



## **Press Statement**

**By**

**Amongi Betty Ongom (MP),  
Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development  
on the**

**Commemoration of the 2022 International Labour Day**

**at the**

**Uganda Media Centre, Kampala,**

**Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Amongi', is located in the bottom right corner of the document.

Distinguished Members of the Press,

1. It is my pleasure to address you about the upcoming International Labour Day celebrations for this year - 2022.
2. Uganda will join workers around the world to commemorate the International Labour Day on 1<sup>st</sup> May, which falls on Sunday this weekend. This day is commemorated in appreciation of the contribution of workers to national development and helps in raising national and international consciousness on the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of workers. The day is also used to reflect on our achievements, challenges and opportunities for enhancing productive employment.
3. The theme for this year's observance is: **"Mitigating the impact of COVID-19: Enhancing Productive Employment for improved livelihoods through Parish Development Model"**.
4. The choice of this theme is strategic in heightening national consciousness on the relevance of the Parish Development Model as a mechanism for enhancing productive employment.
5. As you are aware, for the last two years, the country has implemented COVID-19 containment measures. The measures had adverse effects on the economy halting production in some sectors, leading to workplace closures, job and productivity loss. The pandemic placed workers in unprecedented situations as witnessed by the drastic reduction in production, closure of workplaces and consequently loss of jobs, not to mention the diminished benefits for those who remained working the COVID-19.





6. Preliminary findings from a study commissioned by Government to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Labour, employment and productivity reveal that nearly 57 percent of the firms (employing 2,945,372 workers) decreased employment to cope with supply-chain disruptions and sales contraction and only 5 percent registered an increase in employment. This sunk 2.9 million people into unemployment due to the temporary or permanent lay-offs by some firms.
7. Furthermore, the study also indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated youth unemployment with about 1 in every 4 youths (24 percent) between 18 and 30 years having lost their jobs due to the pandemic. In addition, there was a 35% reduction in sales per worker and productivity of informal firms reduced by 59.9%. More than half of firms in the Agriculture and Services sectors adjusted salaries downwards by as much as 37 percent and 35 percent, respectively.
8. To respond to these challenges and also increase access to productive employment, especially for the 39% households that are in subsistence agriculture, mostly the youth and women living in rural areas, Government has introduced the Parish Development Model. The Programme is expected to increase production, aggregate demand, create jobs and increase incomes within the major sectors where majority of our labour force is employed, and also induce jobs in other sectors.
9. You may recall that on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022, H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda launched the Parish Development Model (PDM) in Kibuku District. The PDM is aimed at moving households from subsistence agriculture to modern agriculture. This move is projected to create more jobs as the 39% of the households graduate from subsistence to producing for the market. The PDM addresses the challenges of the poor like access to credit, limited participation in the value chains and low productivity. The changes the Parish



Development Model will bring create productive jobs at the household level, increase consumption and demand, and induce more jobs in the economy. This job creation model will lead to increase in production, improve incomes and enable us achieve our vision of transforming Uganda from a peasant to a modern, industrial and prosperous society by 2040.

10. It is on this basis that during this Year's Labour Day, it will be important to reflect on the importance of the PDM as a mechanism for enhancing productive employment for improved livelihoods. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the lead Ministry for Community Mobilisation and Mindset Change Pillar. As part of our mandate in implementation of the Parish Development Model, I am glad to inform you that the Ministry has so far achieved the following:
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  - i. developed and printed the CMMC Pillar Operational Manual;
  - ii. developed and printed the Training of Trainers Manual;
  - iii. trained National PDM Facilitators (Subject Matter Specialists) to support rollout of training activities across the country;
  - iv. sensitized Cultural Institutions and Religious Institutions on PDM;
  - v. Conducted regional Awareness Campaigns
  - vi. trained lower Local Government staff (Parish Chiefs, CDOs, Extension Workers, Sub-County Chiefs and OWC Constituency coordinators) from the districts of Budaka, Kibuku, Butebo, Pallisa and Butaleja.
11. Government has also been proactive in developing interventions that protect and promote workers' welfare and rights, for instance;
  - i. Government introduced the economic stimulus package such as the COVID Relief Cash, Tax Deferrals, Lowering of Interest Rates, Loan Repayment Breaks and the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) and Small Business Recovery Fund.





