



**FOURTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (STC-SDLE-4)
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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

Theme: “Building forward Better Well Being and Living Standards in Africa”

REPORT

**SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS ON CONTINENTAL COOPERATION AND
COORDINATION MECHANISM**

VIDEO CONFERENCE

31ST MAY -1ST JUNE 2021

INTRODUCTION

Africa is pursuing the goal of decent work in a context of labour market marked by high level of working poverty, precarious working conditions prevailing in the informal economy and rural sector. Social security coverage is limited to 20% of workers on the continent. SMEs are faced with difficulties to set appropriate and effective social security policies and systems. Challenges also exist on the access of migrant workers to social security and portability of the social benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the prevailing situation, including with millions of workers laid off without set back in the form of unemployment insurance or any other kind of social protection, as underscored during the tripartite virtual meeting of African ministers of labour on the impacts of the pandemic in April 2020. This is coupled with the lack of coordination on social security, both in terms of policy frameworks and legal instruments harmonization, and in terms of cooperation between the social security institutions at continental level.

Mindful of this state of affairs, during its extraordinary session in Abidjan in December 2019, the **AU Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC-SDLE)** decided to work towards the coordination of and cooperation between the social security institutions and tasked the AUC to facilitate the process.

Objectives:

- a. Sensitization on the AU policy frameworks and priorities on social security, and opportunity in the STC Rules and Procedures
- b. Assessment of the situation of the social security institutions under COVID-19 context by select institutions ILO (general overview), **CIPRES, ECASSA** and in 10 Member States,
- c. Get an overview from the RECs and their strategic perspectives
- d. Get lessons from experience of EU Institutions such as the EU Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Social Security Agency and the European Alliance in Social Insurance
- e. Discussion on continental coordination and cooperation mechanisms on social security (as requested by the Extraordinary Session of the STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment, Abidjan, December 2019)

ATTENDANCE

Meeting was attended by experts from ministry of labour and social security institutions of the following AU Member States: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Social partners' organizations were represented by Business Africa, Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and ITUC-AFRICA.

Representatives from the following Regional Economic Communities (RECs): Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (**COMESA**), East African Community (**EAC**), Economic Community for Central Africa States (**ECCAS**), Economic Community for West Africa States (**ECOWAS**), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (**IGAD**), Southern African Development Community (**SADC**), Union of Maghreb Arab (**UMA**).

The meeting was also attended by the following partners: International Labour Organization (**ILO**), International Social Security Association (**ISSA**), EU Agency for Occupational, Safety and Health (OSH),

OPENING ADDRESSES

ILO Regional Director for Africa Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olajuwon's opening remarks have been delivered by Mr. George, ILO country Director for Zambia.

Mr. George welcomed the participants and said that the ILO is pleased to collaborate with the AUC to organize this virtual meeting bringing together Social Security Institutions across Africa, Regional Economic Communities, Workers and Employers organizations to discuss cooperation and coordination at the continental level. Mr. further stated that The ILO has an array of tools to assist countries in extending gender responsive social protection. First, as expressed in Recommendation No.204 concerning the transition from the informal economy to formal economy, social protection can be an incentive and tool for transitioning informal economy to the formal economy. There are also a number of Conventions and Recommendations that guide countries to extend social protection to all including the Recommendation on Social protection floors No.202.

Mr. George went on saying that as part of this regional strategy, the ILO in partnership with the AUC and the UNDP organized most recently, a regional Dialogue on extending social protection to the informal economy and financing options. This meeting brought together Ministers of Labour and Employment, Ministers of Finance, Workers' and Employers' organizations international financial and technical organizations such as the UN, the AfDB, IMF and WB to name a few.

H.E the Secretary General of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), Mr. Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano expressed his gratitude to the African Union for associating its organization in the organization of the event, and for engaging a high level of attention to the development of social security in the region. He further points out that as social security is a condition for social and economic progress, social security institutions are a condition for the successful implementation of any policy in this field. Without the appropriate investment in, and development of, the capacities of social security institutions, extending coverage or improving social security is nothing but a promise. The recent pandemic has once again demonstrated the important role of social security, and the fact that agile and well-governed

social security institutions are a national asset for any country to face crisis and to build resilience.

He stressed that building on the lessons from the crisis response, we must seize opportunities offered by digital tools and technology, strengthen our human resources, service delivery systems, compliance frameworks and financial and investment strategies, to name just a few. In this regard, and as the institution bringing together 98 social security institutions from 45 African countries, the ISSA recognizes with much satisfaction that the African Union is committed to strengthening the role, governance and institutional capacities of social security institutions in the region.

The Secretary General went on saying that ISSA was pleased to continue and strengthen the long-term collaboration with the African Union towards this important objective. Building on the ISSA existing professional standards for social security administration, our five regional structures in Africa, and our programme of events and workshops, he expressed confidence that the commitment of the African Union will further strengthen the existing exchanges on social security in the region.

Ms Kapinga Yvette Nganda, Commissioner for Gender, Human and Social Development ECCAS, chair of AUC-RECs-AfDB Coordination Committee extended her warm and warm congratulations to the organizers of the meeting. which will deal with continental cooperation and the coordination mechanism for social security. She hoped that foundation should allow us to achieve the objectives of the meeting, specifically the development of a first draft of the continental coordination and cooperation mechanism on social security, which will be submitted for consideration and, hopefully, adopted by the 4th session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, work and employment, in September or October 2021.

