

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
30 January 2020

Original: English

**Economic Commission for Africa
Committee of Experts of the Conference of African
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**Thirty-ninth meeting
Addis Ababa, 18-20 March 2020

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Statutory issues**Report on the meeting of the third session of the
Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender****I. Introduction**

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division, convened the third session of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender, in Addis Ababa, on 14 and 15 November 2019, under the theme “Accelerating Africa’s Progress in Eradicating Poverty and Reducing Inequality”.
2. The Committee is a statutory body of experts and policymakers, entrusted with providing guidance and advice to the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division through the review of activities implemented during the biennium 2018–2019 and strategic vision and direction for the next plan period, 2020.
3. The aim of the third session of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender was to review and provide strategic orientation to the work of the Division and share with member States the Division’s new areas of focus and policy interventions in delivering on its mandate to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce inequality for inclusive and equitable growth. Furthermore, Committee members and participants are expected to guide the Division in its work to analyse the interlinkages between growth, poverty and inequality, in the context of social policy, urbanization, gender equality and women’s empowerment; and identify priority needs as they relate to the Division’s core areas of work.
4. The meeting was attended by representatives from Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. From the regional economic communities, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was represented at the meeting. Also in attendance were representatives from the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis. A total of 48 participants attended the meeting.

* E/ECA/COE/39/1.



II. Opening of the session

5. In her opening remarks, the Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division provided an overview of the recent ECA reforms and reminded delegates that ECA was part of the United Nations Secretariat, under the supervision of the Secretary-General, thus highlighting the differences between ECA and other United Nations specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

6. The Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division informed the Committee of the reforms that had taken place at ECA, in which the Commission's vision was framed around generating ideas for Africa's prosperity, and was encapsulated in its motto, "Ideas for a Prosperous Africa". The Commission also supported member States in putting those ideas into action. While generating innovative knowledge on the core areas of work of the divisions, ECA technically backstopped the progress of African countries towards regional and global agendas.

7. The Director highlighted the three core functions of ECA – convening, operational and think tank. She informed the Committee that to implement those core functions, the Division was reformulated as the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division, which consisted of two subprogrammes divided across three sections: the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Section implemented subprogramme 6, while subprogramme 9 was divided between the Urbanization and Development Section and the Social Policy Section.

8. The Director also provided an overview of the development context related to the work of the Division, and the global and regional frameworks that were aligned with the Committee, and its scope of work and consideration. She reiterated the objective of the Committee, which was to review and provide feedback to ECA on its work in the biennium 2018–2019, and to receive proposals on the planned work ahead. Specifically, she asked delegates how the Division could best assist them in addressing the challenges of gender equality, social policy and urbanization, with the overall objective of eliminating extreme poverty and reducing inequality by 2030.

III. Election of the Bureau

9. The following countries were unanimously elected to the Bureau:

Chair:	Egypt (North Africa)
First Vice-Chair:	Lesotho (Southern Africa)
Second Vice-Chair:	Nigeria (West Africa)
First Rapporteur:	Kenya (East Africa)
Second Rapporteur:	Central African Republic, the (Central Africa)

IV. Consideration and adoption of the agenda and programme of work

10. Following the election of the new Bureau, the preliminary agenda and programme of work of the third session were unanimously adopted.

V. Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – Reporting and discussion

A. Subprogramme 9 – Poverty, inequality and social policy

1. Presentation

11. Presenting the report of subprogramme 9 on poverty, inequality and social policy, the Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section outlined the analytical work of the Section regarding inequality, migration, urbanization, ageing, better monitoring of social investments and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

12. An overview of the implemented activities is as follows:

(a) **Eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality** – The Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section highlighted the global project on strengthening national capacities to develop equity-oriented policies together with the other regional commissions over the period 2016–2018. Its goal was to strengthen countries' capacities to conceptualize, design and implement multidisciplinary public policies to promote greater socioeconomic equality. The project was implemented in two countries, Côte d'Ivoire and the United Republic of Tanzania;

(b) **Migration policies for inclusive growth** – The subprogramme, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the International Organization for Migration, successfully led the Global Compact on Migration consultation and negotiation processes in Africa. Activities included providing technical support to the Africa Group negotiating team. The Global Compact on Migration was adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakech, Morocco, in December 2018, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly;

