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**SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
23-25 APRIL 2013
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

LSAC/MIN//REPORT (SS)

THEME: « Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development »

REPORT OF THE MINISTERS' MEETING

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LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, 25 APRIL 2014**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministers' Meeting of the Special Session of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSACSS) was held at the Windhoek Country Club Resort, Windhoek, Namibia, on April 2014. The theme of the Conference was "***Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development***".

ATTENDANCE

2. The Experts' Meeting was attended by Delegates and Social Partners from the following AU Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. The following AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities, Inter-Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations and cooperating partners were represented: Business Africa, Conférence Inter-africaine de la Prévoyance Sociale (CIPRES), World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), Southern African **Trade Union** Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), International Labour Office (ILO), IOE, International Trade Union Confederation – ITUC-AFRICA, Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), International Organization on Migration (IOM) Intergovernmental Authority Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Commission of Central African States (ECCAS), European Union, UNFPA, JSSO, Embassy of Palestine, EU Delegation to the AU, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Agenda Item 1: OPENING

4. Hon. Doreen Sioka, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Republic of Namibia in her remarks as Programme Director, welcomed participants to the meeting. She underlined the many challenges the African continent is facing, especially in respect to unemployment, under employment, poverty. She stressed the need for continental integration to address these fundamental challenges and achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa.

5. Mr. Yousif Abdelkarim, Workers' Representative, in his opening statement, stressed the importance of protecting workers at the event of heavy job loss, looming poverty, unemployment and underemployment. He noted that creating more jobs through investing in labour intensive sectors, strengthening education system, promoting health

world of work, addressing HIVAIDS, eradicating poverty, extending social protection and ensuring basic needs should be the core priorities of African member states. Mr. Abdelkarim highlighted the importance of tripartism to achieve decent work and social protection, which are sine qua non conditions for inclusive development.

6. Ms Jacqueline Mugo, Employers' Representative, in her address, highlighted the substantial role employers play in job creation and the fight against poverty overall in inclusive and sustainable development and the importance of involving employers in implementing the Ouagadougou Action Plan. She indicated that creating more jobs for youth and women will help address the challenges of irregular migration. The representative of Business Africa requested that African countries invest more in job creation, facilitation of skill transfer and to create an environment more conducive for business and enterprise creation and development to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

7. ILO Regional Director for Africa, Mr. Aeneas Chuma, in his opening statement, stressed the strength of the partnership between the ILO and the African Union Commission in implementing the Ouagadougou Action Plan. He recalled the imperatives of achieving decent employment, social protection and social dialogue and a better governance of labour migration. The Regional Director indicated that implementing the Social Protection Floor, enhancing decent employment among youth and women and strengthening better governance of labour migration and its development potential are quintessential in achieving inclusive growth, sustainable development and integration of the African continent.

8. The Vice Chairperson of the 9th Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, Hon. Nicholas Goche, Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Republic of Zimbabwe, in his opening statement, indicated that African countries should use their natural resources to create more jobs, enhance social protection for workers, especially the informal economy and rural workers and achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

9. His Excellency, Dr. Moustapha Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union Commission, in his opening statement, stated that poverty and its ramifications such as unemployment and underemployment and lack of social protection remain gravest burden to the African continent. The Commissioner highlighted that African Union member states should strengthen their efforts towards structural transformation of Africa, poverty eradication and inclusive development. He stressed that strengthening industrialization, agriculture and food security would have trickle down effects in enhancing livelihoods, more employment creation and inclusive growth. He further mentioned the need to enhance labour market institutions and to spur integrated labour markets for an effective governance of labour migration and regional and continental integration. The Commissioner concluded with the recommendation that member states increase budget allocation for an effective implementation of Ouagadougou Action Plan.

10. In delivering his keynote address, the Guest of Honour, His Excellency, Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, indicated that promoting decent and sustainable employment, addressing poverty, unemployment and achieving prosperity and inclusive development should be considered as key development priorities for the continent. His Excellency, the President, noted that in spite of economic growth, progress have been slow in the continent, evidenced by massive unemployment, underemployment, lack of social protection and the poverty trap. His Excellency, the President, stressed the complexity of unemployment in Africa and the increasing vulnerability of the working population especially in the informal economy and rural sector and the need to address the challenges in implementing the Ouagadougou Action Plan to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development in the continent.

11. His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Namibia underscored the need for a more comprehensive and targeted approach to address the fundamental challenges of poverty, unemployment and underemployment especially among women and men, and lack of social protection in the world of work, especially among informal economy and rural workers. His Excellency, the President, emphasized the importance of achieving effective industrialization, promoting renewable energy, green jobs, small enterprises development, transformation of the informal economy, rural development and to strengthen workforce for inclusive development. The Guest of Honour featured some of the recent initiatives of the government of the Republic of Namibia, among them, the New Employment Policy (2013-2017), the establishment of the Small and Medium Enterprise Bank, the National Youth Credit Scheme, the Social Security Development Fund, among others. His Excellency, the President, concluded that we need to take lessons from the past and envision comprehensive and workable solutions for decent and sustainable employment and inclusive development.

12. Minister of Labour, Employment and Youth of the Republic of Burkina Faso, gave the vote of thanks on behalf of all participants. He thanked the Government of the Republic of Namibia for the kind and warm hospitality and the outstanding facilities provided for the meeting. He praised the consensual spirit and commitment of the Government of the Republic of Namibia to host this important meeting, in view of the Ouagadougou + 10 Summit to be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Agenda Item 2: PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A.) Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work

13. The meeting adopted the agenda (LSC/MIN/1(SS)) and programme of work (LSC/MIN/Prog/2(SS)) for the meeting, including one item under agenda item 7 on Specialized Technical Committees and Agenda 2063.

Agenda Item 3: POLICY ORIENTATION PANEL DISCUSSION OF MINISTERS AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

14. The Ministerial panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Aeneas Chuma, ILO Regional Director for Africa.

15. The Minister of Labour of Cameroon introduced the theme on the financing of labour policies. He stated the example of his country where a percentage of the wage bill of the private sector is deducted to finance the National Employment Fund which is the public operator of labour policies and implement all job creation programmes. He stated the experiences of other countries like Senegal that have a public-private partnership model of the State-Employer National Convention through which the private sector contributes to the financing of the access programme to enterprises for young graduates as a complement to financing by the government. Several States grant budgetary allocations to finance various job creation programmes for the youth and women in particular.

16. He mentioned a few challenges which are making job financing difficult, such as coherence in the elaboration of policies, formulation of programme costs and budgets and the monitoring-evaluation system. He concluded by underscoring the fact that efforts towards ensuring good governance are necessary.

17. The Minister of Labour of Sierra Leone introduced the theme on inclusive development. He pointed out that Africa had one of the highest unemployment and under-employment rates in the world with a substantial proportion of working age population. He laid emphasis on the importance of expenditure in order to fight against exclusion and inequalities by enhancing access by vulnerable and low-income persons to basic social services such as education, health, social protection, training, electricity, water, sanitation and housing. It is imperative that Africa speed up its inclusive social-economic development with job creation and social protection in order to benefit from demographic dividends. Africa needs a strong private sector and to optimise the exploitation of its natural and human resources for the socio-economic transformation necessary for economic development that accompanies social progress. A highly qualified workforce is indispensable to meet the needs of all the social and economic sectors.

18. The theme on labour migration was presented by the Minister of labour of Burkina Faso. He recalled the three main trends of African labour migration. The majority of migrant workers are found among the intra and inter-regional labour influx within the continent. Beyond Africa, the new trend is targeting Asia and America. He underscored the vulnerability and fragility of the majority of the migrants who come from the informal economy with low incomes and without sufficient social protection. It is a situation that necessitates the intervention of Member States, Regional Economic Communities and the AUC. Political instruments have been formulated at continental and regional levels (ECOWAS, SADC) with a view to making migration more useful for countries and individuals. He deplored the fact that policies are not often implemented. He mentioned the AUC-ILO-IMO-ECA joint programme on labour migration and regional economic integration. He concluded by proposing three thrusts of intervention: strengthening regional integration by the implementation of legal and political mechanisms; strengthening the capacities of the institutions of the ministry of labour at national and

regional levels; establishing a real technical, political and financial partnership at all levels

19. The Minister of Youth of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Anatole Collinet MAKOSSO, briefed the meeting on the expectations of African youth in the area of employment, as was clearly expressed during the high-level inter-generation summits of 2011, 2013 and 2014. According to him, the youth constituted an asset for the accelerated socio-economic development of Africa. He called for the re-consideration of relations with international and multinational partners, exploitation of job creation opportunities in the agricultural sector, improving the quality of education in order to align it with the labour market, establish a fund for young entrepreneurship, associate the youth in decision-making. He concluded by expressing the wish that ministers of youths be associated with the Ouaga +10 process and participate in the activities of the Ouagadougou Summit in September 2014.

