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**EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
ON EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY ERADICATION AND INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT
3-7 SEPTEMBER 2014
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO**

**Theme: “*Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive
Development*”**

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

I- INTRODUCTION

1. In 2004, the African Union (AU) Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa held in Ouagadougou in September 2004 adopted a Declaration, Plan of Action and Follow up Mechanism that committed Member states to place employment at the center of their economic and social policies. The Summit was a culmination of efforts by member states, RECs, tripartite social partners, as well as international partners to address the challenge of employment creation and providing conditions for decent work. It was also a point of departure for more concerted efforts at national, regional and international levels to step up employment creation for poverty alleviation. The Summit adopted three policy documents:

- The Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa
- Plan of Action for the Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation and
- Follow up Mechanism for Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

2. While Member States and RECs are the principally responsible for implementation, UN agencies and other international development partners are expected to adopt greater policy coherence and to increase support for the implementation of the above three policy documents.

3. In 2011, the 19th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council decided (**EX.CL/Dec.648 (XIX)**) to hold a Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC) to evaluate the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation. The 9th Ordinary Session of the AU LSAC (Addis Ababa, April 2013) decided to convene the Special Session in Windhoek, Namibia, from 23 to 25 April 2014 as prelude to an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly in Ouagadougou (Ouaga+10) in September 2014.

4. The Assembly of the AU in its decision (**Assembly/AU/Dec.498 (XXII)**), accepted the offer of the Government of Burkina Faso to host the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly from 3 to 7 September 2014 to assess the progress in implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty alleviation, under the theme “***Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development***”.

5. The Extraordinary Assembly is taking place at the end of the year-long celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU that commenced in 2013 and during which an African Agenda for the next 50 years is being developed (African Agenda 2063). The Assembly also convenes at a time when the international community is engaged in defining the Post 2015 Development Agenda. For example Goal 8 and Targets of the proposed Sustainable Development for the Post 2015 Development Agenda states: “*Promote strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all*” and has clear targets to “halve the number of youth not in employment, education or training by 2020”; and to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities by 2030”. Hence, the Special Session could draw from a wealth of

contemporary thoughts and information to enrich its outcomes, particularly from the Common African Position on Post 2015, as it relates to human capital development, job creation, social protection and inclusive development.

I. SITUATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY 10 YEARS AFTER OUAGADOUGOU 2004

6. According to the Report on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa, 2013¹, though the proportion of employed people living in poverty is declining, Africa, excluding North Africa, is off-track in seeking to halve poverty by 2015. Employment is recognized as a pathway to exiting poverty. Since the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration, Africa has witnessed persistent high levels of unemployment and underemployment affecting in particular the youth and women.

7. Prior to the onset of the global economic and financial crisis in 2008, Africa was one of the fastest growing regions in the World. The continent has since weathered the financial crisis of the past few years and resumed its 'robust' growth. However, Africa's economic growth has been non-inclusive and without jobs. The economic growth has failed in creating the number of quality and decent jobs necessary to absorb the more than 10-12 million youth entering the labour market each year, while inequality remain very high. Furthermore, improvements in the labour market have not been as impressive. Indeed, informality, working poverty and vulnerable employment, as well as deficits in the creation of decent jobs continue to be the norm for most workers in Africa with job losses prevalent in the manufacturing and service sectors. Notwithstanding the continent's faster recovery compared with other regions in the world, Africa still continues to experience meager job content growth. This has led to rising social unrest on the continent with a threat to social and political stability.

8. The continent is also hampered with a huge concentration of the majority of the workforce in the informal economy and rural sector which have low social protection coverage if any, low productivity and low income generation power. Furthermore, despite progress noted, Africa remains the least productive region in the world. Therefore, a major lesson of the global economic and financial crisis of the past few years and the non-inclusive economic growth in Africa has been the need for, and the importance of intervening in the labour market to protect workers and promote better employment outcomes.

II. FOLLOW-UP IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS BY MEMBER STATES

9. The 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration defined and outlined the follow up mechanisms at national, regional and continental levels including precise timetables for implementation and monitoring the process at all levels. The Plan of Action recommended the African Union Commission (AUC) to coordinate the follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action at the Continental level. The follow-up mechanism implicitly determined the lifetime of the

¹Sixth Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, Abidjan, 21-24 March 2013

2004 Ouagadougou process by fixing the follow-up reporting calendar of the Declaration and Plan of Action with a Final Comprehensive Evaluation to take place in 2014, concluding a cycle of 4 Biennial reports (2006, 2008, 2011 and 2013) and first Comprehensive Report (2009).

10. According to the various biennial and the two Comprehensive follow-up reports (2009 and 2014), the Key Priority Areas (KPAs) 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation were at the centre of implementation efforts of Member States. Member States raised the profile of employment promotion in their policy dialogue, including developing or reviewing their employment policies. They enhanced their capacity in employment policies M&E, and follow-up. They were also able to seek for more coherence and coordination in the area of labour and employment.

11. The main challenges in implementing the 2004 Ouagadougou Plan of Action were: (i) the large number of KPAs, Strategies and Recommendations; (ii) the lack of financial resources at all levels; (iii) the weakness of labour market institutions; (iv) the persistent weak political will with concrete commitment; (v) the poor coordination between institutions concerned by the challenges of the labour market. With regard to the mentioned challenges, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should have played a central role in the implementation process of the Plan of Action, but they did not have the required human capacity to so do.

12. The progress assessment made by the Second Follow-Up implementation report (April 2014) did, among others, the following recommendations for the future policy setting: (i) deal with the persistent challenge of underemployment; (ii) streamline the key Priority Areas; (iii) increase level of Political Commitment; (iv) imperative of policy and institutional coherence for better coordination and efficiency; (v) need of more and better coordinated involvement of RECs and international partners; (vi) necessity to reform the vocational and technical education system; (vii) imperative for increased resource mobilization and allocation based on national budgets; (viii) need to strengthen the Follow up Mechanism for Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, with targets and indicators for result-based policy; (ix) need to accelerate social protection extension to informal economy and rural workers; and (x) imperative to develop labour migration and regional economic integration.

13. In the process of implementing the 2004 Ouagadougou PoA, a set of other targeted policy instruments and programmes/projects were developed. Having concern for the fact that Africa is the least productive region in the world, the AU Executive Council engaged in a two-pronged strategy by adopting the Productivity Agenda for Africa coupled with the Social Dialogue Guidelines. In line with the Key Priority Area 4 of the 2004 Ouagadougou PoA, two instruments were enacted: the Programme on Upgrading the Informal Economy and the Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural Workers (SPIREWORK). They reflect the priority of the AU Political Leadership for inclusive growth, equity and respect for rights of all categories of workers in the job market dominated by the informal economy and rural sectors.

14. Furthermore, the 2004 Ouagadougou PoA called for equity in international governance and for facilitating labour migration in Africa. Pursuant to this, the 2006 AU Migration Policy Framework devoted a main chapter to Labour Migration, while the Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC) consider regional labour migration as an important factor in sustainable development and regional integration. At its 9th Ordinary Session in April 2013, the LSAC adopted the Youth and Women Employment Pact including “Promotion of regional and sub-regional labour mobility”. Similarly, a major objective of the AUC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 is to “Promote labour migration to support cross border investment and to fill the skills gap”. A major challenge remains their application. Until now, few resources and consequently little effort has been dedicated to promoting and supporting the actual implementation of the labour migration dimensions of these policy commitments.

15. Labour mobility is still too often impeded instead of facilitated, by absence of implementation of free movement protocol rights and mechanisms, by the prevalence of rigid border formalities, by the abundance of road blocks and security checkpoints on international highways, by malpractices at borders and along transportation routes, and by lack of coherency between labour migration, regional commerce, migration monitoring and security². Indeed, security agenda often limits the broader understanding of labour migration as a fundamental issue for development, regional integration and social welfare. Thus, most Member states remain characterized by a lack of comprehensive national labour migration strategic and policy frameworks (aggravated by the dominance of security concerns at the expense of labour market integration), although several countries are moving in this direction.

