

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

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**EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT
ON EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY ERADICATION
AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

**DRAFT DECLARATION ON EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY
ERADICATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

DRAFT DECLARATION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT ON EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY ERADICATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

WE, the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union, meeting at the Extraordinary Session of our Assembly in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from.....th toth September 2014, focusing on the theme “**Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development**” to review the progress made and the challenges faced in implementing the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation;

RECALLING the objectives of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as well as the Vision and Mission of the African Union, the post-2015 Development Agenda for Africa and the AU 2063 Agenda;

ALSO RECALLING all relevant declarations, decisions and policy guidelines that we adopted in the area of poverty eradication and political and socio-economic development since 2004;

FURTHER RECALLING subsequent instruments such as the Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008), the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2006), the African Women Decade 2010-2020; the African Youth Decade Plan of Action, 2009-2018; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the African Charter on Statistics, the Productivity Agenda for Africa (2010), the Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers-SPIREWORK (2011), the Malabo Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development and Empowerment (2011), the Labour Market Information Systems Harmonization and Coordination Framework (2012);

NOTING also the Comprehensive Progress Report on the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation; and **EXPRESSING CONCERN** about the low level of submission by Member States and RECs of their progress reports on the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation;

NOTING WITH SATISFACTION the progress made on the policy development front, labour market governance and budget allocation by Member States, Regional Economic Communities in the fight against high levels of unemployment, underemployment and poverty since 2004, complemented by increased commitment of the international partners, Social Partners, the Private sector, CSO, NGOs and other Non State Actors to promote the decent work development agenda of the International Labour Organization;

AKNOWLEDGING that the presence of high political engagement in some countries has yielded significant progress in the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Agenda, while **RECOGNIZING** the imperative to scale up the political leadership and commitment;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that despite the mentioned significant efforts, unemployment, underemployment and poverty rates, in particular among the youth and women, remain at unacceptable levels that hamper social cohesion and inclusive development, reduce speed of growth, enlarge inequalities and threaten political stability in our maturing democracy ventures;

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the unacceptably high rate of structural underemployment associated with the lack of social protection, low productivity, low income generating capacity and the exposure to poor occupational health and safety conditions which affect particularly women and youth who dominate the large poor workforce in the informal economy and rural sectors;

AFFIRMING the private sector as the engine for wealth creation and jobs creation, and **MINDFUL** that Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs), Micro Enterprises, the Rural Sector and Social Economy are the main sources to create jobs, enhance inclusive growth and foster the social contract to ensure social stability, while they are faced with specific obstacles and shortcomings that need to be removed;

APPRECIATING the increase of the rate of women participation in the labour market in the Continent; however **NOTING WITH CONCERN** the prevalence of discrimination against women in the labour market with gender gap in wages and employment, the inadequacy of legal and institutional arrangements to cater for their respective responsibilities in professional and family life;

MINDFUL that the last two decades Africa experienced sustainable and high growth rates with rates of return on foreign investment higher than any other developing regions but that it did not translate into proportionate job creation;

PARTICULARLY CONCERNED by the fact that Africa has the lowest productivity performance which affects its competitiveness and ability to achieve inclusive growth, combat marginalization and eradicate poverty; **and ACKNOWLEDGING** that the continent is endowed with natural resources shared by many countries and which opens up opportunities for continental resourced skills development initiatives;

NOTING WITH DEEP CONCERN the unsatisfactory absence of appropriate legal, policy and programmatic measures to protect workers and their families from unacceptable forms of work that are in contrast with commitments taken within relevant binding instruments to promote fundamental principles and rights;

ACKNOWLEDGING the acceleration of widespread labour migration within the continent and its significant contribution to development and poverty eradication through skills enhancement and remittances; **ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING** the importance of increased migrant workers inflows to Africa from other regions, notably from Asia and Europe; **BEING CONCERNED** about the dramatic adverse consequences of migration

and the danger of certain migration routes to other regions in particular the Middle East and Europe;

MINDFUL of the weaknesses of the labour market institutions, in particular in the areas of social security, social dialogue, labour market information, placement services; and **ACKNOWLEDGING** the need to strengthen and modernize the labour market institutions with the view to align them with the African Union Agenda 2063 and support the implementation of its objectives;

RECOGNIZING that while the current process of globalization presents both challenges and opportunities for Africa, it has so far marginalized the continent in a manner that exacerbates problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, indebtedness and vulnerability as well as lack of competitiveness;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the previous commitments made by our development partners in global forums relating to new and additional resource allocation, debt relief and cancellation, increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows and harmonized Official Development Assistance (ODA) have not been fully met;

HAVING CONSIDERED the lessons learned from the assessment of the implementation of the Declaration, Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, and Follow Up Mechanism as well as the subsequent proposals for future policy instruments on employment, labour, social protection and productivity, and poverty eradication;

DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY:

- 1. RE-AFFIRM** our determination to reduce Youth and Women unemployment by at least two (2%) percent annually over the next decade;
- 2. COMMIT** to speed up the promotion of decent work in the informal economy and rural sector;
- 3. COMMIT** to address the link between poverty eradication, decent work, social protection and inclusive growth;
- 4. COMMIT** to undertake the necessary reforms of the labour market and the Education/TVET systems;

To this end, we **undertake** to:

COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

- 1. Place** employment creation as an explicit and central objective of our economic and social policies at national, regional and continental levels, for sustainable poverty eradication and with a view to improving the living conditions of our people; exploiting

the link between macroeconomic policy, fiscal, monetary and trade policies; in so doing, we understand our responsibility to engage in social contract as inspiring principle for growth, employment, inclusion and social protection;

4. End the challenge of persistent high levels of underemployment and unemployment in the course of the next decade through speedy and well resourced implementation of the following Key Priority Areas:

- a. Political Leadership, Accountability and Good governance.
- b. Youth and Women Employment.
- c. Social Protection and Productivity for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.
- d. Well-functioning and inclusive Labour Market Institutions.
- e. Labour Migration and Regional Economic Integration.
- f. Partnership and Resource Mobilization.

5. Effect reforms at national, regional and continental levels to address structural constraints and improve business practices and investment incentives, stimulating entrepreneurship, promoting private -public partnerships, encouraging corporate social responsibility, and creating an enabling environment for increased production and decent employment opportunities to achieve inclusive and equitable growth;

6. Place focus on eliminating the huge underemployment and low productivity affecting the workers in the SMEs, the Informal Economy, the Social Economy and the Rural Sector, with the aim to boost wealth and accelerate the enlargement of the middle class in Africa; **develop** an African skills for jobs platforms/initiatives on agriculture, minerals, industrial development and services;

7. Accelerate empowerment of the poor and the vulnerable, particularly in the rural communities and the urban informal economy, the unemployed and the underemployed by enhancing their capacities through education, skills and vocational training and retraining of the labour force, access to financial resources, in particular micro-financing, land, infrastructure, markets, technology and services in order to meaningfully integrate them into the labour market;

8. Take all measures to increase the abiding to fundamental principles and rights in protecting workers and their families from forms of work that are detrimental to current and future generations;

9. Ensure equal opportunities for all, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized groups by:

- a. **Adapting** the TVET systems to the private sector needs to create and utilize job opportunities;
- b. **Empowering** African youth and women through increased access to decent employment as well as innovative approaches to income generating activities,

entrepreneurship, real business opportunities, productivity and access to resources and markets at the national, regional, continental and international levels;

- c. **Facilitating** effective and productive labour migration and free movement of workers within the continent to support the development agenda and promote regional economic integration and cooperation including the Continental Free Trade Area;
- d. **Implementing** the relevant African and international instruments to protect the vulnerable people in their relation to the labour market, such as children, domestic workers, persons with disabilities, older persons, as well as victims of forced labour and human trafficking;
- e. Promoting equal access to employment and working conditions for women;

10. PROMOTE partnership, in particular strong Public-Private Partnership among governments, social partners, civil society and the private sector, and social dialogue at the enterprise, sectoral, national, regional and continental levels and, **SUPPORT** the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union and the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Social Development, Labour and Employment of the AU as principal fora for discussion, partnership, exchange of views between Governments, social partners and civil society for the promotion of productive employment and poverty eradication;

11. TAKE urgent measures to improve the productivity growth level and competitiveness of the Continent to enhance its competitiveness in the global economy and contribute to inclusive growth, targeting the SMEs, Micro Enterprises in the Informal Economy, the rural sector and the public sector;

12. ENHANCE the capacity of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to monitor and evaluate productive employment and labour migration within the framework of regional and inter regional cooperation;

13. STRENGTHEN the capacity of the African Union Commission with human and financial resources, to support Member States, at their request, in the development, implementation and monitoring of national plans of action for the implementation of the strategies for promotion of productive employment and poverty eradication;

14. REQUEST the African Union Commission to work with the African Development Bank on the feasibility of the establishment of an Employment and Social Cohesion Fund as a funding mechanism to support the implementation of this Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development and its Plan of Action with their Follow-Up Mechanism;

15. INCLUDE initiatives on employment creation, social protection extension, social inclusion and poverty eradication as indicators in the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM);

16. PROMOTE an effective and speedy implementation of policies agreed upon and to **MAXIMIZE** their impact on the continent through efforts geared towards poverty eradication and productive employment creation, particularly in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, environmental conservation, cultural enterprises, fisheries, forestry, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry, trade and tourism which have a high potential for job creation and poverty eradication;

16. PURSUE dialogue with our development partners in the true spirit of the Paris Declaration and Accra Call for Action to support Africa's development, and **CALL ON** them to urgently work for the improvement in terms of trade and increase market access of African commodities, services and industrial products, enhance levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and curtail illicit financial flows out of Africa and repatriate illegally acquired funds stashed in foreign banks to their countries of origin;

17. URGE the UN, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral institutions, regional and continental development banks to adopt greater policy coherence and increased support to the continental employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development agenda within the context of our national PRSPs and other development strategies; this involves integrating this Declaration and its Plan of Action in the UNDAF processes at country level;

18. IMPLEMENT the commitments in this Declaration through the Annexed Plan of Action and Mechanism for Follow-up and Evaluation;

19. DESIGNATE Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the principal bodies responsible for the implementation of this Declaration and the Plan of Action; the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission as the coordinator of the implementing mechanism;

20. REQUEST Member States, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to submit biennial progress reports on the status of implementation to the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission and the Commission of the AU to prepare a comprehensive Evaluation Report in 2019 and 2025.