

New report by ECA says Africa's challenges are opportunities for green growth

ECA Press Release No. 91/2012

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 16 June 2012 (ECA) - A new report by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) says new and emerging development challenges facing Africa -- such as loss of biodiversity, droughts, reduced agricultural yields, depleted cereal stocks and the multiple demands on existing stocks for biofuels -- could provide opportunities for Africa to respond to these challenges in the context of a green economy.

The "Africa Report on New and Emerging Challenges" prepared in collaboration with the African Union, African Development Bank, UNDP and UNEP, and circulated at the ongoing UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio, Brazil, says Africa is home to about one quarter of the internationally recognized biodiversity hotspots whose resources are sustaining the livelihood of millions of people in Africa.

It says, for instance, that two-thirds of the population in sub-Saharan Africa relies on products from the forests of the subregion while wild resources and non timber forest products provide up to 35 percent of rural household incomes in Zimbabwe and over 50 percent in Senegal.

"Addressing biodiversity loss requires permanent and longterm solutions in the form of development and implementation of appropriate policy guidelines, institutional capacity-building and deployment of adequate resources to halt and reduce the intensity of biodiversity loss," the report explains.

But it adds that the water scarcity challenge is already being addressed by the Africa Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW), the Africa Water Task Force, the Africa Water Facility, trans-boundary river basin programmes, water sector reforms and Integrated Water Resources Management principles, among others.

While these measures have resulted in some increase in the proportion of population with access to clean water, interventions are more concentrated in urban areas, the report states.

According to the report, over 40 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to clean drinking water and that less than 4 percent of Africa's water resources and land areas are developed for irrigation in spite of the huge demands exerted by growing industrial development and urban populations which continue to put pressure on governments.

"It is projected that many countries in Africa will suffer from water scarcity and water stress by the end of the next decade as a result of population growth, industrial development and the associated increases in water demand," the report says.

The report says that of the 1.4 billion people who are without access to electricity worldwide, 40 percent are in Africa and almost entirely in sub-Saharan Africa. Improving Africa's access to sustainable energy would facilitate development and contribute to the achievement of some MDGs, especially those pertaining to halving extreme poverty, reducing hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality, promoting gender equality and reducing deforestation.

"These new and emerging challenges provide opportunities including potential growth in the context of a green economy, utilizing the largely untapped natural resources that are being discovered in many African countries," says the report, adding that the opportunities presented by the new and emerging challenges could reorient Africa on the path of sustainable growth and development.

To maintain the momentum in the implementation of sustainable development programmes, the report calls on countries to mobilize and increase the effective use of available financial resources while exploring ways of generating new public and private innovative sources of development finance.

It also calls for the promotion and facilitation of access to environmentally sound technologies and for the use of ICT to increase the frequency of communication and the sharing of experience and knowledge.

As the main arm of the United Nations on development issues in Africa, ECA in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank spearheaded Africa's technical preparations for the Rio+20 process.

Issued by:

ECA Information and Communication Service
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Tel: 251 11 5445098 Fax: +251-11-551 03 65
E-mail: ecainfo@uneca.org
Web: www.uneca.org

For highlights and more, follow us on:



Related Articles

[African delegations at Rio Conference agree to move on\(6/25/2012\)](#)

[Why means of implementation is a thorny issue at the Rio+20 Conference\(6/21/2012\)](#)

[ECA says greater linkage exists between good governance and sustainable development\(6/17/2012\)](#)

Article - New report by ECA says Africa's challenges are opportunities for green growth

Janneh says CAADP holds key to Africa's food security(6/25/2012)

Hundreds attend Africa Day celebrations in Rio(6/19/2012)

ECA study underscores progress in sustainable development within Eastern Africa (6/17/2012)

Mozambique showcases renewable energy experience in Rio; says Africa should follow example(6/25/2012)

African negotiators say progress is finally being made on Rio+ 20 outcome statement(6/18/2012)

Partners commend ECA's technical support on sustainable development in Africa(6/17/2012)

Report says Southern Africa's development is not integrated(6/21/2012)

© 2012 Economic Commission for Africa