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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Quarterly Briefing Meeting with African Ambassadors

Briefing Note

25 June 2013

Addis Ababa

Briefing Note of the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held the second quarterly briefing for 2013 with African Ambassadors to exchange views on the work of the Commission. This Note provides an overview of substantive work undertaken by ECA over the past three months and highlights some key activities that will be taking place over the next three months.

I. Activities from March 2013 to June 2013

The approach taken in this Note is to focus on substantive areas of work grouped under topics relating to ECA service lines, namely key events, knowledge generation and information sharing, technical assistance services provided to member States and consensus building.

A. Key Events

1. Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Economy and Planning, 2013

The sixth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union (AU) Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was held on 25 and 26 March 2013, in Abidjan, under the theme, "Industrialization for an Emerging Africa".

The meeting was attended by representatives (including 34 Ministers) of 44 member States.

The Conference, which drew panelists from Africa and other regions, was interactive, as it was organized around four plenary panel sessions on: (a) "Accelerating Industrialization in Africa"; (b) "Industrialization and Structural Transformation in Africa"; (c) "Planning Industrialization"; and (d) "Financing Africa's Industrialization".

A note on the new ECA strategic directions, the ECA Annual Report, the Revised Strategic Framework for 2014-2015 and the Programme Budget for 2014-2015 were presented and approved as appropriate.

In addition to the theme, deliberations included an overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa. Progress of the Millennium Development Goals and Regional Integration in Africa was also reviewed. The Post-2015 Development Agenda and harnessing the Demographic Dividend were well covered, as was the issue of "Implementing the Rio+ 20 Outcomes in Africa".

A number of important resolutions were adopted by the Conference following the topical issues discussed. These were: 907 (XLVI) - "Industrialization for an Emerging Africa"; 908 - (XLVI) "Refocusing and recalibrating the Economic Commission for Africa to support Africa's structural transformation; 909 (XLVI) - "Realizing and Harnessing Demographic

Dividend in Africa”; 910 (XLVI) – “African common position on the post-2015 development agenda”; and 911 (XLVI) – “Statistics and Statistical Development”.

2. African Union 50th anniversary celebrations

In keeping with its continuing close collaboration and partnership with the African Union, ECA supported activities organized by AUC to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In this regard, on 25 May 2013, the Executive Secretary of ECA moderated the high-level seminar on “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”, with Heads of State and Government in attendance. The seminar provided insights into Africa’s future prospects over the next 50 years and covered issues such as industrialization and infrastructure, urbanization and changing demographics and investment.

In the same context, AUC invited ECA to jointly organize a symposium titled “A Conversation with Africa’s Youth” on 24 May 2013 to provide a platform for dialogue between and among some Heads of State and Government and young Africans. This was of particular significance in view of the Africa Youth Decade 2009-2018 and consolidation of effort by the continent to boost growth and the political renaissance. The symposium afforded young people the opportunity to partake in the social and political discourse of the continent and make contributions to current policy debates.

A short film was commissioned for widespread dissemination in support of “Vision 2063”, which highlighted possible future trends and scenarios for Africa.

3. ECA Support to the articulation of the African Union Vision 2063

As the continent commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU in 2013, a new vision is to be articulated for Africa over the next 50 years. “Vision 2063” will provide a 50- year forward-looking framework to guide member States, regional institutions and other stakeholders to achieve the AU vision of “an integrated, people-centred and prosperous Africa at peace with itself”. In addition, the plan would chart actions and strategies for the integration, peace and development of the continent for the next 50 years.

AUC, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and ECA are working together to articulate the Africa Vision 2063 project document, with a view to giving impetus to the African development agenda. ECA is accordingly supporting the preparatory processes of “Vision 2063”, which started at the beginning of year. The final document is to be submitted to the January 2014 AU Summit for approval. In addition to policy analysis and research, the Vision 2063 process entails convening all stakeholders at the national, regional and continental levels.

4. World Economic Forum Africa

Under the auspices of the World Economic Forum (WEF-Africa), ECA and the WEF jointly organized a high-level side event on 8 May 2013, in Cape Town, South Africa, on the

potential contribution of private equity to structural transformation in Africa. The main objective was to brainstorm on the status of private equity in Africa, focusing on its potential and challenges. As a follow-up to the event, ECA is conducting a study on the potential of private equity as an instrument for financing Africa's development, to fashion an initiative to enable the continent to achieve its goals. President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire has graciously agreed to champion the initiative and bring it to the attention of his peers at the next AU Summit in January 2014.

