



Aide-Mémoire
“Poverty, Inequality and Jobs in Africa”
Expert Group Meeting and Policy Forum

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNCC, Conference Room 4, Addis Ababa
6 - 7 June 2018

A. INTRODUCTION

Poverty in Africa since 1990 has declined much more slowly than other regions in the world. The poverty headcount ratio declined from 54.3 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2013. The strong economic growth witnessed in many countries across Africa in recent years has only had a marginal impact on poverty. In absolute terms, the number of people in extreme poverty is stagnating at the 2002 level.

Africa is currently identified as the world’s second most inequitable region after Latin America and the Caribbean¹ which may explain the slow rate of poverty reduction on the continent as high inequality hampers the poverty-reducing effects of growth.

The fast economic growth has not significantly helped to reduce social and economic inequalities on the continent. In 2010, six out of the 10 most unequal countries worldwide were in Africa. The continent is still fraught with inequalities caused by differences in income, ethnicity, gender, age and disability among others.

There are large differences in access and opportunities to education, health care, employment and productive assets; and wealth inequalities are still transmitted across generations, perpetrating the disparities and trapping large pockets of society in poverty and exclusion.

Addressing inequality in all its forms is a social imperative and a necessity for sustainable and equitable growth in Africa. Both the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063 strongly emphasize inclusive and equitable development in Africa.

ECA project to promote equality-oriented policies

ECA implemented a project in 2015-18 to promote equality as a key driver of sustainable development and strengthen select countries’ capacities to conceptualize, design and implement multidisciplinary public policies oriented towards greater socio-economic equality.

¹ Measured as the unweighted average of the Gini coefficient within countries.

The project was implemented in two countries – Tanzania and Cote d’Ivoire – in two phases that addressed the key constraints of limited national capacities to analyse and measure inequality in all its dimensions; and design and implement policies and programmes that foster social inclusion and contribute to reduce inequality through employment, social protection and access to social services.

The project concludes in June 2018 and recognizing the strong interlinkages between poverty, inequality and the need to create jobs, especially for youth and women, ECA is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) and Policy Forum on “Poverty, inequality and jobs in Africa” on 6-7 June 2018.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE EGM AND POLICY FORUM

The EGM and the Policy Forum will address the following objectives:

1. Explore the interlinkages among the issues of poverty, inequality and jobs in Africa and review progress;
2. Examine the policy landscape on inequality in Africa, discuss policy options, and propose strategies to address inequality in national plans and strategies;
3. Deliberate on the challenges in achieving the inequality-related targets in Africa;
4. Discuss the institutional arrangements, various initiatives, and partnerships to support African member States better implement the strategies to promote employment, especially among the youth and women, and reduce inequality and poverty;
5. Explore opportunities for establishing knowledge networks and communities of practice for sharing information and experiences on equity in Africa.

C. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

The EGM and the Policy Forum is expected to result in the following outcomes:

- (a) Participants better-informed with increased awareness about the critical role of jobs in reducing poverty and inequality in Africa;
- (b) Improved understanding and consensus among participants on how to integrate equity-related policies in national plans;
- (c) Strengthened capacities of stakeholders to support suitable policies and design and implement innovative strategies for leveraging the employment, poverty and inequality for inclusive development;
- (d) Strengthened partnerships and better coordination among stakeholders for mobilizing financial resources and capacities for enhancing the role of reduced inequality in Africa’s transformation.

The key outputs of the EGM and Policy Forum will include the following, and shall be placed on the ECA website: (a) The EGM and Forum report; (b) The Africa regional study on

inequality; (c) Country case studies: Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire; (d) The study on Informality and Inequality in Africa; (e) Policy briefs; and (f) Press releases.

D. PARTICIPATION AT THE EGM AND POLICY FORUM

The meeting will be attended by a group of international experts from the two project countries and elsewhere, as well as representatives from UN agencies, regional economic communities (RECs), academia and civil society, development partners, international organisations based in Ethiopia, and local research institutions. A total of 30-40 outstation experts from Africa and elsewhere are expected to attend the two-day event.

By bringing several partners together, the EGM and Policy Forum is expected to contribute to a rich cross fertilisation of ideas to take forward the work of inequality in Africa and achieve the inequality-related targets of the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

E. FORMAT AND WORK PROGRAMME

Most sessions of the meeting will be in plenary and invited experts will lead-off discussions of each session by presenting papers which will then be followed by in-depth plenary discussions. High-level panel discussions will be organized to discuss the role of development partners in supporting member States to implement suitable policies to address these issues.

A Keynote Lecture by Prof. Haroon Borat, Director of the Development Policy Research Unit at the University of Cape Town, South Africa will be organised on the theme of the EGM and Policy Forum to help frame the issues.

F. VENUE AND DATES

The EGM and Policy Forum will take place at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 6-7 June 2018.

G. CONTACT

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