

Ninth quarterly Briefing Meeting with African Ambassadors

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Briefing Note

The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is convening the ninth quarterly briefing with African ambassadors accredited to Ethiopia to exchange views on the work of the Commission. This note provides an overview of the substantive work carried out by ECA over the past three months, highlights the key events that will be taking place over the next three months, and discusses some of the Commission's new partnerships.

The Executive Secretary would like to take this opportunity to inform African ambassadors that during the period under review, the ECA Printing and Publishing Unit won the prestigious 2014 UN 21 Award in the Efficiency category for its rigorous commitment to reducing its carbon footprint by implementing the ISO 14001:2004 certification in its print shop. The Secretary-General gives this award every year to staff members or sections that have demonstrated ingenuity, efficiency and excellence in the delivery of the Organization's programmes and services.

ECA also finalized its Performance Management Dashboard, an executive management tool. Going forward this tool will be one of the core elements of an integrated system of planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance to promote management for results, accountability and transparency. The Dashboard will support ECA in achieving its overarching aspiration of positioning itself as the think tank of reference on African development policy issues.

I. Activities from October to December 2014

The present note focuses on substantive areas of work, grouped under topics relating to the Commission's programme of work: key events, knowledge generation and information sharing,

and capacity development, which includes providing technical support to member States and consensus building.

A. Key events

1. Ninth African Development Forum

Held in Morocco in October 2014 under the theme "Innovative financing for Africa's transformation", the Forum provided a platform for in-depth discussions on issues relating to innovative financing mechanisms in the following thematic areas: domestic resource mobilization, illicit financial flows, private equity and new forms of partnership. It concluded with the Marrakech Consensus, which calls for greater partnership between the private and public sectors to accelerate Africa's transformation. In addition, the Consensus sets out recommendations on using fiscal policies to tackle poverty as well as a regulatory framework to attract and better deploy capital. The high-level Forum was attended by a number of Heads of State and ministers, as well as policymakers and an impressive number of experts, ranging from the private sector to academia to international and regional financial institutions. In total, the Forum attracted over 1,000 participants. The African Social Development Index was also launched during a side event.

2. Fourth Climate Change and Development in Africa Conference

Held in Morocco in October 2014 under the theme "Africa can feed Africa now: translating climate knowledge into action", the Conference focused on how Africa can utilize climate knowledge opportunities to transform agricultural production systems with a view to feeding itself sustainably and improving the socioeconomic well-being of its people. Some 430 participants were in attendance. The Confer-

ence called for increased investment in climate science and innovation to enhance agricultural production.

3. Ninth African Economic Conference

Held in Ethiopia in November 2014 under the theme “Knowledge and innovation for Africa’s transformation”, the Conference was co-organized with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme and attracted 200 participants. During the Conference, Africa’s existing skills, technology and innovation capacity were examined against the needs required to realize Africa’s transformation agenda. Practical policies and strategies for rapidly eliminating existing deficits and increasing capacity across all sectors of the economy were debated, and a call was made for greater investment in people-centered innovation and technology.

The Millennium Development Goals Report for 2014, developed in partnership with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, was also launched during the Conference. The Report raises awareness of Africa’s performance with regard to the Goals and provides perspectives on lessons learned in accelerating progress towards achieving the Goals.

4. Conference on Land Policy in Africa

Held in Ethiopia in November 2014 under the theme “The next decade of land policy in Africa: ensuring agricultural development and inclusive growth”, the Conference, which attracted 350 participants, took place in the context of the African Union’s decision to declare 2014 the year of agriculture and food security in Africa. During the Conference, the need to deal with land governance issues and implement and monitor appropriate legal and legislative frameworks was underscored, with a view to enabling African countries to fully benefit from their land resources and realize economic transformation.

