

# **19<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners**

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

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

## **Ministerial Declaration**

**We**, the Ministers and Country representatives from Algeria, Cameroun, Central Africa Republic, Chad, , Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

**Meeting** at the Ministerial Session from 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023. at the Intare Conference Arena, Kigali as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar of Labour-based Practitioners co-chaired by Hon Rwanyindo Kayirangwa Fanfan, the Minister of Public Service and Labour, Republic of Rwanda and Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, ILO ADG and Regional Director for Africa.

**Appreciating** the support of the ILO Director General, Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo for putting the seminar and the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) within the context of the Global Coalition for Social Justice through the statement delivered on his behalf during the opening ceremony and his online participation in the Ministerial meeting.

**Acknowledging** that the inadequate productive employment opportunities particularly for young women and men, remains a major labour market challenge in Africa.

**Recognizing** the 2019 Abidjan Declaration on advancing social justice and its plan of action which were adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> ILO Africa Regional Meeting, which is premised on a human-centred approach and committed to “promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development and growth, full and productive freely chosen employment and decent work for all”.

**Recognizing** the role of TVET, including digital TVET, in skills development and lifelong learning for improving the quality of education and training and addressing the skills mismatch; and that technology and digital platforms offer innovative solutions to reduce the cost of TVET delivery and bridge the financing gap.

**Noting** that public-private partnerships (PPPs) present an innovative approach to addressing the financing gap for TVET by pooling resources, expertise, and networks of government, the private sector, and civil society.

**Acknowledging** the rapid, unprecedented and unpredictable changes happening in the world of work due to the increasing use of ever advancing digital technologies, which are creating both new opportunities for and threats to job creation.

**Recognizing** that African countries are faced with the unprecedented challenges including the aftermath of the global health pandemic, volatility of global food prices, increasing food and water insecurity, increasing risk of natural disasters, the effects of climate change and protracted conflicts and violence.

**Recognizing** that infrastructural development is key for successful inclusion, integration, economic and social development and it is essential to ensure the benefits from construction activities benefit young men and women, and persons with disabilities.

**Noting** that creating enough decent jobs, using a mix of appropriate technologies (Employment intensive works) to optimize job creation in different productive sectors to support a localized human-centred approach, promoting just transitions to formal, digital, and green economies, including in situations of fragility and crisis response.

**Recognizing** that productive employment and decent work are key to achieving inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth; that the safety, security and fair working conditions are crucial for increased productivity and personal development of workers; further noting that despite the significant increase in the use of Employment Intensive investment approach in many countries in the region, there are still concerns about the sustainability of jobs created.

**Recognizing** that lifelong learning as well as training using local resource-based approaches are essential criteria for improving employability and productivity of workers in the changing world of work and reaffirming the need for linking development projects with capacity development such as reskilling, upskilling, and apprenticeships; and supporting and creating centres of excellence for labour-based training anchored to the national education, TVET and research systems.

**Recognizing** the role of public procurement and tendering in enforcing decent work and developing communities and micro and small enterprises.

**Noting** that the achievement of participating countries in the implementation of the commitments made during the previous regional seminars for the labour-based practitioners, have not been uniform and that countries have different governance structures for the implementation of employment-intensive works.

**Recognizing** that the EIIP is an important entry point for employment and labour market related interventions such as social protection, occupational safety and health, skills development and job creation in other sectors.

**We therefore commit to:**

1. **Institutionalizing** and strengthening the EIIP approach through an appropriate strategy and high level national inter-sectoral coordination structures and implement integrated multi-sectoral employment programmes, consistent with national development and sectoral priorities.
2. **Strengthening** the capacity of national, local actors and institutions for the design and implementation of infrastructure and intensive employment programmes.
3. **Promoting** policy coherence and improving collaboration between the different implementation and governance structures to ensure the effective implementation strategies of adopted policies.
4. **Building** capacity in the analysis of labor markets and conducting employment impacts assessment of key policies and investments to ensure that these are able to achieve their employment potential and supporting and strengthening the development of quality employment indicators and investment decisions of the development and financing institutions.
5. **Develop** and adopt inclusive and transparent public procurement policies and procedures, at both central and decentralized levels, to ensure full involvement of SMEs, community-based organizations, encourage the use of local resource-based approaches, while at the same time ensuring the quality, durability and cost effectiveness of infrastructure works.
6. **Integrate** skilling and reskilling and recognition of prior learning into EIIP and development projects, including training, internship and apprenticeship requirements in the procurement process thus also committing contractors and other private sectors actors to increasing their contribution to skills development.
7. **Increasing** opportunities for youth to access training through on the one hand on-the-job training, providing valuable practical experience, such as for example the *chantier école* approach used in many countries, and on the other and through online learning platforms, virtual apprenticeships, and digital content which together can make TVET more accessible, flexible, and affordable and complement training provided through institutions and traditional training systems resulting in more effective skilling and reskilling of the African workforce.
8. **Expanding** employment intensive green works, in areas such as soil and water conservation, land restoration, reforestation, irrigation to increase agricultural and livestock productivity, halt environmental degradation and increase resilience to the effects of climate change, and reduce environmental pressures which are an increasingly important source of conflict on the continent.

9. **Sharing our** experiences and learning amongst each other and collectively improve the collection, compilation and dissemination of information and knowledge on global good practices on Employment Intensive approaches and innovative technologies.
10. **Developing** and strengthening exit strategies to transitions from informal to formal jobs and to better empower EIIP beneficiaries to enter into long-term employment, embark on life-long learning and establish sustainable career paths for a better common future.
11. **Increase** our efforts to scale up successful pilot projects, small-scale initiatives, foster innovation and systems for intellectual property registration to support entrepreneurship, so that they can respond to the large needs for more productive and decent jobs, especially among the youth.
12. **Collecting** data through appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems to keep track on progress made on the implementation of the commitments in this declaration and sharing this information.

**Solicit that:**

13. **Governments**, development partners and international and regional development banks be further encouraged to finance jobs, skills and infrastructure development activities that contribute to the achievement of the Abidjan Declaration and the AU Agenda 2063.

**Call upon the ILO to:**

14. **Expand** on its capacities and abilities to provide EIIP technical support to countries requesting such, support in the context of implementing this Declaration.
15. **Take** an active role in facilitating South-South cooperation at the regional and continental level through exchanges, sharing of experiences on good practices in amongst others the areas of inclusive public procurement, inclusive infrastructure development, skills development, gender empowerment, exit strategies for young people involved in EIIP projects, green works and nature-based solutions, and small contractor development.
16. **Advocate** with the World Bank, the IMF, the African Development Bank, other international and regional financial institutions, and other development partners, for integrating stronger employment outcomes and social dimensions into their financing and lending portfolios.
17. **Monitor** the implementation of the commitments in this Declaration and report on progress of their implementation at the 20<sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar for Labour-based practitioners.

**The Ministerial Session provides their vote of thanks to:**

The people of Rwanda, Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, for their warm welcome to the beautiful city of Kigali and the for the successful execution of this 19<sup>th</sup> Regional seminar for Labour-based Practitioners.

**Kigali, Rwanda, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**