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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**

**LSAC/MIN/REPORT (VIII)**

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

**REPORT OF THE MINISTERS’ MEETING**

**REPORT OF THE MINISTERS' MEETING OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION, 14 – 15 APRIL 2011, YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Ministers' Meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC8) was held at the Palais des Congress, Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 14 to 15 April 2011. The theme of the Conference was "**Promoting Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth.**"

**ATTENDANCE**

2. The Ministers Meeting was attended by Delegates and Social Partners from the following AU Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.
3. The following AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities, Inter-Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations and Cooperating Partners were represented: African Youth Volunteer Corps, African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC), Business South Africa (BUSA), Embassy of Palestine, Embassy of the United States of America, International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Trade Union Confederation – (ITUC-AFRICA), Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA), Pan African Employers Confederation (PEC), Réseau African Des Jeunes En Population Et Development (Afriyan-Cameroun), Network of African Youths for Development, Southern African Development Community (SADC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

**Agenda Item 1: OPENING**

4. In his opening remarks, the Secretary General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, Mr. Hassan A. Sunmonu, underscored the need for people-centered development policies to enhance the social welfare of people while contributing to economic growth. The provision of quality in education to increase the employability of youth and the imperativeness of satisfying the eight basic needs and human rights of people were stressed as the cornerstones of economic policy.
5. Mr. John Saki, President of the Pan African Employers Confederation of Employers stated, in his opening remarks that the LSAC is a forum to share experiences and a platform to coordinate the African common position on important issues. He underlined the need for a vibrant private sector to maintain the economic growth in Africa. Mr Saki further emphasised the importance of attracting investment in Africa and continuing dialogue with social partners.

6. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Regional Director (RD) for Africa Mr. Charles Dan, outlined the need to reconcile the two faces of Africa, the economic side, which is marked by dynamic and rapid growth with the social side, characterized by growing inequality and poverty. He stressed the role of the LSAC in working towards the reconciliation of these two faces of Africa and facilitating growth and social development. The RD underscored that investment in education, information and protection in investment in Africa's future.
7. In her opening address, H.E. Adv. Bience Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AU Commission, noted that forms of vulnerable employment have spread across the continent, severely affecting the youth, women, the informal economy and the rural working poor. She mentioned that loss of jobs was most prevalent in the manufacturing and service sectors. The Commissioner concluded that considerations of risk and vulnerability is key to understanding the dynamics leading to perpetuating poverty and this calls for a mix of social sector interventions based on national, regional and continental policy support and advocacy.
8. In his keynote address, the Prime Minister, His Excellency Philemon Yang, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, welcomed delegates to the 8<sup>th</sup> LASC. He expressed his appreciation to the Commission for having selected Cameroon to host this meeting. The Prime Minister indicated that the theme of the conference, 'Promoting Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth' places employment at the centre of development issues. Social cohesion is the platform for social understanding and would allow the continent to grow. At the social level, the need to promote employment must take into account the effects of globalization, in addition to high levels of unemployment, mushrooming of the informal economy, stigmatization and social exclusion. In his concluding remarks, the Honourable Prime Minister highlighted that the session provides an opportunity to share experiences, and reflect on ideas which will deepen the understanding of problems of unemployment, as well as to seek ways of giving hope to a dynamic youth.

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| <b>Agenda Item 2: PROCEDURAL MATTERS</b> |
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**A) Election of the Bureau**

9. The Ministers elected the Bureau for the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission as follows:

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| Chairperson:                      | Namibia (Southern Region, Government) |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson: | Cameroon (Central Region, Government) |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson: | Senegal (Western Region, Workers)     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice Chairperson: | Tanzania (Eastern Region, Employers)  |
| Rapporteur:                       | Tunisia (Northern Region, Government) |

10. The Drafting Committee was composed of the Rapporteur for the Meeting and 3 staff members of the Department of Social Affairs, AU Commission.

## **B) Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work**

11. The meeting adopted the agenda and programme of work consisting of 9 items.

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| <p><b>Agenda Item 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE H.E. THE AU COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION</b></p> |
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12. H.E. the Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission presented the Report of H.E. the AU Commission Chairperson on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union.

