

NAIROBI DECLARATION ON GLOBAL JUSTICE

We, the Ministers responsible for Social Development and their representatives, along with senior government officials and researchers, from 13 Eastern African countries, gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24 to 26 February 2015, for the 1st Forum of Ministers of Social Development of Eastern Africa, organized under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme;

Commending the Government of Kenya and UNESCO for their initiative in organizing this Forum on "Global Justice", with a specific focus on inequalities, poverty and related issues, providing countries in the region with a unique opportunity to share experiences and reflect on challenges in policy-making and implementation in these areas;

Welcoming the participation in the Forum of the East Africa Community (EAC) Secretariat, the African Union Commission (AUC), and United Nations entities;

Further welcoming the participation of the Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion of Ecuador and the Deputy Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection of Ghana, along with their senior officials, presenting the experience from the 10th Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Latin America and the 3rd Forum of Ministers of Social Development for the ECOWAS region, including concrete follow-up initiatives;

Appreciating the participation in the Forum of the representative of the President of the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme, the Minister of Social Development of Argentina;

Recognizing the importance of social science and humanities research in understanding the rapid social transformations within and across all regions of the world, and hence *applauding* the significant participation in the Forum of research and academic communities and networks from Africa, Europe and the United States of America, focusing on research relevant for Eastern Africa;

Welcoming the initiative of the International Social Science Council to launch the editorial process for the 2016 World Social Science Report, which will focus on inequalities and social justice;

Deeply concerned that, after 20 years, implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on Social Development and the Copenhagen Declaration has been slow and uneven, while commitments to poverty eradication, decent work and full employment for all, as well as social integration, remain largely unfulfilled;

Further concerned that growing inequalities within and among nations continue to hinder progress towards poverty eradication and the attainment of other internationally agreed development goals, and that extreme inequality contradicts the most fundamental principles of human rights and social justice, enshrined in major international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights";

Mindful that lack of equal opportunities for all is both a cause and consequence of inequality which engenders a vicious cycle of poverty, thus undermining sustainable development, to the particular detriment of youth, women, people with disabilities, older persons and other persons in vulnerable situations;

Affirming that current trends such as population growth, youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, HIV and AIDS, the growing incidence of non-communicable diseases, gender-based violence, and climate change, call for appropriately managed social – including economic – transformations with a view to creating inclusive and people-centred societies within vibrant, democratic development states across the Eastern Africa region;

Recognizing that corruption impacts negatively on social development and constitutes a major obstacle to the achievement of social justice;

Taking note of the need for affirmative measures to increase the percentage of youth, women and people with disabilities in leadership;

Considering that this Forum takes place in a context of major global sustainable development challenges, including persistent poverty, growing inequalities within and among nations, environmental challenges, increased threats to human and public security, with significant implications for global justice;

Acknowledging nonetheless that current challenges equally present opportunities to promote global social justice through the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to chart new approaches and visions to address global challenges, by scaling up commitments and investments designed to enhance the economic and social empowerment of peoples, provision of justice, respect for human rights, including the right to development, equity, equality, dignity, and mutual accountability;

Welcoming advocacy by the African Union Commission for its Member States to implement the Social Policy Framework for Africa;

Also welcoming the proposal by the African Union Commission to make the present Declaration visible at the Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers that will be held in Ethiopia in April 2015 and at the Heads of State meeting to be held in South Africa in June 2015;

Requesting Member States to fast-track the implementation of the African Union Assembly Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, adopted in January 2015;

Do hereby;

1. *Congratulate* the Government of Kenya for hosting the 1st Forum of Ministers of the Eastern Africa region, under the auspices of UNESCO's MOST Programme;
2. *Call* on the UN System to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially in matters of socio-economic empowerment and

inclusion of all, with specific emphasis on the poor, the marginalized and the most vulnerable members of society;

3. *Urge* the international community to place poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are expected to form a key component of the Post-2015 Development Agenda;
4. *Further urge* Member States to specifically highlight the importance of education at all levels, the sciences and technological advancement, and culture, as key drivers of development, and consequently to invest in strengthening these areas in Eastern Africa;
5. *Call upon* UNESCO and other members of the UN system to provide technical support in their areas of competence to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda;
6. *Affirm* the importance of appropriate family policies in realizing the rights of and supporting opportunities for youth, women, people with disabilities, older persons and other persons in vulnerable situations;
7. *Call* on the African Union Commission to consider hosting a continental MOST Ministerial Forum;
8. *Confirm* the composition of the Bureau elected at the 1st Forum of Ministers, to serve until the 2nd Forum, as follows:
 - President: Kenya
 - Vice President: Tanzania
 - Rapporteur: Djibouti
 - Vice Rapporteur: South Sudan
9. *Commit* to organizing, on a regular basis (at least once every two years), an Eastern Africa Forum for Ministers of Social Development under the auspices of the MOST Programme, in cooperation with the East African Community, African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to reflect on and review the impact of public policies on social development and make recommendations as appropriate;
10. *Welcome* the interest expressed by the Government of Tanzania in hosting the 2nd Forum of Ministers in 2017, and request UNESCO to explore the practical modalities of organizing the Forum, in consultation with the Government of Tanzania;
11. *Commit* to strengthening the social and human sciences by working in close collaboration with academic and research communities at the national, regional and international levels to produce knowledge and research relevant to addressing problems related to social transformations;
12. *Further commit* in this connection to enhancing the capacities of the Regional Gender Research and Documentation Centre and all the affiliated National Gender Research and

Documentation Centres in the Great Lakes Region, with the active engagement of youth, to facilitate research on gender equality issues and any other issues that impact on human rights and thereby aggravate inequalities;

13. *Undertake* to engage with, as well as support the active participation of social science and humanities researchers from the region in, the 2015 World Social Science Forum in Durban, South Africa, which will be held from 13 to 16 September 2015 on “Transforming Global Relations for a Just World”;
14. *Further undertake* to explore with the MOST Secretariat opportunities for the organization of MOST Schools in Eastern Africa as a mechanism to strengthen capacities in the social and human sciences;
15. *Commit* to effective follow-up and implementation of the present Declaration, through the aforementioned Bureau, and in partnership with UNESCO;
16. *Hereby establish* a network of senior officials, coordinated by the President of the Forum in cooperation with the MOST Secretariat, to ensure follow-up of recommendations, sharing of experiences, and enhanced effectiveness of the research-policy nexus;
17. *Undertake* to bring the present Declaration to the attention of their respective Heads of State, with a view to ensuring their commitment to the objectives stated herein.