social protection;
- advancing gender equality;
- strengthening labour market institutions and governance with attention to new forms of work and labour migration.

70. These elements, along with strong policy coordination mechanisms, can support the regional objective of structural transformation and make economic growth more human-centred and employment-friendly.

71. Priorities founded on those constant ILO values – of tripartism, social dialogue and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work – as reaffirmed in the Centenary Declaration, will need to be determined according to national contexts including those in situations of fragility. It is likely that these priorities will be located at the intersection of the Decent Work Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063 and will find expression in the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) developed with constituents and executed in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

72. The African region is very diverse. Each country has its own characteristics and therefore national strategies to ensure decent work remains important. At the same time, the future is also a shared future and there are challenges that require common responses, including, where relevant, regional responses and a supportive environment based on policies that go beyond the world of work. Out of diversity, guided by a shared vision and an inclusive approach and with the will to implement an integrated agenda, countries of the region can move steadily towards a future where women and men can live and work in conditions of freedom, security, equity and dignity.

Chapter 2. From Addis Ababa to Abidjan

73. This part of the Report reviews the progress made in achieving decent work for all on the African continent during the period 2016–19, i.e. the period covered by the [Addis Ababa Declaration \(AAD\)](#): Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development adopted by the African tripartite constituents at the 13th ILO ARM. This review includes a synopsis of the labour market developments in general, followed by an assessment of the implementation of the various commitments contained in the AAD. The information in this part also supplements the ILO programme implementation reports, which are examined by the Governing Body every two years.

The African context 2016–19 from a decent work perspective

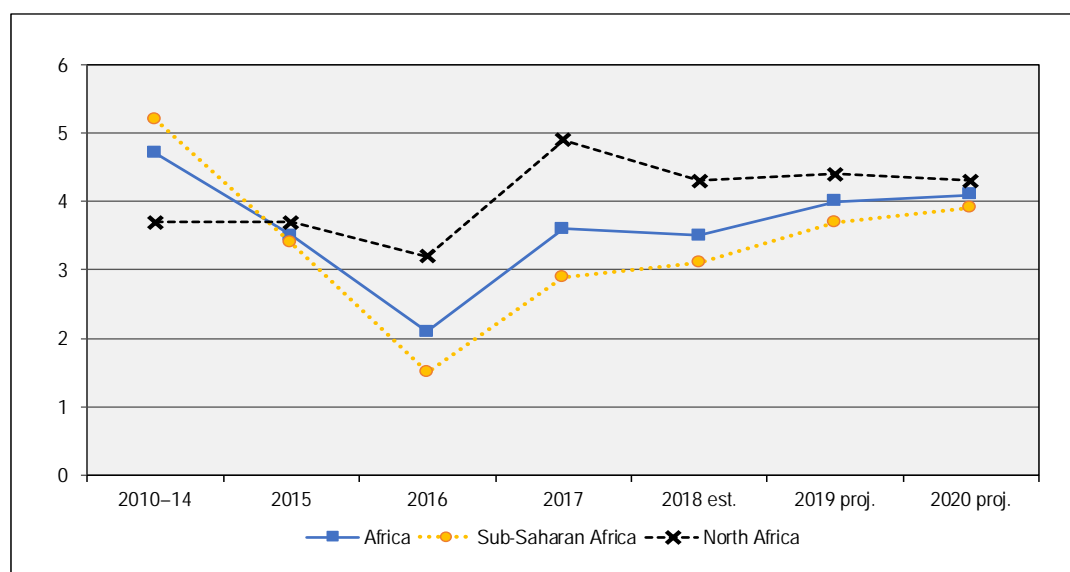
Economic trends

74. After peaking at 4.7 per cent on average during the 2010–14 period, Africa’s real GDP growth slowed to 3.5 per cent in 2015 and 2.1 per cent in 2016, due partly to the drastic drop in oil prices and other regional shocks such as drought in East Africa and southern Africa. A gradual recovery followed, with growth picking up to 3.6 per cent in 2017 and an estimated 3.5 per cent in 2018. Growth is projected to reach 4 per cent in 2019 and 4.1 per cent in 2020, and about two fifths of African countries are expected to see growth of at least 5 per cent in 2019, while a quarter of them may register growth of less than 3 per cent.⁹

75. Of Africa’s projected 4 per cent growth in 2019, North Africa is expected to account for 1.6 percentage points, or 40 per cent (figure 1). But average GDP growth in North Africa is erratic because of Libya’s unstable political and economic situation. East Africa, the fastest growing subregion, is projected to achieve growth of 5.9 per cent in 2019 and 6.1 per cent in 2020. Between 2010 and 2018, growth in East Africa averaged almost 6 per cent, but in several countries, notably Burundi and Comoros, growth remains weak due, inter alia, to political uncertainty, and in South Sudan, GDP continues to fall due to political and military conflicts.

⁹ African Development Bank: *African Economic Outlook 2019*. The growth figures estimated by the African Development Bank are slightly higher than those reported in the latest ILO *World Economic and Social Outlook* (WESO), which anticipates GDP growth rates of 3.9 per cent for both 2019 and 2020.

Figure 1. GDP growth in Africa 2010–20



Source: African Development Bank, 2019.

76. West Africa saw high growth until 2014, but an economic slowdown followed due to the sharp drop in commodity prices and the Ebola virus disease crisis. Nigeria, Africa’s largest economy and largest oil exporter, fell into recession in 2016. Its gradual recovery in 2017 and 2018, helped by the rebound of oil prices, is restoring growth in the region. Other countries – including Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Senegal – have seen growth of at least 5 per cent in the past two years and are projected to maintain this path in 2019 and 2020.

77. Growth in Central Africa is gradually recovering but remains, with a projected rate of 2.2 per cent, below the average for Africa as a whole. It is supported by recovering commodity prices and higher agricultural output. Growth in southern Africa is expected to remain moderate in 2019 and 2020 after a modest recovery in 2017 and 2018. Southern Africa’s subdued growth is due mainly to South Africa’s weak economic performance, which affects neighbouring countries.

78. The continent’s average GDP *per capita* almost tripled between 2002 and 2014 before declining when, in 2015 and 2016, economic growth rates in Africa fell below population growth rates. GDP per capita has slightly recovered since then and is projected to reach US\$2,100 in 2020. However, this regional average masks considerable differences from one country to another: per capita incomes in 2018 ranged from US\$225 in South Sudan to US\$1,708 in the Seychelles. Moreover, per capita incomes are generally higher in Africa’s urban areas than in rural areas. In 2019, the continent was home to 18 lower-middle income countries, eight upper-middle income countries, and one high-income country (the Seychelles), while the remaining 27 countries were classified as “low income”.

79. Economic growth in Africa has often been described as “jobless”, meaning that the growth in GDP did not entail a sufficient growth in employment. This is due to a low employment-elasticity of economic growth of just 0.41 in Africa,¹⁰ which in turn can be

¹⁰ African Development Bank: op. cit., 2019.

explained partly by the low share of (labour-intensive) manufacturing industries in the continent's GDP, compared to the world average.

Table 1. Share of manufacturing in GDP (per cent)

| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2016 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| World average | 16.9 | 17.2 | 16.0 | 15.7 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 12.6 | 11.4 | 9.5 | 10.2 |
| Middle East and North Africa * | 15.2 | 14.4 | 14.0 | 14.0 |

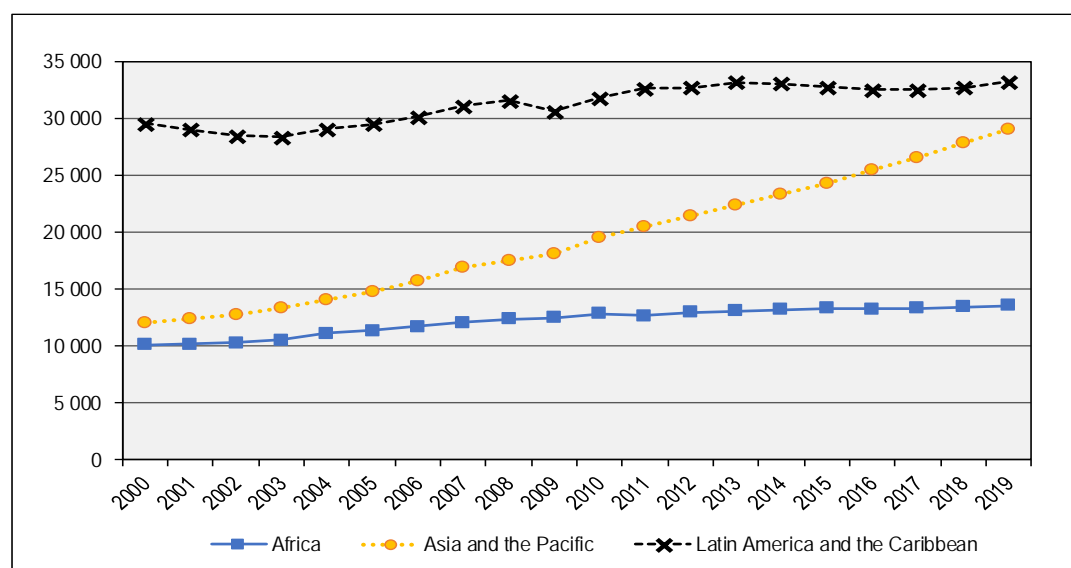
* Disaggregated data for North Africa were not available.

