

# Journalists urged to promote Industrialisation in Africa

Abidjan, 20 March 2013 (ECA) - Over 30 journalists drawn from the five regions of Africa were briefed today on the theme: "Industrialisation for an Emerging Africa" ahead of the sixth joint annual meeting of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development holding from 21-26 March 2013, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

Organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission(AUC) the pre-Conference media workshop was aimed at familiarising the journalists with some of the issues to be addressed by experts in the domain of industrialisation and related sectors.

Speaking on behalf of the Director of Information and Communication (DIC) of the AUC, Mrs. Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, the Senior Editorial Officer of the DIC Ms. Esther Azaa Tankou, emphasized that the role of the African media practitioners is to promote the true image of Africa in all development areas so that Africa can occupy its rightful position in the world arena. She highlighted the eight priority areas of the African Union Commission for 2013-2017, underlining that for the first time information and communication under priority number seven, became an AU priority and part of its Strategic Plan. "This shows the importance the AUC Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has given to this activity". She noted.

Ms. Tankou also invited the media to mobilise ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) celebrated on the theme: "***Panafricanism and African Renaissance***" and provide visibility to this historical event in their respective media.

Addressing the journalists, the Head of the ECA Information and Communication Service, Mr. Yinka Adeyemi underscored the importance of the theme, *Industrialization for an Emerging Africa*, and the reason why this theme was chosen for the conference of Ministers this year.

He stressed the need to accelerate Africa's industrialization agenda as the means through which the recent economic growth achievements could be sustained.

Mr. Adeyemi noted that the objective of the workshop was to enable the journalists to provide more analytical and comprehensive coverage of the Conference through their interaction with the different experts during the sessions.

Mr. Rene Nguettia Kouassi, Director of Economic Affairs of the African Union underlined the importance of enhancing industrialization given that Africa has 60 percent of the world's arable land which accounts for huge agricultural productivity. Yet, stressed Mr. Kouassi, very small amounts of the Continent's natural resources are being processed locally. He pointed out that industrialisation in Africa would contribute to sustained wealth creation as Africa's natural resources and other raw materials would be converted into value-added products for export to global markets, and encourage investment and job creation in Africa. Furthermore, explained Mr. Kouassi, industrialization can help to build competitive economies that can productively be integrated into the global economy, "Industrialisation is a pre-condition if Africa is to register accelerated development," he stressed.

Presentations were made on sub-themes on economic and social conditions in Africa; progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda; and Africa's demographic challenges and opportunities.

On demographic issues, Mr. Jay Gribble highlighted in his presentation that accelerated economic growth can occur as the population age structure changes leading to the concept of demographic dividend.

Later, during a press conference, ECA Director, Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, stated that the success of any industrialization programme will require the creation of an enabling climate that enhances domestic capacity and capability, particularly in respect of physical and social infrastructure, human capital, financial systems, technology and governance.

He argued that a modernized agriculture sector that is labour-intensive, creates jobs and generates value-added in agro-processing activities would uplift many Africans from poverty.

"We need to pay attention to the issue of youth unemployment; 200 million jobs will not be created doing business as usual," he stressed.

Nnadozie also stressed the need for appropriate policies to encourage the development of Africa's private sector, saying, "a credible private sector impacts positively on economic growth."

He urged the journalists to cultivate deeper understanding of the role of industrialization in the continent's economic transformation.

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