



## Special sitting

Monday, 17 June 2013, 12 p.m.

*President: Mr Katamine*

**ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY  
DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA,  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

The PRESIDENT

It is my great honour to greet, on behalf of the Conference, our distinguished guest, Her Excellency Dr Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Guy Ryder, to say some words of welcome to Dr Dlamini Zuma.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Dr Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, we welcome you sincerely and warmly to our Conference and to the ILO. An activist and a medical doctor with a distinguished political career in your own country, South Africa, you are the first woman at the helm of the African Union Commission. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the African Union (AU), and it is being celebrated under the theme of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

I was privileged not only to attend the important commemorative event in Addis Ababa that confirmed that Africa is rising, but also to witness at first hand African leaders' engagement and enthusiasm for consolidating and advancing Africa's achievements.

Your presence with us today is all the more meaningful because it gives us the opportunity to celebrate with you the African Renaissance and, perhaps more importantly, to reflect together on how the ILO can and must contribute to it.

In 1965 the partnership between the ILO and the African Union, which was then the Organization of African Unity, was forged. We have been honoured to collaborate over the years in many areas, particularly with the Labour and Social Affairs Commission.

Our founding principle that "all human beings ... have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity" underlies everything that the ILO does, including in your continent, Africa.

It is extremely encouraging to see ILO values widely recognized by African countries, as keys to their forward development processes. Many of them have ratified all of our eight fundamental Conventions, reflecting a strong commitment to fundamental principles and rights at work.

Africa is rising. It is also encouraging to see African economies growing so strongly, and those countries bringing down poverty levels and progressing on the Decent Work Agenda. Yet jobless growth is a challenge to the African continent, as it is to all others.

Today the African Union is at the forefront of the continent's collective efforts to achieve Africa's development goals.

Dr Dlamini Zuma, the world of work is undergoing tremendous transformation, as I have outlined in my Report to the Conference. These realities and trends will have repercussions in Africa, as elsewhere, and several themes are pertinent to the agenda of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

I note, for example, the following priority areas that you have identified: investing in your people so that all Africa's children – girls and boys – will have a better future; focusing on small, medium and micro-enterprises, rural development and industrialization to meet the challenge of job creation, especially for youth, and the challenge of overcoming poverty; tackling rising social inequalities; empowering women; and promoting solidarity and integration.

As the ILO embarks on a process of renewal and reform, we ourselves have identified areas of critical importance which, I believe, correspond very strongly with the needs and priorities of Africa.

We would be honoured to put our work in these areas at the service of the African Renaissance. Past collaboration between the ILO and the institutions of the African Union brings, I believe, a lot of relevant experience. I am thinking, for example, of the following areas.

Poverty elimination: the ILO actively contributed to the AU's first Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, held in Ouagadougou in 2004. On the road to Ouagadougou +10 next year, the ILO stands ready to intensify its cooperation with our African member States and with the AU Commission to further advance our common goals.

Youth employment: in the region with the youngest population in the world, we have worked together to make youth employment a political priority backed by an integrated policy agenda combining macroeconomic policies and active labour market policies. Africa can reap a demographic dividend but it means overcoming a serious jobs gap rapidly and collectively.

African private sector development: where our collaboration has covered areas such as women's

entrepreneurship, skills development and promoting economic diversification.

And not least, fostering social protection: the realization of labour rights and encouraging social dialogue.

Dr Dlamini Zuma, an important part of the contemporary narrative in Africa is assertiveness, energy, dynamism and creativity. We have no doubt that, as the Africa Agenda 2063 takes shape, you will be bringing enormous energy to the task of transforming Africa's economic, social and cultural paradigm and realizing the vision of a prosperous and peaceful continent.

You have spoken, madam, of the need for Africa "... to reclaim the African narrative – the narrative of our past, present and future – and to tell our own stories". We are honoured that you have chosen to come to the ILO today to continue telling the story of your continent.

I cannot close without saying that today our thoughts are also with President Mandela. We send him our best wishes. As we look to the future, let us all heed the words he addressed to us: "Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all."

Dr Dlamini Zuma, we look forward to hearing from you, and we welcome you again.

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*Ms DLAMINI ZUMA (Chairperson of the African Union Commission)*

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Allow me to thank you, Mr Ryder, for the invitation to address this august assembly on the occasion of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, but let me also thank you for your kind words and best wishes for President Mandela's speedy recovery. We all send him our positive thoughts, because he is no longer considered simply as a South African; he represents everything that is good in human beings across the globe.

I look forward to your recommendations on job creation, social protection and social dialogue for billions of workers in our global village, particularly the youth, women and low-income earners in rural settings. Three weeks ago, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the OAU and the AU. It was an opportunity for us to reflect on our past but also to look forward to our future with hope and agree on what should be done in the next 50 years to fully realize the objective of the African Union to build a united, prosperous, integrated Africa at peace with itself and representing a dynamic force in world affairs. There was unanimity among African leaders that job creation was among the most important factors for achieving this objective, and this unanimity was reflected in the Solemn Declaration and in the decisions adopted by the Summit. In both meetings, African leaders renewed their commitment to accelerate and enhance national and continental efforts to fight poverty and unemployment, with a particular emphasis on youth and women's employment. Already, in April of this year, the Ninth Ordinary Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission unanimously agreed that promoting employment and social protection should be a global concern, and a separate development goal in the post-2015 development agenda.

But also allow me to mention a joint initiative that is being developed by the AU Commission, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the ILO which also goes in the same direction of promoting

youth employment. We look forward to its speedy adoption and implementation. Basically, the joint initiative focuses on three main areas: (i) policy advice and advocacy during the development of youth employment policies; (ii) direct interventions in capacity building in favour of youth, notably over creation of quality and sustainable jobs and the provision of entrepreneurship skills and work experience for youth; and (iii) knowledge production and sharing.

The transformation of the OAU into the AU puts a strong emphasis on the social, economic development and integration agenda of the organization. The AU Extraordinary Summit in Ouagadougou in 2004 laid the ground for the AU strategy on employment. In 2008, the AU adopted its social policy framework for Africa addressing 18 key priorities, notably – to mention just a few – labour, employment and social protection. Its implementation is a major objective of the AU Commission in its strategic plan for 2014–17.

The AU's emphasis on youth employment is critical in the light of the demography of the continent. By all estimates, our continent is a continent of young people and it is getting younger. By 2025, it is estimated that African youth will make up a quarter of the world's population of under-25s. By 2040, half of the world's population will be in Africa, the majority of whom will be, of course, women and girls. This means that in the next 50 years, approximately 1.1 billion members of the workforce in the world will be African. By contrast, the African Development Bank estimates that, presently, youth make up only 37 per cent of the labour force in the mainstream economy, yet it constitutes 60 per cent of the overall unemployed. It is therefore imperative that we invest in our people, invest in their health, nutrition and education, and have them acquire the skills that will enable them to become productive members of our society. But to be properly employed the youth must be employable, so it means young people must be well prepared to respond to the professional and economic needs of their time. The kind of education they receive must therefore help them to adapt to the economic realities of the time. It must give them the necessary skills to be productive employees and, beyond that, to be job creators. It means, therefore, we must also place emphasis on science and technology, on information and communication technology (ICT), on innovations, on recession development in all aspects of human endeavour. And these areas must be areas of focus for education if Africa is to be prosperous and peaceful.

Take the case of ICT. Our youth have actively embraced it and in some instances they are making innovations in many areas, including those of banking. If we invest in youth and women properly, they can become a great asset to drive Africa's social, economic and cultural development. Failing that, they can also become a serious liability. In addition, national governments should create an economic, political and secure environment conducive to the realization of youth's potential.

As I stated earlier, to be employed the youth must be employable, but of course we must also explore the areas in which job opportunities exist. The continent holds abundant natural resources, some of which are still untapped. It has plenty of arable land and a variety of minerals. Its coastlines and oceanic spaces hold rich marine resources. These hold great

prospects for Africa's industrialization and economic prosperity, if exploited judiciously and to the benefit of the people. Africa has great potential in agriculture. We believe it can produce enough food to feed the continent and, to some extent, feed the world. It can also generate a lot of revenue if it processes and exports what it produces. Instead of spending billions of dollars to import food, as we do today, we could be receiving billions of dollars from exporting food.

