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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.: Limited
ECA/FSSDD/CSD-5/..
August 2007
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

*Fifth Meeting of the Committee on Sustainable
Development (CSD-5)*

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23-27 October 2007

**Progress Report on the Implementation of the Activities of the
Sub-Programme "Fostering Sustainable Development"
During the 2006-2007 Biennium**

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Sub-Programme “Fostering Sustainable Development”
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Objectives

1. The objective of the Sub-Programme “Fostering Sustainable Development” is to improve national capacities for formulating and implementing effective policies and programmes, including gender mainstreaming in the areas of agriculture and food security; science and technology; population; human settlements; and natural resources and the environment, consistent with the goals and priorities of NEPAD and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

2. The sub-programme “Fostering Sustainable Development” was under the responsibility of the Sustainable Development Division (SDD) until mid 2006. As a result of ECA’s repositioning¹ that took effect on August 3, 2006, various activities of the sub-programme were redistributed and have been implemented in the reorganised structure by relevant divisions namely: the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSD)(formerly SDD), the African Centre for Gender & Social Development (ACGS), the ICT & Science and Technology for Development Division (ISTD), and the NEPAD and Regional Integration Division (NRID).

Activities Implemented during the 2006-2007 Biennium

3. To accomplish the above objective, ECA has implemented most of the programmed outputs for the 2006-2007 biennium. One follow-up meetings of the CSD-4 Bureau on the implementation of the work programme and the recommendations of CSD-4 was organized (see minutes attached in annex I of this report). The following activities have been implemented:

Servicing of Intergovernmental and Expert Bodies

Substantive servicing of meetings

4. The division provided functional support for the 4th Session of UN Water Africa whose intermediate result was the development of 2007-09 Work plan covering transboundary water resources; water scarcity; water for food security and ecosystems; and water and sanitation programme.

Parliamentary Documentation

5. The following four reports have been prepared for submission to the fifth meeting of the CSD:

¹ Repositioning: Harnessing Regional Resources to meet Africa’s Development Priorities. Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2006.

- Progress report on the follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD): Africa;
- The overview of Sustainable Development on Africa (SDRA) [redacted]; and
- Progress report on the implementation of the activities of the sub-programme “Fostering Sustainable Development” during the 2006-2007 Biennium.

Ad hoc Expert Group Meetings

6. The following two Ad hoc expert group meetings were organized during the current biennium:

- Ad hoc expert group meeting on Fostering Agricultural Transformation in Africa was organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from April 23 to 25, 2007. The meeting brought together twenty five experts drawn from academia, research, RECs, private sector, FAO, AU and NEPAD with the aim of assisting FSSDD in the preparation of the Sustainable Development Report on Africa (SDRA II) and the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) report on Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD). The meeting generated consensus on the key issues, challenges and gaps to be addressed in order to achieve a successful agricultural and rural transformation in Africa; the key elements that should form the basis of the SDRA and the Report to the RIM; an appropriate conceptual framework for analysing agriculture and rural transformation; and good practices in agricultural and rural transformation.
- Ad hoc expert group meeting on Land Policy Indicators was organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from May 3 to 4, 2007. The meeting was organised as a joint collaboration between the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union (AU), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and UN-HABITAT. The meeting brought together twenty key experts of land policy, land administration and indicator development drawn from African governments, RECs, civil society, centres of excellence from Africa and outside, private sector, the UN, NEPAD, AU and AfDB to discuss modalities for developing benchmarks and indicators for monitoring land policy and land administration reforms in Africa. The meeting identified plausible mechanisms and strategies for development of regional and national indicators for land policy; an initial set of benchmarks and a list of indicators for measuring progress in addressing the key land issues in Africa; inputs and revisions for transforming the concept note into a viable background document; and a roadmap with key activities and actors for developing the benchmarks and indicators.

[redacted] Ad hoc expert group meeting on “Monitoring and Assessing Progress on Sustainable Development: Review of SDRA” will be held in November 2007 [redacted]
[redacted]

Other Substantive Outputs

Recurrent Publications

7. The status of implementation for the two recurrent publications programmed for the current biennium is as follows:

- The 2006 issue of the “Africa’s Sustainable Development Bulletin” was released in December 2006. For the 2006 issue, the theme is ‘Capacity Building for African

Sustainable Development'. For the 2006 issue, the theme is 'Capacity Building for African Sustainable Development'. Sustainable development involves a complex interplay between economic, environmental and socio-cultural considerations. In order to appreciate and operationalise it, there need for up-to-date information, knowledge, tools and skills, as well as institutions and appropriate structures to address the various issues. The bulletin highlights the rationale and actions needed to strengthen capacity at local, national, subregional and regional levels for sustainable development in Africa including fulfilling the commitments set out in among others the Millennium Declaration, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Plan of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development, and the objectives of NEPAD.

