

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECTOR SKILLS BODIES (SSBs)**



The ITCILO, ACTEMP, the ILO Skills Department and BUSINESSAfrica organized a workshop to discuss the establishment of Sector Skills Bodies in seven countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Lesotho, Rwanda and the Seychelles.

The workshop took place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 14th-15th May and aimed to tackle three pertinent questions: what SSBs are, why they are important and how to establish them. The participants of the event acknowledged the establishment of SSBs as a potential solution to skills mismatches, youth unemployment and a lack of productivity within the labour market. Further, they agreed that a multistakeholder approach bringing together industry associations, employers, labour movements, relevant government bodies and academic institutions would be most effective in the realisation of SSBs.

In her opening remarks, Dr Wanjiru Kariuki, Secretary of the State Department for Labour and Skills Development of Kenya, highlighted the need to promote demand driven education and training which will in turn guarantee improved labour market transitions. When discussing the case of Kenya, she emphasised that the Government mandates the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to promote decent work, skills development and sustainable job creation. As such, National Guidelines for Sector Skills Committees have been developed to help in the attainment of sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

In the discussion on how to establish Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), Carmel Marock, a research associate at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at the University of Witwatersrand, shared insights from the South African experience. She emphasized the importance of focusing on sectors that align with development priorities and offer significant employment opportunities. Regarding Skills Industrial Training Authorities (SITAs) in South Africa, she noted: SITAs with a narrower focus tend to be more effective as they ensure that the employer voice is heard and employer needs are met.

For example, in the manufacturing SITA, which encompassed a wide range of subsectors, employers felt distant from decision-making. In response, SITAs created smaller, sector-specific spaces to ensure that constituents directly involved can engage and have their voices heard. This has been a key lesson for South Africa”.

Participants were given the opportunity to discuss the state of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) in their countries. Speaking for Uganda, Jeanne Byamugisha, CEO of the Uganda Hotel Owners Association, highlighted urgent issues to be addressed through SSBs.

She said, “Uganda, like many African countries, has a very young population, with approximately 80% under 20 years old. SSBs could help tackle the significant challenge of youth unemployment. Additionally, there is also the issue of outdated curricula that do not meet labour market needs. Therefore, there needs to be a council consisting of industry players to approve curricula, ensuring quality assurance and better job market absorption for students”.

When discussing the risks associated with establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), Kennedy Edward Mollé, CEO of the Hotels Association of Tanzania (HAT), identified five key challenges: “Firstly, setting up these bodies is time-consuming, requiring extensive engagement with key partners and navigating various legislative processes. Secondly, there are significant cost implications, raising questions about whether employers, the government, or employees will bear these costs. Thirdly, there is often a lack of expertise within specific sectors. Then, a lack of political can hinder progress. Finally, there is a risk of insufficient resources and funding, both in terms of financial support and human capital”.

From the ILO side, Skills and Lifelong Learning Specialist Alice Voza emphasized the importance of identifying specific problems before establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). She stated: “Different issues such as unemployment, lack of productivity, skills mismatches, industry competitiveness, and informality impact the skills system at the country level. These factors must be considered when defining the scope of work for SSBs. Additionally, it should be noted that SSBs are not a one-size-fits-all solution due to the dynamic nature of labour market needs. While SSBs are important, a comprehensive strategy involving various stakeholders and approaches is necessary to effectively address these issues.”

The event brought together international experts, private sector representatives, government officials, industry associations, and Employer and Business Membership Organisations (EBMOs) to share best practices from countries that have successfully established Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) and to discuss the current state of SSBs in the represented countries. In the final session of the two-day workshop, delegates had the opportunity to present national roadmaps for establishing SSBs over the next six months. ILO specialists and technical experts will support the implementation of these action plans through ongoing projects in the represented countries.

**Steps to enhance partnerships and collaboration: Highlights from Ms. Jacqueline Mugo during the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice**



The 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held its inaugural forum, featuring prominent voices including Ms Jacqueline Mugo EBS, the Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica and Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo the Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In his address, Director General of ILO emphasized the importance of global cooperation in addressing labour challenges amidst evolving economic landscapes. "Our actions have the power to change our world. Together, let us embark on this journey of collaboration, on this journey of actions", he said. He also emphasized that in the era of rapid technological advancement and globalization, the collective efforts of the members are crucial to achieve decent work and social justice for all.