She further recalled to the meeting that Social security, recognized by the United Nations Charter for Human Rights, is a right. As such, all citizens of AU member states, especially those from vulnerable social strata, have the greatest need. The figures we have put the continent's social security rate at around 10%, which is relatively far below the global standard which hovers around 45%.

The objectives set by the AU of having to cover 20% by 2023, in view of emerging challenges. But the optimism, thanks to this important and ambitious initiative, bodes a promising future with a rate of coverage close to the threshold of global tolerance for social security.

At the level of the Regional Economic Communities, she indicated the situation of Central African region, where several Central African Member States put in place social security mechanisms (contributory and non-contributory) which deserve to be taken as an example of this long-awaited continental mechanism. She cited as examples the cases of Cameroon; the National Health Insurance and Social Guarantee Fund (CNAMGS) of Gabon; and the Rwanda Social Security Board in Rwanda. However, she underlined that a very large part of the population of these countries only partially benefits from a pension scheme and not from social security.

Speaking on behalf of H.E Mrs. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner, the Director of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of African Union , Mrs. Mariam Cisse warmly welcome the participants in her intervention and recalled that the organization of this meeting was the brainchild of AU Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment that decided, in its extraordinary session in Abidjan in December 2019, to work towards the coordination of and cooperation between the social security institutions and tasked the AUC to facilitate the process. She further reported that, in accordance with the STC decision, and to support the debate, the Commission has drafted the TORS on establishing of a continental mechanism for cooperation and coordination on social security Institutions of MS as requested by the extraordinary of STC for consideration by the meeting.

Mrs. Cisse noted that the continental mechanism is enshrined in AU relevant Policy frameworks and legal instruments calling for coordination and cooperation on social security Institutions. She stated that beyond, the Agenda 2063, the call for coordination and cooperation is set in the Social Agenda 2063, adopted by the STC Social development, Labour and Employment (Abidjan, 2019), the Social Protection Plan for Informal Economy and Rural Workers (**SPIREWORK**) adopted by the Labour and Social Affairs Commission (Yaoundé, 2011), the Protocol of Free Movement of Persons with provisions on rights to social security for migrant workers and portability of social security benefits (Addis Ababa, 2019), the draft Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security, endorsed by the STC Social development, Labour and Employment (Abidjan, 2019) and AUC-ILO Joint Programme on Decent Work for the Transformation of the Informal Economy

She also recalled that during the virtual meeting of the Ministers of Labour organized on 29 April 2020, they underscored challenges which were existing before the COVID-19 pandemic but were intensified by the impacts of the pandemic in the labour market. As a result of the strain of the COVID in labour market, the social security institutions are going through difficult and uncertain time. The Ministers stressed the imperative to enhance the resilience of the social security institutions which should continue to play their role while being more inclusive. She went on saying that, at the same time, the pandemic has showed the necessity for coverage of workers in the informal economy, for unemployment insurance schemes, for protection of the rights of migration workers, including access to social security and portability of social benefits, etc.

She pointed out that, through this meeting, the opportunity was given to different key actors to devise on the challenges of achieving an **All Inclusive Social Security System**, shape the continental social security coordination and cooperation mechanism. She also committed that the outcome of the meeting will be submitted to the 4th session of the STC on Social, Development, Labour and Employment, scheduled to be held in October 2021. With regards to the financing of social security, Mrs. Cisse recalled that the Conference of Ministers of Finance adopted in 2016 a Resolution on *“Financing Social Protection and Social Security”* and called for better coordination with the Ministry in charge of labour.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the STC, the Director General of Social Security of Burkina On Faso thanked the organizers of the videoconference and emphasized the urgent need for bold and prompt action. Social protection systems are required to provide a basic level of

social security for all. She stated that the meeting marked a crucial step in promoting social and economic integration on the continent.

She also stated that, through the creation of a mechanism for coordination and cooperation in social security, the institutions will take their legitimate part in the achievement of the specific objectives set in Agenda 2063 which promotes decent work with social security for all workers, such as also prescribed in the draft African Union Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security adopted by the extraordinary session of the STC of December 2019 in Abidjan.

She emphasized that this was the place to recall the major challenge of a glaring deficit in the coverage of workers in the informal economy and the rural sector, which all countries are facing, and are trying to find solutions. Agenda 2063 calls for at least 20% of workers in the informal economy to be covered by 2023, including at least 50% of women. This objective relays the Social Protection Plan for Informal and Rural Workers (**SPiREWORK**) which has seen very promising implementation in countries such as Zambia. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps and deficits in African social protection systems in the world of work. The virtual meeting of Union labour ministers in April 2020 on the impacts of the pandemic on the world of work underlined the urgency of strengthening the resilience of the labor market, among other things, by extending social security to categories of excluded workers, the establishment of unemployment insurance schemes, the strengthening of the governance of social security institutions, the correct coverage of migrant workers, etc.

She ended her intervention by noting that these objectives of the dignity of work in Africa, moreover stated in the Social Agenda 2063 which was adopted by the STC of Abidjan in December 2019. They cannot be reached without a resolute action of the institutions of social security, in supporting system reforms for essential adaptations and reforms in the legal arrangement, in the organization and in the delivery of services facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies.

