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**SECOND SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (STC-SDLE-2)
ALGIERS, ALGERIA
24-28 APRIL 2017**

***Theme:* “Investment in Employment and Social Security for Harnessing the
Demographic Dividend”**

CONCEPT NOTE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Social Development, Labour and Employment is one of fourteen (14) STCs, defined as an Organ of the African Union in accordance with Article 5 (1) (g) of the AU Constitutive Act. The STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment meets once every two (2) years.
2. The Second Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC-SDLE-2) is scheduled to take place in **Algiers, Algeria, from 24 to 28 April 2017** under the Theme: **“Investment in Employment and Social Security for Harnessing the Demographic Dividend”**. The theme is derived from the AU theme for 2017 **“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”** as decided by the AU Heads of State and Government (Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI) of January 2016).
3. The decision of the Heads of State and Government comes at a critical time as investments made in the youth will have a telling impact on the nature of implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this reason, and in response to the Assembly Decision, it is important that all key partners work closely together towards ensuring that key objectives are set and activities planned for the upcoming STC-SDLE-2. The STC participants must furthermore identify challenges in the domains of social development, social protection, labour and employment, and decide which investments will be required to reach desired outcomes.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

4. The demographic dividend can be defined as the benefit that can arise when a country has a relatively large proportion of working-age population due to declining fertility, and effectively invests in their health, empowerment, education and employment through public action and private sector involvement.
5. The central importance of the demographic dividend to Africa’s transformative development has been repeatedly acknowledged by African leaders at the highest level and in key ministerial platforms. Over the last ten years, it has become evident that a demographic dividend lens offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in people in general and youth in particular, in order to achieve sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and to build "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena".
6. Population dynamics - changes in the numbers, ages and locations of people - are critical drivers of prospects for prosperity and well-being across the world’s societies. These dynamics can also pose challenges to social development, inequalities and labour market investment. Africa’s endeavour to harness its unique population constellations is intensifying and it centers on the quest to

secure an economic boom, by capitalizing on the continent's overwhelming youthfulness. The potential for such a demographic dividend (DD) emerges as fertility rates decline, leading to a window of opportunity where the 'working age' population significantly outnumbers the population of children and older people.

7. Given Africa's current demographic structure with a high youthful population, there is a significant potential for economic transformation. Beyond the simple increase in the number and share of working-age population, the development and implementation of sound policies in education, health, including family planning and the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment that facilitates job creation and access to decent employment would ensure increase in the productive workforce and lead to higher growth and rising income per person. Finally, harnessing the demographic dividend presents a great opportunity to building resilience of young people and addressing the root causes of many of the key challenges facing Africa including forced migration, radicalization and violent extremism.
8. It is evident that, given proper investments, population dynamics would play an important role in facilitating high and inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Indeed, the large youth population if well harnessed, would spur the continent to greater economic achievements. Africa is moving at a pace much slower than its potential due in great part to the untapped potential of its youth. The 2016 Economic Report on Africa puts the growth rate of the continent at 3.7% and although this masks higher performance in certain countries, economic growth has not been in areas that are labour intensive. For example, Africa spends about 30 billion US dollars importing processed foods every year and could create about 5 million jobs just by transforming natural minerals by 5%. The time to invest in human resource, particularly in the youth, is now.

Demographic Dividend and Job Creation

9. African youth (15-24 years) constitute about 37% of the working age population, but account for more than 60% of all unemployed people in Africa (AfDB, 2013). To address this high youth unemployment rates and the mismatch of qualifications in Africa, labour force participation needs to be increased by providing employment opportunities to youth in particular. With high-quality jobs predominantly provided by private sector to absorb new workforce entrants and increase overall productivity, there is a need for a paradigm change as young people should be empowered with the necessary entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create their own enterprises. As such, governments should create conducive political, business, financial and economic environment by developing and effectively implementing policies that promote flexible labour markets, facilitate the development of labour-intensive sectors that can compete globally, and liberalize trade. Governments need also to engage with Chiefs Executive Officers (CEOs), national and regional banking institutions and the private sector to enable them to contribute to the emergence of a new generation on entrepreneurs in the continent as well as in the mobilization of the necessary funding. Adequate and tailored policies on Corporate Social Responsibilities should become a norm. The private sector must be engaged and committed to retraining of the large number of unemployed people in order to provide them with requisite skills in demand by the labour market. These measures are necessary to increase employment opportunities and productivity needed.

