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Yaounde, 4 June 2015 (ECA) – A new tool measuring the degree to which people are excluded from Africa's development, in a bid to help the continent achieve inclusive social transformation, will come under detailed review during a workshop convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) from 16 to 18 June 2015 in Douala, Cameroon. During the workshop, senior statisticians and policy planners from all francophone countries in Central and East Africa will be trained on the use and application of the tool for informing and mapping social policies.

The tool, a first of its kind, developed by ECA following a request from African States, is known as the African Social Development Index (ASDI). It measures the depth of human exclusion in key areas of development: health, education, employment, income and survival.

Data for each of the key areas is practically gleaned across the individual life cycle – from early childhood to the elderly stage. Indeed, the tool allows analysing the range of factors affecting the probability of an individual to be excluded from development in each phase of their life.

Speaking ahead of the training workshop, the Director of the Social Development Policy Division of ECA, Takiywaa Manuh, said: "At this time when global forces are scrutinising lessons learnt from the 15 years of rolling out the Millennium Development Goals, in order to forge ahead with new benchmarks of human progress known as Sustainable Development Goals, it is crucial to tackle the development equation from a transformative and inclusive point of view.

"We hope to use the tool for contributing to a more inclusive approach to development but, more importantly, we are keen on seeing African states appropriate the tool, mainstream it in national and subnational planning and help identify policies that have been effective in reducing human exclusion as measured by ASDI," she concluded.

According to the Director of the Sub-regional Office for Central Africa of ECA, Emile Ahohe, it is a fact that the appreciable growth rates in Africa for more than one decade now have not been translated into general better living conditions for the most disadvantaged in our societies.

"This is a timely opportunity to engage policy makers in Africa in general and Central Africa in particular, to privilege development decisions that transform the lives of the majority of the people. It is a simple, intuitive tool, which our colleagues of the Social Development Policy Division of ECA have conceived and our various member States would surely find it useful for accelerating sustainable inclusive development," he noted

During a ceremony to officially launch ASDI, at the 8th AUC/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Economy and Planning in March 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attending ministers commended it and acknowledged its importance in pushing forward the inclusive development

agenda of the continent, and in particular the implementation of the AU Vision 2063. It has also been presented at high-level meetings and acclaimed by development institutions as an important metrics for monitoring and informing social policies.

The Douala workshop will be one among the series of stakeholder meetings across all regions of Africa to introduce the tool to development planners and graft-in their inputs, so that they can practically benefit from its framework as they draw their countries' development roadmaps.

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