

News from the Commission

ECA helps promote ICTs at WSIS summit



ECA coordinated Africa's position at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which took place in Tunis from 16 to 18 November. Thousands of people - including heads of state and government, civil society organizations and representatives of the private/public sectors - attended the meeting which was aimed at promoting an inclusive information society, in continuation of the first WSIS meeting in Geneva two years ago. The summit took decisions on ensuring internet security and improving financial mechanisms to support ICT in developing countries. It also examined ways of bridging the digital divide and improving internet governance. ECA organized various events, including panel discussions. The African Regional Action Plan was launched, which highlights the

continent's involvement in ICT issues. It will have political leadership from the African Union and technical support from ECA. ECA's Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh noted that African ministers now constituted a strong advocacy group to champion ICT issues in their own countries as well as collectively on the continent. [click here for more on WSIS http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/281105disd_dna.htm and interview with Abdoulie Janneh http://www.uneca.org/aisi/wsis2005/janneh_interview.htm]

Defining negotiating positions for WTO talks

ECA, along with the African Union's Permanent Mission in Geneva, jointly organized a retreat for African envoys and Geneva-based negotiators aimed at defining development benchmarks for the WTO trade ministers' meeting in Hong Kong in December. At the retreat, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, ECA made presentations on its work through the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC). These included agriculture, rules regarding regional trade agreements and non-agriculture market access (NAMA).

Trade ministers meet in Arusha

The outcome of the Lausanne meeting formed the basis of discussions for the African Union's Conference of trade ministers held in Arusha, Tanzania from 21-24 November. Ministers held talks on negotiating positions for the forthcoming WTO ministerial conference and discussed development measures critical to African countries. In their final statement, the ministers said the WTO talks should be inclusive and transparent. They stressed the need for a "balanced and fair" outcome, and expressed concern over failures to deliver tangible results on development issues. They adopted the Arusha Development Benchmarks for the WTO ministerial conference [click here: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/documents/AU_Arusha_Development_Benchmarks.pdf]

New Publications



National Councils for Sustainable Development in Africa: A Review of Institutions and their Functioning

http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/documents/ncsd_book.pdf



Review of the Application of Environmental Impact Assessment in Selected African Countries

http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/documents/EIA_book_final_sm.pdf

ECA's Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh, in a statement read out on his behalf at the Arusha meeting, warned ministers that scaling back expectations for the Hong Kong talks would be a setback for completing trade negotiations by the end of 2006. He underlined the need to keep to the original aims of the Doha Development Agenda and ensure that the interests of African countries were properly addressed. [click here for full text: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Speeches/Janneh/2005/211105_speech_janneh.htm]

Executive Secretary attends African finance ministers meeting

Mr Janneh also attended a meeting of African finance ministers in Tunis, aimed at seeking a common position on various issues affecting regional economic development. The meeting was organized by the African Development Bank and also brought together representatives of the AU and regional economic organizations. Participants looked at debt cancellation initiatives, the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and discussed trade policies ahead of the Hong Kong talks. According to an ADB report, they urged the African Union, the ECA and the ADB to provide coordinated support to African countries in building up their negotiating capacity. They also emphasized the importance of strengthening co-ordination between the Bank, the African Union, the NEPAD Secretariat and African regional economic organizations.

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Development Briefs

ADB launches African statistics journal

The African Development Bank has launched an 'African Statistical Journal' devoted to promoting an understanding of statistics in African development. The Journal will be published twice a year in both English and French. The document, which was launched in Kampala, Uganda, will also serve as a convenient statistical reference tool, the ADB said. "The Journal is meant to be a forum not only for exchanging ideas on statistics but, as importantly, for supporting and advancing the cause of sustainable and equitable development in Africa," ADB President Donald Kaberuka said in the foreword to the first edition. Noting that development efforts in Africa are compounded by a dearth of reliable and timely data, Kaberuka expressed the hope that the Journal - together with the various ADB programmes aimed at building statistical capacity on the continent - will enable African countries to address this critical issue.

[On 18 November, the continent celebrated African Statistics Day. Led by ECA, the day was devoted to the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. Click here for ECA audio package: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/major_eca_websites/broadcasting4development/webcasts.asp]

IMF to stop giving money to Uganda

The IMF says Uganda's economy has improved to such an extent that it no longer qualifies for aid from the multilateral organization. Following a review, the IMF decided it would not offer financial support after the current package expires at the end of this year, but would provide support and advice on reforms. According to the BBC, the IMF's senior representative in Uganda Peter Allum said the country was "at the forefront of its class and in the vanguard of the low income countries".

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Upcoming Events

1 December – World Aids Day (global)

4-9 December - 14th International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (Abuja, Nigeria)

7 December – Launch of the State of Food and Agriculture 2005 (FAO, Rome)

14 December – Launch of State of the World's Children Report 2006 (UNICEF, London)