



International Labour Organization
Organisation internationale du Travail
Organización Internacional del Trabajo

**Launch of Decent Work Common Agenda 2008-2010
Occupational Safety And Health Center –Department Of Labor And
Employment**

**Message by Linda Wirth
Director, ILO SRO-Manila**

**OSHC-DOLE, Quezon City
13 October 2008**

The Honorable Secretary Roque
DOLE Undersecretary Trasmonte
DOLE Assistant Secretary Calzado
Mr. Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr. President ECOP
Ms. Flor Cabatingan, TUCP
Atty. Allan Montano, President of Federation of Free Workers
Mr. Daniel Derail, Chairperson, Alliance of Progressive Labour
Ms. Josephine Padilla, Sectoral Representative, National Anti-Poverty Commission
Workers in the Informal Economy
Brothers and sisters of our tripartite partners
Representatives of government agencies

Distinguished guests from the international community
Ladies and gentlemen

Magandang umaga po sa inyo lahat.

On behalf of the ILO, I would like to congratulate the National Tripartite Advisory Committee – the NTAC - and its tripartite members on what we have come together today to celebrate: the completion and launching of the Decent Work Common Agenda for 2008 to 2010. This is a fitting occasion to recognize the significant work that has been done by the NTAC to prepare the Common Agenda and to rally for the important work the NTAC has ahead – a fitting occasion to reflect on what has been achieved through tripartism and what we can achieve through tripartism in tackling the problems of today and tomorrow. This Decent Work Common Agenda stands as one testament to what is possible when tripartism works – when government, workers, and employers come together to discuss their concerns and work collectively to address their aspirations and those of the workers and employers of the country.

This launch, however, comes at a time of persisting poverty, with nearly 30% of Filipinos living below the Asian Poverty Line of \$1.35 a day, persisting unemployment and underemployment, with nearly 30% of the Filipino workforce not able to find work or working less than they would want or need to, and the cost of living becoming higher and higher, with the inflation rate breaking double digits. Perhaps more than ever, Decent Work – with its agenda to create opportunities for more productive jobs, promote standards and rights at work, strengthen social

protection, and encourage tripartism and social dialogue – is needed; that the idea that work should be more than a job, that work should be a path to a better life – is needed. And, indeed, the theme of this third Decent Work Common Agenda - “Narrowing Decent Work Deficits” – and its corresponding targets and outcomes could perhaps not have come at a more needed time.

The ILO stands in full support of such goals identified in this Decent Work Common Agenda as the promotion of better job security, the push for the ratification of six ILO Conventions, including Convention 177 on Home workers and Convention 171 on Night work, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, the creation of sustainable enterprises through the promotion of green jobs, the strengthened application of and compliance with ILO core conventions, and the development of an initiative to reach a full employment strategy through increased productivity and competitiveness. It is goals like these that are crucial in our continued work to address and alleviate the challenges facing the Philippines. And it is precisely because the goals of this Common Agenda have been developed through continued social dialogue between government, workers, and employers that I am confident that this Common Agenda has the collective ownership and broad-based support to enable its goals to become reality.

We have seen, too, what the NTAC has – through its tripartite structure and the support of the ILO – been able to accomplish in the past. This third Decent Work Common Agenda stands on the shoulders of two prior Common Agendas covering the years of 2002 to 2007. Under the roadmap of these two Common Agendas, this period saw the introduction of the concept of Decent Work in the Philippines, the harmonization of Decent Work goals with the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan of 2004 to 2010, and the ratification of three ILO conventions concerning forced labour and migrant workers. Much work has also been done preparing for possible ratification of the Maritime Convention, vital for Filipino seafarers who represent nearly one third of the world’s seafarers.

There are certainly many challenges ahead – not just for the Philippines, but also for our region, and for our world. Problems that have been with us for some time – like unacceptable rates of inequality – or more recent problems – like the current financial crisis – give evidence for the challenges we face. But I am confident that this Common Agenda plays and will play an important part not just in meeting the challenges of this country, but also in helping us inch closer toward the aspirations of the Asian Decent Work Decade of 2006 to 2015 – of helping us one day perhaps realizing a world with social justice, a fair globalization, and decent work for all. On behalf of the ILO, I look forward to continue supporting and working with the NTAC and its third Decent Work Common Agenda, and together taking steps toward achieving decent work for all men and women in the Philippines. Once again, congratulations.

Maraming salamat.