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TOWARDS
AN AFRICAN REGIONAL
SOCIAL POLICY

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TOWARDS AN AFRICAN REGIONAL SOCIAL POLICY

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I. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Overview of Social Challenges in Africa:

1. Despite recent positive GDP growth performance in many African countries, the continent has registered slow progress in the fight against poverty. Due to a variety of historical and present-day causes, human deprivation is acutely felt in Africa. An overwhelming majority of Africans are caught in a vicious circle of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. These adversities combine in a destructive manner to further complicate other social problems. Addressing these social challenges is necessary for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and bringing prosperity to the population of Africa.

2. These social challenges do not only have a high human cost, but also incur significant economic losses for the region. Uncertainty and instability discourages private investment. High poverty and inequality result in small domestic markets, with insufficient demand to foster growth and economic development.

3. Addressing Africa's social development is an urgent priority. Ministries of Social Development, Labour and Social Security, and other related Ministries in each of the African countries are working towards this at the national level. However, the benefits of cooperating at the regional level have been generally overlooked. This document addresses regional policies for the following social challenges of Africa:

- a. Employment and Decent Work
- b. Social Protection
- c. Cross-border Aspects of Health
- d. Higher Education and Regional Research
- e. Housing
- f. Social Regulation of Services and Water, Electricity and Other Utilities
- g. Disaster Prevention, Management and Mitigation
- h. Gender
- i. Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Refugees and Minorities
- j. Human Rights, Social and Economic Empowerment

1.2. Overview of Regional Responses: AU, NEPAD and Sub-Regional Economic Communities

4. **The African Union (AU).** At the Third Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union held on April 18-23 2005 a Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa was tabled (EXP/LSC/5 (111)). It envisaged that Regional (Pan African), Sub-Regional (e.g SADC), and National Programmes would be developed by the AU Social Affairs Department working with the UN, ADB, and the ECA. It continued: "However, one vital condition for meaningful ownership by the countries is their full involvement in the formulation of the programmes" (para. 117). The Draft

Social Policy Framework for Africa is a pioneering document that brings social policy at the forefront of AU's regional agenda.

5. **NEPAD.** The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the socio-economic programme of the African Union, has increasingly become the cornerstone and driver of development on the continent. NEPAD, created in 2001 under the African Union, is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent. Issues such as escalating poverty levels and the continued marginalisation of Africa need a new radical vision and new plans, championed by African leaders, to guarantee Africa's renewal.

6. NEPAD's primary objectives are: (i) to eradicate poverty; (ii) to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; (iii) to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and (iv) to accelerate the empowerment of women. NEPAD works with regional Action Plans and, despite its objectives, these have mostly focused on economic and governance topics, leaving social development lagging behind. Until 2006, NEPAD Action Plans have dealt with social development only in its human development aspects, education and health. This is insufficient for achieving NEPAD's objectives. Social policies to promote equity, decent employment and social integration are necessary to ensure social development. The broader thrust of numerous NEPAD documents clearly demonstrate a greater awareness of the need for comprehensive social policy at the national, regional and continental level. The opportunity can now be taken to strengthen the Social Policy Dimension of NEPAD in tandem with the further development of the Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa.

7. A number of African governments have recognized these gaps and have suggested the development of an African Regional Social Policy to become part of NEPAD Action Plans. The United Nations Commission for Social Development and the 2005 United Nations World Summit have welcomed NEPAD and urged African countries to better incorporate social dimensions among the priorities of the New Partnership.

8. **SADC.** Subsequently SADC partners took the initiative to elaborate a more operational SPF for Africa, commencing by the position of the SADC sub-region. SADC has developed an infrastructure and capacity for the implementation of sub-regional social policy. It has established Directorates of Food; Agriculture and Natural Resources; Trade Industry, Finance and Investment; Infrastructure and Services; Social and Human Development and Special Programmes; and HIV and AIDS. The SADC 2000 Health Policy included cooperation in terms of communicable diseases and the referral of patients between member states. Sub-regional Education Policy was the focus of a needs assessment in 1998. The SADC NGO FORUM is long established providing a sub-regional civil society voice in SADC affairs.

9. At the same time it was suggested that these deliberations be fed into the NEPAD process to strengthen the Social Dimension of NEPAD with a view to put forward

specific programmes to be implemented using various funding options, including possible use of donor funds.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT.

