



EASTERN AFRICA

NEWS

ECA Subregional Office for Eastern Africa

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About the Office



UN Economic Commission for Africa Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (UNECA/SRO-EA) is located in Kigali (Rwanda) and serves 13 countries: *Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.*

Gender and Food security in Eastern Africa



In Eastern Africa, food security and gender are almost synonymous because food production and agriculture in general are the domain of women. Women produce the food on small farms under poor husbandry practices – without fertilisers, irrigation, or mechanisation and with unimproved seeds mainly because of gender inequality. The negative traditions and culture of a patriarchal system, practiced practically in the entire subregion have limited women’s access to valuable “assets” like education, economic empowerment, land ownership/access and political participation, to name just a few; making women to generally lag behind men in terms of skills and capabilities.

Gender inequality contributes to the slow pace of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established for the period 1990-2015, with the exception of MDG 2: *achieving universal primary education*, which also face difficulties of quality and accessing tertiary education. Not much has happened in other goals that are directly related to gender equality promotion and eradication of hunger, these being goals 1 and 3 - *Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and Promotion of gender equality and empowerment* respectively.

Gender inequality affects food production by limiting women’s access to agricultural extension services since



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preference is given to men; the same is true for credit, agricultural inputs and other services but the worst part is the fact that the woman do not own/access land. In a patriarchal society women/girls do not inherit property including land and only gain access to land through male relatives or husbands, and of course they could buy it but the poor cannot as they do not have the means. Given the difficulty of owning/accessing land, many divorced women and widows who have no sons, become destitute and food insecure; and it also happens with modern legal land systems because women lose access to land they used to till as the titled owners fence it off.

Denying women the means and factors to increase agricultural productivity exacerbates food insecurity and poverty in the subregion because some studies carried out by the International Food Policy Research Institute have proved that 1% increase in agricultural productivity reduces poverty by 0.6%. This means that unless and until there is substantial gender equality, efforts to bring about the Green Revolution will remain a piped dream.



Burundian Farmers getting seeds

Recent Events

12TH ICE Meeting held in Addis Ababa

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, organized from 24 to 25 March 2008 in Addis Ababa its 12th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE), a steering organ mandated by the ECA Council of Ministers to provide guidance to the activities of subregional offices.

The ICE meeting was organized while ECA celebrates its 50th anniversary and starting a new era for promoting regional integration in support of the African Union's vision and priorities, and meeting Africa's special needs and emerging global challenges.



SRO-EA Director P. Bugembe (right) with the Ethiopian Minister of Finance (left) Ato M. Manyazewal

The theme selected for the meeting was: **“Meeting Sub-Regional Challenges in the 21st Century: Regional Integration and Financing for Development towards the achievement of MDGs”**. The major objective of the meeting was to track progress made in achieving MDGs, identify major constraints and define modalities for accelerating the achievement of those objectives through regional integration programmes.

Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, EAC, IGAD) the building blocs of regional integration and other regional Groups (IOC, CEPGL, ICGLR) attended the meeting and presented progress reports in supporting member countries for achieving MDGs and other development challenges.

Can Eastern African countries achieve the MDGs?

The experience of the last decade and a half have shown that achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be difficult but not impossible. So far, countries of Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean are on course to fulfil many of the MDGs.

For Eastern African countries, there are considerable variations in the prospects of individual countries. Those that have implemented sound economic policies and improved their systems of governance have seen acceleration in economic growth and poverty reduction and are likely to make significant headway in the future. There are, by contrast, other countries where policy improvements are yet to be secured, largely due to conflicts and poor governance, and where little progress on the MDGs is likely.

Although countries in the sub-region have made tremendous progress since 2001, in terms of GDP growth at an average of 6.8 per cent in 2007, this growth has not benefited the poor.





ECA Deputy Executive Secretary Ms. Lalla Ben Barka , Mr. Ato M. Manyazewal (Ethiopian Minister of Finance), Mr. P. Bugembe, SRO-EA Director and other participants to ICE Meeting

In 2007, more than 50 per cent of the population in Eastern Africa still survived on less than 1 dollar per day and per person, despite ambitious targets set for poverty reduction. Nevertheless, many countries in Eastern Africa have achieved tremendous improvements in social sectors such as health, education, gender equality, environment sustainability and others.

Urgent need for Sustaining and Deepening economic growth

The growth rate in the subregion is still below the one required to make significant inroads in reducing poverty. Most studies have shown that average Africa's growth rate of at least 7 per cent is needed for that. Eastern African countries need to maintain and deepen the sound macroeconomic policy frameworks that many have adopted. However some countries in the subregion attained impressive growth rates.

Participants at the ICE meeting recognized that although most countries in the subregion have undertaken financial reforms those reforms have not yet addressed the issue of poverty reduction and despite the fact that all

development programmes in the subregion are linked to poverty reduction, the resource allocation did not often reflect this priority.

Promoting sustainable Peace and security for economic growth

Participants recommended that countries in the sub-region should undertake necessary measures to ensure sustainable peace and security in the sub-region through the promotion of joint management of common borders and enhancing regional cooperation in the fields of peace, conflict prevention and peaceful settlements of disputes and that Regional Economic Communities have a major role to play by setting up appropriate mechanisms for peace and security in the sub-region.

Promoting Gender Equality

The ICE meeting recognized that poverty and human capital dimensions of the MDGs involve women, both directly and indirectly. It is therefore expected that promotion of gender equality will contribute to the achievement of several goals at the same time.



It was also recognized that achieving this requires conscious allocations of public resources in favour of women and to production areas where women were most concentrated.

Accelerating regional integration process

The ICE recognized that regional integration can play a major role in tackling many issues including harmonization of macroeconomic policies, trade liberalization and negotiation policies, improving economic governance, rehabilitating transport infrastructures and ICT, etc. In this context, the ICE meeting recognized the importance of an observatory for regional integration in the monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards political and economic integration of Eastern African subregional countries.

The crucial role of the region's infrastructure

The ICE meeting noted that strategies need to be developed to improve connectivity in transport networks, communication and exploit the potentials of pooling power grids. There is a crucial need to adopt a regional approach to cross-border infrastructure investment, maintenance and management.

Other recommendations

After exchanging views, the meeting recommended that (1) the capacity of RECs as building blocs to accelerate the implementation of the regional integration agenda should be strengthened; (2) all RECs and other regional organization should emphasize the promotion of intra African trade as a means for regional integration; (3) the private sector and business community in the formulation and implementation in RECs programmes and projects to facilitate trade integration should be fully involved. The 12th ICE Meeting recommended also that (4) ECA should support RECs in the monitoring and evaluating projects and programmes, in order to insure their effective implementation with better achievements; (5) ECA should assist RECs in rationalizing and better harmonizing their programmes and projects at regional level in view to achieve the highest rate of regional integration.

In regard to the Observatory project, it was recommended that further consultations should take place with all stakeholders, including member countries and RECs in view to expand the scope and priority areas to be covered by the observatory during the implementation phase of the project.

Seychelles offered to host the next ICE meeting in 2009 at a date to be determined after due consultations between SRO-EA and the host Government.

Launching of the SRO-EA Knowledge-Management Portal

During ICE Meeting, SRO-EA launched the SRO-EA Knowledge Management Portal.



Participants to the KM training session pose with the trainer

The Knowledge Management is a system approach to increasing the value of ECA's collective intelligence. It involves the capture, evaluation, synthesis, organization, distribution and application of the organization's knowledge capital.

The key objectives of ECA Knowledge Management Initiative include among others (1) to facilitate access to knowledge generated by ECA and external development organizations and to serve as the default repository for all "knowledge content" generated throughout the organizations; (2) to promote cross-regional sharing of innovative approaches to knowledge management, by leveraging successful experiences across region and the global level; (3) to identify the sources of knowledge available in various forms to staff and create a framework or information architecture that will make all of this knowledge easily available; (4) to determine key points in the core business processes where knowledge needs to be injected more effectively

During the training course, the delegates were pleased by this initiative and recommended that, SRO-EA to provide knowledge services by working with its members state and RECs (COMESA, EAC, IGAD) and others regional organizations (CEPGL, ICGLR, IOC). All organization should designate a focal point to implement their activities content's in the portal.



12th IGAD Summit of Heads of States and Government

SRO-EA attended IGAD Ministerial Conference organized from 11 to 12 June 2008 in Addis Abbaba. The Conference was followed by the 12th Ordinary Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 14th June 2008. On behalf of ECA and the Commission, the Deputy Executive Secretary Ms. Lalla Ben Barka addressed the IGAD Council of Ministers. In her remarks, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka pointed out that the meeting was being held at a time when Africa as a whole is at the brink of further marginalization due to the recent crisis of high oil prices, high food prices, climate change, civil conflicts and unrest in many countries. She noted that the Horn of Africa in this regard, faces many challenges, especially with regard to the insecurity, in addition to floods and droughts that exacerbates the poverty in Africa.



H.E Mesfin Seyoum, Ethiopian Foreign Minister (right) and chairperson of IGAD Council of Ministers during the 27th Ordinary Session of the Council

The ECA Deputy Executive Secretary informed the Council that ECA Subregional Offices had become privileged partners of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and effective channels for the provision of required support from ECA programmes. She further reported that ECA and IGAD Secretariat had developed a Multi-year programme to enhance IGAD capacity in industrial sector, tourism, food security, environment protection, ICT harmonization of policies and development strategies. She expressed the hope that the deliberation on the Council will advance the cause of regional integration so as to exploit the huge potential that

exists in the region for all the people of IGAD to enjoy in peace and security.

The IGAD Summit reviewed the political and security situation in the region and received briefs by the President of Sudan on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The Presidents of the Republic of Djibouti and of Somalia briefed respectively the Summit on the situation at the Djibouti-Eritrea border and on the political and security situation in Somalia and the nation reconciliation efforts underway in that country in the Horn of Africa.

During the IGAD Summit, the Heads of States and Government discussed the IGAD programs and the revitalization of the Organisation. In regard to the revitalization of the Organization, IGAD Secretariat was directed to undertake an inventory of what has been achieved so far in terms of harmonization and regional integration, and make recommendations on the way forward. The summit directed the Secretariat to develop and implement regional integration policies and programmes to make IGAD relevant as a building bloc of the African Economic Community. The Summit also decided to call for an extra-ordinary council of ministers or another Summit of Heads of States and Government to discuss the way forward before the end of 2008.

The Summit of IGAD had discussions on the current high food price crisis in the region, the financial situation of IGAD, the membership of Eritrea in IGAD, etc.

The Summit approved the recommendation of the session of the IGAD Council of the Ministers and appointed Eng. Mahboub M. Maalim as New Executive Secretary of IGAD.

The Summit approved the recommendations of the 27th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and appointed Eng. Mahboub M. Maalim as new Executive Secretary of IGAD.

Globalization and Regional integration: the future of the Indian Ocean Commission

From 4 to 6 March 2008, the Government of Seychelles organized, in Victoria, an IOC Conference with the theme “ **Globalization and Regional integration: the future of the Indian Ocean Commission** ”. The IOC Conference was attended by several Member States of the region, international organizations and donors as



well as representatives from different economic sectors, including marine and air sectors for which two workshops were held. SRO-EA was also represented.

The participants unanimously re-affirmed that the IOC is the most appropriate organization that can defend the interests of Island States within the framework of sub-regional bodies and in this regard its role as an active player in facilitating economic and commercial cooperation should be revived. The IOC is supposed to bridge digital, air and marine related gaps and contribute to the opening-up of the region, in close consultation with regional private sector organizations.



President James Michel of Seychelles, the Former General secretary of the COI and participants during the opening ceremony of the conference

Mainly focusing on the future of the IOC, the institutional workshop recommended building the technical capacities of the Secretariat General, which are required for the internalization of development projects in view to sustain their achievements. It also suggested creating an economic and commercial unit aimed at defending the islands' interests.

The Conference raised awareness on the fact that the IOC is at the risk of disappearing due to lack of capacities to meet raised expectations. In order to avoid this situation, its secretariat has to be promptly equipped with the required means to fulfill its mission.

Cross border traders hold their general assembly in Lusaka

Hundreds of cross border traders from COMESA and the SADC region held their general assembly at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka from 13th June 2008 for two days. The general assembly was attended by several traders belonging to the COMESA/SADC Cross Border Traders Association.

Acting COMESA Secretary General Ambassador Nagla EL Hussainy who officially opened the meeting noted that COMESA's vision to fully integrate the region's economies has been strengthened by the establishment of the combined cross border association. Ambassador EL-Hussainy also noted that the Trader's Association would go a long way in fulfilling COMESA's vision of eradicating poverty in the sub-region since the association is one of the driving forces of regional trade at grass root level.

She pointed out that the desire of the people of COMESA is to eradicate poverty through deeper integration which will help provide conditions that will make possible the fulfilment of their potential with gainful employment, good education and sustainable economic and social prosperity.

Ambassador Hussainy commended the Association for embarking on sensitization programmes in the areas of education, immigration, customs, HIV/AIDS and anti-drug trafficking. The Association has over one thousand members across the region.

Rwanda hosted 1st EAC Investment Conference

The East African Community (EAC) organized its 1st Investment Conference from 26 to 28 June 2008 in Kigali (Rwanda).



The theme of the Conference was "*leveraging the East African Market through Trade and Investment*" and the conference was designed to highlight the region's potential as a commercial platform for servicing the African Continent. It attracted over 1,000 participants including leading business executives from around the world and other important business stakeholders.

The Investment Conference was held alongside the ninth session of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of EAC and was attended by the Presidents of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

At the opening ceremony, the Ugandan President, Y.K.Museveni underscored the importance of the private sector in addition to peace and security, infrastructure and appropriate tax measures and incentives as some of the key factors to improving the business climate in East Africa. Liberalisation of the currency and capital markets and expeditious commercial justice were other measures cited for the improvement of the business climate.



visitors that his country is safe and their investments are secure. President Kibaki also stressed the need for harmonizing policies in the energy sector, especially in areas of generation and distribution of electricity so as to enhance and attract investment in the East African region.

President Kagame of Rwanda who took over the reigns as Chairperson of ECA urged the Community leaders to act quickly to curb the problems of delays at borders which he said escalated costs of doing business. He proposed that the borders be opened twenty four hours a day so as to reduce costs arising from waiting and also to reduce other obstacles like excessive weighbridges that encourage corruption.

Rwanda and Burundi only joined the EAC in June 2007. The two countries are also due to join the EAC Customs Union by 2009.

News From the UNCT

Ambassadors reviewed progress made on UN reform in Rwanda



Ambassador Paul Kavanagh (right) with the UN Resident Coordinator Aurélie Agbénonci during a press conference in Kigali

H.E Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the UN, and H.E Ambassador Paul Kavanagh, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN visited Rwanda from 27 to 29 May 2008. Both ambassadors have been appointed by the President of the General Assembly to work towards an agreement on ways to implement greater unity across the United Nations development activities. One central aspect is the Delivering as One reform at country level and assessing progress so far particularly in the eight Delivering as One Pilot countries, of which Rwanda is one.

Rwanda was selected as a pilot country for the Delivering as One reform in January 2007 upon request by the Rwandan Government. Other pilot countries are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Uruguay.

The objective of their visit to Rwanda was to assess progress being made on the UN reform in Rwanda where One UN Programme has been signed by UN Agencies including UNECA in November 2007 and implementation started from January 2008. They also took a bottom-up approach to their consultations seeking to focus on the obstacles and challenges faced by the UN agencies in the process of making the UN more coherent and fully aligned to the national priorities set out in the EDPRS.

During their two day visit, both Ambassadors had discussions with UN Resident Coordinator in Rwanda, the UN Country Team, members of civil society and development partners. They also met with high-level Government representatives and discussed the reform underway with the Rwanda Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister of Rwanda.

Before coming to Rwanda, Ambassador Mahiga and Ambassador Kavanagh also visited Mozambique, Cape Verde, Vietnam and Tanzania earlier this year.

The One UN Programme in Rwanda is an EDPRS (Economic development Poverty Reduction Strategy) based programme and is being implemented through six thematic Groups covering (a) Governance; (b) HIV; (c) Health and Population; (D) Education; (E) Environment and (f) Sustainable Growth and Social Protection.

The One Programme consists of all UN agencies activities in the country. Those Agencies are UNECA, FAO, IFAD, ILO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, WFP, WHO as well as UNV Programme.

New UN Resident Coordinator in Rwanda



Mr. Aurélien Agbénonci of Benin is from April 21st 2008 the new UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Rwanda. In his position as UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Agbénonci will lead the UN Country Team and the implementation of the "Delivering as One" UN Reform in Rwanda. Rwanda is one of eight Delivering as One UN pilot countries in the world.



eight Delivering as One UN pilot countries in the world. At the time of his appointment to Rwanda Mr. Agbénonci was UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative in Congo Brazzaville. Prior to his appointment in Congo, he was the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Côte d'Ivoire.

Meeting on Census Planning and data processing for the 2010 round of population and housing census, Kigali-Rwanda

Staff News

New staff member in SRO-EA



Daya Bragante is a new staff member in SRO-EA of UNECA in charge of Environment, Food Security and Sustainable Development.

Before joining SRO-EA, Ms. Daya worked at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a Project Management Officer in the Land Degradation Unit of UNEP's Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination (DGEF). She was actively involved in the development and implementation of various projects funded by GEF, focusing on sustainable land management. She has been developing and implementing projects involving different countries in the world with a special focus on Africa.

Prior to UNEP, Ms. Daya worked as a consultant in the Ministry of Environment of Djibouti where she led the preparation of the National Environment Action Plan. She also worked on the Blue Plan for the Mediterranean and the Economic Department of the French Embassy in Spain on environmental policy frameworks and economics in Mediterranean countries. Djibouti is her birth country as well as the place of her family residence, and she is also a French and Italian citizen.

Upcoming Events

9-10 September 2008 : Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on Measures to Enhance the Functioning of the Regional Consultation Mechanism of United Nations Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa towards Accelerating the Implementation of NEPAD and the UN-AU Cooperation Programme, Kigali (Rwanda)

11-12 September 2008 : Cluster Meeting of ICGLR on Economic Development and Regional Integration, Kigali-Rwanda

22-26 September 2008 : Ad-hoc Experts Group

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