



13th African Regional Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 November–3 December 2015

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Discussion paper for the High-Level Dialogue “Decent work in Africa in the post-2015 context: Rights and social dialogue for inclusive and sustainable growth”

1. The adoption by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015 of *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*¹ creates a major opportunity for the UN as a whole, and the ILO in particular, to support member States in their commitment to ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that reflect a broad consensus on a wide range of urgent and interconnected priorities.
2. As a result of the inclusion of significant components of the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda in the 2030 Agenda, our Organization has a major opportunity and a significant responsibility to play a full and active role in the implementation of the SDGs including through support for national strategies for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda connects to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted by the UN Financing for Development Conference in July.² It also envisages a successful outcome to the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December 2015 (COP21).
3. African member States and intergovernmental bodies led by the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa played an active role in the negotiation of the text of the 2030 Agenda and many African leaders warmly endorsed the 2030 Agenda at the Summit.
4. President Jacob Zuma of South Africa said “South Africa endorses this transformative post-2015 Agenda without any reservations. The triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality that the development agenda seeks to address is the primary focus of the people and Government of South Africa. The goals are also aligned with South Africa’s National Development Plan and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.”
5. Vice-President Manuel Domingos Vicente of Angola said, “... it is important to note that there is much work ahead. Several million people still live in extreme poverty or in conflict situations, being forced to migrate to other destinations; and we witness the daily growth of inequality and blatant human rights violations and environmental degradation of our planet.”

¹ Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

² Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf.

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6. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali said “Between now and 2030, the only way for us, the world leaders, to ensure the successful outcome of this summit, is to demonstrate our joint capacity to truly commit to a global partnership in order to achieve a balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, namely the social, the economic and the environmental dimensions.”
 7. The Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone, Samura Kamara, said, “Poverty, hunger, youth unemployment, social inequality and the impact of climate change, to name but a few, are effectively addressed, but also to find integrated and innovative solutions to address the special needs of conflict-affected, fragile and least developed countries.”
 8. President Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia said, “In Africa, a High-Level Committee was established by the African Union in 2013, which I was honoured to chair ... culminating in the adoption of a Common African Position reflecting the priorities of our continent. I am very pleased to acknowledge today, that our priorities are substantially integrated into both the 2015 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.” She concluded that “The successful implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda will depend largely on the concrete measures taken at the subnational, national, regional and global levels. We must craft ambitious national responses towards implementation of the Agenda. We must set in motion national processes that will guide member States’ efforts to integrate and domesticate the new Agenda into local content that will engender national ownership in the implementation process.”

Decent Work for Sustainable Development in Africa and the 2030 Agenda

9. As President Johnson Sirleaf emphasized at the New York Summit, an ambitious set of goals calls for a vigorous plan for their implementation. The central role accorded in the 2030 Agenda to decent work as a driver of inclusive growth places a considerable responsibility on the ILO – constituents and Office.
10. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda stresses the importance of integrated and coherent policies across all the goals so as to ensure their success. This creates a major opportunity for the ILO to embed the Decent Work Agenda at the core of social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.
11. The Report of the Director-General to the Regional Meeting, *Towards inclusive and sustainable development in Africa through decent work*, describes the recent strengthening of the region’s economic performance while pointing out that social progress has been uneven. Reductions in extreme poverty have been accompanied by widening income inequality in many countries. Africa’s population is growing at a rapid pace creating a huge need for decent work opportunities for young women and men. The potential of the generations coming of work age between now and 2030 is enormous but a failure to meet their expectations could lead to an aggravation of social ills such as crime, civil conflict and mass migration.
12. The Goals agreed in the 2030 Agenda are ambitious, but were they not to be realized by 2030, the consequences for the world, and Africa in particular, could look very grim.

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (paragraph 3)

“We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. We resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities.”

13. National sustainable development strategies are the linchpin for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. All member States are encouraged “to develop as soon as practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda. These can support the transition to the SDGs and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate.”
14. It will be important for labour, employment and social affairs ministries, as well as social partners to be well-prepared both for strategic discussions on the role of decent work in inclusive growth and sustainable development as well as on specific priorities such as social protection or youth employment.
15. Delegations to the Regional Meeting will wish to highlight the challenges faced by their country as an initial step in identifying policy priorities and monitoring progress. Such priorities could range from specific policy areas such as skill development or support to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, or capacity building of key institutions such as labour, employment and social affairs ministries, statistical institutes and, of course, the social partners.
16. A key difference for ILO constituents when comparing the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the 2030 Agenda is that the Decent Work Agenda is now a core part of the integrated concept of sustainable development. It will therefore be important for ILO constituents to frame their policy thinking and implementation within this overall approach. For example, investing in skills today needs to take account of the likely demand for skills in an economy shifting to lower carbon emissions. Building social protection floors will require a plan for fiscal sustainability.

Decent work and the Sustainable Development Goals

17. The 17 Goals are listed in the appendix to this note. Goal 8 is “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The targets for this goal are:
 - 8.1 sustaining per capita economic growth with a target of at least 7 per cent per year in LDCs;
 - 8.2 enhancing productivity through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors;
 - 8.3 promoting decent job creation, entrepreneurship, and the formalization and growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs);
 - 8.4 decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation;
 - 8.5 achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value;

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- 8.6 reducing substantially the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training;
 - 8.7 eradicating forced labour and child labour in all its forms;
 - 8.8 protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment;
 - 8.9 promoting sustainable tourism that creates jobs;
 - 8.10 enhancing access to financial services.

18. The means of implementation mentioned under SDG 8 are: increasing Aid for Trade support to developing countries (8.a) and implementing the ILO Global Jobs Pact and a global strategy for youth employment (8.b).

19. Many of the SDGs connect to the ILO's mandate and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. Social protection, including national floors, is a target (1.3) for action under the poverty goal and is mentioned together with wage and fiscal policies as an important means of reducing inequality (10.4). In addition, the targets on eradication of extreme poverty (1.1) and reduction of poverty (1.2) will require ILO engagement and follow-up. Technical and vocational skills are the topic of three targets under the education goal (4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). Other references relate to rural workers (2.3), workers in the health and education sectors (3.c and 4.c), unpaid care and domestic work (5.4), ending discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities (10.3), migrant workers (10.7), promotion of industrial employment (9.2), integration of small and medium-sized enterprises into value chains (9.3), resilience to climate-related hazards and economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters (13.1), international law/standards on oceans and water conservation (14.c), rule of law (16.3), effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6), responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7) and fundamental freedoms (16.10).

20. Goal 17 covers means of implementation and global partnerships. Specific targets addressing systemic issues call for enhancing policy coordination and coherence for macroeconomic stability and sustainable development; the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the strengthening of monitoring capacity.

Sustainable development indicators

21. Work already under way in the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) on a global indicators framework will culminate in a report from the UNSC in March 2016 to the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum in July 2016. The ILO is part of an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators which is preparing proposed indicators for the UNSC. The global indicators will be a relatively short list compiled for the purposes of tracking global progress. The initial reports of the UNSC show that several relevant indicators are available for decent work targets and point to the ILO as a primary source and compiler of information for such global indicators. A general difficulty with such indicators, which applies particularly to those concerning decent work, is measuring progress on issues that are hard to quantify such as those with a qualitative content like social dialogue.

Implementation

- 22.** The Agenda sees action by countries as the main means of implementation supported by enhanced international action:

Cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, will be at the heart of our efforts... At the same time, national development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, including coherent and mutually supporting world trade, monetary and financial systems, and strengthened and enhanced global economic governance.³

- 23.** A revitalized Global Partnership to facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of all the goals and targets, bringing together governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources is envisaged. The Global Partnership is expected to evolve and embrace several multi-stakeholder partnerships built around the different Goals.

- 24.** A key support to the Global Partnership is the policies and actions outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. These relate “to domestic public resources, domestic and international private business and finance, international development cooperation, international trade as an engine for development, debt and debt sustainability, addressing systemic issues and science, technology, innovation and capacity building, and data, monitoring and follow-up.”⁴ Decent work was recognized as a core part of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda which opens as follows:

We will promote peaceful and inclusive societies and advance fully towards an equitable global economic system in which no country or person is left behind, enabling decent work and productive livelihoods for all, while preserving the planet for our children and future generations.⁵

- 25.** The central role of productive employment and decent work and social protection in sustaining development and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda are further emphasized in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda:

... To enable all people to benefit from growth, we will include full and productive employment and decent work for all as a central objective in our national development strategies. We will encourage the full and equal participation of women and men, including persons with disabilities, in the formal labour market. We note that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which create the vast majority of jobs in many countries, often lack access to finance. Working with private actors and development banks, we commit to promoting appropriate, affordable and stable access to credit to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as adequate skills development training for all, particularly for youth and entrepreneurs. We will promote national youth strategies as a key instrument for meeting the needs and aspirations of young people. We also commit to developing and operationalizing, by 2020, a global strategy for youth employment and implementing the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Jobs Pact.⁶

³ 2030 Agenda, para. 65.

⁴ 2030 Agenda, para. 62.

⁵ Addis Ababa Action Agenda, para. 1.

⁶ Addis Ababa Action Agenda, para. 16.

26. The 2030 Agenda accords a key role to the private sector:

We will foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector, while protecting labour rights and environmental and health standards in accordance with relevant international standards and agreements and other ongoing initiatives in this regard, such as the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the labour standards of the International Labour Organization, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and key multilateral environmental agreements, for parties to those agreements.⁷

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

27. The 2030 Agenda calls for “a revitalized and enhanced Global Partnership and comparably ambitious means of implementation. The revitalized Global Partnership will facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of all the Goals and targets, bringing together governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources.”⁸ It is possible that several existing or new partnerships will be part of the approach. It must also be remembered that in many ways the ILO’s tripartism makes it the most well-established “multi-stakeholder partnership”.

28. The high-level event organized by the Group of Friends of Decent Work and Sustainable Development in New York on 25 September supported the establishment of a multi-stakeholder partnership to support the implementation of decent work outcomes. The ILO is also an active partner in several multi-stakeholder platforms addressing the environmental dimensions of sustainability, notably the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE).⁹ Youth employment is a major preoccupation in many countries as is reflected in targets 8.5 and 8.6. In this respect it is most timely that the UN Chief Executives Board is launching “The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth”. This multi-agency partnership led by the ILO aims to facilitate increased impact and expanded country-level action on decent jobs for youth through multi-stakeholder partnerships, the dissemination of evidence-based policies and the scaling up of effective and innovative interventions. This objective is directly linked to the achievement of the SDGs relating to youth employment. This initiative has built on the successful Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIACB) which may well play a major role in implementing target 1.3. Similar collaborative platforms are under consideration for a number of other targets such as on forced and child labour and on sustainable tourism. In some cases, the ILO will be the convenor; in others a participant.

ILO policy development and the SDGs

29. The central role accorded to decent work in the 2030 Agenda represents a major endorsement of the ILO’s role in promoting sustainable development and thus accords the Organization a significant opportunity to play a strategic role in its implementation. In parallel to the process of elaborating the 2030 Agenda, the ILO has been developing a number of strategic initiatives in the run-up to its centenary. The end to poverty centenary initiative brings together significant areas of the ILO’s work that contribute to the 2030 Agenda and help define the ILO’s contribution to achieving the SDGs.

⁷ 2030 Agenda, para. 67.

⁸ 2030 Agenda, para. 60.

⁹ <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/PAGE>.

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30. International labour standards will play a fundamental role in framing strategies to achieve SDG targets. The ten policy outcomes and three enabling outcomes of the ILO Programme and Budget for 2016–17 will enable ILO resources to support the SDGs. They cover more and better jobs, labour standards, social protection floors, sustainable enterprises, rural economy, informal economy, compliance, unacceptable forms of work, migration, and workers and employers. The cross-cutting policy drivers cover labour standards, social dialogue and gender equality. In addition the centenary initiatives on the end to poverty, the transition to a greener economy, women at work and the future of work will lead to valuable analytical insights and policy developments that can support the ILO’s contribution to the SDGs.
 31. An important aspect of the ILO’s integrated approach is the analysis of the implications of climate change on the labour market. This led to a clear understanding that climate change and related policy responses have major implications for employment, incomes and social inclusion, both in terms of positive and negative impacts. At the International Labour Conference in 2013, ILO constituents adopted a resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs which provides a framework to support just transition and decent work in the pursuit of climate change and sustainable development solutions. A tripartite expert meeting on 5–9 October 2015 formulated practical guidelines for the implementation of the Just Transition Policy Framework at the national level for consideration by the Governing Body.¹⁰
 32. A further important aspect of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda is the development of suitable indicators. The ILO is actively engaged in the work of the UNSC at the global level. It can be anticipated that countries may wish to have more extensive indicators than the limited set that are being developed for global monitoring. The ILO is developing technical guidelines for country analysis drawing on experience in supporting the Decent Work Country Profiles and other relevant experience.

Issues for discussion

33. The 2030 Agenda creates major opportunities and challenges for the ILO. The views of the Regional Meeting on the following non-exhaustive list of issues would be most timely:
 1. What are governments planning to do as a national follow-up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda?
 2. What are national trade unions and employers’ organizations’ plans for engagement with government and international partners?
 3. Is the preparation of a national sustainable development strategy on the agenda for national tripartite consultations?
 4. What sort of support will the ILO’s constituents wish to have from the Office? For example, are broad-ranging reviews of policy options for inclusive growth through the promotion of decent work useful? Are there clear priority issues requiring urgent action? What adaptations to previous ILO capacity-building programmes are needed to enable constituents to fully engage in national policy-making for sustainable development?
 5. What role should the ILO aim to play in the continental follow-up to the 2030 Agenda and through the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)? The 2030 Agenda

¹⁰ GB.325/POL/3.

envisages follow-up regionally and globally enabling the exchange of information on progress and policies.

6. How can the ILO's tripartite partnership best develop engagements with other international agencies, development cooperation agencies, and other actors to support implementation of decent work for sustainable development?

Appendix

The Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts *
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.