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

Addis Ababa, 2 and 3 November 2023

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Consideration and adoption of conclusions and recommendations of the fifth session**

### Draft recommendations

#### **I. Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – reporting and discussion [agenda item 4]**

##### **A. Subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy**

1. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Members of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) should:
  - (i) Strengthen their efforts to reduce poverty and inequality to meet Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 10 by 2030 by leveraging ECA knowledge products and tools;
  - (ii) Strengthen their commitment to policies aimed at fostering inclusion and sustainable development through poverty reduction and strengthening social protection policies;
  - (iii) Enhance the implementation of policies and targeted interventions to meet the needs of various population groups, in particular those that are at the greatest risk of being left behind;
  - (iv) Build their technical capacity to launch and implement policies that accelerate decent job creation, productivity and service delivery, while placing inclusion and equality in African cities at the core of those efforts;
- (b) ECA should:
  - (i) Provide best practices and tools for adapting global and regional goals to local conditions, including by mapping global and regional policies to local priorities and initiatives;
  - (ii) Carry out analytical work, provide its members with policy and advisory support and capacity-building assistance, develop tools and convene policy dialogues, all in support of national strategies to alleviate and eradicate poverty and reduce inequality,

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\* E/ECA/CSPPG/5/L.1.



with a focus on such areas as urbanization, social protection, population and development, migration and ageing;

(iii) Provide technical support to its members to assist them in building their capacity to develop indicators and baseline data for poverty measurement;

(iv) Continue to support its members in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration by engaging with specialized agencies of the United Nations, the private sector and all other stakeholders, so as to leverage emerging continental opportunities and technological solutions to improve policy uptake with a view to increasing resilience;

(v) Work with strategic partners to strengthen country-level social protection policies and capacity to respond to three concurrent crises (relating to finance, energy and food) in Africa;

(vi) Provide, through the African Centre for Statistics, technical and capacity-building assistance to national statistical offices in the use of national data sources to measure and analyse poverty, inequality, vulnerability and migration;

(vii) Focus on producing analytical work on issues relating to productivity, informality, inequality and the environment in the context of rapid urbanization in Africa;

(viii) Increase partnership with African institutions, experts and universities to develop and implement policy reforms and strategies to create and expand fiscal space, improve municipal financial performance and increase resilience;

(ix) Undertake research on the economic cost, social consequences and environmental impact for its members of unplanned rapid urbanization on the continent.

## **B. Subprogramme 6 – gender equality and women’s empowerment**

2. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Consider fully costing Sustainable Development Goal 5 in a comprehensive and integrated manner to account for all the major activities planned by various line ministries towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(ii) Enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, location and socioeconomic status, to facilitate an accurate assessment of the realization of gender equality in all areas covered by the international and regional instruments to which they are a party;

(iii) Take advantage of the technical assistance offered by ECA, which is readily available upon request through the Office of the Executive Secretary;

- (iv) Update national data so as to be in a position to take advantage of the array of ECA indices that can be used to assess progress in achieving commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- (v) Share good practices to improve the well-being of women and girls across Africa, especially in terms of migration and poverty;
- (b) ECA should:
  - (i) Continue to support its members in using the African Gender and Development Index to assess progress in achieving commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
  - (ii) Compile and disseminate a list of good practices across Africa in terms of support structures and legislation on gender-related issues;
  - (iii) Support the dissemination of research and good practices relating to gender equality and women's empowerment through capacity development, technical assistance and mainstreaming gender perspectives in various sectors;
  - (iv) Promote digital literacy as a means of addressing women's empowerment;
  - (v) Provide further clarity and share information on the means through which its members can seek the technical support it offers;
  - (vi) Track national programmes more consistently and identify examples of and disseminate information on good practices, with a view to reducing the resources required by and increasing the efficiency of national programmes;
  - (vii) Provide technical assistance to its members in order to enhance their capacity to produce high-quality gender statistics that can be used to monitor progress and guide the selection of countries for interventions;
  - (viii) Take full advantage of information made available by its members and facilitate the sharing of good practices for possible adaptation and adoption by other members.