5. Ninth African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing +20)

Held in Ethiopia in November 2014, the Conference discussed progress made in the field of women’s and girls’ rights twenty years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted. The Conference attracted high-level participation including ministers for gender issues, government representatives, experts from other international organizations, observers from women’s groups, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the media. Over 475 people attended. It provided an opportunity for continental experts to agree on the priority areas that Africa should advocate for inclusion in the global Beijing +20 outcome document. A technical expert meeting preceded the ministerial segment and culminated in the Addis Ababa Declaration, which calls for investment for the advancement of women and gender equality to be scaled up. Participants also called for greater accountability regarding the implementation of national, regional and global commitments.

6. First joint session of the Statistical Commission for Africa and the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices

Held in Tunisia in December 2014, the first joint session attracted close to 180 participants and provided a forum for partners to explore synergies and make their support for statistics more efficient and effective. A call was made to explore new financing sources for statistical capacity-building in Africa. The initial results of the Regional Integration Index were also presented on the margins of the session.

7. Africa Forum on Inclusive Economies

Held in Kenya in December 2014, the Forum was the result of a collaboration with the African Development Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation. It brought together key thinkers and policymakers from 23 African countries and beyond to discuss and propel forward-thinking and action around the theme of “Advancing in-

clusive economies in Africa". It also helped to develop a common understanding of inclusive economies within the African context.

8. Launch of the Report on the socioeconomic impacts of the Ebola virus disease on Africa

Launched in Addis Ababa and Niamey in December 2014, the Report presents an assessment of the socioeconomic impacts of the Ebola virus disease on Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as Africa as a whole. It provides an analysis of the real costs involved, including growth and development prospects, and offers a range of policy recommendations to accompany the ongoing mitigation efforts aimed at reducing the region's vulnerability and strengthening its resilience to Ebola in the short, medium and long term. One of the key recommendations is a call for debt cancellation in the three most affected countries, as it will become increasingly burdensome for them to meet their international debt obligations given the current situation. Donors have to date been generous regarding debt relief. Requesting debt cancellation is a step further that would go a long way in creating the necessary conditions for post-Ebola recovery. ECA is now in the process of preparing how to advise countries to use the fiscal space originating from such an initiative if partners adhere to it.

B. Knowledge generation and information sharing

The Commission's knowledge-generating activities and products cover a wide range of topical economic issues. Some of the publications completed during the reporting period include:

- a) Socioeconomic impacts of the Ebola virus disease on Africa
- b) Millennium Development Goals Report for 2014: assessing progress in Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals
- c) 2014 Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa

- d) Step-by-step handbook on the Country Mining Vision
- e) Population dynamics and development transformation in Africa
- f) Tracking progress on macroeconomic policy and institutional convergence in West Africa
- g) Assessment of gender mainstreaming into food security initiatives of West African intergovernmental organizations

C. Capacity development

The Commission's technical support to its member States over the past quarter consisted primarily of training, capacity development and technical advisory services in economic management and planning.

1. Training and capacity enhancement

- a) The Commission's training arm, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, continued to offer training courses to senior and mid-career public officials from African member States on new approaches to development planning, with a view to improving economic policy formulation. They included courses on regional integration in Africa, trade policy analysis using Eviews software, mineral economics, mineral governance, gender-responsive economic policy management, the fundamentals of development planning, and a training of trainers on land policy in a development context.
- b) Curriculum development workshops were organized to develop curricula for new courses in science and technology, transport and infrastructure, energy policy, domestic resource mobilization, governance and development, and debt management.
- c) A training workshop was also organized for journalists, as part of a pre-event for the inaugural Conference on Land Policy

in Africa, to equip them with the tools to better understand and cover land issues as well as advocate for land reforms in Africa. As a result, a network of journalists on land issues has now been established.

d) To strengthen national statistical capacities, the Commission's support included:

- Training sessions for national statistical focal points from ECOWAS and COMESA countries on data collection for the Regional Integration Index
 - Capacity-building initiatives, such as the consultative meeting for national statistics offices and other users and producers of statistics in Southern Africa. This meeting was organized in collaboration with the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and consolidated strategies, technical support and capacity requirements to enhance the provision of credible statistics.
- e) Substantive contributions were made by ECA to the fourth capacity development training workshop for African policymakers serving at the newly formed diaspora-oriented ministries and who are tasked with overseeing diaspora engagement from within a broad range of African government institutions and maximizing the contribution of their respective diaspora communities to the development of their countries of origin.