SETTING THE SCENE WITH AU POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS.

Mr. Oumar Diop, Senior Policy Officer, Coordinator of the AUC-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (**JLMP**) made presentation of AU Policy frameworks and legal instruments to support the establishment of a continental social security coordination and cooperation mechanism.

The AU Constitutive Act set the overall goals to (i) Promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples' (ii) Coordinate and harmonize the policies for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union; (iii) promote Political and socio-economic integration of the continent, (iv) African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples, and (vi) Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations

OUAGA+10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, through its dedicated Key Priority Area 3: Social protection and

Productivity, underscores the need to (i) develop a Protocol on Social Security of the Charter on the Rights of persons; (ii) Establish Social Security Coordination Platform on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, at all levels; (iii) Develop a Technical assistance programme to enhance quality service of the Social Security Institutions in Africa; (iv) Promote Unemployment Insurance Schemes in MS; (v) develop Functional systems, guidelines and tools in place for planning, monitoring and evaluating **SPIREWORK**; and (vi) Organize a Continental conference on occupational security and health in Africa.

The AU Social Agenda 2063 stresses the same imperatives indicated in the Ouaga+10 Plan of Action.

The AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons calls for cooperation between Member States and coordination and harmonization of laws, policies, systems and activities. It provides for (i) the Principle of Non-Discrimination against nationals of another state entering, residing or established in their territory (Article 4); (ii) Free Movement of Workers (Article 14); (iii) Permits of Passes-Work permits (Article 15); (iv) Rights of establishment: Business, trade, profession, self-employed (Article 17); (v) Portability of Social Security Benefits (article 19);

The Draft Protocol on Social Protection and social security (already adopted by the STC on Social Development, labour and Employment, Abidjan, December 2019), provides for (i) Social Insurance (Article 4) with portability through bilateral and multilateral agreements; (ii) rights of workers in the informal economy and rural sector (Article 5); (iii) unemployment and underemployment protection (Article 6); and (iv) detailed procedures on Cross-border migrants and displaced persons including facilitating the co-ordination and portability of social security entitlements and benefits (Articles 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)

Social Protection Plan for Informal Economy and Rural workers (SPIREWORK).

SPIREWORK calls MS to (i) define and implement a Minimum Protection Substantive Package for informal and rural workers and members of their families, (ii) Review laws and regulations, policies, strategies and programmes as they relate to access of the informal and rural workers to social protection measures; (iii) Undertake reform measures for more inclusive social protection systems.

Enablers for achieving a Minimum Social Protection Package. It provides for enablers of social security extension, such as (i) Organization of informal and rural workers for their effective empowerment and participation in the policy formalization processes with a strong and effective voice; (ii) Advocacy and Recognition; (iii) Alignment of legal and regulatory frameworks; (iv) Policy Dialogue and Recognition; (v) Statistics and data base management on SP of the informal and rural workers.

The AUC completed the presentation with specific inputs on labour migration and implications for social security institutions. This concerns the (i) Administrative Sources of data on Labour Migration and roles of Social Security Institutions within the framework of the AUC-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration; (ii) the Bilateral labour Agreements as vehicles for the protection of the rights of

migrant workers with specific provisions on social security benefits portability; and (iii) the Migrants Welfare Programme.

ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING UNDER COVID- 19 CONTEXT

International Labour Organization, Mr. Batchabi Dramane. Mr. Batchabi made a presentation in which he outlined the following:

1. Social protection and COVID-19 pandemic
2. Building back better: importance of social security institution
3. Regional strategy for accelerating social protection coverage in Africa

The ILO stated that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed serious gaps in social protection systems – and required urgent measures to close these gaps. The pandemic generated effects on social security systems such as reduction in revenue from contributions, unemployment, underemployment (reduction of working hours), temporary/partial exemptions from contributions; reduction of State transfers, increase in expenditure on some programmes (unemployment, sickness benefits, children and family benefits, non-contributory cash transfers, etc.). Other effects were encountered on allocation of reserves in some programmes (unemployment insurance), increase in administrative expenditures due to the adjustments necessary for the business continuity and the benefit delivery. For the pension systems., some impact on social security reserves in the short term; but little effect expected in the long term.

Overall, 74.3 per cent of all measures are of a non-contributory nature. Among the new programs and benefits, the non-contributory ones represent 89.0 per cent. While the contributory nature of the measures is mostly observed in expenditure adjustment (34.5 per cent) and programme adjustment (33.7 per cent). Eighty per cent of the countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia could use contributory measures for their responses to COVID-19, compared to 52.7 per cent globally.

Lessons learnt from the Social Protection and the COVID-19 Pandemic show that Social protection systems are an indispensable part of a coordinated response.

Social dialogue and consultation with the social partners are important for coordinated policy responses and countries with strong health and social protection systems can react quickly by expanding and adapting existing mechanisms to mitigate socioeconomic impacts. Countries should prioritize support for most vulnerable groups to the crisis, including workers in the informal economy and social minorities. Furthermore, the crisis has accelerated social protection reforms, prompting many governments to temporarily extend them by introducing extraordinary measures and laws. Governments, in collaboration with the social partners and other stakeholders, should use this opportunity to strengthen social protection systems.

African countries can build back better social protection system following the ILO' two-dimensional strategies for universal coverage:

- Extend social protection through formalization focusing on facilitating access of workers in informal economy to existing social insurance schemes by a change in legislation, the adoption of measures to remove administrative obstacles to contribution, adapting contribution rates and benefit package, and harnessing linkages to other policy areas.
- The extension of social security to informal workers through a combination of non-contributory and contributory mechanisms.

Extending social insurance coverage to informal economy can generate 1.2 per cent of additional GDP to finance social protection. It is accomplished through two strategies:

Extension through Legal coverage:

In 2019, the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire adopted a law to establish a mandatory scheme for self-employed, managed by the national Social Security Fund (CNPS).

In 2019, Zambia passed statutory instrument No 72 which has established the legal basis for the extension of the Social Protection to the informal workers through the National Pension Authority (NAPSA).

Extension through Adaptive Financing and Administrative Procedures

In Kenya, Mbao Pension Plan Members are required to daily contribute a minimum of KES 20 (\$0,20) via their mobile phones but, if impossible, contributions can be made weekly, monthly or annually

Rwanda, EJO Heza Pensions scheme managed by RSSB, contribution can be made any time in amount, co-contributions are made by the State according to the sliding scale of ubudehe system.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the s to the compulsory health insurance are calculated at the time of the sale of production for workers in the sugar cane, cotton and oil palm (CNAM)

In Tunisia, contributors receive a bonus mobile phone credit through Tunisia telecom when making contributions through mobile phones (Tunisia ahmini (Protect me) programme managed in collaboration with National Social Security Fund)

Zambia, (NAPSA) digitalization. An e-registration platform and mobile app have been established through which registration and electronic payments can be made.

ILO's strategy for accelerating social protection coverage

in Africa: In line with Abidjan declaration, AU's 2063 Development Agenda and SDGs 1.3 and 3.8, the ILO strategy seeks to increase social protection coverage to 40 percent by 2025. South Africa has already achieved this target; Northern African countries are close; however in Western, Central and Eastern Africa a lot more investment is required to reach the target by 2025. The strategy interventions aim to (i) extend and adapt contributory social security to workers in the informal economy; (ii) reinforce and extend universal/categorical and social assistance programmes; (iii) achieve UHC on working both on the "demand side"

and “supply side”; (iv) close the financing gaps; (v) build enabling environment; and (vi) develop strategic partnerships.

European Agency for safety and health at Work, Tim Tregenza, Senior Network Manager, Overview of EU actors regarding social security and employment,

Mr. Tim alluded to the Free movement of workers as a fundamental principle of the EU where EU citizens are entitled to several rights to work in another country without work permit, enjoy equal treatment with nationals in access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages.

EU nationals may also have health & social security coverage transferred to the country in which they go to seek work.

All countries are free to decide who is to be insured under their legislation, which benefits are granted and under what conditions

EU provides common rules to protect your social security rights when moving within Europe (EU 27 + EEA/EFTA). However, the rules do not replace national systems with a single European system

EU provisions on the coordination of social security schemes have existed since 1958 and modernized coordination has applied in the EU since 2010

Four principles

- Covered by the legislation of one country at a time
- Principle of equal treatment or non-discrimination.
- Previous periods of insurance, work or residence in other countries are taken into account when you claim a benefit
- Principle of exportability.

He presented the following EU structures which are relevant for coordination and cooperation on issues related to social security and Labour.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA)

It operates as an information agency (Information collection, analysis, and dissemination) for all stakeholders in occupational safety and health, under a Tripartite Governing Board
It works with national focal points in each Member State to facilitate information flow
It ensures sharing knowledge to workers, employers, policy-makers, researchers.

Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information

In line with EU Digital strategy, Member States are required to use digital systems to exchange, access, and process data. The Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) is in place since 2019 covering 32 countries, as an IT system for cross-border

exchange by social security institutions of relevant information (e.g. for unemployment benefits, healthcare costs, family benefits). There is a repository of national institutions.

The system speeds up exchanges between institutions on social security cases, while more accurate data exchange between national authorities through standardized translated documents and procedures and safeguards to ensure that the data exchanged is correct. It allows for secure handling of personal data, verification of social security rights of mobile citizens and statistics collection about social security coordination.

MISSOC 'Mutual Information System on Social Protection

It is aimed at policy makers, providing regularly updated information about national social protection systems in three languages (EN, FR, DE).

Protection at work – minimum rights for workers

- Health and safety at work (e.g. workplaces, work equipment, vulnerable workers)
- Equal opportunities for women and men (e.g. pregnancy, maternity leave, parental leave)
- Protection against discrimination (e.g. sex, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation)
- Labour law (Part-time work, fixed-term contracts, working hours, employment of young people, informing and consulting employees)

European Platform for undeclared work

The Platform enhances cooperation between EU countries to better deal with undeclared work in its various forms (drives change at national level, promotes better working conditions and formal employment, increase awareness of issues related to undeclared work). It allows different actors, including social partners and enforcement authorities, such as labour inspectorates, tax and social security authorities, to exchange information and good practices, learn from each other and together develop knowledge and evidence, engage in closer cross-border cooperation and joint activities.

The Platform will be integrated into the European Labour Authority (ELA) as a permanent working group by latest 1 August 2021.

European Labour authority (ELA)

ELA helps was established in 2019 to ensure that EU rules on labour mobility and social security coordination are enforced, s facilitate access to information on labour mobility, support cooperation and information exchange on the application and enforcement of law, carry out analyses on issues of cross-border labour mobility, support with capacity building and in tacking undeclared work.

Health and safety at work

There are common minimum standards set by EU Directives and transposed into Member State legislation for enforcement by Member State Labour Inspectorate. There is a Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC)

A Tripartite Advisory Committee on OSH is responsible for setting policy direction, anticipating and implementing the European OSH strategic framework.

The EU OSHA is instrumental in promoting OSH in Europe.

EUROFOUND

Eurofound is the EU Agency for the improvement of living and working conditions, focused on:

- Working conditions and sustainable work
- Industrial relations and social dialogue
- Employment and labour markets
- Living conditions and quality of life

It operates with a Network of national correspondents on particular topics and carries out surveys (e.g. working conditions survey) as an organization research.

Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC)

The SLIC has the mandate to give its opinion on all matters relating to the enforcement by MS of EU legislation on OSH. It consists of representatives of MS labour inspection services. Its principal activities are:

- Common principles of labour inspection in OSH
- Improved knowledge of the different national systems
- Information exchange between national labour inspectorates
- Labour Inspector exchange programme
- Rapid information exchange between labour inspectorates about OSH

The international Social Security Association (**ISSA**) made a presentation on Potential, COVID-19 challenges and Perspectives for African Social Security Institutions. Magid Fathallah, Regional Coordinator for Africa, Asia and Pacific, International Association of Social Security.

The intervention gave an Overview of ISSA work on Covid-19. He stated that ISSA served as a platform for the exchange of experiences and knowledge on the impact of the Covid 19 crisis and the measures taken by social security administrations.

The presentation outlined challenges related to the coronavirus crisis for African Social Security Administrations internally and externally.

At internal level, there was a need to quickly put in place mechanisms for training, retraining and upgrading staff to deal with the new situation

At the external level, it should be noted (i) the economic impact of the crisis, slackening of economic activity, bankruptcies, layoffs, worsening unemployment, etc.; (ii) a narrowing of the contribution base and lower revenue; (iii) a lower return on reserve funds increase in evasion and fraud; and (iv) increased demands for social benefit and shrinking social coverage.

Main actions being undertaken internally are, among others : (i) adoption of business and service continuity plans ; (ii) adaptation of internal organization to health requirements related to COVID-19 ; (iii) setting up teleworking and providing IT and connection resources ; (iv) submission of teleworking to the same rules of hierarchical supervision, schedule management, leave and performance monitoring, with development of guides for the proper use of teleworking intended to preserve data security and the integrity of information systems ; (v) establishment of a rotation system for employees whose physical presence is essential in the workplace ; (vi) regular communication with staff and social and psychological support ; (vii) staff training and upgrading through e-learning, videoconferences and social networks ; and (ix) deployment of online service platforms.

At the external level, there were, among other measures, (i) relaxation of the payment of contributions by various means.

(ii) communication on various media at the national level and information and awareness campaign aimed at customers (retirees, affiliates and members); (iii) encouragement to use online services, smartphone applications, call centers, and other voice servers; (iv) measures to relax procedures and information campaigns for users; and (v) improvement of certain social benefits to help vulnerable people cope with the crisis.

The pandemic has brought a development and modernization potential of the social security institutions as a lever for excellence through innovation with communication policy and proximity to constituent, visibility, confidence and support from their constituents , break of psychological barrier for digitalization and modernization is based on progressive dematerialization with its two corollaries (digitization of procedures and bank access to beneficiaries) taking advantage of modern means such as call centers, social networks, mobile telephony, etc.

For future prospect, the following should be considered: (i) substantial losses in revenue and sometimes considerable increases in expenditure (ii) exponential increase in early demands for old-age pensions; (iii) an opportunity for the extension of social coverage; (iv) it is time for Africa to make up its lateness in unemployment insurance systems; and (v) decrease in contribution revenue by up to 25%, in some cases, compared to the revenue from the pre-COVID-19 period. This situation will inevitably affect the financial balances especially of the long-term branches of social security.

Social negotiations for deep and structural reforms must be launched without further delay.

CIPRES : The representative of CIPRES, **Mme Cecile Gornique, Executive Secretary** made a presentation in which she noted that in the CIPRES zone, social security CIPRES was established by a Treaty adopted in 1993, in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), as a regulatory body

for the social security sector in Africa, with 17 Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Chad, Togo and Union of the Comoros). Headquarters are hosted by the Togolese Republic

In the CIPRES zone, social security is, like other regions of the world, an instrument for preventing vulnerability and combating poverty and social exclusion. It is an essential component of the social policy of States and contributes to human dignity, equity and social justice, cohesion and social peace.

CIPRES plays a role in regional integration and participation in the economic and social development of member states, through the use of funds accumulated by social security.

