



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

**14TH ILO REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR LABOUR-
BASED PRACTITIONERS ACCRA, GHANA
5-9 SEPTEMBER, 2011**

SPEECH BY

**HON JOHN BYABAGAMBI
MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS
MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT, UGANDA**

5 September, 2011

Chief Guest of Honour
Hon. Minister of Roads and Highways
Representatives of Development Partners
Hon. Ministers of Public Works and Labour
Regional Director, ILO
Chairperson of the Organising Committee
Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to join you here in Accra, Ghana for the 14th ILO Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners. I want to thank the Government of Ghana, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Seminar Organisers for inviting me to attend this Seminar where I am to handover the leadership mantle of steering the labour-based technology and employment creation agenda to the Government of Ghana. However, before I handover the mantle of leadership to my colleague the Minister of Roads and Highways allow me make a few remarks.

Let me first appreciate the warm welcome that was accorded to me and my delegation from Uganda when we arrived on Saturday. The warm welcome we received is an indication of a good hospitable people of Ghana and a sign

that we shall enjoy our stay in Accra. On that note I want to reciprocate by bringing you warm greetings from the Government and people of Uganda. I also wish to convey special greetings from the Minister of Works and Transport, Hon Abraham Byandala and Hon. John Nasasira who was then the Minister of Works and Transport when you came to Uganda during the 13th ILO Regional Seminar. Hon. Nasasira was assigned other duties in Government. They have wished you good deliberations.

As you many recall my country hosted you for the 13th ILO Regional Seminar in Kampala in November/December 2009. I hope many of you still have good memories of the country and our people. It was at that Seminar that we resolved to hold the 14th Seminar here in Accra, Ghana. I am therefore pleased that we are here for the next five days to review the progress achieved since last meeting in Kampala in 2009. I want to thank the Government of Ghana and ILO for managing to convene this Seminar as was planned.

Let me briefly reflect on the 2009 Kampala Statement. For some of you who attended the previous seminar you will

recall that as partner countries and as individuals we made commitments of generating employment opportunities by up-scaling labour-based technology. We committed ourselves to formulating national policies and strategies in all relevant sectors to enhance sustainability of employment creation while delivering quality economic and social infrastructure services. Further, we agreed to engage in country-to-country and regional economic collaborations to build capacities and promote best practices. We made a couple of undertakings, the above just being a few.

I am sure we have made some remarkable progress in fulfilling what we committed ourselves to do. This is now the time to share experiences on what each of us as a country or as a practitioner or as an individual have contributed to generate sustainable jobs through application of labour-based technology. I am aware a progress on achievements will be presented to us in the course of the seminar.

Mr Chairman, during this seminar I want us to clearly define a framework on how we shall continue to measure our

achievements. The framework will guide us in assessing progress. We need also to agree on the follow-up mechanisms so that there is continuity after the seminar. I must confess that it was challenging for me as the person holding the leadership mantle to keep abreast with what was happening in fulfilment of what we agreed upon at the last seminar. Promoting employment creation through application of labour-based technology in development of infrastructure facilities is a continuous process ~~but~~^{that} we need to assess if we are making good progress. Nevertheless, I want to assure you that the leadership mantle which I am about to handover to my colleague has been kept burning and is alive.

Allow me therefore, Mr Chairman, to briefly share with the participants on how we in Uganda have progressed since our last meeting in Kampala.

a) Immediately after the seminar we issued to all participants the Ministers Statement and the Kampala Statement. The two statements contain what we agreed to undertake. The immediate issuing of the statements

was meant to enable you start implementing the resolutions. Later, proceedings of the seminar were mailed to all participants. I have brought with me a few CDs in case some of you did not receive the seminar report.

b) Government approved a 5-year National Development Plan which recognises the use of local resources and appropriate technologies, among others, in development of the country. Similarly an overarching Policy to develop and strengthen the national construction industry was recently approved by Government. The Policy promotes use of labour-based technology as the first choice of technology in construction of roads, particularly the rural and community access roads. Implementation of the Policy is being monitored through quarterly reports made to meetings of the Works and Transport Sector Working Group.

c) We have increased resources for labour-based technology because of the importance Government attaches to job creation activities. Mt. Elgon Labour-based Training

Centre (MELTC) in Mbale is being supported to actively provide training and promote labour-based technology in infrastructure development and maintenance. Some of you who came to the previous seminar recall the field trip we made to MELTC in Mbale. To-date MELTC has extended training to 125 firms of labour-based contractors in the country, 22 Trainers from Kenya and 37 Engineers from Somalia.

d) There is on-going research at MELTC to develop low-cost methods for sealing of roads. It is expected that use of labour-based methods in sealing of the predominantly gravel district roads will further create job opportunities.

e) We have continued to share knowledge on labour-based technology with our partner states in East Africa and beyond. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between my Ministry and the Public Works Ministry of South Africa on areas of cooperation related to public works and infrastructure development including use of labour-based technology. Other Memoranda of Understanding were signed between MELTC and the two

labour-based training institutions of Kisii Training Centre in Kenya, and Mbeya in Tanzania to foster co-operation and sharing experience in order for the Centres to grow into Centres of Excellence.

I therefore argue partner countries to take the discussions at these seminars beyond and make concrete collaborations aimed at up-scaling labour-based technology.

As I conclude I wish to state that this Seminar under the Theme "***public works for decent jobs and poverty reduction: policies and practices***" again provides us with yet another opportunity to avail ourselves to promote widespread and cost-effective use of employment approaches in infrastructure development. Let us over the next five days commit ourselves to implementing infrastructure programmes in our respective countries that will result into creation of decent jobs and contribute to reduction in poverty among our populace.

I want to thank ILO and member countries for the unending promotion of use of labour-based technology in provision of infrastructure facilities. I have enjoyed leading you in this endeavour over the last two years.

With those few remarks it is now my humble pleasure to handover the leadership of steering the labour-based technology and employment creation agenda to the Government of Ghana through the Hon. Minister of Roads and Highways.

Thank you for listening to me. For God and My Country.

Hon. John Byabagambi
Minister of State for Works
Ministry of Works and Transport, Uganda