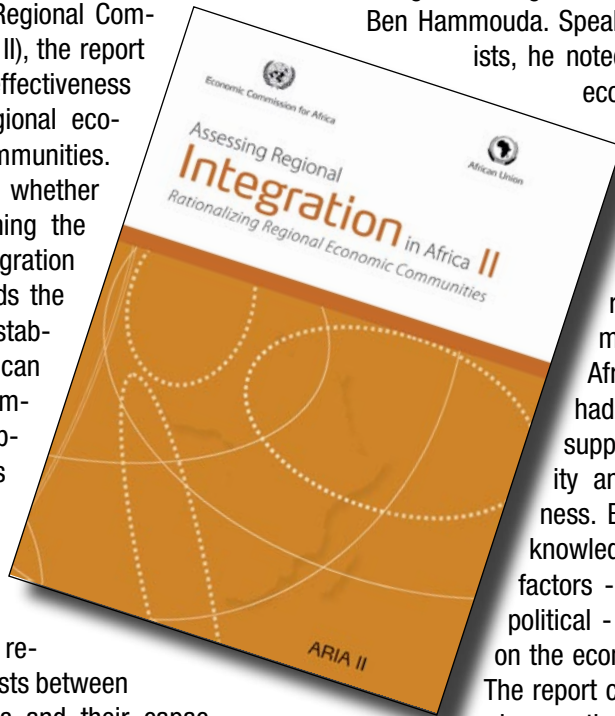


News from the Commission

ECA issues second regional integration report

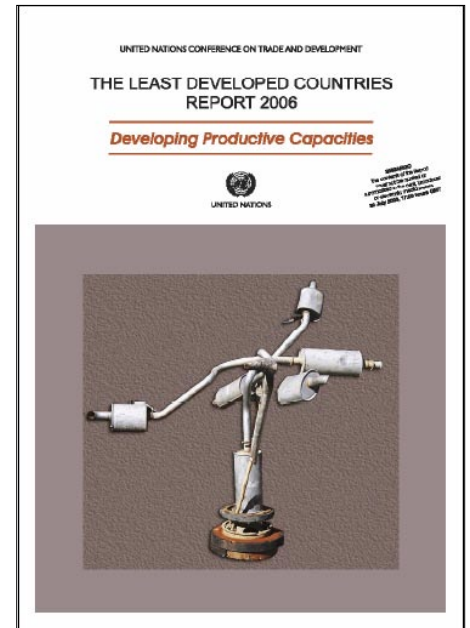
The second report on regional integration in Africa was jointly launched by ECA and the African Union during the AU summit in Banjul, Gambia. Entitled 'Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II – Rationalising Regional Communities (ARIA II)', the report looks at the effectiveness of Africa's regional economic communities. It assesses whether they are pushing the regional integration agenda towards the objective of establishing an African Economic Community. The publication finds that while the RECs have had some successes, a substantial resource gap exists between their mandates and their capacity to deliver. Furthermore, many RECs are pursuing similar mandates. There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the RECs and harmonise their programmes, the report concludes. [click here for report www.uneca.org/aria2]

Addressing the AU gathering, ECA's Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh pledged his organisation's commitment to the specific needs of the RECs, through enhanced partnerships with each economic community. He also said that ECA's sub-regional offices would be strengthened to boost this effort. [click here for full speech: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/janneh/2006/010706_speech_abdoulie_janneh.htm]



'Least Developed Countries Report 2006' launched at ECA HQ

The 'Least Developed Countries Report 2006', produced by UNCTAD, was launched in Addis Ababa by ECA's trade and regional integration director, Hakim Ben Hammouda. Speaking to journalists, he noted that in Africa economic growth could not be sustained because it relied on external, rather than domestic factors. Africa, he said, had to improve supply, productivity and competitiveness. But he also acknowledged that other factors - many of them political - had an impact on the economic situation. The report called for developing national productive capacities in the LDCs as a way of sustaining economic growth



and stemming poverty. It defined these capacities as resources, entrepreneurial capability and production linkages. "Without the development of their productive capacities, more and more LDCs will face recurrent, complex humanitarian emergencies," the report warned. [click here for article: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/200706unctad_launch.htm and here for report overview: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/ldc2006overview_en.pdf]

