



13th African Regional Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 November–3 December 2015

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Draft report of the 13th African Regional Meeting

Elections and appointments

1. The 13th African Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 November to 3 December 2015.
2. On behalf of the Government group, a Government representative of Zimbabwe put forward a candidate for the position of Chairperson of the Regional Meeting, and the Meeting unanimously elected Mr Abdulfatah Abdullahi Hassan, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to this post. The Meeting unanimously elected Mr Grégoire Owona (Cameroon), as Government Vice-Chairperson, Ms Jacqueline Mugo (Kenya), as Employer Vice-Chairperson and Mr Mody Guiro (Senegal) as Worker Vice-Chairperson.
3. In accordance with the *Rules for Regional Meetings, 2008*, the Meeting appointed the members of its Credentials Committee as follows: Mr M. Khiat (Government, Algeria), Mr A. K. Mlimuka (Employer, United Republic of Tanzania), and Mr G. Nkiwane (Worker, Zimbabwe).
4. The Meeting established a Drafting Committee to prepare the conclusions of the Meeting, composed of five Government representatives, five Employer representatives and five Worker representatives, with the following members:
 - Government representatives: Egypt, Gabon, Malawi, Nigeria and United Republic of Tanzania;
 - Employer representatives: Ms Jacqueline Mugo (Kenya), Mr S.H.Ladouyou (Côte d'Ivoire), Ms V. Phala (South Africa), Ms F. Awassi (Gabon) and Mr K. Ghariani (Tunisia);
 - Worker representatives: Mr Mody Guiro (Senegal), Mr G. Mhotsha (Botswana), Mr B. Ntshalintshali (South Africa), Ms T. Lahrech (Morocco) and Ms A. M. Agnala Alagan (Togo)
5. The Meeting suspended the application of certain provisions of the Rules for Regional Meetings, 2008, in accordance with article 8 of the Rules.¹

¹ Article 11 of the *Rules* was suspended with regard to the functioning of the Drafting Committee on the conclusions of the Meeting, in order to allow it to fulfil its function efficiently and decide on its own modalities, and article 10 on the right to speak was suspended with regard to the organization of the

Opening addresses

6. The Chairperson of the Regional Meeting welcomed the tripartite delegations to the Meeting and to Addis Ababa. He thanked the Meeting for electing him as Chair. Ethiopia had hosted both the 10th and 11th African Regional Meetings in 2003 and 2007 respectively. Ethiopia was therefore proud to host 13th African Regional Meeting. This Regional Meeting was held shortly following the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, also hosted by Ethiopia, and the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals placing Decent Work as one of the goals. These developments highlighted the centrality of Decent Work and placed it as a key priority underpinning all development priorities.
7. African countries had achieved high economic growth rates over the past decade, and yet poverty and unemployment persisted. Ethiopia was one of the African countries which had attained such high growth rates. To address the challenge of continuing poverty, the Government had in 2015 developed the Growth and Transformation Plan 2 (GTP 2) aimed at generating sustainable economic and inclusive job-rich growth. Broad-based economic growth would be achieved through a focus on improved productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors.
8. To achieve the GTP 2 objectives, backward and forward linkages between agriculture and manufacturing, export promotion, structural transformation of the productive sector, infrastructural development, human capital investment, and support to small and medium enterprise development would be promoted. The discussions and conclusions of this Regional Meeting would pave the way for future ILO presence in Africa. Ethiopia was grateful for the immense contribution the ILO was making to Africa's development.
9. *The Director-General of the ILO* welcomed the delegates to the Regional Meeting. The Meeting came at a critical moment, with the adoption in September 2015 of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda and coinciding with the Paris Climate Change Conference. He thanked the President of Ethiopia for holding the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 and also for generously hosting the ILO's African Regional Office for the past ten years. His report to the Meeting, towards inclusive and sustainable development in Africa through decent work had a straightforward purpose: to take stock of the experience of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa 2007 – 2015 adopted at the 11th Regional Meeting in 2007 and to seek guidance from constituents in charting the road forward and planning the work of the ILO up to the next Regional Meeting, which would take place in 2019 – the year of the Organization's centenary.
10. Key progress had been achieved: on average, people in Africa had incomes 15 per cent higher than in 2007; extreme poverty had fallen by 12 per cent since 1999; Africa's middle class had grown by almost a half, while access to secondary education was up by more than a half since 2000. Technology was making a difference: internet users had doubled in just three years; and enterprise creation was more dynamic in Africa than in any other region. These elements had underpinned a decade of sustained growth in Africa, 4.5 per cent on average, and the continent had weathered the global financial and jobs crisis better than most. Despite this good progress, the benefits of real economic dynamism were unevenly shared, with too many African citizens benefiting too little or not at all; Africa's recent growth performance, impressive as it had been, had not generated enough decent

High-level Dialogue on *Decent work in Africa in the post-2015 context: Rights and social dialogue for inclusive and sustainable growth*, the special plenary debates and the special session on the "Promotion and application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa, to allow greater flexibility in the organization of their work.

work. The massive potential development dividend of Africa's young population meant that from now until 2030 no less than one in three new entrants into the world labour market would be African. Twenty-five years previously the corresponding figure had been about one in six. 51 of the 54 member States of the region had now mainstreamed decent work into national development strategies, making the ILO's Decent Work Agenda Africa's agenda.

- 11.** The adoption by the African Union (AU) Summit in January 2015 of the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development showed that significant regional and global commitments to the Decent Work Agenda had been achieved. The Plan called on the ILO to work with the AU and other partners in a Five-Year Priority Programme to kick start the Continent's ambitious 50-year Agenda 2063 prioritising prosperity for Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development realized through decent work. Africa had globally adopted a common position on the post-2015 development agenda and had thus played a major role in ensuring that decent work should lie at the centre of the outcome document entitled *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Goal 8 of this document aimed to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Moreover, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals contained many further references to the decent work agenda.
- 12.** Lack of resources, lack of administrative and technical capacities and lack of common purpose were three risks impeding achievement of the Decent Work goals set at the national, regional and global levels. More domestic and international resources should be allocated to promoting respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. More importance should be placed on social dialogue as a means of attaining unity of purpose. The Director-General highlighted the remarkable awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian workers and employers of the General Labour Union of Tunisia (UGTT) and of the Tunisian Industry, Trade and Crafts Union (UTICA).
- 13.** ILO strategy was geared towards providing Africa with the institutional support it needed to achieve the goal of inclusive growth through decent work. In this, partnerships with African institutions like the African Union, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa were crucial to the ILO. The 14th African Regional Meeting would coincide with the Organization's centenary, which the ILO planned to link with a major, in-depth, reflection on the "Future of Work" culminating at the 108th Session (2019) of the International Labour Conference. The Director-General would be writing to all member States urging each one to conduct national future of work dialogues with full tripartite participation in 2016. Their outcomes would be presented to a High-Level Global Commission established in 2017, which would in turn report to the centenary Conference. The purpose was to prepare and equip the ILO, as it moved into its second century, to fulfil its mandate for social justice under the conditions of deep and rapid transformation in the world of work.
- 14.** *The Employer Vice-Chairperson* thanked Employers for her election and the Government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality. Her group was in favour of any fruitful collaboration between employers and workers to better implement the 2007-2015 Decent Work Agenda in Africa. This 13th Regional Meeting was the first to take stock and review progress made since 2007, with a view to mapping future action of the Organization in the region. Other speakers had highlighted the strong economic growth rate in Africa; the challenge was to sustain this trajectory and make it inclusive. The Decent Work Agenda in Africa was a key component of the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on a number of studies conducted by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other institutions, she stressed the competitive advantage of Africa in the agricultural sector.

Investment should be made in this sector in order to help tackle youth unemployment, migration issues and to preserve peace. Unemployment and decent work deficits were considered to be the main root causes of migration in Africa.

15. Other important areas for investment included agro-industry, small and medium enterprises, micro-finance, infrastructure, skills and training, and social dialogue. Attention should be paid to the vision of the President of the African Development Bank of transforming African agriculture in order to fully exploit its potential for job creation in Africa. As part of this, a regulatory framework should be put in place that would facilitate a sustainable environment for job creation. Regional integration suffered from poor infrastructure. Accelerated and greater interconnectivity would greatly encourage better regional integration. Finally, she stressed that workers and Employers had a number of common interests in the national development agenda and should therefore work together in the context of the Social Partners Forum.
16. *The Worker Vice-Chairperson* expressed his group's belief in the vision of the social and economic development of the continent based on the huge potential of Africa in terms of natural resources. Africa had achieved an economic growth rate of 5 per cent over the past decade. However the continent still faced numerous challenges before it could liberate its full development potential. The manufacturing sector accounted for only 6 per cent of employment; factories had not created enough decent work and African manufacturing had dropped from 12 to 11 per cent globally.
17. In order to break out of this negative cycle, Africa needed to implement the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063; this would greatly assist the continent in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Social dialogue was of the utmost importance to this end. Regrettably, many countries in the region did not fully practice social dialogue and had failed in their obligation to implement fundamental ILO Conventions, in particular the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

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

18. *His Excellency President Mulatu Teshome of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia* welcomed all guests to Ethiopia. The hosting of the 13th African Regional Meeting, a platform for discussion and dialogue, was a privilege. The items on the agenda, including issues of decent work, informal economy, and youth employment, were of key importance to Africa. In a continent with a large proportion of working poor, of which a significant number lived on less than US\$1 a day, decent work could contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty alleviation. All parties should be committed to implementing the conclusions that would be adopted by the Regional meeting, as well as supporting the outcomes of other meetings that had recently been held in Ethiopia, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2015, and the African Union Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa. Africa's growth, which had been high on average, should translate into meaningful jobs and promote social transformation while paying due consideration to environmental protection. Sustainable development laid the foundation for lasting development. In view of this, it remained vital that mechanisms to protect the vulnerable were established, that public

spending should be efficient, and that efforts should be made for Africa to provide adequate financing for its youth. This would contribute positively to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- 19.** Ethiopia had made important strides in trying to cut unemployment, reduce poverty and transform the economy. The Government attached special importance to employment policies. Strategic policy guidance documents had been prepared. These strategies included the 2005-2009 Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP); Ethiopia's 2010 to 2015 five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The new Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP 2) would guide future development plans largely based on the experience of GTP 1, with a clear focus on ensuring that Ethiopia became a middle income country. The Government's priorities included decent work, poverty alleviation, social protection, action on HIV in the workplace, promotion of rights and social dialogue. The partnership between the Government and the ILO had been exceedingly positive. The Organization had provided valuable guidance in eradicating poverty and promoting decent work through a number of successful projects under way in the country.

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

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

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

- 21.** *Mr Carlos Lopes* said that African gross domestic product (GDP) had tripled in the last fifteen years, but growth had not been accompanied by equality. Africa needed transformative growth, making society more inclusive and reducing poverty. While six of the ten fastest growing countries in the world were on the African continent, unfortunately six out of the ten most unequal States were also in Africa. Inequality was growing in many countries in Africa. The structures of the economy had not allowed growth to translate into benefit for the majority. The continent depended largely on primary

commodities and natural resources. Most exports were from the extractive industries, which absorbed one per cent of formal employment, while accounting for 85 per cent of exports. Africa needed to create jobs in industry, the manufacturing sector and benefit from its youth dividend. Its population was already of one billion, and was projected to grow to two billion by 2050; this would make it the continent with the largest labour force. The majority of the workers were in the agricultural sector, which had low productivity. Young people were now moving to the service industry, the informal economy was growing and opportunities for industrialization were being missed. The link between industry and the agricultural sector was weak in most countries. To move forward, Africa need to transform the economy from the current situation where growth was created through consumption. The new roads, bridges, airports, shopping malls gave a false impression that the continent was growing. There was need for a comprehensive, integrated plan for Africa, with more emphasis on value addition, manufacturing and industrialization. Labour market information was lacking in Africa with roughly 50 per cent of labour force surveys over ten years old. This posed challenges to policy making. Transformative growth was needed, that would reduce inequality and poverty and generate employment. The time of celebrating potential was over; concrete action was required.

- 22.** *Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko* said that decent work was a priority for AU member States. 90 per cent of the workers in Africa were in the informal and rural sectors, composed mainly of women and youth. Gender issues, particularly the empowerment of women, were therefore an AU priority. Indeed, this theme had been adopted by the AU for 2015, with a view to addressing imbalances in employment. Employment issues should be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner. The Agenda 2063 and the Common Africa Position had preceded the SDGs, but were in line with them. These recently adopted agendas were not new for Africa as they dated back to the Lagos Plan of Action, to NEPAD, the 2014 Ouagadougou Plan of Action and Ouagadougou+10. What they brought was a change of narrative with stress placed on spreading benefits more widely amongst people. Growth without ownership was unsustainable; Africa urgently needed development that was inclusive and sustainable. The AU was ready to work with longstanding partners such as the ILO and to use the ILO competencies in the implementation of these agendas.
- 23.** *Mr Willy Makiashi* said that most governments were deploying efforts to achieve the SDGs. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had developed a strategic plan to implement the SDGs as well as a national labour training programme. An effective mechanism to generate national statistics and establish development indicators was needed. His Government called on the ILO to provide technical and logistical assistance in implementing the plan and deliver results. Support was also needed to build institutional capacity to produce labour market information and to build the social partners' capacity to implement the agenda. The ILO should provide support to African countries in analyzing the employment situation and in implementing international labour Conventions. This should be accompanied by advocacy, especially in respect of international development partners, to place employment at the core of their strategies and make decent work a reality. Some international development partners placed insufficient weight on employment issues.
- 24.** *Mr Mansour Sy* said that Senegal had recently published new employment data, which revealed an unemployment rate of 13 per cent, with 28 per cent of the population classified as inactive, with two million workers in the informal sector. Governments should develop effective and inclusive strategies that targeted unemployment and reduced precariousness. Social dialogue was a key tool in developing and implementing these strategies, and should be at the heart of government efforts to achieve far-reaching reforms and sustainable development. Assistance should be given to workers in the informal economy to assist their transit to the formal sector. The government of Senegal was attentive to the

legitimate demands of the country's workers. The processes of addressing the challenges would continue through dialogue.

