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Item 6 (f) of the provisional agenda**

Statutory issues: reports on the work of the subsidiary bodies
of the Economic Commission for Africa

Report of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender on its sixth session

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa has the honour to transmit to the members of the Commission the report of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender on its sixth session.

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** E/ECA/COE/44/1/Rev.1.



Report of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender on its sixth session

Introduction

1. The sixth session of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender was held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 28 November 2025 under the theme “From informal employment to sustainable livelihoods: emerging technologies as pathways for an equitable transition”.

I. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

A. Attendance

2. The session was attended by 50 participants.
3. Representatives of the following 36 members of ECA attended: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
4. The World Meteorological Organization was represented.
5. Observers from the African Union Commission and a youth civil society organization were present.

B. Opening statements

6. The Chair of the outgoing Bureau, the Director of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection of Ghana, Florence Ayisi, was represented by the Assistant Director at the Ministry of the Interior of Ghana, Barbara Sackey. In her statement, Ms. Sackey reflected on the complex environment that had shaped the biennium, noting the combined effects of recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, rising debt pressures, geopolitical tensions, climate impacts, cost-of-living challenges, persistent inequalities and the widespread dominance of informal employment. She said that those processes had unfolded alongside rapid digital transformation across Africa, which was reshaping economies and societies, offering significant opportunities but also presenting new risks. She noted the timely nature of the session’s theme, which was essential for enhancing productivity, strengthening social protection and promoting inclusive development.

7. Speaking on behalf of the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist of ECA, Hanan Morsy, the Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division, Zuzana Schwidrowski, emphasized that the session was taking place at a pivotal moment for both Africa and the continuing UN80 Initiative. She remarked that, although Africa had achieved strong economic growth, reduced multidimensional poverty and demonstrated resilience during major crises, it continued to face persistent challenges, and technology, skills development, education and strengthened domestic resource mobilization would therefore be vital to closing the region’s substantial financing gap for attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. She highlighted the importance of recent global commitments under the Doha Political Declaration of the “World Social Summit” under the title “the Second World Summit for

Social Development”¹ and the Sevilla Commitment of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development² for the goals of decent job creation and poverty reduction, and the focus on gender and youth, and underscored three priority action areas: harnessing digital technologies and artificial intelligence, scaling up inclusive and innovative social protection systems, and empowering cities and local governments as engines of inclusive growth.

C. Presentation on the terms of reference of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender

8. A representative of the secretariat outlined the terms of reference of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender, which primarily comprised senior government officials and other high-level representatives mandated to speak on national priorities and influence the Commission’s strategic direction. She explained that the Committee’s responsibilities included: reviewing work by ECA over the previous biennium in the areas of social policy, poverty and gender, including achievements, challenges and lessons learned; ensuring that the priorities of ECA were aligned with the needs of its members, including guidance on emerging policy issues; and advising on regional and global social policy agendas and ensuring that African perspectives were reflected in United Nations processes. The Committee’s recommendations fed directly into the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and, subsequently, into the wider United Nations intergovernmental system, including the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

II. Expert group meetings [agenda item 2]

A. Expert group meeting on subprogramme 6 – gender equality and women’s empowerment [agenda item 2 (a)]

1. Presentation

9. Under sub-item 2 (a), representatives of the secretariat presented the main findings of the thirty-year review of progress on implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, with a focus on employment, digital inclusion and financial inclusion. They noted that, although narrowing, gender gaps in employment and digital and financial inclusion persisted. The burden of unpaid care and domestic work contributed to the persisting gender gap in the labour force. Women were more likely to be unemployed and working in the informal sector than men. The gender digital divide remained significant, driven mainly by digital illiteracy and the challenge of providing universal, affordable and safe digital products and services. The closing of gender gaps in digital connectivity would help to narrow gender gaps in some countries in access to formal financial products and services.

2. Discussion

10. In the ensuing discussion, experts underscored the need for a greater focus on the following areas and issues:

- (a) More gender-responsive policymaking, supported by strong data systems for evidence-based policy formulation and monitoring of implementation;

¹ General Assembly resolution 80/5, annex.

² General Assembly resolution 79/323, annex.

(b) Reforms to expand social protection to include those in the informal sector and facilitate transition from the informal to the formal sector;

(c) Increased participation of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics at all levels of education;

(d) Better recognition of unpaid care and domestic work in national statistical systems and in policymaking processes;

(e) Improved access to digital connectivity and financial products and services;

(f) Increased attention to marginalized groups, including women and young people in rural and other marginalized communities.

