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*26 – 29 March 2008*

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*31 March – 2 April 2008*



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COMMISSION**

*Third meeting of the Committee of Experts*

*Third session of CAMEF*

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**First Joint Annual Meetings of  
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and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning  
and Economic Development**

*Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*



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## **Report of the Special Meeting of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) on the External Review of the Institute**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
18-19 March 200**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The special meeting of the African Institute for Economic Planning and Development (IDEP) Governing Council, was held on 18 and 19 March 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting was convened in the framework of the repositioning process of the Institute. This process was launched upon request from the African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to the Executive Secretary of ECA to make proposals for improving IDEP at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission held in May 2006 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. In response to the request, the Executive Secretary of ECA set up an External Review Panel to undertake an independent review of IDEP. During the fortieth session of the Commission on 2 and 3 April 2007, the Panel submitted a Note on its preliminary findings. The Conference endorsed the recommendations contained in the Note and requested ECA to make necessary arrangements to deepen the review of IDEP with the objective of repositioning the Institute to better meet the capacity-building needs of its member States.

2. In this respect, the ECA Executive Secretary decided to reconvene the External Review Panel to undertake a prospective study on the future of IDEP. The Panel has since completed and submitted its study to the ECA Executive Secretary. In addition, an Ad Hoc expert group meeting was held on 17 November 2007 to enrich the report of the Panel. The objectives of this special meeting of the Governing Council of IDEP were to review and enrich the report of the Panel, which will be presented to the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission's Conference of Ministers, and to involve the Council in the process that will lead to the implementation of various recommendations in respect to the repositioning of IDEP. Mrs. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA and acting Chairperson of the IDEP Governing Council, chaired the meeting.

## **II. Participation**

3. The meeting was attended by Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania. ECA, IDEP and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) were also represented at the meeting. The full list of participants is attached as Annex II to this report.

## **III. Account of Proceedings**

### Opening of Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

4. Mrs. Lalla Ben Barka chaired the opening session of the meeting on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECA. In her opening remarks, she welcomed the members of the Governing Council of IDEP to Addis Ababa and to ECA in particular and thanked the representatives of member States embassies in Addis Ababa for attending the meeting. She emphasized the strategic importance of the meeting for the future of IDEP and recalled the major steps undertaken so far in the repositioning process of the Institute, including the finalization of the evaluation report on IDEP prepared by a Panel of external reviewers. She added that the meeting was expected to contribute to the enrichment of the report and in ensuring that its core recommendations are presented at the forthcoming ECA Conference of Ministers. Mrs. Ben Barka stressed the important role IDEP could play to the economic development of Africa's 53 countries.

5. Mrs. Ben Barka informed the meeting that an independent audit of IDEP's management was ongoing under the responsibility of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), noting that the audit report will be presented to the next Governing Council meeting. She concluded by encouraging the meeting to make strong recommendations to be implemented with minimum delays, in light of the concrete findings of the evaluation report. She also suggested that a resolution should be tabled at fortieth session of the ECA Conference of Ministers, delegating the required authority to the Chairman of the Governing Council to implement the measures necessary for repositioning IDEP.

6. Mr. Urbain Zadi, Director of the ECA Office of Strategic Planning and Programme Management (OPM), chaired all the sessions of the second day of the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda (Agenda Item 2)

7. The Agenda was adopted with minor amendments as follows:

- a. Opening of the meeting;
- b. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work;
- c. Presentation of the key findings and recommendations of the report entitled "Evaluation Report on the African Institute for Economic and Planning (IDEP)" prepared by a Panel of external reviewers;
- d. Consideration of the UN Grant and discussions;
- e. Presentation by the Representative of the IDEP Staff Committee and discussions;
- f. Key recommendations of the Meeting and Way Forward for the future of IDEP;
- g. Any other business; and
- h. Adoption of Report and Closing of the meeting.

