

# **The Sixth Meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for African Economic Recovery and Development**

## **Opening Statement by the Chairman**

**Mr. K.Y Amoako, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary,  
ECA**

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Addis Ababa**

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa for the Sixth Meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-IATF). I appreciate that many of the member agencies have responded to my invitation to take part.

There have been many developments in the United Nations system since the Fifth Meeting of the IATF which was held in Addis Ababa in November 1994, and chaired by my predecessor Mr. Layashi Yaker. The issue of African development was considered by the High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council in June last year. The 50th session of the General Assembly considered how to conduct the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF - the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. And recently the Secretary-General launched the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

Our immediate concern today is to become familiar with the orientation and salient features of the Special Initiative, to define ways of coordinating our various contributions in line with the framework of UN-NADAF, the objectives of the Special Initiative and of other ongoing regional programmes initiated either by African governments or by the international community. Also, we need to plan for the conduct of the Mid-term review of UN-NADAF, according to established modalities.

The idea of the Initiative was set in train when the High Level Segment of ECOSOC considered a report of the Secretary-General, to which all UN members had contributed. ECOSOC took note of the encouraging steps taken by many African countries to establish an environment conducive to development, and the several initiatives of the international community in support of Africa's efforts.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to pursue, in the framework of the Administrative Committee of Coordination (ACC), the idea of an initiative which would be focused, and supported by an unprecedented mobilising of African countries, and the international community.

This was how the framework was set up for a renewed focus on Africa by the UN family in its broadest sense, the biggest such undertaking in UN history. It is new and important in several ways.

It is the greatest set of UN Projects in Africa ever drawn up.

It responds to the need for UN agencies to continue developing channels for joint operations with Non Government Organisations and other civic organisations, in view of their strong involvement with the grass roots, where development challenges cease to be dry statistics and assume real personality.

It asks African governments to pitch in with their plans, to give the lead.

I need not dwell on all the objectives and components of the Special Initiative, that was officially launched on 15 March 1996. It is the outcome of the work of a Steering Committee established by the ACC which I co-chair with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At this stage I only wish to point out that the Special Initiative neither conflicts with nor duplicates UN-NADAF. While UN-NADAF remains the political framework for maintaining the momentum for African development during the 1990s, the Special Initiative forms a collaborative and implementable programme of action, focusing on areas which would contribute the most to consolidating the basis for Africa's sustained development.

The Fiftieth session of the General Assembly devoted its session of 5th December last year to UN-NADAF. The Assembly recommended that the Mid-term review of its implementation be conducted in 1996, as scheduled, and adopted resolution A/50/160 which defines the modalities of the exercise.

Essentially, the resolution establishes an Ad-Hoc Committee of the Whole, which will prepare for the review by the General Assembly. This review will be based on a report of the Secretary-General, to be prepared by the ECA with the contributions of African countries, African inter-governmental organizations, chiefly the OAU, and organizations and agencies of the UN system. Members of the Task Force are therefore urged to provide the secretariat with their specific inputs to the report of the Secretary-General.

Another development since the last meeting of the Task Force is my appointment as Executive Secretary of the ECA, and de facto, Chairman of the IATF. I wish to confirm to you that in conformity with its mandate and in line with the accomplishments of my predecessors, ECA will continue to play a major role at the African regional level, along with other organizations of the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the the OAU, the ADB and African regional institutions, and African and Non-African NGOs.

Those of you who have attended the concluded Meeting of the Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) are now well aware of the Strategic

Directions for the renewal of the ECA. This process means more focus on the areas where we have a comparative advantage. From sister organizations and UN agencies we expect collaboration based on real partnership, especially in the framework of carrying out the Special Initiative on Africa. In this new context, ECA is likely to play an increasing role in harmonising UN inputs with the ultimate goal of enhancing the impact of all our contributions. The New Agenda and the Special Initiative have the same goals, so effective implementation requires a clearly defined and formally established link between their coordinating and monitoring mechanisms. Therefore, the UN-IATF should go beyond regular consultations and form a forum which provokes catalytic and innovative joint initiatives, at the country and at the regional level.

For all these reasons, I decided to convene this special meeting. Although we are being kept busy on a Saturday, I am sure you agree that it is more convenient and less demanding for us to meet between TEPCOW and the Conference of Ministers.

May I once again welcome you all to this Fifth Meeting of the UN-IATF, and thank you for your attention.

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