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**Third Ordinary Specialized Technical Committee on
Social Development, Labour and Employment, 1 - 5
April 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**STATEMENT BY MADAME CISSE MARIAMA
MOHAMED- DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

***1 APRIL 2019
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia***

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Commissioner for Social Affairs, H.E. Mrs Amira El-Fadil, I am honored to officially open our **Third Ordinary Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment under the theme “*Poverty Eradication through Strategic Investments at National and Regional Levels towards Social Development, Labour and Employment in Africa*”**. I take this opportunity to thank you all for taking the time to join us in this important meeting. I would like to recall Commissioner El-Fadil’s words at the previous STC in 2017 in Algiers, Algeria. She appreciated the shift of member states, partners, employers and employees and other stakeholders towards prioritizing social dialogue and justice, sustainable development and inclusive growth which are high on the Agenda 2063 and the various continental frameworks. She further stressed that focus would be placed on implementation of the decisions taken in Algiers, particularly with regards to the Protocol on Persons with Disability, and the formulation of national and regional domestication documents on the 5 Year Priority Programme for the implementation of the Ouagadougou+ 10 declaration and Plan of Action.

Poverty is one of the main issues that continues to affect our continent, causing dire results and limiting the economic, social, and even cultural development of Member States. It is important as key stakeholders for us to deliberate on this year’s STC’s theme especially in line with the AU theme of the year which focuses on refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, “Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa.”

As we discuss solutions and recommendations for the eradication of poverty on our continent, let us not forget one of the goals of Social Agenda 2063 which clearly insists on the need for inclusive growth and sustainable development for all to eradicate poverty in one generation and build shared prosperity through social and economic transformation of the continent.

It is important that we note that poverty, though perceived by many as an issue affecting individuals and families, affects us all as it leads to a vicious intergenerational cycle on our development as a people. Poverty is related to social development issues such as employment, social security, social protection, equality, and structure of the economy including income source,

social norms and traditions, access to these basic social services is a key determinant of poverty in countries.

Poverty is an issue that affects us all and that as key players we need to passionately come up with solid ways to accelerate poverty eradication for the future development of our amazingly diverse continent.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

So we are here this whole week to deliberate on the recommendations made at our last STC that took place in 2017 in Algiers, Algeria and also analyze how to have a collective approach and enhance our efforts in concretely addressing the crippling issues that keep plaguing our continent. It will be important to look back at the recommendations also to see how far we have come, where we stand and what more needs to be done for our goals to be achieved.

In this vein, we will spend the next 5 days with a heavy schedule discussing a number of key issues including Incomes, Jobs and decent work; Social security and social protection, Social Agenda 2063, draft disability framework; ending child marriage and inclusive growth among others. In addition, other areas that will be discussed are issues negatively affecting growth and contributing to poverty rates such as inequality and discrimination in particular against women, girls and persons with disabilities including Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Putting an end to conflicts, eradicating poverty, meeting the basic needs of our population, ensuring employment, income generating skills and competencies, safeguarding and nurturing the dignity and human rights of our populations amongst other issues highlighted in Agenda 2063 cannot be tackled individually in view of their intricate linkages and associations.

Everyone's utmost diligence, expertise, and experience is important. Your engagement and commitment in together taking up this task cannot therefore be overemphasized given the startling figures depicting the reality of our continent.

In this regard, allow me to seize this opportunity to appreciate the initiatives and programmes working in the areas of concern led by the Ministers in

charge of Social Development, Labour and Employment, Government Experts responsible for the concerned sectors, social partners, Regional Economic Communities and organizations with status of observer such as the Pan African Productivity Association, OECD and International Organizations including UN agencies, and Business Africa.

Your presence in this gathering as key players is purposeful and it is a positive sign to the direction forward of our continued efforts by means of a multi stakeholder and multidimensional approach in order to accomplish our common vision.

I conclude by quoting a great man and legend- Nelson Mandela: **“Our human compassion binds us the one to the other - not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.”**

So with these wise words, I wish you fruitful deliberations with concrete outcomes that take us beyond discourse and continue to be relentless in taking action on Strategic Investments at continental, regional and national and levels to ensure that we develop as a continent by lifting each other up. And once again on behalf of our Commissioner of social affairs H.E Mrs Amira El-Fadil, I officially declare this 3rd STC- SDLE open.