14 June 2004

Mr. Juan Somavia
Director General
International Labour Organization

Dear Mr. Somavia

Considering Rwanda as a Youth Employment Lead Country

It is with pleasure that I write to you to express My Government's interest and commitment to the promotion of Youth Employment within the framework of the Millennium Declaration where Heads of State committed themselves to ensure sustainable and productive work for young people. I have also learnt about your role as a core and the Coordinator of the Youth Employment Network. Thus, I make this submission partly for your guidance on how Rwanda may be a beneficiary and contributor to the process you started.

Rwanda's poverty situation was worsened by the 1990-1994 war and genocide and deserves to be considered in the global initiative aimed at lifting the world population out of poverty and despair. I would like to register my government's resolve to promote Youth Employment as a strategy to achieving the Millennium Development

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Goals (MDGs), Vision 2020 (a road map to have Rwanda as a lower middle income economy by the year 2020) and a pillar to create quality and productive citizens.

Rwanda like many other less developed countries has a young population and high unemployment rates, implying that many of the unemployed are the youth. In Rwanda for instance over 60% of the population is under 25 years of age, statistics show that there are over one million young people un-employed and an equal number could be under-employed. This makes your initiative of youth employment highly relevant to Rwanda and according to the magnitude of the problem, highly necessary. Rwanda being considered as a lead nation has many implications, among others institutions dealing with youth would have rigorous tasks to integrate the 4Es (Employability, Equal opportunity, Entrepreneurship and Employment creation) in their programs and various undertakings in my view this would have a tremendous impact.

Youth Councils from the grassroots to the national level were established, a number of vocational training centers have also been put in place, these initiatives provide opportunities for youth Employment in our country. Rwanda has also prepared and submitted National Reviews and Action Plans on Youth Employment. With these humble efforts we feel that if our country is considered as one of the lead countries, we shall be in position not only to learn from other countries, but also to share our experience in promoting Youth Employment.

It is on the above basis that I would like to reiterate my government’s profound support and commitment to promote youth employment.

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as enshrined in the recommendations of the UN’s High level Panel of Youth Employment Network (Doc: A/56/422) and as obligation conferred to governments, including that of Rwanda by resolution A/RES/57/165.

I therefore ask you to consider Rwanda to become one of the Ten Lead Nations on Youth Employment and I promise my government’s support where necessary to have the initiative as a success not only in Rwanda but in the Region and International arena.
Dear Mr. President,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 14 June 2004. I greatly value the expression of your Government’s interest in becoming one of the Lead Countries of the Youth Employment Network.

We know that it is through work that young people can actively participate in society, contribute their talents and vision for the future and develop a sense of commitment and belonging. Employment creation and decent work in turn can play a key role in addressing the broader development agenda, including poverty alleviation.

The ILO looks forward to working closely with your Government in the development of your country’s review and action plan on youth employment. The Organization was also grateful to receive a delegation led by Minister of State Angelina Muganza, which has given us greater insight into the youth employment challenges faced by your country and the efforts underway to meet those challenges.

I look forward to receiving the contact information for the official who will be responsible for coordinating this process for your Government. I am also including a preliminary guidance note, as a basis for discussions, outlining potential areas of action in which your Government, in cooperation with other Lead Countries, may wish to take the lead, particularly in your region, in this global alliance for youth employment.

Yours sincerely,

Juan Somavia

His Excellency
Mr. Paul Kagame
President of the Republic of Rwanda
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