10. In the context of the above, this document:
- a) Articulates a conceptualisation of Social Policy at National and Regional levels to inform the social policy dimension of NEPAD
 - b) Builds on the AU's Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa to Develop a Regional Social Policy Framework for the SADC region.
 - c) Proposes a series of Regional Statements of Policy and Programmes that could be implemented as NEPAD projects with donor funds addressing the following social challenges:
 - Employment and Decent Work
 - Social Protection
 - Cross-border Aspects of Health
 - Higher Education and Regional Research
 - Housing
 - Social Regulation of Services and Water, Electricity and Other Utilities
 - Disaster Prevention, Management and Mitigation
 - Gender
 - Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Refugees and Minorities
 - Human Rights, Social and Economic Empowerment
 - d) Suggests a road map and next steps to be taken to reach agreement on a SPF for Africa and a set of social policy programmes in NEPAD
 - e) Suggests a set of feasible proposals for the institutionalisation of Social Policy within NEPAD and the AU.

11. Because NEPAD already has programmes in education and health this document pays less attention to these sectors and more to employment and social protection except where there is a clear overlap between the policy sectors. Thus in the formulation of education and health policy it is important to address the impact of any user charges on the standard of living of poor users. Issues of equitable access through free services or the establishment of funds to cover the cost to poor people become important. . By the same token this document pays attention to HIV/AIDS not so much from the standpoint of its prevention and treatment but from the social consequences of the pandemic. Issues of orphan allowances for example are addressed.

III. DEFINING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL POLICY

III.1. National Social Policy

12. Comprehensive social policies are an urgent priority to achieve development objectives and to build nations that are socially inclusive, economically robust and politically stable.

13. For the purposes of this document, social policies at the national level are collective state-lead measures, implemented by the central and local governments and other stakeholders such as organized employers and workers, the broader private sector and civil society, as well as international development partners. Social policies are interventions which are about promoting the well being of all citizens and which address structural inequalities in wealth, ensure greater equity and equality for all, correct market shortcomings, reduce poverty and promote social inclusion.

14. Social policy at national level can also be described in terms of *sector investments and programmes* in the fields of employment, social protection, education, health, housing social services and utilities (water).

15. Social policy at national level has also can also provide mechanisms of *social redistribution* (land reform, taxation, cash transfers, targeted subsidies), *social regulation* (of business, trade and agriculture to ensure they serve a social purpose) and *social rights* (to enable citizens to make claims about social entitlement from their governments)

16. National social policies address a range of *social issues and concerns* such as unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion and can promote redistribution, equity, social justice, solidarity and integration. Sound social policies facilitate consensus building at the national level and help to prevent and manage conflicts.

17. Social policies are justified not only from a humanitarian viewpoint; they are an economic and political need for future growth and political stability.

- Investing in people enhances the quality and productivity of the labour force, thus improving the investment climate and, hence, growth.
- Raising the incomes of the poor increases domestic demand and, in turn, encourages growth; greater consumption ratios among lower income groups contribute to expanding the domestic market.
- Highly unequal societies are associated with lower rates of growth. Unequal societies are not only unjust but also cannot guarantee social and political stability in the long term, which is a barrier to economic growth.
- Among children, poverty and malnutrition damage health, cause pre-mature death, and impair cognitive abilities, resulting in lower productivity in future adults, a high burden for a country.
- Historical evidence shows that social development accompanied industrialization and economic development in most countries. In Europe and East Asia's 'late

industrializers', social investment was an integral part of modernization processes, nation building, and productive development.

18. Social policy and economic policy are therefore interdependent as well as synergistic, and NOT antagonistic. Economic and social policies need to be promoted in parallel, in a mutually reinforcing way, from an early development stage, as part of the country's national development strategy. All economic policies have different distribution impacts and it is essential that national development is based on decent work and macroeconomic and sector policies that rise people's incomes and foster social inclusion. Social and economic policies should be integrated, promoted in parallel, in a complementary manner.

III.2. Regional Social Policy

19. Regional and sub-regional social policies represent an extension of national social policies, and should be consistent with national social policy objectives. Regional social policies address issues that require intergovernmental cross-border cooperation on issues of rights, regulation and redistribution in the areas of (a) social sector investments, (b) social issues at a cross-national level and (c) human rights and empowerment.

20. Common positions are also important to strengthen Africa's voice in world affairs and reinforce Africa's role in international decision making.

MAIN AREAS OF REGIONAL SOCIAL POLICY

- I. Intergovernmental cross border cooperation in sector investments and programmes in the fields of employment, education, health, social protection, housing and utilities.
- II. Intergovernmental cross border co-operation on policies which address *social issues and social problems* such as poverty and social exclusion, and policies which promote redistribution, social justice and equity, social solidarity and social integration (e.g. redistribution such as regional social funds or regional disaster mitigation funds, regulation of inter-regional labour market issues or utilities)
- III. Cooperation to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms (e.g. sub-regional charters of human and social rights and observatories to monitor progress).

21. Typical regional programmes to be included in a NEPAD Action Plan may include:

- Joint capacity building, learning from best practices
- Division of labour (e.g. regional training centers or research centers, given there is no need to create them in each country and there are benefits from developing economies of scale);
- Joint programmes for international risk pooling (e.g. Crop and cattle insurance and reinsurance, disaster prevention and management);
- Harmonizing regulations (e.g. regulation of utilities like water, electricity to ensure access and affordability by the poor);
- Regional investments (e.g. funds for addressing different social policy common priorities).

III.3. Regional Social Policy and National Sovereignty

22. Interstate cooperation on social policy is a voluntary accession to policies and codes that does not challenge the principle of sovereignty in a fundamental sense. As states agree to the codes and practices, they are the authors of their destiny and consent to bind themselves to measures that may constrain their exercise of power. This is not the same as other states or bodies imposing their will on a nation state. Consensual and self-binding measures only commit states to aligning national policy with the broad principles of the programme. Through intra-state collaboration, no state concedes sovereignty. Cooperation of neighbouring states on regional and common policy priorities has the potential to make each one better off.

23. Intergovernmental cooperation also facilitates the articulation of a common regional or sub-regional position on international issues and hence increases the strength of the African voice in global forums. An African Regional Social Policy could then contribute to the emergence of a common global social policy.

IV. TOWARDS SUB-REGIONAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL POLICIES FOR AFRICA AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS IN NEPAD ACTION PLANS

24. Utilizing the conceptualization of national and regional social policy set out above, this section presents programme areas for Sub-regional and Regional Social Policies for Africa. Each area starts by a brief statement defining its relevance, and continues listing some possible options for potential programmes, for future international funding.

**REGIONAL SOCIAL POLICY:
RIGHTS, REGULATION AND REDISTRIBUTION**

A. SOCIAL SECTORS:

1. Employment and Decent Work
2. Social Protection
3. Cross-border Aspects of Health
4. Higher Education and Regional Research
5. Housing
6. Social Regulation of Services and Water, Electricity and Other Utilities

B. SOCIAL ISSUES:

1. Disaster Prevention/Management/Mitigation (Social Dimensions of)
2. Gender
3. Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Refugees, Minorities;

C. HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Human Rights, Social and Economic Empowerment

Employment and Decent Work

Context: : In 2004 the Ouagadougou Plan of Action adopted by Heads of State in Africa committed to develop strategies for generating decent and productive work, and to explicitly address employment generation issues in national poverty reduction strategies. This was reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit, when African governments committed to support “full employment and decent work for all... as a central objective of our... national development strategies” The decent work agenda is officially supported by UN agencies and by major financiers like the EU. The decent work agenda involves (i) social pacts for employment-generating economic policies; (ii) labour standards and fair income, (iii) skills development for enhanced productivity and (iv) social protection for all. Additionally, the AU has been developing Frameworks for Integrating Employment Policy in different African sub-regions.

- **Policy Statement:** Creating jobs in both rural and urban areas is a top priority to reduce poverty. Creating decent employment is a result of employment-sensitive economic policies, combined with adequate labour market interventions. Skills training is essential for productivity enhancement.

