

**REMARKS BY MR MARTIN CLEMENSSON,  
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**LAUNCH OF THE ZAMBIA DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROFILE**

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Good morning!

Guest of honour, your Excellencies, distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this very early launch of the Zambia Decent Work Country Profile.

The Government of Zambia, along with the employers' and workers' organizations, have worked closely with the International Labour Organization with the financial support of the European Union, to produce this remarkable and valuable resource, which will go a long way in steering us forward, as we strive towards making Decent Work a reality for all in Zambia.

The Decent Work Country Profile provides the facts and figures with regard to the extent that Zambia has achieved Decent Work for all. Only ten countries in the world have made this measurement and I am glad that Zambia is one of them.

The findings of this Decent Work Country Profile challenges us to put in place new and inclusive measures to ensure that key outcomes, such as better employment for the youth, women and people with disabilities; adequate responses to HIV and AIDS challenges in the work place; and the elimination of child labour, are achieved.

One of the Decent Work deficits that have been documented in the Profile is the lack of jobs in the economy. Ask any young woman or man what the key to a decent life is and nine out of ten times the answer will be: a decent job.

Decent Work is central to reducing poverty. There can be no real solution to poverty without secure, meaningful and adequately paid jobs, whether they are in the private or public sectors.

Decent Work offers people the opportunity to be productive and to earn a fair income, but a job alone without decent working conditions is not enough. The jobs must provide security in the workplace and social protection benefits for workers and their families, and must afford people the freedom to express their concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Social dialogue – i.e. consultation among Government, workers and employers - must be understood and accepted as a fundamental necessity to ensure harmonious industrial relations and a productive workforce.

At the same time, enterprises must be competitive to be able to grow and to create more jobs. The economic strides that Zambia has made in the recent years have been very encouraging and the high price of copper continues to be a boost to the mining-dependent economy.

However, it is still a great concern that the number of jobs being created is not matching the growth of the economy, and with over 70 percent of the working population being in the agricultural sector - which had only seen a minimal growth until recently - the need for increased economic diversification must be emphasized once again.

Some of the important conditions for real development are: stable and sound government institutions committed to the rule of law, human rights, property rights and an enabling environment for starting and growing businesses.

Labour market policies, such as minimum wages and legislation for workers' rights are also key ingredients for ensuring that the benefits of development are widely distributed. Skills development and training, hiring subsidies and public employment programmes, are some of the policy tools at hand to create conditions for more jobs.

That solutions exist does not mean that they are easy. To tackle the trade-offs between those policies and the different political interests at play is a challenge for any government.

This is a critical time, as we enter the final years of the Millennium Development Goals Campaign and look towards setting the post-2015 development agenda, both globally and in Zambia.

In the ILO we firmly believe that jobs and livelihoods need to be at the heart of the post-2015 agenda because **development happens through jobs**.

When people have no jobs or are forced to work in poverty, there is less growth, less security, and less human and economic development. Add to this the growing income and social inequalities, and what you get is a recipe for potential economic, political and social instability.

A shift to inclusive and sustainable development will not be possible if millions of people are denied the opportunity to earn their living in conditions of equity and dignity.

Therefore, the objective of full and productive employment and Decent Work should be upgraded to a central goal of the post-2015 development agenda. And this goal should be supported by implementation of a social protection floor for poverty reduction and resilience.

Coming back to the Decent Work Country Profile, I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the Government, the employers and workers of Zambia, NGOs, media houses and the development partners, to use the Zambia Decent Work Country Profile to support our common interest - to eradicate poverty through economic and social development.

Let us work together, and hold each other accountable, for the roles we play as we individually and collectively strive towards moving Zambia forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.