B. Knowledge generation and information sharing

ECA knowledge generating activities covered a number of topical economic issues including:

- The official launch of the Economic Report on Africa 2013, on 25 March 2013, during the AU/ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Since then, launch events involving a cross-section of stakeholders have taken place in Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda and Zambia as well as at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.
- The finalization and publication of the 2013 edition African Economic Outlook on the theme "Structural Transformation and Natural Resource Management".
- The 2013 Africa MDG Progress Report was submitted, as required, to the AU Summit in May 2013. It is to be similarly presented to the United Nations General Assembly, which was the first body to request the submission of annual progress reports on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from the United Nations Regional Commissions.
- The progress review for African least developed countries LDCs in the framework of the implementation of the Istanbul Plan of Action was prepared and presented during the 2013 Conference of Ministers.
- ECA prepared two strategic papers on the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) post 2015. The two papers, titled "Strategy Paper on the Future (post AGOA) Africa-US Trade and Economic Cooperation" and "The African Growth Opportunity Act: Examining the Possibilities Post 2015". The two papers were presented at the AGOA preparatory meeting held in USA for African ambassadors in the US and their US counterparts on 30 and 31 May 2013. The main objectives of the meeting was to discuss and advise on preparations for the upcoming 12th AGOA Forum to be held in August 2013, in Addis Ababa, prepare Africa's substantive input into the Forum, consider two preparatory papers by the African Trade Policy Centre and strategize on the best approaches to engage key US stakeholders on the future of AGOA beyond 2015.
- ECA prepared a policy brief ahead of the 5th Summit of the BRICS, held on 27 March 2013, in Durban, South Africa. The publication titled "Implications for Growth,

Employment and Structural Transformation in Africa” addressed issues relating to Africa-BRICS cooperation.

- ECA worked closely with the NEPAD Agency to produce a draft document on “Finance and Investment in Africa: Mobilizing Resources for Financing AU/NEPAD Development Projects”. The initial findings of the report were shared with the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, which called for it to integrate the work of the Mbeki Panel on Illicit Financial Flows and the report of the Obasanjo Panel on Alternative Sources of Finance for the African Union.

In an effort to scale up knowledge-sharing capacity in Africa, ECA operationalized the Network of African Development Planners, during the Conference of Ministers in Abidjan. The purpose of the network is to promote knowledge sharing among African planners and build the capacity of the organization to efficiently tap into the experience of experts and exchange ideas with them in the area of development planning on the continent. In 2013, ECA will operationalize the network of the African statisticians.

The ECA subregional offices (SROs) are being reconfigured as part of the Commission’s strategic reorientation. In this regard, a retreat aimed at establishing their new role and exploring ideas for the production of ECA country profiles was held in May 2013, in Kigali. Concrete outcomes emerging from this successful meeting include: the terms of reference for the subregional data centres and subregional initiative clusters; the template for country profiles; and data needs and architecture for data collection and modalities for the SROs and the African Centre for Statistics to support national statistical offices.

Experts from African countries discussed the theme, “Economic Resilience to Climate Change in African LDCs”, in an effort to identify best practices and policy recommendations for development planning, aimed at overcoming the vulnerability of African LDCs to climate change. In addition, the upgrade of the LDC monitoring tool, including new data and a simulation feature, was recently presented to external partners.

Working closely with the African Union Commission (AUC), ECA organized the Third Congress of African Economists, from 6 to 8 March 2013, in Dakar on “Industrialization and Economic Emergence in Africa”. This was in line with the theme of the 2013 AU/ECA Conference of Ministers.

In the area of social development, ECA is in the process of completing activities, including preparation of the ICPD+20 report, for which an external review is programmed for September 2013. The African Social Development Index, once ready, will most certainly constitute a technical tool for member States to gauge social development outputs that complement and add value to current MDGs and the human development index. Finally, the next edition of the African Social Development Review will address issues on unemployment, social protection and poverty reduction.

