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Addis Ababa, 24 March 2016 (ECA) - The Economic Commission for Africa will launch the seventh edition of the *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIAVII)* on April 2, 2016, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The report, entitled “**Innovation, Competitiveness and Regional Integration**”, asserts that Regional Integration is a driver and beneficiary of innovation. The deeper the integration and the larger the community created, the greater potential benefits for innovation. Africa’s recent growth spurt has hardly changed the underlying orientation towards commodity dependence in national economies. Innovation capacities are therefore crucial for transforming what the continent produces and trades. Based on its theoretical and empirical insights, the report recommends for Africa to shift its policies to new areas driven by science, technology and innovation (STI) on a national, regional and continental level.

The launch of ARIA VII falls during the week of the 9th Joint Annual ECA-AUC Conference of Ministers (CoM2016), also known as the Africa Development Week, taking place in Addis Ababa from March 31 to April 5 2016. This report comes three years after the launch of ARIA VI in 2013, entitled “Harmonizing Policies to Transform the Trading Environment”.

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