SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS: GENDER PERSPECTIVES

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Outline of Presentation

- Objective
- Mandate of the ECA on social development
- Rationale for the project on gender sensitive social protection
- Major findings of the study
- Key messages
- Best practices
- Policy recommendations
Objective

- To share information on ECA's work on social protection for informal sector workers:
  - Major report on gender sensitive social protection.
  - African Human and Social Development Report
  - Universal Health Coverage IFS
  - ECA Country Profiles
  - Green Economy and Youth Employment

Mandate of the UNECA

- Promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable development in Africa focusing on:
  - Poverty reduction
  - Equitable distribution of wealth
  - Sustained job-generating growth
  - Climate change and its social and human impact
Rationale for projects on SP and IFS

- Improved macroeconomic and political environment.
- Persistence of vulnerability and deepening poverty – failure to meet MDG1.
- Persistent gender inequality – especially in the labour market.
- Africa’s population dynamics and need to reap the demographic dividends.
- Precarious lives for many, including in conflict affected countries.
- Extremely high rates of youth employment and lack of job opportunities in the formal sector.
- Need to sensitize policy makers about SP as a policy instrument for development and inclusive growth.

Major Findings of these studies

- Large numbers of vulnerable groups in all African countries - majority are women and in many countries, social protection programmes are being taken to protect them, but not necessarily as informal sector workers.
  - Urbanization in Africa has been associated with expanding labour market inequalities, persistent informalization and emergence of precarious forms of employment.
  - Labour markets tend to be strongly segmented by gender reflecting limited economic opportunities driven largely by gender bias in education, making women heavily involved in the informal sector.

- Informal employment is more akin to survival strategies with low returns – less earnings, volatile incomes, lack of access to basic public services and protections, and higher risks compared to workers in formal employment.
Key findings cont.

- Social transfer programmes impacted positively on women's labour market participation, including in informal sector.

- On average, up to 95% of informal sector workers do not have access to any form of social protection.

- Out-of-pocket expenditures to access health services form up to 80% of total household health expenditures.

- High-level political will and commitment are essential for the integration of both gender and social protection into national policies and strategies and ensure adequate budgeting.

Key Messages

- The informal sector carries the potential to make Africa realize its moment but quality of output needs to be improved.

- In order for social protection to address challenges of those in the informal sector it needs to be part of the shared and coherent vision of national development by mainstreaming it in national development framework. This approach implies forging close linkage between productivity innovations on one hand and social and economic security on the other in an integrated manner.

- Improved data collection on the various categories of activities and players in the informal sector is absolutely critical.
Messages cont.

- Capacity development for formulation and implementation of social protection policies, strategies and implementation programmes in the informal sector must be undertaken. This will require investment in institutional and human capacity development.

- Institutional frameworks are critical. Make institutional arrangements to enable operation that allows greater collaboration and coordination between government ministries and other stakeholders.

- Financing and budgeting – provision must be made for mobilization and appropriate allocation of adequate sustainable resources.

THANK YOU!