The African Centre for Gender organized an online discussion on “Promoting the Role of National Gender Machineries through Effective Advocacy and Sensitization” from 11 to 29

March 2013. This e-discussion was to initiate a dialogue on approaches to sensitizing and advocating on gender issues and the role of national gender machineries vis-à-vis other ministries, departments and sectors. Staff from national machineries and mechanisms from African countries with existing e-network teams were invited to participate in this discussion. Participants from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zambia actively participated in this discussion and shared their success stories and challenges to ensuring effective advocacy and sensitization for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa.

ECA, through the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), continues to engage other partners to share research results, advocate and build partnerships for land policy development and implementation in Africa. In this regard, two major studies were carried out to enhance and improve the development and convergence of land policies in the African region. The first, in collaboration with the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, was on "Mainstreaming Land Policy and Governance in CAADP", while the second was on "The Land Policy Convergence Framework for West Africa Land". In addition, a report on "Improving Access to Land and Strengthening Land Rights of Women in Africa" was prepared to address the specific issue of African women's access to land.

Of particular interest was the support provided to the Government of Niger, in close collaboration and consultation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Monetary Union (UEMOA) and development partners at country level, to launch a national pilot on implementing the AU Declaration on Land Issues and challenges in Niger.

The outcomes of work undertaken by the LPI was brought to the attention of the pre-G8 Conference on Tax, Trade and Transparency, with a view to building synergies with and capacitating the existing AU framework, including its instruments and tools (AU Declaration on Land; Framework and Guidelines; Nairobi Action Plan) and mechanisms (LPI) for facilitating land governance so as to enhance rather than undermine these ongoing efforts.

C. Capacity development and training

ECA technical support to its member States in the past three months was mainly in the form of training and capacity development in economic management and planning.

The African Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), which is the training arm of ECA, organized short one- or two-week courses in English and French for up to 25 policy officers drawn from the five subregions of the continent as follows:

- "International Trade for National and Regional Development", which targeted officers of the trade, finance, industry and planning ministries. They were worked through the core themes and principles of developing and applying trade policy for the achievement of long-term national development and regional integration.

- “International Trade Negotiations”, which was a counterpart to the trade policy short course for officers, whose line of work involved negotiation of intra-African and international trade agreements.
- “Agricultural Policy in Africa”, which targeted officers from across Africa, whose day-to-day work involved developing agricultural policies on food security, land allocation and land use for agricultural purposes, agricultural exports and the agriculture-industry linkage.
- “Data Analysis for Development Planners” gathered officials responsible for the collection, curation, and/or development of statistics in planning and finance ministries, and national statistical offices. Participants were shown how to apply various tools and software for managing data and deploying them.
- “Integrating Gender into National Budgets and Development Financing Strategies and Plans” targeted officers from across Francophone Africa. The session of the same course for Anglophone Africa will take place in July 2013, in Nairobi.
- The “Industrial Policy in Africa” course took advantage of the results and proposals reported in the 2013 Economic Report on Africa, which focused on commodity-based industrialization. It also drew attention to the AU Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa, alongside its other classic course modules dealing with why Africa needs to industrialize, how this could be done and the institutional, policy and governance pre-requisites that should be put in place. In 2013, IDEP began a new Masters Degree programme in Industrial Policy for African officers, in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg.

The Institute also delivered a tailor-made course on Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for (25 officers from Benin’s Ministry of Development, Economic Analysis and Planning and the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

IDEP also organized three monthly development seminars on “migration and development in Africa”, “post-conflict development planning” and “the future of development financing”. The Institute welcomed its first visiting Fellow for 2013 from Swaziland. The Fellow is undertaking a policy research for the Swazi Government on employment generation for young school leavers.

The Capacity Development Division of ECA has also begun operating and has been in consultations with the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities (RECs), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism to determine its programme of support for them. The Division is also in the process of recruiting high-level regional advisers to provide advisory services to member States and their regional and subregional organizations in the areas of industrialization, development planning, macroeconomic policy and negotiation of natural resource contracts.

D. Consensus building

ECA supported its member States in actively contributing to the articulation of common positions on important issues.

The Commission has also been partnering with the AUC, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate elaboration of the African Common Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda as per the mandate received from African Heads of States. The first version of the common position was presented to Heads of State at the African Union Summit held in May 2013. Consequently, the Assembly agreed to pursue its consultations through a high-level committee headed by President Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia.

Implementation of the outcomes of the Africa Regional Implementation meeting on the follow-up to the Rio+20 outcome preparations is ongoing. Five subregional reports and a regional one on sustainable development goals (SDGs) will be discussed at a regional consultative meeting, 31 October - 5 November 2013, to derive Africa's collective input into the work of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on SDGs.