(c) **Health and economic growth** – The subprogramme prepared an analytical report on economic growth and health care in Africa that was launched at the African Business: Health Forum in February 2019. The report analyses progress and challenges in extending health care in Africa, and identifies opportunities for mobilizing the private sector and innovative sources of finance for strengthening national health-care systems and leveraging technology for high-impact health outcomes. Developing effective health financing mechanisms and harnessing the strengths of the private health sector are key strategies to address the increasingly complex health challenges in the region and help bridge the health financing gap of \$66 billion per annum;

(d) **International Conference on Population and Development** – The subprogramme, working jointly with the African Union Commission and the United Nations Population Fund, undertook a five-year review of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development, covering 2014–2018. A total of 49 member States submitted national reports. These reports informed the development of a continental review report that highlights Africa's progress, gaps and challenges, and good practices in implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration and the International Conference on Population and Development;

(e) **Better monitoring of social investments in Africa** – The subprogramme implemented a project to strengthen the capacities of selected African countries to monitor investments in social protection policies and programmes that contribute to the achievement of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The project extended the concept of social protection to more than social assistance, safety nets or food aid, to also include the provision of basic social security guarantees such as universal access to health care, nutrition, education, income security for those unable to earn sufficient income, and basic income security for older persons. Analytical studies in five countries

(Chad, Kenya, Mauritania Mozambique and Nigeria) were prepared. These were complemented by country-specific resource requirements estimated to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that are related to social protection;

(f) **Ageing** – In 2018, the subprogramme responded to United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/144 on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – and submitted to the Secretary-General at the Third Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing Review for Africa, covering the period 2012–2017. The Commission guided the review process and prepared an analytical report on older persons' issues in the region, highlighting the nexus with the new Sustainable Development Goals;

(g) **Regional monitoring of sustainable cities and human settlements** – The subprogramme supported the Africa Regional Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on safe, resilient and sustainable cities, as part of the regional review of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2018. The monitoring report on Goal 11 – and its corresponding Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1, Priority 4 – reiterated the need for countries to act quickly, given the speed and scale of urbanization in Africa. The results show that the region's cities have made limited progress on issues prioritized in Goal 11 (such as access to public transport, urban sprawl, loss and damage from disasters, air pollution and solid waste collection), thereby constraining efforts to achieve inclusive growth;

(h) **Strategic integration of urbanization in national development planning** – Informed by the request from member States during the second session of the Committee, the subprogramme undertook a policy review and assessment of the status and extent of integration of urbanization into the national development plans in five countries (Cameroon, Chad, Morocco, Uganda and Zambia). The resulting analytical report concluded that more efforts were needed to strengthen the strategic and cross-sectoral integration of urbanization in national development planning. It showed the importance of national development planning as an ideal framework within which to align diverse multisector and multilevel activities toward leveraging cities for inclusive economic development.

2. Discussion

13. Member States commended the Division for the report on the subprogramme.

14. It was suggested that elderly persons be included in future analyses, not only as recipients of services, but also as potential service providers. Specifically, the work of the Division should also examine how the elderly contribute to the economy and society through knowledge transferred to younger generations. A campaign to raise awareness about the positive role of the elderly was proposed. Member States also shared their experiences on protection and care for elderly people.

15. Other recommendations included strengthening analysis on rural–urban linkages, urbanization and climate change, and employment challenges related to rapid urban growth.

16. The Chief of the Urbanization and Development Section shared with the Committee the list of courses offered by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, and in-country training provided by the Division.

3. Recommendations

17. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Accord more attention to older persons, especially women, living in urban areas;

(b) Reorient the focus of the review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing more on the contributions of older persons to development and how those contributions can be harnessed in terms of rural, urban, and formal and informal contexts.

18. The Division was called upon to consider the following in the implementation of its programme of work:

(a) Report on its subprogramme in a more unified manner in the future and ensure that the work of subprogramme 9 is linked to ECA's other programmes, especially those directed towards social development;

(b) Assign priority to the periphery of cities, which remain largely underserved and potentially informal, as well as consider the linkages between the Division's work on urbanization and rural development, and the implications of rural–urban migration;

(c) Generate better data with regard to employment creation, in reference to rural and urban areas; and

(d) Integrate emerging issues across its areas of work, including climate change.

