

Aide-Memoire

**Launch of the
African Social Development Index (ASDI)
Sub-regional Report for North Africa**

Organized by

**The Social Development Policy Division (SDPD)
and the Sub-Regional Office for North Africa (SRO/NA)
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

**Tunis, Tunisia
20 September 2016**

A. BACKGROUND

Despite two decades of fast and sustained economic growth, Africa has not yet succeeded in translating economic gains into commensurate social development outcomes. The slow progress towards social outcomes is replete with high inequalities, suggesting that growth has not been sufficiently inclusive and equitable for all segments of the population.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been at the forefront for promoting the economic and social transformation in Africa. The economic transformation agenda calls for putting ‘Africa First’, building on its comparative advantage and shifting towards increased productivity with a focus on adding value through commodity-based industrialization and deeper regional integration. The social transformation needs, in turn, to ensure that economic development translates into meaningful job creation and improved well-being of Africa’s populations.

To achieve this, ECA has recently proposed a new paradigm for inclusive development that builds on addressing human exclusion throughout the life-cycle. Conceptually, human exclusion can be defined as *‘the reflection of economic, political, institutional and cultural barriers that are manifested in deprived human conditions and that limit the capacity for societies to grow with equity and foster social and economic transformation’*¹. Hence, the focus is on the impact that the contextual determinants (social, economic, political/institutional and cultural), and their interactions with social policies and programmes, have on improving people’s lives and on promoting a more inclusive and equitable development.

To accompany this paradigm, ECA has developed a tool, the African Social Development Index (ASDI), to help member States track progress towards reducing human exclusion. In particular, the ASDI aims at estimating the depth of exclusion in six key dimensions of well-being across the life cycle, including health, education, employment, means of subsistence and decent life. Based on available data, the ASDI will help to capture the differential impacts of exclusion on gender, urban/rural and sub-national levels. Finally, the historical findings of the ASDI will be instrumental in identifying and assessing the effectiveness of social policies in reducing human exclusion over time.

B. RATIONALE

The ASDI fills an important gap insofar as it allows countries to position their social transformation efforts in a continental context, while serving as a ‘compass’ to identify successes and lessons learnt in the implementation of social development policies at national and sub-national levels. Indeed, an important role of ECA in this project is to strengthen the capacity of member States to identify and implement initiatives that address the key drivers of social and human exclusion in Africa.

¹ECA (2015), *The African Social Development Index (ASDI): Measuring Human Exclusion for Structural Transformation*, Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa

Against this framework, an important step will be to provide guidance to member States on the potential use of the tool for mapping and assessing inclusive social policies. To enhance the impact, ownership and sustainability of this initiative, the implementation of the ASDI includes a strong capacity building component, in which data collection, production and analysis of results will be led by experts from relevant ministries and national statistical institutions.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

Following the ASDI capacity-building trainings that were conducted in Cairo and Cotonou in June 2015, the ASDI has been produced and the results consolidated into five sub-regional reports. The main objective of this meeting is to launch the ASDI report for North Africa, with consolidated results from six participating countries². The analyses in this report are expected to support policy makers in the design and implementation of more effective and inclusive social policies. More importantly, the ASDI will serve as a monitoring tool and will be instrumental in the process of domestication and implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs in each country.

D. PARTICIPATION AND FORMAT OF THE LAUNCH

The launch will be a half-day event, and will be attended by senior officials from each participating country who have contributed to and validated the country results. It will also benefit from the presence of key representatives from sub-regional organizations in North Africa – including research institutions development partners and civil society organizations.

E. PARTNERSHIPS

In building synergies with other UN agencies and pan-African institutions dealing with social policies in Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa will work collaboratively with UN agencies, regional institutions and other development partners in North Africa.

F. VENUE AND DATES

The launch of the report will take place at the Grand Hotel in Tunis, Tunisia, on Tuesday, 20 September 2016.

G. CONTACTS

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