## **II. Parallel sessions [agenda item 5]**

### **A. Digital technical and vocational education and training: enhancing the skills of women and girls across Africa**

3. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Members and partners of ECA should:
  - (i) Provide education and training and extracurricular opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to students at an early age, including through technical vocational education and training on subjects relating to the digital sector;
  - (ii) Develop programmes and step up current efforts to change gender stereotypes and encourage girls and young women to choose such non-traditional fields of study and professions as

science, technology, computer studies and engineering, including through the use of quotas and affirmative action in recruitment and hiring practices, and the distribution of bursaries, grants, scholarships and stipends to reduce financial barriers to education and training;

(iii) Strengthen the collection and management of data and statistics on the use of digital technology and participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location, socioeconomic status and other relevant factors, to facilitate the analysis of gender gaps, with a view to supporting evidence-based policy action to address those gaps;

(iv) Form national coordination mechanisms comprising core ministries, departments and agencies with a view to institutionalizing efforts to bolster the digital skills of women and girls across Africa by leveraging existing resources, including as part of the ECA programme on the topic;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Develop a deeper understanding of the role of technical and vocational education and training on subjects relating to the digital sector in attaining gender equality and women's empowerment and in accelerating digital and economic transformation in Africa;

(ii) Support its members in developing policies and strategies aimed at promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, training and job opportunities for women, with a focus on digital literacy and the use of technology;

(iii) Support its members in lowering the cultural, financial, social and institutional barriers that women and girls face to their participation in the digital sector and to gaining access to digital devices and to education and training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(iv) Promote the safe, responsible, inclusive and productive use of digital tools, products and services by girls and young women, emphasizing online learning opportunities;

(v) Expand the roll-out of the ECA programme on bolstering the digital skills of women and girls across Africa to additional countries in the region;

(vi) Facilitate the sharing of good practices relating to initiatives that are focused on digital technologies, including by organizing exchange programmes, conducting case studies and developing guidelines and tools.

## **B. Reducing poverty through skills development**

4. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Introduce programmes that encourage the enrolment and retention of girls in school by, among other things, removing both direct and indirect costs associated with education, adopting compulsory schooling policies and improving school facilities and infrastructure;

- (ii) Strengthen private sector involvement in skills development schemes to minimize skills mismatches and ensure that the skills developed are aligned with sectoral demand;
  - (iii) Allocate additional organizational, human, technical and financial resources for skills development;
  - (iv) Implement reforms in the education sector in order to provide employees with the skills they need to be competitive at the national, regional and international levels, with a view to reducing unemployment and poverty;
- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Review its strategies to support its members in providing young people with a solid educational foundation and employable skills, so as to raise productivity, enhance resilience to shocks and prevent a relapse into poverty;
  - (ii) Support its members in establishing education and training funds aimed at long-term human resources development;
  - (iii) Also support its members in developing and implementing legal frameworks that recognize prior learning and skills acquired through informal means;
  - (iv) Establish a continental resource mobilization strategy to raise funds to finance the skills development programmes of its members.

**C. Reviewing the *Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines* as a tool to foster the adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goals to the local level**

5. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Members of ECA should:
- (i) Expand the adoption of voluntary local reviews in Africa with a view to accelerating progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;
  - (ii) Strengthen the collection and management of data and statistics to make the conduct of voluntary local reviews more efficient and effective;
  - (iii) Adopt a participatory approach to conducting voluntary local reviews by involving local authorities, universities, civil society organizations, government officials at all levels and other stakeholders;
  - (iv) Allocate adequate organizational, human, technical and financial resources to voluntary local reviews;
- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Increase the technical and financial capacity of stakeholders in African countries to conduct voluntary local reviews;
  - (ii) Foster peer learning through knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices on voluntary local reviews;

(iii) Update tools to improve the conduct of voluntary local reviews through evidence-based practice;

(iv) Strengthen the capacity of its members to collect data on urbanization needs at the local level.

### **III. General discussion on the theme of the fifth session “Building new social contracts in Africa: choices to fulfil development aspirations” [agenda item 6]**

#### **A. Presentation of the issues paper**

6. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Build new social contracts among the Government, people, civil society and the private sector that integrate employment, sustainable development and social protection on the basis of equality and non-discrimination;

(ii) Put people at the centre of policies and ensure that their needs are met;

(iii) Prepare to manage successfully the four global megatrends of demographic transition, urbanization, climate change and digitalization;

(iv) Improve policy coherence and adopt systems thinking to ensure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Disseminate knowledge among its members on techniques for building a new social contract in Africa through innovative solutions that reduce poverty and inequality, promote gender equality and increase inclusion;

(ii) Assist its members in building the technical capacity to develop new social contracts, with a focus on new entry points and better integration between social policies and urban policies, including through the increased use of behavioural science.