B. Subprogramme 6 – Gender equality and women's empowerment

1. Presentation

19. Presenting the work of subprogramme 6 on gender equality and women's empowerment, the Chief of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Section underscored that the mandate of the subprogramme was to support member States in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in light of the global and regional commitments.

20. The presentation of the Chief of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Section focused on the main achievements for the biennium 2018–2019, highlighting policy influence, results achieved, lessons learned and the main challenges in implementation. She also discussed the planned activities for 2020.

21. The Chief of Section noted that the subprogramme had produced various reports on social protection, women's economic empowerment, artisanal and small-scale mining and the African Gender and Development Index during the period 2018–2019.

22. In addition, technical capacity-building services were provided to member States as well as to the African Union Commission.

23. Furthermore, the Chief of Section provided examples on policy influence and impact that had resulted from the Section's support to member States. Malawi used the findings of the African Gender and Development Index report to mainstream gender into its growth strategy. Mauritania also used the African Gender and Development Index report to integrate gender dimensions into its National Strategy for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity. In addition, the Ministries of Health and Gender in Ethiopia jointly organized a high-level policy dialogue on women's health and agreed to co-launch interventions to address women's health issues.

24. Drawing from its research on "Women's Rights to Social Protection in Africa", the Section led the convening of a United Nations-wide policy dialogue advocating for the formulation and implementation of national social protection policies and programmes for African women and girls.

2. Discussion

25. Member States commended the Division for the report on the subprogramme and commended it for the volume and quality of work accomplished on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

26. The Government of Mauritania informed Committee members of the ongoing work in advancing gender equality in that country, as well as recognizing the support it received from the Section.

27. It was acknowledged that the subprogramme's work was addressed across a number of sectoral ministries, and this should continue. The Chair encouraged the dissemination of the Division's knowledge products and services, suggesting that member States should share materials and data among themselves and support dissemination of the Division's knowledge products.

3. Recommendations

28. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Take full advantage of the technical support and advisory facilities offered by the Division;

(b) Support the Division in the dissemination of its knowledge products and tools;

(c) Use findings from the Section's research on gender issues to inform their programmes;

(d) Develop and implement specific programmes geared towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

29. The Division was called upon to consider the following in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

(a) Extend technical support and advisory services to countries that have not been covered in current activities;

(b) Report on its subprogrammes in a more unified manner in the future;

(c) Address the needs of women and girls with disabilities;

(d) Expand the implementation of the African Gender and Development Index to the five countries that have not been included;

(e) Share online African Gender and Development Index reports and the African Gender Scorecard to support current and similar ongoing initiatives in member States;

(f) Support countries undertaking time use surveys to inform policy responses on the burden of women in unpaid care work;

(g) Ensure that the work of subprogramme 6 is linked to ECA's other programmes, especially those that are directed towards social development.

VI. Parallel sessions

A. Parallel session 1 – Progress towards gender equality: Insights from the 2018–2019 African Gender and Development Index

30. The African Gender and Development Index was presented highlighting the key findings from the latest report (2018–2019).

31. In the ensuing discussions, member States commended the Section for designing the African Gender and Development Index, and for supporting the 49 member States that had implemented it so far. Member States expressed appreciation for the African Gender and Development Index as a tool that

worked to fill the gender statistics gaps. The tool had helped member States assess progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, and producing their national Beijing review reports. The Index was used in providing technical assistance to member States such as Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia and South Africa and was also noted with appreciation.

32. However, participants pointed out that the report did not sufficiently explain the criteria for selecting the countries that participated in the report. The discussion centred around the late sharing of reports, which affected the ability of member States to provide substantive concrete and timely input into the report.

33. Member States highlighted how, across the continent, women still bore the burden of time poverty, thus inhibiting their access to opportunities for meaningful economic empowerment. The importance of time-use surveys was emphasized.

34. Participants noted that, in order to optimize reduction of gender inequalities in Africa, particular attention had to be paid to addressing persisting negative norms that perpetuated discrimination and the exclusion of women in productive sectors. These negative norms were the basis for what could subsequently become cultural practices.

35. Literacy and education were identified as key focus areas in order to address negative norms, as they empowered people with the ability to properly evaluate understanding and interpretation of societal practices before they became engrained within culture.