- ii. Government amended the National Social Security Fund Act, created yet another economic buttress mechanism allowing workers to draw from their savings the much-needed finances. Workers who are 45 years old and have saved for at least 10 years with the Fund are able to access up to 20 per cent of their accrued savings. In addition to the midterm access, members will benefit from the new provisions on Voluntary Top ups and New Benefits, for which the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is still developing regulations. In all this, the workers are the winners.
- iii. Securing jobs abroad. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is mandated to oversee the externalization of labour and as such has embarked on establishing bilateral agreements with destination countries to facilitate the safe labour migration of Ugandans. We have also intensified monitoring of deployed Ugandans to keep track of the conditions under which Ugandans work.
- iv. Skills Development in the World of Work. My Ministry has also initiated the Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme, through which we place unemployed and underemployed young people (16-35 years) in different workplaces for acquisition of hands-on skills as demanded by the labour market. It's a reciprocal scheme that also allows the workplaces tap into the youth talent.
- v. Provision of business toolkits, equipment and green technology to Jua-Kali groups. The Ministry is implementing the Green Jobs Programme that is a constituency-based intervention. The Programme facilitates productive self-employment and transition into the formal economy while improving the energy, raw material efficiency, reducing waste and pollution.





- vi. Provision of Climate Smart Integrated Organic Production System Skilling. Similarly, the Ministry is implementing the Uganda Green Incubation Project. The project currently housed in Kampiringisa- Mpigi District, promotes climate smart integrated organic production skilling to peri-urban and rural community youth, women and PWDs. The project also promotes business skills development and behavioral change of the youth/juveniles who have been in conflict with the law.
11. The Ministry continues to improve efficiency in the disposal of labour complaints and disputes. The Labour Office as Quasi Court of first instance with unlimited jurisdiction on all matters of labour and employment is being strengthened. Similarly, the Industrial Court is up and running and I want to encourage workers to make use of it as a special court for resolving labour disputes. Let's remember that an individual who works part-time or full-time under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, express or implied, and has recognized rights and duties is called a worker or an employee and it's for this person that the Court exists.
12. I therefore call upon employers to ensure worker's rights and welfare are protected and promoted in their establishments. Some of the key workers' rights and welfare include:
- i. Issuance of appointment letter/ contract of service;
  - ii. Freedom of association (right to join a labour union);
  - iii. Payment of social security contribution to NSSF;
  - iv. Issuance of insurance cover to workers;
  - v. Provision worker's compensation;
  - vi. Provision of sanitary facilities at workplaces;
  - vii. Provision of adequate wholesome drinking water;
  - viii. provision of adequate washing facilities;
  - ix. provision of personal protective equipment;



- x. payment of wages on time;
- xi. provision of weekly rest;
- xii. provision of annual leave and public holidays;
- xiii. provision of sick pay; and
- xiv. provision of maternity leave.

13. As I conclude, I would like to thank the number one frontline worker, H.E the President of Uganda Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, for the strategic leadership at a time when the country came to a near halt. You will agree with me that H.E served with distinction. I would like also to pay tribute to the brave frontline workers such as health professionals, emergency responders, market vendors, factory operatives, supermarket cashiers, cleaners and refuse collectors for their selfless dedication to the protection and well-being of others during the Coronavirus pandemic.
14. The venue for the National celebrations is selected on a rotational basis and each City/District/Municipality is eligible to host the celebrations. However, due to containment measures imposed to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, this year's celebrations will be held at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds and will be presided over by H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. All leaders at both local and national level, in Government, Private Sector and Civil Society, are called upon to mobilise communities to embrace the Parish Development Model.
15. The National celebrations will be broadcast live on all the major Television stations beginning at 8:00 am. I therefore urge all Ugandans to tune in and follow these important celebrations.

Thank you

**For God and My Country**

