



ILO country programme to “ensure a future of social justice in the world of work for all Namibians”

Windhoek, 7 August: The Government of the Republic of Namibia, the country’s workers’ and employers’ organizations and the ILO have signed a new Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for the period 2018-2023.

The DWCP, which replaces an earlier one, covers various areas that will require intervention, including child labour, social protection, industrial relations, employment, domestic work, the informal economy, occupational safety and health, support to key populations and gender equality.

In a country with high youth unemployment and rising informality, the programme prioritizes employment promotion. It also aims at strengthening social dialogue and industrial relations and promotes social justice by focussing on working conditions, particularly minimum wages, care work, maternity protection, violence and harassment at work, occupational safety and health, and HIV and AIDS responses at the workplace.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, the Honourable Erkki Nghimtina, members of the Namibia Employment Federation (NEF), the two main trade unions – the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) and the Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) – as well as ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

Ryder acknowledged the contributions of the government and the social partners in addressing the concerns of the world of work in Namibia. He called the DWCP a programme “not lacking in ambition” and that it would be “unrealistic to be less ambitious”, and that the signing of the programme was only the “beginning of the story”. He reminded the tripartite partners that “implementation will be a shared responsibility requiring the participation of the government, workers and employers to ensure a future of social justice in the world of work for Namibians.”

Speaking at the ceremony, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, the Honourable Erkki Nghimtina thanked the head of the ILO for his visit, which culminated in the signing of the DWCP. He noted “the tripartite team spirit that had been

demonstrated so far and encouraged the social partners to focus on addressing the problems facing the world of work for the benefit of the country and future generations. Let us Harambee* together," he concluded.

The acting Secretary- General of NUNW, Mr Job Muniaro, expressed his appreciation for the support by the ILO and highlighted the centrality of the DWCP for development.

Representing the workers affiliated to TUCNA, its President, Mr Paulos Hango acknowledged the joint efforts that led to the DWCP He called on the partners to put the issue of a national minimum wage on the top of the agenda.

Represented by their Secretary- General, Mr Tim Parkhouse, the employers re-affirmed their readiness to implement the DWCP as they had done before with an earlier programme.

The ceremony was also attended by Ms Rachel Odede, the UN Resident Coordinator a.i. who noted the significance of the DWCP with respect to the current United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) and the idea of delivering as one UN in Namibia. It is also in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 'Decent Work and Economic Growth'.

*Harambee means "all pull together" in Swahili