13. With regard to the above, the meeting raised the following issues:

- (i) Future employment policies should emphasize increasing jobs in rural areas
- (ii) A special session needs to be organised on the extent of implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Action Plan with clear indications of what has been achieved, as well as the way forward regarding promotion of employment and poverty alleviation, including youth employment
- (iii) The launching of the AU campaign to combat human trafficking (AU.COMMIT) for SADC and ECCAS will take place in Botswana in October 2011
- (iv) The important role of the informal economy in job creation and poverty alleviation as it relates to its massive contribution to youth and women employment, as well as to growth, though it remains handicapped by lack of appropriate social protection measures and weak productivity. Hence, the need to advocate and campaign for its recognition.

14. The meeting took note of the Report of the AUC Chairperson and adopted the following recommendations in the Report on items not dealt with in the Experts' Meeting:

- i. Capacity Enhancement and Modernization of the Public Employment Services and Labour Administration**
  - a. The AUC will facilitate provision of technical assistance to Member States;
  - b. The AUC, in collaboration with the RECs, shall work towards the harmonization of the Labour and Social Protection legal frameworks in order to facilitate labour migration inside Africa, and towards the integration of the labour markets on the continent;

ii. **Establishment of the Experts Team on the Informal Economy**

- a. The AUC should advocate for the establishment of the month of May as the African Informal Economy Month. Every two years African Informal Economy Biennial events will be organized within this Month;
- b. The AUC to conduct a study on the technical and financial feasibility of an African Centre for the Informal Economy;
- c. That a former Head of State of an AU Member State be designated as the Ambassador for the Informal Economy. His name could be proposed by the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the LSAC for adoption by the AU Summit in Malabo, July 2011;
- d. The AUC to sensitize the RECs' competent organs, the Pan African Parliament and its Member institutions, and NEPAD, for joint interventions and implementation activities;
- e. The AUC to launch and maintain the Informal Economy Webpage and Newsletter also to sensitize and advocate for the Social Protection Plan for Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK);

iii. **Productivity Improvement**

- a. The AUC to facilitate the mobilization of resources required for the implementation of the Productivity Agenda for Africa;
- b. AUC to conduct a study on the technical and financial feasibility of a Continental Governing Body for Productivity;

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| <b>AGENDA ITEM 4: PANEL DISCUSSION: MINISTERIAL PANEL INTRODUCTION AND PLENARY DISCUSSIONS ON: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOR SOCIAL COHESION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN AFRICA</b> |
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15. The Plenary Discussion was moderated by H. E. Adv. Bience Gawanas, Commissioner of the Department of Social Affairs. The Director of Social Affairs, Dr. Olawale I. Maiyegun made a brief presentation on the "**Background and Policy Orientation Paper on Youth Employment for Social Cohesion and Inclusive Growth**", prepared by the Commission. Subsequently, the panellists made their presentation relating to the topic under discussion.
16. Hon. Annonciato Sendazirapa, Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Security from Burundi mentioned that her country is a post conflict country, which has programmes for rehabilitating child soldiers (2500) and for demobilized soldiers (15,000). After alluding to other strategies the Government of Burundi is embarking upon to address the issue of youth employment, she concluded that reform of the vocational training sector to link it to the labour market and development needs are the main strategy to empower youth and women in entrepreneurship, particularly in local enterprise development, in the case of Burundi. She highlighted the human

resource survey conducted by the EAC with the priority objective of supporting youth employability in the region. She alluded to the funding gap of employment policies and referred to their appropriate inclusion in the Poverty Reduction Strategy as an effective solution.

