

▶ **HIGH LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE:**  
**GLOBAL ACCELERATOR ON JOBS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR JUST TRANSITIONS AT WORK IN AFRICA**

**TICAD 8 SIDE EVENT**

▶ **Thursday 15 September 2022**

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm GMT

10:00 pm - 11:30 pm Tokyo

9:00 am - 10:30 am New York



## CONCEPT NOTE

### Background

Decent jobs and social protection when well-integrated, can serve as a powerful set of tools for reducing poverty, exclusion, and inequality while enhancing political stability and social cohesion. They also serve to prevent and recover from economic crises, natural disasters, and conflicts. Recent history points to the need to place people at the centre of economic growth and recovery, which is also so powerfully reflected in the SDGs. We also know from previous crises, including the Great Recession, that economic recovery can be delinked from jobs and labour income, which in turn contribute to widening inequality further. The situation is even harder for vulnerable groups, including many women, young people, and informal workers. The challenges are particularly acute in Africa, with an increasing number of workers, especially young women, and men, earning a living in the informal sector and dominated by low pay, temporary and precarious employment, insecure and unsafe work, insufficient social protection coverage, bad working condition, and lack of a voice and representation.

Although the world's 10 fastest growing economies were in Africa in 2019, the continent is still grappling with the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality, and poverty. Africa has shown strong political will at the highest level to put in place policies aimed at building sustainable development and combating poverty through job creation and job improvement and by promoting social protection. The political commitment is reflected in multiple policy and strategy documents including the AUC's *Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development* (2015), the *Addis Ababa Declaration on Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development*, the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the *Abidjan Declaration-Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa among others*. The African Union's Agenda 2063 affirms the priority given to infrastructure development and with the share of employment in the construction sector in Africa standing at 4.2%, this is a missed opportunity to create more formal jobs; especially in infrastructure development for transportation needs which cuts across most sectors and industries, especially agriculture, trade and tourism in the Region.

Despite the relative importance given to social protection policies, social protection coverage remains limited and workers across the Continent have insufficient access at gainful employment and decent work. Most recent ILO estimates (ILO, WSPR 2020/22) show that Africa has the lowest social protection coverage in the world - 17 per cent of the total population compared with the global average of 47 per cent (ILO, WSPR 2020/22). The underinvestment in social protection has left glaring

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gaps in coverage, particularly in the informal economy. It has reinforced the importance of ensuring adequate public spending and social protection coverage over the life cycle and across all forms of employment. According to the ILO's 2020 study on Financing gaps in social protection, countries in Africa would need to progressively increase their investment to an additional 8.2 per cent of their GDP to achieve at least the social protection floor. This means that they need to aim at doubling their current investment in social protection and to also create more formal jobs to increase tax revenues (including social security contributions) to create the much-needed fiscal space to finance social protection policies.

The COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the growing climate emergency and impacts of the conflict in Ukraine is compounding existing food, energy and financial crises, and threatening immediate and long-term risks to prosperity. We are witnessing what has been termed a 'Great Divergence' between richer and poorer countries. Low- and middle-income countries, especially in Africa, are struggling to mount a sufficient fiscal response to reignite and buoy their economies, and at the same time respond to the degradation of the health, social and environmental sectors. Many Africans – those living in poverty, especially youth, women, informal/rural workers – are suffering heavily as a result of the crisis and the slow economic recovery. More and more targeted investments are needed in sectors that are promising for creating good jobs and reducing economic inequalities. This includes to design and implement policies and investment strategies for decent jobs with social protection, including in the green, care and digital economies, supporting just transition for all.

## GLOBAL ACCELERATOR

Despite the challenges, there is an opportunity to build forward better – to design and implement inclusive policies and investment strategies for decent jobs with social protection, including in the green, care and digital economies supporting just transitions for all people, including those from marginalized or vulnerable groups. In September 2021, the UN Secretary General launched the [Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#) to help direct global financing towards the creation of 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and extend social protection to 4 billion people currently without coverage.

The Global Accelerator represents a global response under the UN's leadership to the glaring deficits in decent jobs and universal social protection, and a rapidly moving environmental disaster, laid bare and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the ambition of bringing together Member States, international financial institutions, the social partners, civil society and the private sector, to build a better future and keep the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

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This requires sustained investments in sectors with high potential for decent job creation, as well as in social protection, which acts as an important shock absorber in times of crisis, including those caused by natural disasters. It requires policies with a strong life-cycle approach and a focus on women, marginalized and vulnerable groups that were most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and older persons. It also requires reflections on social infrastructure more broadly, such as housing, education, universal child benefits and strategies to transition from emergency measures in fragile and conflict-affected countries towards sustainable systems of social protection (or strategies to maintain those systems if countries backslide).

By supporting and complementing national efforts to combat the socio-economic consequences of the crisis, and accelerate recovery, the Accelerator can be a game-changer by promoting an integrated and inclusive vision of employment and social protection and securing the needed investments to underpin a virtuous cycle of human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Such an integrated and inclusive approach, focusing on gender equality and youth, will bolster resilience against future shocks, promote decent work and facilitate just transitions towards inclusive and environmentally sustainable economies and societies, including digital economies and societies.

The Global Accelerator aims to be implemented in an initial number of Pathfinder countries that have considerable potential to amplify investments in jobs and social protection and have expressed a commitment to make such investments.

## Objective

The main objective of this High-Level Policy Dialogue is to discuss opportunities for expanding domestic fiscal space and the types of partnerships required for African countries interested in doing so, to implement the Global Accelerator. The event will serve to provide updates on the status of the Global Accelerator and the discussions will be centred around:

- The UN Secretary-General's Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transitions;
- Complementarities between the Global Accelerator and the AU's Agenda for transforming Africa, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want;
- The type of integrated approaches required to promote job creation, expand social protection, and achieve just transitions;
- Identifying the potential impact for job creation by investing in viable sectors and increased investments in social protection;
- Identify opportunities for mobilizing financing and the types of partnerships required to amplify the impact of the Global Accelerator.

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## Expected Outcome and Action Points

- To discuss, secure interest, and identify actions for implementing the Global Accelerator in Africa
- To identify practical options for financing integrated policies that accelerate decent jobs creation, the extension of social protection and a just transition

## Target audience

- Officials from government social-protection, employment, social development, finance, planning, economic development, and institutions
- Regional, sub-regional and national policymakers and planners
- Representatives of workers' and employers' organisations
- The private sector, civil society, academia, and researchers
- International financial institutions and development partners