



Republic of Mozambique

Keynote address

by

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Opening Session

“Working Out of Poverty”

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H.E. Mr. Ali Hachani, President of ECOSOC

Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway

H.E. Mr. Chadi Laroussi, Minister of Labour and Youth Employment, Tunisia

Mr. Juan Somavia, Director General of ILO

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Mr. President,

Allow me, at the outset, to thank you for the kind invitation to address this important session of the High Level Segment of ECOSOC on the theme "Working Out of Poverty".

We wish to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and enlightening Report on "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development".

Mr. President

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and the subsequent political momentum thereafter have highlighted the need for an integrated and broad approach to the major international issues, particularly the global efforts to fight the scourge of poverty, by giving equal weight and importance to the development, security and human rights agenda.

In this regard creating an environment at national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development must be addressed in the context of national and regional efforts to eradicate poverty.

Agriculture remains the most important economic sector in Africa contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agriculture employs the majority of the working population, with many African people being heavily dependent on the performance of this sector for their incomes, family security, subsistence, inputs for local industry, and participation in international trade.

As such, until and unless income and poverty levels in agriculture are improved, most African countries are unlikely to emerge from the current poverty levels.

Many women are working in agriculture throughout the world, often in the most precarious situations. Regrettably, the current trends in employment levels display an alarming trend of increasing unemployment, particularly among women and young people, two vulnerable and important groups in the labor force in Africa. It is worth noting that agriculture is a sector that can have a meaningful role in providing employment and decent work, as the majority of our population lives in rural areas.

In this sense employment plays a crucial role in poverty reduction, gender equality and social inclusiveness.

Mr. President,

It is against the background of the relationship between the performance of agriculture, land and agrarian reforms, poverty, conflicts and HIV/AIDS that Africa must stimulate and promote 'decent work'. This calls for an integrated approach to economic and social policy in a manner that is inclusive of the majority of the population in a given developing country set up.

Employment must be seen as the key in supporting the commitment towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the basis of economic empowerment.

As we gather here to reflect on the ways to draw strategies that will provide our fellow citizens around the world, with opportunities to find decent and productive employment allowing them to become independent and responsible global citizens, I would like to share with you a few ideas to explore the link between employment and working out of poverty.

In order to focus on employment issues in the process of development it is important to have a clear picture of the population situation in each country: its dynamics, structure, migration trends, and their implications. The large experience of the UN and its universality are critical in supporting the member states to produce data and analysis for the design of policies and its monitor and implementation.

At the same time given the characteristics of most developing countries, and African in particular, it is important to have a clear understanding of the concepts of:

- employment,
- the informal sector
- the family sector (subsistence agricultural farms), and
- the role of women in the productive activities.

Poverty reduction means improvements in wealth, and wealth comes from productive activities. In other words, creation of value added. On the other side, productive

activities occur from a dynamic domestic private sector. Wealth also can be expressed in terms of assets accumulation: labor, physical capital and human and institutional capacity.

In this regards, in Mozambique, the Five Year Poverty Reduction Strategy program encompasses the establishment of adequate policies conducive to job creation through its three Pillars:

- Human Capital, that includes education, health and other social sectors;
- Economic Development that includes Infrastructures and all the productive areas including agriculture and issues related to private sector development.
- Good Governance that includes decentralization, judicial reform, and fight against corruption.
- Cross cutting issues such as HIV-AIDS, environment, disaster preparedness, and gender.

In this domain, we face several challenges. Some concrete questions are addressed for further analysis and here the role of the UN System is crucial in embracing them jointly with the developing countries agenda:

What is the definition of employment?

What is the most appropriate concept taking into account the specificities of developing country?

Do we use the standard manual definitions and how do they fit in the policy dialogue within the country?

Data collection on employment, its analysis, their uses in policy design in order to promote employment and reduce regional disparities, and how the data links with population censuses and Household Surveys?

How we define the “informal” sector and the “family sector” and the impact on wealth creation and self-employment? The success in this challenge, involves the need of making our people, specially women and youth, employable, providing opportunities, developing individual skills for entrepreneurship.

Mr. President

The broad goals of sustainable development call, today, for a wide range of partnership between member states, the United Nation, and the society as a whole, so as to drive our countries on the path to sustained growth and improved living conditions for its people.

The challenges of long-term sustainable employment require a concerted and coordinated approach that draws on the strengths of all countries and explore different alternatives.

Let me end with the words from the secretary-general of the United Nations in the report to the Director General of International Labor Organization: "the best program against Poverty is the employment and the best guarantee for wealth is decent work".

I thank you for your kind attention.