



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Tenth quarterly briefing meeting with African ambassadors

BRIEFING NOTE

**14 APRIL 2015
ADDIS ABABA**

BRIEFING NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is convening the tenth 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.

I. ACTIVITIES FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2015

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

A. KEY EVENTS

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

Held in Ethiopia, in January, the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons Retreat, which was held with the Strategic Partners, facilitated a dialogue between the Panel, the African Union, the APRM continental secretariat and the APRM strategic partners. It specifically focused on strengthening technical support for the APRM implementation process and enhancing synergies between the parties to ensure the APRM remains relevant. The importance of scaling up the sensitization of APRM Member Countries to ensure ownership of the continental governance agenda and fulfill their financial obligations was also underscored. It ended with Strategic Partners reiterating their continued commitment to support the APRM agenda and process.

2. Third Conference of Ministers responsible for Civil Registration

Held in Côte d'Ivoire, in February, the theme of the Conference was "Promoting the use of civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in support of good governance in Africa". The Conference assessed the status of implementation of CRVS in Africa and facilitated discussion around priority areas. These areas included: the role of health sector; CRVS and identity management; CRVS and Child rights; registration based vital statistics and measuring development. One of the key results included a call to the African Heads of State and government to declare 2015–2024 as the African Decade of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, with the goal of "leaving no child out" and "leaving no country behind" in a bid to register all vital events in Africa and to produce timely statistics.

3. Forty-eighth session of the Commission and eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Conference of Ministers)

Held in Addis Ababa, in March, the Eighth Conference of Ministers was held under the theme of "Implementing Agenda 2063: planning, mobilizing and financing for development". The Conference spanned a week. It began with an Experts Segment, followed by over twenty noteworthy side events and culminated with the Ministerial Segment.

Over 1400 participants attended the various events, including 64 ministers, 25 Governors and Deputy Governors of African Central Banks, 8 former heads of States and 7 Under-Secretary-

Generals of the United Nations. The Conference passed nine resolutions, on issues related to the theme of the conference, least developed countries in Africa, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and Financing for Development. A Ministerial Statement was issued pledging among other things support for the negotiations for the establishment of a continental free trade area. In addition, African negotiators were urged to ensure that the continent's interests and concerns are reflected in the outcome document that will emanate from the upcoming third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in July. Finally, ministers called upon African central banks to increase their support to the efforts to boost the continent's socioeconomic transformation and financing.

4. High-Level Conference on the Data Revolution

Held in Ethiopia, in March, as a side event during the Conference of Ministers, the High-Level Conference on the Data Revolution Conference reached consensus on a common vision for a data revolution in Africa. This High-Level Conference was a response to the requests made at the 2014 Conference of Ministers, as well as at the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. A set of principles that will drive the data revolution in Africa were adopted as was a road map, with short, medium and long-term action plans for an African Data Revolution.

5. Sixteenth session of Regional Coordination Mechanism in Africa

Held in Ethiopia, in March in conjunction with the Eighth Conference of Ministers, the sixteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) was held. The theme of the meeting was "United Nations system support for the African Union's 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063". A key result of the meeting included the framework for a new United Nations and African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda (PAIDA). It will be submitted to the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in June this year, for consideration and adoption, and subsequent transmittal to the United Nations General Assembly at its seventieth Session in September, for adoption as the new United Nations programme of support to the African Union.

6. Intergovernmental Committee of Experts

Meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) were held in each of the five subregions of ECA. The overall purpose was to develop a coordinated perspective on the activities of each subregion. Member States had the opportunity to provide orientation to the programmes of the subregional offices as well as oversee the development and overall implementation of their programmes. In addition, the various themes for the respective offices aimed at increasing awareness, deepening understanding, sharing knowledge, and adopting concrete actionable recommendations. For instance, in North Africa, the ICE meeting theme was "Implementing Agenda 2063: planning, mobilizing and financing for development". In Central Africa, the theme was "Developing the forest industry for the structural transformation of Central Africa's economies". In East Africa the theme was "Harnessing the blue economy for Eastern Africa's development". In West Africa, the theme was "Integration, infrastructures and their impact on the Subregional Free Trade Zone in West Africa". In South Africa, the theme was "Accelerating industrialization in Southern Africa through beneficiation and value addition".

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) Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. (The report was instantaneously passed as a ‘Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows ‘by the African Union Heads of States);

(b) Economic Report on Africa 2015: Industrializing Through Trade;

(c) Socio-Economic Impacts of the Ebola Virus Disease (revised edition of January 2015);

(d) Innovative Financing for Economic Transformation of Africa ;

(e) Private Equity and its Potential Role in Economic Growth in Africa;

(f) Country profiles for Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco and Nigeria;

(g) Synthesis report on the demographic dividend by both ECA and UNFPA;

(h) Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Using Climate Science Knowledge to Drive Policy Issues in Africa;

(i) Africa in the Post-Kyoto Climate Governance Framework.

A documentary series developed by the Commission’s training arm, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, themed “Makers and Shapers of African Development” was also launched. It includes the following 4 documentaries: (i) “Achieving Regional Integration in West Africa” featuring Prof. S.K.B Asante; (ii) “Advocating for Economic and Social Justice in Africa” featuring Dr. Yao Graham; (iii) “Planning for Development” featuring Prof. Kwame Addo; and (iv) “Economic Development for a Better Africa” featuring Mr. Kwame Pianim.

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: (i) retool ECA staff as part of a staff capacity development program to compliment and support the new vision for the commission; and (ii) to train senior and mid-career public officials from African member States on new approaches to development planning, with a view to improving economic policy formulation. The retooling courses targeted Report Writing Skills, Communication Skills, Research Methods and Research Analysis, while other courses included those on the Fundamentals of Development Planning, and Agricultural Policy in Africa.

(b) To strengthen national statistical capacities, the Commission’s support included:

- The development of a specialization programme in agricultural statistics in the Ivory Coast that aims to double the number of trained statisticians as well as develop new statisticians to support the African national statistical systems;
- National workshops such as the one held in Gambia in February that aimed at strengthening the capacity of African countries to use mobile technologies to collect data for effective policy and decision making;
- Various trainings that included one on the use of the software CSPro for data collection on Android mobile devices, held in Ethiopia in January; and another for

national statistical focal points on the Africa Regional Integration Index in the Anglophone countries from Eastern and Southern Africa, held in March 2015;

- Technical Assistance, such as that provided in a mission to Guinea, to ensure the quality of the results of the 2014 General Population and Housing Census.

2. Technical support and advisory services in area's related to:

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

- In conjunction with the African Union and NEPAD Policy and Coordinating Agency, technical and advisory services were provided in implementing a bio-fuels development programme for the household and transport sectors;
- Technical and advisory services were provided to African negotiators, legal experts and scientists to build a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of Africa in the UNFCCC Negotiations, from Kyoto to Paris and to assess Africa's participation at the negotiations. A publication – Africa in the Post-Kyoto Climate Governance Framework – was also launched to complement efforts and chart out the different elements of the negotiations, including new aspects of the climate negotiations such as the Intended Nationally Determined Commitments, Structural and Conjectural Issues affecting Africa's Negotiation; including Adaptation and Loss and Damage; Technology Transfer; Climate Finance; and Capacity Development;
- Technical and advisory support has been extended to countries of the Western Indian Ocean region, towards the development and implementation of national and regional Blue Economy. Strategies offered include strengthening related legal and integrated frameworks. Policy discussions have also been enhanced on the role of deep sea and ocean energy and mineral resources in Eastern Africa;
- Through ECA support, youth groups will now be encouraged to participate in solutions to the problems that climate change poses to Africa's development following the launch of the ClimDev-Africa Youth Platform. This aims to ensure that youth groups are active participants in the negotiations both in terms of intergenerational equity and as crucial stakeholders in shaping climate decisions;
- Capacities of policy makers continue to be strengthened. The scope has ranged from mainstreaming natural disaster risk reduction into national and regional development policies and strategies; to providing country specific support, such as to Guinea on skills development on natural resources management, revising tax provisions in the mining code as well as development of a new mining code; to supporting countries such as Tanzania, Lesotho and Mozambique implement their Country Mining Visions;
- A High-Level Policy Dialogue on financing transformational change and achieving the sustainable development goals in Africa was also organized alongside the Fifteen Delhi Sustainable Development Summit in February. The dialogue has been particularly relevant in underscoring the role of sustainable development, economic transformation, inclusive development and quality of development and creation of financial architecture to ensure inclusive development for Africa;

(b) Trade-related issues, industry and infrastructure

- On trade and industry related issues, technical and advisory support has been extended to individual member States. For instance to the Kingdom of Swaziland for a trade and industrialization policy. In addition, a Review of Industrial Policies and Strategies across Africa was completed and provides relevant information on the status of development of industrial capabilities across Africa. It utilized latest available data from countries to guide decisions on the short, medium and long-term and highlight steps and initiatives that are necessary in order to enable key industrial sectors and sub-sectors to thrive;
- Support continues to be provided on regional matters such as on the Boosting Intra-Africa trade (BIAT) and the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). For instance, substantial technical support was provided for the organization of the first African Union customs expert meeting on the implementation of single windows in Africa. In addition, four analytical reports on CFTA negotiations and on institutional arrangements have been submitted to the African Union for the Ministers of Trade meeting to be held in May 2015.
- Member States continue to be supported with regards to decision making on Economic Partnership Agreements. For example, support has been provided in formulating Cameroon's position in the negotiation on the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union and particularly on the rules of origin for an access to the EU market;
- In line with the past, calls have continued for a seamless renewal of AGOA for a reasonably long time-span so as to give predictability to investors and producers, backing up this argument with solid research. Technical and advisory support has been extended to African countries to take a more proactive approach in supporting the private sector to fully harness AGOA preferences such as in the case of Ethiopia's AGOA Centre;
- On infrastructure, technical and advisory support from ECA was central to the decision of the African Union Summit in January 2015 to harmonize the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for infrastructure financing in African countries. To support the accelerated implementation of the Dakar Agenda for Action with regards to the 16 trans-boundary infrastructure projects, ECA has designed Project 16-16-16 - in collaboration with NEPAD Agency, the African Union and specific Regional economic communities to enhance private sector interest in specific projects.

