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JOINT AUC-ILO WORKSHOP ON PRODUCTIVITY
AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE PROMOTION IN AFRICA
NAZARETH (ETHIOPIA), 12-14TH MAY, 2009

CONCEPT NOTE

Department for Social Affairs

INTRODUCTION

Africa is the least productive Region on the World, while the Social Dialogue practice which is pivotal to competitiveness of the nations is still a challenge for the Continent. To face this double-edged challenge, the Heads of States and Government of the African Union had committed themselves through a series of Declarations and Plans of Action since 1980.

The constant uphill struggle remains to build continent wide competitiveness capacity by effectively implementing these decisions. They conducted to the creation of the Pan African Productivity Association which have an Observer status to the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union, and to a move in Social Dialogue promotion in some countries and Regional Economic Communities, with the technical cooperation of the ILO.

The 6th Labour and Social Affairs Commission (April 2008, Addis Ababa) examined a Note on Productivity in Africa and recommended to implement the proposed strategies aiming at lifting up the level of competitiveness of the Continent. The AU Strategic Plan 2009-2012 entails provisions for the development and implementation of a “Productivity Africa Programme” with Social Dialogue, as means to meet the strategic objective on “A Common Path to attaining middle-income status by Member states”, Pillar 2.

In the purpose of contributing to better competitiveness of Africa, the African Union Commission and the ILO, in collaboration with the Social Partners and the Pan African Productivity Association have committed to engage in a long run approach to productivity improvement and Social Dialogue Enhancement. This commitment intends to facilitate the effective implementation of the AU Strategic Plan 2009-2012, as it reflects the Four Year Strategic Priority Programme on the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation.

Productivity and Social Dialogue promotion are considered as crucial levers for Africa to make its way out of the global economic and financial crisis.

The workshop would convene the AUC Departments of Social Affairs, Economic Affairs, Political Affairs and Industry, the RECs, the PAPA, the ILO and other international development partners, the European and Asian regional productivity organizations, and other African organizations involved in productivity and social dialogue promotion at national and regional levels.

A. BACKGROUND

In 1988 the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) organized the first Pan-African Tripartite Seminar on the Productivity of African Workers the results of which were condensed in Document LC/3 (XII), calling particularly for the establishment of regional productivity organizations as clusters for the creation of a pan-African productivity organization. Subsequently, Resolution

LC/Res.133 (XII) was adopted, requesting the Secretary General, in cooperation with the ILO, to assist African governments to establish productivity centers in their respective countries. In 1992, the Pan-African Productivity Association (PAPA) was established pursuant to a declaration made by Member States in Kuala Lumpur at the 7th World Productivity Congress. Today, it has six member organizations.

The OAU granted the PAPA Observer status by Resolution LC/Res.234 (XIX). On the occasion of the 20th Conference of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs held in Addis Ababa, in April 1997, the Secretary General of the OAU produced an important report on the theme “Increasing Productivity, Key to the Improvement of the Quality of Life in Africa in the 20th Century” (LSC/5(XX)).

In September 2004, at an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly, the Heads of State and Government adopted in Ouagadougou a Declaration together with a Plan of Action for the Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation, with a Follow-Up and Evaluation Mechanism for its implementation. They called for increased productivity by improving occupational health, safety and hygiene, and partnership between the public and private sectors with a view to promoting productive employment in the modern sector. They also stressed that priority should be given to the development of productivity in activities of the informal and rural sectors in order to make these sectors competitive and capable of creating the largest number of productive and decent jobs. At the 6th LSAC (Addis Ababa, April 2008), the African Union Commission presented a Briefing Note on Productivity in Africa, in view of a Commitment by the Continental Organization for a more Productive and Competitive Continent.

Since the eighties, the higher authorities of the continental organization have made the issue of productivity one of its central concerns. The 6th LSAC made the following recommendations: (i) through brainstorming should continue on this issue; (ii) there is the need to implement the strategies contained in the Note, in collaboration with social partners, Member States, RECs, the PAPA and international partners such as the ILO; (iii) the Commission should help in the establishment and/or strengthening of national and regional structures involved in the promotion of productivity, (iv) the Commission should support the PAPA by sensitizing Member States to join the organization

The Commission undertook a mission to the PAPA on July 2009; the main outcome was to prepare a Productivity Promotion Programme, in collaboration with the AUC, Social Partners and the ILO. The PAPA displays proven experience in productivity management. Its members offer various experiences according to their distinctive competence in productivity management systems in private sector, public sector, rural sector, as well SMEs and Micro Enterprises. The PAPA has capacity to implement a Continental Productivity Programme, as specialized technical wing of the African Union.

Productivity Promotion in Africa is closely linked to the development of Social Dialogue. In this respect, one can notice that the Continent is still facing an important deficit in Social Dialogue. It is broadly admitted that the promotion of social dialogue calls for the setting up of tripartite or bipartite social dialogue institutions where they do not exist and reinforcing existing ones (ILO, 2007a). The Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration extends its “SUPPORT the continuing efforts made by our governments, social partners

and civil society organizations to promote the decent work development agenda of the International Labour Organization (ILO) through achievement of the following related strategic objectives: (i) promote and implement international labour standards and, fundamental principles and rights at work; (ii) create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent income; (iii) enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; and (iv) strengthen tripartism and social dialogue”.

The Declaration calls also to “PROMOTE social dialogue and partnership among governments, social partners, civil society and the private sector, at the enterprise, sectoral, national, regional and continental levels”. Furthermore, the Priority Area 4 of the Ouagadougou 2004 Plan of Action encourages a “better sharing of productivity profits in order to increase employment creating investments and ensure better conditions for workers.” Also, the Priority Area 6 deals with the objective “*To strengthen the capacity of local, national, regional and continental institutions in promoting participation, voice, tripartism, social dialogue and partnership to ensure an equitable and efficient representation of important socio-economic interests and beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of inclusive development policies.*”.