Source: World Bank, 2019.

80. Interestingly, the share of manufacturing in GDP was much higher in the past: it had peaked at 16.9 per cent in 1988 (sub-Saharan Africa) before declining steadily. Only 6 per cent of all jobs created between 2000 and 2018 were in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for just 6.2 per cent of total employment in Africa.¹¹

81. The labour productivity on the African continent remains below the world average, and has not progressed much during the past two decades, especially when compared to the spectacular increase in labour productivity in Asia (figure 2). Moreover, there are considerable variations in labour productivity from one African subregion to another. In 2019, the productivity per worker in southern Africa was more than eight times higher than the labour productivity in East and Central Africa. Africa's growth continues to rely mostly on traditional low-productivity sectors, the export of commodities, and on public expenditure, which are all detrimental to labour productivity growth, which grew by less than 1 per cent in 2018. It should be noted however that labour productivity in Africa is difficult to measure, due to a large proportion of subsistence activities.

Figure 2. Labour productivity by region

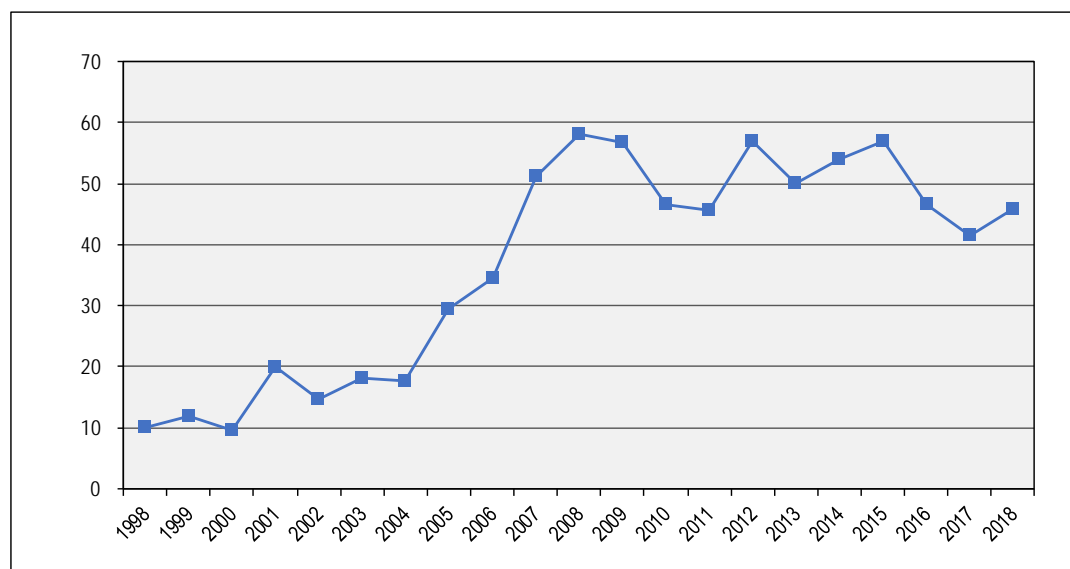


Source: ILO, 2018.

¹¹ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018*.

82. Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into Africa grew from a mere US\$9 billion in 1998 to US\$58 billion in 2008, before declining as a result of the 2008 financial crisis as well as the effects of trade policies. Since then the volume of FDI has been fluctuating, as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3. FDI inflows into Africa



Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2019.

83. The top five African FDI recipients in 2018 were Egypt (15 per cent of the total), South Africa (12 per cent), Congo (9 per cent), Morocco (8 per cent) and Ethiopia (4 per cent). In 2017, Ghana and Nigeria were among the top five, with FDI flows mainly targeting the extractive sector.

84. Factors such as infrastructure, trade openness and education are major drivers of FDI inflows in Africa.¹² Moreover, countries with strong growth rates and those seen as having more business-friendly policies, as well as countries that enhance their accessibility, connectivity and urban attractiveness tend to perform better in attracting FDI than others. Other factors such as skills availability, governance, including strong institutions, laws and practices, and stability also play an important role in influencing FDI decisions.

Demographic trends

85. The United Nations¹³ estimated that, in 2015, the African continent was home to 1.18 billion people, representing 16 per cent of the world total at that time. The continent's population is expected to grow to 1,688 billion by 2030, and to 2,489 billion by 2050, then representing over 25 per cent of the world total. The number of persons of working age (15+) stood at 703 million in 2015 (50.5 per cent female and 49.5 per cent male), and 43 per cent

¹² UNECA: *How African countries are boosting intra-African investment, with a view to sharing best practices among member States*, Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration, Tenth Session, 1–2 November 2017.

¹³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA): *World Population Prospects 2019*.

of those lived in urban areas (compared to 37 per cent in the year 2000). It is also projected that the population aged 60 years or over will rise from 5 per cent in 2015 to 9 per cent by 2050, with resulting consequences for the care economy and for the rural economy.

86. According to the 2017 UN *International Migration Report*, migratory movements are widespread in Africa. The majority of Africans do not leave the continent but move to neighbouring countries in the same subregion. The 2018 *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers* estimated there to be 13 million migrant workers in Africa, representing almost 8 per cent of the total number of migrant workers worldwide. In terms of international migration, Egypt had the largest number of people living abroad in 2017, followed by Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Algeria. In terms of immigration, South Africa is the most significant country of destination in Africa, with around 4 million international migrants residing in the country. Other countries with high immigrant populations as a proportion of their total populations include Côte d'Ivoire (2.2 million), Uganda (1.7 million), Ethiopia (1.3 million), Nigeria (1.2 million) and Kenya (1.1 million). In addition, over the last five years there have been significant new displacements of refugees and forcibly displaced persons affecting millions of people from crisis-affected countries such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.¹⁴

Labour market

87. The total working-age population (15+) in Africa stood at 763.8 million in 2018, of whom 602.9 million lived in sub-Saharan Africa and 160.9 million in North Africa.

Table 2. Selected employment indicators for Africa (per cent)

| | | North Africa | | Sub-Saharan Africa | |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | | 2015 | 2019 | 2015 | 2019 |
| Labour force participation rate | Total | 46.8 | 46.3 | 67.9 | 68.0 |
| | Male | 72.0 | 71.1 | 73.2 | 73.0 |
| | Female | 21.7 | 21.6 | 62.7 | 63.1 |
| Unemployment rate | Total | 12.4 | 11.8 | 5.9 | 5.9 |
| | Male | 9.8 | 9.1 | 5.6 | 5.6 |
| | Female | 20.9 | 20.8 | 6.2 | 6.3 |
| Extreme working poverty rate | | 1.6 | 1.3 | 40.1 | 37.8 |
| Moderate working poverty rate | | 9.9 | 9.0 | 25.2 | 24.7 |

Source: ILO estimates and projections, 2019.

88. Labour market participation rates range from 46 per cent in northern Africa to 68 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, a difference due to the much lower female labour market participation rate in North Africa. Only 6.8 per cent of Africa's labour force is unemployed (11.8 per cent in North Africa and 5.9 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa). This, however, is hardly a sign of a well-functioning labour market, as many jobs remain low paid and

¹⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2017* (2018).

informal. In the absence of any unemployment benefits, a large part of the African population simply cannot afford to remain without work.

89. The youth unemployment rate (age bracket 15–24) is, in all African subregions, higher than overall unemployment: it was estimated at 12 per cent (females) and 11.8 per cent (males) respectively, on average, in 2019. This rate has remained more or less at the same level during the past ten years. The share of “NEET” youth was projected at 26.8 per cent (females), 16.3 per cent (males) and 21.4 per cent (total) in 2019; in that same year, 54.4 million young Africans belonged to the “NEET” group.

90. Fifty-five per cent of the sub-Saharan labour force derives its livelihood from agriculture whereas only 6.2 per cent work in manufacturing industries. The subregion has witnessed a strong employment growth in the service sector, but such growth has been concentrated in those activities that are characterized by low productivity, a high informality rate and poor working conditions. Thus, over 84 per cent of those employed in the accommodation and food sector in sub-Saharan Africa are informal workers – a share that rises to over 87 per cent in the transport, storage and communication sectors, and also in wholesale and retail trade and repair activities.¹⁵

91. Informal employment is the main source of employment in Africa, accounting for 85.8 per cent of all employment, or 71.9 per cent excluding agriculture. Within sub-Saharan Africa, informal employment is the main source of employment in Central Africa (91 per cent), eastern Africa (91.6 per cent) and western Africa (92.4 per cent). If agriculture is excluded, informal employment continues to dominate employment with a 78.8 per cent share in Central Africa, 76.6 per cent in eastern Africa and 87 per cent in western Africa. Southern Africa is the only subregion with less than half of the employed population in informal employment at 40.2 per cent and 36.1 per cent excluding agriculture.¹⁶

Table 3. Composition of informal employment in Africa (2016)

| | | Including agriculture | | | | Excluding agriculture | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | | Including agriculture | In the informal economy | In the formal economy | In households | Excluding agriculture | In the informal economy | In the formal economy | In households |
| Africa | Total | 85.8 | 76.1 | 5.7 | 4.0 | 71.9 | 59.2 | 9.4 | 3.4 |
| | Men | 82.7 | 72.5 | 7.0 | 3.2 | 67.7 | 54.7 | 11.0 | 2.0 |
| | Women | 89.7 | 80.5 | 4.1 | 5.1 | 78.6 | 66.5 | 6.9 | 5.4 |
| Northern Africa | Total | 67.3 | 58.1 | 8.4 | 0.7 | 56.3 | 46.2 | 9.2 | 1.0 |
| | Men | 68.5 | 60.1 | 8.0 | 0.4 | 59.7 | 50.5 | 8.8 | 0.5 |
| | Women | 62.2 | 49.0 | 10.4 | 2.8 | 41.5 | 26.5 | 11.3 | 3.7 |

¹⁵ ILO: *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019*.