Presentation of the key findings and recommendations of the "Evaluation Report on the African Institute for Economic Planning and Development (IDEP)" (Agenda Item 3)

8. Under this item of the agenda, Dr. Alioune Sall, Executive Director of the African Futures Institute, presented the key findings and recommendations of the report on the evaluation of IDEP. He made the presentation in his capacity as member of the External Review Panel set up by the Executive Secretary of ECA to undertake the evaluation. Dr. Sall, started by briefly recalling the history of evaluation exercise. He then explained the terms of reference and methodology of the evaluation, noting in particular that the Panel met with officials at ECA, African Union (AU), and various IDEP stakeholders to sought their inputs. He focused the rest of the presentation on the key findings and recommendations of the Panel.

9. In that regard, Dr. Sall explained five key findings of the evaluation as outlined in the report of the Panel. First, although the mandate of IDEP remains relevant, the institute has to be retooled to enable it to be proactive in the area of development planning and management in an era of increased globalization. Second, IDEP lacks the required amount of staff to fulfill its mandate. Budgetary constraints of IDEP remain a challenge for attracting and retaining staff required for smooth delivery of IDEP's training programmes. In addition, few African countries are benefiting from the services offered by the Institution. The third finding is related to the possibility of linking IDEP to ECA's peer learning activities. In this regard, the Panel found out that IDEP's participation in the African Learning Group on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs-LG) would be much more significant if the network of former trainees, most of whom are now effectively serving as senior policy makers in their countries were to be reactivated. Forth, the training offered by IDEP is highly relevant to the needs of AU and as a result, demand for it is high. However, participation has been limited due to resource constraint. AU has also observed that it is not being consulted adequately with the view to selecting appropriate resource persons for IDEP programmes. Fifth, IDEP's financial support is likely to improve if it shows prudent and effective use of the financial resources at its disposal.

10. With regard to whether IDEP was responding to Africa's current needs, Dr. Sall noted that the Panel, in general terms, made the following conclusions: IDEP has concentrated mainly on its training programmes targeting mostly civil servants and as a result, it was out of touch with the scholarly and academic community; IDEP no longer features in ongoing debates in Africa on development issues; IDEP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) could complement each other in carrying out different types of capacity-building initiatives in Africa, especially those involving strengthening governing structures and institutions in war-torn countries; and IDEP, as a think tank of ECA, should lead in research and dialogue on issues related to planning for development, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

11. Concerning the way forward for IDEP, Dr. Sall mentioned a number of options that may be explored, including: (i) transforming IDEP into a joint institute of ECA, ADB, and AU; (ii) enabling IDEP to move upstream and focus on the production of teaching materials to be used by African universities and other higher learning institutions; and (iii) enabling IDEP to serve increasingly as a platform for intensified interaction between African research centres, policy makers in the economic and social fields, and institutions of higher learning.

### Discussions

12. In the discussions that followed the presentation, the Council expressed appreciation of the good quality of the report of the External Review Panel and thanked Dr. Sall for his exhaustive and clear presentation of the findings and recommendations of the report. It also thanked ECA for commissioning the evaluation.

13. At the outset, the Council agreed that the situation of IDEP is paradoxical, in the sense that its resources have dwindled over the years due to non-payment of contributions by member States, although the mandate of the Institution remains relevant and the scope of issues to be addressed, including emerging challenges to Africa's development, has indeed broadened. It was felt that lack of awareness of the usefulness of IDEP is a contributing factor to the fact that most African countries fail to pay their financial contributions. To help address this problem, the Council highlighted the

need for IDEP to improve its communication strategy. It emphasized that efforts have to be made to highlight the achievements of IDEP and raise awareness of African countries on the benefits they could derive from the Institute. In particular, countries that do not participate in the Governing Council meetings should be kept informed on issues related to IDEP.

14. The Council acknowledged that IDEP is underutilized. In this regard, it noted that the number of people trained, 800 over 10 years for 53 African countries is insufficient. Similarly, it stressed that the number of staff and budget of IDEP are inadequate and constitute a major constraint to the effective functioning of the Institute. It was pointed out that making use of ECA staff and visiting scholars from other institutions could be part of the solution to the problem of under staffing. Regarding the shortage of sustainable financial resources, the Council underscored the importance of exploring self-financing options for IDEP, noting that diversifying its clients to include the private sector offers an opportunity. It was agreed that self-financing mechanisms were critical in solving the problem of depending mostly on donor funding for IDEP.

