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Addis Ababa, 31 March to 2 April 2016

Report of the first session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development [final version]

Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Social Development Policy Division, convened the first session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 December 2015, under the theme: “Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: Enhancing gender-responsive and social development policies”.
2. The Committee was formed through a merger of the Committee on Women in Development and the Committee on Human and Social Development. It is a statutory body of experts and policymakers, entrusted with providing guidance and advice to the Social Development Policy Division through the review of activities implemented during the current biennium (2014-2015), and strategic vision and direction for the next biennium (2016-2017).
3. The aim of the first session was to review progress on gender and social development in Africa, and identify achievements, challenges, and implementation gaps to ensure the desired impacts. In particular, the Committee provided guidance and expert opinion on the Division’s priorities and activities, and made recommendations for strengthening ECA programmes to ensure that the needs of member States and regional economic communities were better served. Conclusions and recommendations were adopted at the end of the two-day session.
4. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad,

Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were also represented: the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The list of participants will be circulated in an information document.

I. Opening of the session

5. The representative of Sierra Leone, who had served as vice-chair of the outgoing Bureau, opened the session and welcomed participants. He briefly outlined the reasons for the merger of the two statutory committees and their achievements, and called upon the new Committee to be fully committed in undertaking its functions as outlined in the terms of reference.

II. Presentation of the evolution and terms of reference of the Committee on Gender and Social Development

A. Evolution of the Committee

6. In her welcoming remarks, the Director of the Social Development Policy Division, Ms Takyiwaa Manuh, gave a brief background to the Social Development Policy Division, which had been established in 2013 in response to the emerging issues on the continent and aligned with the strategic direction of structural transformation.

7. Noting that the theme of the Committee's first session, "Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: Enhancing gender-responsive and social development policies", was consistent with the strategic direction and rationale of the Division's establishment within ECA, she emphasized that the session would provide an opportunity to guide the Division's work in support of African governments over the next two years.

8. Drawing attention to the progress achieved on social outcomes in Africa, she underscored the critical role of experts in providing strategic direction to enable ECA respond to the needs of African member States; ECA would support member States in the harmonization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Agenda 2063 for the purposes of national development planning. Drawing on its extensive expertise and knowledge base, ECA would further generate evidence for the formulation, revision and strengthening of gender and social development policies, strategies and programmes.

9. In conclusion, she reiterated the importance of the experts' input, feedback and guidance on the outputs submitted by the Division for close alignment of its work to African priorities.

B. Terms of reference

10. The Committee's terms of reference were presented by Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Coordinator for the African Centre for Gender. She also outlined

the composition of the Committee and the role of the Bureau, which comprised a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and two Rapporteurs, each elected for two-year terms. She stressed that regional representation was critical in the composition of the Bureau: thus, each of the five regions had to select one representative and the positions on the Bureau would then be allocated among the five selected representatives.

III. Election of the Bureau

11. The following countries were unanimously elected by the Committee to form the new Bureau:

Chair:	Malawi
Vice-Chairs:	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania
Rapporteurs:	Mali, South Sudan

IV. Adoption of the preliminary agenda and preliminary programme of work

12. Following the election of the new Bureau, the preliminary agenda and programme of work for the Committee's first session were adopted unanimously by the Committee. The agenda was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Presentation of the evolution and terms of reference of the Committee on Gender and Social Development.
3. Election of the Bureau.
4. Adoption of the preliminary agenda and preliminary programme of work.
5. Presentation of the report on employment, social protection, population, youth issues and urbanization activities.
6. Presentation of the report on the work of the African Centre for Gender.
7. Presentation of the report on the development of national satellite accounts of household production.
8. Presentation of the report on the African social development index.
9. Presentation of the report on urbanization.
10. Presentation of the report on the demographic profile of African States.
11. Presentation on the African gender and development index.
12. Presentation on Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: opening inroads for enhancing gender and social development policies.
13. Presentation and adoption of main conclusions and recommendations of the Committee.
14. Closing of the first session.

13. In her opening remarks, Ms. Esmie Kainja, incoming Chair of the newly elected Bureau and Chief Director in the Ministry of Gender, Children,

Disability and Social Welfare of Malawi, reiterated the advisory role served by the Committee for the Commission, namely:

- (a) To provide guidance and expert opinion on the Division's priorities and activities;
- (b) To review past activities and future programmes;
- (c) To provide recommendations for strengthening ECA programmes to ensure that the needs of member States and regional economic communities were better served;
- (d) To provide policy guidance to ensure the relevance of activities to meet Africa's development needs and to address development challenges on the continent;
- (e) To support implementation and review of the regional and international policy agenda in relation to the Division's areas of work;
- (f) To support the partnership between ECA and the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, and with its development partners.