Recommendations

36. The Committee recommended that member States:

- (a) Address the health of women;
- (b) Develop a methodology to include unpaid women's work in labour force accounting;
- (c) Tackle the rights of women and the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace as a matter of urgency.

37. The Division was called upon to consider the following in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

- (a) Assist member States to access capital, technology and particularly digital financing;
- (b) Conduct further research on the causes of gender inequality;
- (c) Share best practices from the African Gender and Development Index with member States, and encourage them to adopt and comply with these practices.

B. Parallel session 2 – Population dynamics and sustainable development: findings and recommendations of the regional review of the International Conference on Population and Development, 2018

38. A presentation was made on the continental report of the five-year review of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development. It highlighted the main gains, gaps and challenges that member States had experienced in the implementation of the framework.

39. Dominant population trends revealed that Africa's population was growing and fertility was declining, although at slow rates and with significant disparities across subregions, and significant gains had been made on life expectancy.

40. Africa's youth population was also rapidly increasing and at the same time population ageing was a growing phenomenon. The review showed that member States were implementing various measures to respond to some of these population trends and achieve the demographic dividend.

41. However, major challenges remained – including persistent inequality, weak institutional mechanisms and limited budgets – to support implementation and monitoring.

Recommendations

42. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Create specific components within the national development plans and national budgets for financing social investment and social protection of older persons, as well as recognizing their potential;

(b) Maintain existing monitoring mechanisms, or, where necessary, establish them within national social protection programmes, and allocate budget for social investment and social protection.

43. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called on to consider the following in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

(a) Develop a platform and provide technical support and resources for member States to share successes and experiences;

(b) Deliver technical assistance to set up national integrated management information systems for tracking mobility, youth employment and investment in young people and the elderly;

(c) Provide technical assistance in drafting and implementing legislation on child protection;

(d) Provide assistance in addressing portability in skills, rights and social security in the context of the free movement of people and labour mobility.

C. Parallel session 3 – Urbanization and development: Strategic orientation

44. A presentation was given on the work of the Section covering urban job creation, urban productivity and the role of cities in regional integration. The presentation also looked at poverty in cities, issues of urbanizing without growth, productive jobs, economic diversification and industrialization.

45. The ensuing discussion identified persistent issues of concern that included, inter alia, poor urban spatial planning, weak collaboration between urban stakeholders, low productivity and growth of urban sprawls.

46. In the ensuing discussion, planned orientation of the Section's work on urbanization to focus on urban jobs, urban productivity and the role of cities in regional integration was considered timely and strategic, as it complemented the efforts of other actors.

47. Member States noted and appreciated the policy impact and concrete results arising from the Section's work on urbanization and development. Technical assistance provided to a member State in support of the integration of urbanization in its new national development planning was elaborated, where the Section's knowledge products and technical assistance led to the prioritization of urbanization in the country's new National Development Plan III.

48. It was stated that, if cities were not well planned and managed, it would be difficult to achieve global and regional sustainable development targets, including those related to climate change. It was also noted that spatial planning

was a precondition for inclusive growth and development. In the absence of adequate spatial planning, African cities were growing chaotically and constraining access to land for infrastructure and other investments.

49. The discussion also brought up the issue of citizen engagement, with member States highlighting the need to include citizens at all levels of decision-making. The persistence of poverty in Africa amid sustained economic growth was considered a central challenge for the continent, and a matter that ECA should analyse further to determine the underlying drivers.

Recommendations

50. The Committee recommended that member States:

- (a) Prepare and implement comprehensive national development plans for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda;
- (b) Align economic plans with financing and planning for sustainable urbanization;
- (c) Better link urban and rural development and the interdependence between the two;
- (d) Strengthen and harness endogenous policy capacities to manage urbanization better with less external support;
- (e) Encourage urban citizens' participation at all phases of related decision-making.

51. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called on to consider the following, in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

- (a) Continue focusing on, for the next three years, urban jobs, urban productivity and the role of cities in regional integration;
- (b) Prioritize urbanization, recognizing cities as enablers and locations for the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (c) Prioritize spatial planning as a precondition for inclusive growth and development, and to reduce the chaotic growth of African cities;
- (d) Analyse further the persistence of poverty in Africa to determine the underlying drivers;
- (e) Deliver technical assistance to member States for integration of urbanization into national development planning, with a focus on urban jobs and productivity;
- (f) Support urban and spatial planning in member States linked to economic planning and financing frameworks;
- (g) Strengthen its work on rural–urban links and strategies to enhance the complementarities between rural and urban development.

