
ECA country profiles to help countries tell their own development narratives

Addis Ababa, 28 March 2015 (ECA) - *“Africa must be in position to tell its own story, but it won’t be able to do so if it doesn’t have the data to tell this story. [...] The ECA country profiles will be assisting member states to take control of their own narratives, they will also place them in a better position to take evidence-based decisions”*, said ECA Deputy Executive Secretary Mr Abdalla Hamdock, at the launch of the ECA Country Profiles.

The ECA Country Profile launch was a key moment among the preparatory events for the 8th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa on 30-31st March. Five pilot profiles were presented, covering Botswana, Cameroun, Kenya, Morocco and Nigeria.

Designed to support African countries’ structural transformation and set up in application of decisions taken at the previous ECA Conference of Ministers (held in Abuja in 2014) the ECA Country profiles are set to become a key data and forecasting tool. They will help countries focus their energies on macro-economic and social policies that will help them achieve structural transformation in Africa and provide a diversity of stakeholders including governments, investors, partners, academics, analysts and civil society representatives with a high quality, alternative source of data.

Tailored to the needs of African countries

The ECA Country Profiles will make it possible to evaluate countries’ macroeconomic and social performances and potential risks on a regular basis and will provide high level practical and strategic recommendations. They will be produced in partnership with various African national authorities, including central banks, statistics offices and research centres. *“We consider Country Profiles as a contribution to the Data Revolution, meaning that it’s not a static series of country overviews but a development analysis made in interaction with member states”*, explained Ms Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the ECA North Africa Office in a presentation made on behalf of the five ECA

sub-regional offices.

A unique product specifically tailored to the needs of African countries, the ECA country profiles cover themes such as employment, natural resources, agriculture, climate change or the green economy, and focus on national and regional priorities such as Agenda 2063 or the setup of the Continental Free Trade Area. Other key characteristics include the inclusion of ECA indexes launched as part of the Data Revolution, such as the African Social Development Index, the African Gender Index and the Regional Integration Index.

A powerful tool to put Africa first

However, while Country Profiles can become powerful tools for the promotion of national and African growth, their success will depend on the support of each country: “*We support the African narrative, and doing it well. Our facts [and] figures ... will prove this message: these will not be ordinary CPs, they will always put Africa first*”, explained Mr Antonio Pedro, Director of the ECA Office for East Africa. Mr Pedro stressed however that securing reliable data across the continent is not always easy. His assertion was complemented by Mr Hamdok who asserted that a collective effort to ensure their success will however be needed: this tool is all the more needed since sustaining Africa’s current impressive growth will require continuous vigilance and assertiveness through elements like the Country Profiles.

ECA regional directors for West, Central and Southern Africa: Messrs Dimitri Sanga, Emile Adohe and Said Adejumobi also attended the launch.

Other key points discussed at the event included ECA’s plans to give priority to national data, the role of Country profiles in supporting structural transformation and increasing data collection capacity in member countries.

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