The main mission of CIPRES are:

- a. Promotion and extension of social security
- b. Establishment of common management rules
- c. Permanent control of the management of the Bodies
- d. Advisory support and assistance to organizations
- e. Harmonization of legislative and regulatory provisions
- f. Initial and continuous training

Assessment of the situation of social security institutions in the CIPRES zone in the context of Covid 19

The COVID 19 pandemic has not had a significant negative impact on the situation of the Social Security Organizations in the area. Thus, the situation of the Social Security Bodies in the area does not present any major risks based on the data available as of December 31, 2020. However, the presenter said that it was to be feared in the future (i) a possible decrease in income from social contributions, due to the economic and financial difficulties of companies, induced by the health crisis; (ii) the total, partial or technical unemployment of employees, which can lead to a drastic reduction in the base subject to contribution; (iii) difficulties in declaring and paying contributions following travel restriction measures, (iv) the absence of a teleworking, electronic declaration and electronic payment system in several organizations.

Flexible measures were taken in favour of employers (extension of the deadline for payment of social contributions, reduction of penalties and late payment increases on arrears of social contributions, suspension of the calculation of late payment increases on all contribution payments).

The presenter went on to say that late payment of social benefits and / or liquidation of files, due to: (i) the low rate of bank access to social insurance; (ii) the vast majority of recipients of social benefits do not have a bank account for the transfer of benefits; (iii) the implementation of measures to limit grouping; restriction of movement; (iv) the lack of teleworking arrangements in most PSOs; (v) the lack of online reception systems for social insurance policyholders.

III. Assessment of the situation of the social security institutions, including under COVID-19 context by select Member States' institutions

Three Member States (Kenya, Morocco and Zambia) turned up and made their country experience presentation respectively.

A presentation was made on National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Kenya experience on the security extension to excluded categories of workers in the informal economy. NSSF came into being through an Act of Parliament in 1965. The Act was reviewed in 2013 allowing NSSF to establish a Pension and a Provident Fund. 82% of Kenya's labour force is in the informal sector. The Informal sector accounts for more than 65% of the GDP

NSSF supported extension of coverage to the informal sector using new innovation has been presented as follow:

- Informal Sector product “*haba haba*” developed in November 2019
- The Product is based on 6A analogy – Awareness, Adequacy, Adoptability, Affordability, Accessibility, Adoptability
- Members can withdraw up to 50% of accumulated benefits with interest after consistently contributing for a period of five years.
- Daily savings through mobile money platform of Kes.25 per day, also allows weekly and monthly option
- Member registration, validation of details, checking of statements and payments done through Mobile phone use of USSD code *303#
- As at 30th April 2021 89,574 new members registered and 59383 dormant accounts activated

The lessons learnt from the experiences of the coverage to the informal sector in Kenya are as follow:

- Behavioural pattern of norming/conformity Members listen to their leader and are clustered in associations and sacco
- Member education is better done by one of their own
- Engagement of local leadership and administration
- Simple member registration process hence uses of Know your Customer Validation (KYC)
- Incentives to enhance product value for both long and short term periods
- Behavioural Pattern of Intent -action – putting in place auto debit /nudges
- Use of member loyalty programs –*Reward points to pay contributions from telecom company.*

Way forward and recommendations:

- i. Innovation and Technology is key in extension of coverage
- ii. Use of multiple channels to reach out to the informal sector
- iii. Partnerships with banks and micro financial institutions to support extension of coverage and enhance visibility
- iv. Putting in place incentives

- v. Integration with the community
- vi. Studying and understanding behavioural patterns of each segment

Zambia made a presentation on reaching and protecting the difficult - to -cover groups: the case for Zambia. Labour and economic structure of Zambia are characterized by (i) a total Labour Force Employed estimated at 2.9 million, (ii) formal Sector Employment at 0.917 million (30%), and (iii) informal Sector Employment 1.9 million (70%).

The presentation brought to light two specific main realities, first reality being the Economic structure which is skewed towards informality focusing on Legal and Policy framework on Social Security: National Pension Scheme (NPS) Act No. 40 of 1996 sets to implement the National Social Protection Policy: (i) NPS ACT is based on Employer-Employee Relationship; (ii) 90% of the informal sector operations are owner run, no employer -Employer Relationship; (iii) Contributions set based on a monthly salary, informal sector's income irregular.

On its side, the National Social Protection (NSP) Policy advocates for the coverage of both the Formal and the Informal Sectors while the 7th National Development Plan sets to deliver Social Security for all, including the informal sector during the plan's timeframe

In order to fill the policy commitment and objective, the NAPSA'S extension of coverage to the informal sector (ECIS) build on the following:

- a. ECIS aimed at on-boarding new members from the informal sector
- b. SPIREWORK is an African Union initiative which Zambia has adopted to extend social security coverage to the small scale farmers and casual agriculture workers
- c. Secured required legislative framework through a Statutory Instrument to NAPSA Act, Administrative changes for registration and contribution collection, and mass communication
- d. Signed MoU's with mother bodies and unions (Partners) of various sectors (both Informal and Semi-formal), Financial institutions and aggregators
- e. Compliance planned to be self-enforcement
- f. Developed a mix of short and long term benefits portfolio for informal sector workers

Subsequently Zambia is also implementing a Tailored Scheme based on revised Pension Rule:

- Contribution 5% (employee share only)
- Reduced vesting period from 180 months to 120 months
- Flexibility in contribution frequency (daily, monthly, weekly, quarterly, Bi annual, annual)
- Contributions credited in the year or month in which the contribution is made
- No penalties suffered by self-employed members for none or late remittance of remittance
- Inclusion of short term benefits (maternity, family funeral grant, weather index insurance, short term credit).