3. Recommendations

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

(a) In line with the Beijing+30 Action Agenda, members of ECA are advised:

(i) To strengthen policies and incentives that support the transition of women and young people from informal to formal employment, including by providing access to credit and business development services and through inclusive workplace practices;

(ii) To recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work, and to integrate the accounting for such work into national statistical systems through regular time-use surveys and labour-force surveys, thereby improving data-driven policy design;

(iii) To invest in gender-responsive educational systems and training programmes that promote digital literacy, competence in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and vocational skills for women and girls, with a view to bridging digital divides and fostering the uptake of leadership positions by women and girls in the fields of technology and finance;

(iv) To invest in women's financial literacy and entrepreneurship training, in particular in rural areas and in the informal employment sector, while expanding access by women to tailored financial products and services;

(v) To invest in the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of data that are disaggregated by sex, age, disability and location relating to employment, and in the digital and financial sectors, with the aim of supporting evidence-based policymaking and the effective monitoring of progress;

(vi) To strengthen resource mobilization, multisectoral partnerships and regional collaboration by institutionalizing gender-responsive economic governance through gender budgeting and the integration of gender-responsive macroeconomic analysis into national planning and fiscal policies;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of best practices through structured mechanisms at the continental level, including regional communities of practice, annual gender and technology forums, and documentation of examples of successful national models for digital inclusion, women's financial literacy, gender budgeting and youth employment;

(ii) Institutionalize robust gender indicators, monitoring systems and accountability frameworks for tracking progress and adapting policies and programmes;

(iii) Work with the African Union and other international and regional organizations to formulate a continental approach to developing and financing policies centred on the realities of care in Africa, including universal childcare, eldercare and time-saving social services that reduce the burden of unpaid care on women and enable their fuller participation in the labour market.

B. Expert group meeting on subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy [agenda item 2 (b)]

1. Presentation

12. Under sub-item 2 (b), representatives of the secretariat reported on the work of ECA on the use of new technologies to enhance social protection strategies and measure multidimensional poverty, including the development of a social dimensions interface platform that overlaid multidimensional poverty with geospatial data on social dimensions and crises. They also highlighted work by ECA on advancing a new urban narrative, emphasizing the bridging of digital divides through broadband infrastructure, digital skills and e-government; the empowering of communities to ensure equity and inclusion; and the expansion of municipal finance to strengthen urban governance. The presentation concluded with a call for a renewed urban compact to guide sustainable and inclusive urban development across Africa.

2. Discussion

13. In the ensuing discussion, experts noted that the new social dimensions interface platform would facilitate better analysis of the drivers of multidimensional poverty while ensuring accurate and reliable data for targeted, effective and equitable policy interventions and resource allocation. They agreed that, although the uptake of technology and digitalization in conflict-affected areas faced significant challenges, including infrastructural deficits, limited digital literacy and barriers to access, which further exacerbated regional inequalities, digital technology could support data collection and enhance the delivery of social and humanitarian services in conflict settings.

14. Experts also observed that rapid urbanization in Africa was increasingly shaped by conflict, natural hazards and displacement, and in conflict-affected countries large inflows of displaced persons had generated unplanned settlements, stretched urban services and heightened inequalities. They pointed out that, while digital transformation could strengthen planning and service delivery, its effectiveness depended on expanding adequate and accessible infrastructure, and building institutional capacity.

15. Experts concurred that urban economic empowerment required integrated approaches linking financing, social protection and skills development. They observed, however, that women and informal workers remained excluded from digital finance and economic opportunities by restrictive attitudes, low literacy and limited access to credit. They discussed the importance of urban governance, data and planning and noted advances in data-driven urban master plans, urban-rural linkages, the deployment of artificial intelligence and digitalized service delivery. Persistent fragmentation, parallel systems and obsolete data, which undermined evidence-based policymaking, were highlighted. There was strong agreement that interoperable, centralized urban data systems were essential to countering informal expansion, unsafe mobility and gender-based violence and to

improving the integration of public transport, green spaces, social housing and citizen participation, thereby enhancing livability.

