

## **Commitment and Sacrifice required to deliver Programme on Infrastructure Development in Africa – Says Kargbo**

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Addis Ababa, 02 June 2011 (ECA) - Member states and regional integration experts have been urged to “put all hands on deck to achieve the continental free trade project that will transform Africa into a single economic and market space.” Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, Deputy Executive Secretary, of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) made this [remark during the official opening](#) of the 7th Session of the Committee on Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration.

The Addis Ababa meeting is expected to conclude on 5 June with recommendations that, according to ECA's Information and Communication Service, will “accelerate the establishment of a continental free trade area in order to achieve an African Common Market” 5 June 2011.

Ms. Kargbo said in a [speech delivered on behalf of the ECA Executive Secretary](#) and UN Under-Secretary-General Mr. Abdou Jannet that Africa's collective GDP is over one trillion dollars, which is comparable to Brazil and India.

“The significance of this is that the economic integration of Africa will enable a larger trading and investment area which will fast-track economic growth and enable it to have a greater say in global economic processes.”

The 31-1 June Experts' Meeting that preceded the Official 7th Session underscored that moving towards this goal will entail addressing a number of critical concerns, including loss of revenue, fear of competition, the desire to protect local employment, national security issues and infrastructure.

Estimates point to \$93 billion a year, as the optimal figure needed to meet the Continent's need for “provision, operation and maintenance” of infrastructure. According to Ms. Kargbo, of this amount, up to \$40 billion is generated within the continent, which leaves a substantial financing gap.

She highlighted the Programme on Infrastructure Development in Africa as “a clear and a coherent vision” for Africa's infrastructure priorities and underlined that its implementation requires “full commitment and sacrifice on the part of our Member States, and the active support of our development partners.”

Also present at the opening was H.E Dr. Abraham Tekeste, State Minister Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Ethiopia who said that African integration cannot ignore the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“The majority of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are yet to be recognized by the WTO in the context of the rules governing regional trading arrangements. He said that the interface between Africa's integration agenda and the increasingly liberalizing and globalizing world economy needs to be adequately addressed as a priority for REC activities.

He urged for more effort and commitment to promote regional integration, “as it remains the key solution to overcoming economic fragmentation and promoting economic diversification.”

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