(c) Land policy and agriculture

- Technical support has been provided to member States such as in the case of Gabon, to build national awareness on the Voluntary Guidelines and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa. In Uganda, technical and advisory support was provided for a land policy Gender strategy.
- Various projects to strengthen land policy were also launched. For instance to improve land governance in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region by increasing capacity to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the African Union Declaration on land issues as well as to mainstream land

governance in programmes of the IGAD Secretariat. In Niger, a transversal support programme on land governance in Africa will promote an integrated approach to the implementation of the voluntary guidelines and the framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa;

- Evidence-based technical support has been provided through a study on the Doha agenda. It questions what is in it for Africa and what is next for secured development outcomes and fast integration imperatives. This report will help inform Africans on issues of major concern in the post-Bali negotiations on agriculture while contributing to address the needs and aspirations of Africa, its institutions and people;
- Implementation on the Development Account project, on strengthening capacities for the development of regional agricultural value chains in Africa was launched in Senegal. It is part of the overall support to agenda 2063, to fast track implementation process of the commodity based industrialization strategy, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the 3ADI Programme (Agriculture, Agribusiness, Agro Industries), It contributes to strengthening capacities of other key value chains actors including emerging small scale producers, young entrepreneurs, industrialists and agribusiness women groups with view to upgrade their position within existing and newly created regional agricultural value chains and industrial clusters.

(d) Governance issues and social policy

- Technical and advisory support continues towards Post-Ebola Recovery plans both directly and as a contribution towards the work of the multi-agency task force set up, to prepare the recovery plans for the Ebola affected countries in view of the socio-economic impact of the Ebola Virus Disease. For instance, support has been provided to Guinea for national recovery post-Ebola. A scoping mission was also undertaken to Liberia to undertake a needs assessment for a stabilization and recovery plan. In addition, in response to a request by the Mano River Union, support was provided to the preparation for a Regional Recovery Plan that was presented at High-level Conference on the Ebola epidemic, organized by European Union (EU) in Belgium recently;
- In line with strengthening the capacity of the African Union and its organs – including the African Union, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and APRM within the context of the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme – ECA has been contributing with its technical and advisory support by serving on the Labour and Employment, health and migration as well as the Environment, Population and Urbanization Subclusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, wherein ECA together with other United Nations agencies works on a common United Nations agenda that is aligned to Africa's priorities;
- Following the landmark decision on alternative sources of funding made at the twenty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, technical support has been provided to the office of the Deputy Chairperson on the implementation of the decision and that has fed in to the report of the Ad-hoc Ministerial Committee on the Scale of Assessment. The report is expected to be submitted in June 2015;

- Technical support continues to be provided through the launch of a number of innovative tools. They include the African Social Development Index, a policy tool for the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2063 which assesses human exclusion in Africa. In addition, Country profiles presenting a new data and forecasting tool for Africa were launched at the Eighth Conference of Ministers. They will help countries evaluate the macroeconomic and social performances and potential risks they face on a regular basis. A unique product specifically tailored to the needs of African countries, the ECA Country Profiles cover themes such as employment, natural resources, agriculture, climate change and the green economy, and focus on national and regional priorities such as Agenda 2063 and the Continental Free Trade Area. They also provide high-level practical and strategic recommendations. The reports will be produced in partnership with various African national authorities, including central banks, statistics authorities and research centres.