- **Potential Programmes:**

- Capacity building activities to:
 - Ensure policy-makers understanding of the links between economic and social policies;
 - Enhance inter-ministerial cooperation (economic and social sectors) to ensure that economic policies are employment generating;
 - Promote sharing of experiences and best practices in the areas of employment, sustainable livelihoods and labour standards to combat Africa's race-to-the-bottom;
 - Appropriate legislative frameworks that strike a balance between economic efficiency and labour protection, and create disincentives for migration;
 - Strengthening capacity of labour market institutions in areas such as employment statistics and labour inspections, to better inform social dialogue for evidence-based and employment sensitive economic policies.
- Establish regional funds for:
 - Programmes for employment generation and for promoting formalization of informal work (promoting small and medium enterprises, cooperatives, wage subsidies, public works, guaranteed job schemes, and special employment programmes for women, youth, and persons with disabilities);
 - Skills development programmes (training and retraining of labour to enhance employability and productivity).
- Collaborate with the Infrastructure Unit in the NEPAD Secretariat to integrate regional public works programmes into cross-border developments.

Social Protection

***Context:** National Risk Management and Social Protection Strategies, including country-specific vulnerability profiles, have been developed in several African countries. Efforts have also focussed on social insurance (health, old-age, disability), social assistance and other instruments such as community-based social funds. Additionally, in March 2006, the African Union and the Government of Zambia held an intergovernmental conference on social protection in Livingstone, Zambia, that brought together ministers and senior representatives from 13 African countries. The delegates at the conference called for social transfer programmes, including the social pension and social transfers to vulnerable children, older persons and people with disabilities and households to be a more frequently utilized policy option in African countries; so African governments to put together national social transfer plans within two-three years that are integrated within national development plans and within national budgets, and that development partners can supplement.*

- **Policy Statement:** Social protection is important for both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups, as it has defensive and enabling dimensions. It can reduce their

exposure to risks and to enhance their capacity to protect themselves against various hazards including loss of income. Social protection instruments, particularly social pensions and social assistance, are a priority instruments to expedite poverty reduction, and tools to initiate a positive spiral of aggregate demand in local and national markets. Social protection also has an enabling function as it unlocks human potential to engage in higher productivity and profitability businesses and livelihoods.

- **Potential Programmes:** Capacity building activities to promote social protection in the region. These may take the form of:
 - Best practices in Vulnerability Assessments, benefit determination, eligibility criteria, (child care, aged pensions, disability, war veteran, foster care for HIV and AIDS orphans, unemployment), actuarials, targeting vulnerability, institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation;
 - Establishing an infrastructure for the effective delivery of pensions, especially in areas where banking facilities and ICT are unavailable, ensuring the secure transport of cash to isolated areas, especially in post-conflict environments with a high prevalence of armaments;
 - Awareness campaigns on social assistance, so vulnerable populations can access benefits; where women are recipients, campaigns to prevent inter-family violence, as this should not lead to or exacerbate spousal abuse;
 - Social protection programmes specifically addressed to community development needs.

Cross- Border Aspects of Health

Context: There are several international initiatives to control the spread of vector-borne and other diseases, such as the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Programme of Action 2003-2007 (Appendix G). These initiatives need to be strengthened to avert cross-border transmission.

Policy Statement: Cross border co-operation on the development of accessible and affordable quality health care is essential. The cross-border spread of diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Avian Flu, Chikungunya, etc) must be prevented and collaborative efforts between governments strengthened.

Potential Programmes: Capacity building programmes to:

- Develop early warning systems of epidemics coupled to the regional coordination of specialists for rapid deployment to effected areas;
- Bolster the ability of border controls to monitor the movement of persons from and into affected areas;
- Establish effective procedures for disinfecting people, livestock and vehicles;

- Ensure that users of regional road corridors are aware of anti-HIV and AIDS practices;
- Promote curative and preventative health services for women of reproductive age. The challenges of reproductive health are large, and free public services are advised, given their positive impacts on (i) women's health, (ii) infant and toddler health, and (iii) fertility regulation;
- Facilitate regional access of citizens to specialised health care facilities through partnerships;
- Share expertise in primary and community-based care;
- Coordinate regional procurement and production of pharmaceuticals, including retroviral drugs, to standardise prescriptions where appropriate and benefit from economies of scale;
- Signing agreements for exchange programmes, and promoting training of health personnel;
- Investigate the viability of mobile medical and health care units to ensure that rural communities have access to diagnosis and treatment;
- Coordinate a systematic campaign to rid the region of damaging, yet preventable, diseases like malaria and various water-borne diseases that impact on health;
- Coordinate approaches to global funds.