¹⁶ ILO: *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, third edition (2018).

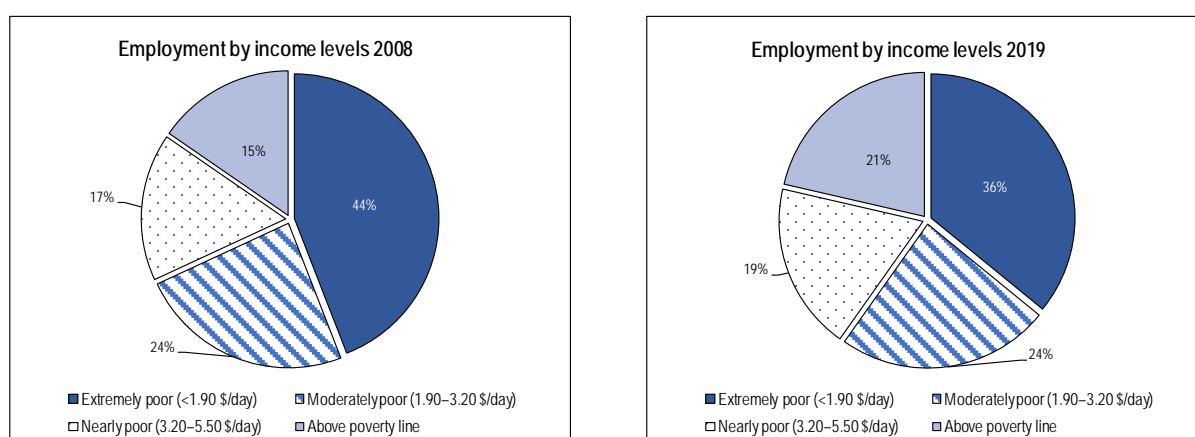
| | | Including agriculture | | | | Excluding agriculture | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | | Including agriculture | In the informal economy | In the formal economy | In households | Excluding agriculture | In the informal economy | In the formal economy | In households |
| Total | | 89.2 | 79.3 | 5.2 | 4.6 | 76.8 | 63.3 | 9.5 | 4.2 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | Men | 86.4 | 75.7 | 6.7 | 4.0 | 71.6 | 56.7 | 12.1 | 2.8 |
| | Women | 92.1 | 83.2 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 82.8 | 71.0 | 6.4 | 5.6 |

Source: ILO: *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, third edition (2018).

92. The youth and persons over the age of 65 have especially high rates of informal employment: 94.9 per cent of persons between the age of 15 and 24, and 96 per cent of persons aged 65 and older. The figures reach as high as 97.9 per cent of young people in western Africa and 98 per cent of older persons in Central Africa.¹⁷

93. Working poverty rates show a small decline during the AAD period, as illustrated below.

Figure 4. Employment by income levels 2008 and 2019 (projection)



94. The extreme poverty rate among the African working population has been declining over the years. However, 60 per cent of the working population are still classified as “moderately” or “extremely” poor, and the poverty rate continues to grow in absolute numbers since the rate of poverty reduction is lower than the rate of population growth.

95. Real wages increased by about 19 per cent on average in the African region between 2006 and 2017, with a steeper increase in real wages for North Africa (+22 per cent) than for sub-Saharan Africa (+15 per cent) and much variation across countries over the last few years.¹⁸

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ ILO: *Global Wage Report 2018–19*.

96. The African continent also continues to experience high levels of inequality, which, however, is much more pronounced in southern and Central Africa than in West and North Africa. Rural–urban inequalities are increasing in Africa, which, if left unaddressed, may jeopardize the goal of ensuring that no one is left behind by 2030. In view of that, more inclusive patterns of growth should be pursued across the continent. Gender pay gaps also remain high in many African countries.¹⁹

Social protection

97. The [Social Security \(Minimum Standards\) Convention, 1952 \(No. 102\)](#), defines a universal minimum standard covering medical care, sickness, unemployment, old-age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity and survivors’ benefits which countries may implement through social insurance or social assistance programmes. However, only seven African countries²⁰ have ratified Convention No. 102. While the ratification rate has been generally low, various reviews and surveys point to constructive developments which underline the universal nature of the Convention’s principles and their relevance to all countries regardless of their level of development.

98. The [Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 \(No. 202\)](#), expands the normative framework for the extension of social security.

99. The concept is reflected in SDG target 1.3: “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”. In addition, SDG target 3.8 calls for universal health coverage, one of the components of the social protection floor, whereas SDG targets 5.4, 8.5 and 10.4 refer to complementary aspects of social protection.

100. Unfortunately, the reality on the African continent is far from reaching these targets; 82 per cent of the continent’s population has no access to social protection at all.

Labour standards

101. Africa continues to make progress in ratifying international labour Conventions. The fundamental Conventions are close to universal ratification in Africa, as is demonstrated by the table below (number of countries that have ratified the Conventions out of 54 African countries).

Table 4. Ratification of ILO fundamental Conventions by African countries

| Freedom of association | | Forced labour | | Discrimination | | Child labour | |
|------------------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| C087 | C098 | C029 | C105 | C100 | C111 | C138 | C182 |
| 49 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 52 | 54 | 52 | 54 |

Source: ILO, 2019.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Namely: Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo; most [ratifying countries](#) accepted only parts of the Convention. A number of African countries are considering ratifying the Convention.

102. As of July 2019, out of 432 possible ratifications of the core Conventions, 423 ratifications (98 per cent) have been registered. There is room for further progress on the ratification of the four priority Conventions ²¹ (124 ratifications out of 216 possible ratifications). In particular, the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), remains ratified by less than half of ILO Members in Africa at a time when national employment policies are gaining prominence in realizing the full and productive employment and decent work for all envisaged in SDG 8. Just under 30 per cent of the 83 up-to-date technical Conventions and Protocols have been ratified (1,328 out of 4,482). Recent ratifications in some areas concerning wages, social security, occupational safety and health, migrant workers, human resource development, maritime, fishing and indigenous peoples, however, reflect the positive response of the region to the “One for All” Centenary ratification campaign and the Organization’s normative mandate in the pursuit of social justice.

103. However, there is a challenge of implementation. In many African countries, the lack of effective application of labour standards is due to limited capacities of labour administration and inspection systems. The new inspection methodology of the ILO’s Strategic Compliance Planning for Labour Inspectorates could help to achieve better compliance and reduce vulnerability and exploitation, which are ultimately costly both in terms of reduced profits to the enterprise and for the economy as a whole. ²² Additional challenges affecting the application of labour standards include:

- the exclusion of certain categories of workers from the application of labour legislation (in particular those in agriculture, the informal economy and domestic work);
- limited legal literacy and restricted access to legal remedies, exhibiting the need for labour laws to provide a more effective governance response to changing patterns of the world of work and to protect workers, taking into account the needs of sustainable enterprises;
- limited capacity to implement these standards, including resources;
- political instability, crises and fragility.

104. Moreover, many countries experience problems in ensuring comprehensive and timely reporting on the application of ratified instruments.

Social dialogue

105. Social dialogue is regarded as a means to achieve social equity, economic efficiency and democratic participation. It is important for protecting labour rights, facilitating wage determination, improving working conditions and promoting sustainable enterprises. ²³

²¹ Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129); and Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

²² ILO: Labour standards in Africa (2019).

²³ ILO: *Social dialogue and tripartism*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, Geneva, 2018.

106. National, regional or sectoral social dialogue institutions have been established that allow the national workers' and employers' organizations to meet and discuss together with governments policy issues. The ILO estimates that such institutions or processes exist in about 85 per cent of its member States ²⁴ with Africa performing slightly better (more than 90 per cent of African countries institutionalized social dialogue). In some countries, social dialogue institutions focus more narrowly on labour issues, such as minimum wages, working conditions and collective bargaining while in an increasing number of other countries they are involved in a much broader range of national economic and social policies in line with the stipulations of the Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation, 1960 (No. 113). The ILO instrument underpinning tripartite social dialogue, namely the [Tripartite Consultation \(International Labour Standards\) Convention, 1976 \(No. 144\)](#), has been ratified by 43 out of 54 African countries.

