

**Economic Commission for Africa
Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender**

Fifth session

Addis Ababa, 2 and 3 November 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda*

Opening of the session**Terms of reference of the Committee on Social Policy,
Poverty and Gender****I. Background**

1. In 2012, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) embarked on a reform process that led to changes in its mandate, structure, programmes and intergovernmental mechanisms. The changes were endorsed in resolution 908 (XLVI), adopted at the forty-sixth session of ECA, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 25 and 26 March 2013 as part of the sixth Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance. The same mandate is derived from decision 450 (XX) of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, adopted at its twentieth ordinary session, in January 2013, in which it endorsed refocusing ECA to support its transformation agenda.

2. The reform further revised intergovernmental mechanisms to ensure that the subsidiary bodies were congruent with the new programme priorities and structure. In this regard, the following intergovernmental mechanisms of the Commission were maintained: (a) the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and its Committee of Experts; (b) the intergovernmental committees of experts of the subregional offices; (c) the Committee on Gender and Social Development; (d) the Committee on Sustainable Development; (e) the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration; and (f) the Committee on Statistics.

3. Between 2013 and 2019, the Committee on Gender and Social Development served as the intergovernmental body guiding the work of two subprogrammes: subprogramme 6 (Gender and women in development) and subprogramme 9 (Social and development policy). This was following the restructuring of the commission where social development became sub-program 9 of the ECA and to greater coherence and results in the social policy space. During this period, the Committee convened twice: in 2015 and in 2017.

4. In 2019, following a restructuring of ECA in line with the overall reform of the United Nations Secretariat, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development endorsed a review of the intergovernmental structure of ECA pursuant to its resolutions 943 (XLIX) and

* E/ECA/CSPPG/5/1.



957 (LI). The Conference of Ministers recalled its resolutions 908 (XLVI), of 26 March 2013, and 943 (XLIX), of 5 April 2016, in which it called for a thorough review of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission, including its intergovernmental committees of experts, to realign the structure and organize sectoral subsidiary organs.¹ Consequently, the Committee of Gender and Social Development was replaced with the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender. This Committee combined the former Committee on Women in Development, which had existed since 1979, and the Committee on Human and Social Development, which had existed since 2009.

Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 25 and 26 March 2019, Marrakech, Morocco

In its resolution 966 (LII) on the review of the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Africa pursuant to its resolution 943 (XLIX) and resolution 957 (LI), the Conference took note of the review of the intergovernmental structure, its findings and recommendations and endorsed the following adjustments to the intergovernmental structure of ECA:

(a) To organize the sectoral subsidiary organs as follows:

- (i) Committee on Economic Governance;
- (ii) Committee on Statistics and Data;
- (iii) Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology;
- (iv) Committee on Climate Change, Blue Economy, Agriculture and Natural Resource Management;
- (v) Committee on Social Development, Poverty and Gender;

(b) To change the name of the subregional intergovernmental committees of experts to the intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts, with a view to ensuring effective policy uptake and greater participation of senior government officials in the committees (E/ECA/CM/52/2, annex).

II. Role of the Committee

5. The role of the Committee on Gender and Social Development – the former name of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – was defined in paragraph 18A.45 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014–2015 (A/68/6 (Sect. 18)), which reads as follows:

Functional and sectoral subsidiary organs of the Commission

Committee on Gender and Social Development

The role of the Committee on Gender and Social Development, as an advisory forum of experts and policymakers, is to provide guidance to the Commission in its work of promoting equitable and inclusive human and social development in Africa, with particular focus on gender, employment, population and youth development, social protection and urbanization. The Committee reviews follow-up activities pertaining to global conferences and regional action programmes in the areas of social development, including the global and regional platforms for action on the advancement of women. It also reviews major trends and issues of regional interest regarding human and social development. The Committee meets biennially.

¹ E/ECA/CM/52/2/Rev. 1.

6. More specifically, the Committee, with a focus on ECA subprogrammes 9 (poverty, inequality and social policy) and 6 (gender equality and women's empowerment) serves to:

- (a) Provide guidance and expert opinion on the priorities and activities of ECA;
- (b) Review the past activities and future programmes of ECA;
- (c) Provide recommendations to strengthen ECA programmes to better serve its members and the regional economic communities;
- (d) Provide policy guidance to ensure that ECA activities are relevant to meeting the region's development needs and addressing its critical development challenges;
- (e) Advise on priorities for the implementation and review of the regional and international policy agendas in relation to the work of ECA;
- (f) Provide direction on ECA partnerships with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and development partners.

III. Composition of the Committee

7. The Committee is composed of the following:

- (a) Experts from relevant ministries and departments of members of ECA;
- (b) Representatives of the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities, as observers;
- (c) Representatives of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as observers;
- (d) Representatives of ECA, as convener and secretariat of the Committee.

IV. Bureau of the Committee

8. The Chair of the Bureau should be present at the annual meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

9. Members of the Bureau are expected to attend statutory meetings in their subregions to ensure that gender and social development issues are addressed effectively at the subregional level.

V. Election of the Bureau

10. The geographical representation of each ECA subregion (see annex), as well as language and gender balance, are taken into account in the election of officers.

11. The election of the Bureau of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender will be held during its fifth session, on 2 November 2023. A new Bureau is elected every two years. Members of the Committee and the secretariat of the Committee (ECA) will consult on the election of the Bureau. Nominations are to be made by members of the Committee.

Annex

List of countries by subregion

Central Africa

Cameroon
Chad
Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Sao Tome and Principe

East Africa:

Burundi
Comoros
Central African Republic
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Ethiopia
Eritrea
Kenya
Madagascar
Rwanda
Seychelles
Somalia
South Sudan
United Republic of Tanzania
Uganda

North Africa

Algeria
Egypt
Libya
Mauritania
Morocco
Sudan
Tunisia

Southern Africa

Angola
Botswana
Eswatini
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
South Africa
Zambia
Zimbabwe

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cabo Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo