



THE CASABLANCA DECLARATION

CASABLANCA, MOROCCO 25 – 26 November 2013

We, the representatives of the employers' organisation members of Business Africa and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), meeting in Casablanca on 25 and 26 November 2013, in the presence of representative of the ILO, on the occasion of the Conference of African Employers on the theme: "*Developing Job Creation Strategies for African Countries – the contribution of Sectoral Strategies.*"

Recognising the role of the private sector as an engine of growth and creation of productive employment, and consequently, its essential role in the economic and social development of countries;

That the employers' organisation are the voice of the private sector and play a key role in social dialogue and the search for a united and common vision;

That the African continent benefits from an environment conducive to an economic take-off and has at its disposal real advantages such as that:

- Africa has demonstrated remarkable dynamism over the last ten years and an outstanding growth rate of between six and seven per cent before the crisis;
- Africa is a young continent in the midst of demographic transition, which provides the opportunity over the next two to three decades to transform this demographic dividend into growth and economic wealth;
- The continent has witnessed remarkable development with regard to new information and communication technologies, notably in mobile telephony;
- Africa has an abundance of arable land for the development of its agriculture;
- The continent possesses significant natural and mineral resources;
- Africa is blessed with a growing middle class and a high level of urbanisation in the population.

Cognisant that Africa equally has significant challenges to meet, notably that:

- Economic growth has not succeeded in generating enough jobs in the formal economy to meet the demand of the massive entry into the labour market of

young people and women, and to meet the demand for graduate and qualified workers;

- The ongoing development of the informal economy;
- The mismatch between training and the skills needs of enterprises;
- Youth unemployment, which is a principal source of social unrest and instability;
- The rate of under-employment and of work in the informal economy is estimated at around 50 – 70 % of the active African population;
- Productivity is low and there is an 80% trade deficit (export of low value raw materials and import of manufactured goods).

Moreover, African governments are called to:

- Work towards the development of a national jobs strategy derived from sectoral strategies based on comparative advantages;
- Bring together the conditions necessary to encourage productive investments, access to financing, PPPs, the creation of basic infrastructures and the preparation of skills that are in demand;
- Improve the business climate to improve in the World Bank Doing Business ranking and by doing so, promote investor confidence;
- Develop basic infrastructure : roads, railways, ports, water and electricity;
- Develop sectoral strategies based on comparative advantage to stimulate growth;
- Adapt legislation in line with developments in the world of work and in types of economies;
- Develop direct and sustainable dialogue between the different economic and social partners;
- Put in place measures to support the transition of the informal economy to formality;
- Support the development of small and micro-enterprises, true seedbeds for the creation of jobs in the future;
- Investment in sectors with potential for the future such as ICT; the transition to the green economy; re-inventing production in so-called traditional industries for export markets and/or for domestic markets by identifying new niches;
- Provide additional support to the thousands of small initiatives managed by men and women and encourage micro and small enterprises, which are often operating in the informal economy, in order to increase productivity and promote the aim of their gradual transition to formality.
- Foster PPPs through strong political will and the involvement of the tripartite partners of the world of work;

- Seek the increased and concerted participation of the private sector in the elaboration of sectoral strategies and policies, whilst developing financing mechanisms dedicated to wealth-creating initiatives;
- Invest in the agriculture sector which represents a real comparative advantage for Africa in light of its arable land wealth;
- Promote active programmes for the promotion and intermediation of employment;
- Put in place innovative measures to encourage the modernisation of the economy and improve the quality and volume of products and services;
- Promote industrialisation for sustainable development;
- Reform education and training systems involving the different stakeholders: enterprises and social partners.

Strongly encourage organisations of employers to:

- Become an influential force by strengthening their capacities;
- Get together with governments to develop tailored employment policies;
- Encourage the business community to articulate its future skills needs, both in terms of quality and quantity;
- Get involved in a dynamic way in education and training systems;
- Participate in the structuring of the fabric of the SME and micro-enterprise sector;
- Encourage tax compliance with a view to endowing states with increased financial means;
- Encourage the integration of young people into the labour market by developing internships in enterprises;
- Mobilise African enterprises around the issue of growth, productivity and youth employment.

Strongly encourage organisations of workers to:

- Promote sustainable social dialogue in order to create a climate of confidence amongst economic operators;
- Develop a global common vision based on the principle that business is the creator of wealth and jobs;
- Accept that employers are encouraged to develop the skills of their employees, especially young graduates;
- Be fully involved in sectoral strategies and employment policies;
- Create, with a view to competitive enterprises, a climate of confidence with the economic operators within a framework of direct and meaningful dialogue.

In order to ensure the follow-up to this Declaration, the participants in the Casablanca symposium have decided to launch a task force of African employers on employment and employability. They have developed action plans at sub regional and national level to operationalize them.

The participants would like to express their heartfelt thanks to CGEM for their hospitality and their warm welcome. They would also like to thank the Moroccan authorities for their support and above all His Majesty King Mohammed VI, under whose esteemed patronage this symposium was held. Thanks also go to the IOE, the ILO and Business Africa for their unfailing support.

(Translated from the original French version/IOE)