#### **B. Breakout sessions**

#### **C. Reporting back on the breakout sessions and discussion on the way forward**

##### **1. Gender equality and women’s empowerment**

7. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members and partners of ECA should:

(i) Introduce programmes that encourage the enrolment and retention of girls in school by, among other things, removing both direct and indirect costs associated with education – for example by reinforcing free education, school feeding programmes and cash transfers – reinforcing compulsory education, improving the

quality of teaching, improving school facilities and infrastructure, and recruiting more female teachers;

(ii) Develop programmes and step up current efforts to encourage girls and young women to choose non-traditional fields of study and professions in the areas of science, technology, computer studies and engineering;

(iii) Strengthen the collection and management of data and statistics disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location, socioeconomic status and other factors relating to participation in and progression through the education system and the quality of education;

(iv) Put in place adequate infrastructure, such as boarding schools, to accommodate girls from rural areas;

(v) Improve the quality of education to better match the requirements of the job market;

(vi) Implement gender-responsive budgeting to address gender issues holistically, along with monitoring and auditing of such budgeting to ensure that it addresses gender gaps in areas of strategic priority;

(vii) Implement programmes to raise awareness among parents and community leaders of the importance of educating girls, with a view to changing the cultural biases and social norms that impede the educational achievement of girls;

(viii) Adopt new measures and strengthen current ones to prevent gender-based abuse and sexual violence at school and to ensure that perpetrators are adequately punished;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Enhance the knowledge and capacity of African policymakers to create an environment that enables greater participation by women and girls in non-traditional fields of study and professions in the areas of science, technology, computer studies and engineering;

(ii) Share good practices with its members on financing programmes that are aimed at ensuring that young women and girls enrol in education and stay in school;

(iii) Support its members in implementing gender-responsive budgeting;

(iv) Establish a regional gender-equality observatory to monitor gender issues.

## 2. Poverty and social policy

8. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Rethink the social contract with a view to creating a symbiotic relationship between governments and people in Africa and fostering more sustainable and inclusive development;

(ii) Explore opportunities and strengthen efforts to mobilize domestic resources, so as to increase public expenditure on education and expand the coverage, improve the efficiency and increase the effectiveness of education systems;

- (iii) Formulate targeted policies with a view to enhancing the affordability of education and training programmes, especially for vulnerable groups;
  - (iv) Strengthen investment in the monitoring and evaluation of education and social protection programmes so as to better identify the needs of beneficiaries and the gaps and inefficiencies in the provision of services to them;
- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Help countries to identify bottlenecks in their social contracts in order to reinforce social cohesion around national and regional development agendas and accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;
  - (ii) Support its members in improving the efficiency of social investment in education by helping them to better calibrate policies and encourage appropriate behaviour through the mapping of best practices, policy measures and strategies to make education more affordable, in particular for vulnerable groups, with a view to fostering more inclusive and equitable development;
  - (iii) Assist its members in designing national policies and strategies to eradicate extreme poverty by harnessing the opportunities unleashed by the demographic dividend and migration and reducing inequality through effective social protection;
  - (iv) Support its members in developing a more coordinated approach to tracking progress, using limited resources efficiently and minimizing inefficiency;
  - (v) Also support its members in integrating robust digital tools into social protection programmes in order to enhance transparency in programme delivery;
  - (vi) Increase collaboration with multilateral organizations, such as the International Labour Organization, when designing social protection floors;
  - (vii) Assist its members in designing and mobilizing resources for social protection programmes;
  - (viii) Support the development of delivery systems by identifying alternative sources of funding for social protection schemes;
  - (ix) Convene social dialogues on human development, including high-level discussions on the importance of social issues;
  - (x) Promote South-South dialogue to support peer learning among its members, and develop platforms that facilitate co-creation and minimize duplication of effort among them;
  - (xi) Assist its members in establishing national and regional observatories to strengthen data collection on employment and training, in developing national skills recognition strategies to support skills accreditation, and in evaluating the efficiency of policies, projects and programmes;
  - (xii) Support its members in improving their migration data management systems and in designing gender-sensitive programmes to reintegrate women migrants who have returned to their countries of origin in order to reduce poverty among them;



(xiii) Support its members in developing policies to strengthen economic growth and in identifying opportunities and comparative advantages to that end.

### 3. Urbanization and development

9. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Members of ECA should:
    - (i) Promote sustainable urbanization, with a focus on equal access to core urban services;
    - (ii) Explore new opportunities by rethinking the nexus between rapid urbanization and decent job creation, while placing equality and inclusion at the centre of urban policies;
  - (b) ECA should:
    - (i) Increase knowledge about the cost of unplanned rapid urbanization by disseminating relevant evidence-based research and analytical work, with a focus on urban productivity, inequality and climate change;
    - (ii) Assist its members in building the capacity to launch and implement policies that address inequality within African cities by increasing access to urban services, and support its members in building tangible social contracts through citizen participation in urban settings;
    - (iii) Organize peer-learning events to share knowledge and lessons learned relating to urbanization and socioeconomic dynamics;
    - (iv) Raise awareness of the interrelated nature of public finance and social policy with a view to formulating inclusive policies that effectively address the challenges related to informal economic activity;
    - (v) Work with strategic partners, such as the African Union Commission, to facilitate the creation of an African observatory focused on data collection, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building in relation to urbanization.
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