

AFRICAN UNION

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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Tel: +251-115517700 Fax: +251-115517844
Website: www.au.int

STATEMENT

BY

AMB. AMMA A. TWUM-AMOAH

**COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (HHS)
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

STATEMENT

**SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
DOHA, QATAR
4TH – 6TH NOVEMBER, 2025.**

Your Excellencies,

Honourable Ministers,
Representatives of the United Nations,
Esteemed Development Partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a profound honour to address this distinguished gathering on behalf of His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Allow me to commend the United Nations and the Government of the State of Qatar for convening this timely Summit, one that speaks to the conscience of our world and renews our collective resolve to build societies anchored in dignity, equity and inclusion. Also, I add my voice to the many in thanking the Emir and the people of the State of Qatar for amazing hospitality. My delegation and I are grateful.

For Africa, social development is not merely a policy, it is a principle. It is not an act of charity, it is an expression of justice.

The three pillars before us - eradicating poverty, promoting productive employment and decent work, and advancing social integration - are inseparable from the African Union's vision of **“an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the**

global arena,” as articulated in Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*.

Excellencies,

We recognise that growth without equity is a mirage, and progress without inclusion is but a pause before reversal. This conviction guides the work of the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, placing social protection, employment creation, and inclusive development at the heart of Africa’s transformation.

Through the Ten-Year Strategy on Social Development (2021–2030) and the revised Social Policy Framework, the African Union is supporting Member States to embed equity into the very fabric of macroeconomic and fiscal planning.

Across the continent, national social registries are being established, digital systems are expanding coverage, and cash-transfer programmes are reaching households that were once excluded.

We affirm a central truth: social protection is a right, not a privilege, and its expansion is not a cost, but an investment in resilience, productivity and peace.

Africa's greatest wealth is its people. With over sixty per cent of our population under the age of 25, we cannot afford a generation in waiting.

Through the Youth Employment Strategy for Africa (YES-Africa), the African Decent Work Framework, and the Labour Migration Governance for Development Programme, we are forging pathways from vulnerability to value, formalising the informal economy, strengthening labour institutions, and ensuring that women and young people can thrive in safe, dignified and decent work.

Our Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aligns learning with labour market realities, promoting entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and innovation so that African youth are equipped not only for today's jobs, but for tomorrow's industries.

Inclusion is the measure of civilisation.

Africa continues to advance the rights of persons with disabilities through the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Continental Disability Inclusion Strategy, guided by the principle: **“Nothing about us without us.”**

Gender equality remains a cornerstone of our mandate. The Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), alongside flagship initiatives such as the African Girls' Summit, reaffirms our conviction that empowering women and girls is the fastest route to transforming communities, economies, and futures.

We meet amid complex headwinds - rising inequalities, shrinking fiscal space, climate disruptions and debt vulnerabilities that threaten to erode decades of progress.

These realities demand a new social contract: one that sees social protection and inclusion not as safety nets, but as springboards; one that links fiscal justice to human dignity; and one that secures predictable, sustainable financing for people-centred policies.

The African Union, therefore, calls for renewed global solidarity, anchored in partnerships that honour national ownership, strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, and harness innovation to protect the vulnerable while empowering the capable.

Excellencies,

The African Union's message is unequivocal: social development is not a peripheral concern, it is the cornerstone of peace, stability, and prosperity. It must be treated not as an afterthought in economic planning, but as the very foundation upon which inclusive and sustainable growth is built.

As we move forward, let us hold fast to this truth:

“A society that neglects its weakest members forfeits its strongest asset, the moral authority to lead.”

Let us, therefore, reaffirm our collective humanity. Let us ensure that no woman, no child, no young person, and no person with a disability is left behind in the architecture of our shared future.

Africa stands ready, not as a recipient of benevolence, but as a co-architect in reimagining global social justice.

Together, we can build a world where inclusion is not a distant aspiration, but the very air we breathe, where every human being can live, work, and dream in dignity.

I thank you.