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

This shift faced a number of challenges:

- The current model had deep roots, but provided major benefits only for a limited section of the population;

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- The global economy was changing; Africa's position in this shift needed to be rethought;
 - Where would the necessary resources come from?
 - Weak labour markets and institutions;
 - Energy.
- 29.** Requests for support from the ILO were not new, and were fully justified. Mr Atwoli's call for a narrative inspired and owned by Africa was important and should be heeded. The ILO had built partnerships with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa on migration and youth employment. There was a need to further strengthen this partnership.
- 30.** *The moderator* highlighted the need for African ownership of the SDGs both at national and continental levels, again stressing that the economic model must change.
- 31.** *A Government representative of Malawi* concurred with all speakers in support of the 2030 Agenda, an ambitious plan with 17 goals. The achievement of these goals required an investment of resources. Already, achievement of the MDGs required resources, but to attain the 17 targets set out by the SDGs would require vast sums that governments alone could not raise. Partnerships, such as Public-Private Partnerships, would be important in achieving the SDGs. Extensive consultations and social dialogue were also critical in the elaboration and implementation of national development plans. The SDGs contained wide-ranging decent work related elements and support from the ILO, and from other UN agencies and partners would be essential.
- 32.** *A Government representative of Zimbabwe* said that the Regional Meeting was taking place at a critical moment, following closely on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and after the recent adoption of the Agenda 2063. The robust 2030 Agenda and Africa's blueprint presented a challenging path for the tripartite constituents. The Director-General and all ILO field offices were to be congratulated for their efforts towards the adoption of SDG 8, which was at the core of the development framework, and to rooting out poverty, strengthening universal peace and promoting sustainable growth. Quoting the preamble to the ILO Constitution, she stated that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice". However, social justice required social cohesion: the tripartite constituents should work closely with other UN agencies and partners so that dialogue and rights did not remain purely ideals.
- 33.** *The representative of the Arab League* congratulated the Chair and the team for facilitating the High Level Discussion. The subject was critical to Africa, but the Arab States faced the same issues. The Agenda for 2030, and in particular Sustainable Development Goals 1, 7 and 8 were of critical importance. The ILO had a major role to play in Africa where youth constituted a very high percentage of the population. He questioned the Director General on whether the ILO had undertaken a review of this issue and how the Organization would meet the expectations in Africa.
- 34.** *A Government representative of Algeria* indicated the importance of social dialogue in achieving concrete results. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be developed to learn from experiences and achievements. Lifelong training was another area to which attention should be paid. The 13th African Regional Meeting provided an international forum for sharing country experiences across the region.

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35. *The Worker delegate from Cameroon* said that social dialogue should be engaged to consider the question of the source of work. Below a certain threshold, a person could not be considered as a worker. The forestry sector, for example, faced particular difficulties, and wages in it were very low. Social dialogue should be used to ensure internal national consensus.
 36. *A Worker Adviser from Senegal* suggested that the Lagos Plan should be revisited to look at different aspects of social dialogue. He wondered what would be the role of the social partners at international level, given that States imposed their own development plans in relation to the SDGs. Social dialogue was a work in progress and the social partners were making efforts to make it effective. Agreed frameworks to facilitate dialogue should be established.
 37. *The Worker delegate from Morocco* also stressed the importance of social dialogue in Africa to achieve the objectives of workers and employers. Resources should be mobilized and utilized to create a flourishing middle class. Support was required from international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, also from the former colonial powers. There was an urgent need for greater international cooperation.
 38. *The Worker delegate from Tunisia* expressed gratitude to his colleagues who had received the Nobel Peace Prize. They had achieved much in the field of social dialogue. The implementation of the social contract agreed in Tunisia was an issue of great importance. However, security was essential to development and growth, and he called for support in the fight against terrorism.
 39. *A Government delegate of Togo* was concerned that a move had been made towards the SDGs, without adequate analysis of the MDG agenda. There was a need for proper analysis of the MDGs which should be integrated into work towards the SDGs.
 40. *The Worker delegate of Sudan* also stressed the importance of social dialogue in combatting poverty and achieving other SDG objectives. Specific outcomes should be set if realistic action was to take place. He raised a question as to whether workers and unions in African countries played a negative or positive role in achieving regional or national objectives.
 41. *The Worker delegate of Nigeria* said that meaningful dialogue was unattainable without the concomitant political will. In many cases plans remained a dead letter with scant implementation. Governments must have the political will to implement social dialogue. Newly elected governments were abandoning many of the existing processes and goals with consequent negative impact within countries.
 42. *Mr Francis Atwoli* noted that many interventions supported the key place of social dialogue in achieving the SDG goals. In response to a question raised by the Worker delegate of Sudan, he stated that unions in Africa were funded by workers. This was different in some developed economies, where unions were government funded. Consequently, unions in Africa were free and independent and most definitely played a positive role.
 43. *Ms Linda Kromjong* stressed the importance of investment, of reducing red tape, funding innovation, SMEs and promoting social dialogue. A “one size fits all” approach would not work; there was a need to tailor according to needs. The means of measuring progress was lacking, as well as that of ensuring continuity.
 44. *Mr Makiashi* emphasized the need for a more results-based approach, with emphasis on the important role of social partners in implementing the SDGs. Much could be learned from successful country

initiatives and good practices. There was a need to strengthen the relationship between the ILO and the respective countries to achieve the SDGs.

45. *Mr Kaloko* reemphasized the need for inclusiveness, with people-centred action in the implementation of the various policy instruments: the five year Plan of Action, the Ouagadougou+10 Declaration and Plan of Action, the Agenda 2063 and outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.
46. *Mr Carlos Lopes* said that the 10-year plan envisaged the creation of 122 million jobs. At the current pace, Africa would only create an estimated 54 million jobs. Imperatively a mechanism must be found to fill the deficit. There was therefore a need for industrialization in Africa, even if other parts of the world were moving towards knowledge-based development. The situation, with its issues of trade relations, intellectual property and protectionism, was naturally highly complex. However, Africa's problem was not financial. The challenge centred on the way resources were used and managed. The following factors were critical to Africa's growth:
- Rising labour costs in China and Asia were too high for low production industries;
 - Africa could be a front runner in the renewable energy field, which would generate green jobs;
 - Africa itself was a huge market. Internal trade needed to expand;
 - Africa could become a market leader in the technology platform; it was already a leader in phone banking and insurance;
 - Africa could learn from others.
47. *The Director-General* said that the ILO was conducting an ongoing internal reform that would reinforce its capacity to respond to the needs of its constituents. There was a need for coherence at all levels – local, regional and international, and an integrated approach should be adopted in delivering the 2030 Agenda. Social dialogue would be critical in this. Silo approaches should be replaced by the creation of new partnerships.

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

Presentation of the report by the Regional Director for Africa

48. *The ILO Regional Director for Africa* introduced the report of the Director-General for the 13th African Regional Meeting focussing on the report's second part, which consisted of the review of the Decent Work Agenda in Africa (2007-15). He gave an overview of the evolution of the concept of Decent Work and the development and implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DCWP). The Decent Work Agenda for Africa (DWAA) was ambitious with 17 targets.
49. The report provided a detailed account of the achievements and shortfalls under each of the 17 targets. It highlighted the successes of the DWAA as follows: job creation had been placed at the centre of

national policies in all countries; many African countries had adopted policies that extended a minimum of social protection to all, including the most vulnerable, advancing and extending social dialogue and tripartism. The ratification of ILO's fundamental Conventions was almost universal on the continent, effective programmes were in place progressively to eliminate child labour as well as forced labour. A vibrant domestic private sector was driving the continent's steady economic growth, creating jobs for millions of youths. The average GDP per capita in sub-Saharan Africa now stood at over 3,300 US\$, 28 of 54 Africa's nations were classified as middle or high income, with a rising African middle class.

- 50.** Many of the Decent Work Agenda targets had been achieved but several targets lagged behind: youth unemployment remained high on the continent, the informal economy remained and inequality continued to grow, while labour standards, although ratified, were not systematically implemented. Social protection coverage, although improving, was still far from universal; in several African countries, social dialogue suffered from the fragmentation and insufficient representativeness of social partners, and many African governments still lacked the institutional capacity to implement commitments and enforce legislation. Moreover, new challenges affected the continent: the catastrophic Ebola outbreak, state fragility, mass emigration of young Africans to wealthier continents and terrorist attacks.
- 51.** Despite these challenges Africa had embarked on a structural transformation which should develop the continent into an economic giant of the future. Many industries were relocating to Africa, taking advantage of a large youthful workforce, the availability of natural resources, the proximity of major consumer markets and continuous improvements in infrastructure and communications. The continent's structural transformation would create massive job opportunities and greatly expand the country's fiscal space to finance social programmes.
- 52.** The Director-General's report identified critical factors which facilitated the implementation of the DWAA, namely:
- National ownership of, and commitment to, the development process;
 - The domestic funding of the development process in addition to ODA and FDI;
 - The establishment of inter-ministerial task teams, multi-stakeholder alliances and comprehensive partnerships in support of Decent Work;
 - A focus on large-scale, long-term interventions rather than ad-hoc projects;
 - The acceleration of regional integration across the continent.
- 53.** The ILO could achieve the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda alone, but must build a solid partnership with the African Union. The conclusions of the 13th Regional Meeting must be closely aligned with the AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which had recognized Decent Work as a key driver of development. The ILO must engage the entire United Nations Development System around the objective of Decent Work. A new generation of African Decent Work Country Programmes must be developed which are entirely owned by our national constituents and to a large extent financed from domestic sources. This should also include the formulation of sub-regional Decent Work Programmes pioneered by the African region.

Discussion of the report

- 54.** *The Employer Vice-Chairperson* welcomed the report. She appreciated its references to the importance of entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, as Africa was not short of entrepreneurs. Employers could play an important role in this regard by strengthening an entrepreneurship culture. She appreciated the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (EASE) Toolkit used by many employers' organizations which analysed challenges for businesses and proposed recommendations. The report recognised the need for inclusive growth. However care should be exercised in increasing minimum wages too much to avoid increasing labour costs and making Africa uncompetitive. Productivity was of prime importance, and the ILO should support productivity growth by establishing and revamping productivity centres. The capacity of employers' organisations needed to be strengthened on technical issues such as wage determination, social protection and occupational safety and health in order for employers' organisations to engage in evidence-based policy dialogue. In addition, the structure of employers' organisations should be strengthened, with the support of the ILO, to include technical sub-committees and branches at provincial levels. The ILO remained the Employers' organizations principal partner in this regard. Employers supported the formulation and implementation of DWCPs, but there was room to improve Employer involvement, including through ACT/EMP specialists. DWCPs could be vehicles to assist women in business associations and promote the extension of social protection.
- 55.** *The Worker Vice-chairperson* said that the Regional Meeting was taking place in the context of rapid economic growth, of great potential for Africa, at the same time coinciding with the newly adopted SDGs, the African Union (AU) Declaration, the Action Plan for Employment, the Agenda 2063 and the ILO 2008 Declaration on Social Justice. These political declarations provided great opportunities for realising decent work. Unfortunately Africa was still a region with huge decent work deficits: 1 in 4 of the world's poor lived in Africa, inequalities persisted while precarious jobs were abundant and wages rose by less than 1 per cent in 2014. Youth unemployment was high, women still suffered from discrimination at work and from gender-based violence in the community. The Workers' group urgently appealed to constituents to meet the challenges to achieve social justice and decent work. Inclusive social dialogue should be promoted, to allow the social partners to contribute to policies by respecting ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 particularly. Member states needed to pursue social and economic policies centred on decent work. Trade unions must have full freedom to exercise their rights, including collective bargaining. Part 2 of the report referred to a number of targets reached. However some results remained only partial. The report could have referred more to the difficulties in implementing the Decent Work Agenda for Africa. The group hoped that a strong political message would emerge from the Regional Meeting. DWCPs must be the drivers of change at the national level; they should systematically involve the social partners so that the principles of decent work were included.
- 56.** *A Government representative of Zambia* said that in his country decent work had been mainstreamed into the Revised Sixth National Development Plan (R-SNDP) and the National Strategy on Industrialisation and Job Creation launched in 2013. These overarching policy documents were operationalized by the National and Employment and Labour Market policy currently being revised by the tripartite structures. The focus was on gaining maximum advantage from human and natural resources and actively developing labour-intensive industries and enterprises that generated huge employment potential, especially in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing and tourism sectors. The target to create one million formal jobs by the end of 2016 was supported by ongoing efforts at national and local levels to build linkages between small and medium enterprises and the mining sector and to promote fundamental principles and rights at work. In the construction sector,

communication strategies had been put in place to ensure that minimum labour standards were met by all, including small-scale local contractors. The Social Cash Transfer Programme had been extended each year with the addition of new beneficiaries in more districts and greater budget allocation. The Tripartite Consultative Labour Council remained the key body for social dialogue in the country. In 2015, the Tripartite Partnership Committee for the Mining Sector was constituted; this focused on rights at work in the Mining sector. Zambia was actively enhancing capacity in negotiation skills among the social partners through workshops in order to mitigate job losses in the mining sector. That Zambia had been instrumental in steering the campaign on combatting forced labour was witnessed by the Government hosting the Subregional Conference on the Ratification and Implementation of the new ILO Protocol on Forced Labour (Lusaka, 17 November 2015) at which the President, His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, accepted to champion the 50 for Freedom Campaign. Zambia's current national action plan (2011-2015) on Labour Migration provided a national multi-sectoral response to prevention, protection and prosecution. In 2012, Zambia had developed a national referral mechanism and guidelines for protecting and assisting victims of trafficking.

