



Report of the 11th African Regional Meeting

Introduction

1. The 11th African Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, from 24 to 27 April 2007.
2. The Meeting set up a working group to consider conclusions for submission to the plenary and appointed a Credentials Committee, in accordance with the Rules for Regional Meetings.
3. Information regarding attendance at the Meeting is provided in the report of the Credentials Committee.

Opening ceremony

4. The Meeting unanimously elected as its Chairperson, Mr Hassen Abdella, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and, as its Vice-Chairpersons, Ms S. Kanda (Government delegate, Minister for the Civil Service and Labour, Niger), Mr C. Faye (Employers' delegate, Senegal) and Ms M.F. Carvalho Francisco (Workers' delegate, Angola). Prior to the opening of the discussion in plenary, the Meeting heard a joint message delivered by the social partners and addresses by the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia, Mr Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Ms Gertrude Mongella, President, Pan-African Parliament, Mr Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr Blaise Compaoré, President of Faso, and Mr Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
5. In his welcoming words, the Chairperson of the Meeting, Mr Hassan Abdella, emphasized the long and fruitful relations that the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia had enjoyed with the ILO. The establishment of the ILO Regional Office in Addis Ababa bore witness to this. Africa faced problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and others. The task of this 11th African Regional Meeting was to provide clear guidelines to the ILO's Director-General on how best to assist African countries to generate the decent work that would allow African women and men to create prosperity for their families and live in dignity. Through tripartite dialogue, the partners would doubtless reach a successful conclusion.
6. Mr Hassan Sunmonu delivered a joint statement on behalf of the Employers and Workers. He acknowledged the various contributions made to key activities leading up to this Meeting, such as the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963;

the First Social Partners Forum in 2004 and the subsequent historic Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation (Ouagadougou, 2004); the work of the Labour and Social Affairs Committee of the African Union (AU); and the preparatory workshop for this Meeting. The social partners had been active in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action. Unfortunately, economic growth had not been sufficient to create enough decent and productive jobs and help reduce poverty and unemployment. The social partners had decided to organize a Second Social Partners Forum in 2008, on the theme of “Governance and Social Dialogue for Decent Work in Africa”, to give African employers’ and workers’ organizations the opportunity to promote governance as a tool to make sustainable enterprises and decent work for all realities: governance and social dialogue were indispensable to achieving decent work. He thanked national and international stakeholders, including the UN system and the ILO, in advance for their support. He called on the Regional Meeting to adopt a Decent Work Decade for Africa.

7. Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, thanked the high-level dignitaries for their support. He said that the achievements of African women reinforced his conviction that by empowering African women, Africa itself was empowered. He pledged support to the proposed Second Social Partners Forum. He also acknowledged Africa’s constant support for justice and freedom for the Palestinian people.
8. He noted the tremendous progress since the Ouagadougou Summit, indicating that the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) had connected worldwide with people asking for opportunities and decent work, calling on their political leaders to provide decent jobs. The DWA had been taken up by presidential summits of regional organizations; and it had been endorsed by 150 Heads of State at the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, and at other global meetings. Africa took the lead in lifting the concepts of decent work and fair globalization onto the international stage. It was now time to bring the policy message back home, so it could make a difference to the lives of people in Africa. He noted the present air of hope in Africa: a “can do” spirit and “we’ll make it” attitude that was inspiring and motivating.
9. Africa needed to create 11 million jobs a year simply to match the global unemployment rate of 6 per cent; eight out of ten workers struggled in the informal economy, where four out of five could not earn enough to lift their families above the US\$2 per day poverty line. ILO projections indicated that the number of people working in extreme poverty in Africa would grow by 20 per cent by 2015, meaning that 10,000 more African women and men were joining those in extreme poverty daily. Growth that produced few decent jobs was not politically sustainable. International cooperation was critical, but was often offered on unacceptable conditions of the type rejected by Africa’s leaders at the Ouagadougou Summit, where it had been stressed that a true commitment to Africa meant helping the nations to generate decent and productive jobs for their populations, not just through aid, but through fair trade and financial rules that created “a level playing field”.
10. The ILO was responding with its Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Nineteen such programmes were currently operational, with 25 more under discussion with constituents. They focused on areas such as: youth employment; women’s entrepreneurship; child labour; HIV/AIDS; social protection and the informal economy; workers’ rights; migration; the challenges facing rural workers; crisis and reconstruction; enterprise development for job creation; and consolidating social dialogue and tripartism. Implementation required relationships with regional institutions such as the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the Pan-African Parliament and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

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11. Mr Somavia highlighted the three critical concepts underlying the thematic Report he was presenting to the Meeting. First was **true ownership**, with each country defining its own priorities, choices and frameworks, as a “one-size-fits-all” agenda was not possible. Second, **effective partnerships** were required to build a broad constituency for action at all levels. The ILO had developed a tool kit in cooperation with other agencies, and approved by the Chief Executives Board, to help them self-assess their policies in terms of employment and decent work outcomes. Third, **an effective and responsive system of tripartite social dialogue**: the absence of such a system weakened and divided countries. He mentioned the positive example of Guinea, where the social partners had helped move the country toward peace.
 12. Recalling the 50th anniversary of Ghana’s independence, he highlighted the ILO’s tripartite contribution to Africa’s liberation struggle and its emphasis on real independence, based on releasing the capabilities of Africa’s working women, men and entrepreneurs from oppression. He stressed the essential contribution of tripartism in improving the effectiveness and accountability of governments, and pledged that the ILO would stand firmly beside African workers and employers to defend their rights to organize and express their views in full freedom.
 13. Mr Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary, UN-ECA, said that the theme of this Meeting was relevant and timely. Employment was central to the fight against poverty and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This had been emphasized at several high-level events, including the Meeting of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Addis Ababa, 2–3 April 2007). The role of the social partners was critical to African development and to addressing challenges related to social protection and social exclusion.
 14. The DWA had helped shift the development debate from narrow goals of macroeconomic stabilization and an exclusive focus on markets, to broader goals that emphasized growth, poverty reduction and the creation of decent employment. Employment creation needed to be accelerated. Economic growth still lagged behind the overall target of 7 per cent for the continent. There was thus a great need to scale up investment in infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, science and technology, as well as gender equality. It was important to pay attention to the informal economy, which contained the vast majority of jobs. Better access to decent work would also enable greater use of the workplace in combating HIV and AIDS. International labour standards and social dialogue had much to contribute to the work of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism in promoting good governance. Fair globalization was necessary for the success of the DWA. The international community must meet its promises to double official development assistance to Africa.
 15. He flagged some issues for the Meeting to consider: more effort for integrating employment creation policies into national development agendas; support for improved infrastructure and social services; special attention to improving the business and investment environment; skills levels to be upgraded; urgent attention to creating decent work opportunities for young women and men; promoting the DWA in post-conflict countries.
 16. Ms Gertrude Mongella, President, Pan-African Parliament, commented on her institution’s growing partnership with the ILO, creating a common platform for the benefit of the people of Africa. The two organizations shared core values based on principles of human rights and democracy, and promoting peace, stability and security in Africa. The intersections and shared vision could be seen in the Pan-African Parliament’s Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Labour and Social Affairs; and on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disabilities.

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17. The lack of decent work was the root source of poverty in Africa. HIV/AIDS depleted the labour force, diverting resources away from economic development. Women, children and people with disabilities were the most vulnerable. The heaviest burden of poverty fell on women, despite being the main economic producers. Many women had successfully created networks and social support groups which sustained their livelihoods.
 18. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, United Republic of Tanzania, congratulated the Director-General on his Reports. He noted that Africa held the largest number of poor people in the world, and hoped that the Meeting would promote decent and respectable jobs in the continent. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government had pledged to create 1 million jobs over five years. With close tripartite cooperation, this was possible. The challenge was to address decent work deficits, which were particularly marked in the informal economy. It was urgent to tackle the specific needs of young people, including building human capacity. The supporting role of the ILO and the tripartite partners was indispensable in this context.
 19. President Blaise Compaoré, Faso, considered the Meeting critical in the follow-up to the Ouagadougou Summit and its strong political commitment to create decent work. It provided an ideal framework for reflecting on what had been achieved, and on the way ahead. It was essential to find solutions to employment challenges and to consolidate the DWA. Full employment was key to collective stability and the ILO's contribution was critical. The President acknowledged the work of the Organization and commended the ILO Regional Director for her commitment.
 20. Burkina Faso had undergone major reforms, the benefits of which were not yet felt. Africa remained the poorest continent. AIDS was taking its toll, particularly affecting young women and men. Unfair trade and subsidies to agriculture were having grave social repercussions, and the continent had still to take advantage of globalization. Much remained to be done to promote youth employment. Areas where effective action could be taken should be defined, and the ILO and its DWA could help achieve this. Employment was at the heart of Burkina Faso's five-year plan (2005–10) and initiatives were under way with the ILO. A DWA had been developed, containing social protection, especially for the most vulnerable, microfinance, employment for youth and women, and social dialogue.
 21. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, said that the presence of two African Presidents at the Meeting confirmed their commitment to the ILO's ideals. The Organization's African Regional Meetings had been of great interest and significance for Africa's development. Their tripartite character, with the potential to harmonize the positions of the three parties in their efforts to achieve change, was a special asset. Africa's economic revival was possible only through effective tripartite collaboration. The theme of this Meeting highlighted the need to intensify efforts to reduce poverty. All citizens must be active partners in this endeavour, particularly through productive work. The private sector played a leading part in ensuring economic transformation, and the State had an important role in collaborating with the private sector and in providing better government. Africa had reached a turning point, and countries should mobilize domestic resources. Public–private partnerships, key for Africa's future, were still insufficiently utilized.

