



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

52nd meeting of the IDEP Governing Council

PRESENTATION

by

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Introduction

On resumption of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in September 2012, a series of consultations and reflection exercises to determine the new strategic directions of ECA were organized.

The conclusions reached were that the world is changing, Africa is changing and in order to meet identified priorities for accelerated transformation, ECA itself must change.

The world has entered a new era of globalization with accelerated economic integration and higher value addition from knowledge and global industrial chains. There is also a reconfiguration of economic powers alongside other mega-trends including shifts in demographic profiles, rapid urbanization and an acceptance of limits to current consumption patterns with adverse effects on the environment.

In this same context, African countries are experiencing significant economic growth with many of them being amongst the fastest growing economies in the world. This growth is due to several factors including Africa's youthful population, its burgeoning middle class, enormous natural resources wealth, improvements in governance and macroeconomic fundamentals, urbanization and the growing dynamism of the private sector.

These developments have led to more positive assessments of Africa with visible changes from attitudes of Afro-pessimism to effusive Afro-enthusiasm. However, there is need for caution particularly as there are concerns about the quality and sustainability of growth, massive degradation of production structures and deficits in state capacity. These are manifested in high rates of unemployment and inequality as well as persistent poverty.

Against this background there is an imperative to use current growth as a platform for broad structural transformation. Such growth must work for Africans and driven by their own priorities. It must also have a strong focus on the use of Africa's economic strengths, upscaling of infrastructure, creation of productive jobs and domestic entrepreneurship. It should also assure food and nutritional security alongside viable social policies.

ECA Refocusing

In order therefore to be relevant to the transformative agenda of the continent, ECA itself must retool and recalibrate its work by taking the frontline in generating original data and knowledge, grounding its policy research and advocacy on clear and objective evidence and offering meaningful capacity development and advisory services in key thematic areas relevant to the transformation agenda of our member States.

One implication of this refocusing was that ECA must put 'Africa First'. It also meant that its programmes had to be recalibrated taking account of its comparative advantages. As a result, ECA's organizational structure has been realigned. The new organizational structure is attached at Annex I for information. The refocusing also affects the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).

Integration and Strengthening of IDEP

IDEP's statutes (Art III) state that it is a subsidiary body of ECA. Accordingly, it is also considered by the General Assembly as an ECA sub-programme. However, there has been some ambiguity in its treatment within ECA leading to constraints in its delivery of training activities, shortage of senior level personnel and neglect of physical and related infrastructure. The current exercise will accordingly integrate IDEP fully into ECA's administrative and programmatic structure.

One of the intentions of the refocusing exercise is to use specialization in a manner that enables ECA's work to achieve the desired impact. Accordingly, rather than the current system whereby Divisions in Addis Ababa undertake a plethora of workshops and seminars, all training activities in ECA will now be conducted by IDEP. As a corollary, all ECA staff working in policy research will be required to give 5% of their time delivering training activities under the ambit of IDEP.

Following the principle of specialization, IDEP would no longer undertake research activities that are better undertaken by relevant policy research Divisions at ECA headquarters. Again, this is fully consistent with the role envisaged for IDEP in its statutes which require that any research it does should only be related to training methodologies. IDEP staff will of course be brought into research work being conducted at headquarters according to their respective strengths.

The organizational structure for IDEP following these changes can be seen from the organigramme attached as Annex II. There will be three sections namely, Training, Library, and Partnerships and Administration. As indicated earlier, the Training Section will be strengthened and this will also be accompanied by further investments in the IDEP Library collection and knowledge services. In addition to supporting the Director in the day to day running of the Institute, the Partnerships and Administration Section will have its work cut out to ensure full compliance with the statutes which state that IDEP is subject to the Financial Regulations and Staff Rules of the United Nations.

In order to ensure that these changes are meaningful, the delivery capacity of IDEP will be reinforced by human and financial resources from ECA. The Institute will be provided with at least four additional posts at the professional level and at least \$1m. Having these resources will mean that IDEP has to spend less effort

trying to raise resources to keep it afloat. The resources will also enable IDEP to sponsor more participants from African countries for short term courses based on knowledge products produced by ECA.

The short-term courses envisaged are of key importance for supporting Africa's transformation and the areas identified include:

1. Macroeconomic Modeling for Development Planners
2. Mining Policy and Contract Negotiation
3. Industrial Policy Course
4. Land Policy for National Development
5. Trade for Development and Regional Integration
6. Agricultural Policy
7. Trade Policy and Negotiation

Next Steps

These changes require the approval of the Governing Council which according to Article IV.2 (a) of the statutes shall "Lay down the general principles and policies governing the operations of the Institute'. Thereafter, they will be taken to the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for endorsement. This will be the appropriate time as the Conference will also be expected to endorse the programmatic and organizational changes arising out of the refocusing of ECA.

The strengthening of IDEP will also be reported to the UN Economic and Social Council and thereafter to the General Assembly as part of the Report of the ECA Conference of Ministers which is rendered to these bodies.