



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

Published on *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa* (<http://www.uneca.org>)

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Lusaka, Zambia, 2 December 2015 (ECA) - The Zambian government says they are expecting ECA to provide economic advice on what direction to take following the sharp decline of Zambia's economy in the last three months.

"We are expecting ECA to convene an emergency meeting with us and other struggling economies to discuss options" said Secretary to the Cabinet, Rowland Msiska during a meeting with ECA, Deputy Executive Secretary, Giovannie Biha in Lusaka, Zambia.

"Other institutions - the World Bank, IMF have met us, but we want to hear from our own pan African institutions such as ECA" Msiska said.

Severe electricity shortages, a plunge in global copper prices to record lows and a depreciating currency have hurt the southern African country's economy.

Last week the World Bank projected that Zambia's economy in 2016 will fall below 4 percent far from the 6 percent projected earlier in the year. Inflation rose sharply to 19.5 per cent year-on-year in November from 14.3 per cent in October, and 7.7 in September according to the Central Statistical Office. It's the highest inflation in a decade.

Msiska also requested technical support ECA to build the capacity for the newly established Ministry of Development and Planning.

On her part, Biha assured the Zambia Government of ECAs commitment "Your requests will receive our highest priority" Biha said, who was on a three-day familiarization tour in Zambia. She held meeting with government institutions including Bank of Zambia, Central Statistics Office, Ministries of Land, Finance and Gender. Other meetings were with COMESA, Africa Development Bank and the UN Country Team.

During her meeting with Bank of Zambia Governor, Danny Kalyala, Biha emphasized the need for Zambia and Africa to return to strategic and long term planning. "As a continent we need to revive strategic long term planning which we lost along the way, but we need data, we need data to plan and to reclaim the narrative" she said.

Kalyalya echoed the need for data which he said, remained a challenge for the central bank. "We need a strong national statistical system, this is an area where ECA could provide support to Zambia" he said.

Biha, who was accompanied by ECA Director of Administration, Carlos Hadad also met with staff at ECA Southern Africa Office to discuss among others country profiles and UMOJA implementation.

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