Discussion of the Reports of the Director-General

22. Ms Amadi-Njoku, ILO Regional Director for Africa, introduced the Director-General's Reports. She noted the consultative nature of both Reports which were drafted in collaboration with the NEPAD Programme of the African Union, the UN-ECA, the RECs

and the sister UN organizations. The activities Report of 2004–06 reflected progress on the implementation of the outcomes of the tenth African Regional Meeting, and those of the Ouagadougou Summit. A joint ILO–AU task force had been established, and a start had been made to set up a regional employment forum in collaboration with the AU and the UN-ECA. The AfDB and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been invited to join the forum. At the subregional level the ILO and the RECs had adopted regional frameworks for integrated employment policies. Within the framework of the DWCPs, the ILO was assisting member States to implement the Ouagadougou Plan of Action. The Report reiterated the progress made regarding the four strategic objectives of the ILO.

23. Ms Amadi-Njoku, introducing the thematic Report, emphasized Africa's leadership in placing decent work on the global and national agenda. The Report, *Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007–15*, focused on: the links between the DWA and the MDGs within the wider global agenda; the ILO's support to the Summit follow-up through DWCPs with time-bound targets; and reinforcing the capacity of the ILO's Africa constituents, while addressing the challenges of the last four years. It began with an overview of the economy, employment and poverty in Africa and included a review of the required conditions for ending the cycle of poverty, with attention to the role of social dialogue.
24. The Report noted that African economies had averaged an annual real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 5.7 per cent in 2006 and would attain 5.8 per cent in 2007. Despite this performance, growth had not produced decent jobs. The challenge now was to break the cycle of poverty by providing decent jobs that would fully utilize, and reward fairly, the labour of African citizens. The path to sustainable poverty reduction lay through employment, based on social justice, respect for fundamental principles and rights, providing social protection and facilitating social dialogue.
25. Social protection was essential to sustainable poverty reduction, particularly for vulnerable groups such as migrant workers and their dependants, people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and workers in the informal economy. Many regions of Africa were emerging from years of conflict. Men and women must be able to re-establish conditions in which human rights, both moral and material, were ensured. Social dialogue institutions promoted participation of the tripartite partners in conflict prevention, resolution and national decision-making and could be a useful instrument for the RECs to use in strengthening the social dimensions of Africa's benefits from the global economy. Moreover, social dialogue was a proven stimulant to productivity and thereby economic competitiveness.
26. Although Africa had a strong record of ratification of the eight fundamental human rights Conventions, application of the Conventions was still lagging. The Report challenged member States to reorient their development strategies, so that employment and decent work would become the principal tools to reduce poverty. The Decent Work Policy Portfolio, outlined in the Report, could be used to design DWCPs in the region. The Report concluded by calling on the AU, the UN-ECA, the AfDB, RECs, sister agencies of the United Nations and the donor community, to help further the goals of sustainable poverty reduction through decent work.
27. The constituents' subsequent response to the Report reflected their deep interest and enthusiasm. All speakers complimented the quality of the Report, the excellent and productive effort of ILO staff in the region under the leadership of the Regional Director, and the Director-General's commitment to social and economic progress in Africa. All agreed that the Report combined cutting-edge analysis with the practical advice needed to assist constituents and the social partners to develop decent work programmes in their respective countries.

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- 28.** The Employer spokesperson considered that the Report clearly demonstrated the ILO's commitment to follow up the Tenth African Regional Meeting and the Ouagadougou Summit with concrete action and cited various country examples of such action from the Report. He underscored the need to strengthen the capacity of ministries of labour as well as employers' and workers' organizations' to identify and implement demand-driven DWCPs, within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
 - 29.** The Report acknowledged economic progress on the continent and the opportunities which this provided for African workers. However, he emphasized that the opportunities provided by growth must be harnessed. Employers played an important role in the development process, and this role must be strengthened by an appropriate business-enabling policy environment for sustainable economic growth. This included political and social stability; good governance; coherent economic and social policies; infrastructures, education, skill development, information and communication technology (ICT) and institutions to support investments; social dialogue for the social partners' contribution to the development process.
 - 30.** The Worker spokesperson also praised the Report and confirmed the need to build constituents' capacity to formulate and implement DWCPs. He appreciated the Report's alignment with the goals of the Ouagadougou Summit. However the Report had one crucial shortcoming: it should have emphasized the negative consequences of the neo-liberal programmes currently imposed on African countries. Consequently, he advocated that the Bretton Wood institutions should be persuaded to accept the goals and recommendations of the DWA and fair globalization. He added that the impact of the economies of China and India had not been analysed in the Report.
 - 31.** Due to the weaknesses of the public and private sectors, poverty persisted, particularly in rural areas and the informal economy. Globalization was eroding decent work capital. The Report gave insufficient attention to the detrimental effects of bad governance, particularly in relation to human rights, the implementation of international labour standards and the facilitation of social dialogue. All of these were basic requirements for the DWA. He cited Guinea and Zimbabwe as examples. He also noted that social dialogue was never included in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), or in any macroeconomic framework.
 - 32.** Policy coherence, reinforcement of labour administration, maternity protection, emphasis on collective bargaining and freedom of association rights, as stipulated in the Social Partners Forum during the Ouagadougou Summit, must be prioritized and more emphasis be given to the Global Employment Agenda (GEA). He concluded by recalling that 2007 marked the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery.
 - 33.** The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment of Mauritius evoked the economic and social changes brought about by globalization. In a world characterized by rapidly changing working conditions and employment structures, globalization had yet to generate the decent jobs required. Mauritius' once thriving economy had been badly hit when, for various reasons, the growth rate had dropped sharply. The Government was restructuring the economy to ensure that workers were not penalized. It had established flexi-security and work-fair programmes; in which unemployed workers were helped to obtain gainful employment. Gender equality was also being promoted through capacity building for women. The Government was implementing ILO occupational safety and health Conventions.
 - 34.** The Minister of Labour and Social Development of Malawi said the Report was an informative and practical policy document. He agreed that Africa's resources had not been used to the full benefit of the poor. Poverty was still rampant. To realize the MDGs would require activating mechanisms to make full use of resources and promote full employment. Technical cooperation was essential and should be promoted. Full collaboration between

the social partners and other development agents was needed to obtain resources and increase donor contributions to the ILO's technical cooperation programme. Finally, HIV/AIDS must be addressed in the workplace, both for prevention and social protection.

- 35.** An Employer delegate from Egypt made a number of recommendations to further the DWA goals. These included the modernization of industry, the promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI), research, improvement of conditions in the informal economy, skills in modern technology, promotion of gender equality, especially in relation to equal wages. It also included the abolition of child labour, extension of social protection, reinforcement of micro-enterprises and promotion of social dialogue.
- 36.** The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe linked decent work to the attainment of the MDGs. He emphasized the importance of translating the ideas in the Report into employment creation on the ground via actionable programmes and projects. Governments must create employment and support micro-enterprises, particularly in the agricultural sector and the informal economy. He added that his Government was focused on promoting youth employment and micro-enterprise development. He stated his support of the ILO's effort to work within UNDAF. In a separate statement he deplored the Worker spokesperson's reference to Zimbabwe's labour policies.
- 37.** The Government delegate of Morocco reiterated the challenges facing Africa, including environmental degradation, poverty, political instability and unfair globalization. He emphasized that the Moroccan decent work priorities were focused on strengthening social protection, improving skills, the promotion of occupational safety, legislative reform to promote gender equality at work and combating poverty. Moreover, a strategy paper as well as an action plan to defend the rights of the child, had been approved. Social dialogue was ongoing in the public and private sectors. Although the Report was good, there was an error regarding the number of complaints against Morocco. In closing, he reiterated his country's commitment to drafting effective legislation on child labour and promoting social responsibility of private companies.
- 38.** The Minister of Labour and Employment of Lesotho emphasized the improved governance in his country. Women's status in the world of work was no longer linked to their marital status. Women now had access to credit without the approval of their husbands. Child labour was being addressed in a variety of ways; primary school would be free and obligatory, while scholarships were available for secondary and tertiary education. He stressed the importance of involving tripartite social partners in the elaboration of legislation and listed the nation's decent work priorities, including combating HIV/AIDS in the workplace, youth employment, the availability of comprehensive social security, equitable distribution of wealth and sound leadership.
- 39.** The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Namibia noted that the ILO had assisted in the revision of the Premier Labour Act of 1990, the amendment of which was now before Parliament. The Government had prioritized the provision of information and communication on labour legislation, auditing labour administration, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and the elaboration and implementation of an action programme. He concluded by encouraging the ILO to strengthen its technical cooperation.
- 40.** The Minister of Labour of Sudan noted that, despite its oil wealth, the country was still beset by problems. Employment policies needed revision. National focus was placed on investment and economic development rather than on job creation. A manpower survey was scheduled to identify a DWCP for sustainable poverty reduction. Youth unemployment was a national priority, and there was a need to enhance the employability of young persons through skill and enterprise development. The country would focus on

improving the private sector's capacity to generate employment. The containment of HIV/AIDS was also on the list of priorities.

41. A Worker delegate from Morocco criticized the lack of tangible results following the Ouagadougou Summit, saying the economic and social situation in Africa had worsened. He cited the growing commoditization of labour; the persistence of child and forced labour, and the relentless rise of unemployment. He criticized the Report for failing to address the ills of structural adjustment and its effect on access to social protection and decent employment. In conclusion he stressed the need for international cooperation and more resources to redress the lingering effects of colonialism.
42. The Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development of Kenya noted that the Report responded to issues of importance. He congratulated the ILO for implementing a large number of activities, in particular rights at work, which had resulted in increased ratification of the core Conventions. He appreciated the ILO's support in respect of labour law review and the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. While praising the Report for its focus on strengthening links to RECs and the AU, he noted that there was almost no collaboration between the ILO and the East African community. In conclusion, he stated that the Ouagadougou Summit Plan of Action and the attainment of the MDGs formed the framework for Kenya's development programme.
43. A Government delegate of Senegal focused attention on social dialogue as a priority for promoting economic development. Moreover, social protection was a critical strategy for sustainable poverty reduction. Senegal's PRSP prioritized social protection, giving it equal status with accelerated economic growth. In conclusion, he reiterated Senegal's support for the DWA.
44. An Employer delegate from Egypt thanked the ILO for all its successful activities in his country, and emphasized the expansion of youth employment programmes. Emphasis must be placed on improving governance and skills among young persons. Egypt was relying on the ILO for technical assistance to improve labour market policies, thereby increasing employment possibilities for educated youth. Efforts should be redoubled to overcome child labour, which continued to increase. A forthcoming session of the International Labour Conference should address the issue of training at basic, intermediate and advance levels. GDP should be boosted by the creation of new work opportunities and by developing industry to reduce unemployment and poverty. The ILO should provide technical assistance in this connection and develop regional programmes for the exchange of experiences. Education and apprenticeship should be reinforced as, despite the high unemployment, there was a shortage of skilled labour.
45. The Deputy Minister of Labour of Mozambique thanked the ILO for its support. The country had prioritized the eradication of the worst forms of child labour, and a project was being implemented under the guidance of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). He noted that high incidences of HIV/AIDS had led to many orphans. Mozambique had initiated a strategy of employment as part of the integrated programme of vocational education reform targeting youth. Finally, he underscored the importance of tripartism and social dialogue.
46. A Government delegate of Nigeria acknowledged that the Report provided a road map, and recognized that social dialogue constituted a forum allowing the social partners to participate in policy articulation and programme delivery. Nigeria's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy had, with ILO's support, made progress in a number of areas, including the review of trade union law, with emphasis on freedom of association and the right to organize, creation of job centres of excellence, employment-intensive investment, elimination of child labour and HIV/AIDS in the

workplace. The social partners had been involved in the formulation of the priorities for the DWCP.

- 47.** A Government delegate of Benin said that economic growth had not led to poverty reduction. It was therefore more necessary to apply the DWA on the basis of the outcomes of the Ouagadougou Summit. In keeping with the Summit's Plan of Action and the MDGs, the Government had focused on reducing poverty by promoting agriculture and rural development, employment promotion, youth entrepreneurship, building women's capacity to integrate labour markets. The Government had set up a low-interest credit programme, available to vulnerable groups. Benin had ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and was working with the ILO to eradicate child labour. He called on the ILO to assist in improving the country's labour administration system and social dialogue.
- 48.** The representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions recalled the difficulties facing Africa at present, and stated that few governments on the continent were promoting social issues.
- 49.** The Minister of Labour of Chad said her Government had taken follow-up action to the Ouagadougou Summit. The new oil exploitation project had modified the employment landscape, highlighting the need to promote decent work as a vision for the future. Social dialogue had improved and the social partners were increasingly consulted in the decision-making process. She called on the ILO and its partners to extend their action in providing special protection to vulnerable groups.
- 50.** The Minister of Labour, Employment and Youth Development of the United Republic of Tanzania said his Government had instigated a capacity-building programme to mainstream gender at local and government levels, combating the worst forms of child labour. Children that had been taken out of work had formed peer groups to sensitize others. A national employment-creation programme had been formulated through tripartite cooperation, with the objective of creating 1 million jobs in five years. The Government had also created new employment opportunities with access to credit and entrepreneurship training, and had extended social protection to the informal sector. An HIV/AIDS code of good practices for the workplace had been formulated through tripartite dialogue.
- 51.** A Worker delegate from Zimbabwe acknowledged the ILO's work with trade unions in Africa. He stressed that decent work needed to be given top priority in the wake of rising unemployment and increasing poverty. He reiterated his opposition to the violation of workers' rights in Zimbabwe, saying that, although the Government had ratified the ILO's core Conventions, it had not implemented them. Besides, freedom of expression and of association were controlled through repressive legislation and the harassment of trade union leaders. He concluded that if social dialogue was to work in Zimbabwe, the Government must learn to work with the social partners.
- 52.** The Minister of Manpower, Youth and Employment of Ghana informed the Meeting that Ghana was currently implementing a Decent Work Pilot Programme which targeted the macroeconomic framework as well as the informal economy. Priority issues were youth employment, gender equality, the elimination of child labour and social protection.
- 53.** A Worker delegate from Ghana praised the Report's emphasis on the effects of improved governance on business. He emphasized the importance of formalizing the informal economy through cooperatives, stating that organizing was fundamental. Social dialogue and tripartism required reinforcement.

Special session

Keynote address by Mr Kemal Derviş, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

- 54.** The Director-General welcomed Mr Kemal Derviş as a remarkable leader, highlighting his distinguished career as a strategic thinker on poverty reduction and inclusive development and globalization. Mr Somavia noted the common understanding by the ILO and the UNDP of the role of decent work in development, and their renewed partnership to promote decent work and “deliver as one” for greater coherence and effectiveness. This was illustrated by the recent ILO–UNDP agreement to cooperate more closely.
- 55.** Mr Derviş stated that development cooperation should focus on productive employment. Development was not about charity but about creating long-term capacity. This explained why the DWA was at the heart of development. He noted the unique character of the ILO as a tripartite organization engaged in promoting dialogue between the social partners, stressing the importance of tripartism. He evoked his own past experience as Minister for Economic Affairs of Turkey and how he worked with the social partners to preserve social peace.
- 56.** Mr Derviş expressed optimism regarding Africa, underlining the three phases of economic performance which the continent underwent after decolonization in the 1960s: rapid growth from 1960 to the mid-1970s; decline from 1980 to the mid-1990s; and finally an ongoing phase of recovery with real GDP per capita in 2005 approaching the level it had reached in the mid-1970s.
- 57.** He considered that while the recent growth performance in sub-Saharan Africa was encouraging, it had not been sufficiently pro-poor. Available data indicated that the recent significant growth in Africa had not raised employment levels. Sub-Saharan Africa’s unemployment was around 10 per cent in 2006. He referred to the incidence of working poverty in Africa which was the highest of all developing regions and pointed to some of the disturbing trends in African development, notably:
- the high rate of unemployment among women and young persons;
 - the decrease in labour productivity over the last ten years;
 - the problem of the quality of jobs;
 - the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and its adverse effects on labour markets and employment;
 - the significant brain drain which, coupled with the effects of HIV/AIDS, eroded the valuable human capital, critically needed for economic growth and human development.
- 58.** Africa should use the current promising economic performance to move ahead under the framework provided by the MDGs, a major challenge being the integration of employment in development policies.
- 59.** There was a need for pro-poor economic policies which focus on employment generation. Employment and poverty reduction strategies had to become an integral part of macroeconomic policies. Employment and poverty reduction strategies must be built into development goals and policies. He also emphasized the importance of cooperation between African countries to ensure that Africa as a whole moved forward.

