

## News from the Commission

### ECA Conference of Ministers Ministers agree to step up job creation

The annual Conference of African Finance, Planning and Economic Development Ministers, hosted by ECA, ended in Burkina Faso with a pledge to boost employment prospects on the continent. The ministers – who met in the capital Ouagadougou from 14-15 May – agreed to strengthen statistical capability, noting that a lack of reliable data hindered effective employment policies and the ability to track progress in job creation. They also noted the importance of regional partnerships and tasked ECA with taking the lead in developing and coordinating data-related activities on the continent. [click here for ministerial statement [http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/ministerial\\_statement.htm](http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/ministerial_statement.htm) and conference website: <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/>]

### ECA's reform plan gets go-ahead

The conference also endorsed a reform exercise, introduced by ECA's new Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh, entitled "Repositioning ECA to better respond to Africa's priorities". The initiative is aimed at enhancing ECA's support for the regional integration agenda and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. To this end it envisages much closer cooperation with the African Union and African Development Bank to avoid duplication of efforts. [click here for further information: [http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/docs/repositioning\\_eca.htm](http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/docs/repositioning_eca.htm)]

### Infrastructure void holding back development

The conference was held back to back with the African Development Bank's annual meeting, and a jointly organized ministerial round table addressed the challenges of infrastructure development on the continent. Speakers noted that infrastructure remained the "missing component" in Africa's development strategy, and participants looked at ways to tackle this void,

including private sector investment. [click here: [http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/news\\_infrastructure%20\\_missing\\_component.htm](http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2006/news_infrastructure%20_missing_component.htm)]

### African Governance Forum debates APRM

ECA co-hosted the Sixth African Governance Forum in the Rwandan capital Kigali, which looked at the challenges of implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The event was attended by Rwandan President Paul Kagame and his Burkina Faso counterpart, Blaise Compaore. At the closing session, both leaders remarked that the continent's development depended primarily on the African people, and that the APRM had a crucial role to play in this development. Participants called for a speedier implementation of the mechanism – which is voluntary- and queried its sustainability whenever there was a change of leadership. Better advocacy regarding the APRM was also mooted. [click here: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_programmes/development\\_policy\\_management/news/05122006dna\\_dpmd.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/development_policy_management/news/05122006dna_dpmd.htm)]

In an address read out to the Forum, ECA's Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh said the APRM was not a pipe dream but a "living reality, woven into the African governance agenda". [click here for full speech: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/Speeches/Janneh/2006/050906\\_speech\\_Abdoulie\\_Janneh.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Speeches/Janneh/2006/050906_speech_Abdoulie_Janneh.htm)]

### Access to energy crucial for poverty reduction

ECA drew attention to the fact that without more access to energy sources, Africa was unlikely to meet key MDGs. Addressing an ener-

gy meeting in Addis Ababa (UN Energy/Africa), the head of ECA's Sustainable Development Division, Josue Dione, noted the widely-held view that without energy, most development programmes would be in vain. In this regard, he stressed that ECA would focus on improving access to energy sources by rural populations. [click here: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_programmes/sdd/news/05242006dna.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/news/05242006dna.htm)]

### More financing needed to meet MDGs, says Janneh

ECA's Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh reiterated the need for job creation in an address to an African ministerial conference on financing for development, held in Abuja, Nigeria. He noted that additional financing was necessary to diversify economies leading to broad-based growth and more jobs. He also said extra financing was needed to provide regional public goods and thus promote regional integration. This would help speed up Africa's ability to meet the MDG targets, he pointed out. He cautioned however that increased aid flows meant that Africa had to boost the efficiency of systems and strategies. [click here for full speech: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/Speeches/Janneh/2006/210506\\_speech\\_Abdoulie\\_Janneh\\_Abuja.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Speeches/Janneh/2006/210506_speech_Abdoulie_Janneh_Abuja.htm) and here for ECA's MDGs webmag: <http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/>]

### E-learning conference hears calls for better use of ICTs

Speakers at an e-learning conference at ECA headquarters called for better use of ICTs in Africa in a bid to improve education and thus development. ECA's acting deputy Executive →