57. *The Government Vice-Chairperson* noted that not all the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa had been achieved, despite the considerable efforts by the Director-General and the Organization to this end. Cameroon had benefitted from the ILO's support in implementing the Decent Work Agenda in four areas:

- Standards: many Conventions had been ratified, the labour code had been revised, and a national DWCP had been signed;
- Social dialogue: various mechanisms for social dialogue had been established;
- Social protection: the Government was working to extend social protection to the maximum number of people through a voluntary insurance system;
- Employment: A National Employment Plan had been adopted, and an SME promotion agency had been created; promotion of self-employment, vocational training, and many other initiatives had been undertaken in order to stimulate job creation.

58. *A Government representative of Morocco* drew attention to the current very difficult international and economic context, riven with conflict and instability; peace was at risk, while unemployment was on the rise, with increasing labour migration, human and drug trafficking. To deal with these challenges, Africa needed more inclusive development policies; South-South cooperation should be promoted. The Government supported the report's content and its recommendations; decent work should be mainstreamed in all programmes and policies in Africa. Morocco had revised its legislation and taken a number of initiatives to protect vulnerable workers such as domestic workers; it had established a programme to eradicate poverty, developed an employment strategy, and reinforced social protection and retirement benefits. African countries should form wide partnerships and should support the ILO.

59. *The Worker delegate from Kenya* pointed to rising unemployment as a key factor for migration. He appealed to employers to increase the minimum wage and to the ILO to assist the social partners in promoting respect for international Conventions. Although Kenya had signed the ILO fundamental Conventions, in practice it did not respect them. More efforts should be devoted to mobilizing resources.

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- 60.** A *Government representative of Namibia* informed the Meeting that his Government was implementing a “nobody should be left out” policy centered on inclusive development. The Namibia DWCP was in place and was the vehicle for strengthening the Decent Work Agenda in development policy, reinforcing social dialogue, extending social protection to the vulnerable, providing a regulatory framework that guaranteed rights for all workers, especially the most vulnerable, and for the introduction of employment services legislation that compelled all employers with 25 employees and above to declare their vacancies to the Public Employment Services for recruitment. This legislation aimed to address the excesses of the labour brokers. Namibia had launched a National Productivity Unit; introduced a solidarity tax; a minimum wage for Domestic Workers; and universal free primary and secondary education. Namibia worked within the AU Agenda 2063 policy framework and ILO International labour Standards and believed that Africa could rise through its own resources. The Government aimed to eradicate poverty by 2025.
- 61.** A *Government representative of Egypt* stressed the importance of decent work for Egypt as a vehicle to overcome the challenges faced by the country. Egypt had developed and was implementing initiatives to address the informal economy, it had elaborated a national labour plan for youth, a training programme for youth which took account of labour market needs, placing the focus on agriculture. Egypt was promoting value added production rather than commodity exportation.
- 62.** A *Government representative of Comoros* said his Government had signed a DWCP. Comoros had developed regulations and labour law to meet its obligations under international labour Conventions and to protect its workers. A plan had been put in place to create 5000 jobs by 2016. To this end, a youth fund had been established, with ILO support. This was part of the Government’s Emergency Plan for job creation. Comoros promoted Decent Work and international labour standards with ILO support and was moving towards the ratification of international instruments in the field of social protection and labour administration. Particular account should be taken of the specific context of Small Island States in the face of climate change. The Government would welcome ILO support in this.
- 63.** A *Government representative of Sudan* stressed the critical importance of the objectives set out in the Director-General’s report and those set by the SDGs for Africa. Decent work was also critical for Africa’s future. There was need for a new growth model for Africa, which would be consistent with 2030 Agenda, and in particular with its Goal No. 8. Sudan had attained 3.5 per cent growth in 2014 and planned to reach 7 per cent over the next 3 to 4 years. Economic liberalization and industrial diversification were key strategies in combatting unemployment. Sudan was promoting investment aimed at generating decent work for its entire population – ensuring equality for women and promoting transformation from informal to formal enterprises. The Government would welcome support from the ILO in these areas. Sudan was also working hard to promote reconciliation so that all people could participate in development. Social dialogue had been engaged to bring about reconciliation. A new law would be promulgated to guarantee equality between men and women, as provided for in Sudan’s Constitution.
- 64.** A *Government representative of Senegal* pointed to an overall global situation characterized by inequalities and imbalances. He supported the emphasis placed in the Director-General’s report on the need for social security. Africa was truly a land of opportunities, but workers’ rights were not fully respected. The Government had taken action to remedy this situation in Senegal, and policies to strengthen workers’ rights had been promoted by the President. By this means the Government sought to improve the living and working conditions of the population, basing its action on the ILO four

strategic objectives. The President supported recent initiatives taken in Senegal in the field of social dialogue. The ILO should provide support in this area.

- 65.** *A Government representative of Zimbabwe* noted that the report provided an evaluation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, and showed that there was room for optimism. Ratification of fundamental Conventions had been successful, and other achievements were to be commended. However, despite economic growth across the continent, poverty continued to be entrenched in Africa. One of the barriers to sustainable development was a lack of inclusiveness. In Zimbabwe, the social partners were implementing the third cycle of the DWCP in which social dialogue and tripartism continued to be the cornerstone, culminating in the establishment of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum. The challenge was to overcome the inability to create employment, especially for the young. Zimbabwe had accordingly elaborated a development agenda aimed at galvanizing economic inclusion. The Government believed that the pursuit of decent work should be anchored in the Ouagadougou+10 Declaration and Plan of Action.
- 66.** *A Government delegate of Mozambique* emphasized the importance of achieving social justice through decent work. The report highlighted the importance of strategic, inclusive and sustainable development. Mozambique was developing strategies for vulnerable groups including women and youth. On 25 November 2015 Mozambique had established a national employment programme to promote investment for decent jobs, and the Government was now putting in place a compulsory social security system for the self-employed. Considerable efforts were being made to improve the situation in the labour market, participation of women and working conditions in general. Social dialogue was essential in promoting sustainable development and decent work. A Consultative Commission had been established to engage the provinces in dialogue and the Government hoped the ILO would provide support to promote social dialogue and the collection of labour statistics. Mozambique supported the Director-General's call for social justice and decent work and asked all participants to reflect on the World Aids Day.
- 67.** *The Worker delegate of Sudan* explained how workers' organizations in Sudan were implementing various workers' education programmes to help defend workers' rights, and engaged in social dialogue with the Government. Workers organizations were represented in most relevant bodies, national institutions and structures in the country, and through those, they participated in decision-making on issues affecting labour and employment in the country. The workers in Sudan had created an annual festival for workers, commemorated on 21 May each year through cultural events, different awareness-raising activities as well as seminars to articulate and defend workers' rights. Specific sessions were organized on topics such as safety and health, transition to the formal economy and wider social security coverage. Social dialogue with the Government took place through the Ministry of Employment. All partners worked together to promote decent work and national economic development.
- 68.** *The Employer delegate of Senegal* referred to a number of issues affecting the private sector in Senegal, which impacted negatively on the achievement of sustainable development. While Africa was rich in resources, with all accounts pointing to it as the future of the world, it still registered shortfalls in employment. Corruption was largely responsible for this, hindering economic development, private sector development and job creation. Efforts should be made to combat corruption, and encourage governments to support private sector development through social dialogue. He also highlighted the important role played by women through their associations and individually as entrepreneurs, and noted that in Senegal, the government had supported the formation of an association of women which now had more than 20,000 members, partly through ILO support.

ILO DWCPs were an important tool to promote more inclusive growth and obtain information from the social partners.

- 69.** *The Worker delegate of Egypt* stated that sustainable development and decent work should be at the heart of all development efforts. While the African continent was rich in natural resources and minerals, it still faced poverty and inadequate resources to finance development. This could partly be attributed to the efforts by former colonial powers to monopolize access to these resources. In October 2016, the international workers union would hold its meeting in South Africa and some of the topics to be discussed related to the fight against poverty, promotion of decent work and expansion of social protection. Migration was a growing phenomenon and should be discussed as an important topic, given the trend of many people leaving Africa and other countries to Europe. The discussion should focus on what needed to be done to stem this flow of migrants, the drivers of the movement – poverty and unemployment - and how to promote the creation of opportunities that would reduce the trend. This was linked to the brain drain that was affecting the African continent. Certain multinational companies were taking advantage of the lack of knowledge and inadequate social justice laws and systems in Africa. They failed to respect trade unions and ultimately exploited workers, reducing levels of decent work.
- 70.** *The Employer delegate of Côte d’Ivoire* observed that the employment creation problem should be seen within the context of demographic growth, not on its own *per se*. Africa thus needed to aim for higher rates of economic growth than, for instance, China. It was important to develop socioeconomic policies which could result in economic growth and job creation. Governments therefore needed to do more to stimulate enterprises and to provide more resources in order to have a strong private sector.
- 71.** *The Employer delegate of Namibia* noted that while the private sector was generally considered as the engine for economic growth, government had a very important role to play in encouraging employment creation by the private sector. This could be achieved through social dialogue, and paying due attention to suggestions from the private sector. The dialogue should address constraints faced by private sector and aim at reducing the many regulations or red tape, and move towards ‘smart’ regulations. Regulations should not be a ‘one size fits all’ and should address key issues faced by different sectors such as business registration procedures, tax regulations and land legislation. The review of regulations should not affect international labour standards, and workers’ rights, and should be in line with DWCPs. The EESE tool should be applied to assess the business environment and to generate recommendations as to how the constraints could be addressed. Governments should approach the issue of granting tax breaks with care. Citizens as well as companies and enterprises expected services from government, and this had a cost. Everyone should pay their share to facilitate provision of public services by government.
- 72.** *The representative of Help Age International* highlighted the role, contribution and constraints faced by older persons in labour force participation. The number of older persons in the labour force currently stood at 60 million in Africa, and by 2050 the number would be about 215m, making this a significant population group. Older persons contributed to economic growth, experience sharing and knowledge transmission but they faced constraints and inequalities in the labour market arising from poor health, age-based discrimination, relatively lower incomes, and violation of land rights. The social partners should apply the provisions of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), following the excellent example of such member States as the Seychelles, Mauritius, Botswana and Namibia, which had shown that pension and social security coverage for the elderly could approach 100 per cent. The results from these countries showed that due to this coverage, wider benefits were being realised at household and societal levels, reaching even into such areas as

improved school enrolment. Moreover, the extension of pension and benefits to the elderly was in line with a number of indicators in the SDGs. The Meeting should consider the possibility of introducing legislation to prevent age discrimination and to protect the rights of older persons, the expansion of social protection coverage to older persons and to ensure the provision of age disaggregated data.

- 73.** *A Government delegate of Algeria*, said that sustainable development in Africa must come through inclusivity based on the Decent Work Agenda. Africa was rich in human and material resources and wished to put these at the service of inclusive development. The ILO had a key role in assisting member states to implement the Decent Work Agenda through sharing best practice. The Decent Work Agenda had been mainstreamed in the national development strategy and was being implemented through the employment policy. Unemployment had dropped from 30 to 10 per cent since the implementation of the employment policy. With particular focus on the informal economy incentives had been put in place to facilitate the transition to formality. Tax incentives and other administrative reforms had been designed to facilitate the promotion of decent work. Social dialogue remained a key pillar of the promotion of decent work.
- 74.** *The Worker delegate of Morocco* referred to a 2014 report issued by the African Development Bank on integrated and sustainable development in Africa which listed Morocco as a vulnerable African country in terms of integrated development. Although Morocco had realized significant economic growth over the past years, there had been no trickle down effect. National social dialogue remained fragile despite an agreement signed in the wake of the Arab Spring. There was an alliance of trade unions bargaining collectively together to ensure rights and attain decent work. Faced with a de facto decision to fully liberate prices and dismantle the clearing system (support price), in exchange for a wage freeze, and in the context of freedom of association, the unions decided to intensify their efforts in defense of workers' rights and the promotion of social dialogue. On 29 November 2015 a labour march took place in Casablanca that would be followed by a commemoration of the martyrs of the Moroccan working class uprising against the colonial power on 8 December 1952, and then by a national strike on 10 December. Any possible further action would depend on the Government's response to the workers' demands.
- 75.** *The Employer delegate of Chad* agreed with the ILO Director General's view on sustainable enterprises in Africa. Investment was needed to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. Assistance should be given to young people coming out of university in mounting their projects. One challenge was their lack of even minimum resources for this, including lack of access to microfinance. To invest in young women and men was a true investment. The Meeting should make a strong recommendation that governments should provide loans of this sort, even if there were a 20 per cent level of non-repayment. With 80 per cent of the population employed in the informal economy it was worth risking an investment in young people, both in urban and rural areas.
- 76.** *A Government representative of Malawi* stated that Africa needs inclusive and sustainable development through decent work. He praised the achievements of the ILO and member states in the implementation of the DWAA. Malawi subscribed to the fundamental principles and rights at work. The country had scaled up efforts to implement international labour standards, notably the eight core conventions. Malawi would ensure the enforcement of legislative provisions and implementation of plans of action on of HIV and AIDS, discrimination, forced labour, trafficking and child labour. The country would also initiate programmes on fair migration. Widely appreciated action taken by the Ministry of Labour, Youth and Manpower Development to promote decent work had resulted in an increased financial allocation for the Ministry in the national budget. The government was grateful

for the ILO's support to its skills development plan. The Government was providing financial support through start-up capital, tools and equipment to enhance self-employment for graduating students. Malawi had made remarkable progress in the implementation of its DWCP, mainstreaming employment and labour issues in its growth and development strategy. The country continued to invest in social protection packages to promote social inclusion, through the public works programme and social cash transfers. The Tripartite Labour Advisory Council had been relaunched to reinforce social dialogue.

