
OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS

ZCTU SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE

1-2 NOVEMBER 2017, PANDHARI LODGE, HARARE

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Representatives from the named Ministries

Clerk of Parliament

Representative members of the Parliamentary Portfolios on Portfolio Committees of Finance and Economic Planning; and, Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and the Thematic Committee on SDGs

ILO Country Director, Ms. Hopolang Phororo

Representatives of UNDP

Representatives of UN-Women

Director of EMCOZ, Mr Mufukare

The ZCTU Secretary General, Mr. Japhet Moyo

Members of the ZCTU National Executive

The ZCTU Regional Women Advisory Council Representatives

Representatives of the ZCTU Young Workers

The ZCTU Heads of Departments

Director of LEDRIZ, Dr. Kanyenze and staff

Ladies and gentlemen

Comrades and friends

It is my great honour to stand before you this morning to give my opening remarks to this esteemed and High Level SDG Conference that brings together distinguished Ministries, Development Partners, the members of Parliament, employers and trade unions, all of whom have relevance to the issues of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We meet today at a time when the issue SDGs have gained widespread currency at the global level, continental and more importantly at national level. In fact, the word SDGs with a life

span has now become the buzz word in the development discourse, following the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Globally, Governments commitment towards implementation of SDGs is growing tremendously as evidenced by the increasing number of national governments committing themselves to the National Voluntary Reviews (NVRs) which are presented annually by governments at the SDG-High Level Political Forum (HLPF). On the other hand development partners, trade unions and CSOs are also taking SDGs seriously in implementation of their programmes.

As trade unions, we commend the commitment of our government in implementing SDGs as evidenced by the National SDG Document in existence which prioritises 10 SDGs. I have also learnt that they are now 11 SDGs with the inclusion of SDG 16 which we shall learn about at this Conference. The government has also institutionalised multi-stakeholder committees for consultation and implementation of the SDGs through the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion. In pursuit of this commitment, the government presented its Voluntary National Review (NVR) on SDGs at the High Level Political Forum on SDGs held in New York in July 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends, the SDGs presents a developmental framework for reinforcing the Decent Work Agenda (which is our agenda as trade unions and workers) especially through SDG 8 which aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. More interestingly is the fact that apart from SDG 8, quite a number of SDGs interlink with the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda (employment creation, workers’ rights, social protection and social dialogue). Furthermore, pursuance of the achievement of SDGs also provides a framework for addressing the various socio-economic challenges that are bedevilling our economy.

With this background, Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends, it is clear that the SDGs present opportunities for the trade unions in Zimbabwe to pursue its goal of decent work for all and the integration of SDGs in the upcoming fourth generation of the Decent Work Country Programme for Zimbabwe (DWCP-Z). The DWCPs-Z have played a significant role in promoting and stimulating social dialogue among the social partners (government, business and labour). They have also been very instrumental in revitalizing social dialogue mechanisms and structures in Zimbabwe.

Likewise, it is important that the upcoming DWCP-Z integrates the ILO’s Future of Work (FoW) initiative, launched at the 104th International Labour Conference (ILC) which focusses on four major areas namely; work and society, decent jobs, the organization of work, and production and the governance of work. The FoW emphasises the need for social partners to understand and to respond effectively to ongoing changes in the world of work.

Evidently, strengthening the capacities of trade unions on these issues in order to fulfil their responsibilities as organizations that promote the interests of workers becomes critical. It is therefore in this context that this Conference has been organised. This Conference provides a wider national dialogue platform for the government, employers, United Nations (UN)

agencies (ILO, UNDP and UN Women) to share with the trade unions on their role in mainstreaming SDGs in national processes and national development plans and policies.

I sincerely hope that this Conference will provide a reference point to complement the government's SDGs multi-stakeholder initiative under the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion as well as provide an opportunity for learning and sharing from each other on how to effectively make SDGs implementation a success. In the process, I trust relations amongst organisations represented here will be strengthened.

I also hope that after this conference will be able to benchmark future assessments of progress made in implementing SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen, Comrades and Friends let me say that this conference is not only for us to get the presentations but most importantly for us to candidly share our experiences both good and bad so that everyone benefits from them. In this way, we will be able to strengthen progress towards achievement of the SDGs from our various organisations.

Lastly, let me end by saying that ***development does not come by default but by design!***

With these few words, I declare the Conference officially opened. Thank you!