- The second issue of the " Sustainable Development Report on Africa" is under preparation and will be released by December 2007. The theme of the report is Agricultural and Rural Transformation.

Non-recurrent Publications

8. The status of the non-recurrent publications programmed for the current biennium is as follows:

- The Africa Regional Review Report on land, agriculture and rural development, and drought and desertification have been produced and will be submitted to Regional Implementation Meeting in October 2007. The Report provides background information and assessment of progress in Africa, in the achievement of goals and targets as contained in Agenda 21, programme for the further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the outcomes of World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The report also reflects on implementation challenges and constraints, and proposes priority approaches and actions needed to accelerate implementation. The RIM will use the report to draw inputs to the UNCSD 16.
- The report on "International migration and development: implications for Africa" was produced and released in September 2006. The report aims to contribute to the ongoing discussions on migration by providing background data and analysis from an African perspective. Drawing on the ongoing debate about migration and development, the report argues that maximization of the benefits requires better management of international migration, and sound political and economic governance in the context of NEPAD.
- The report on "Building Science, Technology and Innovation Systems for Sustainable Development in Africa" was released in December 2006. The purpose of the report is to promote discussion and assist in the building of science, technology and innovation (STI) systems for sustainable development in Africa. The report provides an assessment of the research and inventive activities in the continent and provides an appropriate methodological framework for the development of STI systems.
- The 2006 issue of "Promoting Minerals Cluster Development" was released in December 2006.
- The report on "Unleashing energy access in Africa: Fostering rural energy for sustainable development" was released in July 2007.
- The report on "Development and Implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development: Experiences and Lessons Learnt" is under preparation and will be released by December 2007.

- g) Strengthen and harmonize the legal and regulatory frameworks, and develop the human capacities for sustainable energy development;
- h) Establish an African Electricity Fund including a specific window designed specifically to finance rural electrification of which a study conducted under the auspices of AUC will determine the implementation modalities;
- i) Hold under the auspices of AFREC the Consultative General Assembly of the African Electro technical Standardization Commission (AFSEC);
- j) Encourage states to undertake or pursue structural reforms of the electricity sector, particularly within the context of a public/private partnership, while drawing on successful experience;

The Ministers also called upon the AUC to present the African position on energy at global CSD-14 session in New York that will be held from 1 to 12 May 2006.

Mr. Moulot also informed the meeting that African Ministerial Conference on Hydropower and Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 8-9 March 2006. Energy was high on the agenda of the Conference. The Ministerial Declaration made at the conference invited South Africa, together with AFREC and Forum of Energy Ministers of Africa (FEMA), to report to the global CSD-14 session.

Brief on the outcomes of the Workshop on Land Policy in Africa

Ms. Kagwanja presented the brief on the outcomes of the workshop on land policy in Africa. She indicated that it is a new initiative laid by AUC in collaboration with ECA and AfDB. The mandate to work on land reform and policy is given to ECA by CSD. ECA has so far produced some documents on land issues, as land issues are in its work programme.

Building on past research, experiences and initiatives, AU/NEPAD, ECA and AfDB agreed on the following processes, aimed at building a consensus on a vision for, and adopting, a land policy and land reform in Africa: (a) A Consultative workshop; b) Regional Consultations; c) A continental African experts meeting; d) A meeting of African Ministers responsible for land; and e) AU Heads of State and Government Summit. The whole process is expected to take 24 months.

The Consultative Workshop on Land Policy in Africa is the result of a conference held in London. The objectives of the consultative workshop were to build consensus around the following issues:

- Elements and thematic issues that would characterize the framework and guidelines of land policy and land reform in Africa;
- Features of a vision and guiding principles for a framework of land policy in Africa;
- Actions and sequential activities needed to develop a land policy framework and guidelines; and
- Roles of stakeholders and partners, and resource mobilization.

The expected outputs of the workshop are a background document summarizing the main land issues in Africa that should be used as the basis for developing the guidelines and framework, and a skeleton framework of land policy and land reform in Africa.

