

Annex 2

ILO Statement

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), I am pleased to be able to take the floor to highlight the importance of job creation for youth and the need for multi-sectoral strategies for effective structural transformation and for ensuring inclusive growth. The ILO could have addressed any of these plenary sessions, due to the fact that employment needs to be central in any strategy that is going to promote demographic dividends and positive economic, social and environmental impacts in Africa.

Conflict and disaster, including those caused by climate change, have severe implications for the world of work and those who are most vulnerable, while poverty, unemployment and decent work deficits can themselves become triggers of further vulnerability and fragility. What we can say is that today we are facing similar challenges, as were faced by the ILO's predecessors 100 years ago.

In sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment rates remain relatively low, as the vast majority of employable active youth cannot afford not to work. However, these youth regularly suffer from under-employment and lack of decent working conditions. Employment in the informal economy or informal employment, characterized by vulnerable employment, has too often become the norm. This must change.

ILO places importance in

employment creation, including entrepreneurship and business development support and labour-based public works – in the latter we have worked with Japanese NPOs who are working with us in Africa to create jobs and MSMEs and provide youth and women with skills to increase their employability, while developing needed road infrastructure and maintenance, and natural resource management, while building African ownership through the support to local institutions. To address migration, in some countries we are supporting refugees and host populations with programmes which are addressing the very needs to ensure peace and stability in these countries.

Another important area is, **employment services and skills development** for job insertion of most disadvantaged youth. ILO has supported the creation of some 15 national labour-based institutes in Africa offering vocational training and skills building for better participatory management of local labour, leading to better local ownership,

and helping to support the decentralization process. I take advantage of also mentioning that the XVIIIth Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners will kindly be hosted next year by Tunisia. Last year the same seminar attracted over 500 participants mainly from the African continent for south-south learning on employment-intensive approaches.

A third area is **policy advisory services**, from mainstreaming decent work into national and regional development, including supporting the design of multi-sectoral public employment strategies targeting youth, to the development of national action plans on youth employment, or supporting sectoral employment impact assessments.

As for **advocacy for youth employment**, the ILO has launched a partnership with the African Development Bank, the African Union and the UNECA to jointly address youth employment at regional and country levels. Furthermore, the ILO is the Secretariat to the global initiative for action, which is a hub for catalysing partnerships, collaboration and coordinated action grounded in evidence-based strategies. Amongst its partners are various UN agencies, the private sector and NEPAD.

The ILO looks forward to working with partners through TICAD and the Japanese Government to bring together national stakeholders to develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men and to be able to ensure universal lasting peace through social justice. Thank you.