Higher Education and Regional Research

Context: The erosion of public expenditures on higher education in some African countries due to structural adjustment combined with the brain drain of the few highly trained African experts into aid industry has led to the reduction of research capacity in the field of social policy. Addressing lack of funding is an urgent priority. Given resource limitations, there are major advantages from regional division of labour in research.

- **Policy Statement:** Higher education must be supported on a regional scale to create professional capacities for the public and private sectors, and to contribute to higher quality research. Research is the foundation of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of effective social policies. In order to implement and drive effective social policies at both the national and regional levels, the building of a research evidence base for social policy is critical.
- **Potential Programmes:** Programmes for capacity building to:
 - Bring evidence-based research into policy-making;
 - Support policy-making by looking at the distributional impacts of different national policies;

- Develop and apply indigenous knowledge systems for national and regional development;
- Establish and manage a fund for providing regional academic fellowships to build research capacity in national and regional institutions;
- Identify regional areas for policy analysis and evaluation;
- Support regional tertiary education and academic networks;
- Strengthen statistical capacity and primary data collection for adequate regional research.

Housing

Context: Vast inequalities of housing and housing standards are to be found across the region. The World Summit for Social Development (1995) Programme of Action states that “homelessness and inadequate housing and unsafe environments” are all aspects of poverty which should be eradicated.

- **Policy Statement:** Adequate housing is a basic human need and the provision of decent housing is an essential component of social policy directed at eliminating poverty and social exclusion.
- **Potential Programmes:**
 - Encourage cross border cooperation to share good practice on the provision of adequate housing, to improve access to housing and quality of dwellings;
 - Support cooperation in the area of housing finance for low-income households;
 - Share expertise on assessments for housing need drawing e.g. on the experience of UN-HABITAT.

Social Regulation of Services and Water, Electricity and Other Utilities

Context: Globalisation and the GATS within the WTO have increased the opportunity for global private providers of utilities (water, energy), health and education services to operate across borders. While bringing new investment such providers may not be interested in universalising access or affordability issues.

- **Policy Statement:** Private providers of water, energy, health and education services need to be regulated to ensure equitable access by the poor (when possible free) and good quality services (e.g. drinking water).
- **Potential Programmes:** Capacity building programmes to:
 - Establish a regional regulatory authority with the power to enforce the contractual terms of universal access agreements and ensure oversight of service providers;

- Collaborate with the NEPAD Secretariat's unit on infrastructure to facilitate public and private partnerships in the development of regional services infrastructure, ensuring expansion of coverage of utilities and services to all citizens and that those are affordable and, when poverty and destitution are very high, free through subsidies;
- Ensure civil society participation as stakeholders in service provision;
- Protect sources of water (e.g. wells).

Disaster Prevention, Management and Mitigation

Context: Regional efforts at coordinating disaster management exist in NEPAD (lumped under Agriculture), AU, SADC. and some organizations like the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent in the areas of food security, floods, cyclones and tsunamis. These efforts need to be expanded regionally. These efforts need to be harmonized and expanded given the importance of the topic. Other world regions are creating regional funds (e.g. on 11 November 2006, Southeast Asian countries created a regional fund to help fight forest fires in Indonesia that have spread smoke across the region).

- **Policy Statement:** Collaboration between states to prevent, manage and mitigate disasters is essential to avoid human and economic losses.
- **Potential Programmes:**
 - To build capacity to predict and prevent disasters, to mitigate their impact and to respond and cope with their consequences:
 - Establish effective regional early warning systems for:
 - Food security by coordinating agricultural information from member states on expected crop yields and droughts,
 - Floods based on seasonal rainfall;
 - Develop capacity for Vulnerability and Disaster Preparedness Plans;
 - Investments to ensure:
 - Effective food storage facilities/food banks and transport logistics;
 - Effective emergency transport for evacuation in case of floods, typhoons and tsunamis;
 - Establish regional agricultural insurance instruments —ie. crop and cattle insurance;
 - Build Regional Disaster Response Teams with strong logistical capacity and study where institutionally they will be best placed (ie. RECs, closer to where disasters occur);
 - Establish infrastructure and resources for regional emergency relief funds;
 - Coordinate the collection and interpretation of relevant regional satellite geophysical data.