20 During the discussions Nigeria, Swaziland, Seychelles, Niger, Senegal Comoros and Ethiopia shared their experiences. They highlighted the plight of jobless youth living with HIV-AIDS, the role of economic and social reforms in job creation, the importance of improving the access of the informal and rural economy, the need to build the capacity of public employment agencies, the importance of mobilizing domestic resources to finance employment policies, the coherence of employment policies, the need to reflect of the principle of reciprocity regarding the issue of work permits in order to reinforce the integration of the labour markets in Africa and with those of the other regions of the world.

21. H.E Bience Gawanas, former Commissioner of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission recalled Ouagadougou 2004 which was historic in the area of employment and poverty reduction, with the adoption of a Declaration, a plan of action and a follow-up mechanism. She stressed that in the face of the non-implementation of the continental policies, the Heads of State and Government had for the first time backed their policy instrument with a follow-up mechanism in order to realize the objectives of Ouagadougou 2004. She affirmed that ten years after Ouagadougou 2004, and in spite of the progress made, the fight against unemployment, under-employment and social exclusion was still a political imperative for the continent. She mentioned the Social Framework Policy for Africa which seeks to mainstream economic development and the social progress of the population.

22. She emphasized the importance of the informal economy and the rural sectors as the sectors that could massively absorb the unemployed active population, especially the youth and women. Income security and social protection should be among the priorities of the continent for the next ten years and should also be at the heart of the Ouaga + 10 to ensure inclusive development and social equity.

23. At the end of the panel discussions the moderator re-capped the various interventions and remarks relating to the priority strategies for the next ten years within the framework of Ouaga+10.

Agenda Item 4: BRIEFING ON THE PREPARATION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT

24. This agenda item was presented by Hon Vincent ZAKANE the Minister of Labour of Burkina Faso who started by expressing his appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia for hosting the Special Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission. The Minister recalled the adoption of the Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration, Plan of Action and Follow up Mechanism on Employment and Poverty Alleviation as a milestone in the fight against poverty and unemployment. He expressed his Government's honour in hosting the Ouagadougou plus 10 Special Summit ten years on. He then outlined the preparation for the Summit scheduled for September 2014.

25. The Hon Minister noted that the Government of Burkina Faso and the AUC had agreed on the roadmap for the meeting, wherein the PRC (Permanent Representative Council) would meet on 3 September 2014, Special Session of the Executive Council on 4 September 2014 which would include the participation of Ministers of Labour and Finance. The Extraordinary Summit would then take place on 6 and 7 September 2014. Pre-summit events would be organized by ILO and Social Partners the outcomes which would feed into the recommendations of the Summit.

26. Hon. Zakane concluded that the summit would involve social partners as well as technical and financial partners. At the national level, the Government of Burkina Faso has taken a series of measures including establishment of a National Organizing Committee composed of government officials and civil society to facilitate the logistics. Further Information would be posted on a special website for the summit as soon as possible and also disseminated to participants in due time.

Agenda Item 5: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS' REPORT

Consideration of the Second Comprehensive Follow-Up Report on the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation (Ouagadougou, September 2004)

27. The Special Ministerial Session adopted the Report and made the following **decisions** for insertion into the Report:

- Ministries of Labour and Employment should collaborate with other line ministries, such as education, in the development and implementation of effective policies;
- Ministries of Labour and Employment should liaise with the public and private sector to identify areas of projected growth in industry and the corresponding

labour market needs so as to plan accordingly and bridge the gap between skills required and the demands of the job market;