15. The Council recommended that the External Review Panel should include a table in its report, indicating the structure of IDEP's expenditure. This would enable the Council to have an idea of the magnitude and scope of the institute's expenditure. The Council also expressed the desire to know the cost per official trained by IDEP, especially in comparison with those of other institutions offering similar training. It was pointed out that IDEP was expected to efficiently use its available resources, although acknowledged to be limited, to achieve positive results.

16. The Council pointed out several new areas and emerging issues that IDEP could address, including assisting African countries in setting minimum acceptable common positions in dealing with their development partners; South-South cooperation, which is an area where IDEP could conduct impact studies; and capacity-building on international trade negotiations, including training on negotiation techniques, as well as fostering policy advocacy on major initiatives such as the *African Renaissance*. IDEP was also called upon to take note and be involved in the new debate related to the shift in focus from poverty reduction to wealth creation as the basis of development planning in some countries. Furthermore, the Council suggested that IDEP could do more to support national institutions involved in knowledge generation.

17. The Council urged IDEP to adopt modern performance management techniques, based on achieving results, to enable it improve its governance. Such techniques, which emphasize the key role of evaluation, will help boost the image and credibility of IDEP as well as the confidence level of its stakeholders and donors.

18. A number of other issues were raised by the Council, including the view that IDEP's activities are too centralized. These activities should also reflect the linguistic and geographical diversity of Africa. In addition, IDEP needs to align its degrees with current practice of the academic community, to ensure that certificates awarded to its trainees are universally recognized.

19. Participants expressed the view that the Governing Council should share some of the blame for the shortcomings of IDEP. In this regard, it was noted that, although the Council has been aware of the problems of the Institution for several years, it has not been able to find appropriate solutions, including changing the vision of IDEP. Similarly, the meetings of the Council, which are only

organized once a year and deemed insufficient by some members, are often postponed. This negatively affects the ability of the Council to follow-up key decisions on the management of IDEP.

20. The Council agreed to request the Executive Secretary of ECA in his capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council Board to continue with process of repositioning IDEP in close consultation with other members of the Board. This will enable the operationalization of the recommendations of the External Review Panel as well as those from the present meeting.

#### Consideration of UN Grant (Agenda Item 4)

21. Mr. Abraham Indieka, Officer in Charge of the ECA Division of Administration, made the presentation under this item of the agenda. He essentially provided a summary of ECA's grant to IDEP. In particular, he informed the meeting that the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of ECA grant to IDEP at the request of the Controller of the United Nations in November 2005. The key recommendation of the audit were that ECA should: (i) establish an accurate overrun figure against IDEP grant; (ii) modify the arrangement for the provision of the grant to IDEP; (iii) provide the grant directly to IDEP and make sure that it is used for its intended purpose and remains within its limit; and (iv) that ECA should carry out an assessment of the type of support it should provide to IDEP. He noted that in 2006, ECA confirmed to the Controller the final amount of overrun against the IDEP grant from 1996 to 2005, which was \$US761,454.54, and also conveyed the information to the Director of IDEP.

#### Discussions

22. The issues raised following the presentation covered the institutional and financial management of IDEP, the UN grant potential, resource mobilization, lack of interest and commitment from African member States, comparison with sister organizations such as the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), improvement of the image and awareness of IDEP in member States, and the need to improve IDEP management at the governing and operational levels.

23. On the institutional and financial management of IDEP, the meeting was informed that IDEP operates under a dual system of management involving accountability to the United Nations through ECA and to African member States through the Governing Council. Originally, IDEP was established as an African project to serve African interests and needs for their development with the support of the United Nations. Therefore, the meeting acknowledged that member States have primary responsibility in supporting IDEP. The UN and other donors only provide additional support to improve the performance of the Institute.

24. On the UN grant, the meeting was informed that the issue is discussed at the UN statutory body for budget under ECA programme every year. In order to increase ECA grant to IDEP, UN requires certain conditions to be met, including:

- A solution to the non-payment of contributions by African member States, and

- Conducting a comprehensive external independent review of the management of IDEP, defining its role, relevance and scope in Africa.

25. On resource mobilization, the Council suggested the need to probe into why member States are not paying their contributions and to prepare a strategy for resource mobilization. It was recommended that necessary measures should be taken to improve the perception of the relevance of IDEP to African countries and the donor community.

26. The Council underscored the need to reformulate the vision, mission, and institutional structure of IDEP. Since IDEP is evolving in a competitive environment, the need for a clear definition of its niche was also underscored. The Council also pointed out the need to optimize the management of IDEP's financial, human and institutional resources, and called on ECA to tighten its monitoring of the management and operations of the Institute. To this end, the Council noted the need for quarterly reporting on the state of IDEP as well as on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Panel and its meetings. The Council also underlined the need to designate one of its members to serve as a focal person who would liaise with the Executive Secretary of ECA in his capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council Board and be responsible for the dissemination of relevant information pertaining to IDEP management.

27. In comparing the financial status of IDEP and ILPES in Latin America, the meeting was informed that ILPES follows the same kind of dual management as IDEP. However, ILPES maintains its financial viability by mobilizing resources from development banks and the private sector. Furthermore, ILPES benefits from strong support of Latin America countries and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in pushing its agenda at the highest levels in order to increase the UN grant.

#### Presentation by the Representative of IDEP Staff Committee (Agenda Item 5)

28. In his presentation, the representative of IDEP Staff Committee discussed in detail a broad range of issues, which, in the view of his Committee, affect the moral and welfare of staff of the Institute as well as its overall performance. In this regard, he mentioned the lack of visibility of IDEP; minimum consultations at the Institute resulting in lack of transparency in decision-making; confusion in the status of IDEP staff as it is not clear to them whether they belong to the UN system or not; inequitable distribution of staff in the various units of the Institute; disregard of rules and regulations, among others. He also tabled several proposals of the Staff Committee aimed at improving the visibility of IDEP, mobilizing resources, and promoting good governance in the management of the Institute's resources, including UN subvention.

#### Discussions

29. In the discussions that followed the presentations, it was recalled that a management audit of IDEP was ongoing and that most of the issues raised by the representative of the Staff Committee would be addressed by the audit. The Council therefore felt it was inappropriate at this stage, to draw conclusions on the management of IDEP based on the presentation. It however, invited the representative of the Staff Committee to distribute the presentation to members of the Council and ECA. He was also encouraged to submit the presentation for consideration by the team conducting

the management audit. The Council urged the Director of IDEP not to respond to the presentation of his Staff Committee, noting that the ongoing management audit was a more appropriate platform to share his views on the concerns raised about the management of the Institute under his leadership.

30. In order to increase awareness of IDEP staff of administrative decisions of the Institute, it was suggested that the idea of allowing the Staff Committee to participate in Governing Council meetings as observers should be considered.

#### Key Recommendations (Agenda Item 6)

31. The following recommendations were derived from the discussions of the various agenda items:

- The Governing Council fully endorsed the recommendations of the evaluation of IDEP by the External Review Panel;
- The vision, mission, and institutional structure of IDEP should be adapted to current challenges through the revision of its legal texts, training and research programmes, advisory services, and other activities. In this regard, it would be important to revive its Scientific Council;
- Steps should be taken to improve the perception of the relevance of IDEP by African countries and the donor community. To this end, efforts have to be made to highlight the achievements of IDEP and raise the awareness of African countries on the benefits they could derive from the Institute;
- Results-based management should be fully implemented to improve the governance of IDEP. Similarly, ECA and the Governing Council should ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the management and operations of the Institute on a regular basis;
- IDEP should prepare a resource mobilization strategy. In this regard, IDEP should be proactive and creative in mobilizing resources including from non-traditional sources;
- There is an urgent need to build strong communication links between top management and staff of IDEP in order to ensure transparency in the decision-making process and dissemination of information on decisions taken in the Governing Council. This will enhance the sense of belonging to the Institute and hence help boost the morale of the staff;
- The Council recommended that the Executive Secretary of ECA, in his capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council, should be given the mandate to take all the necessary measures for the repositioning of IDEP, in close consultation with the other members of the Council. In this context, he should, as a matter of priority, assume direct responsibility for the management of the Institution, the revitalization of its deliberative organs, particularly the Governing Council and the Scientific Board, the updating of its statutes and the preparation of a programme budget over a transitional period of 12

months. He should also pay particular attention to the other recommendations of the external review and those of the present meeting during this transitional period;

- The Council recommended that it should continue to benefit from the experience and insights of Dr. Alioune Sall, member of the External Review Panel, as it enters the crucial phase of implementing the recommendations of the review;
- The Council designated Mr. Maurice Doube, representative of Cameroon, as its focal person to serve as a link between the Executive Secretary of ECA in his capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council and other members of the Board. It was agreed that Mr. Doube would participate in the forthcoming ECA Conference of Ministers where the report of the IDEP Review Panel will be presented; and
- The Governing Council should meet more than once a year to ensure proper follow-up of its decisions.

#### Any other business (Agenda Item 7)

32. The Council felt that it was necessary to strengthen links amongst its members and keep them updated on issues related to the activities and management of IDEP. In this regard, it recommended the establishment of an electronic platform on the IDEP website to facilitate exchange of views and communication between Council members.

33. The Council requested that the report of the audit of IDEP management should be made available to its members once it is completed.

#### Adoption of Report and Closing of the meeting (Agenda Item 8)

34. The Council adopted the report of the present meeting together with a draft resolution contained therein as Annex I to be presented for consideration by the forthcoming ECA Conference of Ministers.

35. As part of the closing session, Mr. Diery Seck, the Director of IDEP, thanked the Council members for their dedication to the success of the Institute. He expressed his wish that the outcome of IDEP review and the present meeting will contribute to improving the performance of the Institute.

36. In his closing remarks, Mr. Urbain Zadi, Director of the ECA Office of Strategic Planning and Programme Management (OPM), on behalf of the ECA Executive Secretary, Chairman of the Governing Council, thanked the members of the Council for their commitment throughout the meeting. He noted that the special meeting met all its expectations and wished participants a safe journey back home.

## ANNEX I

### DRAFT RESOLUTION

#### **FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION BY THE ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS**

The Conference of Ministers

Taking note of the report of the special meeting of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) organized on 18 and 19 March 2008, at the Headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Recalling that at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in May 2006, the African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development considered the critical financial situation of IDEP and requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to make proposals for improving the Institute and to report to the fortieth session of the Commission.

Noting that in response to this request, the Executive Secretary of ECA set up an external review panel composed of two high level consultants, and that on the basis of the preliminary recommendations and subsequent decisions (E/ECA/COE/26/15) of the Conference on IDEP, the Executive Secretary reconvened the same review panel to deepen the exercise and to recommend some scenarios on the future of the Institute.

Taking note of the relevance of the report on the external review of IDEP and particularly its recommendations on the repositioning of the Institute.

Noting that some strategic and operational malfunctions identified in the external review report had already been noted by the Governing Council at its 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> meetings.

Endorses the findings and recommendations of the external review, in particular those on the urgent need to reposition IDEP.

Reaffirms the importance of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the training and research agenda in Africa, on the basis of a consistent and effective results-based management and division of labour among the major regional organizations and the other training and research institutions on the continent.

Reaffirms that the mandate and mission of IDEP remain relevant, but stresses that the Institute should strengthen its cooperation with other United Nations institutes and national, regional and international training institutions.

Gives the Executive Secretary of ECA, in his capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council, the mandate to take all the necessary measures for the repositioning of IDEP, in close consultation with the other members of the Council. In this context, the assumption of direct responsibility for the management of this Institution, the revitalization of its deliberative organs, particularly the Governing Council and the Scientific Board, the updating of its statutes and the

preparation of a programme budget over a transitional period of 12 months should be addressed as a matter of priority. The other recommendations of the external review and those of the special meeting of the Governing Council must also receive particular attention during this transitional period.

Urges member States to commit themselves more clearly in the process of repositioning IDEP, particularly through a substantial support in terms of participation in the activities of the Institution and financial contributions to its budget.

Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to make proposals, in consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with the Governing Council, to alleviate the financial difficulties of the Institute based on the modalities used in UN training institutes with similar missions.

Requests the Executive Secretary to report the results of the conduct of the process to the next session of the Conference.

**ANNEX II**

**47<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Governing Council  
 18-19 March 2008**

No	First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization	Address	E-mail	Country
<b>Members of the Governing Council</b>							
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11.	Alioune	Sall	Panel Review Expert	African Future Development			South Africa
IDEP Staff							
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