Gender

***Context:** African ministers in charge of gender and women affairs met at the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+10), in Addis Ababa, October 2004, and reaffirmed and renewed their commitment to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment as agreed in Cairo, Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. Additionally the codes in the SADC Charter on Fundamental Rights as well as the Declaration by SADC Heads of State or Government on Gender and Development fully support women's empowerment.*

- **Policy Statement:** Development must provide equal opportunities for men and women of all African countries and empower women to ensure they benefit as much from development processes.
- **Potential Programmes:** Capacity building programmes to:
 - Establish effective monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure and document progress on gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels (e.g. Observatories);
 - Establish a fund for supporting gender mainstreaming in all aspects of development;
 - Establish where they do not yet exist the equal legal rights of women with regard to the economic, the law and the political system, and effectively promote their implementation;
 - Prioritise the reproductive rights of women in health programmes including the free distribution of condoms;
 - Prevent and combat human trafficking, in particular criminal practices against women and children;
 - Make utilities accessible and affordable to population, taking into consideration the important role of women as caregivers (fetching water, collecting firewood, etc);
 - Prioritise women friendly employment practices such as child care facilities at work and affirmative action;
 - Formalizing unpaid care work is a way to increase the position of women;
 - Improve the social status of woman and ensure that they reach decision-making positions;
 - Ensure that employment and freedom of association codes, as set out in the SADC Social Charter, are effectively implemented with regard to women's rights.

Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Refugees and Minorities

***Context:** Following the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the World Social Summit (1995), the World Program of Action for Youth (1995), the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), and the International Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006), African countries followed*

with regional initiatives such as the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in Africa in 2002, an instrument to guide member countries in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national policies on ageing to address the individual and collective needs of older people. This was followed by subregional initiatives – e.g. SADC Social Charter refers explicitly to older persons and persons with disabilities. International agreements supporting the protection of refugees, including the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, also provide a framework for international cooperation. In addition, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement further reflect international commitments to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs).

- **Policy Statement:** Social policy striving for a society for all requires special attention to the needs of children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and minorities.

- **Potential Programmes:** Capacity building programmes to:
 - Draft and implement National Action Plans for Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with international agreements at global and regional level;
 - Establish effective monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that policy objectives in the Conventions of the Rights of Children and Persons with Disabilities are implemented effectively;
 - Implement the objectives of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities and support the Secretariat;
 - Establish and manage funds to support results of National Action Plans for Children, Youth, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, and countries ratifying the Conventions of the Rights of Children and Persons with Disabilities;
 - Establish regional funds to assist refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs);
 - Cooperate with NEPAD's e-Learning initiative, ensuring access to minority groups and youth, including in rural areas.

Human Rights, Social and Economic Empowerment

Context: The UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ILO's Labour Standards, the Africa Charter of Rights and Sub-regional charters such as SADC's all establish a human rights framework for governments and regional associations to work within

- **Policy Statement:** Empowering people and governments to respect, promote and protect rights is critical to ensure shared social and economic development and social inclusion.

- **Potential Programmes:** Programmes for capacity building to

- Support cross border regional and sub-regional NGOs addressing cross border social issues;
- Strengthen or develop Observatories to monitor adequate protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Develop cross border Social Consultative Councils to facilitate regular consultations between Ministers of Social Development and trade unions and other social partners and interest groups;
- Support Human Rights Regional Councils to mediate human rights issues at regional level in accordance with existing bodies in the region.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

V.1. Institutional Requirements of a Regional Social Policy for Africa and its Sub-Regions

25. The ways and means may involve:
- i. Strengthening the National Ministries of Social Development/Social Policy/Community Development/Labour, etc. and mainstreaming social perspectives across all other Ministries.
 - ii. Strengthening the capacity of Sub-Regional Secretariats, e.g. SADC, to deal with Social Policy Issues and mainstreaming social perspectives across all other Directorates.
 - iii. Strengthening the capacity of AU and NEPAD Secretariats to deal with Social Policy Issues, and mainstreaming social perspectives across all other sectors.
 - iv. Ensuring the participation of the donor community, ECA, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, World Bank, AfDB, EU, UNDESA, other UN centers and agencies, bilateral donors and the several global funds in the institution and capacity building required for national and regional social policy, whilst accepting and recognizing the need to allow funds to flow through the Regional Social Policy authorities.
 - v. Establishing selection, monitoring and evaluation systems and criteria for the social policy programmes.
 - vi. Develop peer review mechanisms.