E. Subregional activities for development

At the subregional level, ECA, through its five SROs, continues to play an important role and contributes to policy design and implementation towards its economic and social transformation. As members of the "One UN" teams in their respective locations, the SROs work closely with other United Nations agencies to engage government agencies, partners and civil society organizations in national processes on the post-2015 development agenda.

In North Africa, ECA organized, in cooperation with the Algerian Ministry of Post and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), a workshop on "the Observatories of ICT and the Information Society in Africa" from 14 to 16 April 2013, in Algiers. Participants representing ICT ministries, national statistical offices, the private sector, academia and civil society from all over the continent, analyzed the current situation of ICT and information society statistics in Africa, to support socioeconomic development and respond to the necessary adaptations to the knowledge economy and society. As more effort was needed in this area, recommendations were made to ECA, member States, the RECs, international organizations and partners to strengthen cooperation, support national and subregional initiatives for better ICT and information society statistics collection, analysis and dissemination and efficient knowledge management.

In West Africa, ECA facilitated intergovernmental expert meetings on green economy, as one of the avenues for sustainable development in the subregion, taking note of ongoing efforts in the area of agriculture. In addition, it has been involved in the review of regional integration programmes through West African intergovernmental organizations led by ECOWAS and UEMOA to design common regional policies. ECA also supported formulation and validation of the ECOWAS Aid for Trade Strategy at a validation workshop held 7-9 May 2013.

ECOWAS member States at the meeting agreed on a roadmap to adopt the strategy for implementation by member States, once it became a policy document for the subregion .

In East Africa, plans are well under way for a partners and stakeholders validation meeting for the proposed Regional Programme on Food Security for Eastern Africa. The meeting, which will take place in Dar es Salaam from 2 to 4 July 2013, will be held in conjunction with a workshop for high-level decision makers on enhancing agricultural research and development for value addition in Eastern Africa.

In Central Africa, ECA significantly contributed to “the harmonization of rules of origin towards a continental free trade area” as part of the work of the AUC 5th Customs Technical Working Group, which informed the final methodologies for informal sector statistics to be submitted to the 4th session of the Statistical Commission for Africa in January 2014.

In Southern Africa, ECA continued to assist member States, RECs and other subregional stakeholders in policy coordination and harmonization. It also contributed to analytical and policy making capacity by undertaking studies and publishing timely reports on:

- Regional Integration in Southern Africa: Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Sustainable Development in Southern Africa - Addressing the Gaps
- Regional Integration in Southern Africa: Promoting Commodity Market Exchanges in SADC
- Economic and social conditions in Southern Africa (2013)
- Progress Report on the Implementation of Regional and International Agendas and Commitments in the subregion: Population and Sustainable Development

II. Forthcoming events: July to September 2013

A. Task Forces on ECA reforms

As part of the reform process aimed at the strategic reorientation and retooling of ECA, which started in October 2012, ten task forces were set up to chart a new course for doing business. Their main objective was to conduct ECA-wide consultations and make concrete and implementable recommendations to improve the Commission’s business standards. Their work, among other things, would be to: (a) determine procedures for effectively preparing and disseminating ECA knowledge products in a timely manner; (b) articulate a strategy that provides a framework to guide ECA in the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its capacity development activities; (c) determine the procedure that would govern the planning of conferences; and (d) develop a timely and “disciplined” calendar of annual activities to better engage member States and their regional and subregional organizations.

B. Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade

The 4th Global Review of Aid for Trade will take place in Geneva on 8 July 2013. The Global Review will discuss aid for trade practices from the perspective of joining and adding value within the network of production chains. This is in line with the AU action plan to boost intra-African trade and the ongoing deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. As Africa is the second largest recipient of aid for trade and has attached paramount importance to its transformation agenda, much is at stake for the continent, compelling ECA to be actively involved in the process.

ECA is therefore working closely with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the AUC and has conducted a survey on how aid for trade can best contribute to boosting intra-African trade. The survey, which targeted member States, RECs and donors, was to support the African Union's action plan on boosting intra-Africa trade. The survey report, which also contains an updated analysis of aid for trade flows to the region, will be discussed and will inform the debate on how aid for trade can best be harnessed to help African producers connecting and moving up regional and global value chains.

