

Leadership baton changes hands at ECA as Janneh retires

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Addis Ababa, 03 September 2012 (ECA) - The staff and management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) await their new Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary following the retirement of Abdoulie Janneh at the end of August 2012 after seven years at ECA.

Mr. Janneh, bowed to a rousing standing ovation last Thursday 29 August 2012, in a heavily attended staff town hall meeting. The day after, 30 August, a lively seminar took place on his thoughts and writings in two areas that, he often admitted, consumed most of his energies throughout his term at ECA - regional integration, partnerships and sustainable development. The seminar was attended by ECA member States, senior managers from the African Union Commission, and UN staff based in Ethiopia.

The high point of the seminar was the launch of two publications: *"Integrating Africa"* and *"Reflections on Africa's Development"*.

Integrating Africa is a 323-page collection of some of Janneh's policy statements over the last seven years, centering on the Africa Policy Agenda; Regional Integration, Partnerships; the Financial Crisis and Africa's Special Needs.

The book was launched by Advocate Bience Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union who spoke of Janneh's commitments to partnership, his revival of a joint ECA/African Union/AfDB Secretariat and transforming the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) from a mere consultative forum into a coordination mechanism co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Gawanas said there was no better way to launch *Integrating Africa* than to cite the words of the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, on the book. She quoted Mr. Zenawi as saying "The policy statements in this book contributed to shaping our strategies, policies and programmes in the pursuit of sustainable development and economic transformation."

The second book, *Reflections on Africa's Development* is a collection of essays written by ECA staff members. They are on Africa's infrastructure, International Trade, African Integration, Mineral Resources Governance, Economic Growth, Governance and Globalization.

In a farewell message to staff today, Janneh said: "Together, we have built a more focused, relevant, professional and better resourced UNECA. Our success was mainly due to our collective dedication and hard work but obviously with other contributory factors."

He spoke fondly of the scaled-up partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank as well as various credible platforms created for dialogue and consensus building, including the AU/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the African Economic Conference; and the African Development Forum.

"Amongst the many credible decisions of the last AU/ECA Ministerial Conference was the establishment of the High level panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa that is now being chaired by former President Thabo Mbeki," he said.

Janneh also spoke of structures and programmes notably the AU/AfDB/ECA Joint Secretariat Support Office, the ClimDev Africa Programme, the Land Policy Initiative and the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) which were initiated under him.

He will be succeeded by Dr. Carlos Lopes who has been serving as Director of the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) at the level of Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) since 2007. He previously served as UN Assistant-Secretary-General and Director for Political Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

Dr. Lopes has actively contributed to research on development issues. Specialized in development and strategic planning, he has authored or edited 22 books and taught at Universities and academic institutions in Lisbon, Coimbra, Zurich, Uppsala, Mexico, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

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