- 77.** *A Government representative of Nigeria* referred to the huge decent work deficits in Africa, associated with high unemployment and underemployment, and hence the relevance of the theme of the Meeting. Nigeria had shown strong commitment to the realisation of the DWAA and had made significant progress in closing the skills gap, working through the National Board for Technical Education, the Industrial Training Fund, the Government had established skills-upgrading centres as well as the National Directorate of Employment. More substantial progress has been made through the National Planning Commission, the National Bureau of Statistics and the National Electronic Labour Exchange. The DWAA was paving the way for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 8. In order to achieve these goals, Nigeria would work with the ILO to rehabilitate and train over twenty million internally displaced people affected by the insurgency in North-East Nigeria; build the capacity of the tripartite partners on policy development and implementation of DWCPs; and provide technical assistance on labour administration policies. The President of Nigeria was strongly committed to addressing unemployment through various strategies such as the revival of the agricultural sector, and providing loans for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Finally, Nigeria reiterated its request for a fully-fledged ILO Office in the country.
- 78.** *The worker delegate of Zambia* suggested that the Meeting should consider building partnerships in order to access finance to attain the SDGs in general and SDG 8 specifically. African workers recognised the importance of the private sector but a true partnership was balanced, and did not give priority to business. The UN Secretary General had referred to 2015 as a golden year, with a concurrence of very important international meetings, including the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the UN Summit on Sustainable Development and COP 21. There was also the upcoming World Trade Organization meeting in Kenya this December. Efforts should be made to promote genuine development without exploitation in the context of the ILO Social Justice Declaration of 2008. There was a need to build the capacity of the social partners to enable them to become partners in attaining the SDGs.
- 79.** *A Government representative of Mauritania* said that President of Mauritania promoted sustainable development through decent work by implementing a number of projects and reforms to improve working conditions through the national development strategy. Examples of this included the implementing of a national plan to end child labour that had been approved by the Government following negotiations with the social partners. Praise was given to the ILO for its assessment of the national programme to promote decent work and the Government looked forward to continuing engagement with the ILO. Mauritania was also working on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. The Government was grateful to the ILO Regional Director for Africa for his support in promoting social policies.
- 80.** *The Malawi Employers' delegate* encouraged the Meeting to pursue inclusive business in companies' value chains. Knowledge and skills were needed to increase employment and raise living standards. This required the commitment of the social partners. There was also a critical role for Government for this to succeed, including though incentives to businesses to make become more inclusive. Job

creation, new technology and labour migration were all examples of direct interventions that contributed to decent work. The benefits were several: supporting linkages between SMEs and larger enterprises; addressing challenges to business such as low productivity, lack of skills and a growing youth population. Employable skills were needed to meet the needs of youth.

- 81.** *A government representative from Lesotho* said that considerable progress has been in his country that would provide a basis for future work. The DWAA was one of the principle means of working towards attaining the SDGs. Labour standards were of critical importance: the inclusion of decent work in the SDGs strengthened this principle. There was a need to reinforce social dialogue institutions and processes. Lesotho welcomed migration as a key factor contributing to economic development. If left unattended youth unemployment could become a social and economic time bomb. African economies were characterised by a large informal economy, compromising the four pillars of decent work. ILO Recommendation No. 204 provided a path towards the formal economy. The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) was an essential tool to maximise the potential of FDI. Lesotho strongly supported the Declaration. The SADC region has managed to develop a Labour and Employment Protocol to harmonise labour standards in the region for fair competition.
- 82.** *A government representative of Gabon* concurred with earlier speakers in respect of growth in Africa and its impact on the population, particularly the youth. The Government had taken certain actions: it had reformed governance structure to better share national resources, leading to job creation. Decent work promotion was high on its agenda. The labour code and social protection code had been revised following consultation with the social partners. Measures had been taken to create social protection floors to take independent workers into account. The Employment Office had been restructured. Thanks to the ILO's support, the country had established a stability pact.
- 83.** *A Government representative of Djibouti* stated that decent work was a priority today for most African countries. the Republic of Djibouti had demonstrated its willingness to implement the Decent Work Agenda, achieving many objectives, including:
- Modernization of its labour laws: to increase the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises, through the enactment of a new Labour Code.
 - Promoting social dialogue and tripartism, through the establishment of the National Council of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training (CNTEFP), a permanent forum for consultation, which opened up opportunities for constructive tripartite social dialogue on all issues concerning labour relations.
 - Revision of sectoral collective agreements or corporate agreements, which helped to raise salaries, improve living conditions and increase purchasing power, and protect the most disadvantaged.
 - The formulation of a National Employment Policy in September 21, 2014, for the period 2014/2024, and its Action Plan Five Year Operational 2014/2018. This National Employment Policy was formulated in a participatory approach, based on a preliminary diagnostic analysis of the employment situation, and resulted in a National Employment Strategy, including vocational training, employment, labour regulation, social dialogue and social protection. The National Employment Policy, based on commitments by the country at African and international levels has consolidated actions contributing to the development of decent work and contributed to economic and social development, promoting training and employment

suitability, a decent pro-jobs economic growth, effective governance of the labour market and the extension of social protection.

- The adoption of a Universal Health Insurance, in February 5, 2014, based on national solidarity and establishing equal access to care for all citizens. To face food insecurity and other risks, the Government had made significant budgetary efforts to implement social safety net programs, executed by public agencies, targeting the most vulnerable groups
- The promotion of a viable private sector: adoption of two sectoral national strategies, one for the development of crafts and the other for trade development. A new Commercial Code was created to improve the legal environment for business and enhance the country's competitiveness, as evidenced by the massive influx of foreign investment, which reached 22 per cent of GDP on average between 2005 and 2013
- The Observatory of Employment and Skills: Established September 21, 2015, sought to improve information availability for policy elaboration.

84. *The Employer substitute delegate of Egypt* stressed that there could be no development without investment and no investment if there was no security. Lack of security today was a threat to the young, resulting in migration to the West, which had been refusing them entry. Western nations should support training centres in sub Saharan Africa to train African youth. The speaker evoked the memory of great African leaders of the past including Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela and others. The Social Partners in Africa should work together to protect the children of Africa.

85. *A Government representative of Côte d'Ivoire* said that Côte d'Ivoire adhered to the recommendations of the report and supported the Director General's analysis on the need to promote growth that generated employment and provided benefits for the poorest of the population. The Ivorian government had committed to action in this sense and had sought to carry out the following reforms:

- On governance, tripartite consultations had just led to a consensus on a new labour code. This sought to increase the employability of youth, improve worker protection s including health and safety at work, without losing sight of the imperatives of competitiveness and of growing the economy;
- Employment: the Government had reformed the training system to adapt to labour market needs. An annual job survey had also been put in place. A ministry and an agency specifically dedicated to Youth Employment had been created in order to meet the needs of many beneficiaries in terms of funding and training;
- Better redistribution of the benefits of growth: Cote d'Ivoire had increased minimum wages on the basis of a consensus between the social partners;
- Social protection of workers, with extension of coverage to the informal sector, which was the largest segment and that most exposed to risk. With the implementation of Universal Health Coverage, now being deployed, Côte d'Ivoire considered investment in human capital as an essential lever to obtain decent work.

86. *A Government representative of Burundi* said that his country had adopted the Second Strategic Framework in order to combat poverty. Under the framework, a national employment policy had been put in place. This policy focused on job creation in agriculture, mines and tourism. Numerous policies

had been adopted including social protection, vocational training and the social dialogue tripartite charter. An investment promotion agency had been created. The Government looked forward to ILO support in addressing the challenge of implementing the policies.

- 87.** *A Government representative of the Central African Republic* acknowledged that his country was in crisis, with concomitant effects on sustainable development and the promotion of Decent Work. Nonetheless the national development strategy had mainstreamed employment. A national decent Work Forum was conducted which focussed on three main issues: employment promotion, vocational training and social promotion. The DWCP had been developed with two priorities: youth employment and social priority, but it had not yet been endorsed. In view of the crisis it would have to be reviewed. To combat poverty the Ministry of Labour had started a project on vocation training and apprenticeship for youth as part of the reconciliation process. A diagnostic study had been undertaken on youth employment in post-crisis situation with focus on creating job opportunities for former soldiers. A new labour code had been developed.
- 88.** *A Government representative of Kenya* noted that Africa was currently one of the fastest growing regions of the world and that the economies were, on average, growing at a similar or higher pace in comparison to the rest of the world. However, despite this economic growth, there was still a jobless growth to which the high prevalence of informal employment, vulnerable jobs, working poor and an increasing number of youth entering the informal sector bore witness. The challenge for Africa therefore, was to transform the economies in an effort to generate more and better jobs for inclusive growth and development. There was need to ensure that Social Dialogue and Tripartism, through the Tripartite National Labour Board (NLB), was used more effectively to ensure that the policy space was indeed used to advance decent work and productive employment objectives. Kenya wanted to promote Recommendation No. 204 as it represented a powerful policy tool for transition into formality in fulfillment of the 2030 development agenda and, in particular, SDG 8 as it was the first ILO instrument to address the informal economy in its entirety. The constitution safeguarded the right of workers to collective bargaining, social security, freedom of association and indeed the right to strike, among other principles that were enshrined in national labour law. Emigration rates in Africa were the highest among all regions and there was evidence that lack of decent work opportunities – rather than low economic growth – was a major determinant of involuntary migration. Further, remittances accounted for a significant share of GDP but their impact on local development was often weak. The case of M-PESA, a mobile money transfer service in Kenya, provided a valid example of innovation in finance and modern technology which had significantly improved access to credit, especially for the hitherto unreached rural areas. In conclusion, Kenya was optimistic that Africa would one day live to its full potential and strength.
- 89.** *A Government Delegate of Ethiopia* said that Ethiopia had developed and implemented its Decent Work Country Programme since 2008. Within the context of that, Ethiopia had mainstreamed decent work in its national policies, plans and strategies and programmes to achieve decent work. This included some legislative and policy measures taken, including on promoting international labour standards, and reviewing national policies and also the constitution to safeguard rights including migration policy, social protection and social security, occupational safety and health, the national employment policy, national development plan, plan of action on prevention of worst forms of child labour and the youth development package. While progress had been noted in achieving some targets set under the decent work country programme, there were still some challenges that hindered the realization of full decent work. These included weak institutional capacities to coordinate and monitor the DWCP and mobilization of the needed resources. Other challenges included growing youth

unemployment, inadequate social protection coverage, and effects of climate change. The ILO should provide more support to ensure decent work deficits were reduced.

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

Statement on Participation in the African Regional Meeting

91. *Ms Prisca Mupfumira, The Minister of Labour and Social Services Zimbabwe* read a statement on behalf of members of the Government Groups from the following countries: Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe on the rules governing the participation in the African Regional Meeting. The statement requested that a process be commenced to review the rules governing the participation in the African Regional Meeting and requested the Regional Coordinator of the Africa Group of the ILO to proceed accordingly and report progress during the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2016.

92. *Mr Moussa Dosso, Minister of State, Minister of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training, of Cote d'Ivoire*, speaking on behalf of Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco, Mali, Congo, Comoros, Djibouti, Cameroon, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Gabon, and Libya took note of the position expressed in the statement made by the Minister of Labour and Social Services of Zimbabwe. Given that the opinion expressed would have required a consensual statement made by the Government group, and that the question did not feature on the agenda of the Regional Meeting, he considered that the best course of action would be to refer the question to the Regional Coordinator for Africa, with a view to engaging further consultations, in full respect of the rules in place and of due process, leading to a consensual decision of the entire group.

93. *The Chairperson of the Regional Meeting* stated that note had been duly taken of these two interventions and that appropriate follow up would be made.

Resumption of the general discussion

94. *A Government Delegate of Angola* noted that the report resonated well with certain observations made in a speech by the Vice President of Angola highlighting issues on inequalities, environmental degradation and migration challenges. Decent work had an important place within the 2030 Agenda, and the ILO had the responsibility of helping to achieve the goals by promoting integrated and coherent social and economic policies at national level. There was a need to promote decent work opportunities especially for the youth and also women. If the expectations, particularly for the youth, were not met there could be negative consequences with unrest and increase in the migration trend. Member states should develop national initiatives on the implementation of the decent work agenda

to achieve sustainable national development. The President of Angola had elaborated the 2025 development agenda for his country, as well as a medium term poverty reduction strategy. These measures were all aimed at combating insecurity, enhancing infrastructure development and achieving food security. More resources should be put into training, capacity development and enhanced social protection aimed at reducing poverty.

