PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON INEQUALITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION
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STATEMENT BY:

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Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Ghana,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel particularly privileged to have this opportunity to address this conference and to deliver this message on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Carlos Lopes, who cannot be here with us today, as we are gathered to reflect on inequality as a global phenomenon, but more particularly in the African context.

Dear participants,
In Africa’s last two decades of fast and consistent economic growth, the continent has not yet succeeded in translating economic gains into commensurate social development outcomes. Far too many of our economies are dependent on the production and export of primary commodities. And far too many are highly unequal. As we celebrate the fact that seven of our countries are in the top ten of global growth, we must also bear in mind that a similar number are in the top ten of global inequality; Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, count among the continent’s top ten most unequal countries. Slow progress in addressing poverty and inequality and the very nature of economic growth on the continent have created a vicious circle...
whereby inequality and slowdown in economic growth are mutually reinforcing.

Ladies and gentlemen,
The lack of a transformative effect of economic growth in social and human development has been brought to the fore in recent policy debates. In its latest report, the United Nations High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda recommended that the new agenda be guided by the vision of “eradicating extreme poverty once and for all in the context of sustainable development”. It is clear that there are different and varied needs for African countries which are therefore working towards a converged and harmonized approach to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, through an African Common Position. The African Common Position takes into account the challenges of the MDGs, whilst calling for a structural transformation agenda based on a set of enablers of development such as infrastructure, peace and security, and human rights. These will require goals that can be translated at national levels whilst recognizing the need to integrate policies at the international level. In addition, the inequality global background paper that ECA with other partners has developed for the Post-2015 Development Agenda has placed tackling exclusion as the kernel of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Distinguished participants,
The Post-2015 Development Agenda will not be realized without effective, creative and consistent partnerships. Partnering means working in solidarity, not just theoretically but practically. This kind of partnership requires voluntary and collaborative relationships in which all parties agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits.

The concept of partnership is fundamental to ECA, whose history provides a powerful illustration of how people and organizations working together, sharing resources and building on one another’s ideas can create synergies that produce larger and more effective results than might otherwise be imagined.
Ladies and gentlemen,
I want to share with you some thoughts on quick wins for the Post-2015 Development Agenda:

- **Embed** the development goals in overall development frameworks, as well as in poverty reduction and macroeconomic programmes; this is necessary for attaining national ownership and commitment, and for prioritizing domestic spending;

- **Develop** broad-based, people-oriented and simple, low cost but effective strategies for development goals related programming;

- **Upgrade** development goals indicators to capture qualitative aspects;

- **Nationalize** development goals, taking into consideration the specificity of each country;

- **Formulate and pursue** well-focused, socially inclusive economic growth that is pro-poor. Pro-poor policies are those that generate increases in the incomes of the poor at a rate that is at least equal to the overall growth of the economy, thereby resulting in the reduction of income inequality and the incidence and depth of poverty.

**Dear participants,**

Politics has been described as the art of the possible. Thus politicians and international organizations should embrace the pledge to make the Post-2015 Development Agenda possible and successful.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In its desire to contribute to new thinking and practice on tackling inequality, the ECA has recently developed a tool- the African Social Development Index (ASDI)- that attempts to respond to the paradigm shift of an inclusive and equitable development path. The Index gauges the depth of human exclusion over the life cycle to capture the inter-generational transfer of the “exclusion risk” factor. There is strong evidence indeed from the *Cost of Hunger in Africa* studies that the ECA has conducted with the African Union Commission and the World Food Program demonstrating that when a child suffers from under-nutrition for example, this factor is prone to be carried forward through and across various stages of the life cycle, thus diminishing his/her educational achievements and future economic and social opportunities (UNECA,
Hence, the ASDI allows both transfer effects and cumulative effects of exclusion to be measured over a complete life cycle. But more importantly, this index can help to inform policy making and map policy interventions at the various tiers of government. This on-going exercise will provide empirically grounded data and share lessons on policies and programmes that have contributed to a more inclusive development.

**Dear Colleagues,**

There is no doubt that this conference has been organized at a very opportune moment. The exclusion of the most vulnerable from developmental processes is unsustainable, not only for the economic and social reasons that underpin an inclusive sustainable developmental path, but also as a fundamental human right and a condition for a more stable political environment.

The sharing of ideas, concepts and tools that this Conference provides should invigorate our work in assisting the continent to achieve greater equality, greater cohesion and greater inclusion. Africa has the experience to forge solutions to its own challenges and contribute to global goals of inclusive growth and social justice.

**Distinguished participants,**

Thank you for your willingness to commit your professionalism and time to the betterment of the lives of our African people. It is in this spirit of confidence in the value of your deliberations that I wish you great success in this conference and beyond.