2. Technical support and advisory services

a) **Africa's natural resources, environmental issues and sustainable development**

- Technical and advisory services were provided to the African group of negotiators participating in the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which took place in Peru. Support included articulating Africa's position in the negotiations, facilitating the high-level

participation of African countries, and organizing an Africa Day side event on the theme "Africa in a post-2015 new climate change agreement" and a high-level dialogue on providing climate services for Africa's transformation agenda.

- Work was undertaken to facilitate validation meetings for reports on the inclusive green economy and structural transformation in Burkina Faso, Tunisia and Gabon. In addition, an expert group meeting was convened to review a draft report that had been under preparation on integrated assessment tools and methodologies for an inclusive green economy in Africa.
- Advisory and technical services were provided to Lesotho to translate its Mineral Policy Green Paper into a mineral policy legislative framework for implementing its Country Mining Vision and supporting the development of the legal framework. Similarly, ECA has also been supporting the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to formulate its Country Mining Vision.
- Among the technical missions undertaken, one was to Guinea to assess its taxation and fiscal framework, and to subsequently provide technical support for its development. This led to the Commission supporting the design of a Mining Development Agreement for bidding on the Second Simandou concession. Furthering its work on improving mining tax administration frameworks in Africa, ECA, in cooperation with the Australian International Mining for Development Centre and the World Bank, organized a five-day workshop in Ethiopia to strengthen capacities in this area.
- Research reviews on the existing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks in the mining sector were completed for Zambia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Guinea and Ghana, and were initiated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recommendations were proposed that integrate

gender equality and equity into mining policies, laws, regulations, standards and codes of member States.

b) Trade-related issues, industry and infrastructure

- Technical and advisory services continued to be provided to member States to prepare them to negotiate better Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and build common positions to use trade for development. ECA has also widened the dissemination of its analysis of the impact of EPAs. The Commission's analysis has been presented at various forums, including the regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on EPAs, regional sectoral policies and development in West Africa; the ninth ordinary session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Trade; and the Economic Community of Central African States Conference on Regional Integration.
- With regard to the ongoing work on boosting intra-African trade and the continental free trade area agenda, consultations were organized on the implementation of the strategy in Arab Maghreb Union and East African Community countries.
- In line with promoting regional value chains, an expert consultation was organized on regional value chains for diversification and value addition in North Africa. Guidelines for establishing and improving value chains in the region will be developed next. Meanwhile, pilot projects related to the development of strategic agricultural commodity value chains in ECOWAS countries have been launched, starting with baseline studies on three strategic commodities, namely rice, maize and livestock.
- To further the Commission's continued support for regional integration and towards enhancing trade and investment, a stakeholders' meeting on the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle Initiative was organized to review its existing

mechanisms, instruments, frameworks and institutions. It also provided a forum for senior government officials to discuss and finalize the draft memorandum of understanding and prepare the documentation to be presented to ministers responsible for commerce, industry and trade from the three countries in 2015.

- Technical and advisory support has also been deployed this quarter to repackage the landmark study on domestic resource mobilization focusing on a global advocacy strategy for private-public partnerships in relation to the 16 regional infrastructure projects from the Dakar Financing Summit.

c) Land policy and agriculture

- The Guiding Principles on Large Scale Land-Based Investments in Africa were finalized and launched during the inaugural Land Policy Conference in Africa. This will equip African countries with the tools they need to manage land in a transparent and sustainable manner, and to negotiate investments. African countries will be better equipped to draft policies that recognize the strategic importance of land, and encourage its efficient use in Africa's efforts for structural transformation, industrialization and inclusive development.
- The foundation for piloting the Land Policy Initiative's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and strengthening synergies between the Land Policy Initiative, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Results Framework, and other relevant programmes was laid at an expert governmental meeting organized by ECA.
- In collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, a workshop was held to validate the draft report on "Effective land administration in Africa" and to reach consensus on follow-up activities by the Land Policy Initiative and its partners in the areas of

awareness-raising, advocacy, capacity development, peer learning, monitoring and evaluation towards effective land administration systems in Africa.