- 95.** The Worker delegate of Cote d'Ivoire noted that the theme of inclusive development was in harmony with decent work. Africa was a rich continent, but its development agenda required to be rethought. While the continent faced a number of challenges including famine, civil unrest, and migration, hope for the future hinged on the fact that 40 per cent of the world's resources lay in Africa. There was therefore need to ensure cooperation between private and public sectors to harness these resources, and for partners to have a common agenda to fight corruption and promote respect for social justice. This should be extended to stemming capital flows and money laundering. Research which showed that more than USD 700 m is lost by the continent each year, presenting a compelling case for better management of resources. The continent nevertheless had the means to manage its resources well. Inclusive and sustainable development needed to take root in Africa: all parties should play a role in this. There was a need to cooperate together and safeguard the continent's heritage.
- 96.** *The Worker delegate of Angola*, noted that decent work was now a global concept accepted by all, since its adoption by the 10th African Regional Meeting in 2007, with Africa setting an objective of achieving decent work by 2015. However in Angola, and in Africa, this noble goal had not been achieved. Countries in the continent had faced political challenges, economic problems as well as food crises. There were several challenges such as violations of labour rights, including the right to freedom of association and to collective bargaining, resulting in the lack of decent and productive work. There had however been some progress particularly in relation to social dialogue. An important challenge was gender inequality, which still persisted, with factors such as participation of women in meetings and conferences, and the persistence of violence against women. Countries were still far from achieving gender equality, and women workers formed the majority of workers in the informal sector, characterized by precarious work with no or inadequate social protection. While there were excellent protocols on gender equality, these had not been locally reflected in a number of areas. Gender based discrimination still persisted in wage employment, and also in representation in international bodies including in ILO Governing Body and other structures. It was time to move from theory to practice, for example by setting gender targets at 40 per cent representation of women, and investing in education and capacity building. She applauded the ILO Turin Centre for coming up with the first academy for women's trade unions. More gender equality policies should be adopted: there could be no sustainable development while women were left behind
- 97.** *The Government delegate of Uganda* noted that decent work was now widely accepted to contribute to economic growth by raising labour productivity and enhancing social stability, including citizens' right to social protection. The Government of Uganda had adopted the first DWCP (2007-10), which had the following priorities: industrial relations and productivity and international labour standards, promotion of youth employment and promotion of social protection, especial for vulnerable groups. The formalization of the informal economy had massive importance in the world of work, as between 40 and 80 per cent of the global labour force were in the informal sector. However, the informal economy played an important role in the economy and labour market, by contributing to employment creation, national production and income generation. In Uganda, the informal economy employed over 1.8m households; for this reason, the Government had adopted the informal sector strategy to facilitate formalization.
- 98.** *A Government delegate of Niger* noted that the Decent Work Agenda 2007-2015 adopted by the 11th African Regional Meeting (2007) was soon coming to its end and the time had come to take stock of the progress made in making decent work a reality. There had been some achievements, but much remained to be done. Now it was time to define new orientations in order to tackle problems such as

poverty, unemployment, under-employment, precarious jobs and inequalities, etc. Niger was making considerable efforts to promote decent work, creating employment, advancing social protection and social dialogue. The DWCP adopted in 2012 as part of the economic and social development plan for 2012-2015 was an implementation tool of the programme set up by the President of the Republic. An important project was the setting up of universal health coverage, with the definition of a national social protection floor. In the field of employment, almost 700,000 jobs had been created from 2011-2014 compared to an initial plan of 200,000 jobs set by the Government. A review of the National Employment Policy and Action Plan was being conducted and two major Youth Employment Programmes had been initiated. Concerning industrial relations, social dialogue, which was a privileged means of solving social conflicts, had made important progress and would be reinforced by the process of trade union elections to determine the most representative trade unions. Niger has ratified all eight fundamental Conventions of the ILO and had just ratified the 2014 Protocol to Convention No. 29 and a number of other international instruments. The Government was now working on new orientations for the Decent Work Agenda and developing an Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2035 as well as a new Economic and Social Development Plan. Niger approved the strategic recommendations on the way forward as proposed in the Director-General's report. In particular, the recommendation on the reorientation of the objectives of the ACI and of the AU in respect of employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development was most important as it would ensure the necessary coherence between AU and ILO action, thus enhancing implementation.

99. *A Government delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* noted the objectives that had not been met, including youth unemployment, social protection coverage and persistence inequalities. The government of the DRC had place employment at the heart of its macroeconomic policies, and much effort had gone into increasing the quantity and quality of employment; the National Policy of Employment and Vocational Training (PNEFP) had been put in place, and the country had acceded to OHADA. Effective and accountable institutions in the field of work had been established or enhanced including the Labour Courts and the Commercial Courts, the Economic and Social Council, and the Steering Committee for Reform of Public Enterprises. The following measures had also been implemented:

- Creation of one-stop business creation (GUCE) to improve the investment process and creation of businesses in DRC;
- Improving the business climate by various reforms, including membership in the accounting system SYSCOHADA;
- The Creation of the tax collection system on single declaration;
- National coverage of the National Employment Office which deployed its provincial offices now operational in all the provinces and some districts.

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

101. *The worker delegate of Botswana* stressed that a better future was possible if DSG 8 was taken with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063, as they all placed full, productive and decent employment for all as the central objective for national development strategies. To ensure the successful implementation of these goals in the next fourteen years would require collective action to strengthen labour legislation, increase communication of and advocacy for the new agenda, by strengthening national, regional and international partnerships for its implementation. Pragmatic

measures based on practical experience should be adopted. Some possible interventions to promote sustainable growth with decent work included:

- Delivery of high quality public services, especially in the areas of free and universal education, access to portable water, health and sanitation and support for nutritional wellbeing. This also includes the urgent need to implement national social protection floors;
- Ministries of Labour and Employment, together with social partners, should be placed on the right basis and given the support needed for them to execute their duties, including giving substance to the objectives of SDG 8;
- National partners must commit to genuinely respect, preserve, protect and promote rights at work, especially freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;
- The adoption of a progressive and fair tax administration to ensure growth of the national revenue base, with an equitable redistribution of gains.

102. *A Government delegate of Burkina Faso* observed that the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action were in harmony with the Decent Work Agenda in Africa. He observed that the Global Compact of 2009 laid the basis for recovery from the global financial crisis through Decent Work. Burkina Faso had developed and adopted a DWCP in 2012. The implementation of the DWCP followed the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. Respect for standards was anchored on the implementation of the ratified core Conventions. Employment promotion was driven by the development and adoption of the National Employment Plan and its Action Plan. The National Employment Plan focussed on the promotion of youth employment and creation of decent jobs for women. Efforts were being made to extend social protection coverage to include vulnerable groups.

103. *The Worker delegate of Mauritania* praised the Director-General for his determination and that of his staff to promote social dialogue in Africa. This was having an important impact on decent work on the continent. Migration was the result of the youth being deprived from adequate employment opportunities. Unemployment certainly increased tendencies among youth towards radicalisation. It was to be hoped that the Meeting's decisions would help support marginalised groups through social policies and decent wages, and the promotion of social security and health insurance. It was important that workers should not become the weakest link in the development process. Mauritania trade unions upheld workers' rights and the principles of ILO international labour Conventions. Through forming partnerships the Mauritanian trade unions had been able to create 16 trade unions out of an original 25. The Mauritanian trade union movement engaged in social dialogue with the Government, and the principles of dialogue and representation highly appreciated the Government response and acceptance of the principle of dialogue and representation were widely shared between the Government and the social partners. The workers of Mauritania appreciated the action taken by the Government in relation to minimum wages and older workers, but called on the Government to take further action, in particular with regard to developing trade union capacity, enhancing social dialogue and promoting decent work for workers in all sectors.

104. *The Worker delegate of Nigeria* commended the progress being made in Africa towards the consolidation of constitutional multiparty democracy. He acknowledged the efforts of African workers specifically in Burkina Faso and Tunisia in ensuring the attainment of democracy for their respective countries. The achievement of decent work in Africa would require respect for the principles of accountability and transparency, genuine, effective and participatory social dialogue practices, both bipartite (collective bargaining) and tripartite at national level. Organised labour had resolved to practice what it preached in terms of Freedom of Association. Organised business should also commit towards ethical and responsive business practices and this could be demonstrated through their denouncing of tax dodging and mispricing practices. There was a need for governments to demonstrate sincerity in cutting down on the cost of governance while maintaining quality public services. Governments should make all efforts to block leakages and defeat public corruption by committing to the effective implementation of the "Mbeki Panel Report on halting Illicit Financial Flow from Africa". The ILO

should work with Labour and Finance Ministries to promote policy coherence. Only by doing this could Africa take advantage of the opportunities for mobilising the resources needed to finance the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa in order to achieve growth and inclusivity.

- 105.** *The representative of the Arab League of States* commended the continuation of high-level dialogue on rights and social dialogue as a means of achieving inclusive and sustainable growth on the continent of Africa. The Arab League was contributing to the sustainable development effort which would lead to national development through the setting up of trust funds and technical cooperation. Specifically the league was working by supporting policy development and implementation through a well-defined global partnership. There was clear consonance between the Decent Work Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, in particular with respect to SDG 8. Decent work was part of a sophisticated vision of the future. The Arab States would continue to work with the ILO on the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, in particular with regard to enhancing productivity and providing decent and productive employment opportunities and to promoting small and medium-sized enterprises.
- 106.** *The representative of UNI* commended the ILO for its work towards promoting inclusive growth through its interactions with the World Bank and the IMF. Decent work was critical in ensuring economic growth and reducing the levels of inequality. Despite the progress achieved at national level some objectives had not been reached as a result of the lack of jobs and of inequality. There was a need to acknowledge demographic trends and their impact on the youth of Africa. Africa should therefore put relevant policies in place in order to develop production, training and job opportunities for workers, and thus dissuade them from migrating. In order to achieve decent work, Africa had to overcome youth unemployment, diseases and natural calamities including those brought by climate change. Decent work could only be achieved with the participation of national partners; it should not be left to Multinationals in the name of FDI. Governments must ensure that agreements with Multinationals brought included protection of workers' rights. The Director-General should take all steps to ensure that the 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063 were implemented. In this regard, employment promotion should be at the fore front of these efforts. Efforts should also be made at improving standards of work especially in Security companies which were known for not respecting the use of social dialogue.
- 107.** *The representative of SATUCC* noted that the report of the Director-General took stock of the opportunities created for the ILO with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and its consonance with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda in terms of promoting sustainable development. The ILO had a genuine role to play especially in relation to SDG 8 and its attendant targets. All stake holders should have the same understanding when it came to measuring progress. It was of concern that Workers were usually left out in the preparation of these progress reports and only came to hear of them at meetings subsequently. This practice should end, and the ILO should provide capacity building support towards the development of appropriate, practical, workable monitoring and evaluation tools. The SADC had taken an important step with the endorsement of the Protocol on Employment and Labour by Heads of State in 2014. This was a major milestone towards the commitment to Decent Work by the region.

Special plenary debates

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

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

- 109.** *Mr Grégoire Owona, Government Vice-Chairperson of the Regional Meeting* chaired the special plenary debate, which was moderated by Ms Sunita Pitamber, Director, Social and Human Development Department, African Development Bank. The panel was composed as follows:
- Ms Mildred Oliphant, Minister of Labour, South Africa;
 - Mr Moussa Dosso, Minister of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training, Côte d'Ivoire;
 - Ms Wenyan Yang, Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
 - Ms, Vanessa Phala, Director, Business Unity South Africa
 - Mr Eric Mwezi Manzi (Secretary-General, Trade Unions Central of Rwandan Workers)
 - Ms Azita Berar Awad, Director, ILO Employment Policy Department
- 110.** *Ms Azita Berar Awad* introduced the topic by highlighting the challenge of informal economy in African economies and the new opportunity and momentum that was created by the adoption of Recommendation No. 204 at the 2015 International Labour Conference for scaling up action and setting up integrated strategies for transition to the formal economy.
- 111.** Globally, one half of the workforce worked or produced in conditions of informality. In Africa, on average 66 per cent of workers in non-agriculture employment worked in the informal economy, and if subsistence agriculture were taken into account, the percentage of informal employment rose as high as 80-90 per cent . Self-employed, own account workers and micro and small economic units had the largest share, in addition to 10 – 30 per cent of informal employment in the formal segment of the economy.
- 112.** The share of young women and men in informal employment was particularly high: eight out of ten employed young persons found their first job in the informal economy and for most remained trapped. Women, in wage and self-employment outnumbered men in the informal economy in most African countries. Informality represented a sub-optimal solution for all: governments, employers, workers and in the African context, action needed to address both the economic and developmental challenge by unlocking the low productivity trap and accelerating structural transformation as well as the social inclusion and rights challenge by addressing deficits in social protection, rights and representation.
- 113.** Various policy initiatives were taken in African countries focusing on local economic and employment promotion; registration and one-stop-shops for SMEs; tax facilitation; contributory and non-contributory social protection for access to health insurance and pensions; labour inspection; access to finance, and formal recognition and certification of skills acquired in the informal economy. However, these approaches were often fragmented, had limited outreach and lacked a coherent overall enabling framework. The new Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) adopted this year at the International Labour Conference with strong tripartite support, generated a new momentum and opportunity for scaling up action on

transition from the informal to the formal economy in Africa. This was the first international standard that provided both a normative and developmental framework, focussing on the informal economy in its entirety. It provided clear orientation, practical guidance.