V.2. Financing of Regional Social Policies

26. Developing policies and programmes at the regional level as described above requires funding. Funding may originate in NEPAD, the Global Solidarity Fund or a new fund to be created, with adequate institutional arrangements and good-governance to attract donor financing. Sound management practices and controls must be put in place to ensure prudent and efficient use of resources.

V.3. Road Map

27. Issues discussed at the Senior Officials and Ministerial Meeting *NEPAD: Towards an African Regional Social Policy* held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 21 – 24 November, 2006 were essential to the development of a Sub-regional SADC Social Policy. Discussions were based on contributions provided by the participating governments. Agreements reached at the meeting represent a consensus of the participants and were made after comprehensive and thorough discussions.

28. This document and the following roadmap were endorsed by the Ministerial Meeting on 24 November 2006. Concern was also expressed regarding the consistency of diplomatic efforts in this context. It is therefore essential to ensure coordination and coherence in addressing issues of regional social policy implementation. Country representatives present at Johannesburg committed themselves to disseminating and discussing the content of this document and roadmap widely within their respective governments to ensure that government positions will be consistent at all stages and fora at the regional and international levels.

ROAD MAP (PROCESS)

Milestone	Activity descriptive	Date
<i>Phase I (Consolidating the SADC integration and harmonization process)</i>		
2 nd Forum of SADC Ministers responsible for social development	SADC meeting which will address harmonization and sub regional position with regards to AU Social Policy, social dimensions of NEPAD and the UN Commission for Social Development.	21-24 November 2006, Johannesburg.
	Production and dissemination of report to UN, AU and SADC through copy and presentations to lobby for further support	October – December 2006
UN General Assembly	Informal dialogues and sessions within the Africa Group to gain momentum for Africa Forum proposals	September – December 2006, New York.
OECD POVNET	Dialogue with donor partners, regional and subregional secretariats and interested African governments, presenting the outcomes of the Johannesburg Ministerial Meeting and discussing institutional and financing options	January 2007
45 th Session of the Commission for Social Development	Formal tabling of SADC Positions and statements to the Africa Group, G77 and Commission, which would elaborate the Social Dimensions of NEPAD, and future themes and methods of work of the Commission. Side-event by UNDESA on Regional Social Policy in Africa.	February 2007 New York
African Union Commission for Labour and Social Affairs	Formal tabling of SADC position with regards to AU Social Policy, social dimensions of NEPAD and future methods of work of AU Commission, and proposal to have AU Forum for Social Development Ministers.	April 2007
<i>Phase II (Consolidating the African integration and harmonization process)</i>		
3 rd Forum for SADC Social Development Ministers	SADC meeting which would reassess harmonization and sub regional position with regards to AU Social Policy	June 2007
1 st Forum of African Social Development	AU meeting which will address harmonization and regional position with	September 2007

Ministers	regards to AU Social Policy, social dimensions of NEPAD and the UN Commission for Social Development. 1. Briefly examine national [needs], policies and practices, and assess their adequacy in addressing the challenges identified, 2. Review social development related legislation, including treaties[and other legal instruments, and make recommendations regarding overcoming the existing bottlenecks], 3. Propose and formulate regional social policy objectives and strategies consistent with the AU and NEPAD overall objectives and the process of regional integration, 4. Propose regional programmes, financing mechanisms and capacity building for a regional social policy.	
	Production and dissemination of report to UN and AU through copy and presentations to lobby for further support	October 2007 – January 2008
<i>Phase III (synchronization and formalization of processes)</i>		
46 th Session of the Commission for Social Development	Formal tabling of AU Positions and statements to the Africa Group, G77 and Commission, which would elaborate the Social Dimensions of NEPAD, and future themes of the Commission	February 2008
African Union Commission for Labour and Social Affairs	Formal tabling and finalization of AU Social Policy, social dimensions of NEPAD and future methods of work of AU Commission, and finalize 5 year implementation plan of the AU Forum for Social Development Ministers.	April 2008
4 th Forum for SADC Social Development Ministers	SADC meeting which would reassess harmonization and sub regional position with regards to AU Social Policy	June 2008
2 nd Forum of African Social Development Ministers	AU meeting which will address implementation, harmonization and regional position with regards to AU Social Policy, social dimensions of NEPAD and the UN Commission for Social Development.	September 2009