V. Presentation of the report on employment, social protection, population, youth issues and urbanization activities

A. Presentation

14. Presenting the report on employment, social protection, population, youth issues and urbanization activities (subprogramme 9), the Director of the Social Development Policy Division said that the core mandate of the ECA social development subprogramme was to undertake analytical and empirical research and strengthen the capacities of member States to design and implement appropriate policies that promoted inclusive and equitable sustainable development, in particular in the areas of employment and social protection, population and youth, and urbanization, and thereby accelerate the social and economic transformation of African countries.

15. Over the period 2014-2015, studies and policy work had been undertaken on health, education, youth, employment, social protection, population issues (including the demographic dividend), ageing, migration, and urbanization, in collaboration with the African Union, United Nations agencies, civil society, member States and regional economic communities.

16. The main activities under the subprogramme included analytical work, such as the Cost of Hunger in Africa study; a study examining the linkage between informal employment and inequality; a policy paper on population dynamics and structural in Africa; research activities on ageing and development in the small island developing States; a synthesis report on the demographic dividend; and a situational analysis of youth and development issues on the continent.

17. In addition, the Division was leading the African regional review of the implementation of commitments made in the Habitat Agenda, which had emerged from the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), in 1996. It was also contributing to Africa's inputs to the development of indicators for the monitoring of goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aimed to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

18. Policy and advisory support was also provided under the subprogramme, including to the Joint Labour Migration Programme, in partnership with the African Union Commission, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and it was also contributing to the design of Vision 2050, the forward-looking strategy for the East African Community. In response to the request of member States, the Division had developed the African social development index to help assess and monitor the extent of exclusion within their countries and to devise more inclusive and equitable policies.

19. That work had been undertaken in partnership with pan-African institutions, including the African Union, the regional economic communities, other United Nations entities, universities, think tanks and a wide range of civil society organizations and foundations, attesting to the trust and credibility of knowledge generated.

20. Feedback from the partner survey on the Social Development Policy Division provided by the African Union Commission, member States and research institutes indicated that ECA knowledge products had been instrumental in tackling African inequalities in the context of African transformation. The Division's analytical research was deemed to be responsive to African development issues.

21. In the next budget cycle (2016-2017), the Division would build on the knowledge generated during the 2014-2015 biennium, to ensure continuity and sustainability of the knowledge accumulated over a longer period, and would use it to influence policy. That applied in particular to the policy mapping exercise to be conducted in the next biennium, which emanated directly from the roll-out of the African social development index in 2014 and 2015. As part of that endeavour, the Division would also undertake to identify and measure the impact of policies on human exclusion, and highlight success stories and lessons learned.

22. Among the main guiding principles in selecting countries for support were the need, on the one hand, to ensure equitable geographical representation and the importance, on the other, of avoiding duplication of efforts by other actors. ECA was also trying to expand its work to countries which had not benefited much from its support. Technical assistance was provided upon the request of member States and countries were encouraged to ensure that requests were submitted in good time to be included in the programming and budgeting cycle. In that regard, the Commission's strategic framework and business plans would be shared with member States and were also available on the ECA website.

B. Discussion

23. In the ensuing discussion, participants commended ECA on the pertinence and relevance of the issues that it addressed and the results achieved during the period under review. They also drew attention to the need for ECA to provide capacity development and to enhance its knowledge platform to facilitate a dynamic and sustained exchange of experiences on a wider scale, covering an array of topics of relevance to Africa. Member States were encouraged to share information that would enrich the knowledge platforms.

24. ECA was called upon to enhance its strategy for rolling out and disseminating its knowledge products, in particular to countries not covered by its interventions. That would entail, amongst other things, building and strengthening partnerships, in particular with countries where ECA did not have a strong physical presence.

25. In view of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals with their new targets and indicators, ECA was requested to revise important tools such as the African gender development index, to take due account of those new development frameworks.

VI. Presentation of the report on the work of the African Centre for Gender (subprogramme 6)

A. Presentation

26. In her presentation of the report on the work of the African Centre for Gender (subprogramme 6), Ms. Ruzvidzo said that Africa had made some progress in meeting its commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. The 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, carried out in 2014 at the regional level and in 2015 at the global level, showed favourable outcomes on social development among the 51 reviewed countries. In terms of economic improvements, however, despite recorded average growth rates of 5-7 per cent, there was rising gender inequality across the dimensions of income and wealth and certain gender parameters showed sharp disparities.

27. Among the Centre's major achievements during the biennium 2014–2015, she identified its focus on research programmes; the development and strengthening of knowledge tools; capacity-building efforts; and technical support.

28. The Centre had also been able to influence national policy through such outputs as the following:

(a) Studies on efforts to transform Africa's agriculture through women's empowerment, conducted in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Uganda and Zimbabwe;

(b) Work on the issue of women in artisanal and small-scale mining, undertaken in Ghana, Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe;

(c) Preparation of a gender statistics toolkit on women in informal cross-border trade in Africa;

(d) Continued work on the African gender and development index, currently in its third phase.

29. The Centre's work also provided policy influence at the regional level, through the African scorecard on gender equality and women's empowerment developed for the African Union Commission. The scorecard was an efficient and easy-to-use tool for the assessment of progress by members States in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in critical sectors such as health, education, access to and control over land, finance and political participation.

30. Recalling that the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had noted the significant steps taken to put policies and legislation in place to achieve gender equality, she stressed that a great deal still remained to be done to implement those policies.

31. Technical support for gender mainstreaming in ECA and the provision of capacity-building to member States had resulted in a number of outputs. Those included the formulation of a gender strategy, which had been presented to senior management in July 2015; roll-out of the gender equality marker in preparation for the 2016 programme of work; and the further development of

knowledge platforms, such as the e-network of gender machineries and the African women's rights observatory, which had been used for outreach and as a forum for member States to share best practices. She encouraged member States to take advantage of that forum.

32. During the 2016-2017 biennium, a strong focus would be applied to women's rights and the social dimensions of women's empowerment. In that context, she noted that, despite the important strides made by African member States, gender inequality persisted in the economic and political sectors, reinforced by negative social and cultural norms, which limited the economic gains made in the last decade. Transforming negative stereotypes and eliminating persistent inequalities were crucial to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, for which the African gender and development index could be used as the overarching gender monitoring tool.

33. In conclusion, she observed that the index's third implementation phase offered member States an opportunity to implement a comprehensive, robust and multidimensional tool for development planning, which drew lessons from previous phases of the index development process. Against the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, the fourth phase of the African gender development index would be rolled out and commitments to accelerate the implementation of gender equality would be renewed.

B. Discussion

34. In the ensuing discussion, participants commended ECA on the important work that it was doing on gender, in particular in designing the African gender and development index. Countries that had benefited from the index in the second and third phases of its implementation had mainstreamed it into their planning and activities, and expressed their appreciation for the usefulness of the index. A key question raised by participants was how the new indicators on the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 could be included in the index.

35. Participants commented on the facilitative role of ECA as a pan-African convener that could open up new pathways for the sharing of knowledge, such as e-platforms on which information on best practices could be uploaded and shared. ECA needed to encourage and publicize the existence of those platforms.

36. In addition, they stressed that gender and social entrepreneurship programmes and the need for knowledge-sharing platforms should be considered by ECA in its planned activities. On unemployment, some participants emphasized that ECA should consider more studies and also provide support to women working in micro-businesses, to develop their social entrepreneurship skills.

37. The African Centre for Gender should also consider other broader issues and should focus on and campaign against child marriage, which prevented young girls from attending school, learning necessary skills and being empowered to venture out into the labour market. In that context, participants requested information on the extent of ECA engagement in the campaign to end child marriage in Africa and its engagement with other development partners in Africa on that issue. They stressed the importance of partnership between ECA and the African Union in that regard.

38. Lastly, participants commented on the need for African governments to deal with issues of cultural barriers and to tackle the causes of discrimination in access and ownership of land and education in Africa before attempting to

mainstream a rights framework adapted to the African context into their national policies.

VII. Presentation of the report on the development of national satellite accounts of household production

A. Presentation

39. Presenting the report on the development of national satellite accounts of household production, Mr. Gonzague Rosalie, Economic Affairs Officer at the African Centre for Gender, said that the exclusion from official national accounts of most services produced by households for their own consumption led to an understatement of the importance role played in the national economy by those working in the household sector, in particular women.

40. It was therefore important to compile satellite accounts of household production that imputed monetary values to services produced by households for their own account, in order to supplement the core national accounts and obtain a broader measure of national welfare. To that end, the report proposed a framework for constructing such satellite accounts of household production and discussed the policy implications of those accounts.

B. Discussion

41. In the ensuing discussion, participants underscored the importance and relevance of time-use surveys and satellite accounts of household production for recognizing and valuing domestic work in general, and the work of women in particular. They commended ECA on placing its focus on such an important area of work and urged the Commission to continue its work in that area in support of efforts by member States to design, plan, implement and evaluate policies which took cognizance of the difference between the statuses of men and women, and the differing effects of policies on them.

42. The representatives of Guinea and Uganda specifically requested assistance from ECA in undertaking time-use surveys.

43. The Committee made a number of recommendations in relation to the satellite accounts of household production, as set out below:

(a) Ministries of member States with responsibility for gender and women's affairs should take the lead in advocating the application of time-use surveys and satellite accounts of household production;

(b) Member States should:

(i) Undertake regular time-use surveys based on sound methodology to collect nationally representative, quality time-use data. The objectives of the surveys should reflect the national priorities of each country;

(ii) Make use of time-use data in national publications and formulate and evaluate policies;

(iii) Use data from time-use surveys and other information sources to compile satellite accounts of household production. To that end, critical importance attached to the engagement and ownership of accounts by member States;

(c) Non-governmental organizations should strengthen their advocacy of regular time-use surveys and satellite accounts of household production, and of time-use data to inform policymaking in African countries;

- (d) ECA should:
- (i) Ensure that time-use studies and satellite accounts of household production constituted an important focus of its work programme for the 2016-2017 biennium;
 - (ii) Assist member States in undertaking time-use studies and compiling satellite accounts of household production, and disseminate the results of the surveys by providing financing and technical assistance. That support should be aligned with the policymaking processes and structures of the countries concerned;
 - (iii) Promote the sharing of information and best practices among African countries to facilitate the conduct of time-use studies and the analysis of time-use data for the compilation of satellite accounts of household production;
 - (iv) Assist member States in using the results obtained from time-use studies and satellite accounts of household production to design, plan, implement and evaluate policies that took cognizance of the difference between the statuses of women and men;
 - (v) Undertake studies that considered and measured women's contribution to the economy beyond the household level.

