Conclusion of the SADC Employment and Labour Sector Troika Meeting on the Implementation of the SADC Portability of Accrued Social Security Benefits Framework within the Region

Manzini, Swaziland

13-14 December 2017

1.   Context and Objectives of the Meeting

1.1   The SADC Ministers of Employment and Labour and Social Partners adopted the SADC Cross-Border Portability of Social Security Benefits Policy Framework in May 2016. The framework provides an opportunity to demonstrate the political commitment to make progress towards the progressive coordination and integration of social protection systems in the region.

1.2   The SADC Employment and Labour Sector (ELS) Troika meeting was held with ILO support in Manzini from 13th to 14th December 2017 in Manzini, Swaziland   to discuss a road map towards the implementation of the SADC Cross Border Portability of social security benefits framework within the context of the forthcoming project funded by the European Union (EU) on portability of social security benefits in AU, ECOWAS, EAC and SADC.

1.3   The meeting was hosted by the Government of Swaziland and chaired by South Africa. Namibia tendered an apologies as they could not travel due to the short notification. Resource Persons from Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Zambia also participated in the meeting.

1.4   The Honorable Minister of Labour and Social Security, Senator Winnie Magagula officially opened the meeting and welcomed members to the SADC ELS Troika on behalf of His Majesty's Government. She stated that the event was a milestone as it commenced strengthening of the SADC capacity and policy instruments on social security provision with particular attention on the portability of social security benefits or rights.

2.   Presentation on the SADC Framework on Portability of Accrued Social Security Benefits

2.1 The meeting noted that the overall objective of the Framework is to facilitate the development of policies and programs aimed at the progressive enhancement of the adequacy, efficiency and regional coordination of SADC Member States' social security systems.

2.2 The framework applies to all general social security schemes, which include but not limited to, retirement benefits; occupational injury and disease benefits; unemployment insurance; health insurance; and survivors' benefits where relevant. **The competent authorities of the Member States will establish the administrative measures necessary for the application of the Framework.**

2.3 The Framework is one of the seven ELS Targeted outputs of the RISDP (2015-2020). In particular: "**Cross border portability of social protection instruments developed and operationalized by 2018**"

3.   Presentation of project on Strengthening SADC's Capacity and Policy Instruments on social security provision including portability or Rights acquired in Countries of Origin

3.1   The ILO made a presentation on the SADC Project on Strengthening SADC's Capacity and Policy Instruments on social security provision including portability or Rights acquired in Countries of Origin. Over the next two years,   the project will aid the implementation of the SADC Policy Framework on Portability of Social Security benefits through the following activities summarized in the matrix in annex (inception implementation plan).

4.   **Conclusions and recommendations**

The ELS Troika made the following conclusions and recommendations:

4.1   The proposed pilot countries are not predetermined by the project but to be proposed ELS Troika for further consideration and endorsement during the Senior Official's meeting. A clear criteria should be set for selection of pilot countries. Guiding principle should be that members' states should be ready to commit some resources to implementation of the pilot project. It recommended that the study be conducted to ascertain the countries to be targeted for the pilot. The results of the study will also feed into inaugural meeting of the Technical Working Group proposed in April 2018 in Namibia.

4.2   The SADC Technical Working Group to spearhead project implementation; with support of the ELS Troika team of social security experts for the Troika Member States who would meet regularly. It is recommend that the proposed Technical Working Group incorporates other relevant institutions in addition to social security institutions because there is a need for Acceptance Authority and ability among teams to facilitate effective implementation.

4.3   Issues of informality should also be addressed as it is not easy to remit money as there are no incentives to contribute to social security schemes. In this regard streamlining and improvement of payments processes, mechanisms and reducing stringent payment mechanisms is needed.

4.4   Employers should be encouraged to take responsibility during both recruitment and termination of employment and they should put in place education programmes for members and workers bodies.