The following Several recommendations conclude the Zambia's presentation

- a. Interoperability of legislative frameworks among social security Institutions
- b. Establishment of focal-point offices in social security Institutions for coordination and collaboration
- c. Foster Exchange programmes among social security institutions with similar mandates e.g, occupational injury schemes
- d. Evoke Political will for Member States to ratify portability of accrued rights and benefits of members among social security institutions
- e. The AUC champions the development of social security administration guidelines suited to the African environment
- f. Leverage already existing structures such as the RECs to support coordination and collaboration

Morocco experience:

Just after the COVID-19 pandemic Morocco launched, under high Royal instructions, the project to extend and generalize social protection, which also represents a lever for integrating the informal sector into the national economic fabric of so as to guarantee the protection of workers and their rights.

The implementation of this project, spread over the next five years, which will begin with the generalization of compulsory health insurance, requires the modification of a set of existing legislative and regulatory texts, the development of new texts, and the launch a set of structural reforms which concern the upgrading of the health system, the reform of the compensation system, with the operationalization of the unified social register.

The implementation of this major social project also requires the development of management methods, in particular those linked to the governance of social security organizations, with a view to creating a unified body for the coordination and supervision of social protection systems.

Concerning the field of social security at the level of our continent, given the low rates of social coverage, the predominance of the informal sector, the proportion of vulnerable populations in particular following the harmful repercussions of the COVID19 pandemic and given the phenomena of migration and the mobility for work experienced by our countries, a strengthening of social security coordination and cooperation is necessary. The exchange of experiences and good practices in social protection, the transfer of know-how and the conclusion of social security agreements are means to be implemented in order to extend and generalize social protection on our continent and allow the portability of acquired social rights.

Morocco has developed experience in cooperation and coordination of social security with the increase in migratory flows of Moroccans for work or within the framework of family reunification, more particularly to European countries. The organization of this emigration was carried out through Labor Conventions which were supplemented by Social Security Conventions, in order to guarantee the social protection of workers and their family members in the host country and to allow the preservation and portability of their social security rights once back in their country (the maintenance of acquired rights and in the process of being

acquired, the aggregation of insurance periods and the transfer of social benefits to the native country).

Morocco has signed 15 social security conventions, including those with France in 1965, Belgium in 1968, the Netherlands in 1972 and Spain in 1979, Libya in 1983, Tunisia in 1987, Algeria in 1991 and Egypt in 2006. A draft convention is being finalized with Mauritania and draft social security conventions have been exchanged with Senegal and Gabon

Morocco's experience highlights two essential conditions for ensuring better coordination of social security systems through social security agreements:

(i) the competent social security bodies must have an efficient information system and technical means of communication ensuring efficient and rapid exchange of data.

(ii) signatory countries must undertake to respect personal data and ensure that insureds and their family members are aware of their rights guaranteed by social security agreements, for example through guides, brochures or any other another tool to indicate to them in a clear and simple way the procedures to be followed and the forms to be used in order to be able to benefit from social benefits.

OVERVIEW FROM THE RECS AND THEIR STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

All Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were invited to share with their view and their perspective on the situation of the social security institutions, including under COVID-19 and three RECs, namely Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Communities (SADC) and the Union Maghreb Arab made presentations.

IGAD Experience:

Mrs. Lucy, head of mission of IGAD in Kampala made a presentation on IGAD Social Security perspectives. The Challenges faced by the region as follow:

- Data limitations on workers including migrant workers in the Region;
- Limited knowledge on the different categories of workers i.e. professional skilled categories and semi-skilled workers; formal & informal economy workers; rural and urban workers;
- Limited knowledge on access to Social Security schemes and institutions both for formal and informal sectors; over urban and rural areas.
- Coverage of National Social Security Services limited and focus on formal employment sector;
- Portability of benefits by migrant workers is limited due to lack of functional overarching regional legal frameworks and coordination mechanisms for the Region and weak national Security Institutional limitations – special reference to fragile states in IGAD.

The joint IGAD/ILO planned actions for 2021/2022 which consists of:

- Finalisation of the IGAD Draft Regional Social Protection Strategy;
- Tracking progress in the MS development and implementation of Social Security mechanisms (laws, policies, institutions) for all Workers across IGAD Region;
- Tracking MS equal access and utilisation (same status as nationals) of national security schemes by migrant workers in countries of destination and portability of benefits on their return to countries of origin;

Conclusion: Social Security Schemes support the attainments of the goal for Decent Work for workers in the region. Ultimately reduces poverty & vulnerability of workers (UN ILO Recommendation No. 202).