3. Recommendations

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

- (a) Members of ECA are advised:
 - (i) To mainstream national multidimensional poverty indices into official national planning and budgeting processes, while linking them to social protection databases and social registries, and to use the country-specific social dimensions interface platform developed by ECA for evidence-based policymaking, with a view to channelling resources towards the most disadvantaged communities and areas;
 - (ii) To disaggregate multidimensional and monetary poverty data by sex, age, location and disability in support of efforts to ensure that no one is left behind and that policies are inclusive;
 - (iii) To use vulnerability assessments developed in partnership with ECA to advocate and fund nationally appropriate social protection floors;
 - (iv) To explore innovative financing for social protection, including links to broader domestic revenue mobilization efforts, leveraging digital payment systems to improve efficiency and reduce leakage;
 - (v) To scale up regularization mechanisms, in line with the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,³ and to expand and diversify regular pathways for migration;
 - (vi) To ratify regional protocols on free movement, adapting them to local contexts, and to integrate migration, in particular climate-induced displacement, into national development and climate adaptation plans;
 - (vii) To implement the toolkit on legal identity for migrants, developed by ECA, to ensure the protection of migrants' rights and facilitate migrants' contribution to development;
 - (viii) To align national youth employment and entrepreneurship strategies with the commitments set out in the Doha Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development" and such continental frameworks as Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the African Youth Charter;
 - (ix) To strengthen data collection at the local level by equipping municipalities with digital tools to generate reliable and up-to-date information, guiding effective policymaking;
 - (x) To invest in foundational digital infrastructure, including connectivity, public transport, energy and serviced land and data systems to enable technology-driven planning, service delivery and inclusive and sustainable urban development;
 - (xi) To strengthen municipal finance and local governance by reforming intergovernmental transfers, improving land and revenue administration and deploying innovative financing tools to expand fiscal space for resilient and equitable urban growth;
 - (xii) To adopt inclusive and displacement-sensitive urban policies, ensuring that master plans account for population inflows, while also

³ General Assembly resolution 73/195, annex.

expanding basic services that integrate social protection, safety and livelihood support for vulnerable groups into planning and budgeting processes that recognize the needs of women, young people and informal workers;

(xiii) To institutionalize harmonized and interoperable urban data systems, linking geospatial, demographic and sectoral information across different levels of government, to guide the development of policies on affordable housing, public transport and resilient urban development;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Work with other regional commissions and academic institutions to develop training packages linking national multidimensional poverty indices with national social registries for more efficient beneficiary targeting, scaling up national and continental training initiatives on multidimensional poverty indices to include more countries and building a core group of national trainers to ensure sustainability and monitoring;

(ii) Support countries in strengthening data-collection systems for social development by providing technical assistance and digital tools that enhance the accuracy and timeliness of information generated at local levels, including in rural and remote areas;

(iii) Provide technical support to its members and to the African Union in the development of a common, evidence-based African position for the second International Migration Review Forum, to be held in 2026;

(iv) Accelerate the roll-out of the legal identity toolkit across all African countries, in partnership with the African Union Commission and the International Organization for Migration;

(v) Facilitate the development of a multi-stakeholder African youth skills and jobs pact, linking Governments, the private sector and training institutions with the aim of aligning skills development with market needs, including those within the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(vi) Deepen analysis on youth migration and brain circulation and provide policy options to harness the African diaspora and facilitate productive mobility;

(vii) Strengthen the capacity of its members to implement digital and data-driven urban management, supporting the development of interoperable urban data platforms and providing technical assistance on digital tools, artificial intelligence applications and evidence-based urban policies;

(viii) Support municipal finance reforms by offering guidance on expanding fiscal space, improving revenue systems and leveraging public-private partnerships and innovative financing instruments;

(ix) Facilitate regional peer learning and knowledge exchange on urban governance, decent job creation, productivity and entrepreneurial development, in particular for vulnerable groups;

(x) Assist in implementing data collection and technology-enabled urban recovery and service delivery strategies prioritizing the safety, livelihoods and needs of displaced persons.

III. Election of the Bureau [agenda item 3]

17. The following countries were unanimously elected to form the new Bureau:

Chair:	Ethiopia
First Vice-Chair:	Equatorial Guinea
Second Vice-Chair:	Mauritania
First Rapporteur:	Eswatini
Second Rapporteur:	Senegal

18. The newly elected Chair, Yared Teshome, thanked members for their confidence and expressed appreciation to the outgoing Bureau for their strong leadership over the past two years. He underscored the Committee's role in advancing the work of ECA on social protection, decent work and digital inclusion, and pledged to work with all members to ensure that the session's outcomes supported a more inclusive and resilient Africa.