Brief on Agricultural and Rural Economic Transformation

Mr. Abdoulaye Niang informed the meeting that a concept paper on Agricultural and Rural Economic Transformation was prepared. Meetings will be held to discuss the issues raised in the paper where Member States, Embassies, RECs, UN Agencies and other stakeholders will be involved. The next ACSD session will deal with Agricultural and Rural Economic Transformation.

Mr. Niang also said that Africa is not retaining a fair share of its resources while the resources create wealth and jobs to the others.

Brief on Population and Development Conference

Mr. Israel Sembajwe said that the Conference of the Commission on Population and Development was held recently.

The Commission on Population and Development was established by the Economic and Social Council. The Commission is to assist the Council by: a) arranging for studies and advising the Council; b) Monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; and c) Providing appropriate recommendations to the Council on the basis of an integrated consideration of the reports and issues.

The recently held International Conference discussed migration. He indicated that people's lives are lost as a result of migration. A discussion was held on migration between Europe and the Group of 77 countries. The borders of the developed countries should be opened for migration as they are in need of manpower from developing countries. He said that even in Africa borders are not open for migration.

At the Conference the consultations undertaken by all regional commissions with regard to migration were presented, except for ECA. He said that there is a need for member States to move forward and ask ECA how it could be able to help them.

Furthermore, he informed the meeting that the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will take place in September 2006.

He also raised the issue of ageing. Although currently ageing may not be the problem of Africa, he said that it is necessary to start thinking on how to tackle the problem.

The Chairman said that there are ongoing activities on migration by AU, RECs, and member States as it is a development as well as human rights issue. There were meetings recently held on migration and development in Algeria, Morocco etc. He said that it is important to harmonize the ongoing activities on migration and development. Furthermore, he said that the problem of migration has to be looked into in a holistic manner.

The Chairman informed the meeting that ECA should try to involve itself in the ongoing activities on migration and development in Africa. Besides, he stressed that partnership is important and what is lacking in ECA need to be met by the organs of the AU.

Any other Business

Mr. Niang made an appeal to member States to own and lead their development agenda and to make the necessary commitments to finance it.

The Chairman said that commitments are needed to move the continent forward. He also said that although member States are conscious of the ownership of their projects, it is difficult for them to finance all the projects. Therefore, there is a need for partnership to overcome this difficulty.

The Chairman thanked the participants and closed the meeting at 12:45 PM.

List of participants

No.	Name of participant	Country	Email address	Telephone
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cooperation/integration approach to, and the creation of a financing facility to improve availability (through pooled sub-regional manufacturing and procurement), accessibility and affordability of fertilizers for African farmers. Both recommendations were adopted in the Declaration of the Summit, which in 4 of its 12 points, further calls explicitly on ECA to collaborate closely with the AUC, the AfDB and RECs in following up to the implementation of its resolutions among others on the establishment of regional fertilizer procurement and distribution facilities, the promotion of national/regional fertilizer production and intra-regional fertilizer trade, the establishment of an African Fertilizer Development Financing Facility, and the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Declaration.

- The Division represented ECA and played an active role as a member the International Technical Committee of the Abuja AU/NEPAD Food Security Summit in December 2006. The division continued to successfully advocate for advancing the NEPAD/CAADP agenda by articulating its implementation around a regional cooperation/integration strategy built on selected food and agricultural commodity chains. The Summit adopted the strategic-commodity approach advocated by ECA and, in its Declaration, further agreed on a list of 9 continental-level and 3 sub-regional level strategic commodities for priority policy program focus.
- In the area of trade and environment, the division in collaboration with other UN Regional Commissions implemented a specific project - the Capacity building project in trade and environment- during the biennium. This project aims to enhance the capacity of member States to formulate coherent trade and environment policies that address issues related to environment in an effective manner, thereby increasing market access for products in developed country markets while enhancing environmental sustainability. A regional study examining the inter-linkages and priority concerns between trade and environment from a regional and subregional perspective was prepared and discussed in a regional meeting attended by representatives of member States from Ministries of Trade and Environment. Two subregional training workshops on trade and environment were organized, one for English speaking countries and one for French speaking countries. The assessment of the workshops showed that 80% of the participants found the topics covered were relevant and increased the amount of information and analysis available to them on the relationship between trade and environment. Hence their personal capacity to address trade and environment issues was strengthened and, their knowledge necessary to develop effective and coherent trade and environment policies was strengthened.
- The Division continued to play a critical role in the success of the AU-ECA-ADB joint initiative on land policy. The initiative aims to harness global and regional resources, and build effective partnerships and synergies in support of Africa's quest to improve the management and governance of land and land resources. In particular the initiative seeks to support NEPAD's efforts in and programmes related to: agricultural development, environmental management, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction, and the APRM. A consultative workshop held jointly with AU and AfDB, and hosted by ECA in March 2006. The workshop, consensus was gained on the main land issues and pillars (Economic, Social, Environmental, Governance) that form the basis for developing the framework and guidelines; agreement was reached on the roadmap outlining the critical steps that would guide the formulation and implementation of the framework; and modalities were developed for building

institutional capacity and partnerships necessary for resource mobilization, development and implementation of the framework.