16. Ten years after Ouagadougou 2004 and considering its achievements and drawbacks, AU leaders are determined to accelerate job creation in the continent, in particular for youth and women. They have therefore, decided to undertake a comprehensive assessment of ten years of implementation so as to take stock of achievements and challenges faced, as well as concrete actions to be taken in the next decade to create decent employment and accelerate poverty eradication in order to ensure inclusive development. It is in this context that the Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission held in Windhoek (Namibia) from 23 to 25 April 2014 to prepare the grounds for an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of States and Government in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 3rd to 7th September 2014. The Summit is set to adopt a new declaration and plan of action on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development for the next decade, with a follow-up mechanism. These new policy instruments will renew and enhance the continent’s response and efforts towards reversing the persisting trends of unemployment, underemployment and poverty, especially for the poor and most marginalized people such as the poor working in the informal economy and rural sector.

III.OBJECTIVES OF EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATES AND GOVERNMENT ON EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY ERADICATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

² Factors cited in the Final Communiqué of the Mini Summit of Heads of State and Government on the creation of a borderless ECOWAS, Abuja, 2000, and in the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, 2008

17. The overall objectives of the Extraordinary Summit are the following:

- a. High Level critical Evaluation/Assessment of the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action;
- b. Build a common understanding of the current and future challenges of labour markets and policy perspectives at all levels in the continent; and to define concrete strategies including a Public-Private Partnership Framework in response to pervasive youth and women unemployment and underemployment in the continent;
- c. To renew at highest policy level commitment towards accelerating decent jobs creation for sustainable and inclusive development, through adoption of a new policy framework for the next decade on labour, employment and social protection.
- d. To facilitate reflection at the highest level, the issue of Mobility and Labour Migration within the continent as one of the key priority areas for the next ten years.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

18. To achieve the mentioned objectives, the Ouagadougou + 10 policy areas will focus on 6 Key Priority Areas and Goals on:

- 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.

19. Thus, the main expected outcomes of the Extraordinary Summit are the adoption of:

- a. Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development
- b. Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development encapsulating the six key priority areas
- c. Follow-Up Mechanism
- d. Assembly decision on exerting stronger and coordinated efforts towards achieving concrete results on critical issues and challenges of the labour market over the next decade, in particular at national levels
- e. Public-Private Partnership Framework in support of the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development.

V. MANDATE

20. The AU Assembly by Decision No. **Assembly/AU/Dec.498 (XXII)** took note and welcomed the offer by the Government of Burkina Faso to host an Extraordinary Summit on progress assessment of the implementation of the 2004 Ouagadougou

Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in September 2014.

VI. FORMAT OF THE MEETING

21. The meeting will be organized in three phases:

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| a) Session of the Assembly of the Union | 6-7 September 2014 |
| b) Session of the Executive Council | 4 September 2014 |
| c) Session of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) | 3 rd September 2014 |

22. The Summit will be preceded by the following events as contributions to the theme of the Summit:

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| a) Social Partners Forum | 4-5 September 2014 |
| b) Youth and Women Employment Forum | 1-2 September 2014 |

VII. PARTICIPANTS

23. Participants will include national delegates comprising the Presidency; Representatives of Ministries of Labour, Employment, Finance and Economic Planning, Education, Youth, Women, Social partners, Regional Economic Communities (RECs); Civil Society Organizations and NGOs, the UN and its Specialized Agencies; Development Partners; the AU Commission and other AU Organs and Programmes, academicians, grassroots women, private sector and representatives of professional bodies amongst others.

VIII. WORKING LANGUAGES

24. The working languages for the Extraordinary Assembly are: English, Arabic, French and Portuguese.

IX. CONTACT

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