

News from the Commission

Bid to boost African statistics capability

A workshop hosted by ECA in Addis Ababa was aimed at boosting efforts to help Africa meet international goals and standards in the field of statistics. Gaps in compiling, analyzing and disseminating statistics on the continent reduce the capacity to formulate suitable policies. This workshop, for English-speaking countries, was key in helping states design and implement their national strategies by the end of 2006. A similar workshop for French-speaking countries will be held in October.

Journalist training on ICT issues

A “training of trainers” workshop for francophone African journalists was held in Yaounde, Cameroon, aimed at increasing awareness of ICT issues. The event, structured around ECA’s “African Information Society Initiative (AIS) Media Training Module”, covered topics such as ICT policy development, infrastructure development, intellectual property rights and content development. Discussions also focused on integrating the issues into journalism curricula and developing new course work. [For more information and for testing out the media module online, contact Mercy Wambui mwambui@uneca.org or click here <http://www.uneca.org/DISD>].

For more information on these stories please go to the ECA website: www.uneca.org

Development News

Warning over high oil prices

ECA’s Augustin Fosu warned that soaring oil prices could be disastrous for African economies. In an interview with Reuters news agency, Fosu – who heads the Economic and Social Policy Division – said it was likely global growth would be reduced which would cut export demand for African goods. He added that many African countries could also be forced to reallocate funds away from crucial development projects to cope with a high oil budget.

[Click here for full story: http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2005-08-26T150349Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-214030-1.xml]

Food crisis in Niger

Devastating food shortages gripped the West African state of Niger, just weeks after the G8 summit in Scotland pledged debt cancellation and more aid. Over a third of the population was affected, despite the fact that the looming crisis had been predicted last year due in part to locust infestations and failed harvests. However the picture is more complex. Analysts say the problem is also due to the soaring price of food as neighbouring countries, particularly Nigeria, have been buying up grain in the region. And higher cereal costs mean pastoralists have had to sell livestock, driving down prices and reducing their

Looking Ahead:

The 2005 World Summit takes place in New York from 14-16 September, and is expected to be the biggest gathering ever of world leaders, bringing together more than 170 heads of state and government. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be high on the agenda. ECA will be launching its report ‘The MDGs in Africa: Progress and Challenges’, which will be distributed at the Summit. The report looks at progress on the continent, assesses those countries likely to meet all or some of the MDGs, and analyses why many countries in sub-Saharan Africa will not make the deadline. It provides facts and figures to back up the findings, and notes that the MDGs have provided a framework for many national poverty reduction policies as well as restoring human development as a core objective in economic planning.

income still further. Experts say the cost of the emergency response per child was up to 80 times greater than if countries had responded to initial appeals for help.

New CEO for NEPAD

Mozambican agricultural economist Firmino Mucavele has been named as the new chief executive of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), replacing South Africa’s Wiseman Nkuhlu who resigned his post in August. Mucavele, a university professor specialising in African food security, is a founder member of NEPAD’s steering committee.

eca UPDATE

First African e-school launched

NEPAD's initiative to introduce electronic schools throughout the continent came to fruition after the first e-school was launched in the Ugandan village of Busoby. The project aims initially to transform some 600,000 African schools into establishments with internet access and other electronic learning materials. The intention is to transform all high schools within 5 years, and primary schools

Africa Briefs - August

John Garang killed in helicopter crash

Former rebel leader and Sudanese Vice President John Garang was killed when the helicopter he was travelling in crashed on the Sudan-Uganda border, sparking fears that the long-awaited peace deal could unravel. He was returning from talks with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni aboard the latter's military helicopter. Just three weeks earlier, the SPLM leader had been sworn in as the country's vice-president. An investigation into his death is underway. Meanwhile, his deputy Salva Kiir took the oath as Su-

danese vice-president and expressed his commitment to a united Sudan and to continuing Garang's vision.

Military takeover in Mauritania

A military junta toppled the government of President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya viewed by many Mauritians as pro-Western. Despite condemnations by the African Union and other international organizations that the bloodless takeover was "unconstitutional", many Mauritians appeared to support the move. The coup leader, Colonel Ely Mohammed Vall, has pledged to hold elections in two years' time and stated that he was simply heading a caretaker administration.

AU summit sticks to demands on UN reform

African leaders gathered for a summit meeting at the African Union in Addis Ababa to thrash out issues concerning an expanded UN Security Council. They refused to back down on their demands for six new permanent seats with veto-wielding powers – two of which would be for Africa. The AU also wants five new non-permanent seats of which two would also go to Africa. The decision is a blow for Brazil, Germany, Japan and In-

ECA Phone Numbers to Change

Phone numbers for the UN Economic Commission for Africa will change on 17 September 2005, in a major re-numbering exercise by Ethiopian Telecom intended to accommodate the rising number of subscribers.

All fixed and mobile numbers will move from being six, to seven digits, and all area codes will be three digits long, instead of the current two.

For local callers, ECA's main number, currently 01 51-72-00 will become 011 551-7200. For international callers it will be necessary to dial +251-11-551-7200.

To reach ECA's Communication Team, the new local number will be 011 551-5826 or +251 11 551 5826.

The change to each existing number is determined by its first two digits and cannot be derived from any general rule. To convert other ECA numbers already in your contacts list, visit http://www.ethionet.et/num_p.html and check the guide to re-numbering there, available in PDF format or MS Word.

dia – known as the G4 – who want extra seats but minus the veto. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has extended the deadline for members to resolve their differences until Christmas.

Upcoming Events:

2 September – Launch of 2005 UN Trade and Development Report (UNCTAD)

7 September – Launch of 2005 UN Human Development Report (UNDP)

13 September – Launch of 2005 Economic Development in Africa (UNCTAD)

14 September – 2005 World Summit