It is worth mentioning the African Charter for the Public Service in Africa (Windhoek 2001), which will continuously improve its service level through quality, effectiveness and efficiency, speed and responsiveness. Some African Productivity Centres have gained proven experience in this field of Service Public Productivity and Quality which can yield quick progress.

The conclusions of the ILO African Regional Meeting of April 2007, in which employers’ organizations were represented, were clear on the consensus that emerged on social dialogue. Social dialogue was seen as an important element in good governance, as an efficient way of identifying best socio-economic options at national, regional and continental levels, and each country should use social dialogue to advance the decent work agenda (ILO, 2007b). In addition to effective institutionalized dialogue at regional level, concrete action need to be taken to promote social dialogue, and to measure its efficiency and effectiveness in terms of structure, composition, functioning, disputes management and application of labour conventions.

A few experiences exist in African regional economic Communities like the SADC which developed Regional Productivity Policies/Instruments, as from non African Regional Organizations like the Asian Productivity Association and the European Association of National Productivity Centers.

Interesting experiences have been developed by Member States like Senegal where a National Social Dialogue Charter was adopted and a National Social Dialogue Committee established. South Africa has established a very effective National Development Economic and Labour Council (NEDLAC). The Algerian Social and Economic Pact is another one successful experience in Social dialogue. Also some regional communities like the Economic and Monetary Community of West Africa have adopted Regional social Dialogue Framework. These experiences should be shared to guide the workshop. Indeed in order to recover from the current financial, food and fuel crisis, Africa needs to increase its productivity performance and to enhance social stability through effective Social Dialogue mechanisms.

It should be mentioned that the African Union Strategic Plan 2009-2012 entails a Strategy “Develop a Programme Productivity Africa” as part of the Strategic Objective “A Common Path to attaining middle-income status by Member States”, under the Pillar 2: development, Integration and Cooperation. This Strategy has two Expected Outputs: (i) African Productivity promotion programme developed and implemented, and (ii) Social Dialogue practice enhanced.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The Objectives of the Workshop are:

- to examine how best social dialogue and productivity can be promoted at national and regional levels; and
- to sensitize the Regional Economic Communities and enhance their capacity in Productivity and Social Dialogue Management at the political level
- to share experiences on Productivity and Social Dialogue Policy and Programmes
- to discuss and adopt a Framework on “Africa Productivity Programme 2009-2012”, as outlined in the African Union Strategic Plan 2009-2012;
- to discuss and adopt a Framework on “Social Dialogue Guidelines for Africa”.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

The workshop will consider the following agenda items:

- i) Presentation on the “Strategic Imperatives of Productivity and Social Dialogue in Africa Today” by the African Union
- ii) Presentations on Productivity and Social Dialogue by the ILO-Geneva
- iii) Presentation on Productivity: Challenges, Achievements and Perspectives, by the PAPA
- iv) Presentation of experience on Regional Approach of Productivity Promotion (SADC, ECOWAS and UEMOA)
- v) Presentation of national experiences on Social Dialogue Management (Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Algeria)
- vi) Presentation of a Regional Productivity Policy
- vii) Presentation of the Framework on “Productivity Africa Programme” by PAPA
- viii) Presentation of the Framework on “Social Dialogue Guidelines” by the ILO
- ix) Working Groups
- x) Plenary Session for Adoption of the Reports and the Frameworks on “Productivity Africa Programme” and on “Social Dialogue Guidelines”
- xi) Closing Session

D. FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop will be rolled out through technical presentation made by the UAC, RECs, the ILO, the PAPA and other sister organizations, and through two (02)

Working Groups dedicated to examination and adoption of (i) the Framework on “Productivity Africa Programme” and (ii) the Framework on “Social Dialogue Guidelines”

E. OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

The expected outcomes of the Workshop are to:

- Develop common understanding and vision on Productivity and Social Dialogue agenda in Africa, among the main stakeholders
- Adopted Draft of the Framework on “Productivity Africa Programme”
- Adopted Draft of the Framework on “Social Dialogue Guidelines”

F. PROCESS OF THE WORKSHOP

- Preparation of technical documents of the workshop with the AUC, ILO, the PAPA, SADC and other sister organizations 910-15 minutes by presentation).
- Organization of Working Groups on each of the above objectives for proposal of a “Productivity Africa Programme” and a “Social Dialogue Guidelines” .The Department of Economic Affairs will be closely associated in the preparation of the workshop in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs.
- Inviting participants from developed countries

G. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The AUC will be responsible for the invitations to the participants and the preparations of the Agenda, Programme and Documents in coordinating with the ILO and the PAPA.

Translation, and interpretation services, as well as secretariat support, will be availed for the Workshop.

H. PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include: experts from the MS Social Dialogue and Productivity organizations, PAPA, the ILO, RECs, and AUC EXPERTS and invited international partners.

I. DOCUMENTATIONS

- AU Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration and Plan of Action
- Follow-up Mechanism on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa
- AUC four Year Strategic Priority Programme (4YPP) 2008-2011
- AU Strategic Plan 2009-2012
- AU-EU Action Plan and Joint strategy (2008-2010)
- African Charter on Public Service
- Briefing Note on Productivity in Africa, LSC/EXP/8 (VI), April 2008
- LSAC 2008 REPORT, LSC/MINT/RPT (VI)
- PAPA Papers on Productivity

- ILO (2007a) The Decent Work Agenda 2007-2015 Geneva
- Conclusions of the 11th African Regional Meeting Addis Ababa
- ILO paper on Labour administration and Social Dialogue

J. FURTHER INFORMATIONS

Contact persons for any further information on the Workshop:

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