107. However, in many countries in Africa, institutions for social dialogue are still not used to their full potential to help governments and the social partners address the challenges facing the world of work in an effective way. In some instances, the lack of political will and respect of past commitments and the limited resources for social dialogue have led to an erosion of trust among the tripartite actors of social dialogue. Also, while some important developments in collective bargaining institutions and practices can be observed, full respect across the continent for the principles of freedom of association, and preconditions for effective social dialogue and collective bargaining are yet to be achieved.

108. Another social dialogue challenge in Africa is the preponderance of the informal economy, which employs 90 per cent or more of the national labour force in several countries. Hence social dialogue institutions cover only a small share of the labour market. It is for this reason that in a growing number of African countries, trade unions are reaching out to informal economy workers, either by integrating them into existing trade unions, by promoting "informal economy trade unions", or by building alliances with informal economy associations. In a similar vein, African employers' organizations are seeking ways to embrace the informal economy as well, for example by establishing special desks for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), running special programmes such as Start and Improve Your Business, including SMEs into supply chains, linking SMEs to established formal businesses and access to financial services. Such initiatives are key to the transformation of the informal economy towards formalization and for social dialogue institutions and processes to become more inclusive.

²⁴ *ibid.*

Chapter 3. Implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration

109. The following sections review the progress made against the identified priorities in implementing the 2015 Addis Ababa Declaration's thematic priorities as listed in its paragraph 13.²⁵ The review will, under each heading:

- provide the rationale and background for the ILO's involvement in the respective thematic area;
- summarize the actions taken by constituents during the AAD period;
- assess the results achieved; and
- draw lessons for future action.

110. The review is largely based on information collected from the ILO's 13 field offices through a comprehensive questionnaire that covered all technical aspects of the AAD,²⁶ on information compiled during field visits to Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Senegal and Tunisia, and on feedback received from the tripartite Technical Working Group established to support the preparations for the 14th ARM.

Creating decent jobs for all, with particular emphasis on youth, women and persons with disabilities²⁷

111. The ILO has had a long-standing commitment to promote decent work for youth. The Youth Employment Programme (YEP) was set up in 2005 to consolidate the ILO's response to the global youth employment challenge. Its work has been guided by two global policy instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference, namely:

- the [resolution concerning youth employment](#), adopted by the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference (2005); and
- the [resolution and conclusions concerning the youth employment crisis: A call for action](#), adopted by the Conference at its 101st Session (2012).

²⁵ Paragraph 13 was chosen for the review because it specifies the strategic priorities on which the constituents had agreed to focus on during the AAD priorities. For the sake of conciseness some of those priorities have been merged, as indicated in the respective footnotes.

²⁶ The questionnaire was completed by ILO field offices in Africa; they provided information for 51 of Africa's 54 nations.

²⁷ Including priority 13(i), namely: "promoting employability through investing in education, skills development, lifelong learning, vocational training, apprenticeships and internships".

112. These instruments resolved that tackling youth employment required an integrated approach, one that combined supportive economic policies and targeted measures addressing labour demand and supply as well as the quantity and quality of employment. This is reflected in the UN system-wide Global Initiative on [Decent Jobs for Youth](#), which is led by the ILO and has a strong focus on Africa.

113. It is important to note that there is a strong link between child labour and youth employment, because:

- child labour, which is prevalent in rural areas in particular, prevents children from acquiring the human capital necessary for gainful employment as young people;
- due to poor youth employment prospects, parents may have little incentive to invest in their children's schooling and instead send their children to work prematurely.

114. In 2016, Alliance 8.7 to end forced labour, human trafficking, modern slavery and child labour was launched in the Africa region in collaboration with the African Union. This led to the development of a regional action plan to be adopted in December 2019.

115. The overwhelming majority of the African countries have, during the AAD period, prioritized youth employment and the elimination of child labour in their national development policies and plans, and the large majority have designed special programmes for youth employment and national action plans for the elimination of child labour.

116. In different combinations, country programmes have included the youth employment measures advocated for in the ILO's call for action, particularly work-based learning, youth entrepreneurship and youth-specific intermediation services. The great majority of those programmes include actions to promote jobs for young women specifically, and many include components for the promotion of jobs for youth with disabilities. Several national youth employment programmes have set quantifiable targets, either in terms of the number of jobs to be created or the number of jobs to be improved/consolidated, or in terms of the reduction of unemployment rates. It is encouraging to note that in almost all instances, the social partners were involved in the design, implementation and/or monitoring of youth employment programmes. Furthermore, virtually all United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF, the successor to the UNDAF) or similar UN strategy papers concluded in Africa include youth employment as a top priority.

117. However, despite the considerable efforts and resources that African nations have deployed, the youth unemployment rate (15–24 age bracket) in Africa has fallen only slightly – from 12.2 per cent to 11.9 per cent – between 2015 and 2019. This reflects the modest decrease from 30.6 per cent to 30.1 per cent witnessed in northern Africa, while it has increased slightly in sub-Saharan Africa from 9.7 per cent in 2015 to 9.8 per cent in 2019.²⁸

118. This situation indicates that youth employment projects, programmes and agencies, however ambitious and well-resourced they may be, are not sufficient to meet the youth employment challenge in Africa. It points to the need for an inclusive structural transformation of the African economies to promote a process of employment-rich economic growth.

²⁸ ILO: *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2019*.

Promoting effective social dialogue and tripartism

119. During the AAD period, the trade union movements of many African countries suffered from fragmentation, both in the number of sectoral trade unions and in the number of national federations or confederations. Trade unions have responded by mergers (such as in Eswatini and Liberia) and the establishment of joint coordination bodies (Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mauritius and Niger). Trade unions have also formed inter-union platforms to strengthen their voice and union actions. For example, in Niger, there are now two platforms that have brought together 14 national federations.

120. In addition, trade unions have responded by reaching out to the informal economy, which constitutes a huge member reservoir for organized labour. In doing so, trade unions deploy four partly complementary strategies:

- Organizing individual members from the informal economy into existing formal economy trade unions. In Sierra Leone, for example, 82 per cent of the members of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (344,390) are from the informal economy.
- Promoting trade unions specifically for the informal economy, as for example the Union of Informal Workers Associations (UNIWA) Ghana, or the Malawi Union for the Informal Sector (MUFIS) that are both affiliated with the national trade unions' centres. Moreover, domestic workers' trade unions have been formed in 21 African countries.²⁹
- Building alliances between trade unions and informal economy associations to fight for common objectives.
- Organizing informal economy workers into cooperatives and similar member-based organizations as a means to collectively obtain economic and social services.

121. By reaching out to informal workers, African trade unions can overcome the dichotomy between “formal” and “informal” and significantly enhance their membership, the number of specific sections and trade union organizations focused on informal economy visibility and relevance, as well as their associational and bargaining power for the benefit of both the formal, salaried wage earners, and the informal, precarious own-account workers.³⁰

122. The African employers' organizations, too, are confronted with the phenomenon of fragmentation, albeit to a much smaller extent than the trade unions. Even though a number of countries have seen the emergence of more than one employers' organization, there is usually one that is clearly recognized by the national constituents, the ILO and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) as being the most representative. This notwithstanding, many employers' organizations are facing financial difficulties, partly due to declining membership and partly due to the inability or unwillingness of member-enterprises to pay their membership fees. The organizations are seeking to address this

²⁹ Namely: **Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa**, the United Republic of Tanzania, **Togo**, Uganda, **Zambia**, Zanzibar, **Zimbabwe**. Entries in bold are those that have formed trade unions for domestic workers specifically; in the other countries, domestic workers have been admitted to existing trade unions, mostly those catering for the hotel and tourism industry.

³⁰ Friedrich-Ebert Foundation: *Organizing [in] the Informal Economy* (2018).

problem by improving their governance, providing adequate services and mobilizing external resources through projects.

123. Just like the trade unions, the employers' organizations are reaching out to the informal economy so as to represent all components of the private sector. In this context, their principal target groups are the unregistered and unregulated micro and small enterprises, including own-account workers, which, in most countries, constitute more than 90 per cent of all enterprises. In Liberia, for example, the Fulah Business Association regroups informal entrepreneurs whereas the Liberia Marketing Association comprises hawkers and street vendors; both are members of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce. In Zimbabwe, a group of 22 informal business associations came together in 2002 to form the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), which comprises 150 member-associations grouped into 45 chapters. The ZCIEA operates as a "third force", complementing the employers' organization, Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ), and the trade union federation, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).³¹

124. Most African countries have set up national, tripartite social dialogue structures that, in many cases, function regularly as platforms for tripartite cooperation between government and the social partners. In eight countries, namely Burkina Faso, Egypt, Guinea, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe, these social dialogue structures were established during the AAD period.

125. It is encouraging to note that both the workers' and the employers' organizations have begun establishing regional organizations that are aligned with Regional Economic Communities (RECs); such organizations exist already in southern Africa (SADC), East Africa (EAC) and West Africa (ECOWAS), and are in a formative stage in the Horn of Africa (IGAD). Moreover, subregional social dialogue institutions have been established in recent years, such as the Tripartite Forum of Social Dialogue of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Council of Labour and Social Dialogue of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Consultative Dialogue Framework of the East African Community (EAC). In addition, the African Union's [Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment \(STC-SDLE\)](#), is a continental tripartite body.

126. Few statistics on the extent and coverage of collective bargaining, and concrete or relevant impacts on industrial disputes are available, but it appears that, in general, the coverage of collective bargaining agreements (in terms of total employment and total labour force) is very low, mostly as a result of the preponderance of informal employment and the fragmentation of workers' and employers' organizations. This notwithstanding, collective bargaining processes are being improved in some African countries.³²

127. In terms of lessons learned, ILO support, such as capacity development of the tripartite partners as well as the social dialogue institutions, can be instrumental for them to play a more prominent role in formulating and implementing national development

³¹ LO/FTF: *Labour Market Profile 2015: Zimbabwe*, Danish Trade Union Council for International Development (Copenhagen, 2015).

³² Examples include: the Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CMAC) of Eswatini, the Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolution (DDPR) of Lesotho, the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation (CCM) of Mauritius, the Labour Commission of Namibia, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) of South Africa and the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration (CMA) of the United Republic of Tanzania.

strategies, and in shaping national legislation and policies to address the challenges and opportunities in the evolving world of work and to facilitate transitions and adaptation to transformations. This is a role that South Africa's National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), Senegal's High Council for Social Dialogue, Ghana's National Tripartite Committee and Morocco's Economic, Social and Environmental Council attempt to play today by facilitating the conclusion of social pacts and tripartite agreements. Similar efforts across the continent could help to render existing national social dialogue institutions effective and more inclusive in order to ensure the continued relevance of social dialogue and tripartism as key governance instruments.

Strengthening labour market institutions

128. Labour market institutions are responsible for areas such as unemployment insurance, wage-setting systems, labour inspection, employment services, employment protection, occupational safety and health, collective bargaining frameworks, dispute settlements, etc. Those institutions are subsumed under the term “labour administration”, which is defined by the ILO [Labour Administration Convention, 1978 \(No. 150\)](#) (ratified by 25 African nations as of June 2019) as “public administration activities in the field of national labour policy”. In most African countries a ministry in charge of labour affairs is responsible for labour administration and the related labour market institutions.

129. The mandates, authority and scope of work of these ministries vary widely throughout the continent; while in some countries the ministries are responsible for labour affairs in the narrow sense only (labour law, labour administration and labour inspection), in others they cover, in addition, employment-related subjects, and/or social affairs, and/or vocational training, and/or the civil service. More importantly, many countries report frequent changes in the structure, organizational set-up and attributions of the ministries in charge of labour, employment and social protection, often resulting in the loss of technical capacity and institutional memory. High rates of ministerial and senior officials' turnover during the AAD period in some countries have compounded this challenge.

130. Moreover, the capacity of the ministries in charge of labour to fulfil their mandate and responsibilities has, to a large extent, been limited by inadequate resource allocations from the national budget. This adversely affects their ability to deliver on programmes and outcomes. Labour inspectors, for example, are hardly able to cover the country's formal sector – they most certainly cannot inspect the myriad of microenterprises in the informal economy, let alone private homes that are the workplace for millions of domestic workers in the continent.

131. Because of these challenges, not much progress has been made during the AAD period in the strengthening of labour market institutions. The importance of promoting full employment should be duly reflected in the staffing, budgets and status of the ministries in charge of labour and employment. On a positive note, the valuable role of the three African regional labour administration centres (ACLAE, ARLAC and CRADAT),³³ supported by the ILO over time with special initiatives since 2015 should be acknowledged.

³³ The centres offer training courses and consultancy services on labour administration, labour inspection, international labour standards, occupational safety and health, employment, social dialogue and other related subjects.

Accelerating the transition from the informal to the formal economy

132. The ILO [Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 \(No. 204\)](#), concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy, which is of greatest importance to the African labour market, was adopted in the same year as the AAD. It provides a comprehensive policy framework for the formalization process. A large number of African countries have taken steps to implement the Recommendation through various methods:

- Some countries, including Cabo Verde, Ghana, Lesotho and South Africa, have developed (mostly through tripartite processes) national strategies based upon Recommendation No. 204. This has also happened at the subregional level, where the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has developed a regional programme for the implementation of Recommendation No. 204.
- Other countries, such as Algeria, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal and Zambia, have taken measures to extend social protection, namely health insurance and pension coverage, to informal economy workers and operators.
- A third group of countries have introduced special support programmes for informal enterprises, such as protected workspaces and business incubators; concrete examples include Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Gambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe.
- A fourth group of countries has facilitated the official registration of informal enterprises, through one-stop shops and/or mobile registration offices; this group includes Cameroon, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- Several countries, including Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar and Togo, have extended labour inspection services to the informal economy.
- Two countries, namely Morocco and Tunisia, are promoting the SSE ³⁴ as a bridge between the informal and the formal sectors.
- At least three African countries, namely Madagascar, Senegal and Togo, have established dedicated government structures to cater for the informal economy.

133. In April 2019, the African Ministers of Labour at the Third Session of the AU STC–SDLE adopted the “AUC–ILO Decent Work for the Transformation of the Informal Economy Programme”. This regional programme, jointly designed by the AUC and the ILO, is aimed at supporting the AUC in providing leadership, guidance and a framework for enhancing strategic coherence, collaboration and coordination in efforts towards the transformation of the informal economy in Africa, with the Decent Work Agenda as the underpinning premise.

³⁴ An African regional tripartite conference organized by the ILO in Johannesburg in 2009 adopted the following SSE definition: “The SSE is a concept designating enterprises and organizations, in particular cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which have the specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity.”

Improving the environment for sustainable enterprises ³⁵

134. This area of work builds on the 2007 Conference [conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises](#), which underlines the importance of creating a conducive environment for SMEs, and outlines the basic conditions that create opportunities for sustainable enterprises, by “balancing the needs and interests of enterprises with the aspiration of society for a path of development that respects the values and principles of decent work, human dignity and environmental sustainability”. It also draws on the 2015 Conference [conclusions concerning small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation](#). The African constituents have widely supported these conclusions, and many countries have adopted measures to improve the legal, administrative and regulatory environment for enterprises, with a focus on SMEs. In doing so, governments pursue a variety of complementary strategies:

- Countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe, have embraced the ILO’s Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (ESEE) methodology, described as “a comprehensive and powerful ILO methodology developed to assess, advocate and reform the environment in which enterprises start up and grow”.
- Other nations, including Cabo Verde, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia, have introduced legal and regulatory reforms with the aim of accelerating business registration, of attracting foreign investments or of establishing favourable tax regimes.
- A third group of countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Eswatini, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania and many others, have designed special programmes to support SMEs through business development services and/or easier access to finance.
- Two countries, namely Botswana and Guinea, have amended public procurement rules so as to grant local SMEs preferential access to public tenders.

135. ILO experience in applying the ESEE methodology shows that improvements in the legal and regulatory framework and enhanced institutional support for enterprise development are more likely when: (i) strong participation and ownership from social partners and key stakeholders is secured from the beginning of the process; (ii) reform proposals are based on hard empirical evidence; (iii) a road map for reforms focuses on a few key interventions, it is agreed among key stakeholders, performance-based and linked to other related government programmes; and (iv) a rigorous monitoring and evaluation process is in place throughout the road map implementation.

136. Cooperatives are well positioned to advance decent work in the rural and informal economies across the continent. They improve livelihoods and ensure access to markets and services such as finance. Cooperative development projects abound in countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In recent years, Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia have also been putting considerable emphasis on the promotion of the wider SSE,

³⁵ This heading covers three related points of paragraph 13 of the AAD, namely: 13(e) (improving the environment for sustainable enterprises; 13(f) (promoting a conducive environment for enterprises and investment; and 13(g) (promoting an entrepreneurial spirit).

including through new policies and legislation with an emphasis on generating youth and women employment.

Extending social protection

137. Social protection coverage is very low on the African continent.

Table 5. Social protection coverage as a percentage of the eligible population

| | At least one benefit | Health insurance | Old-age pension | Child/family grant | Maternity benefit | Unemployment benefit |
|---------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| World average | 45.2 | 61.0 | 67.9 | 34.9 | 41.1 | 21.8 |
| Africa | 17.8 | 25.0 | 29.6 | 15.9 | 15.8 | 5.6 |

Source: ILO, 2017.

138. Table 5 shows that the social protection coverage is much lower in Africa than the world average. Some 75 per cent of the African population is excluded from legal health coverage, with a much higher rate of non-coverage in rural areas (83 per cent) compared to urban areas (75 per cent).³⁶ Moreover, social protection deficits are greatest in the informal economy.

139. Against this background, almost all African countries have in recent years increased their efforts to extend social security coverage to informal economy workers and the rural population through a variety of initiatives:

- Many countries, including, for example, Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and others, have adopted legal, policy and/or institutional reforms to facilitate the inclusion of unprotected population groups into social protection schemes.
- Almost all African countries have established social assistance/cash transfer programmes that either target the poorest citizens (those living below the national poverty line), or specific population groups (the elderly, persons with disabilities, refugees, war veterans, etc.); several countries, including Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe and others, have introduced school-feeding schemes. In many instances these programmes are being supported by development partners, which poses questions about their sustainability.
- A large number of African countries are aiming at reaching universal health coverage of the entire population, either by offering free health services for all (for example, Botswana, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa), or by offering affordable social health insurance.
- Several countries, including Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and others, are using labour-intensive public works programmes to provide poorer households with an income as an alternative to social assistance.

³⁶ ILO: *World Social Protection Report 2017–19*.

140. There is no doubt that these manifold initiatives have increased the number and percentage of African households benefiting from social protection in one form or another. The extension of social protection has also become a priority for the African Union; it is core to the African Union Vision 2063, and the basis for the Social Protection Plan for Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK) which was adopted by the AU in 2011.

141. However, despite African States' strong commitment to expand social protection and health care, 82 per cent of the population remains with no access to social protection benefits. In light of these persistent challenges, efforts need to be accelerated to close the coverage gaps and improve the comprehensiveness and adequacy of social protection, which calls for strengthened institutions and increased investments in social protection.

Promoting productivity

142. Low productivity is one of the root causes of the “working poor” phenomenon: people who work long hours, often in the informal economy or in subsistence agriculture, but still do not earn enough to feed their families.³⁷ Raising productivity – and ensuring that the productivity gains are equitably shared between business owners and investors (higher profits and shareholder value) and workers (higher wages and better working conditions) – is, therefore, of critical importance in efforts to reduce poverty. The virtuous circle of productivity, employment and development can be fuelled through the reinvestment of productivity gains into product and process innovations, plant and equipment improvements, and measures to enhance the skills and improve the work environment of the workforce.

143. Labour productivity measures the efficiency with which inputs are used in an economy to produce goods and services and it offers a measure of economic growth, competitiveness and living standards within a country.³⁸ Labour productivity, defined as GDP per employed person, is therefore an element of the ILO's Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), as well as an indicator of SDG target 8.2. Moreover, productivity has been included into one of the six key priority areas of the “Ouagadougou +10” Plan of Action,³⁹ albeit with a special focus on the impact of social protection on productivity. “Ouagadougou +10” calls for the accelerated implementation of the African Productivity Agenda, the development of an African Productivity and Competitiveness Index, and the establishment of an African Productivity Council. The African Union Agenda 2063 also refers to productivity as an engine for the industrialization and the enhancing of the competitiveness of the continent in the global economy.

144. Governments, workers and employers are united in their pursuit of enhanced productivity because greater productivity is the primary source of improvements in living standards, is key to charting a sustainable route out of working poverty and informality, and the basis (and measure) of competitiveness in global markets.

³⁷ Hence, productive employment refers to employment that yields sufficient income to allow the worker and his/her household a consumption level above the poverty line.

³⁸ ILO: *Labour Productivity*, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, Oct. 2015.

³⁹ AUC: *Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa*, Addis Ababa, 2014.

145. Despite the critical importance of productivity for income growth at the micro and macro levels, only eight African countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia) reported the existence of an operational, national productivity centre, and those had very limited outreach in terms of the number of enterprises covered. These eight countries are members of the Pan-African Productivity Association (PAPA). Between 2016 and 2019 (the AAD period), labour productivity in Africa grew by a mere 2.5 per cent on average, or 0.6 per cent per year, whereas most Asian countries recorded labour productivity increases of well over 4 per cent.

146. The African tripartite constituents put much greater emphasis than hitherto on productivity enhancement, especially in the informal economy and in smallholder agriculture, which will be key to unlocking the potential of the continent.

Tackling gender inequality in the world of work

147. The struggle against discrimination and gender inequality is at the heart of the ILO, and the subject of two fundamental Conventions: the [Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#), and the [Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958 \(No. 111\)](#), which have been ratified by almost all African countries. The more recent Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), however, has been ratified by only six African countries so far.⁴⁰

148. Several challenges remain to the achievement of gender equality in the world of work. Significant gender gaps exist with respect to both the quantity and quality of jobs: access to employment, pay, social security and occupational segregation, and there has been little change over the past 20 years.⁴¹

Table 6. Gender gaps in employment (in per cent)

| | Sub-Saharan Africa | | North Africa | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Labour force participation rate | 74.0 | 64.7 | 71.9 | 21.9 |
| Unemployment rate | 6.4 | 8.2 | 9.1 | 19.9 |
| Share of contributing family members | 16.7 | 31.7 | 5.7 | 24.5 |

Source: ILO, 2018.

149. The gender gap in the employment-to-population ratio in Africa has shrunk slightly during the AAD period, from 18.4 in 2015 to 17.8 in 2019. At 20.3 per cent, the share of women in managerial positions in Africa is the second lowest in the world.⁴² At 9.3 per cent, the “gender gap”⁴³ in the labour force participation rate is much lower in sub-Saharan Africa than the world average (26.5 per cent), whereas it is significantly higher in North Africa (50 per cent). On the other hand, the rate of informal employment among

⁴⁰ Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal.

⁴¹ ILO: *Women at Work: Trends 2016*.

⁴² V. Beghini, U. Cattaneo and E. Pozzan: *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality – For a Better Future of Work for All* (ILO, 2019).

⁴³ The difference between the labour force participation rate of men and women.

women compared to men is lower in North Africa than it is in sub-Saharan Africa. Women are more likely to be unemployed than men, with unemployment particularly affecting young women. They are often underemployed and represent the majority of poor workers.

150. Women also continue to be over-represented in unpaid and care work, often working longer hours than men do when both paid work and unpaid work are taken into account. More than 60 per cent of working women in sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in agriculture and other rural economic activities. Unfavourable traditional land inheritance systems and access to other productive assets prevent women's control over productive resources and block them from accessing finance and new technologies.⁴⁴ Gendered analysis of value chains in the agriculture sector show that women not only have less access to extension services but also occupy the lower ranks in the chains, with a disproportionate amount of hours spent working relative to men.

151. Advancing gender equality will require addressing these gaps, including the unpaid and undervalued work undertaken by women, redistributing care responsibilities, and ensuring equal remuneration for work of equal value.⁴⁵

152. The ILO's expertise in the area of gender equality and non-discrimination focuses on issues related to equal opportunities and treatment for all women and men in the world of work, and eliminating discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity and disability, among others. The Office provides policy advice, tools, guidance and technical assistance to constituents, including with respect to promoting more inclusive workplaces, and ensuring that policies, programmes and institutions are gender-responsive. Currently, the work on gender equality is guided by an ILO [Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21](#), which is the results-based tool for operationalizing the 1999 policy on gender equality and mainstreaming in the Office. Moreover, the ILO's [Women at Work](#) Centenary Initiative, identified a number of key issues, including that of unpaid care and domestic work, which block the path to equality.

153. Many African countries⁴⁶ have put in place special programmes, institutions and/or ministerial departments to promote gender equality. Experience shows the importance of having a dual strategy that combines gender mainstreaming and specific actions to address the challenges of equality of opportunity and treatment in the world of work. To have sustainable impacts, it is necessary to promote women's rights at work by repealing discriminatory laws, and promoting legislation that addresses discrimination and promotes equality. This goes hand in hand with strengthening the representation and expression of women to engage in social dialogue and to claim their rights, and have access to fair working conditions and an environment free of violence and harassment at work. Furthermore, the majority of African women are self-employed or family workers; improving their working conditions requires facilitating their access to resources and assuring them of the opportunity to formalize their informal economic units.

⁴⁴ ILO: *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, third edition (2018).

⁴⁵ Childcare payments are deductible only in Mauritius and while nine countries offer tax deductions or credits to men, there is no African country that offers similar incentives to women (World Bank: *Women, Business and the Law* (2016)).

⁴⁶ Including, for example, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Eswatini, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

154. Providing opportunities for women involves removing all forms of constraint that may prevent them from reaching their full potential, including the unequal distribution of responsibility for unpaid work. It is important to examine its impact on women's participation in the labour market and to formally fund domestic and care services. Infrastructure, social protection and public care services, when intelligently designed and sufficiently financed, have a positive impact on redistributing unpaid care work and freeing women's time.

155. Gender equality at work, which leaves no one behind and assures a fairer future of work, requires combined action and partnership between all actors in the world of work.

Enhancing fair and effective labour migration governance

156. International migration is largely linked to the search for jobs and better wages. In Africa, most countries are now simultaneously origin, transit and destination countries for migrant workers. Decent work deficits and the lack of job-rich growth resulting in high levels of youth unemployment, underemployment and labour force underutilization are key drivers of labour migration within and outside (e.g. Europe and the Arab States) the African continent. African migrant workers, particularly women, are primarily concentrated in low- and semi-skilled occupations in agriculture, construction, retail trade, mining and domestic work. However, some African countries also attract highly skilled workers in sectors such as finance, IT, engineering or education.

157. Labour migration is an important enabler of regional integration and economic development in Africa.⁴⁷ International migrants are more economically active than the general population.⁴⁸ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)–ILO studies on the impact of immigration on developing countries' economies showed that migrants can have a positive impact on economic growth. However, the migration process can represent complex challenges in terms of migrant workers' protection. Migrant workers are often concentrated in poorly regulated sectors with limited access to information, support systems and trade union representation. Irregular migration and informal recruitment practices are prevalent and can expose them to situations of debt bondage and forced labour.

158. The protection of migrant workers has indeed been one of the ILO's predominant concerns since its inception.⁴⁹ The ILO is promoting the rights of migrant workers and the fair governance of labour migration through its body of standards, including the eight ILO fundamental rights Conventions, the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). Global policy frameworks⁵⁰ and initiatives contribute to strengthening

⁴⁷ Together with the OECD, the ILO assessed the economic contribution of migrant workers in four African countries as part of a global study covering ten countries (www.ilo.org/eclm).