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60. Mr Derviş highlighted the importance of the renewed cooperation between the ILO and the UNDP, as reflected in the recent agreement between the two organizations which will be instrumental in advancing the DWA in UN Member States. He also highlighted the need for the UN system to “deliver as one”.
 61. The Employer spokesperson said the Employers were pleased to see a reinvigorated relationship between the ILO and the UNDP as this would lead to better coordination of the respective programmes and to “deliver as one”. The Employers’ group looked forward to a stronger relationship between the ILO and the UNDP and stronger cooperation between the UNDP and employers in Africa.
 62. The Worker spokesperson welcomed the renewed cooperation between the ILO and the UNDP to promote decent work, particularly in Africa. The Workers congratulated the UNDP for the excellent analysis of the recent economic performance in Africa and the challenges facing the continent. They stressed the need for growth to reduce poverty and inequalities, and the importance of good governance including good management of natural and financial resources. They encouraged the ILO and the UNDP to keep their distinctive characters and called on the UNDP to fully take into account the tripartite dimension in its collaboration with the ILO.
 63. A Government delegate of Nigeria said that she was looking forward to a productive partnership between the ILO and the UNDP as their cooperation had proved fruitful in the past in Nigeria. She expressed the hope that the ILO and the UNDP would also collaborate on social dialogue.

Thematic plenary sessions I and II

I. Investing in Africa for the creation of enterprises and decent work in the context of fair globalization

64. The Executive Director of the Employment Sector, Mr Salazar-Xirinachs, introduced the topic, focusing on two themes, investment and enterprises. He addressed four key questions: first, how to boost investment in Africa to contribute to development and decent work; second, how to promote growth that delivered decent work; third, what the social partners could do to promote enterprises and maximize the contribution of the private sector to decent work, poverty reduction and development in Africa; and fourth, how investment, growth and enterprises fitted into the context of globalization.
65. Since investment determined growth and productivity, it made decent work possible. Investment comprised public and private investment, while the latter included domestic investment, as well as FDI. These forms of investment were complementary, not just in terms of aggregation, but also in terms of causality. Public sector investment in infrastructure, both physical infrastructure like roads, rails, ports, telecommunications and energy, as well as social infrastructure like education, health and water was critical for facilitating private sector investment, boosting productivity and competitiveness, thereby attracting FDI.
66. There had however been a policy mistake in Africa, with public sector investment in infrastructure actually decreasing over the 1980s and the 1990s, under the assumption that the private sector would step in. But this did not happen sufficiently, with only US\$27 billion private sector commitments out of a total of US\$150 billion investment in infrastructure. The reality was that the private sector could not really substitute for public

sector investment in infrastructure to any great degree. Even the World Bank appeared to have reversed its position on this, and returned to putting the emphasis on public sector investment in infrastructure.

- 67.** Such public sector investment was also conducive to the use of labour-intensive technology, resulting in up to three to five times more direct employment, and 1.6 to two times more indirect employment. It led to major savings in foreign exchange and lowers costs.
- 68.** The perception remained that in Africa there were still significant barriers to enterprise development. More general weaknesses in the enterprise environment included low levels of productivity and competitiveness, large informal economies, limited access to markets of industrial economies, limited participation in global value chains and limited regional integration of markets. Specific input weaknesses included limited access to finance and credit, deficiencies in basic infrastructure, deficiencies in workers' education and skill levels, weak government capacity to formulate policies on enterprises and provide services for them, and weak employers' and workers' organizations and capacity to supplement the government's policy efforts.
- 69.** This framework to address the constraints on enterprises stemmed from the ILO's GEA, developed with the guidance of the Organization's constituents. Tools to create quality jobs through enterprise development included an appropriate policy and regulatory environment at the national level, methodologies to upgrade value chains at the sectoral level, methods for local and regional development and, at the enterprise level, promotion of productive and decent workplace practices, based on both international labour standards and sound management practices.
- 70.** The ILO's work on business enterprise reforms raised four key concerns. Reforms should support formalization through simplification of registration procedures. Cooperatives should face a level playing field, through reform of cooperative laws. Regulatory barriers to women's entrepreneurship needed to be reduced, as did those affecting small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- 71.** The bigger picture, to which Mr Salazar-Xirinachs drew the attention of delegates, was that not all patterns of trade integration into the global economy would have the same effect on growth and jobs. Specializing in low value added activities, with low domestic linkages, would not generate either high growth or job-rich growth. The question today was no longer the old chestnut of getting the prices right. The question now was how to get growth right.
- 72.** The Employer spokesperson was critical of Africa's development record over the past two decades, with poverty levels not having budged and FDI having dropped. He focused on the need to make the African investment environment more attractive through a comprehensive list of suggested measures. The barriers to investment needed to be lowered considerably. An investment code was much needed. Institutional support was required to raise investment in the form of dedicated agencies working with chambers of commerce and industry. The regulatory environment for investment should be reformed in consultation with the social partners. A one-stop shop had to be set up for investment approval procedures. Credit expansion was advocated, especially for SMEs and for unemployed young people. Labour productivity had to be improved through education and training and in concert with workers. Good governance and reduction in corruption was essential for increasing investment, and covering investors' risk. The resulting investment environment would promote entrepreneurship and the DWA.
- 73.** The Employers were concerned about investment in Africa, and the enabling environment. They considered the Report's focus on enterprises and on the private sector to be positive.

The role of public sector investment in infrastructure as a means to boost private sector investment was strongly endorsed. Attraction of FDI could also be enhanced by attracting large multinationals, although these seemed to be unpopular with consumer groups and non-governmental organizations. Globalization was similarly criticized, but had to be seen as an opportunity within the context of countries' domestic constraints, and was an especially important door for FDI. There was not just paucity of investment in Africa, but in some cases the wrong kind of investment, particularly in conflict zones.

- 74.** The Worker spokesperson reiterated the challenges of increasing investment to promote decent work in the context of fair globalization. African growth had not reduced unemployment or poverty. Footloose expatriate capital was seen as not helping decent work. Exports were based on low value added. To counter these negative tendencies a number of policy suggestions were made. The DWA was recommended for all enterprises. Tax exemptions for enterprises had to cease to raise much needed revenues. The role of public investment in infrastructure as a means of enhancing private sector investment was strongly endorsed. The private sector was seen as the main vehicle for generating growth and employment. Higher value needed to be added to processing of raw material. More employment-intensive industries were required. The agricultural sector should be developed to give food security. There was a major need for human resource development to enhance productivity and competitiveness.
- 75.** The Worker spokesperson also set out a number of broader goals, which he felt would encourage investment and decent work. Remnants of various forms of discrimination had to be eliminated. A fairer distribution of revenues was also necessary. A new type of globalization was called for, which was based on decent work and the MDGs. The World Bank agenda of liberalization and privatization was decried as being anti-labour. And the World Trade Organization (WTO) trade agenda was seen as not helping either employment, or women. Tripartite consultation was recommended to redress the negative impact of the agendas of these institutions.
- 76.** The Workers emphasized the role of public sector investment in infrastructure as a means of enhancing private sector investment, and saw the decline of this public sector investment in infrastructure as being caused by the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the IMF. Not only had social investment in health, education and physical infrastructure gone down, but entire public sector transport systems, like railways, had also been scrapped in some countries. It was necessary to include a basic needs agenda within the DWA. Elements of this basic needs agenda included food security to generate growth in agriculture, housing to boost domestic demand, investment in health to curb HIV/AIDS, provision of drinking water and electricity. All these basic needs-driven industries would also generate good growth and employment.
- 77.** Foreign investment did not appear to be helping domestic investment in Africa. FDI needed better monitoring for its impact on decent work deficits. There was also an apprehension that calls for revised labour codes, and increasing flexibility might lead to a reduction in decent work, and privatization might result in mass retrenchment. Accordingly these processes needed to be based on tripartite consultation.
- 78.** The comments from Government delegates were largely based on conditions and policies in their own countries. Zambia highlighted macro policy reforms to attract FDI, which came in, initially, in the trading sector from the southern African subregion and, later, in the textile, mining, tourism and agricultural sectors from Asia and Western Europe. The DWA had been mainstreamed into a number of national policy framework documents. Algeria pointed out the importance of instituting incentives for improving decent work, and generating productive employment through development of infrastructure. South Africa reiterated the important role of public infrastructure in generating employment and referred to its very high budget allocations for this sector.