4.5   Consider prioritization of three sectors identified by the framework as the start. Other sectors would be incorporated progressively as lessons are drawn from the pilots to feed implementation in other

sectors. The financial sector to be considered in view of the challenges in streamlining payment systems.

4.6   Two studies to be conducted, one study will be participatory in nature, and involving interviews with key informants on the state of the progress, indicating what can be done acted upon. The second study will focus on the payment systems and mutual administrative assistance models in the region, this will be specific to payment systems.

4.7   The use of the ELS Troika administrative technical experts to follow up on project activities bimonthly and progress on project implementation submitted to the SADC Troika meetings.

5.   Proposed Next Steps

5.1   Report of the SADC ELS Troika meeting in December 2017 to be presented for endorsement to the SADC ELS Annual meeting of Ministers and Social partners scheduled for 01 - 02 March 2018.

5.2   SADC Mnisters and Social partners to consider and endorse the Inception implementation plan – Annex A below.

5.3   Pilot actions to be proposed for ELS Troika for further consideration and endorsement during the Senior Official's meeting.

5.4   The inaugural meeting of the SADC Technical Working Group to be held experts meeting will be on 26 – 27 April 2018 in Namibia - the incoming presidency of the SADC.

5.5   Conduct the above mentioned two studies

5.6   Realize the adaptation Handbook on Social security agreements principles and negotiations:http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.res sourceId=26461 and Print of 150 copies of said (adapted to SADC) handbook.

Annex A: Inception Implémentation Plan

Group of activities	Startup activities
(1) Formal launch and validation of the activities foreseen.	• TROIKA meeting in Manzini 13-14 December drafts note for Minister recommending approval by ELS; because Namibia excuse itself this time, information on launch will be given to Namibia at formal TROIKA meeting in Windhoek in January • Ministers endorse the minister note at ELS Ministerial meeting 21-22 February • Project documents are circulated to SADC member states to increase awareness and ensure that information is fairly disseminated to all member states • First Workshop 26-27 April in Namibia: cross country, interdepartmental and social partners (suggested format: "fair of social security organizations" and experts in areas of database management, payment systems, etc.. for practical exchanges) helps plan concrete activities. • A background study will help partners decide on options for pilots and activities (see below, next point).
(2) Assessment proposal and support of pilot implementation of policy and programmatic options for the three SADC pilot countries for distinct economic sectors.	A study will be realized to help establish the knowledge base for options to target pilot actions on vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, mining, domestic or construction. The study will adopt a action research process that will engage key stakeholders in preparation for workshop indicated above.
(3) Development of suitable administrative arrangements and management systems to support a regional social protection regime; including training material;	Study will be conducted to elaborate on options for administrative coordination processes building on good and current practices, as well as emergent practices in different areas including but not limited to • Payment systems: use of SASWITCH / SADC Central Banks working group on payment systems coordination • Mutual administrative assistance model(s) best practices in the field internationally and regionally but also practices of mutual support of SADC in other areas (ex. Cross Border SADC Water management Institute/ Centre of Excellence)
(4) Facilitation of coordination technical and consultation meetings and consultations with social partners.	Proposals for coordination • SADC Troika of technical persons bimonthly meetings (including via skype) • SADC Troika (Namibia chair from August next year) and ELS tripartite for political authorizations
(5) Support to the establishment of an Independent Committee of Experts within the relevant SADC structures.	Consideration for establishing a network of practical experts in fields of legal, technological - data base management, and payment systems to offer practical expertise – in the form of *an Ad hoc SADC experts working group/committee* from social security institutions and experts in specific areas
(6) Support the implementation of the SADC policy framework in the three pilot countries.	- Establish concrete learning and practice workshops and technical support to three commonly defined instruments including a possible multilateral, a bilateral and a pilot to extend coverage to vulnerable migrant workers not covered by formal schemes - Adaptation Handbook on Social security agreements principles and negotiations: http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=26461 and Print of 150 copies of said handbook