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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Committee of Experts**  
 Thirty-sixth meeting

**African Union  
Committee of Experts**  
 Third meeting

**Tenth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union  
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary  
Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the  
Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African  
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic  
Developments**
**Meeting of the Committees of Experts**  
 Dakar, 23-28 March 2017

## Concept note

### I. Introduction and background

1. Africa has achieved impressive economic growth over the past 15 years. Average growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) increased from close to zero in the 1980s and 1990s to a robust 4.5 per cent a year between 2001 and 2014, with large variation across countries. Since then, growth has been more moderate as the decline in commodity prices in recent years has put severe strains on many of the largest economies on the continent. Still, many countries continue to register growth in excess of 5 per cent and even higher, especially those with ongoing infrastructure investment and strong private consumption.

2. The period of sustained growth in Africa has been accompanied by high income inequality. Of the 10 most unequal countries in the world, 7 are in Africa. While African countries have made steady progress with gains in education, health and living standards, the pace of progress is slow and hampered by high levels of income inequality which weaken the impact of growth on poverty reduction and limit work opportunities.

3. Africa is a youthful continent. More than 60 per cent of the total population is under the age of 25, and in 15 countries half the population is under 18. Africa has more people aged under 20 than anywhere in the world. In 2015, Africa's youth population (15-24 years) was 226 million, comprising about 19 per cent of the global youth population. It is expected to more than double by 2050. Already the world's youngest region, Africa will be home to 38 of the 40 youngest countries in 2050, with a median population under 25 years old. This youth bulge can be a huge asset, and offer an opportunity to mobilize this reservoir of human capacity towards economic and social transformation. Countries with growing working-age populations can potentially benefit from increases in productivity through higher savings and

investment and overall economic growth. Alternatively, the youth bulge can be a source of instability if the continent fails to harness the potential of young people by designing and implementing appropriate policies that unlock new economic opportunities.

4. Economic growth is a necessary condition for employment generation, and employment is a pathway out of poverty. The economic growth witnessed since the turn of the century has failed to create the number of good-quality and decent jobs necessary to absorb the more than 10 million young people joining the labour force each year. Furthermore, the majority of the continent's workforce, particularly women and youth, remain trapped in the informal economy and the rural sector, which suffer from low productivity, low incomes and low social protection, if any.

5. There is an imperative need for African countries to adopt coherent strategies and national development plans that promote structural transformation and address the challenges of growth, inequality and unemployment within the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. The Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (together known as the Conference of Ministers) provide an ideal platform for high-level policy dialogue to address these challenges.

7. The Conference of Ministers is the premier and statutory forum on the continent to discuss issues pertinent to Africa's development. The theme of the Conference of Ministers 2017, "Growth, inequality and unemployment", builds on the understanding that the sustained reduction of inequality requires a holistic understanding of the issues for integrated policymaking.

8. The Conference of Ministers 2017 will provide a platform for dialogue and exchange of experience on the theme by engaging high-level experts and other stakeholders, including member States, academia, civil society and agencies in the United Nations system. It will:

(a) Develop an understanding of the sources of growth, drivers of inequalities and the need for a common framework to effectively address the systemic causes and persistence of inequalities between and within countries;

(b) Explore the growth-inequality link and the various interrelated economic, social and political channels through which inequality affects the growth process;

(c) Reaffirm the centrality of decent employment to the task of reducing inequality and poverty;

(d) Consider policy approaches and actions to address inequalities and find pathways towards inclusive and job-creating growth by engaging with representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, think tanks, academic and research institutions and other stakeholders for the exchange of knowledge and experience;

(e) Raise awareness among all stakeholders that inequalities can be reduced only through comprehensive and multidimensional action requiring a dedicated and strong global institutional framework to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(f) Identify ways to enhance national capacities and strengthen institutions at all levels to support the reduction of inequality and the review of progress at all levels, including through the use of disaggregated data;

(g) Provide policy recommendations for the design and implementation of suitable employment strategies in Africa by harnessing resilient labour markets to ensure that the benefits of growth are widely shared among all Africans.