New Publication



New story on ECA's MDGs webmagazine: "Has Gleneagles brought Africa closer to meeting the MDGs?" [click here: <http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/Story4july06.asp>]

New website - ECA in the APRM. The website explains the African Peer Review Mechanism and explains ECA's contribution. [Click here: <http://www.uneca.org/aprm/>]

Assessing Regional Integration in Africa II – Rationalising Regional Communities [click here: www.uneca.org/aria2]

Development Briefs

African food aid should be rethought - Oxfam

The aid agency Oxfam called for an overhaul of the way food aid is delivered to Africa. In a report entitled "Causing Hunger: An Overview of the Food Crisis in Africa", it said emergency assistance was often inadequate, arriving too late, while the fundamental causes of hunger were left largely unaddressed. "Although food aid can play an important role in emergencies and save lives, it should not be viewed as the inevitable default response to food insecurity, particularly where poverty is the main cause of hunger," the report noted. "Other innovative solutions – such as cash transfers, food vouchers or cash-for-work programmes – may be more appropriate." It said the root causes of hunger must be tackled, including poverty, unfair global trade rules, conflict, HIV/AIDS, climate change and bad governance. [Click here for report: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/bp91_hunger.htm]

Trade talks collapse in Geneva

WTO trade talks collapsed in Geneva after negotiators failed to reach agreement on reducing farm subsidies and tariffs. Many trade experts blamed the US for what was perceived as an inflexible position in reducing subsidies to its own farmers, while demanding higher tariff cuts from developing countries. "We must now look to the

future for global trade - which remains a central element in the fight against poverty," said the charity ActionAid. "There must now be root-and-branch reform of the WTO if it is to be a force for good in the world, rather than a forum for the rich to exploit the poor." Some campaigners hailed the failure of the talks. Friends of the Earth said this was now an opportunity to review the multilateral trading system in its entirety. "The collapse of these talks is good news," it said. "The proposals on the table had been driven by certain governments attempting to put the commercial interests of corporations before the needs of workers, farmers, and the global environment."

G8 criticised for "downplaying" fight against poverty

Leaders from the G8 group of industrialized nations wrapped up their summit in the Russian town of St Petersburg with a pledge to extend the global trade talks until mid-August. But Africa fell down the list of agenda items, and charity organizations said the G8 had failed to live up to its promises on trade and aid. "By downplaying the fight against poverty, the G8 ignored the world's most critical crisis, one that will kill 11 million children by the time they next meet," said Oxfam. It accused the G8 of "dragging its feet" on Africa and called for the continent to be "top of the agenda" at next year's summit in Germany.

African brain drain discussed

Ministers from 58 African and European countries met in Rabat, Morocco for talks aimed at curbing the brain drain from Africa. The first ever Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development approved an action plan in a bid to retain skilled workers in Africa. Measures included developing networks between scientists and research institutions, training courses for young African professionals, and incentives to return home after studying abroad. To this end, the plan called for creating "regional centres of excellence" in Africa.

Wolfowitz says Africa his top priority

World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz said Africa remained his number one development priority. Speaking in the Nigerian capital Abuja during a tour of African countries, he noted that sub-Saharan Africa stood in sharp contrast to the rest of the developing world with the number of people in extreme poverty doubling over the past two decades. He highlighted a number of reasons, including disease and governance. "Bad policy gets in the way of the private sector," he said, stressing that private enterprise was the way to create jobs and opportunities for people. But he praised anti-corruption efforts on the continent, saying there had been a "dramatic" change for the better. And he commended Mozambique and Rwanda in particular for achieving sustained economic growth.

Upcoming Events

9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous People [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – DESA]

12 August – International Youth Day [DESA]

31 August – Launch of the Trade and Development Report 2006 (UNCTAD, Geneva)

Click on www.uneca.org for more information on these stories.