African Social Partners support implementation of the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa

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The African employer, trade union and government representatives, including from Least Development Countries (LDCs), meeting in Tunis on 15-16 December 2016 endorsed the implementation of the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa through national action plans on employment and employability. Hosted by the IOE member in Tunisia, UTICA, the summit followed the launch of the Jobs for Africa Foundation in Geneva on 3 November 2016 and was funded under the IOE-EU partnership agreement.

Speaking at the opening of the Summit, the Prime Minister of Tunisia H.E. Mr. Youssef Chahed underscored the importance of creating more and better jobs for the youth in Africa. Given the growing unemployment challenge, especially among the youth in the continent, African countries needed to make job creation a national priority. This view was supported by the Coordinator of the African Government Group in the ILO Governing Body Mr Poem Mudyawabikwa.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Ms Wided Bouchamaoui, President of the Tunisian Federation of Employers (UTICA), and Mr Houcine Abassi, Secretary-General of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), advocated for social dialogue as an effective way of addressing the jobs challenge in Africa.

The President of the Jobs for Africa Foundation Mr Jamal Belahrach underscored the importance of economic and social development. Recalling that the Tunisian revolution was triggered by unemployment and desperation among the country’s youth, youth unemployment was a ticking time bomb in many countries and therefore needed immediate and concerted attention.

IOE Secretary-General Linda Kromjong expressed full IOE commitment to helping Africa deal with the jobs crisis. Job creation was closely linked to the IOE's objectives in the areas of sustainable enterprises, formalization of the informal economy, migration and skills development, the sustainable development agenda and business and human rights.
ITUC representative Mr Mamadou Diallo thanked the workers of Tunisia for being at the forefront in moving the country forward after the revolution. Social dialogue had proven to be an important tool in helping resolve crisis situations. He called for reinforced social dialogue between the tripartite constituents in Africa in order to develop a shared vision on job creation.

The representative of the African Development Bank called for synergies between the bank’s Jobs for Youth Initiative and the Jobs for Africa Foundation which has received strong support from the European Commission.

Representatives from the ILO Regional Office, ILO area Office for North Africa in Algiers, ILO Sectoral Activities Programme, ILO Governance and Tripartism Department, ILO Skills Department, the ILO Cooperatives Department and ACT/EMP called for linkages between the Jobs for Africa Foundation and similar ILO programmes such as the Global Jobs Pact and the Global Employment Agenda (2003), the ILO Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (EESE) toolkit and the 2015 ILO African Regional Meeting conclusions set out in the Addis Ababa Declaration, as well as linkages with the UN Sustainable Development Goal number 8 and the African Union Ouagadougou +10 Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation.

Discussions focussed on four key areas:

1. **Social dialogue** and its importance in developing national employment policies and social pacts on employment and competitiveness.
2. A **sectoral approach** to job creation based on the importance of agriculture, energy and ICT.
3. **SME development, entrepreneurship, and the social and solidarity economy** and their importance in building value chains and a strong private sector ecosystem.
4. **Skills development and employability**

Priority areas for action identified by the Tunis summit included:

- Mainstreaming employment into national action plans and priorities.
- Addressing the skills mismatch between training and the needs of enterprises.
- Promoting SME development, entrepreneurship, the social and solidarity economy particularly in rural areas, formalization of the informal economy.
- Holding consultations at sub-regional level with ILO Decent Work teams in Cairo, Pretoria, Dakar and Yaoundé.
- Promoting job-rich sectors such as agriculture based on each country’s competitive advantage.
- Promoting social dialogue as a tool to develop social pacts on employment.

The African social partners will come together again in Algiers on 25 April. The Terms of Reference for the April meeting in Algiers, and other relevant information including presentations from the Tunis Summit (where available in English), may be accessed via the links in the side panel.

*If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mr Frederick Muia, Senior Adviser at muia@ioe-emp.org and/or Ms Anetha Awuku, IOE-EU Projects Manager at awuku@ioe-emp.org*