9. Discussion on the growth-employment-poverty nexus is not new to the continent. African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development have focused attention on the issue of increasing employment to enhance economic development. The Ouagadougou Declaration adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union held in September 2004 on employment and poverty reduction placed employment at the centre of development policies and programmes in Africa by stressing the decisive role of employment in poverty reduction and acknowledged that "widespread poverty, unemployment and underemployment compromise basic human rights and dignity of individuals and communities affected, and that they constitute a threat to social, economic and political stability".

10. ECA prepared an issues paper on the theme "Meeting the challenge of the Millennium Development Goals" for the Conference of Ministers held in Abuja in 2005, which emphasized the role of employment in meeting the internationally agreed goals. The publication of its *Economic Report on Africa 2005* on the theme "Meeting the challenges of unemployment and poverty in Africa" was followed by the deliberations at the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 2006. The African Union summits of 2004 and 2008 also contributed to the discussions, underscoring the importance of the issue for Africa's development.

11. Since 2010, subsequent reports in the *Economic Report on Africa* series have focused on promoting economic growth in Africa through structural transformation and moving towards industrialization. The 2010 report (on "Promoting high-level sustainable growth to reduce unemployment in Africa") made a compelling case for targeting employment in the long-term development plans to enable countries to embark on paths of high, sustainable and employment-friendly growth. These need to be supported by industrial and labour market strategies and policies that bridge the infrastructure gap, invest in people and improve governance. The subsequent 2010 Conference of Ministers held in Malawi underscored the need to promote broad-based and sustainable growth for employment generation and poverty eradication. Most African countries have adopted their own mechanisms to diversify their economies.

12. The theme of the 2017 Conference goes beyond a sectoral focus on employment and aims to address the issue holistically by locating it within a larger discussion on the nature of economic growth and its role in reducing both poverty and inequality. The theme is underpinned by the recognition that inequality is one of the most pressing social, economic and political challenges of our times. The issue of providing employment opportunities is seen through a "demographic" lens. Access to reliable data is considered central for evidence-based policymaking and monitoring progress.

13. The 2017 Conference offers an opportunity to draw attention to the need to forge a socially cohesive society in Africa in the framework of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Participants will be able to discuss the interrelated issues of economic growth, inequality and unemployment so as to devise suitable strategies for enhancing inclusive growth and promoting employment, especially among young people and women. The Conference will also explore measures for reducing inequality and extreme poverty on the continent and achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda and the first 10-year plan (2014-2023) for the implementation of Agenda 2063. In particular, participants will address the following thematic issues:

- Strategies for sustained, sustainable and inclusive growth.

- Priorities for addressing inequalities at the national and regional levels.
- Policy approaches for promoting sustainable and inclusive employment through a stronger role of the private sector and resilient labour markets.
- Strengthening the data value chain for designing better policies and monitoring implementation to reduce inequalities.

## II. Objectives of the Conference of Ministers

14. The specific objectives will be:

- To provide insights on the need for member States to design and implement a coherent framework to foster inclusive growth, reduce income and gender inequalities and promote decent employment, especially among youth, so as to achieve the complementary and mutually reinforcing targets of Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- To provide guidance on continent-wide and national-level mechanisms for the development of the framework in order to contribute coherently to the achievement of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## III. Discussion themes and issues for promoting growth, equality and employment

15. The meeting will deliberate on the following four thematic areas:

### A. Strategies for sustainable and inclusive growth

16. Growth is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for broader development, enlarging the scope for individuals to be productive and creative. It needs to be sustainable and inclusive - implying that it is broad-based across sectors and that its benefits are shared by a large proportion of the population. The distributional pattern of growth is of particular importance for its sustainability, especially in countries with already high inequality levels.

17. Africa has exhibited strong economic growth since the mid-1990s. GDP growth across the continent has averaged about 4.3 per cent a year, or 3 percentage points higher than in the previous two decades. There are a number of characteristic features of Africa's growth pattern:

- ***Growth in the region has not been driven only by commodities.*** Many countries in the region that are not reliant on commodities were also able to achieve rapid growth. In fact, 8 of the 12 fastest-growing countries in the region over 1995-2010 were non-resource-dependent economies.
- ***Countries in the region are growing at divergent speeds*** – some are growing faster than others. In the 20 fastest-growing countries, excluding oil exporters, GDP growth averaged 5.8 per cent for two decades, and real incomes per person more than doubled. But in other countries, growth was much slower, and in eight countries, income per person actually fell.

