

DRAFT

Statement of the Hon. Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services on the occasion of a press conference in respect of the First African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development, Windhoek - Namibia 27-31 October 2008

Theme: "TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR AFRICA"

Honourable Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Hon. Immanuel Ngatjizeko
Honourable Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Hon. Marlene Mungunda
Members of the Organizing Committee
Distinguished Members of the Press
Ladies and Gentlemen
Comrades and Friends

I am privileged today to share with you and the rest of the people of the Republic of Namibia, that, a few months ago, the Ministry of Health and Social Services has been approached by the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs to host the above Conference scheduled for 27-31 October 2008 at the Windhoek Country Club and Resort Hotel.

This is the first AU Conference which will bring together all African Ministers in charge of Social Development. It falls within the framework of the various instruments adopted by the African Union and more specifically the African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa which was Africa's contribution to the World Summit for Social Development in 1994. Similarly in 2001, the global community adopted the MDGs with clear targets for the achievement of social development.

After a decade, it is pertinent to take stock of the situation, identify what has worked well, the good practices and constraints. It will be an opportunity to learn from each other and provide a basis for integrated social development policies. The Conference will aim to:

- identify and promote measures needed to accelerate the attainment of longer, healthier, and better lives for the people of the continent especially the vulnerable group;
- support the strengthening of national systems to provide the basic services and cater for the welfare of the people in general and the marginalized and poorer groups of the society, in particular;

promote the rights of all the sectors of the society, including the elderly, people with disabilities, the family, and women and include them in the development policies and programmes.

The main objectives of the Conference are:

1. To review and adopt a Social Policy Framework for Africa;
2. To review and assess progress made by Member States in implementing the various instruments in the area of social development, identify gaps, constraints and best practices;
3. To forge partnership with development partners and CSOs in supporting AU Member States to implement the various instruments on social issues;

The Conference will also:

1. Popularize the various existing instruments on social issues;
2. Share and exchange good practices on social development in Member States including policies and programmes;
3. Adopt recommendations to enhance social development in Africa and promote the rights and welfare of the most vulnerable group of the society.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Conference will:

- Adopt a Social Policy Framework for Africa

FORMAT OF THE MEETING

The Conference will be organized in two phases:

- (a) Experts Meeting: 27-28 October 2008

During the first two days of the Conference, Experts/ officials from Member States will consider the documents and provide their inputs and make appropriate recommendations for the Ministers' consideration and approval.

- (b) Ministers Meeting: 30-31 October 2008

The Ministers will consider the Report of the Experts' Meeting and adopt its recommendations and the Social Policy Framework for Africa.

AGENDA

Apart from the Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa which is the main item on the Agenda, the Conference will also consider specific items related to:

- The Family within the framework of the Plan of Action on the Family;
- People with Disabilities, in particular, the Plan of Action on the African Decade for Disabled Persons ;
- The Elderly and Ageing – The establishment of a Steering Committee on Ageing to oversee the implementation of the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in Africa;
- Study on Social Protection Systems in Africa

DOCUMENTATION

(a) Working documents:

The key working documents for the Conference will include:

- A study on Social Protection
- Draft Social Policy Framework in Africa

(b) Reference documents:

The reference documents will include:

- Various existing AU instruments related to social issues;
- Other regional and international social development documents

Relevant information will be placed on the AU Website (www.africa-union.org), and will also be circulated during the Conference.

PARTICIPANTS

It is expected that the 1st AU Ministerial Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development will bring together: Ministers responsible for Social Development and Experts/Officials from AU Member States, the RECs, the AU Commission, UN Agencies, Development Partners, International, Regional and National Organizations, including NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, dealing with social development issues, Independent Experts and Resource Persons, and Special Guests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to all who have availed themselves amidst their busy schedules to be part of this briefing and herewith also extend invitation to those individuals, stakeholders and organizations who are involved in the area of social development.

I thank you