- The division in collaboration with the Capacity Linkages for Environmental Assessment in Africa (CLEAA) organized the African Experts Workshop on Review of Effectiveness of EIA systems in Africa. The workshop was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from April 12 to 13 April 2007. This meeting provided a platform to review recommendations made by the ECA study report on “Review of the Application of Environmental Assessment in Selected African Countries (2005)” and to deliberate and identify practical and feasible measures, for improving the quality of EIA review, enforcement and compliance, financial sustainability and overall improvement of the role of EIA, in environmental governance and sustainable development in Africa. In addition, the workshop provided an opportunity to strengthen networks and partnerships in environmental assessment and management in Africa.
- The subprogramme in collaboration with UNEP organized a Regional Expert Meeting on the Development of an African Eco-labelling Scheme. The meeting, which took place from 11-13 June 2007 in Addis Ababa, took stock of lessons from the major ecolabel-related initiatives from within and outside the region and provided input to the development of an African ecolabelling scheme.
- On 8-21 April 2006, the sub-programme in collaboration with the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) held workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop resulted in the elaboration of a regional plan of action and implementation strategy for improving the availability, accessibility and use of climate information for development. As a follow-up, ECA has acted as technical secretariat to catalyze and facilitate the development of a 10-year Climate and Development in Africa Programme (ClimDev-Africa), which aims at improving climate observations, services and data management, creating awareness and enhancing policies for mainstreaming information on climate variability and change into climate risk management strategies in the focal areas of agriculture and food security, water resources management and health.
- The division participated at the workshop on Desertification and its Implications organized by PanAfrican Parliament in Algiers from 2-4 April 2007. The division highlighted the significance of desertification in Africa and discussed the main challenges, measures undertaken and priority approaches needed to combat desertification in the region. Elements of these were highlighted and adopted in the workshop outcomes namely the Algiers Call 2007 and workshop recommendations.
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Technical Cooperation

Advisory services

13. Advisory services to member countries and RECs in support of NEPAD and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conference and international agreements:

- The programme provided advisory services and thus contributed in the process of formulation of Liberia's New Mineral Policy and Reform of Angola's mineral legislation.
- We need information on other advisory services undertaken

Group Training

14. The sub-programme organised two workshops on integrated resource planning. the workshops helped to create a critical mass of informed policy makers in the sectoral ministries responsible for mining as well in the ministers of planning, finance and economic development; raise their awareness on the potential of minerals in supporting long-term economic development and growth; provide them with tools for minerals policy design and implementation; and enhance their knowledge and capacity on mineral-related subjects, which are important to create a conducive environment for mineral-related subjects, which are important to create a conducive environment for mineral resources development. The status of the delivery of group trainings programmed for the current biennium is as follows:

- The sub-programme organised two sub-regional workshops on integrated resource planning in 2006 namely: Integrated Resources Planning: Fostering Minerals Clusters(); and Integrated Resources Planning (IRP) for Electricity in Africa

15. The status of field projects is as follows:

- The sub-programme carried out a study on the relationships between women's reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and food security in Rural Africa:
- The sub-programme developed and implemented PEDDA and other analytical tools on sustainable development
- The sub-programme assisted in the development, transfer and application of biotechnology for sustainable development in Africa
- The sub-programme contributed to the Institutional Strengthening of the Inter-Agency Group on Water in Africa (IGWA)-Follow up Project on Implementing the International Decade of Action: "Water is Life" in Africa.

Perceived Impact of Activities on Beneficiaries

16. The above activities were undertaken based on the assumptions that: a) Member States are effective partners of the Commission's efforts to raise awareness of policy makers to integrate in a balanced manner the three pillars of sustainable development, namely economic development, social development and environmental protection and, to increase capacities for integrated design and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for sustainable development; b) Member States remain committed to the core principles of NEPAD and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements.