- Ministries of Labour and Employment should be the focal point in reporting on implementation of Ouagadougou 2004, and for future reporting on Ouagadougou 2014;
- The linkages between economic and social dialogue for inclusive growth, social cohesion and effective employment policies should be strengthened;
- High labour intensity sectors should be promoted and Industrialization should be accelerated as it remains essential to socio-economic development in Africa through job creation and increased productivity;
- The mismatch between the education sector outputs and skills required in the labour market should be addressed;
- The gaps between skills required and the jobs available in the labour market should be bridged;
- There should be a promotion of branding goods as 'made in Africa';
- The report should further elaborate on the role of the private sector in job creation;
- Restructuring of the report to include achievements, gaps identified, challenges encountered and lessons learned, should be considered;
- The report should include a matrix on implementation and follow-up and quantify the results of implementation;
- The recommendations on resource mobilization should be strengthened in the report and information on the activities of the AUC in relation to resource mobilization should be provided, as well as on the support of international partners;
- Governance and accountability should be underscored as crucial in realizing the objectives of Ouagadougou 2004 with the promotion of social dialogue as a key element;
- The participation of social partners in the consultation process leading up to Ouagadougou plus 10 should be strengthened and facilitated;
- The national reports should be validated at national level with participation of social partners before submission to the AUC;

- Strengthening female entrepreneurship for more gender-sensitive employment policies should come out clearly in the report;
- Mention should be made of the need to facilitate access to credit to small entrepreneurs to enhance job creation;
- Acknowledging the role of professional education, as an engine for employment;
- Operationalizing regional integration for more intra-African trade and business that will spur more job creation should be emphasized;
- The report should recommend the determination of viable indicators to measure progresses in employment and social protection;
- Member States were requested to submit their final inputs into the report by 15 July 2014 latest;
- Some Member States offered to assist the Commission in the consolidation of the Comprehensive Report after the 15 July 2014 deadline.

Consideration of the Draft reviewed Declaration, Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, and the Follow-Up Mechanism

28. The special session proposed a few amendments to the three documents for insertion before presentation to the policy organs for the Ouagadougou Summit in September 2014.

Briefing on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa

29. The following **decisions** were taken with regard to Labour Governance for Development and Integration in Africa:

- National and regional policies on labour migration should include not only the lowly skilled migrants but also highly skilled migrants;
- There is need for the recognition of education by harmonizing the education frameworks and realigning the educational systems in Member States to meet the demands of the labour markets;
- There is a need for synergy among actors at national and regional levels and between migrants sending and destination countries in order to ensure adequate protection of migrants rights including access to social security and portability of social benefits.

Briefing on employment of persons with disabilities (PWDs)

30. The meeting **decided** the following regarding the employment of PWDs:

- Called upon Member States to make educational institutions and workplaces accessible both in terms of infrastructure and equipment, for persons with disabilities;
- Requested that punitive measures be included in the Protocol against workplaces that discriminate against PWDs, as well as measures to reward those workplaces that support PWDs;
- Urged Member States to sign, ratify and domesticate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the forthcoming AU Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Requested the AU Commission to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to Member States in the formulization of disability inclusive policies, programmes and legislation.

Preparation of common position on agenda items of the 103rd ILC, June 2014:

- a) **Election of the ILO Governing Body**
- b) **1986 Amendment to the ILO Constitution**

The transformation of the informal to the formal economy, contribution to the ILC two years standard setting discussion from 2014

31. The special session:

- Took note of the decision of the ILO Governing Body (GB) on the question of Privileges and Immunities granted to officials of the secretariats of Employers' and Workers' groups of the GB and expressed support for the position of the African Group in Geneva on identity cards for worker and employer delegates of the GB;
- Endorsed the position of the African Group in Geneva that issues relating to sexual orientation not be placed on the agenda of the GB;
- Supported the position of the African Group in Geneva in relation to Article 37 (2) of the ILO constitution:
- Allocated the floating deputy seat to East Africa for the GB term 2014-2017;
- Endorsed the candidature of South Africa as Chair of the Committee on transitions of the informal to the formal economy of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC);