⁴⁸ AUC: *Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa in 2015* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mar. 2017).

⁴⁹ The ILO's Constitution of 1919 calls for the "protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own".

⁵⁰ The ILO 2018 Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration; the 2018 ILO/World Bank Guidelines on measuring recruitment costs; the 2017 Conference resolution and

governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility. At the international level, the Global Compact for Migration that UN member States adopted in December 2018 had strong support from African nations. At the continental level, these include the 2014 “Ouagadougou +10” Plan of Action, which references labour migration as one of its key priority areas, and the AUC tripartite African Labour Migration Advisory Committee (AU–LMAC) established in 2018 and including BUSINESS Africa, the Organization of Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)–Africa. That same year, the AU also adopted the *Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–30)*, which includes work on regional cooperation and harmonization of labour migration policies. Finally, the AU Free Movement Protocol was adopted in 2018 and includes nine labour migration–mobility related provisions. The ILO has substantially contributed to the labour migration component of the three-year Implementation Plan in Africa of the Global Compact for Migration.

159. Extending social protection to migrant workers in Africa is another key priority in the region and an important component of the Joint Labour Migration Programme (see box below). It can contribute to addressing labour market needs, facilitate formalization and regional integration, while building more sustainable and inclusive social protection systems.

The Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP)

The JLMP, spearheaded by the AUC with support from the ILO, IOM and UNECA, is an important strategic framework supporting the operationalization of the AU's 2018 Revised Migration Policy Framework. As such, it is a crucial means of advancing regional integration and development in Africa. The JLMP includes two components, namely:

- (1) Strengthened governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa.
- (2) Operational implementation of law and policy.

160. Fostering the assessment of labour market needs for migrant workers and enhancing job matching and recognition of their skills can contribute to improving their labour market integration. Recently, the ILO has provided support on advancing work on the recognition and equivalence of migrant workers' degrees, diplomas, certificates and other qualifications (e.g. EAC's incipient Qualifications Framework, as well as the SADC decision to develop a Regional Qualifications Framework). The recent adoption of the AfCFTA Agreement can represent an opportunity for the mobility of skills.

161. The ILO has provided advice to the EAC's and SADC's labour migration policy frameworks and technical support to ECOWAS tripartite dialogue on labour migration within a recently established Social Dialogue Forum, to SADC's Labour Migration Plan and 2014 Labour Migration Framework, and to the draft IGAD Free Movement of Persons Protocol. A number of African nations have designed or adopted national labour migration policies⁵¹ and bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs) to fill structural shortages in specific sectors, particularly of highly skilled workers, but also for the employment of their

conclusions on fair and effective labour migration governance and its follow-up plan of action; and the 2016 *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment*.

⁵¹ Including Egypt, Ghana, Lesotho, Seychelles, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zimbabwe.

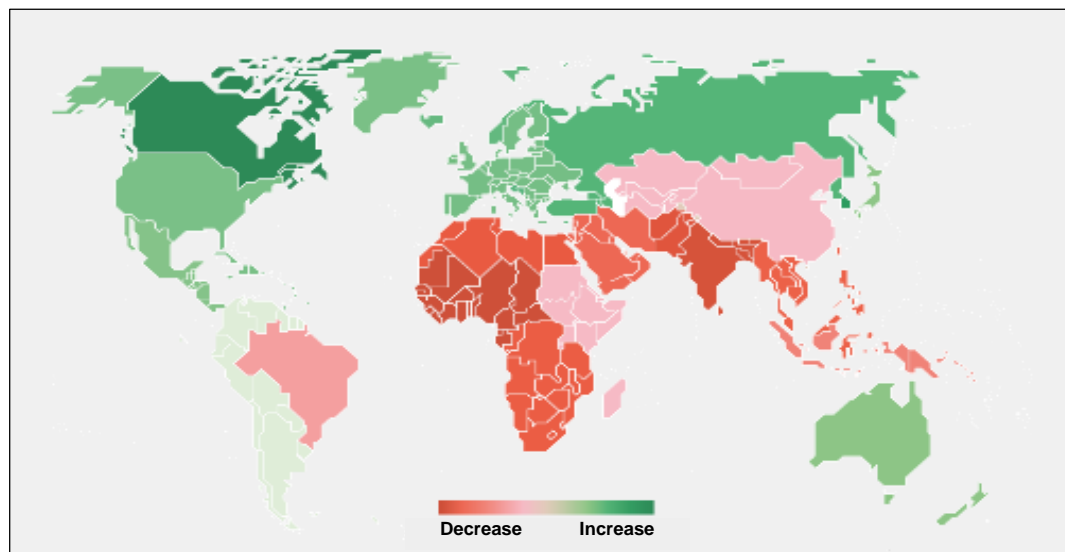
nationals abroad.⁵² To support these and other efforts, the ILO is currently implementing ten labour migration projects in Africa.

162. Of the total number of forcibly displaced persons only a very small minority gain access to labour markets in the formal economy. The ILO's 2016 [Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market](#) and the [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 \(No. 205\)](#), provide a unique normative framework focusing on world of work-related measures to prevent and respond to the devastating effects of conflicts and disasters on economies and societies, paying special attention to vulnerable population groups, such as children, young people, women and displaced people.

Promoting a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies

163. Almost 59 per cent of all jobs in Africa are linked to agriculture, forestry, fishing, food processing, renewable energy and water management, and therefore depend directly on the ecosystem.⁵³

Figure 5. Changes in agricultural production in 2050: Climate change relative to the baseline



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2018.

⁵² For example, the Seychelles has entered into BLMAs with Kenya and Mauritius to recruit workers for the public health and education sectors. Uganda has also concluded agreements with South Sudan for the secondment of civil servants and for professionals in the oil sector with the United Republic of Tanzania. In East Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have entered into BLMAs with several countries in the Arab States to employ their nationals abroad, in particular as domestic workers.

⁵³ ILO: *World Economic and Social Outlook* (2018).

164. The effects of climate change will alter the structure of employment and cause labour migration; new jobs and new job families will emerge, others will disappear or become unsustainable, and enterprises must find ways to organize work and production differently.

165. During the AAD period, ILO Green Jobs ⁵⁴ projects have been (or are being) implemented in several African countries, namely Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

166. The ILO is a member of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (**PAGE**), which brings together a number of UN agencies (UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNITAR) as well as bilateral agencies and specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the partnership, which is being supported financially by several donors, aims at putting sustainability at the heart of economic policy and practice. Five African countries are currently covered by PAGE: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal and South Africa.

167. In May 2019, the Regional Conference “Creating a Sustainable Future of Work and a Just Transition towards a Blue Economy in African Island States”, hosted by the Seychelles, adopted an outcome document with programmatic building blocks for actions on the “blue economy”, to promote the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs.

Enhancing policy coherence and inter-ministerial coordination

168. From an ILO perspective, the pursuit of policy coherence aims at formulating and adopting policy portfolios that enhance the coherence between the objectives of economic growth and the generation of decent work for all. ⁵⁵ It therefore requires close coordination between different ministries, such as those in charge of labour, social affairs, health, finance, planning and economy but also, depending on the structure of the national economy, the ministries responsible for agriculture, mining, industry, tourism and others. Such inter-ministerial coordination would allow for:

- (a) an interrelated and mutually supportive objective of sustainable growth, equity, employment and decent work;
- (b) a more comprehensive policy mix and better sequencing to obtain these objectives; and
- (c) the creation of more policy space to implement national policy priorities. ⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The ILO “**Green Jobs**” programme operationally promotes the “greening” of enterprises, workplace practices and the labour market as a whole. These efforts seek to create decent employment opportunities, enhance resource efficiency and build low-carbon sustainable societies. Green jobs are defined as “decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment”, be they in traditional sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.

⁵⁵ The goal of policy coherence is encapsulated in SDG target 17.14: “Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development”, but in this context “coherence” means the simultaneous pursuit of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

⁵⁶ ILO: *Policy coherence initiative* (2018).

The MNE Declaration

The fifth edition of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy ([MNE Declaration](#)) was adopted in March 2017 by the ILO Governing Body to respond to new economic realities, including increased international investment and trade, and the growth of global supply chains. The Declaration provides “guidelines for enhancing the positive social and labour effects of the operations and governance of multinational enterprises to achieve decent work for all, a universal goal recognized in the 2030 Agenda”.

169. In many instances, such policy coherence would also require the participation, besides that of the social partners, of development partners as well.

170. Many African countries, especially those in French-speaking regions, have set up National Economic and Social Councils, which can, and sometimes do, play an important role in building policy coherence around the Decent Work Agenda. This notwithstanding, further efforts are needed to strengthen policy coherence and inter-ministerial coordination so as to enhance the employment elasticity of economic growth, the interrelationship between employment and social protection, as well as fundamental principles and rights at work, the quality of work in the informal and the rural economy, and other decent work-related topics.