- To widen the availability and use of evidence-based information for agricultural growth and improved food and nutrition security, ECA collaborated substantively with the African Union Commission and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission on delivering a scientific conference on “Information for Meeting Africa’s Agricultural Transformation and Food Security Goals”. The event brought together scientists and policymakers from a wide range of institutions and research organizations from Africa, Europe and the United States of America, as well as major United Nations agencies.

d) Governance issues and social policy

- Support for the Cost of Hunger in Africa study, compiled in partnership with the African Union Commission, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Children’s Fund, continued. This quarter, the Government of Chad was assisted in launching the Cost of Hunger in Africa study, becoming the ninth country in Africa and the first in the central African subregion to do so. In addition, technical support was provided in the validation process of the study in Ghana.
- The African Social Development Index, which assesses human exclusion in Africa, was rolled out in eight southern African countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe). To enhance its use by government officials, a capacity-building workshop on methodology and applications was conducted for the SADC subregion in collaboration with Zambia.
- Technical and advisory services were provided to the Second International Forum on Youth Entrepreneurship in Cameroon,

where ECA promoted goal-setting, branding for business and the use of ICT in business. In addition, ECA made substantive inputs to the first inter-regional meeting with ESCAP, ESCWA and DESA, on youth participation in Africa. This is part of an innovative project to promote national youth policies and inclusive and sustainable programmes piloted in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Kenya.

- Technical and advisory services continue to be provided to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in addressing governance challenges and institutional constraints on the continent. For instance, a technical country support mission was undertaken to Senegal to support the national APRM secretariat with the APRM implementation agenda and to assist in preparing the road map for the APRM implementation process. Support was also provided to Zambia to harmonize its APRM national plan of action with existing development strategies and the medium-term expenditure framework. In addition, a programme to re-invigorate NEPAD and APRM in Nigeria was implemented; it included the drafting of a comprehensive communication and advocacy strategy to improve the profile of the NEPAD/APRM secretariat in Nigeria.
- Eight fact-finding missions were undertaken to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone at the height of the Ebola virus disease outbreak in order to gather credible data and offer a robust evidence-based analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of the outbreak. The analysis was presented in the Report on the socioeconomic impacts of the Ebola virus disease. Data collection will continue, and going forward the findings and conclusions of the report will continue to be adjusted and updated until the Ebola crisis is over, so that it culminates in a comprehensive evaluation of the impacts once the outbreak is contained.

e) Investment

- A review was undertaken of the investment agreements landscape in Africa and its implications for regional integration. The review clarifies the issue of bilateral investment treaties for the benefit of member States and offers appropriate policy recommendations. The initial findings were discussed at an expert group meeting in South Africa, and the next step is the development of a policy paper incorporating the proposed recommendations. This will subsequently be discussed with member States during regional workshops to be held in the course of the year.
- A policy paper on private equity was developed and presented at the Ninth African Development Forum as part of the discourse on innovative sources of financing for Africa's transformation. It provides an analysis of the trends, challenges, opportunities and recommendations to be considered by African Governments to promote private equity in Africa in support of national development efforts and Africa's transformation in general. In addition, a consultation was organized on using remittances to finance development in Africa, which considered lessons learned from the experiences of North African countries.

f) Regional economic communities

- Strategic support for the regional economic communities has continued. SADC received support to develop a road map and strategy on industrialization for the subregion as well as a post-2020 strategy. A mission to Botswana was undertaken to assess the scope of the work and to identify associated areas of technical support needed from ECA. The draft strategy and roadmap on industrialization will be presented to the policy organs of SADC at its special summit in May 2015.
- Technical and advisory support was provided to the Conference of Ministers of the

Economic Community of Central African States on the Fund for the Green Economy in Central Africa. The overall objective of the Conference was to discuss the structural transformation of the natural resource economy in general, and of timber products in particular.