17. Mr. Mthunzi Mdwaba, Vice President, Business South Africa (BUSA), representing employers organisations alluded to his experience as a youthful entrepreneur and emphasised that the biggest challenge for Africa is to believe in ourselves, and to have confidence in young people. The disconnect and need for relevant government ministries (education, TVET, Employment, Science and Technology, etc) to work together to make sure that the skills needed are provided for in education and skills training, must be addressed. There is also a lack of entrepreneurial orientation in the educational systems in Africa with technological content in the curricula. A lack of cooperation between the public and private training institutions has also been observed. It should be avoided to create an unequal base in the labour market due to unequal access to ICT. Hence it is important to have stakeholders share their programmes.
18. Hon. Louh Tayeb, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Algeria, underscored the fact that Africa needs to have confidence on her own people and reiterated the programmes that the Government of Algeria has embarked upon to assist the youth to employ themselves. Among those are financial assistance, over three years, and provision of bank loans, guaranteed by the Government to youthful entrepreneurs and micro finance schemes, with differentiated delivery systems addressing the needs of specific youth groups such as the graduated, the unskilled youth with low education. He underlined the successful Public-Private Partnership for access of youth to the enterprises through On-the-Job-Training to acquire experience for permanent employment.. He stressed the critical importance of transparency in the management of youth employment promotion programmes.
19. Mr. Hassan A. Sunmonu, Secretary General, Organisation of African Trade Union Unity informed that Trade Unions, other than bargaining for workers' rights, also provide training in entrepreneurship business plan development. The problem is that banks do not want to assist young people with loans to start their businesses. Trade Unions have also started investing in hotels, banks, and tourist villages and holiday apartments for their members. Adult education and employment in the agriculture and energy sectors should be prioritised.
20. Hon. Mr. Pervet Fachari, Minister of Employment and national Training, Cameroon, emphasised the need to undertake reforms, particular with regard to vocational training, its coordination and governance. TVET Regional strategies should be supported to face the high and unbearable cost of skills acquisition at national level. He stressed the need to put employment objectives at the centre of macroeconomic and sectoral development policies with appropriate mechanisms to be developed to coordinate the implementation of the policies. In his country, a number of youth employment programmes are implemented which calls for establishing of effective coordination mechanisms to increase their results and impacts. The Minister emphasized the imperatives to enhance the capacity and modernization of the labour market institutions in the continent, to ensure well functioning labour market

information systems and to adopt innovative funding strategies for effective implementation of employment policies.

21. An expert on youth issues articulated the concerns of the youth that emanated from the recent pre-summit youth conference in Addis Ababa. He reiterated that African youths should be given visibility for the skills they possess and that they deserve the same opportunities as youths elsewhere, such as access to loans for studies or to start their own businesses instead of continuing to experience frustrations. He acknowledged that the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action contains the required strategies for youth employment and needs to be revisited in view of the current youth employment crisis.
22. Dr. Kamal Elkheshen, Vice-President of the African Development Bank, informed the Meeting of the Bank's perception and response to the phenomenon of youth unemployment through the development of a framework to appropriately assist its regional member countries (RCMs). The AfDB will assist its RCMs with immediate actions: (i) mainstreaming of job creation in its operations (sector budget support arrangements, social funds), (ii) upgrading the knowledge base for policy decisions on employment through labour market analysis or youth employment policy evaluation; (iii) support to business incubators to create youth employment ventures; and (iv) lending to small and micro enterprises through lines of credit to financial intermediaries. There will be Medium and Long Term actions such as: (i) assistance to integrated TVET/apprenticeships programs targeting the private and informal sector; (ii) increased support to higher education reforms for more responsiveness to the job market needs; (iii) support to agricultural productivity; (iv) rural employment promotion –organic agriculture, green energy-based micro-businesses, agro-processing and community adaptation activities. Dr. Kamal reiterated the continuing readiness of the AfDB to make available its experience, advice and strategic assistance.
23. A number of Member States took the floor to share their respective experience and reiterated their call to the AUC to facilitate information and knowledge management on the lessons learnt on entrepreneurship development, skills development and TVET reforms, rural employment, experience in post-conflict settings, public-private partnerships, employment policy funding schemes including faith based systems such as the Zakat Agency for micro enterprises, etc.
24. After the panel discussion, the Ministers made the following **decisions**:
  - (i) That the AUC incorporates inputs from the 8<sup>th</sup> LSAC into the Paper on Youth Employment and circulate it at the Summit in June-July 2011 which should include the development of apprenticeship and distance learning schemes for youths;
  - (ii) That Priority Actions targets 2% per annum reduction in youth unemployment to be endorsed as an incentive criterion for youth employment targeting;

