



**FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (STC-SDLE-5)
29 JULY- 02 AUGUST 2024
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**THEME: SOCIAL AGENDA 2063: PROMOTING SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY
(SSE) ECOSYSTEMS**

CONCEPT NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

The African Union Agenda 2063 is a blueprint and a commitment by the Heads of States to transform the continent. Its Seven Aspirations include measures to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth and sustainable development. Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development of Africa reaffirmed the commitment of Member States to place employment creation at the centre of economic and social policies, while addressing issues of political leadership, youth and women empowerment, social protection, productivity, labour migration and regional integration.

The African Union Social Agenda (2063) interprets the social development context of the Agenda 2063 and recommends a human rights approach to eradicating poverty and inequality as a vital step towards creating opportunities for all, including the most vulnerable members of the society. It is hinged on the principles of solidarity, self-reliance, hard work and collective prosperity in the quest to build social cohesion among people in different economic strata. The Social Agenda 2063 recommends addressing wider socio-economic aspects which makes for good governance including respect for human rights, peace, security and stability and highlights the criticality of social cohesion as an important step for addressing poverty, vulnerability and inequality. These principles are ingrained in the social and solidarity economy.

The Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of institutional units which specifically involve in activities that balance economic gains, social gains and environmental objectives while fostering solidarity, democracy and mutualism, as they promote collective gains over individual benefits. The concept and theory of the SSE was borne from the experience of a number of very diverse small and medium economic organizations formed from different kinds of links – family, neighbourhood, community, cooperation, mutual aid. Central to this economic rationality is the active presence of solidarity in the organization and processes of production, distribution, consumption and accumulation. SSE combines economic development with social innovations and places people, rather than profit, at the heart of its activities. This is why it was given the name solidarity economy.

The universally accepted definition of SSE follows that “The SSE encompasses enterprises, organizations and other entities that are engaged in economic, social, and environmental activities to serve the collective and/or general interest, which are based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets. SSE entities aspire to long-term viability and sustainability, and to the transition from the informal to the formal economy and operate in all sectors of the economy. They put into practice a set of values which are intrinsic to their functioning and consistent with care for people and planet, equality and fairness, interdependence, self-governance, transparency and accountability, and the attainment of decent work and livelihoods. According to national circumstances, the SSE includes

cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other entities operating in accordance with the values and principles of the SSE.”¹

Over the years, there has been a significant expansion of Social and Solidarity Economy in terms of scale of economic activities, the number of people involved and types of SSE organization. Social and Solidarity Organizations (SSEOs) contributed to provision of social services, poverty reduction, job creation, community development, mitigation of environmental degradation, promotion of access to affordable finance, health and education, food security, gender equality as well as the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, other marginalized groups and those in vulnerable situations. Thereby, being instrumental in the recovery efforts of the African economy. Given the ways, they complement government interventions, promote innovative approaches, promote social cohesion and societal resilience, they have also been recognized as an important contributor to inclusive and sustainable development. ²_{ibid}. They provide assets which can be scaled up, including localized circuits of production, exchange and consumption as well as local reinvestment.

Given that they work across various government departments and entities, they create opportunities for policy coherence which may effect social, environmental and economic change.

II. RATIONALE

The African Union has developed a Ten-Year Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) Strategy and its Implementation Plan (2023-2032). The Strategy presents a comprehensive policy framework to support African Union Regional Economic Communities and Member States in their endeavour to legitimize, support and expand the contributions of Social and Solidarity Economy in Africa. The AU SSE Strategy aligns with the Aspirations of Agenda 2063³ as well as several AU instruments including the Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development,⁴ the newly adopted Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security,⁵ the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, the Single Air Transport Market, the African Continental Free Trade Area. These policy and legal frameworks encourage the promotion of social protection, inclusive development, human rights, decent work and removal of barriers to migration, mobility and trade and promote the rights of citizens to move, reside and establish in another Member State. The Strategy can be instrumental in the promotion of social protection, decent work and helping migrant populations to organize and support themselves, before, during and after their migration experience.

¹[The definition of the social and solidarity economy adopted at ...International Labour Organizationhttps://www.ilo.org › sse › WCMS_849066 › lang--en](https://www.ilo.org/wcms/849066/lang-en)

² ibid

³ [Our Aspirations for the Africa We WantAfrican Unionhttps://au.int › agenda2063 › aspirations](https://au.int/agenda2063/aspirations)

⁴ [AUC's Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development](#)

⁵ [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' ...African Unionhttps://au.int › treaties › protocol-african-charter-human-...](https://au.int/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-...)