VIII. Presentation of the report on the African social development index

A. Presentation

44. In his presentation of the report on the African social development index, Mr. Saurabh Sinha, Chief, Employment and Social Protection Section, said that the index had been developed in response to a request from member States for a tool to track progress in tackling exclusion and promoting more inclusive and equitable policies. The tool was a product of wide and iterative consultations with member States and other stakeholders. It offered a particular advantage in that it followed a life-cycle approach in measuring the impact of social policies on human exclusion in six key dimensions of well-being: survival, health, education, employment, productive income and quality of life.

45. He explained that the index was intuitive and simple to use in planning effective social policies that took due account of Africa's social development context. The index's overarching goal was to enhance Africa's capacity to develop policy options that would help to build more inclusive and equitable societies. The index had been rolled out to 44 member States and had also been presented to the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities, and had been introduced at a number of meetings involving civil society, United Nations agencies and representatives of the academic sector.

B. Discussion

46. In the ensuing discussion, participants acknowledged the usefulness of the African social development index and commended ECA on having introduced it and made it available to member States. They noted with satisfaction that the tool was highly relevant to Africa's development and

planning frameworks. One participant noted that the tool could be very useful in social budgeting and auditing.

47. Participants wondered how the tool could be extended to other member States, in particular those which did not participate in the subregional training workshops. They also wanted to know how it could be extended to other sector ministries, such as those responsible for education, health, gender and social development, besides those of finance and planning. The presenter informed the Committee that training courses could be organized upon official request for member States that were not covered.

48. It was pointed out that the definition of exclusion was framed within the social transformation agenda, which placed a high premium on leaving no one behind. The index used national data provided by member States. As a result, its values could not, and should not, be compared across countries since national data used different methodologies, rendering comparisons across countries very difficult. It was for that reason that, unlike other indices, the African social development index did not rank countries. The major challenge arising in the application of the African social development index was often the lack of reliable data, particularly at the subnational levels.

49. One participant informed the Committee that her country was currently implementing social protection programmes for vulnerable groups and that the African social development index would be a very useful tool in improving the targeting of beneficiaries.

50. Recognizing the relevance of the African social development index to Africa's development, the Committee made a number of key recommendations to ECA:

(a) The African social development index tool and training should be extended to all countries that were not covered in the initial capacity-building workshops across the region;

(b) ECA should go beyond ministries of finance and national planning in rolling out the African social development index and include ministries responsible for gender, education and health, among others;

(c) The data used in the computation of the African social development index should be further disaggregated, in particular in the rural areas, in order to capture the disparities between women and men, and girls and boys;

(d) The African social development index should be linked to national planning frameworks and, in particular, to social budgets and auditing using disaggregated data.

51. The representative of South Sudan requested ECA to support that country in conducting an assessment of human exclusion, with the aim of improving the targeting of beneficiaries of social protection programmes. It was decided that, since South Sudan was a special case, consideration would be given to its request for the conduct of an African social development index study.

IX. Presentation of the report on urbanization

A. Presentation

52. Presenting the report on urbanization, Ms. Edlam Yemeru, Chief, Urbanization Section, said that ECA had been providing technical assistance to member States on urbanization from the early 1960s but the issue had since

faded from the regional agenda. In 2012, the repositioning of ECA in line with the transformative agenda of the continent had re-established its work on urbanization and a separate section on that issue had been created. In 2013 and 2014, ECA had engaged in consultations and discussions with different stakeholders to help define its urbanization programme, from which the urbanization strategy had been developed.

53. She observed that urbanization was a far-reaching trend with enormous implications for Africa's growth and transformation. Only 100 years previously, 8 per cent of Africa's population had been urban but, today, 40 per cent was urban. In the past five years – 2005-2010 – Africa's urban growth rates had been 1.7 per cent higher than the global average and, by 2035, more than 50 per cent of the continent's population would be living in urban areas. In 52 African countries, urban populations were growing faster than rural populations and, by 2050, Africa's urban population would triple to 1.23 billion. For that reason, efforts were needed to harness the urbanization process for Africa's transformation and development.

54. Urbanization and structural transformation were strongly linked, as there were economic and social advantages intrinsic in urbanization. For example, 60 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) was generated in 600 urban areas but Africa had yet to harness the full potential of urbanization. Urbanization had previously been delinked from economic growth and development and it was therefore important now to mainstream it into national development planning.

55. She further noted that, to support member States in harnessing urbanization, ECA work in line with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was premised on the following: urbanization was a driving force behind inclusive social and economic growth; there were close interlinkages between urbanization and industrialization; urbanization and agricultural transformation were complementary processes; urbanization was the backbone of regional trade and integration; and urbanization presented an opportunity for efforts to tackle environmental and climate change challenges.

56. In conclusion, she said that implementation of the urbanization strategy and ECA work on urbanization would be effected through evidence-based policy research and knowledge creation; data and monitoring; capacity-building and technical assistance; and partnerships.

B. Discussion

57. In the ensuing discussion, participants welcomed the identification of urbanization as a process that was likely to have a major impact on the social development agenda of the continent. The cross-cutting nature of urbanization affected all population subgroups and all sectors. They suggested that ECA should consider looking at measures to strengthen the provision of services and decongest African cities, because there were more and more people in the urban areas. Attention was also drawn to the need for industrialization to strengthen the urban component of development.

58. Participants noted that the report on urbanization did not fully integrate a gender perspective and called for the mainstreaming of a gender dimension as urbanization affected different groups of people in different ways.

59. They also noted that ECA needed to take a holistic view of the integration of the social and environmental dimensions of urbanization. Rural-urban linkages in ECA work on urbanization should be strengthened because rural centres fed the urban centres and sustained the people living in them.

60. In response, it was pointed out that there was no dichotomy between urban and rural areas as the process of urbanization formed a continuum between the two. It was also noted that Agenda 2063 made reference to the modernization of agriculture and that urban centres provided the market for produce from the rural areas.

61. Cities needed to be able to finance their investments in order to improve services and infrastructure and create enough jobs, but for that to happen, urbanization had to be accompanied by industrialization. To a large extent, urbanization in Africa had been taking place without concomitant economic transformation.

62. The Committee recommended that the statistics used to measure urbanization should be harmonized, to ensure their comparability across the continent. ECA should support member States in developing similar indicators on urban development.

X. Presentation of the report on the demographic profile of African States

A. Presentation

63. In his presentation, Mr. William Muhwava, Chief, Population and Youth Section, highlighted population dynamics in Africa. Africa was both the fastest growing continent in the world and the youngest, and would remain so for decades in a rapidly ageing world. That suggested the need for sound demographic planning, for which reliable data were essential.

64. He clarified a misconception held by some member States that the United Nations used its own data; the United Nations relied on data generated by member States and provided through a system of questionnaires. For countries whose information was incomplete, estimates were based on the basis of previous surveys. For those submitting complete data, a process of direct estimation was followed.

65. The share of Africa's population in the world population continued to rise. In 2015, Africa had a mid-year population of 1,033 billion, accounting for some 15 per cent of the world's population. The continent's current population reflected an immense change from 1950, when it accounted for only 9 per cent of the world's population. By 2010, Africa would account for 80 per cent of the projected increasing in world population. Most countries were expected at least to triple in population, as the region had very high fertility rates and very little family planning in most regions.

66. Population in urban areas had increased mainly as a consequence of rural-urban migration. The proportion of urban dwellers in Africa, excluding North Africa, had been 37 per cent in 2014, which was lower than the world average but slightly higher than that for the least developed countries, at 31 per cent.

67. Population mobility within the continent had always been an essential element in the historical processes of social, political and economic change. Africa had experienced a 13 per cent increase in the number of migrants over the previous 10 years and 50 per cent of African migration took place within the continent. The proportion of migrants moving within the same subregion was close to 90 per cent in West Africa, 65 per cent in Southern Africa, 50 per cent in Central Africa, 47 per cent in East Africa, and only 20 per cent in North Africa. Those people moved in pursuit of jobs, often in urban areas of a neighbouring country.

68. The report stressed that, because of the youth bulge, Africa must be prepared to absorb its young people into employment, education and other social services. Cities also needed to prepare for the positive and negative consequences associated with the youth bulge.

B. Discussion

69. In the ensuing discussion, participants agreed that the release of the report on the demographic profile of Africa had been timely and they commended the focus which it placed on the integral role of population in development planning. They expressed concern, however, at the lack of any gender-based analysis in the report and stressed that it should have explored the implications for young women and men of the youth bulge.

70. In addition, they expressed the view that the report should have covered the issue of persons with disability. It was recommended that the issue of disability should be placed on the agenda for social development. The presenter noted that due account would be taken of disability and that the issue would be included in the demographic profile of Africa.

XI. Presentation on the African gender and development index

A. Presentation

71. In her presentation, Ms. Ngone Diop, Senior Gender Advisor, African Centre for Gender, said that the African gender and development index had been developed by ECA in 2004 to provide member States with a comprehensive tool to assess their progress in implementing their regional and global gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. The index had been piloted in 12 African countries and the findings had been published by ECA in 2009, its first African women's report.