Modernizing agriculture and fisheries will improve productivity. We should also pay special attention to the creation of, and investment in, small and medium-sized agricultural and fishing businesses and processing plants. These industries can also spur local production and create jobs by having some of the activities carried out by local communities.

The other area which is a key element for job creation is infrastructure development. Infrastructure development is a key driver of economic growth, but its absence is also a great impediment to development. Of course, we have already developed an intercontinental Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), which looks at infrastructure in all its dimensions. This includes transport infrastructure, roads, rail, maritime and air, and also ICT and energy infrastructure.

Some work has been done and is currently going on in the regions in the form of regional economic communities, but it needs to be accelerated. We shall strive to achieve the interconnection of all the regions and all the countries of the continent before 2063. Therefore, there is a need also for Africans to invest in a safe transportation sector because in this sector we are completely absent. An African presence in the major seaways and African ownership of shipping companies can stimulate more trade between island States and the rest of the continent. It will also end the physical isolation of the island States by facilitating the safe movement of goods and people between the islands and the coast. Intra-African tourism also stands to benefit, but of course all these activities will create jobs for young people, for women and for the rest of Africans.

Energy generation is critical, especially for industrialization. At present we are told that sub-Saharan Africa is generating only the same amount of energy as Spain, even though it has 20 times Spain's population. Statistics show that between 2006 and 2009 only 28 per cent of the African population had access to electricity, compared to 70 per cent in other parts of the developing world. So increasing investment in energy should include investing in hydro, geothermal and solar power. As I said, this would be critical for Africa's transformation in both economic and social areas, but it also will help create jobs.

If we attend to all the infrastructure, transport, energy, ICT and industrialization needs of the continent, we will be able to increase both intra-African trade and, of course, external trade. We will also be able to unlock intra-African tourism and increase the revenue of our people.

We also need to harmonize regulations and increase our cooperation to improve the movement of goods and people and accelerate job creation, particularly in favour of youth and women.

Tourism has great potential for job creation. The revenue generated by tourism is usually passed on to many other segments of society from the big

hospitality industry to small sellers of souvenirs and cultural artefacts, to transport and many others areas.

Africa is widely recognized for its abundance of wildlife and diversity of ecosystems and cultures. But, on the whole, the tourism industry in Africa remains generally weak because of poor infrastructure and its dependence on external demand. In addition, the tourism industry makes little effort to attract African tourists, perhaps because of a mistaken notion that Africans are not interested in tourism in Africa. Therefore, we are determined that this situation must change.

At the AU we are looking into how to help member States to showcase a variety of their cultures, ecosystems and beautiful landscapes, and build a sector that does not just cater to the curiosity of outsiders but serves as a port to intra-African cultural exchanges and the enhancement of our rich cultural heritage. This will help with job creation, but it also will showcase the beauty of our continent – and, of course, I believe that our continent is the most beautiful. But come and see for yourselves and then prove me right or wrong.

Governments have a major role to play in creating an environment conducive to the creation of decent and sustainable jobs. I am keenly aware of the challenges facing many governments that seek to implement macroeconomic policies that will be inclusive and distributive while, at the same time, trying to spur economic growth.

In the preface to a book on how Seychelles succeeded in transforming its economy in a short period of time, President James Michel wrote: "Too often, economies are allowed to slump deeper and deeper into crisis simply because leaders are reluctant to make tough decisions because they are concerned about possible social unrest." But President Michel writes that he decided to put the future of his country above everything else and put political considerations aside. He believes it was the right thing to do because the people of Seychelles needed a change in mindset from dependency to a new attitude of "Get up and do something for yourselves!" This is true for the people of the Seychelles, but it can be true for all of us.

Seychelles has demonstrated that it is possible to apply macroeconomic policies that spell growth and improve the living conditions of the people. But, I must say, part of their success was due, among other factors, to their investments in education and free and mandatory schooling, free health care and low-cost housing for low-income people. So it was not just a question of macroeconomic issues, but of social issues too.

The experience of Seychelles shows that, even if the fundamentals are right, Africa still needs courageous and visionary leadership, good planning and good implementation to realize the objective of the AU to build a united, prosperous, integrated continent at peace with itself.

Governments need to create conditions that promote social protection for the workers by making sure there is legislation that protects them against arbitrary dismissal and promotes healthy working environments. Social protection should also include job security for women and along with pregnancy care, paid maternity leave and childcare. Some progress is being made, but I think this area needs to be expanded. Governments should make sure that there is legislation that promotes social dialogue in the

workplace, whether it be between management and workers or between employers and unions.

The other area I want to just touch briefly on is labour migration, which remains a major global challenge and will continue to be so in the coming years as more and more young people look beyond the borders of Africa and their countries in search of decent work and decent pay.

In Africa this phenomenon is affecting young people, but also young girls. Unfortunately, the young people who tend to migrate fall into two groups. There are those who are skilled, who are fine, and who get good jobs, but there are those who are unskilled. They are the ones who become very vulnerable in their migration and they tend to end up in domestic work. Sometimes they are paid slave wages, and sometimes they are easily exploited as sex workers and sex slaves. So we need to look at how to find solutions to this problem and overcome them.

So we must also accelerate regional economic integration to include intra-African trade, accelerate infrastructure development, achieve integrated labour market governance, improve services and productivity, and enhance the free movement of people and goods on the continent.

But a key factor that remains is to provide our young people with professional skills, so that even when they migrate they are able to get decent jobs and are not taken advantage of and abused, so that they are not as vulnerable as they are now. Measures such as these will generate all the measures I have spoken about of transforming our economy. They will attract many skilled workers of the African diaspora back to the continent and reverse the brain drain.

To conclude, there is a lot of optimism in the continent and rightly so, because in the last decades African economies have sustained high levels of growth, even in the midst of an economic crisis. But for growth to be sustainable, we must make sure that we implement all the commitments that I have outlined here in order to really transform our economy.

The African Union is committed for the next 50 years, and beyond, to modernize Africa. But I hope we will be modernized before that. Industrialization continues to transform our economies so as to ensure social services, as well as decent work and decent remuneration for all African workers regardless of the sector of activity. We are determined to step up our efforts to promote job creation, work for the eradication of poverty and achieve growth and al-

low equitable distribution, particularly for women and youth.

So we invite our international partners, particularly the ILO, to join hands with us in our efforts to raise the productivity and income of this category of workers and to create favourable conditions for their gradual participation in all the mainstream sectors of the economy, because the majority of African workers are still in the informal sector. For Africa to become prosperous a lot of workers have to move into the mainstream economy. Conditions should be created for them to do so, and for young, skilled people to get employment and to create employment themselves.

So I wish you all a fruitful session, which I hear is drawing to an end. I hope it has been very productive over the last three weeks. I wish you well and look forward to the continued cooperation between our Organization and yourselves.

*Merci beaucoup. Shokran. Thank you.*

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The PRESIDENT

Many thanks, Dr Dlamini Zuma, for those very informative and kind words. You have a reputation for frank, refreshing and direct speech, and you have upheld that reputation today.

Dr Dlamini Zuma, your life personifies many of the struggles that the ILO is pursuing across the world. The struggle against poverty, against discrimination, against oppression of all sorts, the struggle for equality of opportunities; in your own career, you have shown what is possible. From your work as a politically active physician, to the Ministry of Health in your home country, and then to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, your aim has always been to deliver tangible benefits to the people. You have consistently shown your commitment, and I quote you, to “freeing every man, woman and child from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of poverty”.

In your present role as Chairperson of the African Union Commission, your voice is now among the most powerful for development and social justice on the African continent, and you have insisted that youth and women will be the main drivers of economic growth. Under your guidance, the Union will certainly become a stronger force in working towards a peaceful and prosperous Africa that takes its rightful place in the world. The ILO will definitely be working at your side.

Once again, Dr Dlamini Zuma, many thanks for coming to address our assembly today.

*(The Conference adjourned at 12.45 p.m.)*



## CONTENTS

*Page*

### *Special sitting*

Address by Her Excellency Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.....	1
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