Meanwhile, ECA is also leading a project comprising the five United Nations regional commissions, namely the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe to build the capacity of selected developing countries to formulate bankable aid for trade interventions and strengthen their monitoring and evaluation systems.

To that end, all the commissions are organizing regional workshops, expert group meetings and technical capacity activities. It is expected that an inter-regional forum will be held to share experiences and lessons learnt. In the Africa region, the project focuses on supporting the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) by improving the capacities of African countries to tap into aid for trade resources, thereby contributing to covering infrastructural financing gaps. ECA selected five out of the 51 PIDA priority projects to serve as pioneers, and will work closely with concerned stakeholders to enhance their capacity in managing trade infrastructure projects and mobilizing resources through aid for trade.

C. United Nations Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change

Working Group III (WG III) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) focuses its work on the mitigation of climate change. Just like the other two working groups of the IPCC, WG III is currently preparing its contribution to the 5th Assessment Report to be published in 2014, with plans to hold its Fourth Lead Author Meeting from 1 to 5 July 2013, in Addis Ababa. The meeting will be hosted by ECA through its African Climate Policy Centre. The author teams will discuss how to consider the approximately 20,000 comments received, to complete the revisions and produce the final report. The second order draft of the team's contribution was reviewed and finalized by governments and registered experts.

D. Meetings of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows

The High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, established by ECA and AU, is continuing its work. It is chaired by President Mbeki, former president of South Africa, and composed of other distinguished personalities from within and outside the continent.

Illicit financial outflows drain foreign exchange reserves, reduce tax collection, cancel out investment inflows and worsen poverty. Such outflows also undermine the rule of law, stifle trade and worsen macroeconomic conditions. ECA has prepared a paper titled "Quantifying illicit financial flows through trade mispricing and assessing their economic incidence on African economies", to support the work of the Panel.

As part of its regional consultation meetings, the Panel engages key stakeholders, including the executive, legislature, judiciary and key civil society and private sector representatives from African subregions. So far, the Panel has held similar consultations in Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Tunisia and Zambia. The Panel consulted with the presidents and high officials in these countries to enhance dialogue and policy discourse on the matter. Preliminary evidence shows that taking prompt action to curtail illicit financial outflows from Africa will provide a major source of funds for development programmes on the continent in the near future.

III. Partnerships

A. ECA Business Plan 2013-2015

The ECA Business Plan 2013 – 2015 has been finalized and is being printed.

The Business Plan is a strategic articulation of the ECA programme of work in the coming three years, in line with the Commission's refocusing exercise. It outlines how ECA intends to deepen its work in priority areas identified, with greater emphasis on statistical information and credible data for better and informed policy and decision making; and highlights how the Commission plans to strengthen its partnership and collaboration with the AUC, AfDB and the RECs.

The Business Plan is anchored on three pillars of support to the African transformative development agenda, namely the economic growth and impact of the global economic crises, mega-trends and rise of emerging economies. It also places emphasis on delivering results in these three areas, through its existing service lines of knowledge generation, sharing and networking; advocacy and consensus building; and advisory services and technical cooperation. It aims at focusing the "operations" of ECA on a more limited set of sectors and themes where its competence and contribution are widely acknowledged.

The budget for implementing the ECA work programme during the three-year period is estimated at US\$331.9 million. Of this amount, \$196.9 million (59.3 per cent) will be funded through the regular budget of the Commission, while the balance of \$135 million (40.7 per cent) is expected to be funded from extrabudgetary resources, through grants provided by ECA donor partners.

Discussions with development partners (bilateral and multilateral) for their technical and funding support to the three-year business plan have commenced and will be intensified in the next six months.

B. Strategic planning meeting on the African Trade Policy Centre

A strategic planning meeting on the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) will take place from 16 to 18 July 2013 in Addis Ababa. Its purpose is to discuss a strategic framework for the future of the ATPC, and within that context, define the programme areas of focus for the centre. The new strategic framework for the ATPC should be in line with the Centre being part of ECA regular programme but with activities that will be implemented using extrabudgetary resources. The outcome of the ATPC strategic meeting will inform its future direction and inputs into the proposed ATPC business plan, articulated around its overall objective to become the leading knowledge centre and policy hub for trade and development in Africa. Participants to the meeting will include representatives from African member States, RECs, private sector, civil society and other trade constituents.