72. Following the pilot study, the index had been refined and studies for the index had been extended to a further 14 countries. The current third phase of the African gender and development index process was being carried out in 13 countries, namely, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa (for technical assistance only), Swaziland and Zimbabwe. To date, a total of 39 countries had participated in studies for the index.

73. She explained that the index was an Africa-specific resource based on national statistics and informed by Africa's social, cultural, economic and political landscape. It was a composite index made up of two mutually reinforcing components: the gender status index, a quantitative measure of gender issues, which measured gender equality gaps by assessing whether women and men had the same opportunities to earn income, and the same access to and control over resources and opportunities to obtain education and live healthy lives; and the African women's progress scoreboard, which captured qualitative issues relating to the performance of the gender policies of African countries and progress in implementing regional and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

74. Unlike many such indices, the African gender and development index was not linked to countries' GDP. Instead, it measured gender equality, women's well-being and empowerment in all the social, economic and political spheres. Attention was also given to the voices and agency of women,

in other words, to their ability to make choices leading to desired outcomes, free of retribution and discrimination.

75. The results of the scorecard had been used by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission at the June 2015 session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in rewarding countries that had made progress towards gender equality.

76. She informed the Committee that the African Centre for Gender was collaborating with the African Union Commission to produce the gender equality scorecards and also with the African Development Bank to harmonize the two indices on gender equality developed by the two institutions. Countries were encouraged to use the African gender and development index in developing national plans and indicators for the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The basic rationale for the African gender and development index process was to assist Governments in streamlining and aligning their national development frameworks and visions with regional commitments under the broader framework of gender concerns.

B. Discussion

77. In the ensuing discussion, participants commended ECA on its development of a comprehensive tool which responded to their countries' specific needs and used national statistics to measure gender equality and women's empowerment.

78. Looking ahead, the Committee encouraged ECA to extend implementation of the African gender and development index to the remaining countries, to help them to monitor implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Attention was also drawn to the need to expedite harmonization of the African gender and development index and the gender equality index of the African Development Bank, to ensure synergy and to avoid duplication of effort.

XII. Presentation on the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: opening inroads for enhancing gender and social development policies

A. Presentation

79. In her presentation, Ms. Manuh said that the focus of the presentation was on two critical frameworks, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015. Both frameworks played a critical role in mobilizing consensus for development, although the responsibility for their implementation lay with member States.

80. Both frameworks emphasized inclusive equitable economic growth, gender equality, empowering vulnerable groups, ending malnutrition and enabling sustainable urbanization. They complemented each other on such issues as gender equality, social development and related actions at the national, regional economic community and continental levels.

81. She highlighted key priorities in the areas of gender and social development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as they related to the work of the Division and the implications for gender and social development policies and strategies on the continent. The areas where member

States needed support in implementing the Agenda were outlined. She stressed that member States needed to take lead in the systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and give due consideration to gender and social development in their planning.

B. Discussion

82. In the ensuing discussion, participants stressed that the mainstreaming of gender perspectives and women's issues into policies, strategies and budgets should be the responsibility of sectoral ministries. Ministries responsible for gender and women's affairs should support the sectoral ministries in their mainstreaming efforts through capacity-development interventions based on their needs, the development of guidelines and the provision of appropriate mechanisms and forums for knowledge-sharing and coordination. Egypt, Ethiopia and Rwanda were highlighted as good practices in that regard.

83. Other issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women discussed by the Committee were the need to promote regular interface between ministries responsible for gender and women's affairs and ministries responsible for finance and development planning; the need to capacitate national gender machineries on a regular basis to counter high attrition rates; the need for more effective e-discussions, including through the ECA e-network for national gender machineries for information-sharing and advocacy; and the need for member States to share knowledge and good practices.

84. Participants highlighted the fragmented nature of social protection systems on the continent and called for more integrated approaches to social protection. In addition, they highlighted the need for a single registry of civil registration and vital statistics to support integrated social protection systems.

85. The Committee recommended that member States should nominate focal points for the e-network for national gender machineries for information-sharing and advocacy that were at a high enough level to engage effectively in e-discussions; and that there should be more and better engagement with ministries of finance and economic planning, to ensure that gender issues and women's concerns were well integrated in national budgets and development planning.

86. It also recommended that ECA, for its part, should support member States by:

(a) Ensuring that the Chair of the Bureau of the Committee on Gender and Social Development attended and reported back on the outcomes of the first session of the Committee to the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, scheduled for March-April 2016;

(b) Undertaking a mapping exercise to ascertain the capacity-development needs of national gender agencies, and to identify good practices in gender mainstreaming;

(c) Providing technical and advisory support to develop gender-responsive budgets;

(d) Reinvigorating the e-network for national gender machineries for information-sharing and advocacy, to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices and more effective e-discussions on topical issues on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(e) Undertaking a study of existing social protection regimes to identify good practices and assist in developing integrated national social protection systems.