IV. Consideration and adoption of the agenda and programme of work [agenda item 4]

19. Following the acceptance statement by the newly elected Chair, the Committee adopted without further amendment the programme of work and the following agenda, based on the provisional agenda that had been circulated as document E/ECA/CSPPG/6/1:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Expert group meetings:
 - (a) Expert group meeting on subprogramme 6 – gender equality and women's empowerment;
 - (b) Expert group meeting on subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy.
3. Election of the Bureau.
4. Consideration and adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
5. Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – reporting and discussion:
 - (a) Subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy;
 - (b) Subprogramme 6 – gender equality and women's empowerment.
6. General discussion on the theme of the sixth session “From informal employment to sustainable livelihoods: emerging technologies as pathways for an equitable transition”:
 - (a) Presentation of the issues paper;
 - (b) Discussion.
7. Briefing on the Second World Summit for Social Development.
8. Consideration and adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the sixth session.
9. Closing of the session.

V. Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – reporting and discussion [agenda item 5]

A. Subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy

[agenda item 5 (a)]

1. Presentation

20. Under this agenda item, representatives of the secretariat introduced a report on the activities of the subprogramme for the 2023–2025 biennium, circulated as document E/ECA/CSPPG/6/7, highlighting significant results in poverty reduction, social protection, migration and young people, sustainable cities and communities, voluntary local reviews in Africa, estimation of urban gross domestic product, and strengthening of resilient urban fiscal space. They observed that the subprogramme had delivered comprehensive knowledge products, provided tailored technical capacity-building and offered policy guidance to ECA members and they reaffirmed the commitment of ECA to working with countries on critical issues that advanced social development and sustainable urbanization, including multidimensional poverty analysis, the economic empowerment of women and young people, urban job creation, municipal finance and the strengthening of municipal and urban data systems.

2. Discussion

21. In the ensuing discussion, representatives noted that social and urban development efforts must be supported by robust analysis of relevant data and indicators. In that regard, the implementation of the new social dimensions interface platform, covering multidimensional poverty, conflict, migration, social protection, and related issues, was deemed critical. They also welcomed the development of the African Urban Data Portal, noting that it enabled targeted, effective and equitable policy interventions and resource allocation. They also noted the importance of the subprogramme's knowledge products for members of ECA and the need for those products to be easily available to the members.

3. Recommendations

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

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁴ Agenda 2063 and relevant policies aimed at fostering sustainable development by reducing poverty, addressing inequality and promoting social protection;

(ii) Foster inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities by implementing policies that expand local fiscal space, drive the creation of decent and productive jobs and improve service delivery in African cities;

(b) ECA should:

(i) Strengthen its analytical work, provide its members with policy advice and capacity-building support, develop tools and convene policy dialogues in alignment with national strategies to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, paying particular attention to the issues of urbanization, youth employment, social protection, population dynamics, disability and migration;

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

- (ii) Strengthen the collection of disaggregated subnational data and improve the use of national data sources to measure and analyse poverty, inequality, vulnerability and migration;
- (iii) Deepen the production and dissemination of relevant analytical knowledge products, including links to knowledge repositories for lessons learned and national benchmarks;
- (iv) Disseminate lessons learned and best practices in translating global and regional goals into local priorities and initiatives;
- (v) Support its members in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration by engaging with the International Organization for Migration, the private sector and other stakeholders, leveraging continental opportunities and technological solutions to strengthen policy uptake;
- (vi) Support its members in deepening their knowledge and analytical capacity relating to urbanization processes and the socioeconomic dynamics of African cities, with a view to informing evidence-based policymaking and urban planning;
- (vii) Promote the development and implementation of policy reforms and strategies that expand local fiscal space, enhance the financial performance of municipalities and bolster resilience;
- (viii) Facilitate the development of urban plans, through the acquisition of technologies for digitizing land records and improving the digitalization and analysis of spatial data, in order to assess the impact of urbanization on land-use planning and economic development decisions;
- (ix) Support its members in applying digital tools aimed at strengthening social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, including older persons and persons with disabilities;
- (x) Strengthen support for its members in collecting and using data on various crises for resilience building, including climate-related shocks, and assessing the social impacts of such crises.

