

Janneh calls for more youth mobilization initiatives on climate change, development

ECA Press Release No. 92/2011

Malabo (Equatorial Guinea), 27 June 2011 (ECA) - The UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Abdoulie Janneh on Sunday called for sustained youth mobilization “to get out the message of sustainable development, as they have the greatest stake in the future sustainability of our planet”.

Related Links

[Africa is new global growth pole, but continent must not rest on its laurels, says Janneh](#)

ECA Press Release No. 91/2011

[Statement by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh](#)

to the 17TH Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council

Addressing the opening session of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the African Union, on the eve of the 17th AU Summit, he said that “all hands must be on deck to ensure that the outcomes of the on-going climate change negotiations which continue in Durban later on this year and the Rio +20 Summit taking place in Brazil next year take account of Africa's interests and concerns”, according to the Information and Communications Service of ECA.

“As they have the greatest stake in the future sustainability of our planet, Africa's youth should be mobilized to get out the message of sustainable development. Indeed, they also have to contribute by bringing their dynamism to bear through ideas, taking business risks and contributing to educating and mobilizing the rest of society behind agreed goals”, he explained.

He announced that in the case of Rio +20, “ECA is working closely with the AUC, AfDB and UNEP to prepare the background documents that will guide Africa's negotiating position”.

“We are also organizing the African Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio +20 in October 2011, where a common African position on the negotiations will be adopted”, he promised, calling on “member States to continue to pay very close attention to this process whose outcomes will affect the future growth trajectory of our continent.”

Citing recent studies, he recalled that youth unemployment in Africa is over 20% in many countries “but even this figure underestimates the gravity of the problem”, proposing a new “strategy that combines public works programmes and enhanced investment in infrastructure and production ... to tap into the nexus between job creation, sustainable development and social stability.”

Accordingly, “we must now pay greater attention to green growth, which could leap-frog old and environmentally unsustainable technologies and enable African countries to take advantage of their current potential in agriculture, tourism, forestry, and eco-industries”, Mr. Janneh insisted

He assured that the United Nations system in Africa will continue to strengthen its partnerships in support of continental development initiatives, and “with the conclusion of the review of the Ten Year Capacity Building Plan, the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa is poised to build on previous achievements by developing concrete capacity building programmes for the African Union, its NEPAD programme and the Regional Economic Communities”, he also announced.

RCM-Africa resolved at its 11th session which was co-chaired by the AU Commission that an annual report on its activities should henceforth be submitted to the AU Summit through appropriate organs, it would be recalled.

He urged the ministers to have their respective governments implement the recommendations of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) National Programmes of Action, especially as they refer to improved governance and greater accountability, “while paying closer attention to policy on land, our greatest asset, and the huge illicit financial outflows from Africa.”

Lack of good governance and corruption are regularly cited as some of the reasons for Africa's economic setbacks and need to be looked at closely, although Africa displayed relative resilience to the fall-out of the global economic and financial crisis of 2008/9.

Moreso, “there is also much to cheer in the fact that Africa is increasingly recognized as a destination for foreign investment and as a global growth pole”, Mr. Janneh said. However, he quickly warned that this is “no reason to be too sanguine because this rate is far below the minimum growth rate estimated to achieve the MDGs.”

Furthermore, Africa's good performance is relative in the sense that while growth rates fell quite sharply to 2.4% in 2009 it was not as bad as other regions, as its “recovery rate of 4.7% in 2010 was also swifter”, he explained.

Insisting on the aspects of good governance, he said that “Africa’s commitment to improved governance since the adoption of NEPAD and APRM was not misplaced and might even have provided a safety valve in some countries by helping to maintain political stability in the face of severe economic shocks.”

Hence, he suggested that “the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and changes elsewhere in North Africa (might be) evidence of the desire to upscale and improve governance.”

“While youth unemployment was a factor, the desire for greater freedom, demands for greater accountability and distaste with the scale of corruption also played a significant role in the demand for change, he concluded.

:: [Click here](#) to read the full Statement

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