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79. A number of other governments concurred with the introductory remarks, on the role of the three complementary forms of investment, public, domestic private investment and FDI, and stressed the need for better balance between them.

II. Delivering through DWCPs: Contents, strategy and process; experiences, lessons learned and the way forward

80. The Executive Director of the Director-General's Office, Ms Ducci, explained that the objective of the session was to share the constituents' perception of the DWCPs. She outlined the evolution of decent work from its conceptual origin, to its adoption by Africa at the Ouagadougou Summit in 2004, which had transformed it into a global goal. The Summit also brought the decent work concept to the country level in the form of DWCPs. The four pillars of DWCPs formed a coherent package, which could be adapted to varying national priorities and overall development plans. DWCPs aimed at placing employment at the centre of national development strategies. They were an advocacy and management tool, as well as an instrument to advance national policy coherence. DWCPs could be strategically designed to attain country objectives by highlighting public policy and its beneficial effects on the market economy. DWCPs were the ILO's contribution to broader national development frameworks.
81. The ILO's tripartite constituents must own DWCPs and use them as their contribution to UNDAFs. To be able to do so, constituents must build their capacity to develop and implement DWCPs. This included building institutional capacity, strengthening the legal framework and creating an enabling environment to achieve the objectives. Moreover, it was necessary to build a knowledge base and promote partnerships with the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral and other institutions.
82. The ILO Regional Director for Africa then introduced her team of ILO Directors in Africa, who were ready to answer questions on the status of DWCPs in the different countries for which they were responsible.
83. An Employer delegate from Burkina Faso thanked the ILO for its role in formulating DWCPs. He explained that decent work created stable jobs, which emanated from high-quality enterprises. In other words, a business-friendly environment generated decent jobs. Although the private sector had material resources and technical skills, the capacity of employers had to be reinforced in such areas as productivity improvement, job creation and HIV/AIDS in the workplace. He added that achieving national policy coherence required the participation of employers, emphasizing the importance of social dialogue. He noted that, while 19 countries were implementing DWCPs and 25 more were preparing one, many constituents were not aware of this and should be informed. An adequate system of follow-up and evaluation was also necessary.
84. A Worker delegate from Senegal regretted that international labour standards had been left out of many DWCPs. He cited several examples of DWCPs where workers were only mentioned as participants in a tripartite context. Workers had not participated in the elaboration of a number of DWCPs. It was necessary to revise the DWCPs concerned to ensure proper attention to international labour standards.
85. An Employer delegate from Nigeria considered that DWCPs should be demand driven and participative. It was crucial to discuss funding early during the formulation stage. DWCPs required constituent-led follow-up, evaluation and review. They should be a platform for sharing tripartite experiences. These sentiments were echoed by a number of other participants.

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86. A Government delegate of Uganda was pleased that the formulation of the draft DWCP in his country was done in a highly consultative manner. He identified a number of challenges, including the lack of human and material resources to implement the carefully formulated laws and policies.
 87. A Government delegate of Malawi indicated that his country still had to formulate a DWCP. He noted the need to build the capacity of the social partners and underscored the need for improving research capacity to obtain adequate data on which to make informed choices. Other key ministries, such as the ministries of finance and planning should also be involved in the process of formulating DWCPs.
 88. A number of participants reiterated that DWCPs must be demand driven and participatory, to ensure national ownership. The call for increased participation, especially of trade unions, was repeated by several delegates, as was the call for the reinforcement of tripartism throughout the process of formulation and implementation of the DWCPs. The need for capacity building was underscored, particularly in terms of needs assessment and programme development. The ILO's Turin Centre had an important role to play in this respect.

Summary of parallel sessions

89. Four parallel sessions were held during the meeting to address issues of particular significance to the African region: I. Combating child labour – Promoting youth employment; II. Tackling HIV/AIDS in the world of work; III. Integrated employment and social protection policies to upgrade the informal economy; and IV. Governance and social dialogue.

I. Combating child labour – Promoting youth employment

90. Following brief introductions of the subject by the Executive Director of the ILO's Employment Sector and the Director of IPEC, participants' observations covered three broad areas, namely the challenges, potential solutions, and examples of country programmes to combat child labour and to promote youth employment. As regards the diagnosis, some alarming figures were presented, such as the 50 million working children in Africa. High rates of youth unemployment, 20 per cent for young men and women, were also cited. These were considerably higher than those of adults. Of particular concern was the scourge of child soldiers, street children, sex workers and trafficking of children across borders. However, while the picture was gloomy, there were some indicators of progress.
91. Child labour and youth unemployment amounted to formidable economic and social wastes at individual, family, community and country levels. Furthermore, they constituted a serious political risk. As the Minister of Faso had noted, "If we don't take care of youth, youth will take care of us".
92. The main causes of child labour and youth employment included unemployed parents, lack of education and training opportunities, the informal economy, cultural norms and attitudes that considered it more important to have children at work in agriculture than for them to be educated. There were also lapses in law enforcement and labour inspection.
93. Participants considered it necessary to make youth employment creation and the fight against child labour a priority. This should include investment and entrepreneurship support in employment-intensive sectors, such as construction, tourism, agriculture,

textiles and clothing. It should also include entrepreneurship training, including access to credit and business development services, for self-employment and cooperatives.

94. It was necessary to invest in education and training, both formal and informal, and to provide free and compulsory education, to break the vicious circle of poverty and child labour. Participants further noted the role of labour market institutions and processes, including labour market information, employment services targeting youth, career orientation and guidance aimed at families and communities, to encourage youth to find their vocations through vocational training and apprenticeships.
95. Other areas of intervention identified included media campaigns and membership of appropriate associations to defend their interests and rights. The objective would be to seek an acknowledgement of young persons as important and active socio-economic members of society, and consequently entitled to be involved in the design and implementation of youth employment policies and programmes.
96. Finally, participants addressed the way forward, including the need to place child labour and youth employment high on the political and policy agenda, to develop clear action plans and have clearly defined roles of the respective stakeholders and actors. It was necessary to link up policies and programmes on child labour and those on youth employment. The active involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in policies and programmes, and encouragement to them to initiate specific programmes on their own, in areas such as campaigns and development of corporate codes of conduct was also required. The need to ensure sufficient financial resources was emphasized. The role of UN agencies, such as the ILO and the UNDP and other multilateral organizations was also highlighted.

II. Tackling HIV/AIDS in the world of work

97. A representative of the Executive Director of the ILO's Social Protection Sector recalled that the rights at work of people living with HIV/AIDS had to be respected. HIV/AIDS should be tackled through prevention, by helping constituents to prevent further spread of the pandemic, and through social protection, by exploring and designing new ways of social protection coverage.
98. The Director of the ILO/AIDS programme highlighted the disturbingly high incidence of new HIV/AIDS infections among adolescent girls. She described the ILO approach to HIV/AIDS in the workplace and in particular the ILO code of practice. In March 2007, the ILO Governing Body had proposed developing a Recommendation on HIV/AIDS in the workplace at the 2009 International Labour Conference. The different ongoing technical cooperation activities her programme was implementing involved putting in place workplace programmes emphasizing defence of rights, reaching out to the informal sector, promoting employment opportunities for those affected by the pandemic and cooperation with regional bodies. To ensure wider impact it was important to integrate the fight against HIV/AIDS in DWCPs. She recalled that the ILO was one of the ten co-sponsors of UNAIDS.
99. An Employer delegate from Kenya indicated that the Employers were committed to fighting the pandemic, which affected the most productive segment of the population and constituted a threat to health, income and productivity for the continent as a whole. She highlighted the need to build partnerships, the importance of developing training materials and building capacity to scale up the response to the pandemic within PRSPs and DWCPs. It was also important to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions and support private sector action.

