



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

REMARKS: BY HON. FLORENCE BORE

**CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**DURING THE 2022 EMPLOYERS' ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

HELD IN SAWELA LODGE, NAIVASHA ON

THURSDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 2022

Secretary Administration, **Dr. William Kiprono**

Deputy County Commissioner, **Mr. Mutua Kisilu**

Chairman, Agricultural Employers Association - **Mr. Stephen Strong**

CEO, Agricultural Employers Association - **Mr. Siele**

Ag. Commissioner for Labour, **Ms. Hellen Apiyo**

Director, National Productivity and Competitiveness Center, **Mr Kariuki Miano**

Deputy Commissioner, Kenya Revenue Authority, **Mr Benard Ambasa**

Members from the Agricultural Employers' Associations

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

I am delighted to join you today, at this 60th Annual Employers Conference, whose theme is “**Fortifying productivity- innovate, Reinvent, embrace**”. I am informed that the focus of the conference is on productivity improvement, promoting a resilient and healthy workforce for a harmonious industrial relations and decent work.

The theme is timely and enables us to appreciate the gains made in the sector and nudges us to further work together for the good of the labour sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am informed that the Agricultural Employers' Association (AEA) is one of the oldest associations and was registered in 1962. This is a long time and it is a testament of the good serve rendered by the Association to the Membership.

The Association has steady grown to have a strong membership drawn from sugar, coffee, tea, sisal plantations, floriculture and horticulture, dairy, ranching and indeed span the entire spectrum of the agricultural economy in the country.

The growth in Membership of the Association can be linked to range of services provided to its members which includes; corporate governance, advocacy and human capital development leading to harmonious industrial relations.

In reviewing the status of industrial relations in the country, in the last four years, the Agricultural sector has remained stable and calm as opposed to others.

For this, I wish to applaud the Agricultural Employers' Association for playing a pivotal role in ensuring that the sector is attended to appropriately.

The leadership demonstrated by the Association during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic that is, 2020-2021 was commendable. Despite the hardship occasioned to businesses, many employers under the

Association did not lay off workers and instead negotiated flexible working terms and conditions which helped secure jobs and sustain the employment relationship. For example;

- i. leave without pay,
- ii. Working for less hours
- iii. Work on rotation and
- iv. Continued pay of NHIF and NSSF

I wish once more to commend the Association for this show of sensitivity to workers plight, a deed which needs to be emulated by employers in other sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy and is a major engine for job creation and is a driving force for economic growth and National development. Agriculture remains the largest employer being a Labour - intensive sector.

It is for this reason that the Government continues to put in place measures to ensure that the growth and development of these sectors is sustainable, socially responsible and creates decent work opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We appreciate efforts by the Agricultural sector in ensuring that workers are protected and trained to address safety and health hazards at the shop floor. I am certain that full compliance with occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) 2007 can greatly improve working conditions in this sector.

However, currently there are many concerns that Agricultural industry work particularly in plantation fields, greenhouses and factories predisposes workers to suffer injury and occupational diseases. Mental

illness is also another rampant disease afflicting workers today, given the difficult circumstances of life.

I urge you to identify and mitigate hazards thus reducing the risks or accidents or injuries which will lead to efficiency and productivity, improved employee relations and morale, and reduce costs associated with insurance, accidents or injuries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Government we recognize the need to set up efforts to strengthen the framework for support in the Country.

To mitigate this, my Ministry has taken steps to empower workers through training of safety committees, inspection and enforcement of standards to protect workers. The Government has initiated the process towards the establishment of a **Work Injury Social Insurance Scheme** to provide for the compensation of workers and their families in the unfortunate event of disability or death arising out of and in the course of employment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also wish to encourage you to work with my Ministry through the National Productivity and Competitiveness Centre (NPCC) which has products to support employers in building a productivity work culture. Through the Centre you can benefit from productivity improvement activities which are tailor made for both Public and Private sector organizations and companies. Productivity improvement programmes will enable enterprises to minimize losses, address quality and safety issues and capacity underutilization all geared towards improving competitiveness.

As you know, productivity is a key driver for enterprise competitiveness and profitability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the recent years, the labour market in Kenya has witnessed a tremendous transformational change, driven by various factors. Key among them is demographics (increase in a youthful generation), technology, climate and environmental changes. COVID-19 had a catalytic effect in transforming the world of work bringing and indeed brought forward the much talked about – **Future of Work**. It changed the organization of work, employment relationships and production of

goods and services. For example, working from home, holding virtual and hybrid meetings.

This calls for a review of existing framework for labour relations to make it more responsive to the emerging realities in the **world of work**. As a Ministry we are committed to addressing the implications of the changes on employers and workers.

There is need to organize broad national and sectoral dialogues, engaging the **Tripartite**- drawing participation of government, workers and employers, and which should involve academia and communities. This social dialogue should revolve around:

- i. Work and society;
- ii. Decent jobs for all;
- iii. Organization of work and production and;
- iv. Governance of work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You realize 70% percent of our populations are the youth and majority who are in the rural areas and remain unemployed. We challenge you to do more as employers to attract the youth to take up farming and to work in the industry.

As a Government, we are keen to partner with you on this and look up to you devising innovative and sustainable programmes to draw the young generation to work in the sector. I suggest you come up with internship programmes targeting the youth to work in this sector.

My Ministry through the National Employment Authority and National Industrial Training Authority stands ready to support you in such endeavor and urge you to take advantage of the reimbursements available under the apprenticeship programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, we all know, wages and remuneration constitute an important component of cost of production and enterprise competitiveness. To workers it is an important element which defines workers welfare.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me state that, I am aware that the two Wages Councils, specific to this sector, that is, the **Agricultural Wages Council** and the **Floriculture Wages Councils** have not been operational due to

various reasons. This unfortunate situation has denied the Government the necessary advisory on issues of terms and conditions of employment as well as salaries and remuneration.

Given the important role that the Wages Councils play, I want to assure you that during my tenure I will be working towards strengthening the Wages Councils, the National Labour Board and other advisory organs.

It is important that they are made operational for it is only through this that we can effectively manage labour and employment sector. It will also lead to fewer labour disputes and industrial action.

Let me also take this opportunity to inform you that with the collaboration of the Social Partners, the Ministry has a draft **Wages and Remuneration Policy** for Kenya and it will soon be presented to cabinet for consideration and possible adoption.

It is our hope that through this initiative we will be able to inculcate a wage determination culture that is anchored on productivity, equity and fairness, sensitive to dynamics of the labour market and social dialogue.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, let me assure you of My Ministry's continued support to the Agricultural Employers' Association in promoting harmonious relations and economic progress of the sector. I wish to once again implore your Members to keep alive to the call for decent work and to pursuing realization through rule of law, social dialogue, social protection and employment promotion.

Let me also take this early opportunity to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year 2023.

Thank You for the attention and God Bless you all.

