



## FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report and conclusions of the Ninth  
African Regional Meeting**  
(Abidjan, 8-11 December 1999)**Contents**

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1. The Ninth African Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 8 to 11 December 1999.
2. The Meeting was attended by 198 participants from 39 countries, of which 142 were delegates (73 representing governments, 33 representing employers and 36 representing workers), and 56 advisers (20 for governments, 15 for employers and 21 workers).

## I. Opening ceremony

3. The Meeting unanimously elected as its Chairperson, Mr. Zirimba Aka Marcel (Minister of Labour, Côte d'Ivoire), and as its Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. Toivo Ya Toivo (Government, Namibia), Mr. Owuor (Employer, Kenya) and Mr. Adiko Niamkey (Worker, Côte d'Ivoire).
4. The Chairperson thanked H. E. Mr. Henri Konan Bedié, President of Côte d'Ivoire, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, for their support in organizing the Meeting. He warmly welcomed the new Director-General of the ILO and the participants, and said that he felt honoured to preside over the proceedings whose conclusions should become a catalyst for future ILO activities in Africa.
5. The Director-General of the ILO recalled his personal feelings of affection for the African continent and recalled that the primary purpose of the Meeting was to provide a forum for the region with a view to focusing on the continent's particular priorities in the context of the ILO's four new strategic objectives. The conclusions of the Meeting should reflect the views of the region held by Africans themselves and guide future ILO programmes in Africa. He recalled the significant advances that had been made in Africa at the political, economic and social levels over the past four years. Nevertheless, the economic and social situation remained fragile, rates of growth were too low to counter the increase in extreme poverty, and the continent was still afflicted by ethnic conflicts, civil wars and the crushing burden of debt. Poverty would not be effectively reduced unless greater attention was given to the world of work within an integrated framework of development policies.
6. The ILO, with its tripartite structure and social vocation, had a crucial role to play in ensuring that due consideration was given to the social dimension of globalization. The Organization was working to strengthen its cooperation with other international organizations through various international forums. It was a vigorous advocate of placing people at the centre of development and making job creation and income-generating activities the central concern of economies. It also advocated adjusting the emphasis of economic policies to ensure that markets operated in the interests of all and to ensure that world trade was better adapted to the needs of developing countries. There was no technical reason why the burden of structural adjustment should be borne by the weakest, and it was essential for the international organizations to support the region through concrete decisions concerning debt, access to markets and the management of capital flows. The greater part of the active population was excluded from any form of statutory social protection and Africa had to face up to the problem of providing better protection for all. He recalled the initiatives undertaken by the ILO since the meeting of the OAU's Labour and Social Affairs Commission in April 1999 concerning the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, social dialogue and the AIDS pandemic. With regard to the latter, the *Platform for action for Africa*, which had been drawn up by tripartite representatives from some 20 African countries in Windhoek in October 1999, would be discussed during the Meeting.

7. The Director-General also drew attention to the problem of child labour, whose links with poverty had been highlighted and whose worst and morally abhorrent forms, which could never be justified under any circumstances, were being combated by the ILO. He emphasized the exemplary role of the African continent in ensuring that the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) came into force in November 2000. This had been made possible thanks to the first two official ratifications by the Seychelles and Malawi. He also recalled the additional resources that had been allocated by the ILO to the *Jobs for Africa* programme.
8. The notion of decent work had become the point of convergence of the ILO's four strategic objectives, which concerned the promotion of workers' fundamental rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue. Particular attention would be devoted to the crucial role of women in development in Africa.
9. The Director-General concluded by emphasizing the special role the ILO intended to play as a faithful and attentive interlocutor in the region as it faced the major challenge of promoting peace and mutual respect, which were essential to progress and stability within the continent. At the dawn of the third millennium, the region was called upon to reconcile social justice and modernity as the basis for an open, democratic society.
10. Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, welcomed the participants in the Meeting on behalf of H.E. Mr. Henri Konan Bédié, President of the Republic. The theme of the Meeting was undeniably the main challenge facing all decision-makers on the continent, and had to be the prime objective of any economic policy. The Prime Minister then briefly reviewed the economic developments that had taken place worldwide and in the region in the last two decades, emphasizing that the significant progress achieved through the economic reforms implemented since the early 1990s was still insufficient. Sustainable economic and human development was also central to the action taken by Côte d'Ivoire, whose growth rate had exceeded the demographic growth rate since the middle of the decade. National plans such as the Anti-Poverty Plan and the Health Development Plan were under way, as were reforms of the institutional framework of social protection and ongoing institutionalized social dialogue.
11. Mr. A. Touré, Deputy Regional Director of the ILO, presented the Director-General's Report, *Decent work and protection for all in Africa*. He reviewed briefly the political, economic and social progress achieved on the continent since the ILO Regional Conference of 1994. The Meeting was a valuable opportunity to assess ILO activities in Africa and identify specific responses and future programmes for technical cooperation between the ILO and the African region in the light of the region's needs. Lastly, a video was shown, illustrating the challenges facing the continent and the types of response proposed by the ILO through its strategic objectives and associated InFocus programmes.

## II. General discussion

12. Some 30 speakers commented on the reports produced by the Director-General for the Meeting. They generally endorsed the contents of the reports and expressed their appreciation of the overall quality. Speakers were unanimous in affirming the central importance of job creation and the eradication of poverty for the continent and the relevance of the ILO's four strategic objectives for the next biennium. Giving due consideration to the social dimension of globalization was essential if real and sustainable development was to be achieved. Various speakers gave succinct accounts of the progress made in their countries in the light of the four objectives identified by the ILO.

13. Most speakers referred to two areas of wide general interest: the elimination of child labour and combating the AIDS pandemic.
14. With regard to the *elimination of child labour*, in particular its worst forms, speakers were unanimous in acknowledging that the phenomenon was morally unacceptable and could not be justified under any circumstances. All spoke in favour of ratification of Convention No. 182 as a matter of urgency, a process which was already under way in some countries.
15. With regard to the *AIDS pandemic*, speakers drew attention to the devastating scale of the phenomenon ravaging Africa, which threatened to annihilate the achievements of development. Speakers called unanimously for concrete action, as a top priority, to stem the spread of the pandemic, and called on the ILO to formulate and implement appropriate coordination programmes with governments, the social partners and other agencies within the United Nations system.
16. Mr. J.W. Bookie Botha (Employers' delegate, South Africa; Employers' spokesperson), indicated that the Director-General's Report, *Decent work and protection for all in Africa*, reflected the four strategic objectives of the ILO, whose global approach was supported by the Employers' group. They had stressed that during the past five years, the major problem in Africa had been the creation of new jobs and the fight against poverty. The Employers' group considered that job creation was the most urgent priority for Africa. The region needed to devote particular attention to youth employment and to the sustainable development of small and medium enterprises.
17. The Employers wanted to see the AIDS problem included in the ILO's top priorities. Enterprises wanted support from the ILO in developing policies aimed at reducing the impact of AIDS on workers and enterprises. As for child labour, he regretted that, despite ten years of effort, more than 80 million children in Africa were still working. Concrete action was needed by everyone. He stressed the importance of developing minimum social safety nets and pointed out that models created for the developed countries were not suitable for African conditions. He asked the ILO to help develop minimum social safety nets.
18. The Employers' group encouraged countries to ratify the core labour Conventions, especially Convention No. 182. The group supported the *Jobs for Africa* programme and considered that the right conditions had to be put in place to allow the development of enterprises that would provide decent work. In conclusion, he expressed support for the Director-General's efforts to make the ILO a high-profile and effective institution capable of responding to the world's diverse needs, especially those of Africa.
19. Mr. Christian Appiah Agyei (Workers' delegate, Ghana; Workers' spokesperson), highlighted his group's central concerns: the defence of human and trade union rights, promotion of decent employment for all, elimination of discrimination, good governance and democracy. He called for increased trade union participation in decision-making as the only means of guaranteeing that such concerns were incorporated in development programmes. He appealed for greater ILO visibility in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and for cooperation between the ILO and the other development partners to combat this scourge more efficiently, taking a multi-sectoral approach. The Workers stressed that development should be for the people and that the social dimension must be integrated in all national development policies. The success of structural adjustment programmes relied on the ability to reduce poverty, provide decent employment, distribute the fruits of growth more equitably, provide health and education for all, protect the environment and democratize decision-making.

20. Concerning the debt burden, the trade unions called for debt cancellation for low-income countries that respected human and workers' rights, with the requirement that the resources freed be used for social expenditure. Good governance, transparency, accountability and responsibility should be made part and parcel of the new lending norms. The Workers' spokesperson called for active consultation and involvement of trade unions and civil society in monitoring international capital flows to prevent destructive cycles of indebtedness. He called on the international community to deal with governments and multinational corporations that persistently violated labour standards and showed no inclination to do anything to improve the situation. Lastly, he requested the ILO to formulate and implement technical cooperation programmes to enhance the effective application of the principles contained in the fundamental Conventions, as well as the possibility of ratification by African member States.
21. The representatives of the governments of Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Morocco, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Zambia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Botswana and the Central African Republic expressed their support for the four strategic objectives of the ILO and congratulated the Director-General on the two reports presented to the Meeting, which accurately reflected the situation in the region. The Regional Meeting provided an opportunity to review the results achieved in the social, political and economic domains and to better assess their impact on workers and employers. They called on international organizations, including the ILO, to develop new strategies to counter the perverse effects of globalization. They advocated an extension of programmes such as *Jobs for Africa* and *Start and Improve Your Business*, which focused on increasing job opportunities. A number of Government delegates committed themselves to ratifying the fundamental Conventions, in particular Convention No. 182.
22. Several speakers called for enhancing ILO action with regard to donors, with a view to forging partnerships, through a more integrated approach, mobilizing financial resources for poverty alleviation and boosting productive investment, as well as furthering the more extensive coverage of needy groups. A number of speakers welcomed the *Jobs for Africa* programme and requested that it be extended to other countries.
23. Requests were made for a rapid increase in ILO assistance to conflict-affected countries and those emerging from conflict, to help them rebuild destroyed economies and consolidate peace. Special attention should be given to vulnerable groups in these countries (reintegration of demobilized soldiers and disabled ex-combatants).
24. Delegates also sought the inclusion of evaluation measures in ILO projects and programmes so that their outcome and impact could be measured against established benchmarks.
25. Delegates emphasized the need for technical assistance before and after the ratification of Conventions in order to improve the capacity of member States to implement and comply with such instruments.
26. Governments and the social partners called for the ratification and application of the Conventions on fundamental workers' rights.
27. A large number of Workers' delegates advocated capacity-building to enable trade unions to participate effectively in social dialogue. They also called for increased cooperation between trade unions, the ILO and the other development partners. They emphasized that it was not sufficient to ratify Conventions: they had to be applied in order to improve the living conditions of the people. They called for the organization of tripartite consultations

at the national level on a more regular basis. Several Workers' delegates requested that the ILO/Belgium programme on social dialogue in French-speaking Africa (PRODIAF) be extended.

28. A number of speakers from all groups also advocated an increase of the ILO's resources in the field, including at the level of the Regional Office, the area offices and the multidisciplinary teams (MDTs), in order to better meet constituents' needs for assistance and technical cooperation. They emphasized the need for increased decentralization of ILO technical cooperation and the strengthening of the MDTs to enable them to cover countries in their area more regularly.
29. The representative of the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), Mr. T. Benydin, expressed the wish to see the Democratic Organization of African Workers' Trade Unions (DOAWTU) mentioned in the Director-General's Report among the organizations with which the ILO would strengthen cooperation.

### **III. Strategic Objective No. 1: Promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work**

#### **Introduction**

30. Strategic Objective No. 1, presented by Mr. Touré, Deputy Director of the ILO Regional Office, was centred on its two InFocus programmes, i.e. the promotion of the Declaration and the elimination of child labour. The InFocus programme on the Declaration aimed to promote the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in June 1998. It would involve a concerted effort to inform, raise awareness and provide training with a view to facilitating the ratification and application of the ILO's eight core Conventions. Child labour was widespread in Africa, where more than 80 million children are forced to work, sometimes in hazardous conditions. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), which the ILO set up in response to the phenomenon of child labour, would involve an intensification of efforts, especially in Africa. It was expected that member States would ratify Convention No. 182, which aims to abolish the worst forms of child labour, as soon as possible.

#### **InFocus programme: Promoting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up**

31. In his presentation, the representative of the ILO emphasized the promotional aspects of the Declaration and the commitment accepted by all member States to respect, promote and enforce fundamental principles and rights at work. He recalled that those principles and rights should not be used for protectionist purposes. The follow-up to the Declaration comprised an annual report and a global report which would be used by the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference to formulate action plans for technical cooperation with a view to implementing those principles and rights. The Declaration imposed an obligation on the Organization to assist its Members, using constitutional means and budgetary resources and by drawing on external assistance and resources, and to encourage other international organizations to support its efforts. Activities had already been initiated on the African continent, and cooperation programmes would be put in place from the first half of 2000 onwards.

## Discussion

32. Mr. Botha (Employers' spokesperson) emphasized that the Employers' group has been the first to seek the Declaration, had invested time and effort in promoting it by, for example, producing a brochure explaining it, and were prepared to help with awareness-raising activities at national level in order to promote implementation. The Employers' delegate of Senegal explained why African employers wanted to play an active part in promoting the Declaration. The role of enterprises and of employers' organizations was changing as a result of globalization and trade liberalization. Those organizations found themselves increasingly at the centre of social and economic concerns and were being forced by pressure from trade unions, consumers and non-governmental organizations to alter their behaviour with regard to fundamental principles and rights. Apart from the purely ethical dimension, the Employers were also aware of the need for fairness and social responsibility, which has to be considered as a management variable of crucial importance to the socio-economic success of enterprises. By actively helping to promote the Declaration, employers' organizations also wish to improve productivity and place economic growth on a solid foundation. Lastly, employers' organizations were convinced that implementing the Declaration would open up opportunities for economic recovery in the case of weaker economies, since in the future, those economies which emphasize innovation, training, technology and staff motivation by applying the principles and values of the Declaration would be at an advantage. Influencing institutional decision-makers, their own members and society at large were the three main tasks facing employers' organizations in this area.
33. Mr. Agyei (Workers' spokesperson) highlighted the fact that as soon as the Declaration had been adopted, the Workers' group had ensured that the Governing Body of the International Labour Office put in place follow-up machinery so that it would not remain a dead letter. To this end all governments had to cooperate; in particular, those that had not ratified one or more Conventions had to send their reports after submitting them to the employers' and workers' organizations. Concerning the global report for the year 2000 on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, which would be discussed at the International Labour Conference, he was indignant at the fact that trade unionists were still being subjected to repression, even imprisonment, and unions were still being banned in Africa, in violation of the very rights enshrined in the Declaration. The Workers' delegate of Benin emphasized the need to train trade unions as actors in development, to encourage good governance, to promote democracy and to denounce corruption. He also wondered what strategy the Office intended to implement to ensure that the fundamental principles and rights were taken into account by the IMF and the World Bank.
34. Mr. Mdladlana, Minister of Labour of South Africa, emphasized that democracy and development were not sustainable unless fundamental workers' rights were recognized and respected, which member States had undertaken to do by the very fact of adopting the Declaration. The ILO must help them achieve this through technical cooperation, which should cover not only ratification but also respect for principles through the adoption and implementation of laws and regulations.
35. The Government delegate of Sudan recalled that the Declaration was very clear, that his country hoped that the efforts to promote it would bear fruit and that all African countries would ratify all the fundamental Conventions. Expressing concern at the increasing influence brought to bear by multinational enterprises on national policies, he wondered how the ILO intended to follow up on the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, and recalled that article 5 of the Declaration stressed that labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes and that nothing in the Declaration or its follow-up should be invoked or otherwise used for such purposes.

36. The Government delegate of Angola stated that his country had ratified five of the fundamental Conventions and that discussions were under way on the ratification of the rest, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). A general Act and implementing regulations had been adopted enshrining the fundamental principles and rights. Several programmes were in the course of implementation with assistance from the ILO and the Government of Portugal. The ILO should help raise awareness among the populations concerned by expanding its assistance to countries.
37. Mr. Ondoua, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Cameroon, stated that while he welcomed the adoption of the Declaration and the machinery put in place by the ILO to implement it, the determining factor would be the attitude of other international organizations. He therefore wondered what strategy the Office would adopt to ensure that the Bretton Woods institutions and potential donors were involved in promoting the Declaration.
38. According to the Government representative of Tunisia, civil society must be involved in the strategy to promote decent work. The fight against child labour should be pursued with determination. Technical cooperation would make it easier for countries to commit themselves to respecting the Declaration.

#### **IV. Special sitting on the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)**

39. The purpose of this special sitting was to gather information on the concrete steps taken by African countries with a view to ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Chairperson recalled the recommendation by the Summit of African Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in July 1999 inviting its member States to ratify the new Convention before the next Summit.
40. H.E. Ambassador Mahamat Habib Doutoum, representative of the Secretary-General of the OAU, recalled the long-standing tradition of cooperation between the OAU and the ILO and emphasized the importance of applying the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. He reiterated the OAU's commitment to protecting children, confirmed by its adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. He invited the participants to translate the decision of the Heads of State of the OAU into ratification of Convention No. 182.
41. On behalf of the Employers' group, Mr. Makeka Thabo highlighted the features of child labour in Africa, stressing that it occurred mainly in the informal sector and agriculture, which lay outside the Employers' purview, hence the importance of joint tripartite action to eliminate this scourge. Recalling the importance of ratifying Convention No. 182, he listed the main causes of child labour as poverty and the lack of education, jobs and economic growth. Any serious endeavour against child labour, he concluded, would have to address these factors in particular.
42. Mr. M. Chandoul, representative of the Workers' group, cited the role the African trade union movement could play in encouraging national parliaments to ratify Convention No. 182. According to the Workers, a commitment by civil society as a whole was still the only way to combat child labour, and trade unions had the special ability to give a voice to all segments of society.
43. The Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Somavia, expressed his gratitude to African member States, thanks to which Convention No. 182 would enter into force on 19 November 2000.

He pointed out that the new Convention contained a winning formula, since it had been adopted unanimously and hence could marshal everyone's cooperation in the fight. In order for this Convention to achieve its purpose, ratification was the critical first step.

44. The second part of the sitting registered the political commitment of the governments present to ratify Convention No. 182 as soon as possible. Out of a total of 30 Government delegates who took the floor, two (Ghana, Tunisia) undertook to ratify it before the end of 1999 and 25 (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Zimbabwe) by the end of the year 2000. Three other countries did not specify a time frame.

### **InFocus Programme on Child Labour (IPEC)**

45. The representative of ILO/IPEC recalled that in recent years Africa had seen an upsurge in interest in the elimination of child labour. After summarizing the specific features of child labour in Africa, she pointed out that Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190 were the fruit of the experience that IPEC had accumulated over the years, and were hence very practical.
46. Referring to a document prepared for the occasion on concrete IPEC action in Africa in 1998-99, she gave figures on the African countries covered to varying degrees by the programme (27) and on those that had received assistance under the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), while pointing out that IPEC intended to double its operations in Africa in the coming biennium.
47. The speaker recalled that because its primary task was to serve its constituents, IPEC was morally bound to assist countries' efforts, but emphasized its subsidiary nature, pointing out that IPEC can only assist countries that have manifested the political will to solve the problem and adopted appropriate programmes. The main effort remains the responsibility of States, a shared responsibility involving employers' and workers' organizations and civil society as a whole. IPEC's strategy was thus to act as a lever for the emergence of a sustainable national movement and to demonstrate through concrete action that child labour can be eliminated. In this way, it was hoped that, as has indeed happened in some regions, other donors with more considerable financial resources would take over in an enabling environment created by the countries themselves.
48. The principal aim was to help achieve, at the level of States, a critical mass of citizens imbued with a new culture of rights of the child in the profound conviction that children share fully in human rights.
49. The Employers' spokesperson, Mr. Makeka Thabo, confirmed his group's full support for taking up the challenge raised by the ILO for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. In order to achieve this on a lasting basis, the Employers recalled that it was essential to strengthen action against the poverty factor, in particular in the areas of education for children and employment for adults. He cited the action already undertaken by employers' organizations in certain countries (Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe) in particular through advocacy campaigns on the perverse effects of child labour. In this respect, the Employers' group emphasized the importance of IPEC as a tool of ILO technical assistance and welcomed the tripartite composition of the IPEC steering committee at ILO headquarters.

50. The Workers' spokesperson, Mr. Atigbe, recalled the alarming statistics illustrating the magnitude of the scourge of child labour on the African continent, including its detrimental effect on human resources. While recognizing that the total elimination of child labour could only be progressive, he emphasized the need to strengthen the impact of IPEC programmes on national policies and expressed the wish to see more extensive representation of workers in national tripartite structures for monitoring the programme. Lastly, he proposed that greater use be made of trade union expertise in advocacy campaigns and in efforts aimed at the social reintegration of children removed from the worst forms of labour.
51. Government representatives were unanimous in acknowledging the need to combat child labour. The concern expressed was that the ratification of Convention No. 182 was only a first step and that its implementation would be a much more difficult exercise for which increased technical support would be required from ILO/IPEC donors. It was deemed important to base interventions on the actual situation in the countries and ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable people were covered. Therefore statistical surveys should be undertaken and methodologies developed to cover working children in the informal sector and in hidden types of work. Close monitoring was required both for ensuring transparency and for developing a set of workable strategies. Direct action alone would not have the full impact. Therefore, the fight against child labour should be handled in a more holistic manner in the broader framework of national poverty alleviation plans that include compulsory education accessible by all, vocational training and the need to match the age of education with the age of entry into the labour market.

## V. Strategic Objective No. 2: Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment

### Introduction

52. With regard to Strategic Objective No. 2, the ILO would continue to promote the integration of employment issues in economic policies and programmes with a view to ensuring that those policies and programmes stimulate sustained growth and the creation of decent employment. The ILO would, for example, be helping to enhance labour market information systems. It would make a particular effort to help small and informal sector enterprises, and would encourage the inclusion of informal sector enterprises in development programmes and policies. Lastly, the ILO would strengthen its collaboration with regional and subregional institutions and organizations.
53. The InFocus programmes associated with this strategic objective are: (i) the InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability, which focuses on the way in which human resource development could promote employment growth; (ii) the InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development; and (iii) the InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, which aims to address the need for the social and economic reintegration of vulnerable groups affected by crises and to bring about economic reconstruction in countries emerging from conflicts.

### Discussion

54. The discussion focused on general employment issues, leaving specific questions to the Panel on *Jobs for Africa*.

55. Various speakers emphasized the magnitude of the employment problem reflected in the need to absorb 9 million new entrants to the labour market every year. This also required a new approach to human resource development.
56. The Workers' spokesperson called on governments to show political will in dealing with problems of employment at the national level.
57. Several speakers emphasized the need to upgrade the informal sector and pay particular attention to the position of women in this sector.
58. The impact of economic reform on employment was also discussed. The representative of the Government of Rwanda called on the ILO to assist with the problem of retrenchment, and attempt to influence the Bretton Woods institutions when designing structural adjustment programmes.
59. The Government delegate of Côte d'Ivoire emphasized the need to develop a fresh approach to employment in the formal sector without neglecting SMEs and self-employment, which should be financed from social funds for development.
60. The Workers' spokesperson also emphasized the need for better conditions of work and decent work, with particular attention to women working in export processing zones.

### **The *Jobs for Africa* programme**

61. The Manager of the *Jobs for Africa* programme (JFA), Mr. Samir Radwan, ILO, Geneva, pointed out that JFA responded closely to the ILO Strategic Objective No. 2 in aiming to create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income. The programme addressed the following major developments affecting Africa. First, the need to consolidate the recent turnaround in economic growth, where 28 countries had achieved GDP growth higher than 3 per cent. Secondly, it addresses the basic problems of labour markets: the need to absorb approximately 8.7 million workers a year; prevalence of informal work; low productivity and poverty. Thirdly, to cope with the process of globalization where skill would be a determining factor of competitiveness. The JFA was an unconventional initiative as it aims at influencing the macro and sectoral policies in order to achieve employment-intensive growth. Two major challenges need to be addressed: (1) the extension of JFA to other African countries; and (2) the launch of a resource mobilization strategy to finance the country action programmes.
62. Introducing the achievements, problems and way forward for JFA, Mr. Diejomaoh, African Regional Coordinator of JFA, observed that, initially, the JFA-PRESA project was designed to cover ten sub-Saharan African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
63. However, following recommendations by African ILO constituents to the ILO to extend the JFA programme to other African countries in 1999, the ILO Director-General had made resources available to extend the JFA programme to Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Algeria, South Africa and Egypt. As a result, the JFA programme was currently being implemented in 16 African countries, constituting about 63 per cent of Africa's population, thereby covering the whole of Africa, and not just sub-Saharan Africa. Within the 16 months of its operation the JFA-PRESA institutions, including the National Network Secretariats (NNS) and the National Network Advocacy Group (NNAGs), which were expected to carry out advocacy for poverty-reducing and employment-intensive growth strategies, and key administrative staff had been set up in 13 of the 16 participating countries. Progress had been made towards completing the launch of the programme in the

other three countries early in the year 2000. With the completion of the draft country action programmes in 12 countries by January 2000, donor meetings would have been held in all the JFA countries by the end of the first quarter of 2000. To achieve the JFA-PRESA objective of engineering a policy shift in public and private investment to facilitate employment-intensive growth that also reduced poverty, the necessary studies to facilitate the policy shift would be completed by June 2000. The challenges and problems observed included inadequate office equipment, manpower shortages and inadequate funding of NNAGs. With greater resource commitments on the part of the ILO, UNDP, participating governments, social partners and the donor community, the programme could succeed in creating millions of jobs in Africa.

64. Mr. Joseph Ngutu, Minister of Labour of Kenya, welcomed the *Jobs for Africa* programme, and indicated that Kenya had moved very fast in the implementation of the programme. He appealed to the ILO and the UNDP, and indeed all the development partners of African countries and donor agencies, to fund JFA activities in order to create more productive and quality employment in Africa.
65. Mr. Azad Jetun, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, indicated that the ILO deserved congratulations for the launch of the *Jobs for Africa* programme. The programme was both important and timely, since millions of people were unemployed and millions were working in small and medium enterprises and the informal sector. There was now an economic reawakening on the continent and the will to promote employment. It was hoped that JFA would help change attitudes and bring the social partners together in order to pool the limited resources to fulfil the ultimate goal of *Jobs for Africa*.
66. Mr. Sunmonu, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, stressed their support for the JFA-PRESA programme and sought its extension to cover all African countries. Gender balance should be maintained in all the processes of the programme. Its national coordinators should cooperate with and integrate workers' and employers' projects in the national programmes. Retrenched workers, young people and school leavers should be the main beneficiaries of the programme through entrepreneurship and vocational training, and financial and technical assistance.
67. Mr. Ntandayarwo (representative of the Organization of African Unity) wholeheartedly welcomed and supported the JFA, as evidenced by the unanimous support for the programme by all the policy- and decision-making bodies of the OAU, which had led to the adoption of the Declaration on the Employment Crisis in Africa. In view of the crucial importance of the programme for Africa, the OAU appealed to the ILO, UNDP, ADB and bilateral donors to provide adequate resources to ensure that the programme yielded the tangible results expected from it by the African continent. For its part, the OAU secretariat would, in close collaboration with the ILO, play a catalytic role by advocacy sensitization and publicity at the forthcoming OAU/EU summit and at other OAU forums dealing with the twin problems of employment promotion and poverty alleviation.
68. Mr. Mahmoud (representative of the African Development Bank) stated that the Bank adopted a holistic approach to assisting its regional member countries to improve on their growth and employment prospects at the national level. The Bank gave special attention to a few key areas, namely agriculture and rural development, micro-finance, private sector development and human resource development, but participated in other development promotion programmes/projects with relevant development partners. The Bank encouraged the participation of all key stakeholders (government, civil society, beneficiaries, etc.) in the formulation and implementation of the programmes and projects financed.

69. Representatives of the governments of Madagascar, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Congo, Lesotho, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Nigeria, and of the ICFTU/AFRO spoke in the ensuing discussion. They generally commended the *Jobs for Africa* programme and called on the ILO and UNDP in particular, and donors, African governments and social partners in general to provide adequate resources to ensure implementation of the JFA programmes in all African countries so as to provide quality and productive employment and decent work in Africa, on a sustainable basis, as soon as possible.

## **VI. Strategic Objective No. 3: Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all**

### **Introduction**

70. The ILO encourages African countries to develop mechanisms for improving occupational safety and health and working conditions, making existing social security systems more effective, better managed and financially viable, and ensuring that policies and mechanisms for extending social protection coverage were put in place. It was noted that at the moment, only a very small section of the population enjoyed any social protection, which often only covered a limited number of hazards.
71. The ILO has established two InFocus programmes for this strategic objective: (i) the InFocus Programme on SafeWork, which aims to improve protection for workers in hazardous conditions and occupations; and (ii) the InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security, in which the ILO would help those responsible to design systems to help categories which as a rule had not been covered by traditional social security schemes, to improve access for disadvantaged groups to social services and to improve their employment security.

### **Discussion**

72. Mr. Botha, the Employers' spokesperson, considered that it was a question of inadequate coverage both in terms of persons and in terms of the risks covered. In this respect, he recalled that the Report of the Director-General had highlighted priority areas which, among others, should be the focus of attention on the African continent. Major health risks existed everywhere and were not covered. This situation exacerbated the precarious situation of domestic workers and those in the informal sector and agriculture. The Employers' group strongly supported the point made in the Director-General's Report concerning the role that tripartism should play in identifying risks and organizing occupational safety and health committees. He also emphasized the need for a more innovative approach to formulating a system of social protection that was adapted to the African context. In this respect, the Employers' group felt it was not appropriate to merely reform or extend existing systems. A minimum social protection safety net, accessible to all, should be defined. Lastly, those who paid for protection should be involved in managing the system.
73. The Workers' spokesperson, Mr. Agyei, considered that social protection systems had run into difficulties because their boards of directors could not act autonomously, or because accumulated funds had been lent without any significant financial yield or used for political purposes. Therefore trade unions should participate more in the boards of management bodies, which should enjoy genuine autonomy. Moreover, efforts should be made to prevent workers from becoming victims of exclusion or marginalized on their

retirement. The loss of income affecting workers should prompt the establishment of more efficient management systems.

74. The Workers' delegate of Senegal, Mr. Diallo, echoed this view, pointing out that the organization of better occupational health, safety and hygiene would be conducive to improving productivity. African countries should focus on drafting regulations that would secure more adequate protection for workers while optimizing the functioning of institutions. The institutions that were experiencing management problems were those managed exclusively by the State. There should be improved participation by the social partners, and the regulatory role of the State should be better organized.
75. Mr. Haidoub (Government delegate, Sudan) considered that structural adjustment programmes had had a detrimental effect on social protection systems in some cases and had at times exacerbated the problem of marginalized groups. Regulatory frameworks would also help organize not only workers' but employers' social protection. There was a need for consistency between existing social protection systems at the national level. To this end ILO technical assistance would be necessary to help harmonize, merge or design national social protection systems. Such assistance would enable the institutions to be managed more efficiently and help strengthen the machinery for supervising them.

## **VII. Platform for action on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work: Panel discussion**

### **Introduction**

76. Mr. Bequle, Director of the ILO's Working Conditions and Environment Department, introduced the work of the panel, pointing out that the Platform for action on HIV/AIDS was the result of the activities that followed the ILO Director-General's mission to Windhoek to the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission. The President of the Republic of Namibia had requested, during the meeting, for ILO assistance on HIV/AIDS and the workplace. In response, the ILO had organized, in Namibia, a workshop on strategies to tackle the social and labour implications of HIV/AIDS. Twenty African countries had attended the workshop, which concluded by adopting the draft Platform for action. Mr. Bequle then presented this draft to the participants, highlighting that the Platform addressed the issue of why the HIV/AIDS pandemic mattered to the world of work in general and to the ILO in particular. It called on the ILO to engage forcefully to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide protection to those affected by it. It also identified specifically the areas in which the ILO could play a key role in collaboration with other concerned agencies. A multidimensional response to HIV/AIDS was needed to prevent its spread by protecting those who had to live with its consequences. In the absence of a cure, what was needed was a "social vaccine" that included such elements as social inclusion, income and job security, social security and solidarity.
77. Mr. Schlettwein (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Namibia) gave a detailed description of the nature of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the impact of the pandemic on children, the labour market, the State and the individual. He emphasized that the primary objective of the ILO in Africa was threatened by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS should be an issue on all national development agendas, in particular with regard to its impact on social dialogue. Possible roles for the State included standard setting, legislation and ensuring the availability of employment for affected workers.

- 78.** Mr. Owuor (Employers' delegate, Kenya) emphasized that the fight against AIDS was being hampered by ignorance of the causes of AIDS among the general population, resistance by some religious groups to sex education in schools, as a result of which young people engaged in unsafe and unprotected sex due to ignorance. Such groups were also opposed to the distribution of condoms. Lack of access to medical treatment on account of budgetary constraints, lack of commitment by some employers to the fight against AIDS, some of whom regarded AIDS education and prevention programmes as too costly, and the tendency among workers not to reveal their seropositive status for fear of either losing their jobs or rejection by their workmates. At the workplace, one critical measure that needed to be taken for psychological comfort was to give reassurance to workers that everything had been done by their enterprises to eliminate any possibility of blood or body-fluid exposure by their seropositive colleagues in the course of their work.
- 79.** The Employers' group called on the Meeting to unanimously adopt the resolution on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa, incorporating the Windhoek Platform for action on HIV/AIDS. The ILO may in this respect consider collaboration with UNAIDS and other donors in running joint programmes with employers' organizations and enterprises on AIDS Education and Prevention Programmes in the workplace.
- 80.** Ms. Chitsa (Workers' delegate, Zimbabwe) recommended that every workplace have a policy that clearly protects any worker with HIV/AIDS. She then highlighted a number of issues that needed to be addressed, including discrimination, job security, health and safety at the workplace and health care funds, etc. She suggested that trade unions establish the necessary structures at all levels, including collaboration with management for the successful implementation of the policy.
- 81.** Mr. Makinwa (representative of UNAIDS) identified possible areas for intervention by the various organizations, stressing that a multidisciplinary approach was a necessity when dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There were currently eight UN agencies co-sponsoring UNAIDS, and he hoped that the ILO would consider joining these eight.
- 82.** Ms. Saunders (Public Health Adviser, United States Center for Disease Control) identified key elements of successful prevention, which included creating political will, building partnerships and trust, including people with HIV/AIDS at all stages, creating an accepting community environment, using a multi-sectoral approach and providing direct resources to community capacity-building. The United States Government had announced a new initiative on Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic (LIFE), to address the global AIDS pandemic. The initiative represented a \$100 million increase in US support for sub-Saharan African countries and India.
- 83.** The initiative built on the existing investment by the United States in HIV/AIDS programmes in those countries and involved unprecedented collaboration between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defence (DOD). The initiative would contribute over the next three to five years to the broad global goals of a reduction in the transmission of HIV by 25 per cent and provision of basic care and support services to at least 30 per cent of infected persons.

## Discussion

- 84.** After the presentation by the panelists, Mr. Schlettwein (Government delegate, Namibia) submitted a draft resolution for adoption by the Meeting, to which the Platform for action on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa was appended. Mr. Schlettwein stressed the enormity of the challenge facing the continent and the need for member States

to address the urgency for action. There was a moral and existential imperative for the Meeting to demonstrate its commitment by adopting the resolution.

- 85.** Mr. Botha (Employers' spokesperson) said that the Employers' group had at every available opportunity referred to the need for urgent action against HIV/AIDS. The pandemic was devastating families, friendships and long-standing relationships; it affected the effectiveness of enterprises; it brought out the best and the worst in people through acts of courage and through acts of fear, discrimination and revenge; it challenged conventional wisdom on ethics, confidentiality and the law. It needed to be fought with every available means, including education and training. The Employers' group and the Pan-African Employers' Confederation were prepared to develop joint strategies with concerned organizations, including the ILO, to fight to contain HIV/AIDS. He expressed the support of the Employers' group for the resolution.
- 86.** Mr. Agyei (Workers' spokesperson) referred to the frightening pandemic and the need for intensive education to all, especially workers, and for companies to allocate sufficient resources to support awareness-raising campaigns. He called for intensive research into a possible cure for the disease, respect for confidentiality and prohibition of discrimination. HIV/AIDS-infected persons should benefit from solidarity and compassion. He expressed the support of the Workers' group for ILO initiatives to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic and for the draft resolution.
- 87.** Mr. Ngutu (Minister of Labour, Kenya), on behalf of the Government group, expressed his support for the resolution and urged the adoption and implementation of the Platform for action against HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work. He spoke extensively on the efforts being made in his country by the Government and by employers' and workers' organizations to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and to protect those infected with it.
- 88.** Mr. Diallo (Workers' delegate, Senegal) expressed profound concern at HIV/AIDS and its social and cultural consequences and the need to contain it. He thanked the ILO for joining the campaign against HIV/AIDS and developing programmes in the context of the world of work. He pointed out the need to act along three fronts: (i) to establish structures to organize activities including dialogue and the exchange of information at the enterprise level; (ii) to encourage the integration of HIV/AIDS issues into education and training programmes; (iii) to develop a network and coalition of partners to fight against HIV/AIDS.
- 89.** Mr. Truebody (Employers' delegate, Namibia) noted the large number of international agencies, donors and local institutions acting against HIV/AIDS. He expressed concern at the lack of coordination and called for a link between international agencies as a group and local institutions. This concept should be included in paragraph 3(b) of the draft resolution. His amendment however was not seconded.
- 90.** Mr. Kailembo (representative of the ICFTU/AFRO) referred to the impact and consequences of HIV/AIDS on society and workers, and emphasized the very important role that the workplace could play in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and the stigma and discrimination that accompanied it. There should be no compulsory testing or discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. He called on governments and employers to provide facilities for prevention and care. He urged unions to be involved in this campaign and called for the implementation of an intensive workers' education programme, especially for shop stewards.
- 91.** Mr. Ondoua (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Cameroon) expressed support for the resolution. However, he pointed out his concern that the individual

responsibility of those infected with HIV/AIDS was not pointed out in the Platform for action or in the resolution.

92. The Meeting concluded with the unanimous adoption of the resolution on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa, containing the Platform for action adopted by the Regional Tripartite Workshop on Strategies to Tackle the Social and Labour Implications of HIV/AIDS (Windhoek, Namibia, 11-13 October 1999). The resolution appears in Appendix II.

## **VIII. Strategic Objective No. 4: Strengthening tripartism and social dialogue**

### **Introduction**

93. With regard to Strategic Objective No. 4, the ILO would endeavour to help employers' and workers' organizations to improve their ability to defend their Members' interests and contribute to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of social and economic policies. The ILO would also help to strengthen the capabilities of labour ministries which often had insufficient staff and resources to be effective in their task of defining the basic regulatory framework for the world of work.
94. Associated with this strategic objective was the InFocus Programme on Strengthening Social Dialogue, which would make it a priority to enhance the capabilities of the social partners. This would involve efforts to raise awareness of the advantages of social dialogue and would highlight the crucial importance of sound bipartite and tripartite institutions for improving social cohesion.

### **InFocus Programme on Strengthening Social Dialogue**

95. Ms. Hagen, Executive Director of the ILO, emphasized the importance of the conclusions and the extent of the consensus that had emerged on the role of social dialogue in development in Africa following the High-Level Tripartite Regional Symposium on Social Dialogue in Africa organized by the ILO in Addis Ababa in October 1999. Participants in the symposium had expressed the wish to see an even greater commitment in this area on the part of the ILO. The importance of social dialogue was recognized by everyone in the sense that it favoured sustainable development, stability, social peace and democracy. By bringing governments and the social partners together in a frank and open dialogue, it allowed alliances to be formed and a consensus to be established during the decision-making process. Social dialogue was considered central to good governance, since it was conducive to greater transparency and responsibility in decision-making. Dynamic and effective social dialogue nevertheless required certain essential conditions, including recognition of the principles of freedom of association and respect for strong and independent social partners. It was also essential for labour ministries to have competent staff and adequate resources. The role of the ILO was to facilitate the sharing of examples of successful social dialogue and to promote technical cooperation activities aimed at strengthening the capabilities of the social partners to allow them to make an effective contribution to the social dialogue in its various forms.

## Discussion

- 96.** Mr. Sanzouango (Employers' delegate, Cameroon), speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, took note of the potential role of social dialogue in promoting sustainable development based on a strong private sector and sound management of public affairs. Social dialogue served to stimulate growth and was a concrete means of strengthening democracy. Social dialogue presupposed the political will to promote and institutionalize it. Employers were sensitive to the wish expressed by governments to place enterprise at the centre of the wealth creation process and to make it go hand in hand with bipartite consultations in enterprises. He wondered if it was appropriate to draw other stakeholders of civil society into social dialogue, and suggested that efforts were needed to strengthen tripartite dialogue in its current structures. Governments should involve other ministries whose activities had a bearing on social relations. With regard to the informal sector, what was needed was not to strengthen this sector but rather to create conditions that would allow it gradually to merge into the formal sector. Effective social dialogue implied measures to strengthen the institutional capacities of the social dialogue partners, including labour ministries, which were often sidelined by their lack of resources. Employers' and workers' organizations had to be strong and independent. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for a common vision of human development at work and of enterprise in society.
- 97.** Mr. Agyei (Workers' spokesperson) expressed satisfaction at the fact that social dialogue was at the heart of the ILO's strategic objectives, since social dialogue and consultations were absolutely essential if workers were to be actively involved in decisions regarding social and economic policy. The culture of dialogue was still missing from many countries on the African continent. Considerable efforts would still be needed to ensure that trade unions could participate constructively in social dialogue. All too often trade unions were not consulted, national labour legislation was in many cases obsolete and too many social dialogue bodies were inactive or ineffective as a result of inadequate resources. The Workers' group called on the ILO to work actively for the ratification and implementation by governments of the eight core Conventions and for their principles to be incorporated in national labour legislation. He emphasized the importance of Convention No. 144 in promoting tripartite consultation. He also called for a renewal of tripartite consultation structures and for the creation of bodies to promote social dialogue. He stressed the necessity of improving the human and financial resources available to labour ministries in order to place labour issues at the centre of government concerns and policies.
- 98.** The Workers' delegate of Morocco, Mr. Kabbat, emphasized the importance of social dialogue for social stability in the context of globalization. A new culture of social dialogue was coming into its own in Morocco. The ILO should strengthen technical cooperation in order to facilitate effective social dialogue.
- 99.** Mr. Ondoua (Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Welfare, Cameroon) considered that the extension of tripartite dialogue to civil society at large could pose a problem. In this respect, he expressed a number of uncertainties as to the status of any new partners that might be involved in social dialogue, emphasizing that such an extension could in fact undermine the traditional social partners.
- 100.** Ms. Hagen, Executive Director of the ILO, stressed that tripartism within the meaning attributed to it by the ILO was by no means being called into question. On the contrary, the High-Level Tripartite Regional Symposium on Social Dialogue in Africa held in Addis Ababa had highlighted the ILO's commitment to promoting and strengthening tripartism.
- 101.** Mr. Sidibe (Minister of Employment, the Public Service and Labour, Mali) underscored the need to support workers' organizations so as to enhance the technical capacity of

participants in negotiations in order to reach balanced and sustainable solutions. He emphasized the need to identify representativity criteria that were acceptable to all. The ILO should continue to disseminate experience in this area in Africa. As regards the extension of social dialogue to civil society, the economic and social councils in various countries offered a consultation framework conducive to arbitration between the government, the social partners and representatives of civil society.

- 102.** The Government delegate of Ethiopia welcomed the High-Level Tripartite Regional Symposium on Social Dialogue held in Addis Ababa. Its conclusions should be submitted to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office so that the suggestions and views put forward were taken into account in activities to promote social dialogue.
- 103.** The Workers' delegate of Benin, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, requested that the programme on social dialogue in French-speaking Africa (PRODIAF) be extended to an increasing number of countries. In the context of globalization, there could be no sustainable development unless workers' organizations were involved in economic and social policy-making. To this end he advocated strengthened technical cooperation to lay the groundwork for regular social dialogue.
- 104.** The Government delegate of Morocco noted that all countries faced social problems in the context of globalization. Hence the need to have machinery for social dialogue to boost production and competitiveness while safeguarding social justice. Morocco had accordingly introduced a number of consultation arrangements in recent years, including the consultative committee to follow up on social dialogue. The parties to dialogue had signed a joint communiqué in August 1999, which was in the course of being applied.
- 105.** Mr. Kailembo (representative of the ICFTU/AFRO), recalled that labour laws had often been revised under structural adjustment programmes without the workers being heard. Social dialogue had to be brought to the subregional level in order to influence policies adopted at that level. Strategic alliances had to be built to that end. Contacts with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization had to be intensified to ensure that their policies take into account the needs and aspirations of working people.
- 106.** The Government delegate of Tunisia stated that his country had instituted a social contract, since social dialogue was essential to guarantee social peace and hence sustainable development. Ensuring that growth went hand in hand with social development was a hallmark of the Tunisian experience.
- 107.** Mr. Sunmonu (representative of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)), expressed concern at the weakness of ministries of labour. He called for the ratification and application of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), so that tripartism could become the true bedrock of social dialogue.

## **IX. Adoption of reports**

- 108.** The Ninth African Regional Meeting adopted its report and conclusions, as well as the report of the Credentials Committee, unanimously. It also unanimously adopted the draft resolution on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa.

\* \* \*

**109. *The Governing Body may wish to request the Director-General —***

- (a) to draw the attention of the governments of member States of the African region and, through them, that of their national employers' and workers' organizations, to the conclusions adopted by the Meeting;*
- (b) to bear the conclusions in mind in executing ongoing programmes and in preparing future programme and budget proposals;*
- (c) to transmit the text of the conclusions —*
  - (i) to the governments of all member States and, through them, to national employers' and workers' organizations;*
  - (ii) to the international organizations concerned, including the non-governmental international organizations having consultative status.*

Geneva, 4 February 1999.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 109.



# Appendix I

## Conclusions

1. The delegates at the Ninth African Regional Meeting of the ILO fully endorse the contents of the Report of the Director-General of the ILO, *ILO activities in Africa: 1994-99* and the Report *Decent work and protection for all in Africa*. In particular, they endorse the choice for the 2000-01 biennium of the following four strategic objectives which they consider to be particularly relevant to the problems and needs of African countries:
  - promoting and reinforcing fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards;
  - creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income;
  - social protection for all;
  - strengthening tripartism and social dialogue.

The delegates also attach particular importance to giving due consideration to gender equality and development which should be a component of all the programmes undertaken. In the interests of attaining those objectives, the delegates would like to see the eight InFocus programmes that are set out in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2000-01 implemented without delay.

2. Focusing on the unemployment and poverty situation and the fact that two decades of structural adjustment programmes have not improved the situation, the delegates consider that in the context of global markets, Africa suffers from trade imbalances. Development in different countries presupposes that appropriate economic and social policies are in place, the latter being closely linked to the former. Debt relief and allowing access to external markets and sources of finance are the prerequisites for achieving growth in the countries of Africa. The Meeting recalls the crucial social dimension of globalization, which is a precondition of any real and sustainable development. It requests the ILO to be even more active in its advocacy vis-à-vis the international community (especially the developed countries and donors) and would like to see the Organization acquire greater visibility and influence on the international community and enhance its synergy with other organizations to achieve globalization of social progress.
3. The delegates request the ILO to provide concrete assistance to its constituents in order to promote real social justice, by strengthening their capabilities through technical cooperation programmes that are relevant and have a significant impact in the light of current problems and needs.
4. The continent is beset by many conflicts which are the source of pointless human suffering and jeopardize economic development and social cohesion. In this context, the social partners can play a major role in promoting social dialogue, social justice, and lasting peace, thereby allowing all to contribute to development, of which peace and security are the preconditions. It is particularly appropriate to recall the original values on which the ILO was founded. The delegates request the ILO to continue to be active in crisis-affected countries and to develop its activities as soon as conditions permit in the interests of consolidating peace.

## Fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards

5. The delegates recall that respect for international labour standards is not an option but a necessity and one which promotes growth, which in turn stimulates development. Reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and respect for workers' fundamental rights are all indissolubly linked. Ratification at national level of the fundamental Conventions is a concrete expression of the adoption by the International Labour Conference of the ILO *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, and is the best response to the social problems posed by economic growth and globalization. All countries are therefore called on to ratify the fundamental

Conventions, if they have not already done so, to bring their legislation into conformity with them and to implement them.

6. Violations of workers' rights are still frequent occurrences in Africa, despite the real progress that has been made in establishing democracy, and as a result of this, workers still often face difficult situations. Governments and the social partners must take appropriate action to promote respect for the fundamental freedoms and trade union rights, encourage good governance and improve the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The first step is ratification of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98.
7. Child labour is a blatant violation of human rights. Crises, war, poverty and unemployment increase the likelihood of its spreading, and the elimination of child labour therefore represents a real challenge. But being African means above all respecting and preparing for Africa's future through its children. The elimination of child labour, beginning with its worst forms and those that are the most detrimental to children, which cannot be justified even by poverty, is therefore a high priority for everyone, and the delegates urge all countries to ratify Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 without delay and to ensure their implementation. They emphasize that it is essential that this action be coordinated and concerted, and that everyone share responsibility for it.
8. The delegates also request that the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) be extended to the countries of Africa that have not yet been able to benefit from its assistance, in order to ensure that studies can be undertaken without delay, with subsequent action plans and support programmes aimed at the progressive elimination of child labour and, in the more immediate future, of the worst forms of exploitation. Since IPEC intervenes in response to an expression of national will, governments are invited to indicate their commitment and their needs, and to seek partnerships on this issue with employers' and workers' organizations. The international community is invited to support the efforts and the willingness expressed by the African countries and accordingly to increase the resources available to IPEC.
9. The delegates emphasize the need to remedy the causes of child labour by combating poverty through the promotion of adult employment, ensuring that children receive free education, increasing training opportunities and developing programmes for equal opportunity and social and economic integration of the most vulnerable groups. For greater efficiency IPEC will identify the best synergy with action undertaken by the other ILO programmes and international and regional organizations, as well as NGOs.
10. ILO support is also requested in setting up at the national or regional level reliable systems for the collection of statistical data on child labour and for monitoring the programmes and assessing their impact.
11. Although women play an essential role in production and services, they do not yet enjoy the same opportunities as men in training, skills and access to decent employment and income. Their representation in trade union organizations is still inadequate. The delegates draw attention to the need for concrete action to promote gender equality through appropriate provisions and programmes.
12. The delegates request the ILO to work actively towards strengthening the capabilities of the social partners to meet their respective obligations and responsibilities in full with regard to the application of standards, and to ensure that regulations are implemented.
13. They also request the ILO to step up its efforts vis-à-vis the Bretton Woods institutions to promote workers' fundamental rights so that they are systematically integrated in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of structural adjustment programmes by these institutions.

## **Securing decent employment and income**

14. In the view of the delegates, poverty in Africa can be eradicated only by ensuring access to decent employment, both for women and for men. The delegates consider that this is the region's top priority and that the ILO has a duty to help countries to develop effective employment policies and strategies. The States themselves, in their programmes and national and sectoral budgets, should put into practice in concrete terms the commitments to promoting employment which they entered into at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.
15. Creating more and better jobs will require measures to promote enterprises, to improve productivity, decent incomes, and better social protection. Problems of employment call for an integrated response that takes into account the many complex aspects of human resource development, employment and income.
16. Formulating and implementing policies and programmes that are relevant and effective, and carrying out follow-up and evaluation, will require employment and training information that is

organized, reliable and regular, as well as a system for coordinating the activities of all the national and external partners. The ILO should continue to assist countries in setting up information and programming systems to assist decision-making in the areas of employment and training, as well as in harmonizing methodologies with a view to promoting exchanges of information and regional cooperation.

17. Creating an environment that encourages investment, guiding investments in such a way as to maximize their job generating potential, as well as providing an enabling environment for enterprise creation and development, whether large companies or SMEs and micro-enterprises which all form vital links in the same chain, are the responsibilities of governments, but the private sector must also be involved. Programmes must be set up to help businesses develop appropriate strategies and policies to serve as a framework for promoting employment. To that end it is essential for the development agencies and donors to take coordinated and concerted action geared to countries.
18. Promotion of micro-enterprises and the implementation of measures aimed at promoting the progressive integration of the informal sector in the formal sector should be continued. The ILO should provide assistance to the countries of the region in order to ensure that the jobs thus created are decent.
19. Africa's main source of wealth is its human resources, which should be developed through appropriate lifelong training accessible to all, to enable people to realize their potential and increase their opportunities of securing decent employment and incomes. Special attention must be paid to access to employment of young persons graduating from the training system, and therefore to the problem of creating closer links between the training system and enterprises. The ILO will need to raise awareness among the other organizations of the common system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors of the need to integrate human resource development in all economic reform programmes.
20. A major concern is the social and economic integration of young persons, on which the future stability and development of all the African countries depends. Governments and the social partners, together with civil society at large, are responsible for contributing to their integration. In collaboration with the other development agencies and donors, the ILO must assist them in identifying appropriate strategies and implementing integrated programmes covering education, training, the creation of micro-enterprises, social protection and appropriate and sustainable systems of financing.
21. The crises and wars affecting many African countries have made large segments of the population even more vulnerable, in particular women, refugees and displaced persons, people with disabilities, etc. Governments and the social partners must develop policies and programmes to further their social and economic integration or reintegration, through access to training and decent employment and income.
22. The employment action programmes developed by the ILO must be on a wide enough scale to enable them to meet the major challenges facing countries. Those challenges are: youth employment and employment for women, raising incomes, and improving conditions in agriculture and the informal sector which employ the majority of the active population in Africa. An expansion of the *Jobs for Africa* and *More and Better Jobs for Women* programmes should be envisaged; countries are expecting these programmes to produce tangible results. All of the programmes implemented should further economic integration in Africa and be coordinated with the regional and subregional economic communities.
23. As regards the *Jobs for Africa* programme, the delegates particularly appreciate the integrated nature of the programme and its suitability for incorporation in national strategies which will ensure its lasting impact. They request that every effort be made by the ILO and the UNDP to mobilize the resources that will be needed to extend the programme to all the African countries and to continue core funding of the *Jobs for Africa/PRESSA* programme. The delegates noted with satisfaction the interest of the African Development Bank in the programme and the fact that the Bank insists on the need to make workers' and employers' rights a part of development programmes, and underscores the importance of investing in human resources.

## Social protection for all

24. The delegates recall that there can be no decent work without adequate social protection for workers, and that the lack of social protection is detrimental to the productivity of an enterprise and therefore also to economic growth.

25. Current social protection systems cover only a small proportion of the population that is employed in the formal sector, although other social groups are in dire need of protection. The delegates request the ILO to assist countries in designing and developing sustainable and viable systems of social protection which extend coverage to the entire population and especially to the informal sector and meet the requirement for a minimum level of cover adapted to the needs of the greatest number.
26. Traditional social security systems are also affected by serious management problems which make reform and modernization of those systems imperative. The delegates draw attention to the need for transparent management by the three partners, with increased participation of employers and workers.
27. Protection of workers also means promoting their health and safety at work and maintaining a healthy working environment, all of these things being aspects of decent work. It is also an important goal of social dialogue. It must be possible to extend these safety and health aspects to those sectors that are currently the least protected, namely, agriculture and the informal sector. Monitoring and inspection services must be prepared for that task and the social partners must be helped to adopt the appropriate measures which, apart from anything else, are conducive to greater productivity. The ILO/DANIDA subregional programme has been cited in this context and the wish has been expressed that this programme should be expanded.
28. HIV/AIDS is the cause of heavy losses of human lives in Africa and affects the youngest segment of the economically active population. It is thus not only a medical and public health problem but also a social and economic one which jeopardizes development and employment. It often gives rise to discrimination in employment against HIV-positive workers. It also deprives many children of their parents and forces them to go out to work prematurely. The African member States, aware of the fact that the development of the AIDS pandemic in Africa alone could make it impossible to achieve the Organization's four strategic objectives, therefore request the ILO to give the highest priority to this issue and to develop appropriate programmes in coordination with governments, the social partners, other United Nations agencies (the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS – UNAIDS) and NGOs.
29. The delegates adopted a resolution concerning HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa and endorsed the terms of the draft Platform for action appended to it. They invite governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations to contribute to their implementation. They request the ILO to help them to do this and to develop its activities in synergy with other agencies of the common system, in particular UNAIDS.

## **Tripartism and social dialogue**

30. Faced with the challenges that are still ahead, the delegates emphasize the need for the social partners to achieve a better understanding of their respective roles and to assume their responsibilities fully. Strengthening their capacity through appropriate training and support must therefore be a matter of priority for the ILO.
31. Tripartism and social dialogue provide an opportunity for countries to build and consolidate social cohesion and peace, as well as development, by involving all the stakeholders in shared objectives, through training in the management of industrial disputes, through partnership in preparing and implementing decisions and a more equitable distribution of the fruits of labour. These are the values of dialogue and participation that the social partners must help to strengthen in their countries so that they may inform the whole of society and the different sectors of the economy. Dialogue among the social partners contributes directly to the effective working and strengthening of democracy.
32. It is agreed that the effectiveness of social dialogue presupposes: (a) the political will and strong commitment to promote it; (b) that social dialogue in its present structure, comprising government, employers and workers, should be strengthened; and (c) that the social partners should be strong and independent.
33. The member States are called on to ratify Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 144, and the delegates recall that national tripartite consultations must be organized on a regular basis. Those consultations should cover specific subjects of common interest, such as vocational training, social protection, safety and health at work, etc. The delegates would like to see the ILO/Belgian programme on social dialogue in French-speaking Africa (PRODIAF) and the ILO/Portugal programme on social dialogue in Portuguese-speaking countries (PRODIAL) continue strengthening tripartite structures and dialogue and their example extended to other subregions as well.

## General recommendations

34. In order to respond to the many complex needs and problems Africa still faces, ILO activities in the field and assistance to constituents will have to be expanded. The Meeting accordingly requests the ILO to strengthen its field structures and the multidisciplinary teams in particular, by assigning them the human resources and appropriate means to enable them to respond efficiently to their requests. The ILO must live up to its objectives and fully integrate the regional dimension of the problems raised, and must promote regional integration and cooperation through its activities.
35. The ILO must remain as close as possible to its constituents in order to be always in a position, with them, to identify their needs and respond to those needs in the most appropriate way.
36. The delegates would also like to see the ILO play a greater brokerage role vis-à-vis international donors so as to meet objectives in the area of poverty alleviation and social justice.
37. In the light of the realistic objectives that have been set and the resources that have been mobilized, there must be a framework for follow-up on the programmes and assessment of their results and, most importantly, their impact. The delegates therefore request that machinery be set in place to follow up on the conclusions and recommendations of this Regional Meeting.

Abidjan, 11 December 1999.

## Appendix II

### Resolution concerning HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa

The Ninth African Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization,

Having considered the question of HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa,

Noting the Platform for action adopted by the ILO Regional Tripartite Workshop (Windhoek, Namibia, 11-13 October 1999);

Invites the Governing Body of the ILO —

1. to communicate to governments of the African region the Platform for action on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa that is appended to this resolution;
2. to appeal to governments, in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations and other concerned groups, to use appropriate measures to implement the Platform for action on an urgent, immediate and continuous basis;
3. to request the Director-General of the ILO —
  - (i) to provide, where possible, the necessary expertise and technical assistance to help member States implement the Platform for action;
  - (ii) to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with concerned international agencies, especially UNAIDS, and bilateral and multilateral agencies, with a view to reinforcing national action against HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work.

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## Annex

### Platform for action on HIV/AIDS in the context of the world of work in Africa

#### I. Preamble

AIDS threatens every man, woman and child in Africa today. The pandemic is the most serious social, labour and humanitarian challenge of our time. Since its start two decades ago, AIDS and HIV have taken a catastrophic toll in Africa, decimating its population, tearing apart the very social fabric of its societies and threatening its economies. Its toll of debilitating illness, widespread and indiscriminate death, deteriorating quality of life and life expectancy, threatens to reverse the hard-won social and economic gains of African countries and, ultimately, the very future of the continent.

AIDS is rapidly becoming the single most serious threat to social and economic progress in Africa today. The true cost of the pandemic is almost incalculable. Its impact is aggravated by the overall economic, political and social context, as well as some cultural practices, dominated by a weak economic base, high unemployment, pervasive poverty, and the negative consequences of structural adjustment, all of which further undermine Africa's ability to compete in the global market.

The pandemic has manifested itself in the world of work – the area of the ILO's mandate – in the following ways: discrimination in employment, social exclusion of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), additional distortion of gender inequalities, increased numbers of AIDS orphans, and increased incidence of child labour. It has also disrupted the performance of the informal sector and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Other manifestations are low productivity, depleted human capital, challenged social security systems and threatened occupational safety and health, especially among certain groups at risk such as migrant workers and their communities and workers in the medical and transport sectors.

Clearly, AIDS is no longer just a health problem. It is a developmental crisis with potentially ominous consequences for Africa and the world. Yet, a culture of silence, fear and denial continues to reign and prevent action. The stigma and the fear engendered by AIDS fuels discrimination, persecution and ignorance. Despite this, the spread of AIDS *can* be prevented. A multidimensional response to AIDS is needed to prevent its spread and protect those who live with its consequences. In the absence of a cure, what is needed is a "social vaccine" that includes such elements as social inclusion, income and job security, social security and solidarity.

In search of awareness, action and commitment, participants from 20 African countries, meeting in Windhoek from 11 to 13 October 1999, in tripartite delegations, adopted the following Platform for action to respond to this crisis at workplace, community, national, regional and international levels.

The meeting called upon all African governments to declare HIV/AIDS a national disaster requiring urgent attention and mobilization of resources.

#### II. Common values

It was agreed that the following would form a set of overall principles, which should guide the formulation of policies and programmes:

1. Tripartism, allied with civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders.
2. Social justice and compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS (PWLHA).
3. A sense of shared responsibility among all actors.

4. Good governance, transparency and accountability for results.
5. Partnerships among international and national agencies to complement one another on the basis of comparative advantage.

### III. Goals

It was agreed that, while awaiting a medical vaccine, the aim should be to apply a “social vaccine” for prevention and protection which would include elements such as: social inclusion, income and job security, social security, solidarity and optimal use of treatment.

### IV. Actions

In order to achieve these goals, action backed by strong African political, religious, traditional and community leadership and commitment should focus on:

1. fighting the culture of denial;
2. raising national awareness of the incidence and impact of the pandemic through, among other things, information, education and communication;
3. eliminating the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV/AIDS by adopting and applying the ILO's international labour standards and national labour legislation;
4. documenting and disseminating information and statistical data through effective labour market information systems;
5. strengthening the capacity of the social partners to address the pandemic;
6. empowering women economically, socially and politically in order to reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS;
7. promoting the transformation of gender roles, norms and social structures;
8. integrating HIV/AIDS in existing social security schemes and developing new ones to ensure coverage for all;
9. building capacity to address the dilemma facing AIDS orphans and children exposed to infection or forced into child labour;
10. incorporating HIV/AIDS considerations into the national development agenda and budget allocations;
11. creating a rapid response mechanism to mitigate against the implications of the pandemic;
12. promoting income and employment opportunities for PLWHA and their families through, for example, informal sector and small enterprise development;
13. strengthening occupational safety and health systems to protect groups at risk;
14. formulating and implementing social and labour policies and programmes that mitigate the effect of AIDS;
15. effectively mobilizing resources;
16. improving availability and affordability of drugs;
17. incorporating HIV/AIDS in collective bargaining agreements.

## V. Partnerships

In order to mount an effective response to the HIV/AIDS crisis and address its many faceted implications, national level partnerships should be built rapidly among all the key actors: governments, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and other civil society groups, including religious and traditional leaders. Partnerships should also be forged among and with bilateral and multilateral agencies, as well as regional organizations and United Nations agencies through among others, joint planning, collection, dissemination and exchange of information on good practice and ensuring synergy in programmes.

## VI. Role of the ILO

The ILO should strengthen its activities in fighting HIV/AIDS in the region through improved knowledge, vigorous advocacy, and expanded services. The ILO tripartite structure provides a unique mechanism for intensifying the response to HIV/AIDS.

1. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the ILO should collaborate with concerned international organizations, participate in the decision-making process regarding HIV/AIDS at the global level, and consider becoming a co-sponsor of UNAIDS.
2. The ILO should adapt and apply concepts, methods and tools it has developed on labour and social issues for responding to the design of research and programmes on HIV/AIDS.
3. The ILO should expand its capacity to deal with HIV/AIDS, especially in its multidisciplinary teams, through, for example, training, resource mobilization and secondment of experts from UNAIDS.
4. The ILO should undertake research and surveys to determine the implications of HIV/AIDS for the world of work, including its effects on the growth of the labour force and participation rates, women, child labour, union membership, productivity and competitiveness, informal sector and small enterprise development.
5. The ILO should document and disseminate through all appropriate means information on national experiences including best practices.
6. The ILO should engage in advocacy and training on HIV/AIDS and the world of work targeting the political leadership, workers' and employers' organizations and civil society.
7. The ILO should include HIV/AIDS in its regional meetings and consider organizing a special session on the subject at the International Labour Conference.
8. The ILO should integrate HIV/AIDS issues and gender components in all its programmes and technical cooperation projects in the region.
9. The ILO should develop a policy, programme and structure to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and the world of work.
10. The ILO should strengthen the capacity of its social partners to formulate and effectively implement policies, programmes and activities at the national and enterprise levels.
11. The ILO should consider submitting this draft Platform of action on HIV/AIDS in Africa to the Ninth African Regional Meeting (Abidjan, 8-11 December 1999) for its consideration and formal adoption.

## **VII. A call for immediate action**

Action against HIV/AIDS is primarily a national responsibility. The enormity and exceptional nature of the problem require exceptional measures. Member States are therefore urged to adopt and implement this Platform of action on an urgent, immediate and continuous basis.