C. Contact group on opportunities for Africa from the Sustainable Development Goals

87. Following that discussion, it was agreed that participants should discuss the issues further in a contact group and report back to the Committee on the outcome of their discussions.

1. Substance of discussions in the contact group

88. Reporting back on the discussions in the contact group, participants said that opportunities in member States for the implementation and monitoring of the gender and social development-related goals and targets of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had been identified. They included the national development plans, which aimed to reduce gender inequality and eradicate poverty, while promoting social development. Some of the national policies and laws within the purview of the national development plans addressed various gender inequality-related issues, such as domestic violence, discrimination, equal pay in employment, the removal of discriminatory provisions against women from customary laws, gender equality and equity, and others. The tenets of those laws were also recognized in the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

89. They noted that member States had programmes and strategies focused on awareness-raising and advocacy on policies and laws in relation to gender equality and social development at all levels. There were opportunities to galvanize political will to support the implementation of both agendas. In addition, there were national institutions for mainstreaming gender and social development, issues which had been further entrenched in national constitutions. Within that framework, there are opportunities for sharing widely the aspirations of the two development agendas in member States.

90. In addition, to ensure the participation of women in decision-making, countries had devised affirmative action and quota systems for women, and that had been recognized in Agenda 2063. Member States emphasized that an opportunity had thereby been created to mainstream the African Union's parity principle of 50:50 (recognized in Agenda 2063) in their social, economic and political systems.

91. Most member States were in a process of developing or had already developed programmes and strategies to accelerate equal employment opportunities and to mainstream gender concerns. One country had adopted a national initiative on human development to enhance access to services by the vulnerable members of society, and to eliminate the informal sector. Others were running programmes such as microfinance schemes, specifically for women, and health and sport programmes, for women, men and young people. Avenues for wealth creation were being opened up, and awareness-raising campaigns conducted on gender equality.

92. Countries had adopted multisectoral implementation plans which incorporated broader gender and social development issues and concerns. One country drew attention to its broad-based black economic empowerment legislation, designed to fight discrimination on the grounds of race and gender in economic and social sectors. Some countries recognized that there were potential synergies with the current global and regional agendas 2030 and

2063, but they had as yet to align those frameworks to their current short, medium and long-term visions and plans.

93. Some countries had established platforms to discuss women's rights and responsibilities, which offered valuable entry points and opportunities for mainstreaming the two agendas into their frameworks and for leveraging the potential benefits of their implementation. Participants in the contact group emphasized that, in order for such opportunities to be leveraged, there must be sustained political will for national ownership of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, before efforts were made to align national development plans with those frameworks.

94. It was noted that some countries already had relevant frameworks and programmes, such as free basic education and free healthcare for mothers and children under the age of 5. Some ministries had focal points, to monitor the implementation of some of the common targets in both agendas, which were already present in national development frameworks. In that endeavour, however, they were hamstrung by a lack of effective frameworks for monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective. Although some countries had institutions such as monitoring and evaluation departments and women's departments that carried out periodic analyses of national development frameworks, there were still too few of them and they lacked the administrative capacity to ensure the satisfactory monitoring and implementation of social and gender development programmes.

2. Recommendations and requests to ECA

95. Member States requested support from ECA in their efforts to mainstream the African gender development index process into national development frameworks, while aligning the process with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. ECA needed to provide capacity-building support for the implementation of gender and social policies and laws, and also for programmes and strategies tackling discrimination. In addition, ECA must support national gender machineries which were short of staff, and lacked the funds and adequate capacity for mainstreaming and monitoring gender commitments in national processes.

96. ECA should facilitate the conduct of awareness-raising and advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment issues such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and unequal access to land and productive assets by women at the regional, subregional and national levels, to ensure the well-being of African women and of the African girl child.

97. Specifically, it was vital for ECA first to map the positions of different countries against the indices and indicators of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, before providing a generic framework for their alignment and implementation based on levels and stages of development in Africa.

98. Lastly, ECA needed to provide further support for the establishment of e-platforms for knowledge-sharing, the sharing of best practices, and the documenting of successful frameworks.

XIII. Presentation and adoption of main conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

99. The Committee commended ECA on its strategic focus and agreed that the issues that it addressed were highly pertinent for gender and social development in Africa. It expressed further appreciation for ECA work in that regard in 2014 and 2015, and also for its provision of technical support and

advisory services to member States. The Commission's knowledge products, analytical work and tools such as the African gender development index, the African social development index, the national satellite accounts for household production, the demographic profiling and the urbanization analysis were all of high quality and responded to the issues facing member States.

100. ECA was also commended on the valuable role that it played in coordination and collaboration with member States to enhance the relevance, quality and effectiveness of its work on gender and social development. The efforts made to identify the convergence of gender and social development dimensions across Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and their implications for national development planning were deemed to be both timely and valuable.