VII. Presentation and discussion on the thematic paper: “Accelerating Africa’s Progress in Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Reducing Inequality”

52. The Chief of the Social Policy Section presented the issues paper and highlighted the key issues pertaining to the twin challenges of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality in Africa by 2030. The presentation highlighted that supporting member States in eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality was the overarching theme guiding the work of the Division.

53. Key messages included that the trend of poverty reduction had been slower in Africa, as compared with other regions. If progress was not

moderated, it was predicted that 90 per cent of the global poor would be in Africa by 2030.

54. Fourteen countries had achieved, or were on the right path to achieve, Sustainable Development Goal 1. Therefore, the value in cross-learning between countries, as they proceeded to reduce poverty, was highlighted as an important exercise.

55. The ensuing discussion outlined that poverty and inequality were multidimensional, thus requiring multisectoral interventions, identifying the key drivers of poverty and inequality that included: low demand for jobs, labour supply constraints, gaps in gender parity and women's economic empowerment, and high initial inequality.

56. Poverty was also perpetuated by unplanned cities, substandard housing, and inadequate social services. Lack of human capital was mentioned as a central driver of poverty.

57. Some of the additional causes of poverty identified included conflict – which could result in people becoming refugees or internally displaced persons, as well as introduce difficulties in keeping the youth in school – and corruption, which slowed progress on poverty reduction.

58. Member States were urged to recognize rapid urban growth in the region, and the immense opportunities this presented for structural transformation, and the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union.

Recommendations

59. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Create employment in labour-intensive industries, which is essential for the reduction of poverty and inequality;

(b) Take into account the elderly and ageing population group for future programming and national plans;

(c) Invest in rural areas for economic diversification;

(d) Address the informal sector, particularly by creating jobs for young people;

(e) Consider the future of work by promoting a creative economy with its potential for youth employment, especially in urban areas;

(f) Intensify efforts to improve the planning of, and focus investment on, rapidly growing cities, especially infrastructure and services, so that they contribute to tackling poverty and inequality;

(g) Prepare integrated urban development plans aligned to national economic plans and priorities, with adequate funding for the eradication of extreme poverty and reduction of inequality;

(h) Generate, as a matter of urgency, more reliable, usable and timely urban data, for use in the development of evidence-based policies and plans towards economic transformation and inclusive growth.

60. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called upon to consider the following in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

(a) Continue providing technical assistance to member States to strengthen the concept of urbanization in national development and sector planning, through the support of intersectoral coordination and alignment of spatial and economic planning across the rural–urban continuum;

(b) Provide technical and financial support on extending the African Gender and Development Index for monitoring of progress in poverty reduction and gender equality and women's empowerment;

(c) Provide technical support on strengthening the role of women in human security and poverty reduction.

A. Breakout session 1 – The role of sectoral ministries in eradicating poverty and reducing inequality

61. For this topic, a question was presented to stimulate discussion on how sectoral ministries (including gender, social, youth and urban) can contribute more effectively to the eradication of poverty and inequality, and enhance coordination to address the multiple dimensions of poverty and inequality?

Recommendations

62. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Jointly plan, implement and report processes that accommodate a multisectoral approach to addressing extreme poverty and inequalities;

(b) Forge a common understanding of the work of ministries on poverty and inequality, to provide a better understanding of what poverty and inequality mean, as well as working together;

(c) Adopt inclusive policies, curricula and capacities for achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 that take into account the needs of vulnerable groups, while ensuring a strong reporting mechanism and guidance in order to avoid focusing too much on one sector;

(d) Undertake joint planning, implementation and reporting, by linking and, where possible, participating in the work of interministerial committees, and working groups that bring together different stakeholders (such as the public and private sector, society and community groups), and development partners;

(e) Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the pertinent issues to reduce poverty and inequality, which should be done horizontally and vertically to ensure that progress is measured through a predetermined set of indicators that ensure evaluation at all levels and information is available to all, even at the community level;

(f) Highlight the need to strengthen governance structures in joint planning and implementation to ensure that resources are well coordinated for maximum impact, and combat corruption;

(g) Observe and respect rights and obligations, particularly through binding and well-defined legislation;

(h) Implement the programmes through a multisectoral coordinated approach to avoid sector ministries working in silos;

(i) Set outcome indicators, at different levels, and develop implementation modalities for monitoring and evaluation;

(j) Take measures to ensure the safety of those escaping violence in rural areas, who move to urban areas, especially when moving to the periphery of cities that are underserved and may present socioeconomic risks;

(k) Revive national gender machineries to enhance the capacity of national gender focal points.

63. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called on to consider the following in the implementation of its programme of work:

(a) Build capacity for budget allocation for interventions in reducing extreme poverty and inequality;

(b) Assist with the definition of a conceptual framework of poverty and inequality to support a multisectoral implementation plan;

(c) Develop regional guidelines that provide a harmonized approach to planning and reporting processes;

(d) Provide technical support and backstop, where necessary, in the development of technology-informed policy and planning;

(e) Provide guidelines with regard to adequate budget allocation for eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality.

B. Breakout session 2 – National development plans and domestic financing: Key lessons and experiences to address poverty and inequality

64. The discussions were guided by the following questions: What are the key lessons and experiences from the implementation of national development plans? What interventions may be required to address poverty and inequality? What role can domestic financing play specifically?

Recommendations

65. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Develop and implement specific and integrated plans and programmes that address issues of poverty, inequality, gender and urbanization, with specific attention to the vulnerable and excluded groups, persons with disabilities, women and young people;

(b) Integrate peace and security dimension in poverty reduction plans and strategies;

(c) Allocate sufficient financial resources for the implementation of programmes and projects to address extreme poverty and inequality;

(d) Adopt and implement effective programme budgets for greater investment in poverty reduction interventions;

(e) Improve the collection, analysis and use of poverty-related data for effective planning and monitoring of interventions;

(f) Improve the access of groups to basic services;

(g) Strengthen cooperation between States through cross-border programmes and projects concerning gender.

66. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called upon to consider the following, in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

(a) Assist member States in effective resource mobilization through capacity-building and advisory services;

(b) Assist member States in improving the quality of indicators measuring the multidimensional nature of poverty and inequality, including gender inequality;

(c) Assist member States in strengthening the legal and institutional framework and the implementation mechanism for the promotion of gender equality;

(d) Train and strengthen the capacities of policymakers on gender finance.

C. Breakout session 3 – The role of data in assessing progress and reporting on poverty eradication and inequality reduction efforts

67. The discussions were guided by the following question: How to strengthen national data collection, monitoring and evaluation in order to enhance assessment of progress and reporting on poverty and inequality?

Recommendations

68. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Standardize data collection tools and frameworks to include, but not be limited to, gender, vulnerability, age, persons with disabilities, location, gender-based violence, climate change resilience and impact;

(b) Conduct regular national surveys to better inform policies on poverty and inequality;

(c) Develop, strengthen and digitize data collection through the development of robust, integrated information management systems;

(d) Coordinate the effort to communicate with different levels of government, and encourage the accountability of line ministries;

(e) Develop and strengthen digital platforms at individual and multisectoral levels for tracking the implementation of programmes and budgets, and links to the private sector;

(f) Ensure that budget formulation is informed by population dynamics.

69. The Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division was called upon to consider the following in the implementation and delivery of its programme of work:

(a) Widen the application of the African Gender and Development Index so that gender-sensitive plans and budgets can be designed and implemented;

(b) Provide technical assistance in developing management information systems for digitization of services for better monitoring and evaluation;

(c) Support the design and implementation of a public expenditure tracking framework;

(d) Facilitate information sharing and peer learning among member States on monitoring and evaluation systems;

(e) Provide support for accountability and transparency on resource utilization;

(f) Facilitate the establishment of value chains for creating employment for the vulnerable.

VIII. Closing of the session

70. In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked ECA for organizing the event, and all participants for their active participation and contributions to the discussions. He expressed the Bureau's commitment to continue to support the work of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division and ECA, in implementing its programme of work and encouraged Committee members to extend their support where necessary.

71. The Director in her remarks reiterated the availability of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division to provide technical support to member States on gender, urbanization and social policy issues upon request, and encouraged member States to submit relevant requests for technical assistance.

72. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:30 p.m. on Friday 15 November 2019.