The Office’s role in implementing the Addis Ababa Declaration

Table 7. ILO Development Cooperation Portfolio, Africa

| | 2015 | 2019 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Number of projects * | 250 | 167 |
| Total annual budget (million) | 63.2 | 89.4 |
| Average project size ('000) | 252.8 | 535.3 |
| Delivery rate (2015–18) | 84.7% | 71.1% |

* In this table, the term “project” also includes secondments and junior professional officers.

Source: ILO, 2019.

Formulation and implementation of DWCPs

171. DWCPs have been established by the ILO as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. DWCPs have two basic objectives: they promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies, and they organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation at the service of tripartite constituents in a results-based framework to advance the Decent Work Agenda. Tripartism and social dialogue are central to the planning and implementation of a coherent and integrated ILO programme of assistance to constituents in member States. DWCPs comprise integrated and balanced strategies to meet the ILO’s strategic objectives around priorities identified by national tripartite constituents, grounded in the country-specific context.

172. In February 2016, there were 25 active DWCPs in the continent. As at October 2019, there are 19 active DWCPs in Africa, while 22 others are in preparation (among a worldwide total of 50 active DWCPs and 42 under preparation). In addition, there is one subregional Decent Work Programme for SADC, and one under development for ECOWAS.

Office action in support of the AAD

173. The AAD in its paragraph 17 requested the Office to support the implementation of the AAD through 14 measures. The table below summarizes Office actions in relation to the AAD since December 2015.

Table 8. Summary of key Office actions in relation to the AAD

| AAD recommendation | Key Office actions |
|---|---|
| Align its programme in Africa to the African Union Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development as well as the African Union Agenda 2063. | This was done consistently, notably in conjunction with the formulation of DWCPs, which all contain references to “Ouagadougou +10” and the AU Agenda 2063. |
| Promote synergies with regional organizations and institutions, particularly the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB), on macroeconomic, labour market, employment, social protection and labour rights issues. | The ILO has concluded formal partnership agreements with the AfDB, AUC, UNECA and, in November 2018, with NEPAD. In addition, a partnership has been concluded with the AfDB on Central Africa. Many ILO field offices report close cooperation with the AfDB country offices, and between 2015 and 2019 the AfDB financed five ILO projects with a total amount of US\$6.9 million. Moreover, the ILO, AUC and UNECA are implementing, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance . These partnerships at the continental level have facilitated many joint ventures on the ground, and have greatly contributed to the popularization of the Decent Work Agenda in the African region (AfDB on several themes for example). |
| Work with the regional and subregional employers’ and workers’ organizations on the new development frameworks. | The various ILO field offices report joint activities with the regional employers’ and workers’ organizations of West Africa (FOPAO and OTUWA), East Africa (EAEO and EATUC) and southern Africa (SPSF and SATUCC), but these activities are not necessarily linked to the “new development frameworks”. A close and regular cooperation exists between the ILO Regional Office for Africa and the regional employers’ and workers’ organizations (BUSINESS Africa, OATUU and ITUC–Africa). |
| Engage with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with a view to achieving policy coherence on decent work for sustainable development. | Close cooperation takes place between World Bank/IMF and ILO field offices, in particular in countries where the ILO is resident. Such cooperation is facilitated by the fact that the World Bank at the global level has become much more attentive to the Decent Work Agenda since introducing a new work stream named “ jobs and development ”. Between 2015 and 2019, the World Bank Group has financed five ILO projects in Africa. |

| AAD recommendation | Key Office actions |
|---|---|
| <p>Contribute to regional economic integration by providing advice and support to the African Regional Economic Communities on issues such as trade and investment, free movement of persons, the portability of social protection benefits, skills recognition and labour standards.</p> | <p>The ILO has concluded formal partnership agreements with five of the eight AU-recognized Regional Economic Committees: EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC; MoUs with EAC and SADC were renewed in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Moreover, a regional Decent Work Programme has been agreed with the SADC, and two more are under preparation with the EAC and ECOWAS. In general terms, the cooperation between the RECs and the ILO has greatly intensified during the AAD period.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate the implementation of the Joint AUC/ILO/IOM/ECA Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP).</p> | <p>This programme has become fully operational in three African subregions, namely West Africa (ECOWAS), East Africa (EAC) and southern Africa (SADC). It is being financially supported by Sweden with a grant of US\$9 million, and the European Union in collaboration with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development with a grant of US\$2.7 million.</p> |
| <p>Provide evidence-based research, analysis and technical advice to constituents on issues related to the Decent Work Agenda, such as the EESE (Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises) methodology.</p> | <p>This work item has been covered under the heading “Improving the environment for sustainable enterprises” above. In addition, the Office has conducted numerous capacity-building initiatives and provided advisory services on all aspects related to the Decent Work Agenda.</p> |
| <p>Promote South–South cooperation as a means to facilitate the exchange of experience, the sharing of good practices and mutual learning between countries of the region, and in cooperation with other regions.</p> | <p>South–South cooperation materializes through the interaction between the ILO and continental and regional organizations; in addition, several ILO field offices have facilitated joint ventures between African countries and emerging economies, such as Brazil and China, and have organized study tours within the continent and beyond. In 2017, the ILO Regional Office for Africa developed a strategy paper entitled: “South–South Cooperation for Decent Work in Africa – A Framework for Action” which was validated in May 2017 at the outcome of a tripartite workshop in Casablanca. In 2018, eight African countries, namely Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tunisia have benefited from peer-to-peer learning in support of the SDGs.</p> |
| <p>Build capacity of constituents to effectively contribute to decent work for sustainable and inclusive development through enhanced social dialogue, collective bargaining and other policy issues, using institutions such as the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (ITC–ILO).</p> | <p>All ILO field offices reported comprehensive capacity-building initiatives for constituents at the national level, in many different world of work-related areas; quite often, these measures were implemented with or through the ITC–ILO, and with the support of relevant headquarters units. It is encouraging to note that numerous countries combined such capacity-building efforts with the formulation, implementation or supervision of DWCPs, thereby increasing the results-orientation of these efforts.</p> |

| AAD recommendation | Key Office actions |
|--|---|
| <p>Promote the ratification and implementation of the Conventions concerning fundamental principles and rights at work, the ratification of other up-to-date ILO Conventions, as well as the application of all other ratified ILO Conventions, through action programmes, development cooperation and advocacy campaigns.</p> | <p>In addition to the promotion of labour standards captured earlier, promotion of fundamental principles and rights, particularly those related to child labour and forced labour, has been supported by development cooperation ventures. Between 2015 and 2019, the ILO implemented 43 projects with a total amount of US\$24.7 million linked to the ILO policy outcome on “unacceptable forms of work”, and 12 projects with an amount of US\$6.3 million linked to “application of standards”. Many other ILO projects do promote labour standards as well, even though they might be linked to other policy outcomes. A recently approved regional project on child labour in supply chains has adopted an integrated intervention model that fosters sustainability. The formulation of a ten-year AU action plan for the eradication of child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in Africa (2020–30) provides an important opportunity for the ILO to strengthen its collaboration with the AU.</p> |
| <p>Step up its efforts to promote the ILO MNE Declaration with a strong emphasis on supporting the tripartite constituents at the country level, partnerships with other relevant actors and facilitation of the exchange of experiences.</p> | <p>Some activities under this point were reported. A rapid assessment on labour and employment issues on MNEs was conducted in Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe; the ILO Office for East Africa translated the MNE into Kiswahili; Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal implemented a French-funded project designed specifically to promote the MNE Declaration; and isolated capacity-building initiatives took place in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania and Sierra Leone. The Labour and Social Dialogue Council of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) decided to dedicate the fifth meeting of its Social Dialogue Commission to the MNE Declaration.</p> |
| <p>Develop and implement, in consultation with the constituents, a new generation of DWCPs that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the African Union Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development.</p> | <p>This has been covered by the section “Formulation and implementation of DWCPs” above.</p> |
| <p>Expand its development cooperation programme in the continent, and reinforce its resource mobilization efforts, including through domestic resource mobilization.</p> | <p>With regard to domestic resource mobilization, between 2015 and 2019, the Office has been implementing 20 projects funded by direct trust funds from nine governments, with a total amount of US\$15.5 million; six of these projects, with an amount of US\$12.5 million, were located in, and financed by, South Africa.*</p> <p>Furthermore, and as indicated earlier, the total amount of all development cooperation resources available in Africa has increased by 112 per cent between 2015 and 2019.</p> |

| AAD recommendation | Key Office actions |
|--|--|
| <p>Expand the Office's engagement in Africa's fragile States on the basis of the framework strategy presented at the 13th ARM which calls for the promotion of institutions and mechanisms for quality employment and livelihoods creation, and the promotion of social protection and the advancement of equity and rights at work.</p> | <p>With RBSA funding, the Office is implementing activities in the Central African Republic, Comoros, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia, all of which are members of the "g7+" group of self-declared fragile States (with which the ILO has signed an agreement in 2014). The Office is also implementing activities in Mali and Niger. Moreover, in April 2019, the ILO designed a comprehensive support programme for Libya for which resources are being mobilized. Moreover, in July 2016, the ILO designed an operational strategy to promote decent work in fragile States, on the basis of the strategy presented at the 13th ARM.</p> |
| <p>* The other countries that provided domestic funding during the AAD period were: Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania.</p> | |