A. General recommendations

101. The Committee made the following general recommendations:

(a) Global commitments and frameworks need to be contextualized, taking into account national development priorities in Africa, and ECA should support member States in domesticating both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of gender and social development commitments;

(b) ECA should strengthen the cross-fertilization and synergy of the various components of its work on gender and social development;

(c) ECA should continue to strengthen its current good collaboration with the African Union Commission in supporting member States in the area of gender and social development in the context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(d) ECA should endeavour to support more countries in their efforts to accelerate gender equality, women's empowerment and social development, and mobilize resources towards that end;

(e) Disabled persons are an important population group in Africa and their specific needs should be taken into account in ECA work and future deliberations of the Committee;

(f) ECA should consider the important role of social entrepreneurship and innovation inspired by good practices in Africa and beyond in respect of the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment;

(g) The cultural factors underpinning the violation of women's human rights should be taken into account in future research by ECA on human rights;

(h) Member States should respond to requests from ECA for information in a timely manner;

(i) Adequate time should be provided for detailed discussion of key agenda items during future meetings of the Committee.

B. Specific recommendations

1. Urbanization

102. With regard to urbanization, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Urbanization should be considered a policy priority by member States, given its cross-cutting nature and multiple implications for national growth and transformation;

(b) Given the critical role of rural areas for growth and transformation, ECA work should support the necessary urban-rural linkages and synergies;

(c) ECA work on urbanization should be founded on a holistic approach that goes beyond economic aspects to include gender and social dimensions;

(d) ECA should strengthen its work in the area of urbanization, both in view of the opportunities that it presents, and also the concomitant challenges, including growing informality, poverty and gaps in service and infrastructure provision;

(e) ECA should emphasize the urgent need for rapid urbanization to be accompanied by industrialization to ensure job creation and the provision of services and infrastructure, and should support related efforts accordingly, taking into account context-specific trends and patterns;

(f) ECA should establish an e-platform to facilitate efforts by member States and other stakeholders to take forward the urbanization targets of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. African gender and development index

103. With regard to the African gender and development index, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) ECA should provide support to countries in harmonizing the African gender and development index with the indicators of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) ECA should support the implementation of the African gender and development index; given its resource limitations, however, the Commission cannot support such implementation in all countries. Accordingly, member States are encouraged to mobilize national resources for the implementation of the index and the use of the data in order to mainstream gender into their national policies and budgets;

(c) ECA should consider harmonizing the African gender and development index with other indices developed by other African institutions, including the African Development Bank.

3. African social development index

104. With regard to the African social development index, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) ECA has a role to play in the harmonization of social development statistics and data in Africa, to provide for their comparability;

(b) ECA should extend the coverage of the African social development index to additional countries, taking into account lessons learned in its continuing application in selected countries;

(c) In implementing the African social development index, ECA should broaden its engagement at the national level to include ministries responsible for gender and women's affairs;

(d) Beyond outlining the six dimensions of exclusion, the African social development index should provide an overall definition of exclusion and take into account the definitions used by member States.

4. National satellite accounts on household production

105. With regard to national satellite accounts on household production, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Training is needed for national statistical offices and economists on the application of the national satellite accounts methodology;
- (b) ECA is encouraged to consider women's contribution to GDP beyond the household level;
- (c) The role played by member States and their engagement in and ownership of the national satellite accounts work are of critical importance.

5. Demographic profile of Africa

106. With regard to the demographic profile on Africa, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Beyond presenting the key demographic trends, the demographic profile should analyse underlying driving forces and possible strategies to address challenges;
- (b) The demographic profile should outline gender dimensions, including in relation to urbanization and the youth bulge.

6. Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

107. With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States should prepare national plans for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (b) The continuing preparation and revision of national development plans in some African countries provides an opportunity for the mainstreaming of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (c) ECA should map and assess the differing needs of member States and their requests for assistance relating to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provide technical support accordingly;
- (d) ECA should monitor the effectiveness of its technical assistance to member States for the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (e) In domesticating Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, member States should consider gender and social development as cross-cutting dimensions for national development planning;
- (f) National gender machineries should engage ministries of Planning, finance and economy to ensure the integration of gender dimension into national planning and budgeting processes, including through existing platforms;
- (g) Member States should use information management systems to ensure the effectiveness of gender and social development programmes and that they reach their intended beneficiaries.

7. ECA support for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

108. With regard to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Committee recommended that ECA provide support to member States in the following areas:

(a) Implementation and monitoring of gender and social development targets of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Domestication and monitoring of the gender and social development indicators for both agendas through the technical and advisory services;

(c) Capacity development for the collection of gender-responsive data and statistics, including by providing training for national statistical offices;

(d) Sharing of best practices on gender and social development to support the implementation of both agendas, including through the existing ECA knowledge products and platforms;

(e) Application of the African gender development index in mainstreaming gender into national legislation systems, development planning and public finance;

(f) Advocacy and capacity-building to support harmonized national understanding and ownership of both agendas.

XIV. Closing of the first session

109. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6 p.m. on Friday, 18 December 2015.