B. Subprogramme 6 – gender equality and women’s empowerment [agenda item 5 (b)]

1. Presentation

23. Under this agenda item, representatives of the secretariat introduced the report of subprogramme 6, circulated as document E/ECA/CSPPG/6/6. They reported that, over the period under review, the subprogramme had coordinated the 30-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action (Beijing+30 review), supported members of ECA in producing their national Beijing+30 review reports, and assisted the African Union Commission in facilitating the Common African Position at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It had supported digital and economic empowerment initiatives that expanded women’s and girls’ participation in business and trade and had also supported members of ECA in strengthening their gender monitoring through the African Gender and Development Index, the Africa Gender Index and the regional gender statistics programmes. In addition, the subprogramme had successfully mainstreamed gender into national development plans and migration policies. They confirmed that, in 2026 and 2027, the subprogramme aimed to accelerate efforts by African States to implement and report on global and regional commitments. Anchored in the Beijing+30 Action Agenda, the subprogramme would provide support to African States in mainstreaming gender into fiscal policies and financial

regulatory frameworks, while strengthening their measurement, monitoring and reporting systems.

2. Discussion

24. In the ensuing discussion, representatives underscored the need for more effective implementation of policies and programmes for the empowerment of women and girls so as to meet global and regional commitments on gender equality. They also noted that expanding women's access to digital and financial products and services and mainstreaming a gender perspective in all sectors and budgetary processes remained priorities, in line with the Beijing+30 Action Agenda. The importance of support for members of ECA in institutionalizing the African Gender and Development Index, with the aim of strengthening their national gender monitoring and reporting systems, was also highlighted.

3. Recommendations

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

- (a) Members of ECA are advised:
 - (i) To accelerate the effective implementation of policies and programmes for the empowerment of women and girls, so as to meet global and regional commitments on gender equality;
 - (ii) To implement policy and legislative reforms to eliminate structural barriers that limit women's participation in formal labour markets and commerce and their access to financial and digital products and services;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Extend technical support and advisory services to countries that are not covered by current activities, in particular support and services aimed at strengthening gender monitoring and reporting systems, closing gender gaps in digital and financial inclusion, and enhancing migrant women's entrepreneurship;
 - (ii) Support its members in institutionalizing the African Gender and Development Index within their national gender monitoring and reporting systems, and adapt the tool to identify gender gaps in areas of national concern to inform more targeted programming;
 - (iii) Provide technical assistance to its members in strengthening data collection on, and analysis of, the migration of young people and of women, including in improving the availability, reliability and use of sex-disaggregated migration data, to gain a better understanding of the drivers and economic opportunities linked with women's migratory movements;
 - (iv) Establish and maintain a structured peer-learning and knowledge-sharing platform, including a repository of knowledge products and tools, to document impactful interventions that advance gender equality and enable its members to benchmark best practices;
 - (v) Support its members in strengthening their women's and youth empowerment structures and mechanisms for the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming across all sectors, ensuring adequately financed policies and outcomes that fulfil international and regional commitments related to gender equality, in line with the Beijing+30 Action Agenda.

VI. General discussion on the theme of the sixth session “From informal employment to sustainable livelihoods: emerging technologies as pathways for an equitable transition” [agenda item 6]

A. Presentation of the issues paper [agenda item 6 (a)]

26. Under this agenda item, a representative of the secretariat introduced an issues paper entitled “From informal employment to sustainable livelihoods: emerging technologies as equitable transition pathways”, outlining the growth-employment paradox faced by Africa. In the presentation, the representative summarized ways in which emerging and frontier technologies could support transitions from informal employment to sustainable livelihoods and highlighted inequality and digital divides as ongoing risks and skills development, social protection expansion, urban innovation and integration into reconfigured global value chains as opportunities. The presentation concluded with policy-oriented questions on leveraging technology to boost productivity, inclusion and decent work across the rapidly urbanizing and youthful labour markets of Africa.

B. Discussion [agenda item 6 (b)]

27. In the ensuing discussion, representatives noted that digital tools improved efficiency, accuracy and inclusion, in particular for informal workers and vulnerable groups, by enabling unified social registries, mobile payments, online registration and improved data systems. They also noted the need for strengthened capacity and for spatial and administrative data to support effective planning. Welcoming countries’ readiness to expand technology-based services, they recognized the persisting gaps in connectivity, cybersecurity and institutional systems, especially in rural areas. With regard to social protection and digitalization, representatives reported substantial progress made by their countries in expanding coverage through digital systems, with innovations in digital identity systems, mobile-based payments, shock-responsive systems, unified online registries, e-grievance services and targeted programmes for informal workers, older people, persons with disabilities and vulnerable households. They noted that, although digital readiness to scale up financial technologies and supporting regulatory frameworks varied, digital financial systems for innovation and value chain participation were growing in importance.