- 114.** Recommendation No. 204 was of particular relevance to the African context, given that most people entered the informal economy not by choice but by necessity due to a lack of opportunities. In the process of transition to the formal economy, there was a need to preserve and improve existing livelihoods, entrepreneurial potential, skills and creativity of those in the informal economy.
- 115.** Recommendation No. 204 invited members to initiate integrated strategies to address the threefold interconnected objectives of formal job creation, prevention of further informalization and transition of those in the informal economy. These integrated strategies cut across several policy areas, in particular employment policies by promoting formal job creation opportunities and supporting high productivity structural change, by extending social protection and rights to those who have the most serious deficits through enabling legal and policy frameworks.
- 116.** Recommendation No. 204 provided practical guidance to ensure transition through an integrated and coherent, tailor-made strategy, recognising the diversity of national circumstances in Africa. The approach should be balanced combining incentives and compliance.
- 117.** Coordination and coherence of action at all levels of government, across ministries and agencies were key. Ministries of labour had a key play to play in this process of coordination and coherence building. Social partners had a key role to ply to ensure inclusive tripartite policy dialogue and to include those in the informal economy in the process of dialogue. Recommendation No. 204 recognized the importance for those in the informal economy to enjoy freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
- 118.** The Office strategy for support to constituents action, approved by the Governing Body at its 325th Session (November 2015) over the next 6 years included four inter-related components:
 - Promotion, awareness-raising and advocacy;
 - Support for integrated action at county, regional and sub-regional levels;
 - Knowledge and tools development, sharing and dissemination;
 - Partnerships and international cooperation: in particular the adoption of SDG goal 8 on full, productive employment and decent work and target 8.3 on Formalization provided an excellent opportunity to apply Recommendation No. 204.
- 119.** *Ms Oliphant* said that Recommendation No. 204 was a powerful tool to use in achieving the SDGs and in particular SDG 8. South Africa had adopted an integrated strategy towards formalizing the informal economy. There was however a need for analysis of the process, and ILO assistance would be welcome in assessing the policy gaps. The approach should be an integrated one, providing support to raise businesses focussed on women entrepreneurs and persons with disabilities, and including enterprise training, skills development and good inter-government relations across all spheres. Much could be gained and learned from exchanging experiences and good practices from countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa. There was a need for country-specific plans, driven by each country's interest in achieving the transition to formality.

120. *Mr Dosso* said that Côte d'Ivoire had achieved 9 per cent growth over the last 3 years and had been recognized as the 10th best reforming country in the world; the Government was genuinely committed to promoting decent work. There was a need for a clear understanding of the informal sector and for the elaboration of country specific approaches to address the issue. The following measures were of importance:

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

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

- Extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy;
- Support to increase productivity in the informal sector;
- Promotion of cooperatives to organize and empower workers in informal employment;
- Support micro and small enterprises, especially those operated by women and youth;
- Efficient and responsive public administration to support entrepreneurship/innovation;
- Promote better opportunities for skills and training;
- Support small farmers;
- Certification of knowledge and skills.

122. *Ms Phala* gave her full support to Recommendation No. 204, and said that it should be translated into tangible and measureable outcomes; adequate research was required to fully understand the informal economy to allow the programme to be put in place to be demand driven. There was a need to address the barriers to formalisation and to establish an enabling legal environment for the transition to formality. In this regard, it was important to stimulate economic growth and promote the expansion of the formal economy, promote business investment environment conducive to formalisation and the guarantee land and property rights. Care should also be taken to ensure that the formal economy stayed formal.

123. Among the barriers to formalization noted following a survey conducted in South Africa were:

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- Formalization was costly – taxes were too high;
 - Difficulties in obtaining a business licence;
 - Formalization procedures were too complex;
 - Problems in hiring staff;
 - Formalization process too lengthy;

124. There was a need to understand the sector and the barriers to formality in order to be able to design and implement appropriate tailor-made interventions.

125. *Mr Manzi* said that African states were committed to implementing Recommendation No. 204, which represented a genuine opportunity for Africa. The High economic growth in Africa was not reducing poverty; governments should pay greater attention to this issue. Recommendation No. 204 could be a powerful tool in achieving the SDGs and especially SDG 8. The transition to the formal economy could be difficult, but it should be achieved through inclusive social dialogue, including workers from the informal sector. Recommendation No. 204 would prove an excellent driver of inclusive growth, and the ILO should support its implementation across Africa.

The Chairperson then opened the discussion up to the floor.

126. *Mr Toure* said that with the implementation of Recommendation No. 204 there would be a need to strengthen youth access to finance. In this regard Côte d'Ivoire had established a platform for financing youth with a view to boosting entrepreneurship and promoting formalisation. There was a vital need for a new policy structure to ensure that the young had access jobs; could enter into productive employment; were trained adequately; and that in general, the worst forms of informal economy were eliminated. There was also a need for incentives to encourage businesses to register formally and join the domain of decent work.

127. *A Government representative of Namibia* welcomed Recommendation No. 204. A number of strategies had been put in place to combat informality in his country and his country had presented its candidature to champion the implementation of Recommendation No. 204. In particular, practical endeavours had been undertaken including, but not limited to:

- statistical research, mainly to establish the extent of informality;
- conducting surveys of all formal and informal establishments using broad multi-sector approaches;
- social protection particularly for the most vulnerable groups, including the disabled;
- regular participation in ILO meetings.

128. *The Employer delegate from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)* spoke in favour of Recommendation No. 204, which would make a valuable contribution to the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Social dialogue should play its part in this. An investment-conducive climate was vital for businesses to flourish. Tax pressure and administrative burdens were a strong drag on the transition to formality. As shown in the DRC, such measures as better Public-Private-Partnerships, the organization of roundtables on social protection, genuine tripartite engagement in

the process had a positive influence on formalization. A crucial issue was the effective identification of all obstacles to formalization.

- 129.** *The Worker delegate of Sudan* acknowledged the dynamic nature of the informal sector which contributed about 60 per cent of GDP in Sudan. While efforts to transition the informal to the formal economy had been made, very little progress had been made. To move further it would be necessary to understand the root causes of the problem of informality. These included precarious employment and conflict. In this connection, Recommendation No. 204 could prove a valuable tool in this regard. The ILO should imagine ways of supporting countries and regions in their quest to transition to formality. Priority issue could include capacity building; improving job security; social protection; reducing youth and women unemployment; promoting cooperatives and helping new entrants into employment.
- 130.** *The worker delegate of Cameroon* informed the Regional Meeting that Cameroon had a new decent work programme with the potential to contribute effectively to the transition from the informal to the formal economy. A failure by stakeholders to accept their responsibilities contributed to the maintenance of the informal economy. As a sector, it was discriminated against, and this was compounded by a failure to understand the contribution that the sector could make, especially in respect of poverty reduction. There was a need to develop infrastructure to support the informal economy and to strive to improve standards and decent work.
- 131.** *An Employer adviser and substitute delegate of Egypt* regretted the lack of solutions to the problem of informal economy despite a myriad of meetings and conferences over time, as well as research in the area. The main issue was insufficient evidence of the clear benefits of formalization. In Egypt, even graduates had resorted to informal employment because in some cases they could earn a higher wage than in formal employment. The social protection strategies implemented in some sectors such as agriculture and construction were bearing some fruit but nevertheless the transformation of a large work force into formality would in reality be a slow process.
- 132.** *A Government representative of Zimbabwe* said that a significant proportion of the youth of Zimbabwe was working in the informal sector and lacked skills. The government had adopted an SME policy which made provision for transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. A great deal of effort had also been put towards the finalisation of strategies to formalize informal employment. Genuine engagement of the tripartite constituents and other stakeholders was required to effectively promote formalization.
- 133.** *The Government delegate of Uganda* said his Government had made a commitment to support vulnerable groups. There was a critical need to provide infrastructure; invest in agriculture and rural development, in skills development, to support enterprise development and promote access to finance, as well as support the growth of local businesses.
- 134.** *The Worker delegate of Burkina Faso* highlighted the need for a strong national policy on taxation and the efficient utilisation of resources. Tax evasion by some employers compounded the situation. A specific banking system should be established to service the informal sector. The industrial sector should be developed to provide decent work for those currently in precarious employment. Education systems should be improved and upgraded, and effective efforts should focus on improving the informal sector.

135. *The representative of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity* stressed that the exportation of natural resources was a sub-optimal exercise. Political will was required at national and regional levels to formalize the informal economy. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had generally failed to boost African economies – carefully crafted measures were the only way to ensure the goal of formalization was attained. True social dialogue was called for, as were the mechanisation of agriculture, the improvement of education systems and the combat of illegal loss of revenues.

Remarks by the Director General on World AIDS Day

136. The DG reminded the Regional Meeting that 1 December was World AIDS Day. He observed that the day came at the right moment as in a month's time the MDGs would come to an end, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development would begin. Good progress had been made in MDG6, as 50 million people currently had access to antiretroviral therapy. Further, new infections and deaths had continued to fall. He informed participants of the 90–90–90, an ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic which stated:

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

Employment and new technologies: Opportunities for Africa's youth

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

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

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

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- 139.** *Ms Nubler* stated that new production technologies and the development of new products might destroy, create or transform the nature of existing jobs. This implied that the pattern of technological and structural change determined both the quantity and quality of jobs. She highlighted the fundamental challenge for African countries in steering technological development and promoting patterns of technological innovation that generated jobs and, in particular, jobs that met people's needs and aspirations.
- 140.** She indicated that many African countries still faced low levels of technology and low dynamics in technological change. Production technologies in agriculture and the informal economy demonstrated these low levels of sophistication, which led to low job productivity and low wages, which negatively impacted workers' health and well-being. The share of manufacturing in GDP was still low, as was the share of medium and high technology products. This was a critical issue, as industrial development had been identified as the engine of technological progress in low income countries. Technological upgrading of whole industries could substantially spill over into agriculture and the informal sector.
- 141.** She presented the case of a number of African countries that had demonstrated high dynamics in the transformation of jobs and occupational profiles, significantly changing the share of low, medium and high skill occupations amongst the workforce. This was indicative of technological and structural transformations. However, no systematic analysis of observed patterns of change in occupational profiles had been undertaken to date. There was a need better to understand the nature of technological and structural change and how it had shaped new occupational profiles in the workforce.
- 142.** The success of countries like Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and China could provide interesting lessons. Policy makers needed to formulate a long-term strategy of technological and structural transformation, with a clear vision of the goals to be achieved. She pointed out that the inclusion was required of all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, cottage industries, agriculture, services, in both urban and rural areas, into a strategy of technological renewal. Experience from other countries showed that successfully managed technological development involved a two-pronged strategy: a progression from low to medium and to high technology products, leapfrogging into cutting edge technologies. This incremental movement then implied a learning process to build the capability of enterprises to innovate.
- 143.** There was no one-size-fits-all policy approach and policy makers needed to develop country-specific strategies. Governments should develop a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated package of policies that included investment, trade, technology, education and training policies supported by macroeconomic, financial and labour market strategies combined with investment in infrastructure. These policies required effective institutions for overall coordination purposes, as well as to ensure that learning, investment and innovation went hand in hand.
- 144.** *Ms Mugabo* indicated that changes needed to be examined within the context of why new technologies were wanted; why would new technologies be adopted; what policies existed; what skills existed to use the new technology adopted; and what were the real needs of the population. There was strong demand for these changes in the agricultural sector to help people move out of poverty. One size did not fit all and it would also be crucial to look at the cost of technology. The required skills had to be assessed; training had to be administered; technology utilization had to be simplified so that it was easily adopted. It was vital to promote social dialogue in this context and to mainstream the technological change into national development strategies. In this way, the population would fully embrace technology.
- 145.** *Ms Abdella* reported that Microsoft's 4Africa Initiative was established in February 2013 with the aim of driving innovation to grow locally owned enterprises, promoting training in world-class skills for the private sector, and supporting connectivity through affordable access. The initiative addressed issues of employability, competitiveness and productivity not only in affluent markets but also in more remotely located areas, targeting farmers. She made reference to the Feature Nokia phone project in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Tanzania, designed to promote access and higher productivity through Internet connectivity. Microsoft had invested significantly in the continent and was looking for partnerships on the ground at national level.

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- 146.** *Mr Munthali* set the context in five areas – skills, education, new markets, government regulation and employment creation. With regard to skills, there was a need to tailor technologies to the national context as well as for more sustainable initiatives, like those of Samsung, Microsoft’s Africa Initiative and e-Ghana. He noted that, while businesses were adapting to new technology, the education sector was not responding or being proactive at the same pace. Hence, innovation fostered or incubated in the education system was crucial. He indicated that the ILO could assist countries to identify skills gaps and adapt to training needs, to create linkages between education and training and enterprises, to help countries to develop training programmes in new technologies both at school and in professional training institutions, and encourage investment in infrastructure.
- 147.** With regard to new markets and enabling environments, there was a need for business partnerships and the creation of SMEs. This called for social dialogue and for the social partners to discuss sustainable technologies. The ILO could assist countries to identify areas for the use of new technologies, to encourage local and foreign investment, and to promote the creation new technology enterprises. It should encourage regional cooperation to boost investment, especially in fibre-optic access. It could also support enterprises in developing their own training in new technologies and lifelong learning enabling workers to change jobs.
- 148.** *Mr Manzi* echoed the need for African countries to take up technological change that required innovation. However, the informal and agricultural sectors were characterized by poor productivity and low wages and limited access to digital technologies. Industrialization was required to create opportunities. If new technologies were used well, they resulted in productive employment. Educational and professional institutions needed to be reformed in innovative ways.
- 149.** There was a need for countries to step up industrialization, introduce new mobile technologies and to secure easy access to the Internet. There were challenges connected with energy supply, skills enhancement, investment promotion and ensuring social dialogue in the appropriate policy environment. There was a need for an integrated approach, the coordination of programmes and policies at national level and effective social dialogue. Resources, political determination and ILO technical expertise would be required.
- 150.** *A government representative of Ghana* stated that Africa should import technology that promoted opportunities for youth employment. Countries should not accept technology, even if it was free, if it did not contribute to employment, as it could be redundant. Ghana imported technology that was linked to specific sectors of the economy. African countries should receive technologies that were pertinent to their particular needs.
- 151.** *A government representative of Sudan* informed the Meeting that his country wished to reduce youth employment as a way to address the economic challenges the country was facing. He called for increased ILO support to developing countries, and for the ILO to assist in opening doors for young people on the continent. Additional efforts were therefore needed to promote cooperation and partnership for linking ICT to youth employment.
- 152.** *A Worker Adviser and substitute delegate of Morocco* stated that the link between youth and technology lay with education. Young people added value to the economy and this was enhanced through increased focus on professional training for young people. African governments needed to give greater attention to youth, by adopting education policies that responded to labour market needs. Governments should import technology in a way that supported industrial development, sustainable development and youth employment. Africa’s youth should take advantage of technological development to gain exposure and it should learn from other regions including from Asia. Countries should allocate resources for scientific research, acknowledging that Africa contributed only 1 per cent to scientific research.
- 153.** *The Employer delegate of Gabon* said that it was important to highlight the major role for the private sector of ICT in sustainable development. Countries were encouraged to support SMEs that needed new technology, especially for communication. Capacity building was key, with a recommendation for the

ILO to strengthen its capacity building efforts in Africa. The ILO was further requested, working with Business Africa, to support employers' organization and SMEs in the informal economy to access ICT.

