

Social protection at the heart of the EU-AU relations

Investing in people and in sustainable and inclusive societies

1. We, representatives of social movements, trade unions and governments, coming from 17 African countries, ITUC-Africa, the African social protection network, and the regional organisations UEMOA, ECOWAS and the ILO, having met from the 23rd until the 25th of November during the continental training workshop on social protection, co-organised by WSM, ACV-CSC, ACLVB-CGSLB and ITUC-Africa, on the occasion of the 5th EU-AU summit, wish to highlight the importance of social protection as a key strategy to realise the sustainable and inclusive development of our societies.
2. For us, social movements and trade unions from South Africa, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea (Conakry), Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, the regional organisations ITUC-Africa, OTUWA, RAESS and the African Multi-Actor Network on Social Protection, access to social protection for vulnerable and excluded groups is the spearhead of our undertakings. By organising people in the mutual health organisations to enjoy health insurance; by organising working women and men from the informal economy in trade unions and by providing them access to social security; by organising people in social economy initiatives to promote income generating activities. Our actions and initiatives demonstrate time and again that social protection is an important tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.
3. Social protection is a **human right**, enshrined in several international and regional legal instruments and texts such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Charter of the African Union, the Agenda 2030, the Agenda 2063 of the African Union as well as several Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in particular Convention 102 concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security and Recommendation 202 concerning National Social Protection Floors.
4. Social protection plays a pivotal role in the reduction of poverty and inequalities, and in furthering inclusive and sustainable development – by valuing human capital and by reinforcing the resilience of youth and women in particular, by sustaining internal demand and by enhancing the structural transformation of societies and their economies. Social protection guarantees every person a decent life and ensures, across the life cycle, access to essential health care, goods and services, and basic income security.
5. To date, 73 % of the world population and up to 90 % of the African population, is denied access to adequate social protection. Women and youth, who predominantly exercise their professional activities within the informal economy or in precarious working conditions, are particularly disadvantaged in this regard.

6. The absence of social protection, unemployment and underemployment, low salaries and the poverty of [their] families are among the main factors pushing youth to migrate. At the same time, we do acknowledge the positive effects of migration, for both countries of origin and destination. Young migrant workers, who have decent work, pay taxes, contribute to social security, and contribute to the development of the economy and the society in their destination country.
7. Facing this challenge, we welcome the political will and the initiatives taken by several African states to accelerate the rollout of social protection for all, based on the ILO Convention 102 and Recommendations 202 and 204. We welcome initiatives taken by regional and international organisations such as the AU, UEMOA, ECOWAS and the ILO to support member states in the implementation of national social protection policies.
8. In our countries, though, we identify several challenges and weaknesses in the implementation of effective social protection policies for all : ILO standards concerning social protection are not ratified and/or not implemented (Conventions 102, 157, 183, 189 and Recommendations 202 and 204) ; weak compliance of ratified Conventions and Recommendations; the fragmentation of social protection systems; the lack of structural and sustainable financing for inclusive social protection policies; the governance deficit affecting Social Security Funds; the poor access of working women and men of the informal economy to social protection systems; the weak portability of social protection rights between African countries; the weak link between governmental social protection policies and the initiatives and strategies developed by social and trade union movements; the lack of coherence of the interventions of donors and poor alignment with the social protection policies of African states.

Based on these findings, we call upon African governments, the regional and continental African organisations, European governments, the European Union and international organisations, present in Abidjan for the 5th AU-EU Summit, to place social protection at the heart of their policies and the cooperation between our African states and the EU.

To make this call concrete, we recommend :

To African governments and African intergovernmental organisations :

- To **ratify and transpose into national legislation** the ILO standards concerning social protection, in particular Convention 102 and Recommendations 202 concerning National Floors of Social Protection and 204 concerning the Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy.
- Develop, on the basis of these ILO standards, **holistic, inclusive and broadly supported social protection policies**, which aim at extending social protection to excluded groups – in particular the working women and men of the informal economy and the rural areas, migrant workers, with specific attention for women and youth – and which aim at progressively covering of more risks.
- Identify and **mobilise domestic resources, which are both sustainable and based on solidarity**, for the financing of the extension of social protection, in particular by means of fair

and equitable fiscal policies, the fight against corruption and the pooling of those resources available in the different existing social protection schemes.

- To establish and facilitate **fora for dialogue on social protection with the effective participation of all relevant stakeholders**, including trade unions and social movements and those active in the informal economy, which aim at strengthening cooperation between the government, social movements and trade unions and the private sector.
- Support and organise **capacity building on social protection** for the relevant stakeholders, by promoting exchanges between actors at national and regional level and by organising joint trainings.
- Develop and implement mechanisms ensuring the **portability of social protection rights** at national and continental level, in order to ensure access to social protection for migrant workers on the continent.
- Develop appropriate **employment policies** which put emphasis on the match between education, training and the needs of the labour market, adapted to African realities, and the creation of conditions conducive to investing in and integration of youth.
- Develop **fair migration policies** which, while respecting the right of every person to a life in dignity and freedom, aim at establishing legal and safe migration pathways, respect and protect the rights and properties of migrant workers.

To European governments, the European Union and international organisations:

- Commit to, in close cooperation with the African Union, its Member States and social and trade union movements, the establishment of inclusive social protection policies and to allocating sustainable financing and technical expertise.
- Take care of a **better harmonisation and the coherence** of its interventions in the field of social protection, **aligning** them with the national policies adopted by States, with the involvement of trade unions and social movements and drawing on the expertise that is available locally.

Social movements and trade unions commit themselves to :

- **Reinforce synergies and networking** between civil society organizations (social movements and trade unions) at national and supranational level, in order to develop joint actions of **sensitization and promotion** of social protection and in order to develop joint advocacy actions on the ratification and implementation of international labour standards on social protection.
- **Strengthen the capacities** of social movements and trade unions so that they can better take up their role in the development, implementation and follow up of social protection policies, like the governance of social security institutions and social dialogue.
- Strengthen the **organization of workers in the informal economy**, in order to include their needs and challenges in the fora for civil society dialogue and social dialogue, and to extend social protection towards informal economy actors.

- Invest in a proactive way and based on their own vision and policies on social protection, in the **dialogue and reflexion on the extension of social protection with governments, regional and continental organizations**, with the perspective of developing a common vision and better synergy of action between the different actors.

Participating organizations:

COSATU (South Africa),

CGTB, APROSOC, Multi-actor Network on Social Protection of Benin (Benin),

RAMS, CNTB, Multi-actor Network on Social Protection of Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso),

CSB, COSYBU (Burundi),

DIGNITE, UGTCI, FESACI, Humanistes (Ivory Coast),

TUC (Ghana),

CNTG, PPSOGUI (Guinea Conakry),

COTU (Kenya)

UTM, Multi-actor Network on Social Protection of Mali (Mali),

CLTM (Mauritania),

CNT (Niger),

NLC (Nigeria),

CSC (Democratic Republic of the Congo),

COTRAF (Rwanda),

CNTS, GRAIM, Multi-actor Network on Social Protection of Senegal (Senegal),

TUCTA (Tanzania),

Multi-actor Network on Social Protection of Togo (Togo),

ITUC-Africa, OTUWA,

RAESS

WSM, ACV-CSC, ACLVB-CGSLB, CM-MC (Belgium)

African Multi-Actor Network on Social Protection <https://www.protectionsociale-afrique.org/>