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**8<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY SESSION  
OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
11 – 15 APRIL 2011  
YAOUNDE, CAMEROON**

***THEME: “Promoting Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth”***

**CONCEPT NOTE**

## A. BACKGROUND

1. The AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC) is convened every two years. The 7th Session was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 September to 02 October 2009 under the theme: **“Improving Informal Sector: The Key to Poverty Alleviation”** **“Impact of the Global Crisis on Employment and Labour Market in Africa”**. The LSAC Sessions are organized on the tripartite principle basis, providing a policy forum to governmental authorities and representatives of workers’ and employers’ organizations.
2. The 7<sup>th</sup> LSAC made recommendations with regard to the **First Comprehensive Report on the implementation of the Ouagadougou 2004 Extraordinary Summit of Heads of States and Governments on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation** and adopted key recommendations with regard to the **Programme on Upgrading the Informal Economy (2010-2016)**, and the **Productivity Agenda for Africa (2009-2015)**, as well as on other items related to employment, labour and migration issues.
3. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> Session, the employment situation in Africa has worsened, in parallel with the impacts of the financial and economic crises both on growth rates and profiles in Member States. Forms of vulnerable employment have spread across the continent, affecting the youth, women, the informal economy and the rural working poor more severely.
4. The loss of jobs was prevalent in the manufacturing and service sectors, although the continent has been recovering faster than other regions in the world. However, Africa still continues to experience meager job content growth. This has led to rising social unrest on the continent with a threat to social and political stability.
5. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the LSAC will consider the above realities at in **Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 11 to 15 April 2011** under the theme: **“Promoting Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth”**.
6. Three panel discussions will be held during the Conference - one ministerial and two experts’ panel discussions. The Ministerial Panel will introduce the topic of **“Promoting Youth Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth”**., while the Expert Panels will focus on (i) **“Funding of Employment Policies in Africa: Challenges and Perspectives”**; and (ii) **“Social Protection for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers”**.
7. The outcomes of the panel discussions will feed into the theme of the 17<sup>th</sup> AU Assembly of the Heads of States and Governments, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, June 2011, namely **“Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development”**.

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the LSAC will offer opportunities for side events and exhibitions to showcase the achievements of Member States, Social Partners, AUC, RECs, NGOs and international partners on specific areas of labour and employment, as well as on the theme of the Conference.

## **B. OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE**

9. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the LSAC will provide a forum for Ministers and Social Partners to share experiences and learn from each other on ongoing programmes and activities on labour and employment in Africa, and on Best practices in Social Dialogue. It will also provide opportunity to review progress made in labour and employment issues, particularly those contained in the 3rd Biennial Follow-up Report on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action.

## **C. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE**

10. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the AU LSAC will provide an important forum for Member States, social partners, RECs, development partners and other stakeholders, to, among others:
  - i. Focus on promoting employment for social cohesion and growth inclusiveness in general, and, in particular, on the issues of the still pervasive youth unemployment and underemployment in Africa;
  - ii. Consider the following important frameworks:
    - ☛ A Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK);
    - ☛ A Strategic Document on Resource Mobilization for the Implementation of the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation.

## **D. AGENDA ITEMS**

11. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the AU LSAC will, among others, consider the following issues: The 3rd Biennial Follow-up Report on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action; The Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK); the Strategic Document on Resource Mobilization for the Implementation of the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation; The Session will also be briefed on, inter alia, employment in Post-Conflict Countries and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint AUC-EC Conference of Ministers in charge of Finance, Economy, and Development Planning.

## **E. FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE**

12. The Conference will be organized in two phases as follows

- a) Experts' Meeting: 11-13 April 2011
- b) Ministers' Meeting: 14-15 April 2011

## **F. OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE**

13. The 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the AU LSAC is expected to be highly interactive and constructive, in view of the items to be discussed, and actions to be undertaken to face the challenges of youth employment, social protection for the informal and rural workers, inclusive growth and social cohesion, resource mobilization for the accelerated implementation of the Ouagadougou 2004 PoA on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation. Many lessons to be applied on the ground will be learnt, while networks will be reactivated or initiated.

14. The LSAC is expected to make concrete proposals on Youth Employment to serve as input into the AU Summit in June 2011 in Malabo.

## **G. DOCUMENTS**

15. In addition to the relevant documents of the meeting which will be disseminated to participants and made available on the AU Website ([www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)), reports and other documentation will be circulated during the Conference, in accordance with the draft Agenda items. Policy documents and information materials from regional and international organizations will also be availed for reference purposes.

## **H. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS**

16. The organizational responsibilities are distributed between the Republic of Cameroon and the AUC on the basis of the Hosting Agreement agreed upon, as per the provisions of the AU/DSA Manual on the organization of meetings, and the Articles 5 (2) and 6(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and the Executive Council respectively. Translation and interpretation services, and secretarial support, will be availed by the AUC.

## **I. PARTICIPANTS**

17. Participants will include: Ministers of Labour/Employment and Experts/Officials from AU Member States, , the Social Partners organizations, Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Representatives of Non-AU Member States accredited to AU, UN and Other International Agencies, National and Regional NGOs, Regional Employment Organizations, Civil Society and Labour/Employment Professional Organizations, and AU Organs.

## **J. FURTHER INFORMATION**

**18.** Details of the relevant contact persons at the Commission for further information and for **confirmation of participation** to the Conference are as follows:

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