SADC Experience:

Mr. Maxwell Parakokwa from SADC Secretariat made a succinct presentation on SADC' vision 2050 which aspired to be a peaceful, inclusive, competitive middle to high-income industrialized region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice, and freedom. A table on Social Protection Coverage – Overview based on World Social Protection Report depicts the state of social security coverage in each SADC member States

Various SADC Instruments on Social Security were outlined, such as:

- SADC Code on Social Security, 2007: which encompasses social insurance and social services, as well as developmental social welfare, comprehensive measures designed to protect individuals against life-cycle crises that curtail their capacity to meet their needs, with the objective to enhance human welfare.
- SADC Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits, 2020, promoting access to social security by migrant workers, Mutual Administrative Assistance for migrant workers

SADC countries are faced with a number of challenges such as: (i) non-binding framework; (ii) weak monitoring and evaluation; (iii) weak labour market governance and performance; (iv) weaker role of social insurance measures; (v) formal sector mostly covered; (vi) unemployment and underemployment; and (vii) informality

Mr. Maxwell concluded his presentation by recommending the following;

- A comprehensive and coordinated approach
- Strengthened continental coordination
- Enhanced social protection programming (must go beyond social insurance)
- Collaboration should include Ministries beyond Labour Sector
- Support reforms at Member States
- Sustaining recovery/resilience post-COVID-19, to institutionalize new measures (about 70% new, ad hoc interventions)
- Experience sharing and exchanges (innovative financing and extension of social security to the informal economy)

UMA

On behalf of UMA, **Mr Sidi Mohammed** mentioned that national policies on social security have been developed in line with the AU Protocol. The Social Security Convention was set in 1991. This is a plan to develop an action plan on social security, however, this activity was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. There are also plans to establish a database and produce statistics. UMA expressed willingness to work with sister agencies to promote the welfare of migrant workers, especially those in the informal economy. UMA also is willing to work with the AUC in developing a social security system in the region, mentioning the Programme 20-26. all types of cooperation should be possible.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM OTHER REGIONS
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A global view: COVID-19 responses and long-term impact ISSA, Jens Schremmer, International Social Security Association (ISSA)

Mr. **Jens Schremmer** Jens made presentation on lessons at global level.

The Covid-19 crisis has not been linear, with Phase 1: Emergency response to reduce impact of the health crisis, Phase 2: Balance multiple objectives (supporting society and economy while reducing expenditures) in a longer than expected crisis period, and Phase 3: Supporting recovery and facing long-term crisis impact.

The responses strategies include:

Facilitating the health response (Strengthening access to healthcare, Extension of cash sickness benefits),

Maintaining income and productive capacity (Supporting and maintaining employment, Access to unemployment benefits, social security contributions: reductions, deferral, exemptions, interruption of enforcement, no penalties etc.)

Protecting the vulnerable (Social assistance measures/Emergency cash and in-kind transfers; Social insurance measures/Extending current provisions and introducing complementary ones)

Delivering responses: service continuity/new demands (Business continuity and emergency plans, boosting digital channels, flexibility of requirements, supporting telework and secure connections, collaboration and links with other public/private agencies,

The pandemic prompted opportunities for the social security in terms of (1) recognition and understanding; (ii) closing gaps; (iii) institutional digital transformation; (iv) financing and sustainability; and (v) long term economic impact.

The presentation concluded with a global lesson aiming at building a more resilient social security anchored on (i) A renewed demonstration of the role of social security for individuals-society-economy; (ii) Opportunities for coverage extension and strengthening social security; (iii) Acceleration of Digital transformation of social security and service delivery; (iv) indispensable international cooperation and sharing against uncertainty and rapid change, leveraging ISSA expertise, knowledge platforms and tools.

PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT TORS OF THE CONTINENTAL SOCIAL SECURITY COORDINATION AND COOPERATION FORUM

Mr. Oumar Diop, AU Commission, made the presentation of the TORs, recalling the context and justification through AU Policy Frameworks and Legal instruments. The presentation underlined the structure of the draft TORs with provisions on:

- (i) the vision and mission of the Forum
- (ii) the objectives of the Forum
- (iii) the membership constituted of the DG and CEOs of MS social Security Institutions, representatives of RECs and Social Partners. There are also Observers among the international partners.
- (iv) the Organization and Office of the Forum with the Bureau and the Secretariat at the AUC
- (v) the functioning of the Forum

- (vi) the finance of the Forum
- (vii) Report of the Forum
- (viii) Decisions and recommendations of the Forum
- (ix) Amendments to the TORs

The ensuing discussions highlighted the following:

- Clarity and consistency on the language and concepts (coordination, cooperation, mechanism vs forum, etc)
- Review the periodicity of the meetings of the Forum for effective accomplishment of its vision, mission and objectives. The meeting suggested a periodicity of biannual or quarterly sessions.
- Share the revised draft TORs with MS, RECs and other stakeholders for consultation before submitting to the 4th session of the STC in Mbabane, Eswatini in October 2021.
- Clarify issues around aspects of bidding written and signed agreement, communication and synergy
- Underscore the importance of government-private sector partnerships; and partnership with organizations of informal economy/rural workers
- The importance role that can be played by ITC for transformation and inclusion of social security systems
- Expand coordination beyond social security to include and leverage noncontributory social protection schemes
- The AUC to facilitate the coordination between ministries of labour and ministries of finance as per the 2016 resolutions adopted by the STC of Ministers of Finance/development Planning/Monetary Affairs
- Enhance the collaboration with ISSA, ILO and EU OSH Agency and EU DG Employment
- No financial implications for the Commission.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Sabelo Mbokazi, Head of Division, Labour, Employment and Migration, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, AUC, thanked the participants for their contribution to the success of the event through exchange on their valuable experience and other valuable thoughts to the debate.