- Endorsed the candidature of Zimbabwe as Chair of the Credentials Committee of the 103rd ILC
- Endorsed the following candidatures for seats on the GB for the term 2014 – 2017:
 - Southern Africa: Zimbabwe (regular), Botswana (deputy) and Lesotho (Deputy)
 - Central Africa: Angola (regular) and Chad (deputy)
 - North Africa: Algeria (regular) and Mauritania (deputy)
 - East Africa: Kenya (regular) Sudan (regular) Ethiopia (deputy) Tanzania (deputy)
 - West Africa: Ghana (regular) Mali (deputy) Burkina Faso (deputy)
- Endorsed Zimbabwe as the next Coordinator of the African Group in Geneva
- Requested nominations for Spokespersons of the African Group for the following committees of the 103rd ILC:
 - Supplementing the Forced Labour Convention, 1930:
 - Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy:
 - Recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment:
- Noted the information relating to the turn of the Africa Region to chair the GB for the term 2014 – 2015; and requested the six (6) incoming titular members of the ILO Governing Board to consult and endorse the candidate for the Chair of the Governing Board.
- Encourage all Member States that have not yet done so, to ratify, as a matter of urgency, the 1986 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution;
- Request that the matter of distribution of seats on the GB be placed on the agenda of next meeting of the LSAC, as proposed by Cameroon, Gabon and Guinea, and that preparatory discussions commence by the African Group in Geneva;

<p>Agenda Item 6: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSEMBLY DECISION ON SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES</p>
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32. The meeting made the following **decisions**:

- A modality for Ministers of Labour to meet annually in April to prepare for the ILC should be considered.;
- Rules of procedure of the LSAC were outdated and need to be considered for review when STC Rules and Procedures are developed.

Agenda Item 7: Any other Business

(i) African Union Agenda 2063

33. The meeting was informed that the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States held during the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the OAU/AU adopted a Solemn Declaration which amongst others pledged their commitment to make progress in Africa in the next 50 years in the following eight key areas:

- African Identity and Renaissance
- Struggle against Colonialism and Self Determination
- Pursuing the Integration Agenda
- Social and Economic Development
- Peace and Security
- Democratic Governance
- Determining Africa's Destiny
- Africa's Place in the World

34. The Assembly directed that the AUC with support from AfDB, UNECA and NEPAD provide the leadership in translating these ideals into reality through a people-driven Agenda that would lead to the realization of the AU Vision of “*an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the world*”

35. The special session took note of the AU Agenda 2063 and requested that copies of the draft be forwarded to all Member States for inputs. The Ministers were assured copies would be sent but in addition, Member States were expected to organize national consultations for inputs into the Agenda 2063.

(ii) Statement by the State of Palestine

36. The special session noted the statement and proposed resolution by the representative of the State of Palestine to the Experts' meeting who appreciated the

support of the African Union and noted the importance of the Special Session to Palestinian workers. He appreciated the labour policies of the AU, which he informed also guides them, as poverty and unemployment have increased to 80% in Palestine. The representative further requested that the LSAC Special Session render its support to the proposed decision on the situation of Palestine, as the EU has done.

Agenda Item 8: CONSIDERATION OF THE MINISTERS' REPORT

37. Having examined and endorsed the report of the Experts with some changes, the conference adopted the report as theirs subject to the corrections to be incorporated. The Special Session entrusted the finalization of the report to AUC.

Agenda Item 9: CLOSING CEREMONY

38. The Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union Commission, H.E Mustapha Kaloko, in his closing statement, addressed his special thanks to the Government of the Republic of Namibia for the success of the meeting and for the warm hospitality. He underlined the necessity for the implementation, follow – up and monitoring of the recommendations. The Commissioner alluded to the challenge of resource mobilization. Addressing the fundamental challenge of poverty and its ramification by mobilizing enough resources should be a key priority, he noted. He invited the distinguished national, regional and international stakeholders to continue the discussion during the Ouagadougou Summit to be held in September (Ouaga + 10).

39. The Chairperson of the special session, in his closing remarks, welcomed the hospitality of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the excellent spirit that have prevailed during the meeting. He encouraged member states to strengthen their efforts towards poverty eradication, employment, social protection, inclusive growth and sustainable development. Hon. Nicholas Goche addressed his compliments to the African Union Commission alongside its international partners for their constant efforts, which have led to the success of this meeting.

40. The Ministerial meeting was then adjourned.