A. Social Development

10. Close to 65 million older people (60 years and above) live in Africa today, and this figure is set to increase to 220 million by mid-century—115 million more than in Northern and Western Europe combined, and 100 million more than in North America. Already in 2002, with the adoption of the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, Africa has started preparing to harness the skills, knowledge and cultural wisdom of its rapidly growing older population due to improved nutrition and health care. At first, their rights should be secured, hence AU policy organs called for the development of a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.
11. Work on the Protocol commenced in 2008, and was accelerated since 2013, leading to the adoption of the Protocol by the AU Assembly in January 2016. The Commission has since focused on its entry into force, which will result in, among others, improved access to health care and enhanced social security provisions for older persons in AU Member States. The STC-SDLE will consider fast-tracking of the entry into force of the Protocol, as well as which investments would yield desired outcomes with regard to long-term care of older persons, and access to health care, as encapsulated in Articles 10, 11 and 15 of the Protocol.
12. An estimated 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, many in conditions of poverty. More than 100 million people of the population of Africa live with disabilities. Persons with disabilities and their families are more likely to experience economic and social disadvantage than those without a disability. Globally there is increasing awareness of universal human rights and commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities, and mainstreaming of disability in development. The abilities of Persons with Disabilities is another demographic dividend on the continent that has not been harnessed. However, the domain of disability has received much attention in the AU Commission since the STC-SDLE-1, and training and capacity building to government officials and representatives from Disabled People's Organizations of 45 Member States has been conducted on implementation of the Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019), the programmatic component of the African Union Disability Architecture (AUDA).
13. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, the legal component of the AUDA, was adopted by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, in February 2016. It will be presented to the STC-SDLE-2 for consideration and onward submission to the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs in 2017 before submission to the AU Policy Organs in January 2018 for adoption. Though the lives of persons with disabilities (PWDs) on the continent has generally improved, the first report on the status of disability in Africa, will be considered by the STC-SDLE-2 and decisions will be made on which type of investments will yield the best outcomes towards benefitting from the grossly untapped dividend of persons with disabilities on the continent.

14. Child marriage is a harmful practice which severely affects the rights of a child and has devastating and long term effects (health, education, psychological, emotional, mental, etc.) on the life and the future of girls. Girls who are married as children are more likely drop out of school, suffer domestic violence, contract HIV/AIDS and other STDs and die due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth.
15. The demographic dividend perspective offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in the girls of Africa (such as sexual and reproductive health information and services, education and job creation and growth). While data informs us that the lives of girls today are better in many respects than those of preceding generations, girls still suffer significant deprivations and inequalities, many of which result from the persistent gender discrimination faced by girls and women everywhere. Children who are forced into child marriage are often unable to continue their education, have limited access to quality health services, limited income generating activities and are inevitably denied the opportunity to productively contribute to the society in terms of human and social capital.
16. The pathway identified to reaping the full demographic dividend, including both young men and women, boys and girls, was to keep girls in school, which implied, among the most important interventions, avoiding them being given out in early marriage with all the burdens and consequences of such marriages. Hence, on 29 May 2014 at the 4th Conference of Ministers of Social Development, the AU Campaign on Ending Child Marriage was launched. Subsequently, in June 2015, the 25th Ordinary Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government, adopted the African Common Position on Ending Child Marriage and requested that the African Union Commission develops a comprehensive Action Plan for monitoring the implementation of the African Common Position and report back to the Assembly on progress towards ending child marriage in Africa, biennially. The STC-SDLE-2 will consider the Two Year Report (2014-2016) on the progress of the Campaign, and country initiatives regarding the implementation of the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage, and propose which investments would be required to facilitate the end of child marriage.