- (iii) Member States and Social partners should upscale the investment in education and training, including on entrepreneurship, of African youth to make them self reliant;
- (iv) Member States should develop legislative frameworks to promote legal environments and funding for youth employment;
- (v) That, alongside National Youth Employment Programmes, RECs should develop Regional Action Plans for Youth Employment, including facilitating of volunteer programmes for vocational training within regions;
- (vi) That the implementation of employment policies be coordinated at highest level in Member States through their national Ouagadougou 2004 follow-up institutions, which should include strengthening of capacity at local government, to boost job creation (coordinate nationally, act locally), in collaboration with international partners, in particular the AfDB;
- (vii) That, through the AU Youth Volunteer Corps, youths can be employed to support Member States in the mapping of informal economy activities, and in the development and maintenance of Labour Market Information systems;
- (viii) Member States and RECs should facilitate National and Regional Certification Frameworks for Education and Vocational Training, parallel to National and Regional Youth Employment Action Plans that are harmonised to facilitate labour force mobility within the continent;
- (ix) The AUC and RECs should together undertake regional labour market needs and opportunities analyses in view of a better and dynamic matching with the TVET system's outputs;
- (x) In addition to strengthening and modernizing public employment services, including career guidance to the youth, legal and fiscal space should be created in Member States for young people to employ themselves .

#### **Agenda Item 5: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE EXPERTS' MEETING**

25. The Ministers considered the recommendations of the Report of the Experts' Meeting and made the following **decisions**:

##### **I. Agenda Item 3: Third Biennial Follow-Up Report on the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration and Plan of Action**

- a. That the Executive Council Decision to hold biennial meetings of the LSAC be re-visited in order to have annual sessions, and that the AU Commission should present the matter to the next Session of the Executive Council;
- b. That national and regional employment policies be revisited, updated and implemented;



- c. The AUC will disseminate the report, and share its contents at relevant occasions and at national and regional levels;
- d. The AUC, in collaboration with international partners such as the OECD, ILO, UNESCO, FAO and UNIFEM/UNICEF should facilitate experience sharing on the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action among Member States. This includes developing a booklet on Best Practices on the Implementation of the Ouagadougou Plan of Action for dissemination. The booklet shall highlight practices on Social dialogue, Youth and Women Employment, and Funding of Employment Policies.

**II. Agenda Item 4(a): Resource Mobilization for the Implementation, Follow up, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration and Plan of Action**

- a. Considering that the AU has adopted the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action on Employment promotion and poverty alleviation and that the funding of employment policies is still a challenge, the focus should be on analyses of constraints, solving of problems.
- b. The AUC is called upon to collaborate with the AfDB and facilitate the implementation process of the proposed Strategy on Resource Mobilization, according priority to strong budgetary and fiscal policies addressing employment policy needs;
- c. The AUC is encouraged to collaborate with the AfDB and prepare a coordinated strategy for the implementation of the G20 recommendations and commitments on labour market governance and social protection, during its London (UK) and Pittsburgh (USA) Summits;
- d. That Member States elaborate Mid-Term Expenditure Frameworks specific to employment policy implementation, monitoring to ensure the sustainability of domestic budgeting of employment policies and programmes;
- c. The AUC, in collaboration with the ADB and the ILO, to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization capacity building plan for the benefit of Member States and RECs;
- d. Assessments should be conducted on where resources for job creation are going, and after identification of new priority areas, resources should be re-allocated to the prioritised areas. Internal and external resources are to be utilised to provide micro-credit for youth employment schemes;
- e. Member States should develop targets for the number of jobs to be created through their recurrent and capital budget allocations;
- f. The AUC should facilitate a Donors' Meeting on the margins of the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the ILC, Geneva, 2011, in collaboration with the AfDB, AU Geneva Office, the African Group to the ILO and the ILO;

**III. Agenda item 4(b): Draft Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK)**

- a. That Member States promote the implementation of Social Protection for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK) on their national agenda and debate, develop sensitization campaigns to promote and popularize the instrument, develop concrete plans, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and review their national legal and regulatory frameworks to make them more responsive to the social protection needs of informal economy and rural workers.
- b. The AUC should develop an advocacy campaign with wide coverage on the SPIREWORK;
- c. The AUC, the AfDB and the ILO are called upon to work jointly for the effective implementation of the **SPIREWORK** particularly at national level
- d. Member States should focus on access to markets appropriate technology occupational health and safety and capacity building to improve the productivity as well as ensuring job security of the informal economy and rural workers.