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- 100.** A Worker delegate from South Africa emphasized the importance of the ILO code of practice for the design and implementation of programmes and projects, for campaigns and for capacity building and training. Much more had to be done by all constituents. The knowledge level on safe sex and HIV/AIDS remained low in many countries in Africa, as did the perception of personal risk. The Workers were deeply concerned over the fact that African workers were experiencing the negative impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Out of 25 million African workers living with HIV/AIDS, 18 million lived in sub-Saharan Africa, and more than 50 per cent were women. The loss of a vast number of educated and trained workers such as teachers and health workers, whose skills were vital to maintaining social welfare, sustaining output and generating economic growth, continued to pose a major challenge to the world of work. The Workers considered that tackling the pandemic was an integral part of the African agenda to promote decent work and sustainable development. This required strengthening partnerships with employers. At the regional and global levels, trade unions and employers' organizations had already signed agreements advancing a common approach to the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.
- 101.** Trade union activities had largely focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support at the regional, national and workplace levels. Trade union programmes and projects continued to target all workers including those in high-risk jobs. The Workers also appealed to the ILO to address the exclusion of workers and employers in major bodies such as the Global Fund.
- 102.** During the subsequent discussion, participants referred to the linkage between HIV/AIDS, poverty and the lack of decent work, the need to build strong partnerships with other stakeholders to share knowledge and jointly mobilize resources. Strong regional collaboration was fundamental. Legislation was necessary to avoid discrimination against people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Governments had to work closely with workers' and employers' groups to develop guidelines and codes of conduct on how to manage HIV/AIDS in the workplace. More research was also necessary. The challenges in accessing the Global Fund had to be addressed while workers' and employers' representatives should be included in the Global Fund's governing organs. In many countries, workers had not yet been included in the country coordinating mechanisms.

III. Integrated employment and social protection policies to upgrade the informal economy

- 103.** The Director of the ILO's Employment Policy Department observed that the extent of the informal economy was one of the biggest challenges. While an important source of livelihood and income for 90 per cent of the workforce, most informal economy workers and units had limited access to mainstream development resources. The representative of the Executive Director of the Social Protection Sector added that, though most countries in the region could afford some form of investment in social protection, 90 per cent of the workforce went without. Investment was required if the MDGs were to be met and the Decent Work Agenda was to be effectively realized at the country level. Governments and the social partners should support the entrepreneurial potential and creativity in the informal economy, and extend social protection.
- 104.** Only 10 per cent of the African labour force was in the formal economy, with agriculture as the predominant employer, although non-agricultural employment had expanded rapidly. Some 80 per cent of new jobs created were in the informal economy, defined as economic activities not formally covered by the law or by practice, and therefore without legal recognition, social protection, and access to mainstream public or private resources. The sector contained diverse activities, occupied largely by women workers, and characterized by low productivity, with low and insecure incomes.

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- 105.** Breaking out of informality implied the implementation of a range of integrated and coherent policies aiming at preservation of livelihoods and the moving of economic units into the mainstream economy. This called for policies on employment generation, the extension of social protection, a regulatory environment for labour rights, entrepreneurial and skill support, local development and strengthened social dialogue. The specific policy agenda should contain several integrated elements: a reorientation of growth, as well as investment and poverty reduction strategies targeting the informal economy. Fiscal space had to be created to provide social protection coverage, with precautionary measures to prevent discrimination and promote equality.
 - 106.** The tripartite constituents agreed on the importance of addressing the informal economy in a structured manner, with a comprehensive, mutually reinforcing range of policies. They further agreed that the transition from the informal to formal economy should be gradual.
 - 107.** The Employer spokesperson stressed that with new dynamics and characteristics the face of the informal economy was changing, thus adding to the dilemma of its definition. A broad spectrum of policies was required for the development and growth of the sector. There must be a paradigm shift in approach that assured that formalization was a natural consequence. He noted that informal did not necessarily mean “unorganized”. Networks existed, which had a role to play in providing organization and support.
 - 108.** The Worker spokesperson identified two stages in developing the informal economy: organizing its workers and encouraging its transition into the formal economy. Among a number of objectives, she highlighted recognizing the status of all workers and extending the right to social security, freedom of association and the right to bargaining, thus making informal work decent.
 - 109.** Several Government delegates explained the policies and programmes in their countries to address the informal economy. A Government delegate of Niger said that social protection in his country had been addressed by a new bill which would provide social security in all sectors.
 - 110.** The Government representative of South Africa indicated that in his country, informal economy workers were covered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund and that more than half a million domestic workers had access to unemployment benefit that included illness, maternity and adoption benefits. To address the underdevelopment and marginalization of the informal economy, there was a need to transfer resources to enable it to break out of its underdevelopment. These resources included education and training capital for business development and construction of the necessary social and economic infrastructure, marketing information and appropriate technology.

IV. Governance and social dialogue

- 111.** The Executive Director a.i. of the ILO’s Social Dialogue Sector, emphasized the need to move from discussions to concrete actions. Debates should be about the promotion of good governance, the rule of law and the institutions of social dialogue at national and regional levels. Political will by governments was an essential prerequisite for social dialogue and good governance.
- 112.** Through social dialogue and good governance, governments, employers and workers exerted influence over socio-economic policies and in turn realized the goals of the DWA. The three parties should play their mutually reinforcing roles and increase their ability to negotiate key national issues. Social dialogue was equally important within RECs; there was a need to strengthen the tripartite structures at that level, to provide a means whereby the tripartite partners could reflect together on socio-economic and monetary decisions.

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- 113.** The Employer spokesperson said that social dialogue must be used to formulate wider socio-economic policies as it was the basis for good governance. The dearth of social dialogue in Africa was a cause of poverty. Freedom of association, strong and representative workers' and employers' organizations with financial independence were critical requirements of social dialogue. Regional social dialogue was a new development, and the status of employers' and workers' organizations needed to be upgraded to participate in dialogue at this level. National workers' and employers' organizations must adhere to good governance. In this connection, the speaker mentioned that the Pan-African Employers' Confederation had developed a code of good governance.
- 114.** The Worker spokesperson said that poverty in Africa was not a result of a lack of resources but of poor governance. Social dialogue reinforced the observance of human rights and the rule of law, thus promoting good governance. Through appropriate mechanisms, the social partners contributed to national policy, as the ILO's Promotion of Social Dialogue in French-speaking Africa (PRODIAF) programme had demonstrated in francophone countries.
- 115.** There were tripartite structures in several countries, as well as in the Central African Monetary Community (CAEMC), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), and the Trade Union Confederation of Arab Maghreb Workers (USTMA), which had participated in the revision of labour codes, and of the regulations governing the civil service; in negotiating and adopting collective agreements; and in the adoption of social pacts and protocols. Certain challenges remained, including the deliberate weakening of trade unions by some governments, for example, on the Economic and Social Council of Chad, workers' and employers' organizations had only eight seats out of a total of 31 members; the insufficiency of trade union resources; failure of governments to recognize trade unions as representative; and failure to implement ratified ILO Conventions; several employers' and workers' organizations at subregional level were not operational due to lack of funds. He recommended reinforcing employers' and workers' organizations at all levels; capacity building of subregional organizations of employers and workers; consolidation of social dialogue; effective implementation of ILO instruments; the organization of tripartite or sectoral meetings on important themes, such as fair and balanced globalization, the ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, the first draft of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa's Uniform Act concerning the right to work, international trade and the WTO, and governance and social dialogue at national, regional and subregional levels.
- 116.** A Worker delegate from Algeria pointed to a positive experience of the practice of dialogue between the social partners and the Government. The positive outcome of this dialogue for the workers had been the signing of a four-year economic and social pact, followed by a framework collective agreement for the economic sector: this initiative had been welcomed by the ILO's Director-General, the Chairperson of the Workers' group and by the Secretary-General of the ICTU.
- 117.** The 11th African Regional Meeting noted with interest the good social dialogue practices in African countries. The example of the process of dialogue initiated and developed in the textile and clothing sector in Morocco to promote decent work in the sector could be extended to other sectors and, with ILO technical assistance, provide inspiration to other countries.
- 118.** The following ideas emerged from the discussions:
- social dialogue was an important element in good governance and an efficient way of identifying best socio-economic options at national, regional and continental levels;
 - each country should use social dialogue to advance the DWA;

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- there should be effective institutionalized dialogue at the regional level;
 - concrete action should be taken to promote social dialogue. and to measure its efficiency and effectiveness in terms of structure, composition, functioning, disputes management and application of labour Conventions;
 - social partners needed to have the capacity to face up to the rapidly changing environment; this required lifelong learning.
 - there was clear support for social dialogue in the RECs;
 - the ILO's role was to provide demand-driven technical support to labour administration and social partners.

Information sessions

119. Four information sessions were held during the meeting on the following subjects: International labour standards, growth and development in Africa; Social protection in Africa; ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration; and Follow-up to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.