- 154.** *The Employer delegate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, appreciated new technologies while noting that there were also challenges. Countries should look at the labour intensive aspect of the technology and have their education and training aligned to it. The Democratic Republic of Congo had organized two major Conventions in 2010 and 2011, bringing in employers, workers and government ministries, including the Ministry of Higher Education, together with practitioners in the training market to discuss real labour market needs.
- 155.** *A Worker Adviser and substitute delegate of Sudan* said that employment and new technologies were very important and all closely linked to the needs of young people. He added that Africa was rich in natural resources but needed to acquire new technologies to support the skills required on the labour market, including in the agricultural and livestock production sectors. While Africa was rich with educated youth, it was also necessary to adapt the supply of education and training to the requirements of industry. The use of new technologies should be built into curricula. Finally, he was of the opinion that social dialogue and equity needed to be actively promoted.
- 156.** *The Employer delegate of Zambia* acknowledged that the Internet constituted a vast source of information and should be accessible to all, young people, women and those at the bottom of the pyramid, enabling them to benefit from education, as well as economic and social development. He noted that there were two barriers hampering access to information technologies: a digital and a language divide. The digital divide resulted from not being able to afford the technologies, as well as from the challenges of connectivity. The language divide came about through people not being able to understand the languages most commonly used on the Internet, with 70% of content being in English. These challenges were encountered in his country and Africa at large. He requested the ILO to seek out appropriate enabling technologies that would help ICT to become a key driver of economic development.
- 157.** *The Employer delegate from the Republic of Congo* highlighted the linkages between technology and youth employment. His country had experienced high economic growth driven by the oil industry. Private companies in Africa imported new technologies that required new skills, and such skilled labour was also imported despite high levels of unemployment. This led to social tensions, as the local population had no access to jobs, at a time when the country was experiencing economic growth. Clearly, education lagged behind the needs of the labour market.
- 158.** *The Employer delegate from Cote d'Ivoire* stated that information technologies offered new opportunities for growth and profits. There was a need for the acquisition of new skills to match the technologies and so to promote small and medium-sized enterprises. New technology constituted an opportunity to transform African enterprises. He indicated that governments were generally slow to react, in particular when it came to education and training or the elaboration of policies to encourage entrepreneurship in young people. He emphasized the role of social dialogue in the discussion of new technology and youth employment.
- 159.** Responding to the discussion, *Mr Manzi* agreed that countries should carefully evaluate the risks and opportunities that new technologies brought to Africa. Social dialogue therefore played a key role in addressing both the hazards and advantages, in endeavours to ensure that the right policies were adopted and that youth employment and underemployment were part of the discussion.
- 160.** *Mr Munthali* noted that new technologies also presented challenges of a legal order and pointed out the need for legislation both to protect and promote their utilization. He recommended apprenticeships and traineeships as opportunities to address youth employment and adaptation to technology.
- 161.** *Ms Abdella* endorsed the proposal of Mr Munthali and agreed that on-the-job training in the use of new technologies was highly important. She noted that innovation and entrepreneurship were impacted by the education system, and concluded by calling for a change in mind-set in Africa, that would encourage young people to take risks and the authorities to accept that sometimes mistakes would be committed.

Ms. Mugabo noted that insufficient infrastructure and a shortage of skills were a major handicap in connection with new technology.

- 162.** *Ms Nubler* appreciated that new technology could destroy jobs; at the same time it was capable of triggering off a process of innovation and productivity growth in Africa. She added that new technologies should also be seen in the broader context of production technologies.
- 163.** *The moderator* summarized the session with the conclusion that new technology was not panacea but should rather be viewed as an enabler for innovation and transformation. He emphasized the need to adapt the technology to the needs of the country. He called upon countries to train young people for the jobs of the future, not those of the past. He went on to recommend that the ILO continue to play a leadership role in driving well-integrated action programmes that accounted for the needs of the private sector, employers and workers. The programmes should stimulate the private sector to facilitate jobs and the development of SMEs. The ILO should also facilitate a platform for the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

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

- 164.** The Regional Meeting also held a special session on the promotion and application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Africa. The session was chaired by Mr Gregoire Owona, Vice-chairperson of the Meeting, and moderated by the ILO Director of the Sectoral Policies Department, Ms Alette Van Leur. The panel was composed as follows:
- Mr Ts'oeu Mahlakeng, Minister of Labour and Employment, Lesotho;
 - Mr Edouard Ladouyou, General Confederation of Cote d'Ivoire Enterprises and Business Africa;
 - Mr Bheki Ntshalintshali, General Secretary, Congress of South African Trade Unions.
- 165.** The moderator recalled that this session was organized as part of the new follow-up mechanism of the MNE Declaration adopted by the ILO Governing Body in 2014. The three objectives of the session were to share the main points of the report "Multinational Enterprises, development and decent work. Report on the promotion and application of the MNE Declaration in Africa" produced with direct inputs by tripartite constituents from the member States in Africa, to share experiences on opportunities and challenges related to the implementation of the MNE Declaration in the region and to formulate recommendations for more effective promotion of the instrument in Africa.
- 166.** *Ms Githa Roelans, Head, Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit*, introduced the discussion by referring to a number of priority issues for Africa that had been highlighted in the previous sessions such as the need for structural transformation, the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and the role of social dialogue in inclusive and sustainable development. A delegate had previously mentioned that the private sector was the engine for job creation and that government put the oil through legislation, appropriate policies and social dialogue. The ignition often was foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade. Governments indeed attracted FDI on the expectation that it would lead to local job creation, economic diversification and eradication of poverty. The 2030 sustainable development agenda and the Financing for Development Conference had underlined the role of the private sector in development and called for a closer alignment of private sector policies with national development goals.
- 167.** The MNE Declaration as the tripartite adopted global and rights-based instrument to harness operations of MNEs for inclusive socio-economic development, had gained importance in view of the ever increasing economic globalization and the new development agenda. Its core features were the need to

strengthen policies, to closer align private sector action with national development priorities and to stimulate industrial relations, national tripartite dialogue and dialogue between home and host countries.

- 168.** The main elements of the report comprised an overview of the regional trends in FDI and an analysis of the responses received from governments, employers and workers of the member States in the region on the promotion and application of the Declaration. In the past decade substantive economic growth had been registered in Africa, partly stimulated by a large increase in FDI flows. FDI was no longer limited to natural resources and commodities but now increasingly also in services and manufacturing, sectors that provided more opportunities for job creation. Investments from emerging economies were on the rise as well as increased African cross-border investment due to the emergence of African multinational enterprises. However despite GDP and FDI growth, this growth had been largely jobless. The question that must be asked was how to increase shared benefits. Twelve countries were currently revising their investment strategies and policies offering the opportunity to closer link investment to inclusive development. The momentum and policy space were there to further harness investment for decent work and inclusive growth.
- 169.** The most salient elements of the analysis of the responses received from the tripartite constituents. The areas that were considered most relevant included the employment creation, training, conditions of work and collective bargaining chapters of the Declaration. In each of these areas challenges and opportunities related to FDI and operations of MNEs had been indicated. Dialogue platforms for discussions on and with MNEs existed in most of the responding countries and could be further strengthened.
- 170.** She finally shared some of the suggested actions to further improve the application of the principles of the Declaration, such as the strengthening of existing tripartite structures in discussions on FDI and *investment policies, the further capacity building of tripartite constituents, increased international cooperation, sectoral attention and more ILO forums involving MNEs* so that these would also learn more about the Declaration and incorporate the principles into their operations. Tripartite constituents had also clearly indicated the need for increased ILO technical assistance to better equip them for policy formulation and dialogue in their countries.
- 171.** *Mr Ts'oeu Mahlakeng* shared the experience of his country in harnessing foreign investment for inclusive growth and job creation and formulated suggestions on ways to further promote the MNE in the region. He reported that Lesotho attached great importance to the MNE Declaration, as was indicated by the fact that all tripartite constituents had completed the questionnaire in preparation of the regional report. Lesotho has also ratified all ILO core Conventions and was thus in a good position to apply the principles of the MNE. It had for example promulgated the Social Protection and Welfare Act, adopted a National Strategic Development Plan and the draft Employment policy was ready for Cabinet approval. All of these measures were intended to improve the investment environment.
- 172.** In addition, a one Stop Facility Centre had brought together the units of several ministries responsible for various approvals and procedures, thus facilitating the process of establishing and running an enterprise. Lesotho had also participated in the ILO Better Work Programme.
- 173.** In terms of challenges faced by Lesotho, the speaker observed that in Lesotho many investors did not sufficiently value social dialogue. There was also a language barrier as well as a lack of technical skills transfer. MNEs were moreover often reluctant to re-invest their profits in the country of operations.
- 174.** As the way forward, the MNE Declaration should be widely disseminated and mainstreamed in national development strategies. Moreover social dialogues should be strengthened. Member States should report on a two-yearly basis on progress made. This could be done for example in the context of the African Union's socio-economic commission. There were clear linkages between the MNE Declaration and the AU 2063 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 175.** The ILO should provide further support on the MNE Declaration including supporting the mainstreaming of the MNE Declaration into development and sectoral policies; disseminating best practices; and

conducting research on the impact of MNEs on economic growth, employment creation and skills transfer.

- 176.** *Mr Ladouyou* shared the very positive experience in Cote d'Ivoire in engaging MNEs on the national priority of youth employment in the post-crisis years. An ILO study conducted in 2010 on youth employment had led to a high-level dialogue and the establishment of a tripartite working group comprised of the government, employers and trade unions. Further studies were conducted on the basis of the MNE Declaration in different sectors to identify possibilities of increased linkages between MNEs and local SMEs and the barriers to such linkages. Subsequently the working group adopted a plan of action.
- 177.** The Declaration was largely unknown and the employers' organization was working with the Ministry of Employment on ways to better promote the Declaration among new investors coming to Cote d'Ivoire, so that the principles were immediately incorporated into their policies and practices. There was a need for MNEs to become members of the national employers' organizations so that further trainings could be organized for them on the MNE Declaration and MNEs could also share their expertise in certain areas with local enterprises. He formulated the request for further training on the MNE Declaration for the members of the tripartite working group.
- 178.** *Mr Ntshalintshali* commented on the need to build strong and vibrant trade unions as no employer would voluntarily implement the principles of the Declaration. He reported that the workers welcomed the report and agreed with what had been identified as the negative aspects of FDI. He raised the problem of the limited number of responses to the questionnaire, stressing that it was important to have data and facts to inform an evidence-based dialogue. FDI was generally welcomed but that the experiences had been mixed as often MNEs destroyed jobs instead of creating them and had a negative impact on the environment and communities. There was also the problem of tax evasion and union-free arrangements often undermining national legislation. There was a need for capacity building of the tripartite constituents and a stronger monitoring of how the principles were applied. The development model should be rethought to enhance the benefits for the host country and move away from the export-oriented model that did not add value in the host country. The rights to organize and collective bargaining should be promoted and the ILO had an important role to play in this respect.

The panel discussion was followed by interventions from the delegates

- 179.** *A Government delegate of Cote d'Ivoire* reported that tackling the youth unemployment challenge was a government priority in Cote d'Ivoire and that a specific Youth Employment Agency has been established to that effect. He noted that FDI has been increasing over the years as the result of the reforms of the business environment in the country. A new Investment Code had been adopted as well as a new framework for private sector dialogue and public private partnership (PPP). The objective had been to come to a better sharing of the benefits of FDI. He reiterated the need to further promote the update of the principles of the MNE Declaration and engage enterprises on job creation for youth. He concluded by stressing the need for tripartite commitment, increased business linkages between MNEs and local SMEs, for studies on the impact of MNEs on job creation and the development of a resource kit with good practices. He commended the experience in Cote d'Ivoire of working with MNE on the basis of the Declaration and requested continued ILO support in this area.
- 180.** *A government delegate from Zambia* reported that Zambia viewed FDI as an avenue for job creation. Zambia had therefore introduced reforms to improve the investment climate and established the Zambia Development Agency as the one stop for international investors. Further reforms were under way to enhance the country's capacity for economic development. He provided an overview of the laws affecting foreign direct investment, as well as current efforts to harmonize employment laws to ensure that there was no distinction between foreign and domestic investors in Zambia.
- 181.** *A Government delegate of Niger* welcomed this special session on the MNE Declaration in the agenda of the Africa regional meeting underlining that as member of the ILO Governing Body, Niger had supported the new implementation strategy on the MNE Declaration. He was therefore pleased to see the progress

made. He requested ILO capacity building support in his country to be in a better position to further stimulate the uptake of the Declaration.