- ***The growth picture looks much less promising in per capita terms.*** The annual growth rate of per capita GDP at constant 2005 US dollars for 37 countries in Africa other than North Africa was 3.1 per cent in 2000-2010, dropping to 1.95 per cent in 2010-2012, far lower than the GDP rates reported earlier.
- ***Economic growth has not led to any significant decline in poverty.*** Countries in Africa made the least progress among all developing regions towards reducing extreme poverty. The percentage of people living under the international poverty line of US\$ 1.90 a day in Africa other than North Africa (41 per cent) is almost three times as high as any other region (such as South Asia, with 15 per cent). Various factors such as initial inequality, the distributional pattern of growth and the composition of public expenditure influence the effect of growth on poverty reduction.

18. A reassessment of African growth performance during the last decade underlines the central role of macroeconomic stability in spurring economic transformation. In this regard, there is an increasing consensus on the imperative need for African countries to foster economic diversification and strengthen continental resilience to adverse shocks such as the decline in commodity prices and climate change. Special focus should be placed on industrialization and integration into the knowledge-based economy as a means of sustaining Africa's growth performance over the longer term.

19. Economic growth is not enough. The nature of that growth is important, and structural transformation should lie at the heart of national development plans to increase productivity, create new jobs, reduce poverty and achieve higher economic growth. It cannot be assumed that growth will translate into broad-based improvements in the ultimate outcomes. Governments can intervene on each to reduce poverty, and deliberate policies are required to achieve inclusive growth, generate new job opportunities and reduce inequalities.

20. Fostering economic transformation in Africa for sustainable and inclusive growth requires the setting up of a continental context of stability and optimal policy frameworks, human capacities and resilient institutions adapted to the imperatives of structural transformation. These can be helped by the implementation of policies in five key areas: political and macroeconomic stability; policy frameworks, human capacities and institutions; industrialization (economic diversification) through support for knowledge-based growth; sustainable financing through financial development and efficient functioning of financial institutions; and efficient governance.

***Issues for discussion:***

- What strategies, complementary actions and institutional arrangements are required to sustain both the quantum and the quality of growth momentum achieved by African countries?
- What factors contribute to the fact that some countries show stronger growth than others?
- What can policymakers do to better redistribute the benefits of growth?
- What are the relationships between growth, integration and regional inequalities? How can we address cross-country inequality through regional economic integration?
- What are the impacts of government spending on economic growth and available options to finance sustainable and employment-friendly economic growth?

## **B. Priorities for addressing inequalities at the national and regional levels**

21. Inequality is now a central feature of the global development discourse, with increased recognition of the importance of reducing it. Even if the precise nature and relative importance of the causes of rising inequality and stagnating incomes remain in debate, a geographically and ideologically diverse consensus has emerged that a new, or at least significantly improved, model of economic growth is required to address various kinds of inequalities.

22. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes inequality as a key challenge and aims to provide a vision of a shared future with equality and opportunities for all. Addressing inequalities is instrumental for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which is in large measure an “Agenda for equality”.

23. Despite relatively high growth in recent years, overall, consumption inequality in Africa appears to have remained broadly unchanged. Rapid growth in the region has boosted per capita income, and poverty rates have fallen, though slowly. But wide income disparity across the population remains and has even increased in many countries, making incomes in the region the most unequal in the world after Latin America and the Caribbean, although there is quite a bit of variation across countries. Countries such as Lesotho, the Niger and Sierra Leone have experienced declines in income inequality. However, over the period 1995-2011 inequality increased in a quarter of the countries for which data are available.

24. On average, the past growth pattern in Africa was far from inclusive. Consumption inequality rose hand in hand with GDP growth in almost half of the countries in the last 20 years, while in some where it fell, initial inequality was high. Thus, both the pattern of growth (i.e., its composition) and the rate of growth matter. When growth occurs in sectors characterized by high asset concentration and high capital and skilled-labour intensity – such as mining, finance-insurance-real estate and the public sector – overall inequality rises. In contrast, inequality falls or remains stable if growth takes place in labour-intensive manufacturing, construction and agriculture.

25. This may explain the slow rate of poverty reduction on the continent in this period, since the responsiveness of poverty reduction to growth depends largely on countries’ level of income inequality. Higher levels of inequality typically imply a weaker impact of economic growth on poverty reduction as the more unequal the distribution of income, the lower the share of additional income going to the poor, and therefore the smaller the poverty-reducing effect of growth. More fundamentally, a highly unequal income distribution often reflects a polarized economy, where economic growth has a narrow base, with weak connections to the rest of the economy.

26. There is growing evidence that income inequality hampers growth. Lower net income inequality has been robustly associated with faster growth and longer growth spells for a large number of advanced and developing countries. Similarly, increases in the income share of the poorest 10 per cent have been associated with higher growth.

### ***Horizontal and spatial inequalities***

27. The discussion on inequality is focused on income inequality because most of the available evidence is on household income and consumption. But inequality is multidimensional. Inequalities among social groups, often referred to as horizontal inequalities, systematically disadvantage specific groups of people on the basis of gender, race, parental background, or birthplace. These group-based inequalities, based on “ascribed” characteristics beyond an

individual's control and contrary to principles of human rights, exert a pernicious effect on societal outcomes affecting the opportunities of different groups and the outcomes they are able to realize, often creating conditions for social unrest and even conflict. Inequalities are also spatial, manifested by rural–urban or regional disparities in access to social and economic services. Where horizontal inequalities intersect with spatial inequalities, the potential for social unrest is heightened.

### ***Gender inequality***

28. Gender equality is at the heart of reducing economic, social and political inequalities. Differential access to opportunities is a major source of gender inequality. Despite considerable progress towards achieving gender parity in access to education, significant gender gaps remain. Inequality in education affects the average quality of human capital and reduces growth. Female education contributes to improvements in children's health, reductions in fertility rates and increases in labour force participation rates, and enhances the quality of human capital in future generations. Restrictions on women's rights to inheritance and property, as well as cultural impediments to undertaking economic activities, are strongly associated with larger gender gaps in labour force participation. Overall, gender gaps in economic participation result in large GDP losses across countries at all income levels from a less efficient allocation of resources due to a restricted talent pool.

29. Despite significant progress in fostering inclusion, many groups including indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities and youth continue to be marginalized and largely excluded from major decision-making processes. The needs of women and girls along with other vulnerable groups in society need to be more visible, with better access to basic public services, and participation in political decision-making processes. Countries like Uganda are making concerted efforts in this regard, including through measures to increase the number of women in political office and ensure that the needs of girls and women are mainstreamed into policymaking processes. Rwanda has the highest proportion of female parliamentarians.

30. Growing inequalities are in part attributable to the lack of attention to economic and social inequalities in policy interventions. Global experience indicates that inequalities do not self-correct; instead, they are perpetuated and reproduced over generations. Efforts aimed at addressing extreme poverty, promoting socioeconomic development and safeguarding the interests of future generations have to address inequalities squarely.

### ***Issues for discussion:***

- What are the challenges for policymakers at the national level in addressing different inequalities, especially gender and horizontal inequalities?
- What are the trade-offs among growth, inequality and redistribution that need to be managed by member States to ensure an inclusive and sustainable development agenda?
- What policy tools have successful countries applied to reduce inequalities while fostering economic growth? What lessons can be learnt from their experience?
- What is the role of government spending on social infrastructure (such as education, health and social insurance) and other budgetary policies in reducing inequalities?
- Are the drivers of inequality different across countries? What are the policies and programmes that are relevant for specific groups of countries in Africa (such as resource-dependent, aid-dependent, emerging, post-conflict and fragile)?

### **C. Policy approaches for promoting sustainable and inclusive employment**

31. Contrary to popular perceptions, measured unemployment in low-income countries in Africa is only 3 per cent. Even in lower-to-middle-income countries, unemployment is quite low. In Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, for instance, unemployment is in the range of 1-5 per cent. However, unemployment is high in southern and north Africa, which have well-structured labour markets and large formal sectors.

32. On the other hand, vulnerable, low-pay employment in the informal sector and smallholder agriculture predominates in most low-income countries, coexisting with high levels of working poverty. This is because with low household incomes and non-existent or limited unemployment insurance and safety nets, few Africans can afford to remain unemployed for any length of time.

33. Lower-income countries tend to have a large informal sector, and almost all employment is “vulnerable”. ILO estimates that three out of four jobs in Africa, excluding North Africa, can be labelled “vulnerable” because workers work on their own account or as unpaid family workers. There is a clear inverse relationship between the extent of vulnerable employment and a country’s GDP per capita. Poor-quality employment in most of the region is also reflected in the high share of working poor in total employment. In 2011 more than 80 per cent of workers in Africa were classified as working poor, compared to the global average of 39 per cent.

34. Africa’s employment challenge is inextricably linked to demographic factors. Africa had the highest rate of annual population growth among major areas in 2010-2015 - over 2.5 per cent. The biggest shift in Africa’s demography is the increase in the working age population. Current trends show that Africa has the fastest-growing working-age population. Between 1960 and 2010, Africa’s working-age population (15-64 years) is estimated to have more than quadrupled from 154 million to almost 650 million, and will continue growing over the next 40 years. In 2015, 55 per cent of Africans were aged between 15 and 64. By 2050, close to 60 per cent of Africa’s population will be in the working-age group, and one in every four workers in the world in 2050 will be an African.

35. Young people suffer from particularly poor access to employment opportunities. They made up about 35 per cent of Africa’s working-age population in 2015, but three fifths of the total unemployed. In most countries the youth unemployment rate is more than double that for adults. The average youth unemployment rate is about 30 per cent in North Africa, compared to the world average of 14 per cent. The growth acceleration witnessed in recent years has not yet translated into inclusive and equitable jobs, especially for young people. There are few “good” jobs, which offer secure employment and social protection, and most young people and women work informally as own-account or unpaid family workers.

36. Knowledge is a key driver of growth in the globalized world. Access to skills greatly enhances employment opportunities for young people. Rates of primary school completion have risen significantly in most countries, though the quality of education remains a serious constraint in preparing young people for employment. It is imperative to raise the quality of education at all levels so as to improve the quality of the workforce entering the labour market.

37. The private sector is an important driver of inclusive and sustainable growth, economic transformation and overall development in Africa. According to recent statistics, the private sector is responsible for 70 per cent of the continent’s production, 70 per cent of investment and 90 per cent of employment. At a time when countries are looking for new sources of economic

growth to consolidate the economic gains of the past decade, focusing on the private sector is more important than ever for decent job creation and shifting of labour from lower-productivity to higher-productivity sectors.

38. A holistic approach to the labour market to promote private-sector development through an optimal educational system can help identify policies that foster decent job creation. Reforms in these areas will be of critical importance in enlarging the economic and social opportunities offered to women and young people. As youth unemployment across Africa is unacceptably high, member States should aim to equip young people with the skills needed for both the formal and informal sectors, including the skills to create small businesses, simultaneously offering financing and support for learning business and entrepreneurial skills, especially to start-ups promoted by women and young people. Investing in skills matters, as it will contribute to innovation through start-ups, which should be at the centre of government strategies. This will significantly contribute to the production of new knowledge-intensive products and services essential to sustain medium-term and long-term growth.

39. The private sector offers great opportunities that can enable the continent to convert the continent's demographic profile into a demographic dividend through industrial development. To that end, the Conference will aim at identifying and defining strategic intervention areas for the effective participation and engagement of the private sector in Africa's economic transformation through the creation of a business environment conducive to private-sector development; the empowerment of youth and women as workers and entrepreneurs; increased access to financial products such as savings, credit and insurance by people lower down the economic ladder; catalysed private-sector engagement for private-sector development, and the strengthening of labour market regulations and institutions.

***Issues for discussion:***

- What steps can be taken to develop a multidisciplinary approach towards tackling unemployment particularly that which affects young people and women? How should these be prioritized?
- How can the quality of education be raised in member States to equip young people with the necessary skills needed by the private sector and the jobs market? What is the role of technical and vocational training in Africa's educational system?
- How can the mandate of the Africa Mining Vision be implemented to promote job creation through investment in associated sectors closely related to the mining sector?
- What policies do member States need to adopt to encourage the sound development of the private sector for the creation of inclusive and productive jobs, especially for young people? How can public-private partnerships be improved?
- What policies are required to build strong and resilient labour markets in Africa?
- What reforms are needed to boost growth and create employment? What are the experiences regarding the coordination of monetary and fiscal policies in the times of crisis or big drops in world commodity prices?