Implementing the SSE Strategy will require a multi-sectoral and multi-partner interventions including raising its visibility at the political level, capacity building for key stakeholders, strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders, promote dialogue between SSE stakeholders and public authorities, promote knowledge through research and ensure policy coherence among sectoral policies.

The 5th STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment can facilitate technical and ad-hoc committees or implementation mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the 10-year Action Plan of the SSE Strategy. The STC being held once every two years, leaves a space for technical meetings at experts' level, both for implementation of the key decisions and follow-up on the implementation, working in close collaboration with the AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian and Social Development. It is in this spirit that the Sub-Committees, ad-hoc working groups and other mechanisms will operate. They allow for effective engagement and commitment of Member States in the continental processes and enhance ownership. They will feed into the STC sessions through reporting for recommendations and decisions.

Political Background

Following the recommendations of the 4th STC SDLE, the 41st Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council (Zambia, Lusaka, 14-15 July, 2023) adopted the following policy frameworks:

- i. Revised Draft Strategic Policy Framework and Plan of Action on ageing
- ii. Five-year Strategy of the AU Saleema Initiative on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation
- iii. Draft Terms of Reference of the African Social Security Coordination and Cooperation Forum (ASSCCF)
- iv. Draft Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
- v. Draft Guidelines on Establishing Integrated Labour Market Information Systems
- vi. Draft Guidelines on Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs)

In addition, the same 41st Ordinary Session recommended that the following be submitted to the relevant STCs for consideration:

- i. Draft AU Accountability Framework to End Harmful Practices;
- ii. Draft Guidelines on the Development of a Model Migrant Welfare Programme/System;
- iii. AU Strategy and Plan of Action on Ending Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA);
- iv. Five years Strategy of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa;
- v. Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant workers;

Sectoral Meetings

The 5th Meeting of the STC SDLE will break into Sectoral Meetings to consider Agendas for Social Development and Labour and Employment respectively.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STC SDLE-5

The Overall Objective of the STC-SDLE is to consider and adopt strategies and policy measures at the continental and regional levels to enhance social development, labour and employment. The STC will consider concrete roadmaps which aim at implementing policies and strategies on social protection, the social and solidarity economy, labour migration, youth employment, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, ending exploitation and abuse of children. The STC will also receive knowledge products which will provide insights on the wage issues in Africa and operationalization of dialogue mechanisms related to labour migration.

IV. AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION

The STC-SDLE-5 will deliberate on the following agenda items at the level of Sectorial Meetings:

- i. African Union Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) Strategy and Implementation Plan (2023-2032);
- ii. AU-ILO Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa);
- iii. Feasibility Study for the Labour and Employment Authority;
- iv. Doha Declaration on Labour Mobility between Gulf Cooperation Council, Lebanon and Jordan and African Member States;
- v. Fair and Ethical Recruitment Strategy for Africa;
- vi. Report of JLMP Implementation;
- vii. The Dynamics of Minimum Wages in Africa;
- viii. Comprehensive Information Orientation Programme;
- ix. AU Accountability Framework on Elimination of Harmful Practices;
- x. Draft 5 Year Strategic Plan on AU Campaign to End Child Marriage;
- xi. Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) – Programmatic Response Plan for 2021;
- xii. Briefings on the Implementation of Decisions and recommendations of the previous 4th STC.

V. FORMAT OF THE STC SDLE-5

The Meeting will be organized in two phases:

a) Experts Meeting: 29-31 July 2024

During the first three days (29-31 July 2024) of the Meeting, experts/officials from Member States will consider relevant documents and expert panellists' views and make appropriate recommendations for the Ministers' consideration and approval.

b) Ministers Meeting 01-02 August 2024

The Ministers will consider the Report of the Experts' Meeting and endorse the Draft Policy Frameworks and Guidelines in its Agenda.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

The Fifth Specialized Technical Committee Meeting on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC –SDLE-5) will bring together Ministers in-charge of Social Development, Labour and Employment, Government Experts responsible for the concerned sectors, the social partners, Regional Economic Communities, and organizations with observer status such as the Pan African Productivity Association, OECD and International Organizations, including UN agencies, working in the areas of concern will also be invited to participate in the open sessions.

VII. DATE AND VENUE

The STC–SDLE-5 will convene from **29 July – 02 August 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.**

VIII. LANGUAGES

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four (4) working languages of the African Union: Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

IX. DOCUMENTATION

The main working documents of the STC-SDLE-5 will be available on the AU website: www.au.int