### New Publication



**Strengthening Internal Accountability in the Context of Programme-based Approaches – A study presented by an ECA staff member on the ways and means of delivering aid which make African governments more accountable to donors than to their own people, thus undermining emerging democracies and institutions. [click here: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_programmes/development\\_policy\\_management/publications/Publishedpaper\\_Mzwanele\\_Mfunwa.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/development_policy_management/publications/Publishedpaper_Mzwanele_Mfunwa.pdf)]**

## Development Briefs

### Africa not benefiting from improved global performance

A report by the Economist Intelligence Unit says that Africa is deriving little benefit from the factors driving an improved global performance in reducing poverty. It predicts that by 2015 – the target date for the MDGs - sub-Saharan Africa will have a poverty rate of about 38 percent, nearly three times that of South Asia which is the next poorest region. It lists the main factors as faster economic growth, improved economic and business climate policies, increased foreign aid and debt relief. According to the EIU, trade will help more than aid. But, it also states that “rather than demanding more aid, debt relief and trade concessions, African policy-makers would do better to focus on eradicating domestic obstacles to development”.

An OECD report concurs, saying that despite African economies growing at their fastest rate in 30 years, they are still at the mercy of volatile commodity prices and global markets.

### ADB to improve structures and policies

The ADB held its annual meetings in Ouagadougou, pledging to build on its strength as a “financially solid and relevant institution”. According to its president Donald Kaberuka, the Bank would accelerate efforts to improve its structure, policies and procedures across the board and maintain the highest standards in its operations.

“The Bank must avoid the risk of overstretch, mission creep, lack of focus and dissipation of its efforts unproductively across a wide range of issues and focus on what it is best suited to do and in those areas where it can build excellence and synergies with other actors,” he said, according to an ADB press release.

### Africa “turning a corner”, says ADB chief

Ahead of the meeting, Kaberuka told journalists that Africa was “turning a corner” in terms of growth. He said the continent had registered an average economic growth of five percent in 2005, with oil and mineral producing countries growing at an average eight percent and the non-oil producing countries registering growth rates of about 4.5 percent. “On balance, it is our assessment that economic reforms in the past years are beginning to bear fruit,” he stated. “So the message we shall be passing to our governors is that we are turning the corner but the road ahead is quite long for us to be able to perform in a manner that will get us close to the Millennium Development Goals.”

### Universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment “just a slogan”

An independent report on HIV/AIDS has warned that many developing countries will fail to meet the goal of near universal

access to HIV/AIDS treatment by 2010. The report, by the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) – a group of 700 activists from around the world – looks at six countries hardest hit by the pandemic, three of them in Africa: Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. “Today, universal access is just a slogan,” said Fatima Hassan, author of the South African chapter. “It cannot be achieved unless we have a coordinated strategy with adequate funding and management... So far the international community has gone out of its way to avoid setting an explicit global treatment target.” The report, released ahead of the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (31 May-2 June 2006), details actions needed at national and international level to turn the promises into reality. (Full report available at [www.aidstreatmentaccess.org](http://www.aidstreatmentaccess.org).)

### E-learning...

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Secretary Josephine Ouedraogo noted however that Africa had to overcome challenges such as limited infrastructure and lack of expertise to develop and support applications and systems. “These challenges, if left unchecked, can create greater digital gaps between countries and within countries,” she warned. [For more on ECA’s work with the Africa Learning Network (ALN) click here: [www.uneca.org/disd](http://www.uneca.org/disd)

For conference information, click here: [www.elearning-africa.com](http://www.elearning-africa.com) ]

## Upcoming Events

- 31 May-2 June – UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
- 31 May-2 June: World Economic Forum on Africa (Johannesburg)
- 5 June – World Environment Day (UNEP)
- 5 -8 June - LDC’s ministerial meeting (Cotonou)
- 16 June – Day of the African Child (UNICEF)
- 18-22 June – 5th General Meeting of Poverty and Economic Policy Research Network (ECA, Addis Ababa)
- 19 June – World Urban Forum (UN-Habitat)
- 20 June – World Refugee Day (UNHCR)
- 28-29 June - AU Council of Ministers meeting (Banjul)