Indicators Accomplishments/Results Achieved:

- i) Increase in the number of policies and programmes formulated for achieving sustainable development in Africa as reflected in national policies (Base line: 2002-2003: 0, Base line: 2004-2005: 21, Target: 2006-2007: 30).**

17.

- ii) Increase in the number of African countries incorporating the nexus issues in national policy frameworks and development programmes (Base line: 2002-2003: 0, Base line: 2004-2005: 15, Target: 2006-2007: 20).**

18.

Annex - II

Minutes of the African Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD) – First Bureau meeting Thursday 13 April 2006

Introduction

The First meeting of the ACSD-4 Bureau was held on 13 April 2006 at the UNCC Caucus Room 7 to discuss the following agenda items:

The Agenda of the meeting was as follows:

1. Remarks by the Chair
2. Brief on CSD-14 preparatory process
3. Overview on the implementation of the Trade and Environment Project
4. Brief on the outcomes of the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Electricity
5. Brief on the outcomes of the Workshop on Land Policy in Africa
6. Brief on Population and Development Conference
7. Brief on Agricultural and Rural Economic Transformation
8. Any other business.

The members of the Bureau who attended the meeting were:

- Nigeria (Chairman)
- Algeria
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- South Africa
- Tanzania (see the list of participants on the last page)

Mr. Ousmane Laye led the Secretariat team on behalf of Mr. Josué Dioné, the Director of the Sustainable Development Division (SDD). Other staff members from the Secretariat included: Mr. Abdoulaye Niang, Agriculture and Food Security Team Leader; Mr. Israel Sembajwe, Population and Social Development Team Leader; Mr. Alex Tindimubona, Science, Technology and Innovation Team Leader; Mr. Pancrace Niyimbona, from Natural Resources Development Team; Mr. Yinka Adeyemi, Communication Officer; Ms. Joan Kagwanja, from Agriculture and Food Security Team; Mr. Amson Sibanda, from Population and Social Development Team; Mr. Jacques Moulot, from Natural Resources Development Team; and Mr. Negussie Gorfe from Sustainable Development Monitoring Team.

Remarks by the Chair

H.E. Ambassador Olusegun Akinsanya, from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of the Bureau chaired the meeting.

Ambassador Akinsanya apologized for being late as he was in another meeting. He reminded the participants that the meeting of the Bureau was held in order to review the main activities undertaken by SDD since the ACSD-4 meeting and in particular to discuss the preparations made for the global Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-14) session on Africa's position.

Ambassador Akinsanya introduced the Agenda items and asked for any amendments. Since there were no amendments, the Chairman invited Mr. Laye to present Agenda item 2.

Brief on CSD-14 preparatory process

Mr. Laye apologized that Mr. Josué Dioné could not be available at the meeting as he was preparing to leave for unplanned mission.

Mr. Laye indicated that the 14th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development is scheduled to take place from 1 to 12 May 2006 in New York. As a review session, CSD-14 is tasked with identifying barriers and constraints, lessons learned and best practices in implementation of the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.

The cluster of issues are closely linked in their economic, social and environmental dimensions. These issues should be dealt with in an integrated manner. Means of implementation and other cross-cutting issues should also be addressed.

Regional Commissions are called for contribution during the Part 2 (1 to 9 May) of the session, which includes Thematic and Regional Discussions, that provide an opportunity to focus deliberations on identifying barriers and constraints, lessons learned and best practices in relation to the four issues in the thematic cluster.

The High-level Segment (10-12 May) will feature Ministerial interactive discussions to address barriers and constraints and to provide guidance on areas to be focused on during the policy year. Ministerial dialogue sessions including a mixed panels of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Ministers of Energy, Finance and Development Cooperation.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has invited the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Forum of African Civil Society for Sustainable Development (FACS-SD) to participate in the panel for Africa.

Mr. Laye also said that ECA, the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), the World Meteorological Organization and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society, will organize a side event on the theme: "Climate Information for Sustainable Development".

Mr. Laye finally invited the Chairman to attend the global CSD-14 session and informed him that the expenses to attend the meeting will be covered by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

During the discussions Mr. Moulot indicated that UN-Energy / Africa will also organize a side event during the global CSD-14 session where ECA will be a participant.

The Chairman pointed out that it will be important that the outcomes of the global CSD-14 session to be positive

Overview on the implementation of the Trade and Environment Project

Mr. Laye informed the meeting that the Project is a Capacity Building project on Trade and Environment. This project is being implemented by four Regional Commissions; namely ECA, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The project is coordinated by the ESCAP, but the programme is the same for all regions.

