



## Abdalla Hamdok calls for targeted policy in order to harness youth potential

Addis Ababa, 01 July 2017 (ECA) - Getting the fundamentals right is the first step to harnessing Africa's demographic dividend and must be supported by targeted policy actions that foster investment in the youth. The statement was made by Abdalla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in his address to the Thirty-First Ordinary Session of the AU Summit Executive Council at the African Union Headquarters over the weekend.

Speaking on the theme of this year's Summit, "***Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth***", Mr. Hamdok welcomed it as "relevant and timely", given its centrality to the political, economic and social issues shaping the debate on the continent's development and the need to put in place policies which take advantage of the demographic dividend.

He told the gathering of Ministers and government representatives that by 2050, Africa will be home to 38 of the 40 youngest countries and that unlike other regions of the world, the proportion of youth in Africa's total population is rising.

"While this growth provides the opportunity for a demographic dividend, it also presents the risk of soaring rates of youth unemployment," He cautioned.

Paying special tribute to Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund who passed away early this month, Mr. Hamdok said he will be remembered "as a son of Africa, a great leader and a global champion who tirelessly advocated for the health, dignity, and rights of women, girls, and the youth." He also said his contributions to developing the African Union roadmap on *Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments* in youth form a significant part of a legacy that will live on.

Mr. Hamdok outlined a number of policy issues that must be addressed with a sense of urgency, such as domestic resource mobilization that he said needed to be expanded to provide for increased public investment in employment promotion and social protection. "Sustainable financing in the human capital development will determine the extent to which economic and other policies foster the growth of jobs and income-earning opportunities for young people," he stressed.

He also urged the ministers present to prioritize migration, an issue that he said, calls for a variety of measures that are underpinned by a framework that can lead to effective sharing of responsibilities and firm partnerships to promote well-managed migration. "For us in Africa, it must be a Developmental Framework," he stressed. In this respect, he informed the gathering

that progress had been made towards a “corrective narrative on African migration and to improve public understanding of the key challenges and opportunities of migration from a developmental perspective”. In this regard, the High-Level Panel on International Migration in Africa (HLPM) was launched by the ECA and the African Union Commission on June 6<sup>th</sup> in Monrovia, Liberia, chaired by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

“The youth potential represents both our greatest hope and our most vexing challenge. Africa’s children can scale the ladder of hope based on decisions we take. Our yardstick for success will be adequately measured by future generations if our words are weighted against our action to foster transformative and inclusive development,” he said.

Present at the Executive Council session included Ministers, the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat and Hadja Makale Camara, Chairperson of the Executive Council of the African Union.

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