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### “Africa needs internal solutions to internal social issues”, says Commissioner Kaloko



**Addis Ababa, 29 January 2014-** Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union, Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko has spoken extensively on the need for the African Union member states to recognize and address the linkages of social issues, such as human and child trafficking, migration and malnutrition. Speaking at a press conference at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa today, he noted that African states had already taken the initial steps towards defining and implementing comprehensive labour laws, citing the

2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment.

However, whilst addressing the challenges in the formal economy is a necessary measure, he said, it was imperative for governments to look more closely at the informal economies across the continent, as between 80% and 90% of the continent’s working population operates informally. Those individuals who work in the informal sectors are far more vulnerable to unfair labour practices and are more likely to contribute to inter-linked trends such as undocumented migration, which leave them vulnerable to exploitation. He underlined the need for a holistic approach and commended the African Union and its member states for moving towards inclusive problem-solving mechanisms which involve all stakeholders affected by social issues.

Later on this year, African states will be re-visiting the Ouagadougou Declaration to re-assess its frameworks and implementation, and to re-affirm their commitment to sustainable labour practices, he said.

Speaking on the linkages of the social issues affecting many of the continent’s nations, Dr Kaloko emphasized that an internally-based approach was needed in order for Africa to find sustainable solutions. Governance is a key success factor in the design and implementation of national policies to tackle such issues as human trafficking and child labour, said Dr Kaloko and he was encouraged by the constantly improving state of the continent’s governance systems.

Also key in the Commissioner's press conference was the issue of malnutrition on the African continent. Dr Kaloko noted that a larger percentage of the African population is malnourished today than was the case 20 years ago. He underlined the cost of hunger on the continent by pointing out, that malnourished children underperform in school, leading to them not attaining jobs or underperforming at their jobs in the future. The cost to national GDPs caused by these lost workers is high, and one which Africa can scarcely afford.



In concluding, Dr. Kaloko re-emphasised that the member states of the African Union must continue to move towards an integrated and comprehensive approach to tackling the continent's social issues. In a few years, he said, Africa's population will reach the 1 billion mark and it is imperative to make sure that every one of the continent's citizens has the opportunity for education and decent employment.

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