Echoing these sentiments, Ms Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica, during her presentation on the topic "Steps to enhance partnerships and collaboration" at the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, said the main actionable steps to enhance partnerships and collaboration were:

- I. Resource mobilization- to have a well-coordinated approach for resource mobilization to support partnership initiatives,
- II. Build capacities of coalition partners to enhance the quality of participations and contributions and
- III. Create platforms for stakeholder engagements to promote social dialogue.

Ms Mugo highlighted the role of private sector engagement in fostering sustainable development across the African continent. She added, "businesses in Africa are committed to advancing inclusive growth and enhancing job creation through innovative partnerships and investments in human capital."

The forum, which brought together government officials, employers' and workers' representatives, and civil society organizations, served as a platform for constructive dialogue on advancing labor rights, promoting gender equality, and addressing youth employment challenges globally.

The 112th ILC2024 continues to explore avenues for international collaboration and policy development to navigate the complexities of the modern labor market and achieve the ambitious targets set forth in the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

### **112<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC)**



The 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) took place in Geneva, from June 3 to 14, 2024. This year's conference has drawn delegates from the ILO's 187 member states, including representatives of workers, employers, and governments, and social partners to address several critical issues affecting the global labour market.

Delegates from the member states deliberated on critical issues ranging from workers' rights in the digital age to climate-friendly employment practices.

Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo the Director-General of ILO praised the productive debates that had underpinned the ILC's discussions.

A significant outcome that was anticipated from this session was the potential adoption of an international labor standard on protection against biological hazards. The discussions on protection against biological hazards, has been a recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of fundamental principles and rights at work and a general discussion on decent work and the care economy.

One of the standout achievements of this session was the unanimous adoption of the "Geneva Accord on Digital Labor Rights," a groundbreaking framework aimed at safeguarding the rights of workers in the rapidly evolving digital economy. The accord establishes guidelines for fair wages, job security, and access to social protections for workers engaged in digital platforms and remote work arrangements.

In another significant development, the ILC2024 endorsed the "Green Jobs Initiative," signaling a global commitment to promoting employment opportunities in sustainable sectors. This initiative is expected to drive investments in renewable energy, environmental conservation, and green technology, creating millions of new jobs while mitigating the impact of climate change.

Furthermore, the conference addressed challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for resilient labor markets and universal access to healthcare and social protection. Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of decent work and social justice, underscoring the role of international cooperation in building back better from the pandemic's economic disruptions.

The Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), hailed the ILC2024 as a testament to multilateralism and solidarity in addressing global labor challenges. He called upon member states to translate the conference's resolutions into concrete actions that improve the lives of workers worldwide.

### **International Labour Conference (ILC) marked World Day Against Child Labour on June 12**



During the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), which took place from June 3 to 14, 2024, the International Labour Organization (ILO) marked World Day Against Child Labour on June 12. This year's observance was particularly significant as it celebrated the 25th anniversary of the adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the first ILO convention to achieve universal ratification in 2020.

The high-level side event focused on assessing the progress made and the challenges faced in the fight against child labour, aiming to enhance the implementation of ILO conventions No. 182 and No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment.

Notable speakers included Gilbert F. Houngbo and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, who highlighted the need for accelerated global efforts to eradicate child labour by 2025, as per Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7.

“Today, we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ILO Convention 182 on the worst form of child labour the only ILO Convention to be ratified. Yet, 160 million children are still in child labour. That one in ten children. Of them 79 million are still in hazardous work”, the ILO Director-General said.

The event also featured discussions on strategic partnerships and initiatives such as the "Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour" initiative, celebrating its 10th anniversary. Representatives from various countries and organizations shared insights on effective strategies to combat child labour and the importance of international cooperation in these efforts.

Despite significant strides in reducing child labour, recent years have witnessed a reversal in global trends. Now more than ever, it is crucial to unite and intensify efforts to eradicate child labour in all its forms.