International labour standards, growth and development in Africa

- 120.** International labour standards play a role as a means of development as well as a goal and guide governance of the world of work to achieve equitable and sustainable economic and social development. Growth is an important engine for job creation. Effective employment strategies should therefore create job-rich growth strategies. The provisions of the ILO's international labour standards have a great deal to contribute to job-rich growth as an integral part of the international drive to achieve the ILO's DWA and the MDGs.
- 121.** The ILO's dialogue with constituents on promoting respect for international labour standards needs to continue increasing reflection on the ways in which more effective and efficient labour laws and mechanisms of social dialogue can reduce the gulf between the informal and formal economies of the developing world. Such an approach, among others, contributes to the opening up of opportunities for micro- and small businesses to become more productive and offer more and better jobs.
- 122.** Respect for international labour standards, as **rights at work**, sustains progress towards poverty reduction while reinforcing **democracy** and underpinning **peace**. Respect for rights at work and for the legal and regulatory structures to implement them, assist workers, employers and society as a whole in the quest for sustainable economic growth and inclusive social development.
- 123.** ILO research already indicates that putting labour standards into practice improves the economies of developing countries. In fact, lack of respect for workers' rights has a negative impact on development and on the people directly affected. Labour standards are a tool to assist development and to measure progress towards development. They are thus both instruments and indicators. In addition, respect for labour standards has a number of positive governance benefits. It builds respect for the rule of law; increases respect for human rights; promotes decent work; improves dialogue between social partners and improves prospects for exports as importing countries increasingly demand respect for international labour standards. As such, it makes a major contribution to poverty reduction.

Social protection in Africa

124. Social protection is an essential aspiration for individuals and for society. Social protection is a goal in itself, but also participates in achieving other objectives, including the objectives of the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (Ouagadougou, September 2004) and the MDGs. Social security coverage for all, promoting prevention in occupational safety and health, improving conditions at work and protecting such vulnerable groups as migrant workers, persons living with HIV/AIDS and informal economy workers, constitute the strategic objective of the sector.
125. Widening the knowledge and analysis base to support the constituents in respect of policies and programmes, developing practical tools, and awareness campaigns are the basis of the different elements of the sector. DWCPs provide an excellent opportunity for making social protection a priority in national development policies.
126. The social partners and governments have an essential role to play within the framework of an effective social dialogue to ensure equilibrium between economic growth and social growth.

ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration

127. International migration has become a critical issue on the Global Policy Agenda. For Africa, migration flows occur both within the continent and towards the European Union and other developed countries. The latter countries tend to attract highly skilled African workers, while providing few opportunities for legal entry of low-skilled workers. While the ultimate goal for African countries is to develop decent work opportunities to retain educated and skilled professionals, the short-term priority is to implement policies and practices to regulate labour mobility in and from the region.
128. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration provides a key tool for formulating and reviewing migration policy by country and by region. The Framework covers the governance of migration; international cooperation; protection and promotion of migrant worker rights; and promotion of migration and development linkages. It supplements existing ILO and UN migrant worker instruments, taking account of new global challenges and developments, and provides practical advice to governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders in all fields of national and international labour migration policies.
129. Key challenges include promoting the role of labour migration as a development instrument; addressing the lack of policy coherence and coordination at national, regional and international levels; supporting tripartite dialogue on labour migration issues and improving capacities of tripartite partners and other stakeholders to contribute to, develop and implement labour migration policies and practices based on the ILO Multilateral Framework.

Follow-up to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

130. The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, was adopted at the 94th Session of the International Labour Conference in an almost unprecedented tripartite vote of 314 in favour and none against and was described by the Director-General as "making labour history". The Convention is a significant step towards realizing decent work in the context of globalization. It has a dual objective of securing decent work for seafarers through

effective implementation of labour standards and achieving a level playing field for shipowners.

- 131.** The Convention consolidates 68 existing ILO Conventions and Recommendations which it will replace when it comes into force. This will occur when 30 member States making up 33 per cent of world gross tonnage ratify the Convention. It contains a number of innovations and new approaches to help achieve widespread ratification and effective implementation.
- 132.** This Convention is relevant to the African region because: (1) the governments of the region are very concerned about shipping and ensuring control over, and access to, the world's major international transport system to allow them to develop their export sectors; (2) African seafarers will have the potential to play an ever important role in the international maritime workforce; (3) Africa is home to the second largest shipping register in the world (Liberia) and thus profits from the economic benefits associated with ship registration; and (4) as coastal States, taking care of the human element on ships – the people – is central to ensuring high-quality, environmentally friendly, safe and secure shipping.
- 133.** With a view to achieving rapid and widespread ratification and effective implementation of the Convention, the Office has adopted a five-year action plan that has two primary goals: (1) to promote the rapid ratification of the Convention, especially in countries that did not play an active part in its preparation; and (2) to arrange for countries that are not yet in a position to implement the Convention to have the necessary legal and technical assistance to do so.

Resolution on Africa's representation on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office

- 134.** The following resolution on Africa's representation on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office was submitted to the Regional Meeting by a Government delegate of Kenya, on behalf of the entire Government group. The resolution was unanimously supported by the Employers' and Workers' groups.

The 11th African Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization, having met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 24 to 27 April 2007,

Considering the general developments within the United Nations system of moving towards equitable permanent representation within its governing structures,

Taking into account that Africa comprises the largest block within the International Labour Organization,

Reaffirming the conviction that the ILO should remain the most representative, transparent and accountable UN body,

Aware of the need for the ILO to continue as a leading UN agency that ensures equitable and proper geographical representation,

1. *Calls* for urgent action to be undertaken to ensure that Africa's representation corresponds to its numerical and strategic importance;

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2. *Urges* the Governing Body at its June 2007 session to request the Director-General of the ILO to prepare a comprehensive document to be submitted to the November 2007 Governing Body on the matter of criteria for geographical and country representation within the ILO Governing Body;
 3. *Urges* that this process be carried through in a speedy manner, and that a proposal is presented by the convening of the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Consideration of the report of the Credentials Committee

135. The Meeting took note of the report of the Credentials Committee, while endorsing the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 24 thereof.

Consideration and adoption of the conclusions

136. The Employer spokesperson endorsed the conclusions on behalf of her group, but wished to record the group's reservation in respect of paragraph 29 of the text, which contained a reference to the Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198). This Recommendation was not supported by the Employers' group at its adoption at the 95th Session (June 2006) of the International Labour Conference.
137. The Worker spokesperson thanked the Government and Employers' groups for arriving at a compromise which demonstrated a true sense of engagement. The conclusions established time frames and targets and would provide a real basis for progress. Strong tripartism would be required for their implementation.
138. The conclusions were then adopted by the Meeting.

Consideration and adoption of the report of the Meeting

139. Several delegates submitted amendments, which were incorporated in its final version of the report. The report was then adopted, subject to the decision of the ILO Governing Body.

Closing ceremony

140. The Government Vice-Chairperson highlighted the excellent collaboration and understanding between the groups which had characterized the debates throughout the Meeting. She hoped that action would be taken regarding the conclusions and resolution that had been adopted.
141. An Employers' delegate from Cameroon, speaking on behalf of the Employer Vice-Chairperson, said the group was pleased with the result of the Meeting. He pointed to the profound change in attitude that globalization had brought to the African continent. The legislative and political structures governing enterprise should be reviewed to provide an environment propitious to sustainable growth with viable enterprises. Good governance and social dialogue should be promoted.

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142. The Worker spokesperson, speaking on behalf of the Worker Vice-Chairperson, also expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the Meeting, the work of which had been conducted with a sense of “team spirit”. It was important that this spirit should be taken back home to the participating countries, so that progress could be made.
143. The Director-General underlined four important messages that had emerged during the Meeting. The first of these was the political **relevance** of the ILO’s agenda; this had been underlined by the presence of three Presidents at the Meeting. The Minister of Labour and Social Security of Portugal, speaking in the context of a side event, had also stressed the pertinence of the DWA. The second was **ownership**, as demonstrated by the conclusions adopted, which were the clear and personal choices of the participants. The third was **commitment**, a quality which had particularly marked the proceedings; and the fourth was **partnerships**, the importance of which had been eloquently expressed by Mr Kemal Derviş, UNDP Administrator, in his address to the Meeting. Mr Somavia stated the ILO’s support for a Second Social Partners Forum. The clarity of the conclusions opened up the path for tripartism at home within the countries. The ILO was ready to accompany its constituents in the implementation of these conclusions.
144. The Chairperson of the 11th African Regional Meeting said that the discussions had broadened the participants’ perspectives, and had led to the successful adoption of valuable conclusions. These must be translated into reality. The Tenth African Regional Meeting (Addis Ababa, 2–5 December 2003) had already discussed many of the themes taken up at the present Meeting, but there had been a change of focus and a new impetus given to the process of development. The fundamental goal remained the generation of decent work. The drive for the sustainable development that would attain this goal would be supported by social dialogue, by negotiation and by debate.