B. Labour and Employment

17. The Constitutive Act of the African Union identifies as one of the objectives of the African Union, (to) “promote and protect human and peoples’ rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and other relevant human rights instruments”. Consequently, constitutional provision exists to safeguard human security and social security, of which the right to work is the most important social protection and social security measure. The right to work must still be realized for many citizens of the continent, also to combat poverty and inequality. Unemployment and under-employment are at alarming proportions in all AU Member States, where not only youths and women are affected most, but also many men in their productive years.
18. In January 2015, the AU Assembly adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (Ouaga+10). In order to facilitate the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action, the Commission has worked with ILO and other key partners (UNDP, FAO,

ECA, etc) to develop the First Five Year Priority Programme (5YPP) to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action. The process of developing the 5YPP closely involved the social partners. The First 5YPP builds on the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agend, particularly as it relates to the targets related to employment, labour, social protection/social security, productivity, partnerships and labour market governance. The First 5YPP also takes on board, among others, some key AU policies/programmes such as the Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK); the Programme on Upgrading the Informal Economy; (c) the Productivity Agenda for Africa, (d) the Labour Market Information Management System (LMIS); and (e) the AUC/ILO/ECA/IOM Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP). These landmark policy instruments are to be rolled out in Member States through domestication mechanisms.

19. Some achievements were realized on the implementation of these policies. The First Labour Migration Statistics Report was elaborated in 2016. A study was conducted on social security access and portability for migrant workers in Africa. It led to the formulation of a two year project funded by the EU and implemented by the ILO. Another study was conducted on skills recognition and portability, with recommendations formulated by the AU STC on Education and TVET in October 2015.
20. Governments and social partners will engage in a debate on the future of work in Africa, in view of demographic dividend trends and implications for youth employment, social protection, /social security, labour market inclusion, productivity and equality. The STC-SDLE-2 will also consider follow-up activities on the Africa-US Trade and Labour Ministerial Roundtable (Washington, 22 September 2016) regarding the importance of coordinating trade and investment efforts with policies that promote worker rights and inclusive economic growth, within the framework of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). The US Department of Labour, the Commission and ILO will share the outcomes of the roundtable and discuss the perspective of cooperation under the AGOA.
21. The Ministerial Conference on the Committee for Development and Promotion of Handicraft (CODEPA) is willing to cooperate with the Commission to extend social security and social protection to the artisans and members of their families. The Algiers meeting will provide opportunity to discuss the CODEPA proposal. Lastly, the STC will reach consensus on preparations for the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference to take place in June 2017.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STC-SDLE-2

22. The overall objective of the STC-SDLE-2 will be to consider which investments would be required to address opportunities and challenges in reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend with the inclusion of vulnerable groups and maximising labour outcomes towards enhancing social security, eradicating poverty, and addressing inequality and inclusive development.
23. The STC-SDLE-2 will also undertake the following:

- Deliberate on the future of work in Africa, given the demographic and economic challenges, as well as on novel perspectives on the ways in which Africa's youth, and older populations can yield a demographic dividend on the continent.
- Discuss implementation of the Action Plan on the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage.
- Consider the Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Deliberate and agree on a roadmap to fast-track the implementation of the First Five Year Priority Programme (F5YPP) on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, with consideration and adoption of planning, implementation and M&E mechanisms/tools;
- Consider the fast-tracking of the entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.

IV. FORMAT OF THE STC-SDLE -2

24. The STC-SDLE-2 will be conducted in two parts:
- a **Senior Official's Meeting (24-26 April 2017) (Parallel sessions for Social Development, and Labour and Employment, respectively, on 25 April 2017)**
 - b) **Ministerial Meeting (27-28 April 2017)**

V. PARTICIPANTS

25. The Second Specialized Technical Committee Meeting on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC –SDLE-2) will bring together Ministers in charge of Social Development, Labour and Employment, government Experts responsible for the concerned sectors, the social partners, Regional Economic Communities, and organizations with status of observer such as the Pan African Productivity Association, ITUC-Africa, Business Africa and OATUU. Pan-African and International Organizations, including UN agencies, working in the areas of concern will also be invited.

VI. DATE AND VENUE

26. The STC –SDLE-2 will convene from 24-28 April 2017 in Algiers, Algeria. The exact venue will be communicated to Member States in due time.

VII. LANGUAGES

27. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four (4) working languages of the African Union: Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

VIII. DOCUMENTATION

28. The main working documents of the STC-SDLE-2 will be available on the AU Website: www.au.int

XI. CONTACT PERSONS

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