(e) Regional economic communities and member States

- Technical and advisory support was provided to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in preparing its road map and strategy on industrialization in the region as mandated by the SADC Heads of State and Government at its August 2014 Summit. A progress report on the draft strategy was presented to the SADC policy organs including the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Integration of SADC and will be finalized and presented to the Council and Extra-Ordinary Summit of SADC slated for end of April.
- Technical support for the development of EAC Vision 2050 is ongoing. To date, national consultations have been conducted in: Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda;
- ECA collaborated with the NEPAD Agency, United Nations Development Programme and African Capacity Building Foundation in the Multi-agency Capacity Development Programme for Regional Economic Communities On site missions have taken place in all eight regional economic communities and a report highlighting the opportunities and capacity challenges is under preparation;
- A number of member States have requested technical and advisory support from ECA in relation to accelerating structural transformation and inclusive growth. For instance, following Guinea-Bissau's request, ECA has undertaken scoping missions to the Country; in the case of Rwanda, a policy dialogue was facilitated with a senior delegation wherein policy options were presented- now under consultation- that included i) regional integration, infrastructure and trade diversification, ii) macro-economic policy and development planning, iii) strengthening national statistical systems, iv) inclusive green economy, v) social policies in support of inclusive structural transformation;
- Advisory and technical support was provided to Senegal through a High Level Policy Dialogue to identify opportunities, strategies, instruments, and mechanisms that can be adopted by member States to enhance their capacity to harness domestic resources for development. In addition, the meeting provided a platform to share knowledge on integrating accountability in domestic resource governance, as a means to promote national ownership of growth and development initiatives.

D. CONSENSUS BUILDING

ECA has supported its member States in articulating common positions on important issues.

These included the following:

1. A preparatory regional consultation meeting for the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development. This regional consultation was held in Ethiopia, in March as a side event during the Eighth Conference of Ministers. It facilitated agreement on Africa's priorities with regard to financing for development as well on an outcome document that will be used to inform Africa's participation in the negotiations process.
2. A meeting to build consensus on the practical measures needed to ensure that Agenda 2063 is gender-responsive and addresses women's needs was facilitated in collaboration with the African Union, under the theme "Making Agenda 2063 Work for African Women: What needs to be done?". It was hosted on the margins of the eighth Conference of Ministers in March. The recommendations included emphasis on educational structures, research, financial mechanisms to generate resources, legal and policy frameworks to improve women's legal status, protect their human rights and build requisite skills, capacity and political agency.
3. Consultations supported towards reaching a regional position on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) were in turn delivered at the 46th United Nations Statistical Commission meeting on the Systems Network Architecture. In support of current initiatives in Africa, the regional position calls upon custodian organizations of the SEEA to take concrete actions to provide implementation support to African countries in environmental economic statistics and the strengthening of coordination mechanisms.

II. KEY UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Launch of the Economic Report on Africa 2015

A series of launch events will be organized during the remainder of the year in multiple locations in Africa and beyond.

2. Second Africa Think Tank Summit

The Second Africa Think Tank Summit will be held in Ethiopia, in April on the theme of "The Rise of Africa's Think Tanks: Practical Solutions to Practical Problems". The summit will reflect on how the continent's experts can best support its development priorities as reflected in Agenda 2063 and its position in shaping the post-2015 Agenda. It will also review the current challenges faced by the continent's think tanks, and identify their potentials to influence national and regional development policies.

3. Workshop on Remittances from Workers Abroad and their Impact on Development

Workshops on the contribution of remittances of migrants to economic development will be held across North Africa in April in Tunisia, in Morocco in May and in Algeria in June. They aim to provide a platform for brainstorming and exchanges of experiences and best practices on the optimal use of remittances from migrants to finance the economic and social development.

4. Expert Group Meetings on review of the Millennium Development Goals and on proposals for the Sustainable Development Goals

The meetings will take place in May in Algiers; one meeting aims to review the draft 2015 report on Assessing progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals and the other will review and propose goals, targets and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

5. A policy dialogue on contract negotiation on mining and petroleum extraction

The policy dialogue will be held in May, in Ethiopia. The meeting will bring together national experts with a view to strengthen their capacities on contract negotiation on mining and petroleum extraction, share experiences as well as attempt for common solutions during negotiations with Multi National Cooperation's. The meeting will also serve as a springboard for the development of handbook for negotiators as well as a platform for launching a network of negotiation experts in line with provisions of the Africa Mining Vision.

6. Global land forum and Africa Day

The 2015 Global Land Forum will be held in Senegal, in May, under the theme "Land governance for inclusive development, justice and sustainability: time for action". In recognition of the unique role played by the three leading pan African institutions in spearheading the implementation of the Continental agenda on land, a one Day dialogue session, the Africa Day is specifically dedicated to Africa and organized by ECA.

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 those with:

- The African Union, the International Organization of Migration and the International Labour Organization to roll out a 4 year joint programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa. The main aim is to strengthen institutional capacities and regulation of labour migration and mobility within Africa;
- The Africa Diaspora Policy Centre towards examining the implication of international migration on development in Africa which will contribute to Africa's input into the Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in October this year, in Turkey;
- The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) France to support African countries in the adoption of ERETES, the statistics software used to compile national accounts. The partnership will directly support the demand of countries for technical assistance in the area of IT tools;
- FAO to establish a monitoring system for food market prices in Cameroon, Zimbabwe and the Gambia, using web-based tools and mobile devices to collect and analyze data on a regular basis;
- The African Capacity Building Foundation to support – financially and technically – infrastructure development in Benin.