C. Recommendations

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

- (a) Members of ECA are advised:
 - (i) To scale up digital social protection tools, including harmonized social registries, digital identification systems and mobile payment methods, in order to expand coverage for informal workers and vulnerable rural populations, while addressing digital literacy and infrastructure gaps;
 - (ii) To invest in the promotion of literacy in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, of technical and vocational education and training, and of accessibility to utilities and digital infrastructure, by better aligning skills with labour-market needs;

- (iii) To strengthen services for the reintegration of returnee migrants, including psychosocial support, skills recognition and access to social protection;
- (iv) To prioritize stronger and better-financed health systems to enhance resilience and service delivery;
- (v) To leverage digital technology and platforms for business and livelihood opportunities to address the underemployment and unemployment of young people;
- (vi) To improve spatial data and digitalize land administration systems to strengthen planning, transparency and equitable land governance;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Support digital literacy initiatives, regional peer learning on inclusive education and women's empowerment, and reforms in the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in technical and vocational education and training;
 - (ii) Expand analytical work and advisory support on digital finance, youth employment, the matching of skills with labour-market needs, and innovation systems;
 - (iii) Link its members to the ECA knowledge repository to support benchmarking and the sharing of good practices;
 - (iv) Provide technical assistance for spatial data collection, land value mapping and digital land registries;
 - (v) Support countries in strengthening and expanding national and local finance systems for resilient, inclusive and sustainable urbanization;
 - (vi) Advise countries on how to ensure the inclusive adoption of emerging technologies that complement rather than replace labour;
 - (vii) Ensure that technologies are employed to create opportunities for decent jobs and the formalization of employment.

VII. Briefing on the Second World Summit for Social Development [agenda item 7]

A. Presentation

29. Under this agenda item, the Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division provided a briefing on the Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha from 4 to 6 November 2025. She noted that African priorities had been strongly voiced at the Summit: they had ranged from the reform of global financial architecture to debt action and an increased voice in international governance. She said that the Doha Political Declaration was focused on core areas of universal health coverage, quality education, gender equality and integration of the informal economy, including a mechanism for implementing five-year reviews from 2031, and that emerging narratives on ageing, youth-led governance and digital inclusion were areas of transformative opportunity. Other outcomes of relevance for Africa identified in her briefing included: addressing high informality, harnessing the youth demographic, building resilience to climate and economic shocks, and leveraging digital transformation and integration of the African Continental Free Trade Area. She noted that ECA played a strategic role in ensuring that the priorities of Africa were reflected in the global agenda.

B. Discussion

30. In the ensuing discussion, representatives noted that the social challenges facing African countries were varied but interlinked. They included structural inequalities, harmful cultural practices and system-wide gaps in governance and service delivery. Resistance to gender equality was entrenched in cultural traditions and required sensitive but firm interventions. Representatives highlighted the magnitude of unemployment and underemployment among young people and of their relegation to informal work, compounded by an education system that prepared young people to seek employment rather than create jobs. Fragile social contracts, inadequate education, conflict and climate change were identified as drivers of insecurity, crime, and gender-based violence, while youth unemployment and drug abuse that destabilized communities, the low political participation of women and the persistence of early marriage, which undermined girl-child education and empowerment, were identified as persistent challenges.

C. Recommendations

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

- (a) Members of ECA are advised:
 - (i) To develop integrated and targeted policy recommendations and actions to implement the Doha Political Declaration of the Second World Social Summit;
 - (ii) To work with ECA and pan-African institutions on the development of a common African position on the main aims and challenges of social development on the continent, namely, poverty eradication, decent employment and social integration, the overall goal of which is to achieve social development for all, in line with the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development⁵ and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development;⁶
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Lead a continental assessment of progress, gaps and opportunities for action relating to the implementation of the Doha Political Declaration, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action over the two years following the Second World Summit for Social Development;
 - (ii) Provide support, jointly with pan-African institutions, to its members in forming a common African position on social development;
 - (iii) Assist its members in aligning their national development plans and policies with the Doha Political Declaration, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action;
 - (iv) Support countries in addressing the following matters: poverty, underemployment and youth unemployment; issues relating to social justice and resilience building; the social impacts of climate change; and the social impacts of rapid urbanization.

⁵ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁶ *Ibid.*, annex II.

VIII. Consideration and adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the sixth session [agenda item 8]

32. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered the draft report on its sixth session. Several representatives made comments and proposed amendments to the report. After extensive discussion, the Committee unanimously adopted the report.

IX. Closing of the session [agenda item 9]

33. Closing remarks were made by the Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division of ECA and the Chair of the Bureau. Following those statements and the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.30 p.m. on Friday, 28 November 2025.
