

# 19th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners

**Theme: " Promoting Skills and Productive (Decent) Jobs for Our Common Better Future "**

**15-19 May 2023, Kigali, Rwanda**

## Participants' Declaration

The 19th edition of the Regional Seminar on "**Promoting Skills and Productive (Decent) Jobs for Our Common Better Future**", organized by the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), in Kigali, Rwanda from 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

It is a great joy for me to speak on behalf of the participants to highlight some of the highlights of the Seminar, recall some of the resulting commitments and say a few words of gratitude to the host country, Rwanda and to all those who made the seminar run successfully.

The opening session for this pivotal event was chaired by Hon Rwanyindo Kayirangwa Fanfan, the Minister of Public Service and Labour, Republic of Rwanda. The occasion was enhanced by the presence of several other senior members of the Rwanda Government, and that of the ILO ADG Cabinet (Geneva) Mr. Andre Bogui and the ILO ADG and Regional Director for Africa, Mrs. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon. I would like to thank all these personalities.

The Seminar attracted 1056 participants (female 313; male 743; PWD 3) from 49 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe, including 18 Ministers and other dignitaries. In total, about eleven high-level communications were presented on the sub-themes as follows:

- Innovation in employment intensive technology, approach and work methods relating to the development of rural and urban infrastructure
- Enabling policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for the promotion of inclusive public employment programmes and green works in job-rich sectors
- Skills and competencies for transformative infrastructure and sustainable livelihood
- Employment intensive works in the context of fragility (i.e., natural disasters, conflict and refugee situation, economic decline, etc.)

The Ministers held a parallel Ministerial Meeting from 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and reflected on the commitments and the progress made since the 18th Regional Seminar held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction the encouraging effort made in most participating countries and issued a Statement that reaffirmed their commitment to promoting skills development and the use of labour-based approaches that contribute to the 2019 Abidjan Declaration and the AU Agenda 2063.

All the speeches delivered on this occasion highlighted the relevance of the skills development and life-long learning and the use of labour-based approaches to promote social justice for young women and men and urged us to continue our efforts to promote this approach to face current and future challenges to improve labour market related interventions and job creation in infrastructure and other sectors.

The delegates of the seminar visited several sites including the Green Gicumbi Project and the ICT village to appreciate the ongoing development and climate resilience interventions and some projects that demonstrated that the use of technologies based on local resources is increasingly being used across different sectors to improve resilience of young women and men. The field visits have once again convinced us that the labour-based approaches, skills development and training is a comprehensive and integrated instrument of inclusive and sustainable development that allows citizens to build the basic infrastructure they need and develop their territories by themselves.

We the delegates at the 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar:

**Noting** the persistent challenge of inadequate productive and decent employment opportunities in Africa, especially for young women and men.

**Aligning** ourselves with the principles of the 2019 Abidjan Declaration and its action plan, which underscores the importance of inclusive and sustainable economic development, full and productive freely chosen employment, and decent work for all.

**Asserting** the critical role Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays in building a skilled and productive workforce and in improving the quality of life of individuals and communities, as emphasised by the 2063 Agenda of the African Union.

**Acknowledging** the opportunities emerging from the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution that can lead to new partnerships with TVET institutions and cultivate a lifelong learning culture while enhancing the quality of education and training. The novel solutions provided by technology and digital platforms can enhance TVET outreach, inclusivity efficiency and relevance, while reducing its delivery costs.

**Recognizing** public-private partnerships (PPPs) present innovative and collaborative opportunities to pool resources, expertise, and networks, to strengthen linkages between TVET and productive sectors and to address the TVET financing gap effectively.

**Noting** the rapid and unpredictable shifts in the world of work due to the rapid advancement of digital technologies, and the potential positive and negative impact on the future of work.

**Noting** the aftermath of global health pandemics, displacement crises and climate change-induced risks pose both opportunities and threats to job creation.

**Acknowledging** infrastructure development serves as a significant pathway for inclusive growth, economic and social development, especially in ensuring that construction activities benefit the youth, men and women, and persons with disabilities.

**Noting** the creation of decent jobs through the integration of appropriate technologies (Employment Intensive Works) fosters a localized, human-centred approach and aids in transitioning to formal, digital, and green economies.

**Recognizing** the pressing need to support countries in Africa in structuring and strengthening their ecosystems for skilling, reskilling, and upskilling and the importance of lifelong learning, training using local resource-based approaches, public procurement and tendering, and the role of EIIP for productive employment, decent work, and inclusive socio-economic growth.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Integrate** and enhance the EIIP approach within our national strategies, policies and multi-sectoral employment programmes in line with our respective development and sectoral priorities.

**Strengthen** the capabilities of national, local actors and institutions to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate infrastructure and employment-intensive programmes.

**Promote** policy consistency and inclusiveness and foster collaboration among various implementation and governance structures.

**Develop** the capacity of national and local partners to analyse labour markets and assess the employment impacts of key policies and investments.

**Develop and adopt** inclusive public procurement policies and procedures that encourage the involvement of Women, Youth, SMEs and community-based organizations.

**Integrate** skilling, upskilling, reskilling, and recognition of prior learning into EIIP and labour-based development projects.

**Facilitate** greater linkages between EIIP programmes, TVET and skills development systems, by for instance providing certifications, complementing on the job learning with off-the-job learning, training workplace supervisors in pedagogical skills, introducing new qualifications and offering top-up training to increase impact and deliver better results.

**Expand** employment intensive in green works and renewable energy to increase agricultural and livestock productivity, improve resilience to climate change, and reduce environmental conflicts.

**Collect** data through robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and impact in implementing our commitments.

**Encourage** entrepreneurship and support small-scale initiatives that can lead to the creation of more productive and decent jobs, particularly for the youth, Women and crisis affected populations.

**Develop and adopt** sustainable strategies for the transition from informal to formal employment to improve job security and working conditions.

**Improve** mechanisms for social dialogue and public participation in policymaking and implementation processes, ensuring policies are responsive to the needs and expectations of target groups. .

**Integrate** gender-sensitive policies in EIP and development projects to promote equal opportunities and reduce gender disparity in the labour market.

**Foster** an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and facilitating the adoption of digital tools and technologies to improve efficiency and productivity in the labour market.

**Enhance** resilience to economic shocks and crisis, including those related to health crises, displacement and climate change, by promoting employment diversification and income security.

**Collaborate** and share knowledge and best practices with other participating countries to enrich our collective understanding and effectiveness in promoting employment-intensive works.

**Foster** the development of quality employment and decent work indicators to guide the investment decisions of development and financing institutions, aiming for impactful and sustainable outcomes and social justice

**Regularly** evaluate and update our strategies and policies to ensure they remain effective and relevant in the face of changing world of world .

#### **We request that:**

**Governments, social partners,** development partners, and international and regional development banks continue to finance decent jobs, skills, and infrastructure development activities in line with the Abidjan Declaration and the AU Agenda 2063.

**Social partners** engage effectively in the discussion on job creation, skills and other employment related intervention to make the world of work more inclusive and protected.

**Development partners** increase their financial commitments to support programs and initiatives focused on creating productive decent employment opportunities and enhancing skills development and employability.

**International and regional** financial institutions incorporate strong employment outcomes, labour conditions and social dimensions into their financing and lending portfolios.

**Governments** enact policies that promote a business-friendly environment, encouraging private sector growth and job creation.

**Non-governmental organizations,** civil society, and community-based organizations contribute to the implementation and monitoring of employment-intensive programs, leveraging their unique reach and understanding of local contexts.

**Education and training institutions** align their curricula with labour market needs, ensuring graduates have the skills required by employers and to create employment opportunities during delivery of infrastructure.

**The private sector** invests in skills development, support start-ups and provide decent working conditions, recognizing their crucial role in creating quality jobs and promoting economic growth.

**National statistical** agencies enhance their data collection capabilities to provide reliable and timely labour market information, aiding in the design and evaluation of the impact of policies.

**Technology companies** support the development and implementation of digital solutions that can improve the delivery of training, enhance job matching processes and labour inspection as we transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

**Media outlets** raise awareness about the importance of decent work, skills development, and lifelong learning, helping to build a society that values these principles.

**International bodies** like the United Nations and African Union continue to prioritize employment and skills development in their development agendas and support countries in achieving related goals.

**We call upon the ILO to:**

**Extend** its capabilities and capacities to provide EIP technical support to countries requiring assistance in implementing this Declaration.

**Encourage** South-South cooperation and sharing of best practices in areas such as inclusive public procurement, skills development, and green works.

**Advocate** for stronger employment outcomes and social dimensions in the lending portfolios of international financial institutions.

**Facilitate** the development and implementation of digital solutions in TVET programs, Job creation, Labour inspection to improve accessibility, affordability, and quality of employment across the region.

**Assist** in creating effective social dialogue mechanisms to ensure the voices of workers and employers are considered in policymaking processes related to employment, skills development and labour inspection.

**Promote** the implementation of international labour standards to ensure decent work conditions, safeguard workers' rights and enhance job quality across all sectors.

**Enhance** knowledge sharing and capacity building on sustainable enterprise development and entrepreneurship as a means of job creation.

**Support** governments in developing and implementing inclusive labour market policies that cater to the needs of vulnerable groups such as the youth, women, persons with disabilities, and those in informal employment.

**Work** closely with governments, social partners and humanitarian and development partners in crafting and implementing effective Humanitarian development Peace Nexus HDPN to mitigate the adverse impacts of economic shocks, displacement crisis, natural disasters, and health pandemics on employment and skills development.

**Monitor** the implementation of the commitments in this Declaration and report on their progress at the 20th Regional Seminar for Labour-based practitioners.

**Vote of thanks:**

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the people of Rwanda, the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, and the Ministry of Public Service and Labour for their warm hospitality and successful execution of this 19th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners. We are also grateful to the International Labour Organization and other development partners who contributed financially, logistically in other ways to make this Seminar successful.

Kigali, Rwanda, May 19th, 2023.