## **D. Strengthening data systems for better policies to reduce inequalities**

40. The production of social and economic statistics in Africa has improved over the past 20 years. There are more household surveys; more countries have participated in decennial census rounds; and more countries are updating their GDP base years. Data on non-monetary aspects of poverty are also available, and there are more gender-disaggregated data on health, violence and empowerment-related issues. These data are of great help in examining trends in poverty and inequality over time, and contribute to improving our understanding of the complexities and interlinkages among the different variables.

41. However, data are not always available in an easily accessible form, and so may not be usable as inputs to economic activities and employment generation. The new development agendas envisage an environment in which governments, civil society organizations, development partners and, most importantly, citizens all participate in implementing services to improve their lives. This requires that all stakeholders should have access to data drawn from different sources.

42. The principle of open data is one of the most effective approaches for making data available to diverse communities of users. The benefits of open data have been documented, and include fostering economic growth and job creation; building a transparent society, which enhances accountability; cross-departmental data-sharing; citizen and constituent engagement in implementing services; and innovative services and concomitant opportunities for business and economic development.

43. National open data initiatives are adopting the “data ecosystem” approach, with official statistics constituting an important, if not indispensable, component. However, the open data movement is still developing in Africa, and most of the initiatives are being led by international organizations. Moreover, national statistical offices have not been actively involved, and when they are, their involvement has been very selective. The consequence is that despite the notable progress accomplished by African countries in the production and dissemination of statistics over the last decade, the data are still not readily available.

44. While efforts continue to strengthen the capacity of African countries to collect more data, and improve their quality, the data available should be made available through open data services to make immediate an impact in the economy.

### ***Issues for discussion:***

- What should be done to ensure that opening up official statistics and data does not compromise the fundamental United Nations principles governing official statistics, including that of maintaining privacy and confidentiality where necessary or appropriate?
- How can national statistical offices play their expected leadership role in open data initiatives in member States?
- What steps can be taken to make official statistics open and timely by default in member States?

## **IV. Format of the Conference of Ministers**

45. The Conference of Ministers will be preceded by a technical preparatory meeting of the Committee of Experts. The Committee will analyse the theme and make recommendations to the ministers for adoption. In addition, the Committee will review the state of economic and social conditions in Africa, consider other statutory issues relating to the work of the African Union Commission and the ECA secretariat and make appropriate recommendations for consideration at the Conference. In addition to the Conference, there will be a number of side events on key development issues, as well as the annual Adebayo Adedeji lecture on a topical issue of importance to African development.

46. There will be four main plenary sessions, as follows:

(a) The first plenary session will consider issues pertaining to promoting sustained, sustainable and inclusive growth;

(b) The second plenary session will review the drivers of inequalities;

(c) The third plenary session will address the issue of employment, especially for youth and women;

(d) The fourth plenary session will address the issues of strengthening national statistical systems to effectively monitor progress on the indicators related to growth, equality and employment interventions.

## **V. Expected outcomes**

47. The Conference of Ministers is expected to result in:

(a) Ministerial endorsement of policy guidelines and recommendations for developing a common framework to address the problems of lack of inclusive growth, inequalities and unemployment among member States in Africa;

(b) Guidance on the mechanisms for developing such a common framework.

## **VI. Documentation**

48. The present concept note on the theme of the Conference of Ministers, technical background papers on the sub-themes of the plenary sessions, round tables and parallel events will inform the discussions, at both the expert and the ministerial levels.

## **VII. Participation**

49. Participants and delegates will include ministers and representatives of member States, regional economic communities, United Nations agencies, pan-African financial institutions, African academic and research institutions, development partners and other intergovernmental organizations. Invitations will also be extended to other cooperating partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

## VIII. Contact information

50. For more information about the Conference of Ministers and the session of the Committee of Experts, kindly contact:

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