



Statement of the International Labour Office

Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees, Brussels 21 October 2015

The ILO is committed to work with the Government of Somalia, the Somali People, UNHCR and partners that share our commitment to decent work for Somalis.

Labour market information is critical to design any livelihood intervention, poverty among returnees and the host communities remain pervasive as also ILO's labour force surveys in Somalia show. To create the work opportunities both returnees and those already there, a whole range of labour market interventions needs to be expanded on both the supply and the demand side.

First of all direct job creation through public employment schemes do inject cash into local communities while developing productive infrastructure. This may seem an easy quick-fix but ILO stands for ensuring such short-term jobs are safe and dignified; offering opportunity to those in need. There needs to be support to the Government to control the quality of works. Durability must be integrated from design and into maintenance strategies. ILO's technical expertise in these areas is well-tested and proven.

In Somalia, formal sector jobs are in short supply so enterprise development and self employment are key. This needs support through entrepreneurship training, access to finance and skills development driven by market opportunities. Isolated interventions don't work, ILO advocates a strong role for government facilitating (local) economic development and job matching. Already UNHCR and ILO are working on a fundamental package to roll out wider support, focusing on women and youth.

Mapping economic opportunities must drive any skills intervention. Simply supply of training that is not demand-led can create frustrations and drop-outs, well-targeted skills training linked to market needs with careful selection of beneficiaries can enhance employability, especially if linked to career guidance and job matching support.

Expanding job opportunities must go hand-in-hand with protection and decent working conditions. Our approach is inclusive, the ILO supports a specific focus on disabled people for instance Recognising Somalia's own commitments to the elimination of child labour, all actors for development in Somalia must ensure children do not get caught in hazardous work.

While the focus is on creating decent jobs in Somalia, the ILO works with neighbouring countries on options for Somali refugees to access local employment and vocational training. In a context of already high unemployment and under-employment there is a need to look creatively for win-win situations. For instance through work programmes building productive infrastructure or stabilising fragile environments.

Finally the ILO welcomes the overall migration perspective of the discussions today, particularly as we prepare for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals and

in light of the refugee and migrant tragedies unfolding in the Mediterranean region and beyond. The ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative across a range of labour migration corridors has received support from the European Commission.

The ILO's inputs into the Valletta Plan of Action focus on the need for economic development and investments in both countries of origin, transit and destination to increase labour market absorption capacities. This approach is mirrored in the Joint Labour Migration Programme initiative of the African Union being developed in partnership with the ILO, IOM and the Economic Commission for Africa. This highly ambitious programme can have a significant impact on enhancing labour migration governance for the region, addressing root causes and offering alternatives.

Let me end by reiterating the ILO's strong support for the work of the Governments here today, the European Commission and UNHCR. The ILO stands ready to continue and expand its contribution, including on the specific elements contained in the Action Plan.

Thank you.

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