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## **OPENING STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. DR. MUSTAPHA S. KALOKO  
COMMISSIONER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**AT THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (STC-  
SDLE-1)**

***Theme: "Social Protection for Inclusive Development"***

**NELSON MANDELLA HALL, AU HQ**

**23 APRIL 2015**

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**Honourable Ministers from AU Member States and Brazil participating in this Ministerial Meeting,**

**Distinguished Chairperson and Members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Distinguished Experts and Social Partners from Member States,**

**Esteemed UN Partners,**

**Partners from the CSO community, in the fields of children, persons with disabilities and older persons,**

**Representatives of Women and Youth Organisations,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I bring you the greetings of H.E. Dr Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission, who wished to be here, but who is still returning from a meeting with the EU in Brussels.

Let me start by emphasizing how high the theme of this meeting, namely “Social Protection for Inclusive Development”, is on the African Union Agenda. The AU Assembly adopted the African Union Agenda 2063 in January 2015. Agenda 2063 claims that the Africa of 2063 will be a “compassionate and caring society”. Aspiration 1 of the AU Agenda 2063 aims at a “Prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”. Its Goals 1, 2 and 3 of are built on the life cycle approach of social protection, as reflected in the AU Social Policy Framework and the ILO Social Protection Floors.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The First Goal of Agenda 2063 is aiming at “A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens”. It will be pursued through a set of interlinked priority areas, which are, and I *quote*:

- 1. Affordable social security and protection for all**
- 2. Increase incomes and provide decent jobs for working age adults**
- 3. End poverty and eliminate hunger and malnutrition**  
*Unquote*

The thrust is to “leave no one behind” in the pursuit of growth and development, through appropriate and well managed social protection and social security policies and programmes. This means that we should put in place policies to ensure that growth benefits the poor and the marginalized, which mostly include women, elderly, people with disabilities and people from socially excluded groups.

### **Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Social protection systems are investments with a multiplier effect that promote sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, job creation, promote local markets, improving occupational and economic inclusion.

The first order of business here is to make sure that social protection is grounded on human rights, including social, economic, cultural as well as civil and political rights. The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights stipulates that every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person. This encompasses the rights of social protection and social security for the person. The Charter further elaborates on the right to work under equitable and satisfactory conditions, and shall receive equal pay for equal work, and the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health. It also stipulates the rights of older persons and of persons with disabilities to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs. Subsequently, in terms of the provisions

of Article 66 of the Charter, we have developed protocols on the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities, respectively.

### **Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Would it not be prudent and farsighted to develop a **Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security**, also in view of the aspirations of Agenda 2063? I ask this question, because Africa lags far behind other world regions on the 4 basic pillars of Social Protection Floors as components of the Minimum Social Protection Package advocated for by the AU Social Policy Framework, and I wish to highlight them: Essential Health Care for All, Income Security for Children and Families; Income Security for Women and Men in Working age; and Income security for older persons.

On social protection for Children and Families, Africa expends 0,2% of its GDP with 42% of children as share of the total population, compared to 0,2% of GDP for its 26.5% of children in the total population in the Asian region, and 0.7% of GDP for their 27.9% of children in Latin America. On Social protection for Women and Men of Working Age, Africa allocates only 0.5 of GDP for 56.1 % of its population, compared to 1.5% and for 68.4% of this population in Asia, and 5.1 on 66% men and women of working age in Latin America. On Social Protection for Older Women and Men, Africa allocates 1.3% of GDP compared to 2.0 in Asia and 4.6% in Latin America.

The most important policy gap on social insurance, concerns the informal economy and rural workers who make up approximately 80% of the labour force in the continent. Indeed, we must acknowledge that the specifics of African labour markets, dominated by informal and rural occupations, open up large avenues for a mix of contributory and non-contributory social

protection regimes in our countries. The challenge is further amplified by the demographic dividend of the continent, meaning that we don't have the largest proportion of adults to contribute to social security. To address these challenges, in January 2015, the AU Assembly adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development. These policy instruments are based on six Key Priority Areas with one dedicated to Social Protection and Productivity, thus highlighting the interplay between social protection, productivity, poverty eradication and inclusive development.

### **Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,**

A series of constraints limit the achievements on the social protection front. The main limitations relate to the challenges of coordination, fiscal space and funding, overall governance frameworks, including institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders and beneficiaries participation, knowledge and statistics, political will and vision embracing social protection for all. There are also particular challenges on the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing legal contributory social security regimes covering the workers in the formal economy. The mentioned constraints, and others, are well documented and require comprehensive policies at all levels.

### **Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have underlined the historic and opportune time for Africa to adopt a Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security. Considering the constraints faced in the implementation of the policy documents alluded to above, this rights based approach of the Protocol should furthermore be supplemented and supported by a **Social Protection Agenda** to be developed within the framework of the AU Agenda 2063, and to constitute the

programmatic component of an African Social Development Architecture. This will ensure that economic and social commitments are pursued in tandem, reinforcing each other for well-balanced development.

Allow me to repeat the two essential future steps to be taken:

- **Development of a Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security; and**
- **Development of a Social Protection Agenda for Africa in line with the AU Agenda 2063.**

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Based on your deliberations today and tomorrow, this First STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment will also consider a Declaration for submission to the Summit in June 2015. I understand that frank discussions have taken place in the Experts' meeting, among others on the effectiveness and impact of social protection policies, and that best practices in the development, financing and management of social protection policies have been shared.

I wish to conclude with reference again to the theme of this STC meeting, namely, "Social Protection for Inclusive Development". Indeed, for development to be sustainable, it needs to be inclusive, and in this regard, all members of society have the right to contribute to the development of their communities and countries. In turn, societies should provide its members with the opportunities, space and support for them to make their contributions.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.