- Technical and advisory support was provided to the Annual Meeting of the Subregional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM) for Eastern and Southern Africa under the theme "Scaling-up the Implementation of the SRCM Business Plan for Eastern and Southern Africa". It provided a forum for stakeholders' consultations on how to revitalize the mechanism and address existing implementation gaps in the SRCM Business Plan, and was also a vehicle for coordination of the joint initiatives between the regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders within the framework of the mechanism, to ensure synergy and coherence in their respective programmes of work in the subregions.

g) New technologies and innovation

- Analytical research has been undertaken and peer-reviewed through expert group meetings in the following areas: enhancing research and development financing in Africa; examining patent regimes in Africa, and technology and innovation in Africa in the context of globalization; and analysis of broadband and innovation in Africa. An empirical assessment of the contribution of ICT to Africa's recent economic growth performance to support evidence-based policy is also underway.
- To promote youth innovation for improved health-care outcomes in Africa, a biomedical engineering innovation and entrepreneurship summer school was organized. Over 40 students from 9 countries in East Africa attended the summer school. Based on the success of the initiative, Ethiopia has

offered to host the next session of the summer school, in July 2015.

D. Consensus building

ECA has supported its member States in articulating common positions on important issues. These include the following:

- A sensitization meeting on the common African position and the post-2015 development agenda, which brought together civil society organizations (CSOs) to update them on the status of the process, reflect on how CSOs could influence the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, and develop a road map leading up to the intergovernmental negotiations.
- A synthesis regional report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action twenty years on was developed to reflect and collate inputs from the region for inclusion in the global report, which will be discussed at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York in March 2015.

II. Key upcoming events

1. Preparatory regional consultation meeting for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

A regional consultation meeting in preparation for the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development will be held in January in Ethiopia. The meeting is intended to collate inputs from the region for subsequent incorporation into the consensus document of the Conference, which will take place in July in Ethiopia.

2. Retreat for the African Peer Review Panel and strategic partners

Due to be held in January in Ethiopia, the purpose of the retreat is to facilitate dialogue between the Panel of Eminent Persons, the African Union, the APRM continental secretariat and the APRM strategic partners, to strengthen the technical support being provided for the APRM implementation process and enhance synergies between the strategic partners.

3. Third Conference of Ministers responsible for Civil Registration

The Conference will be held in February in Côte d'Ivoire on the theme "Promoting the use of civil registration and vital statistics in support of good governance in Africa". It will assess the status of implementation of civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa's priority areas. The Conference will be preceded by a three-day expert group meeting.

4. High-Level Conference on the Data Revolution

The Conference will be held in March in Ethiopia, and responds to requests made at the Seventh Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, and at the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. The aim is to adopt a set of principles that will drive the data revolution in Africa; map the stakeholders in the data revolution; and develop a road map, with short-, medium- and long-term action plans for an African data revolution.

5. Eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance

The Eighth Joint Annual Meetings will take place in March in Ethiopia. The broad theme is “Implementing Agenda 2063 – planning, mobilizing and financing for development”.

6. Sixteenth session of Regional Coordination Mechanism in Africa

The sixteenth session of RCM in Africa will take place in March in Ethiopia. The theme of the meeting is “UN system support for the African Union’s 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”. It presents an opportunity to deliberate on gender mainstreaming efforts made by RCM clusters and to look into ways of implementing the outcome of the next African Union Summit, which will be held in January 2015 under the theme “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”.

- The University of Johannesburg, for a Master’s Programme in Industrial Policy scheduled to commence in 2015
- The Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa, to deliver an in-depth course on Regional Integration
- The World Bank and the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation, to collaborate in launching a five-year project entitled “Support for capacity-building for land governance in Africa” aimed at supporting African institutions of higher learning and research to improve their capacity to train land professionals, and conduct relevant research with regard to land policy and governance
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development and Government of Switzerland, to collaborate in areas related to land policy development and implementation in member States

III. Partnerships

In implementing its new partnership strategy, ECA continues to work with pan-African organizations such as the African Capacity Building Foundation, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Some of the Commission’s new partnerships include:

- The Institute of National Planning of Egypt, to undertake collaborative activities in training and capacity-building as well as a Master’s Degree Programme in Economic Management and Development Planning