- 182.** *A worker delegate of Sudan* stressed the important link between MNEs and inclusive and sustainable development. He observed that MNEs in Sudan seemed to go into sectors with specific skills requirements such as telecommunications but did not create enough jobs. One distinct challenge was the fact that MNEs did not fully respect the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. There was a need to hold government accountable to ensure that MNEs could not take advantage of loopholes in legislation. MNEs were rarely driven by social goals but rather by profit making. It was therefore important that governments put in place appropriate legislation and focused on attracting investment that effectively contributed to decent work.
- 183.** *The Employer delegate of Swaziland* supported the MNE Declaration as it encouraged MNEs to comply with host country policies and principles of good governance. In Swaziland, measures had been taken to ensure transparency in government contract and attract investment. However, these government agencies often were not sufficiently aware of the Declaration, although they were the focal points for MNEs in the country. She highlighted the need therefore to reach out to these agencies and other ministries to enhance national policy coherence and the roles that each of them could play. There was a need to mainstream the MNE Declaration in other policy areas.
- 184.** *The Worker delegate of Morocco* welcomed this session in the agenda of the African Regional Meeting. Many governments tried to attract FDI but the question remained whether these MNEs were effectively contributing to decent work and national development priorities. Some MNEs restricted membership to labour unions, discriminated in terms of salaries between locals and expatriates, and discouraged collective bargaining and freedom of association. The ILO should organize workshops to enhance the awareness and uptake of the MNE Declaration in Morocco.
- 185.** *A representative of the International Organisation of Employers* emphasized how MNEs were assisting SMEs in upgrading and in formalization. More and more MNEs were aware of their role in society and embracing corporate social responsibility. Many of them were also working with SMEs to improve compliance with national laws and principles of international labour standards. There should however be no confusion over roles and responsibilities: it was not up to the MNEs to take over the role of government. The IOE was committed to the further promotion of the MNE Declaration and close collaboration with ILO had been established in this regard.

The moderator then invited the panellists for their final remarks.

- 186.** *Mr Ntshalintshali* found it very encouraging that all speakers had recognized the relevance of the MNE Declaration. Its further promotion and application should therefore be supported. MNEs could indeed make an important contribution to job creation and inclusive growth. Ethical behaviour should be further encouraged through compliance with legislation, elimination of discrimination and promotion of local employment.
- 187.** *Mr Edouard Ladouyou* highlighted the need to encourage MNEs to become members of national employers' organizations and to further promote the Declaration, repeating the request for continued ILO support.
- 188.** *Mr Ts'oeu Mahlakeng* aligned himself with the many comments made by delegates and requested further ILO support.
- 189.** *Ms Githa Roelans* welcomed the active participation of the delegates and the many suggestions. She took away the call to further mainstream the MNE Declaration in other policy areas and the call for increased ILO support. A regional action plan would be developed to this effect in line with decent work country programmes.

190. *Ms Alette Van Leur* summarized the session by highlighting that the delegates had expressed wide support for the MNE Declaration and that FDI must contribute to decent work and inclusive and sustainable growth. To this effect national policy coherence and inter-ministerial collaboration should be stimulated and supported. The session had identified skills development and transfer, training, increased capabilities as very relevant areas of the Declaration. In support of the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the African Union's 2063, tripartite constituents requested further capacity building and technical support at the national and regional levels.

Appendix I

Information session on the “Joint Labour Migration Programme”

Ms Samuel-Olonjuwon (ILO) introduced the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) by emphasizing that it was a practical demonstration of effective policy implementation support. Most migration today was related to employment. In 2013, it was estimated that there were 18.6 million migrants in Africa and 31.3 million African migrants, many were women. It was noteworthy that half of African migrants stayed in Africa (15.3 million), with 80 per cent of migrants in West Africa staying in the sub region.

The key drivers of migration included demographic pressures, Africa's growing youthful population, jobless growth and a dearth of decent work opportunities in many countries. This was worsened by rising inequality and exclusion, state fragility as well as global skills shortage.

There was increasing evidence of the benefits of migration to workers, their families as well as the countries of origin and destination. World Bank reports showed that 2013 remittance inflows to Africa totalled about USD61 billion; compared to FDI of USD 59 billion, and ODA of USD 46 billion. Moreover, remittances contributed significantly to countries' GDP. Despite these contributions, migrant workers were not well protected and several challenges persisted: security agendas often limited the broader understanding of labour migration as a fundamental issue for development; inadequate and comprehensive data plus lethargic implementation of free movement protocols.

Relevant AU policies existed to address some of these challenges, including the AU Migration Policy Framework (2006); AU Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development; which prioritized labour migration as a key priority area for inclusive development (2015) and the AU Declaration on Migration (2015).

The 2030 SDGs also included targets which promote effective labour migration governance (10.0, 8.8 and 10.c).

The JLMP provided a new orientation to transformative and longer term development cooperation. It was developed by Africa for Africa, adopted by the 24th AU Assembly and focused on supporting effective implementation of adopted policies to foster rights based labour migration governance, thereby reducing irregular migration. It was the first AU-led programme on migration, which engaged all RECs as well as employers', workers' and diaspora organizations. JLMP promoted international labour standards, social dialogue, social protection and employment; particularly for the youth. The ILO coordinated the support of the IOM and UNECA - an exemplary collaboration between organizations.

The JLMP's objective was to strengthen the effective governance and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa to foster development and regional integration with the involvement of key stakeholders.

Core results would be delivered on the ratification/implementation of labour standards, capacity building for the stakeholders, enhanced tripartite labour migration dialogue, labour migration statistics, skills mobility, protection of the rights of migrants and the access and portability of social security benefits. Despite the absence of donor funds so far, JLMP had delivered several results with RBSA/RBTC funding. These included: establishment of the first tripartite continental Labour Migration Body, policy input to the 2015 AU Summit Declaration on Migration; social partners' participation in regional migration consultations and the preparation of the first Labour Migration Statistics Report for Africa.

The only missing link for fast-tracking the delivery of this important initiative was the need for donor funding. Hence, Ms Samuel ended the presentation with a quote from the AUC Chairperson's Statement to the Valletta Summit: 'We would therefore like to invite our partners to support and provide concrete financial commitments to the AU Joint Labour Migration Programme'.

Ambassador Olawale Maiyegun (AUC) expressed great appreciation to the ILO and all the partners for supporting the JLMP; AUC's flagship programme on labour migration. He insisted that beyond the financial support required to fast track implementation, constituents should promote free movement of persons in Africa. He stated that the 25th AU Assembly Declaration on Migration has prioritized this; an important step for facilitating labour migration.

Ms Maureen Achieng (IOM) noted that the IOM believed that migration was not a problem to be solved, but an opportunity. She recommended the need to change the narrative; focusing on the benefits of migration. This reiterated the need for the bold JLMP initiative to facilitate labour migration governance.

Mr Charles Faye (Employers' Representative) welcomed the JLMP as a means to promote the development benefits of migration. Employers need skilled workers who could be flexibly sourced and deployed through effective arrangements which facilitated labour migration.

Mr Mhlanga (Workers' Representative) stated that Labour migration was influenced by the quest for economic opportunity and survival. The implementation of neo-liberal policies by governments exacerbated poverty and inequalities. The current migration across the Mediterranean was symptomatic of Government failures to address inequalities. He reiterated workers' organizations' commitment to JLMP implementation.

Plenary

The Government delegate of Sudan focused on the link between migration and unemployment in Africa. He noted that despite Africa being short of engineers; it still exported engineers to France. He reiterated the need to curtail the brain-drain from Africa.

The ITUC representative identified 'Voice' as crucial and confirmed ITUC's plans to organize migrant workers. Furthermore, he called on the constituents to take full responsibility for JLMP implementation. He expressed ITUC's resolve to campaign and support Government to ratify/implement relevant conventions on migration. He raised concerns over the agreements between countries in Africa and the Gulf States and the treatment of workers. He requested for a tripartite interregional forum to address these issues.

The Government delegate of Morocco welcomed the plan to promote regular migration. He encouraged all countries to ratify UN Conventions on migration.

The WFTU representative emphasized the need to protect migrant workers from abuse like the European Union Frontier Programme. She reiterated WFTU's commitment to promote the rights of migrant workers. The Worker delegate of Mauritania noted that lack of social justice, inadequate health and education facilities contributed to migration.

The Government delegate of Rwanda emphasized the challenges of movement within Africa. She explained that Rwanda accorded all Africans the privilege of visa on arrival. This had not increased crime and terrorism and therefore called upon constituents to support JLMP implementation.

The Government delegate of Morocco stated that Migration was a result of a demographic explosion and the role of the media in enticing young Africans to cross the Mediterranean. He appealed for appropriate measures to stop the trafficking of persons into Europe.

Conclusion

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

Appendix II

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

The information session was chaired by Mr Aeneas Chuma, ILO Regional Director for Africa, and included as panellists Mr Jürgen Schwettmann, consultant and former ILO official, Dr Helder da Costa, Secretary-General of the G7+ Group of Fragile States, Mr Seitchi Ali Abbas, employer representative (Chad), and Mr Djondang, worker representative (Chad).

Mr Chuma in his opening remarks recalled that the promotion of decent work in fragile states, or rather in countries in a state of fragility, was one of the priorities of the ILO in the Africa region over the coming years. The ILO Regional Office for Africa had decided to launch the preparation of a regional framework strategy to guide its engagement in fragile states in the Africa region. The information session had the purpose of presenting the draft strategy and seeking feedback and comments from constituents.

Mr Schwettmann introduced the draft strategy; this included a definition of the term “fragility”, the rationale for the ILO’s involvement in fragile States, a SWOT analysis referring to this involvement, a description of the ILO’s main technical areas of work in fragile states, and a summary of the positive and undesirable aspects of the ILO’s involvement in these countries. He provided an overview of the proposed policy orientations, implementation modalities and objectives of the ILO’s proposed future strategy in fragile States, namely the promotion of Institutions and mechanisms for quality employment and creation of livelihoods, the promotion of social protection and the advancement of equity and rights at work.

Dr da Costa explained the origins and objectives of the G7+ group with which the ILO had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2014. He briefly introduced the “New Deal” for engagement in fragile states with its five “Peace and Statebuilding Goals”, one of which called for the building of economic foundations through job creation. Dr da Costa emphasized that fragile states do not need *more* resources, but longer term commitment and true partnerships from donors. He praised the partnership with the ILO, and called upon the ILO to enhance its support to fragile States with “courage, passion and partnership”. He stressed the importance of country ownership and the need to use national systems, even though they might be weak. Dr da Costa informed the audience that the parliament of Timor Leste, his home country, had passed a resolution committing his country to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals during the next 15 years.

Mr Ali Abbas pointed out that any form of fragility impacted very negatively on the social partners. He called for good governance at all levels as a prerequisite for stability and the best recipe to prevent fragility. Social partners had an important role to play in ensuring such good governance; hence the ILO should focus on building the capacity of social partners, in particular in situations of fragility.

Mr Djondang recalled that the objective of peace building stood at the very origin of the ILO since its foundation right after the end of World War I. Building on Mr Ali Abbas’ remarks he pointed out that social partner organizations had difficulties in operating properly in fragile situations, and that they were sometimes misused for political purposes. He stressed that social dialogue had an important role to play in restoring peace and stability and therefore called for greater efforts to build their capacity. He further established the link between fragility, unemployment, migration and radicalization of the youths. Finally,

while stressing the importance of ILO's action in fragile States he deplored the fact that the Organization was not resident in most of them.

The Chair then opened the plenary debate. A worker representative from Cameroon remarked that fragility often extended beyond national borders, so that it would be more appropriate to talk about fragile "zones" or regions, and to adopt a sub-regional approach.

An employer representative from the Sudan noted that peace and job creation were mutually reinforcing phenomena; moreover, job creation needed investments, and investments required stability. Employers' organizations had a key role to play in this connection, and deserved greater ILO support.

A representatives of ITUC Africa asked whether the ILO was implementing its programmes in fragile states in synergies with other UN agencies. He also pointed out that climate change could exacerbate fragility in certain regions of Africa.

A worker representative from the Democratic Republic of Congo reiterated the importance of social dialogue in fragile situations, including the setting-up of national social dialogue institutions.

A worker representative from Morocco pointed out that fragility was not a permanent situation, and that fragility in Africa was partially caused by the continent's colonial past. He called for pre-emptive measures and anticipation to prevent countries and regions from becoming fragile.

In view of time constraints the Chair closed the plenary debate despite several more delegates having asked for the floor. Responding to a question raised by a participant, he called upon Ms Azita Berar, Director of ILO's Employment Department, to explain the process towards the revision of ILO Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (N° 71) by the International Labour Conference in 2016 and 2017. Dr da Costa in his brief reply stressed the importance of sound management of public finance and national resources in fragile states, because the unregulated exploitation of natural resources could contribute to fragility. He praise once again the strong partnership between the G7+ and the ILO, and expressed the hope that this partnership would develop further.

Appendix III

Information session on the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy