



309<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE ILO  
AFRICAN GROUP MEETING

Remarks

By

Mr. Charles Dan

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Honourable Ministers,

Dear delegates, dear friends,

Thank you so much Samir Koubaa for inviting me in your capacity as Regional Coordinator. Thank you so much for your commitment and friendship. And thank you also Samia Chouba for your support.

Thank you to our sister Bhavanasha Naidoo and to Ambassador Masri from the African Union Commission in Geneva.

I would like to apologize for not having been able to make it yesterday as the Director-General convened a Senior Management Team meeting.

Allow me to thank you all for this opportunity to exchange with you. It is always a privilege and a pleasure.

Today, I would like to focus on four major issues which are key for our achievements in Africa: policy strategy; capacity building; structures; and resources.

First, our policy strategy in the region:

As you know, in December 2009, the ILO's African tripartite constituents decided in Ouagadougou that the key means to implement the Global Jobs Pact at national level was the adoption of Decent Work Country Programmes.

This was at the heart of the Ouagadougou Roadmap.

In a short period of time, we have achieved a lot: 14 DWCPs have been finalised this year. This brings to 23 the total number of DWCPs which are being implemented in Africa.

During the same period, consultations leading to the drafting of new or 2<sup>nd</sup> phase DWCPs have been held in 21 countries.

And we are moving to a high level political acceptance of the DWCP as a key national development tool. They are now approved at tripartite level and increasingly endorsed at Cabinet level.

This has been the case in countries like Benin, Togo, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Swaziland.

And ILO constituents in Namibia, Mauritius, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique or Cameroon are also planning to use the same institutional approach of getting the DWCPs endorsed by Cabinet.

These political endorsements of DWCPs are important because we need to mobilize resources both at the level of national budgets and with development partners at the local level.

And we have been even further in our ambitions for Africa.

I would like to congratulate you and our tripartite constituents for the success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Decent Work Symposium on “Building a Social Protection Floor with the Global Jobs Pact”, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 6-8 October 2010. Let me also thank the authorities of Cameroon for hosting us.

47 African countries and more than 30 ministers participated. And we learnt a lot from that Symposium.

All participants agreed on the key role of and need for social protection strategies in Africa. They decided that the social protection strategy in each country should contain a basic set of social security guarantees. Best practices in several African Member states have shown that indeed social protection for all can be achieved.

For us the challenge now is to make it a national reality everywhere. At the level of the Regional Office for Africa, we will allocate a significant amount of resources, including RBSA, to move this ambition forward.

Second, capacity-building:

In order for Africa to achieve its decent work potential, gender equality features prominently among our priorities.

We are party to a number of continental frameworks - including the recently launched “Decade for Women in Africa” by the African Union Commission in Nairobi last month.

In October 2008, we organized in Cairo a major Forum on women economic empowerment together with the African Development Bank. As requested in the Cairo Platform, we intend

to organize the second edition of this African Tripartite Women Economic Empowerment Forum next year.

Capacity building for labour administration continues also to be of major importance to the work of the region.

In this connection, the general discussion on labour administration and labour inspection which is on the agenda of the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference next June is of great importance for us.

And we would like to propose a regional follow-up meeting to analyze the specific challenges and perspectives and identify key areas of action for our national labour administration and inspection systems in Africa.

Third, our structures:

In the PFAC Committee last Thursday, you raised two important issues concerning our field structures, namely the appointments of national coordinators and the opening of the office in Abidjan.

Concerning the national coordinators, you have noticed in the GB document that contrary to some other regions, our Regional Office has not included so far any provisions for the setting up of national coordinators. And I say so far for two reasons: on one side we think that we have undertaken a major re-organization of our structures and we want to make sure that we are on track; and on the other side we have to assess the administrative and financial implications for our region of setting up national coordinators and revert back to you to consult if, where and when you should move into that direction. So we think that we should proceed step by step, analyze carefully the financial implications to reach sustainable solutions and liaise with you.

As far as Abidjan is concerned, I would like to inform you that when the decision was taken to open a Country Office covering French-speaking countries, I undertook a mission in Abidjan to plan this opening. During my visit I had a series of meetings with the social partners as well as with the Minister of Labour and the Prime Minister. I also had an audience on 28 May with the President of the Republic, H.E. Mr Laurent Gbagbo who already informed me on this occasion that the presidential elections would take place in October this year. So the decision was taken to continue the material preparations for this opening but to wait till the end of the electoral process for the official opening - as you know the second round of the presidential elections are scheduled to take place on 28 November.

Fourth, resource mobilization:

As we all know the ILO must rely on extra budgetary resources to translate the Decent Work Agenda into progress for people, communities and families. Yet, the global financial crisis has sharply reduced the ability of our traditional donors to support our programmes on the continent: new approvals have declined from 103 million \$ in 2008 to less than 20 million \$ in 2010, and RBSA resources have dwindled as well. This is a worrying trend that we must reverse.

And we are taking action: two months ago, every single ILO director and technical specialist based in Africa received thorough training in project design and resource mobilization; we have appointed a senior resource mobilization officer in the Regional Office; and we are developing our contacts with the donor community.

We are also pleased to inform you that Belgium, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands have recently signed agreements with the ILO, providing some 15 million \$ in RBSA resources for the current biennium, and more for the next. The African Development Bank, Denmark, France, Flanders, Norway, the UN system and others have disbursed funds for new projects at the country level.

Resource mobilization is also a common undertaking. And we thank you for supporting our joint efforts to raise funds in :

- Ensuring that the DWCPs gain greater prominence in national development frameworks, since donors align themselves with the objectives set out in those frameworks,
- Advocating for the inclusion of decent work priorities into UNDAFs and One UN programmes at the country level.

To conclude, I would like to thank the authorities of South Africa. After hosting so successfully the soccer World Cup, they will be hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> African Regional meeting in October next year.

You will recall at that the 11<sup>th</sup> edition was held in Addis Ababa in April 2007, we adopted “Decent Work Agenda in Africa, 2007-15”.

The 12<sup>th</sup> African Regional Meeting will provide us with the opportunity to take stock of achievements, challenges, and plan the way forward towards 2015.

Thank you so much for your attention.