



Economic and Social Council

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Economic Commission for Africa
Committee on Gender and Social Development
Second session
Addis Ababa, 11 and 12 October 2017

Aide memoire

I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Social Development Policy Division, is convening the second session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development, to be held in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 October 2017.
2. The Committee is a statutory body of experts and policymakers that provides guidance to and advises ECA on gender and social development issues. On the basis of its mandate, it will provide a strategic vision and direction to the Division by reviewing activities implemented during the period 2016-2017 and discussing those planned for the biennium 2018-2019. The deliberations of the Committee will result in recommendations to strengthen the ECA subprogrammes on gender and social development to better serve Africa's member States and its regional and subregional organizations.
3. The theme for the second session of the Committee, "Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: from planning to implementation of gender and social development goals for inclusive and sustainable development", provides a framework for the policy discussion. This follows on a discussion begun at the first session of the Committee, held on 17 December 2015, and the second session will offer member States an opportunity to deliberate further on what is required to address gender and social development goals in national planning and implementation processes. The outcome of the second session will contribute to framing Africa's priorities on gender and social development issues and to aligning planning processes for the effective implementation of programmes. The choice of this theme is informed by the recommendations arising out of the first session of the Committee, in which it specifically recommended the contextualization of global commitments and frameworks, taking into account national development priorities, in particular implementation arrangements for gender and social development goals in Africa. ECA was also urged to support member States in incorporating both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national development frameworks for the effective implementation and monitoring of gender and social development commitments.
4. The second session is being organized against the backdrop of ongoing planning processes to implement the regional and global development frameworks. The Committee will take note of policy recommendations of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Addis Ababa in May 2017 and the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in New York in July 2017. The themes of the two forums were, respectively, "Ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity for all" and "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

II. Objectives

5. The second session will provide member States with a platform to reflect on structural and emerging gender and social development issues within the overall regional and global development context. In addition, the effective strategies to address gender and social development issues and how the Division could support member States in this endeavour will be discussed.

6. Recalling one of the recommendations from the first session of the Committee, in which member States requested ECA to provide capacity for the implementation of transformative gender equality, women's empowerment and social policies, the second session will concern the following specific objectives:

(a) Obtain information from member States on what they are doing in terms of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and how they are addressing gender and social development issues;

(b) Present the work of the Division on gender and social development goals and receive feedback from member States;

(c) Offer support to member States on the implementation and monitoring of the gender and social development goals and of Agenda 2063.

III. Expected outputs and outcomes

7. By the end of the second session, the following outputs will be produced:

(a) A synthesized report of the Committee capturing the deliberations;

(b) Guidance from the Committee on strategic gender and social development issues on which the Division should focus;

(c) Key policy recommendations on gender and social development to strengthen planning initiatives on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

8. By the end of the second session, the following outcomes will result:

(a) Improved understanding of and appreciation by Committee members on the principles of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(b) Enhanced understanding of how gender-responsive policies could contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals contained in Agenda 2063;

(c) Enhanced understanding of the role of well-planned and well-managed urbanization in driving inclusive and sustainable growth and transformation in Africa, and the means of achieving this through national development planning;

(d) Enhanced capacity of member States to monitor the magnitude of human exclusion and formulate more inclusive employment and social protection policies;

(e) Enhanced technical capacities of African countries to regularly monitor progress on population dynamics, harness the demographic dividend and related dimensions regarding young people, and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

(f) Solid guidance provided to the Division on strategic gender and social development issues to work on in support of member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(g) Well-informed recommendations to effectively address and integrate gender and social development goals into national planning processes.

IV. Role of the Committee

9. The role of the Committee, as outlined in the United Nations proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, reads as follows:

The role of the Committee on Gender and Social Development, as an advisory forum of experts and policy makers, is to provide guidance to the Commission in its work of promoting equitable and inclusive human and social development in Africa, with particular focus on gender, employment, population and youth development, social protection and urbanization. The Committee reviews follow-up activities pertaining to global conferences and regional action programmes in the areas of social development, including the global and regional frameworks on gender equality and women's empowerment. It also reviews major trends and issues of regional interest regarding human and social development. The Committee meets biennially.¹

10. Specifically, the Committee does the following:

- (a) Provides guidance and expert opinion on the Division's priorities and activities;
- (b) Reviews past activities and future programmes;
- (c) Provides recommendations for strengthening ECA programmes to better serve member States and regional economic communities;
- (d) Provides policy guidance to ensure the relevance of activities for meeting Africa's development needs and addressing development challenges on the continent;
- (e) Supports the implementation and review of the regional and international policy agendas in relation to the areas of work of the Division;
- (f) Supports the ECA partnership with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, and with development partners.

V. Election of the Bureau

11. The Committee will elect a Bureau consisting of a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and two rapporteurs for a two-year term (2018-2019). The election of the Bureau will be held in advance of the second session. The election of the officers will be based on three criteria, namely, geography (one representative from each ECA subregion), language and gender representation.

12. The Bureau will be elected following consultations with diplomatic corps deans and the members of the Committee, the Bureau and the Secretariat of the Committee, bearing in mind the composition of the outgoing Bureau: Chair (Malawi), Vice-Chairs (the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mauritania) and rapporteurs (Mali and South Sudan).

VI. Format

13. The work of the second session will be held in plenary sessions in accordance with the attached draft agenda. Thematic presentations will be made by the secretariat followed by plenary discussions in which the Committee will make observations/comments, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

¹ A/68/6 (Sect. 18), para. 18A.45.

VII. Documentation

14. The second session will be informed by several reports of subprogrammes 6 and 9, namely:

- (a) Provisional agenda, provisional programme of work and provisional annotated agenda;
- (b) Report of the Division to the Committee;
- (c) Report on women's economic empowerment;
- (d) Report on the African Social Development Index;
- (e) Report on urbanization and national development planning for inclusive cities.

15. Other non-recurrent publications and technical materials will also be distributed for information purposes during the second session.

VIII. Participation

16. The Committee is comprised of experts from ECA member States drawn from ministries responsible for gender, social development and urbanization. In attendance as observers will be representatives of the African regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and the United Nations system, civil society organizations and academia. The Division serves as convener and secretariat of the Committee.

IX. Languages

17. The second session will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation.