

News from the Commission

Africa should boost internal trade, says Janneh

African countries should use the Doha Round stalemate to increase intra-African trade for the sustainable development of the continent, according to ECA Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh.



Addressing SADC leaders in Maseru, Lesotho, he stated that if other countries were reluctant to open up their markets to Africa, "let us do it for ourselves". "Let neighbouring countries buy more from and sell more to each other," he said. He added that the "renewed" ECA would focus more vigorously on the specific needs of the Regional Economic Commissions "through a region-specific, multi-year partnership strategy with clear milestones". [click here for Janneh speech: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/janneh/2006/081806.htm]

ECA's new statistics centre hosts ECOWAS meeting

ECA hosted a meeting of statistics officials from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Aimed at boosting statistical capacity in the region, the meeting is the first to be held since ECA launched its new African Centre for Statistics (ACS) in a reorganiza-

tion drive. [click here: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/policy_analysis/statistics/main.htm]

WHO hosts African health ministers

The World Health Organisation held a weeklong meeting for African health ministers at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa. In a report to ministers, WHO's Africa region director Dr Luis Sambo noted that efficient knowledge management and better use of information and communication technology could help Africa overcome the digital divide, strengthen its health systems and improve health outcomes.

Ethiopia to upgrade IT facilities with ECA help

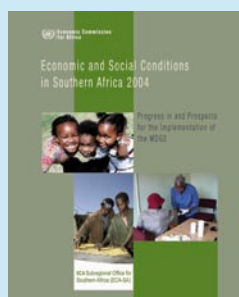
ECA is helping the Ethiopian customs authorities to upgrade their IT facilities. The programme, which is divided into three phases, has been running for more than a year. The first phase, which has just ended, is aimed at building the skills of customs officers in supporting

computer hardware, operating systems and networking. The second phase is intended to improve skills in web, database and application development technologies, while the third phase will introduce IT project management and geoinformation services (GIS) tools for better tracking of goods and services.

ECA and NEPAD agree on cooperation framework

ECA and the NEPAD Secretariat have agreed on a broad framework to guide future collaboration between the two organizations in a more structured and systematic manner. The agreement followed an official visit to ECA headquarters late last month by Dr Hespina Rukato, Deputy Chief Executive of NEPAD Secretariat, and Trade Coordinator Karim Khalil. The two organizations said the framework would be guided by the pursuit of a common African vision through implementation of the NEPAD agenda. The framework is likely to be developed into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by heads of both organizations.

New Publication



"Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on smallholder agriculture, food security and rural livelihoods in southern Africa". [click here: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/srdc/sa/publications/HIV-AIDSandAgriculture.pdf]

"The Statistical estimation of poverty duration and transitions in Zambia". [click here: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/srdc/sa/publications/Statistical-Estimation.pdf]

"Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa 2004" [click here: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/srdc/sa/publications/SRO_SA_Survey2004.pdf]

Development Briefs

AIDS conference hears calls for speedier access to ARV drugs

The 16th International AIDS conference in Toronto, which brought together some 26,000 participants, ended with a call to quicken the pace of HIV prevention, and care and treatment programmes. According to UNAIDS, an estimated 39 million worldwide were infected by the disease at the end of 2005. Participants at the conference called for urgent access to antiretroviral treatment, particularly for people in low- and middle-income countries. Speakers noted that despite increased momentum over the past few years, “the slow pace of progress has led to growing impatience”. They said millions of people worldwide needed immediate access to the antiretroviral drugs.

Government role vital for provision of basic services - Oxfam

The aid agency Oxfam has stressed the role of governments in improving basic services in poor countries. It says that although private contracts can help, they cannot supplant government efforts. Aid programmes by rich countries, which

encourage private supplies of water for example, have a tendency to deprive the poorest sections of society. Oxfam called for long-term and predictable aid to keep public services functioning.

African countries slam IMF reform plan

African countries at the IMF have criticized plans to give non-African poor countries a bigger say in the organization. According to a BBC report, the IMF is due to discuss a package, drawn up by its managing director Rodrigo de Rato that would raise the profile of China, Mexico, South Korea and Turkey. Africa’s IMF delegates said this would mean a delay in proposals to expand the role played by the world’s poorest countries, many of them African. They have called on the UK and other rich countries to force a change in the proposed reform plan.

Better policies could stamp out waterborne diseases, expert says

An expert on waterborne diseases says they could be eliminated if aid agencies step up efforts to tackle them, and African governments regulate the development of water resources more tightly. According to the SciDev.Net website, Prof Alan Fenwick of Imperial College London noted that major dam-building and irrigation projects in Africa had led to “spectacular” increases in diseases such as bilharzia and malaria. “The recent progress in control of waterborne and vector-borne diseases ... suggests that many of them could be controlled effectively by 2015 which is the target for reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals,” Fenwick was quoted as saying.

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Upcoming Events

- 6 September - Launch of State of the World Population Report 2006 (UNFPA)
- 8 September – International Literacy Day (UNESCO)
- 16 September – International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer (UNEP)
- 18 September – High level meeting on least developed countries (General Assembly)
- 21 September – International Day of Peace
- 21 September – Launch of Economic Development Report in Africa 2006 (UNCTAD)