The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of African countries to formulate coherent trade and environment policies that address issues related to environment in an effective manner, thereby increasing market access for products in developed country markets while enhancing environmental sustainability.

The main beneficiaries of the project will be high-level public sector civil servants in trade and environment ministries. The project will be undertaken in collaboration with World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNEP.

Draft Regional Report on trade and environment issues in Africa was prepared. Based on the draft report, a Regional Workshop was held at ECA from February 15-17, 2006. All African countries were invited to send two participants, one from the Ministry of Trade and the other from the Ministry of Environment, to the regional workshop. Only 27 African countries sent delegates and the total number of participants was 46.

The final Regional Report is expected to be ready by the end of April 2006, and it will be used for the two planned training sessions, one for English-Speaking countries (5-9 June, 2006) and the other for French-Speaking countries (26-30 June, 2006).

The invitation letters for the English-Speaking countries have already been sent to countries through their Embassies in Addis Ababa. Invitation letters are directly sent to about 5 countries that do not have Embassies in Addis Ababa. UNEP and UNCTAD will directly collaborate in organizing the two training sessions.

African missions in Geneva will also be briefed on the capacity building project in trade and environment. It was also pointed out that the key issues that result from the project will be used to build a regional programme after the completion of the project.

The project is funded from the UN Development Account. It started in mid 2005 and is expected to terminate in December 2006. ECA is on track in implementing the project, but some commissions like ECLAC requested for delays. It was indicated during the video conference of 26 January 2006 that the project may be delayed until the first half of 2007. It was later confirmed that approval was obtained to close this project at the end of the first-half of 2007.

The Chairman indicated that there is a need to have partnership among ECA, AU and AfDB in implementing the project. Furthermore, He said that the outcomes of project need to be compared with that of other regional commissions.

Brief on the outcomes of the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Electricity

Mr. Jacques Moulot presented the Brief on the outcomes of the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Electricity. He indicated that at the request of AUC, ECA has joined an ad-hoc Group of experts, which also includes African Energy Commission (AFREC), Union of Producers, Transporters and Distributors of Electric Power in Africa (UPDEA) and Mr. Ibrahim Thiam, President of the Regulatory Agency of Senegal.

The objectives of the Group were to: a) Define the agenda of the meeting; b) Prepare the issues paper; c) Provide technical backing; and d) Review all logistical requirements for the Conference.

The Conference was divided into an expert group meeting, which was held from March 20-22, 2006 and the ministerial meeting, from 23-24 March 2006 with the theme "Common Vision and Strategic Framework for a Continental Policy of the African electricity sector".

The objectives of the meeting were to establish a Continental Institutional Framework for the coordination of the Energy sector in Africa, and to define the guidelines for a concerted vision to promote the development of the sector and a Plan of Action of the Commission.

There were a lot of issues discussed during the meeting of the experts. The meeting was attended by delegates from 36 African countries, 6 Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the 5 regional energy pools, regulatory authorities, regional and continental organizations as well as international organizations.

The Bureau established includes: South Africa (Chairperson), Congo (1st Vice Chairperson), Egypt (2nd Vice Chairperson), Uganda (3rd Vice Chairperson) and Senegal (Rapporteur).

The outcome of the Conference resulted in 8 commitments by the Ministers. Besides, the Ministers decided to.

- a) Establish, under the aegis of the AU, the Conference of Africa Ministers of Energy as the Continental Central Coordinating Organ of Electrical Energy Policies and Strategies, the Secretariat of which is managed by AFREC. The Conference shall convene once a year;
- b) Work together to develop the energy potential, particularly the hydroelectric potential of Africa, as a major renewable energy option to ensure sustainable development, regional integration, energy security, and poverty eradication;
- c) Establish a coordination commission for the development of major integrating hydro electric projects;
- d) Develop a holistic vision and a Master Plan for the development of the continent's electric sector based on the policies and programmes of the RECs in the field of electrification in order to streamline the use of the energy resources in the medium and long terms;
- e) Sign a Memorandum of understanding and Cooperation between the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Electrical Energy, the Conference of Ministers in charge of Water Management (AMCOW) and the Conference of Ministers in charge of Environment (AMCEN) to promote the development of trans-border river basins and the regional networks for exchange and production of electrical energy;
- f) Urge African States to ratify as early as possible the convention governing AFREC;