**IV. Agenda Item 5: Harmonisation and Coordination Framework for the Labour and Market Information System in Africa**

- a. That Member States strengthen their Labour Market Information systems in line with the AU Statistics harmonization frameworks, to facilitate employment formulation, implementation and evaluation, including a database on youth for the labour market, with clear and harmonised indicators;
- b. That Member States review their TVET Systems for a better alignment of their outputs with the labour market requirements and development needs;
- c. Member States, the AUC and RECs are urged to implement the Labour Market Information Systems Harmonization and Coordination Project, with the support of international partners;
- d. A harmonized Labour Force Survey needs to be conducted by 2013, coordinated by the AUC and RECs.

**V. Agenda Item 7: Briefings by the AUC**

- a. **Youth employment Promotion for Post-Conflict Countries based on Assessment and Evaluation Missions, including the outcomes of the Seminar on Youth Employment in the Mentioned Countries, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 2010.**

- (i) That Member States pay special attention to the employment situation in post-conflict countries and in solidarity with the victims of the conflict,

including refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons promote job creation ventures in order to ensure sustainable peace, reintegration and development;

- (ii) That Member States engage in solidarity with transit States, and organisations that render assistance to migrant workers, refugees and IDPs and ensure the protection and assistance to the affected populations;

**b. Implementation of the Africa-EC Joint Strategy and its Second Action Plan (2011-2013)**

- (i) The AUC to facilitate the designation of a lead Member State for the overall partnership, and for specific activities;
- (ii) The AUC to support and facilitate private sector cooperation between organizations of Africa and the EU and to facilitate the first meeting between the Pan African Employers' Confederation (PEC) and its sister organizations in the EU;
- (iii) The AUC should collaborate with the EC Delegation to the AUC and prepare a Project to be submitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF and other relevant financing instruments in support to the implementation of the "employment and social protection" provisions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Strategic Partnership;

**Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children**

- (iv) The AUC to mobilize resources for the launch of the AU.COMMIT campaign in remaining African Regions;
- (v) The AUC to organise capacity building and training workshops in more African Regions to address challenges highlighted by RECs and Member States;

**VI. Agenda Item 8: Report on Activities of the African Members of the ILO Governing Body**

- a. Regarding the candidatures of African Countries to ILO High Level Positions, the Ministers decided to discuss the matter in a closed session.

**VII. Agenda Item 9: Briefings by Social Partners, RECs, AU Specialized Agencies and Inter-African Organizations:**

- a. The Meeting took note of briefings to the Experts' meeting by the following organisations:
  - Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)

- International Trade Union Confederation – (ITUC-AFRICA)
- Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA)
- Pan African Employers Confederation (PEC)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Business South Africa (BUSA)
- African Youth Corps
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Réseau African Des Jeunes En Population Et Development (Afriyan-Cameroun)
- Network of African Youths for Development,
- Palestine Liberation Organization

26. The Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also addressed the Experts' meeting and thanked Africa for its usual support with regard to the workers in Palestine. A declaration and resolution were presented to the Experts' meeting. The Ministers confirmed their usual support to the cause of the PLO.

**Agenda Item 6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

27. The meeting had no items for discussion under Any Other Business.

**Agenda Item 7: DATE AND VENUE OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE LSAC**

28. The Ministers welcomed the offer of the Republic of Congo to host the Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission in 2013.

**Agenda Item 8.: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

29. The Ministers adopted their report with amendments.

**Agenda Item 9: CLOSING SESSION**

30. The Chairperson of the Ministers' meeting, Hon. Robert Nkili, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Republic of Cameroon, thanked the Ministers for their constructive contributions, and the AU Commission for their technical support to make the meeting a success. He emphasised that they are welcome to return to Yaounde, which has been the Labour capital of Africa the past week.

31. The meeting was then adjourned.