Appendix I

High-level panel discussion “Partnerships for Decent Work in Africa”

(25 April 2007)

1. Participants at the Meeting attended a high-level panel chaired by the Director-General, with the following panel members: Mr Jeetun, Secretary-General of the Pan-African Confederation of Employers; Ms Ameline, Ambassador, Government representative of France on the Governing Body of the ILO; Mr Manyazewal, Minister of State for Finance and Economic Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Mr Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour and of Social Security of Portugal; Mr Diboti, Worker delegate from Cameroon.
2. Mr Jeetun noted the importance of partnerships but pointed out that they should be a means to achieve development, progress and prosperity, better conditions of employment, better standards of living and better quality of life. He urged the social partners to put forward their own views which should be discussed with other stakeholders to achieve a common and shared national vision.
3. Good policies were required to create an enabling environment for enterprises to achieve growth to generate more and better employment, improve productivity and competitiveness. There was equally a need for partnerships for innovation, and technology to enhance the productivity of enterprises, particularly through training and research, and skills and employability development. He echoed the need for partnerships with the RECs in order to promote intra-African trade.
4. Mr Diboti noted that while Africa had recorded high economic growth, this had not been translated into equitable and social progress to fight the scourge of poverty and social exclusion. The Workers’ group believed that poverty alleviation strategies could only succeed if there was a focus on decent employment creation, as employment was more than a simple source of revenue; it was a source of personal dignity, family stability, community peace and true democracy. Action undertaken as part of the DWA should therefore cover the informal economy, where most vulnerable populations were concentrated.
5. The globalization model proposed by the WTO and Bretton Woods institutions did not address the challenges facing African countries. He urged the ILO to make sure decent employment and fundamental rights at work became objectives of these institutions as well. Finally, he referred to the initiative of the European Commission to offer African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries unlimited access to its markets through Economic Partnership Agreements.¹ The involvement of social partners in the Cotonou Agreement testified to the important role workers’ organizations had in ensuring that global agreements incorporated decent work criteria.
6. The State Minister of Finance of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, referred to the Ouagadougou Summit as a concrete commitment by African leaders to put employment and decent work at the centre of their economic and social policies. Africa now needed to consider how to make decent work a reality. Many declarations at regional and international levels had already confirmed the commitment of the international community and of African leaders’ to decent work. The key issue was now conversion into concrete action. The Ethiopian Government had put decent work at the centre of its development framework. Creation of decent jobs was an important pillar in the five-year programme for socio-economic development. Creating an enabling environment for employment creation, allowing the private sector to seize the opportunities to generate jobs was critical to attaining sustained growth. Partnerships were crucial to the empowerment of citizens to prioritize, plan and implement programmes to address their needs. The devolution process in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia had capacitated local governments to take up their responsibilities fully in leveraging the scarce resources available, and to enter into international partnerships as a means of supplementing domestic efforts.

¹ Accord de Partenariat Economique (APE).

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7. The Minister of Labour and of Social Security of Portugal noted that the Millennium Development Agenda and decent work approach were challenges that existed worldwide. The talk about the need for global converging efforts to increase social protection and inclusion should not be seen as rhetorical or ideological statements. It was now time to put forward an agenda that allowed countries to battle the poverty trap through decent employment. The social dimension of globalization was of growing concern in the European Union. Decent work was probably the most powerful concept, and effective tool, that the international community had produced, as it provided options to address the effects of globalization. He noted the achievements of the ILO in engaging in the PRSP debates and the introduction of the DWCPs. The European Commission had recently published a document on “promoting decent work for all as a structural factor for development”, and he suggested that the DWA should also be promoted in relevant international forums such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO. The Portuguese Development Cooperation had given high priority to employment and training programmes to address poverty and social exclusion. Constructive and structured dialogue between Africa and Europe was mandatory for greater convergence of efforts in promoting sustainable development. The DWA was a real guide for action, together with the MDGs. The ILO should participate actively in multilateral coordination processes to ensure policy coherence at all levels. Portugal would soon assume the Presidency of the European Union, and the issue of decent work, fair globalization and partnership between Africa and Europe would be high on the agenda.
 8. The Government member of France on the ILO Governing Body recalled her Government’s engagement and support for the ILO since its founding, as well as the Government’s desire to see a strong and confident Africa, making globalization a success. She noted that the European Union had endorsed decent work as central to its priorities. She also noted that the European Commission collaborated with international organizations in formulating indicators to monitor the efforts made by the various stakeholders on the issue of decent work. The fight to eradicate poverty could only be won in a favourable enabling environment, improved governance through social dialogue, identifying decent work deficits, a legal framework that protected workers rights, and guaranteed gender equality, as well as the extension of social protection schemes. In this context, France had renewed its partnership agreement with the ILO in 2006, to assist in promoting decent work, so that globalization benefited society more broadly.
 9. Her Government had doubled its financial aid to Africa and was confident that partnership between the ILO and the other UN agencies, as well as multilateral development agencies at the country level in African countries, would be a success. The French Government supported the extension of social protection coverage, and advocated including the DWA among the issues for international negotiations. The voice of the social partners and civil society should also be heard. Finally, she congratulated the ILO and the African Union on joint initiatives to fight discrimination of all types, and violations of rights at work.
 10. A Worker delegate from Tunisia noted that while the general discourse about decent work was very optimistic, the painful reality for workers was that globalization had forced workers out of jobs. Dialogue between the social partners was therefore more urgent than ever.
 11. At the end of the session, the Director-General identified the following themes that had emerged from the presentations:
 - partnership was a means to an end and the end was achieving the DWA;
 - international cooperation should help countries in accordance with their own priorities;
 - decent work must be transformed from a concept into a concrete reality;
 - international partnerships should supplement domestic efforts of governments and the social partners. In this regard, the participation of citizens in society was essential;
 - there was a common understanding that decent work would contribute significantly to achieving fair globalization.

Appendix II

Women's entrepreneurship: Lunchtime debate (25 April 2007)

1. Mr Kemal Derviş, UNDP Administrator, referred to the growing consensus on the need to combine public social policy with entrepreneurship as key elements of development strategies. Women were emerging as strong leaders worldwide in all types of enterprises, extending a tradition of women's leadership in Africa. He stressed the need for increasing the involvement of women in political leadership, noting the UNDP's work to strengthen the empowerment of women.
2. Ms Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament, underlined the importance of women's entrepreneurship, the achievement of decent work, and the realization of the MDGs. Entrepreneurship and decent work must go beyond just empowering women economically and financially by ensuring the removal of the structural and legal barriers that women constantly encountered.
3. The Director-General, recalled that "when you empower African women, you empower Africa". He noted the progress being made in countries such as his own, Chile, towards gender equality in politics.
4. In her contribution, the Chairperson, the ILO Regional Director for Africa, noted that, in Africa, women's entrepreneurship transcended economic and financial activity, embracing as it did social, cultural, economic, financial and environmental aspects.
5. The Director of the ILO Office, Lusaka, recalled the pillars of the DWA, noting the extent to which they were interrelated, as demonstrated in the Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme. Similarly, collaboration between the ILO, its constituents, other UN agencies and development agencies such as Irish Aid Partnership was essential for empowering more women in more countries.
6. The other speakers, who included representatives of the UNDP, AfDB, the Amhara Women Entrepreneurs Association, TUCN, and the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chambers of Commerce, all referred to the constraints that women faced in setting up and growing their businesses. The Employer representative considered that employers' organizations had an important role in helping women to organize themselves and to formalize their businesses. The Worker representative indicated that the trade unions should promote workers' representation in micro-, small and medium enterprises. The latter point was echoed by the ECA representative, who pointed to the need to find ways to mainstream women's entrepreneurship into national development frameworks, such as the PRSPs.
7. The President of the Amhara Women Entrepreneurs Association provided several examples of how WEDGE had helped the membership of her organization to grow within a relatively short period. The UNDP representative proposed that entrepreneurship should move beyond SMEs towards scaling up capabilities by building on entitlements, access to markets, broad financial intermediation and the enhanced use of information and communication technology. The AfDB representative outlined the activities that that organization was undertaking to address women's entrepreneurship, highlighting the African Women in Business Initiative.
8. The AU representative summarized the follow-up action to the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in 2004 in the area of women's entrepreneurship.
9. The proposals on the way forward for development partners included scaling up of current initiatives to support women's entrepreneurship that have proven to be successful, advocacy and support for policies that are pro-poor and pro-women and providing support for capacity development.