



AMOAKO HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION AHEAD OF ADF-III

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Addis Ababa, March 03, 2002 (WIC) – The Executive Secretary of the Economic commission for Africa (UNECA) has challenged African leaders to address some of the key issues prior to the realization of the African Union.

In his key note speech to the African Union Symposium at the Africa Hall today, Amoako highlighted some of the areas that participants of the Third African Development Forum ADF-III, will have to deal with in the effort for Africa’s integration.

Today’s symposium, organized by the OAU and the Inter-Africa Group, takes place ahead of ADF-III, which this year takes place under the theme “Defining Priorities for Regional Integration”.

“The importance of a strong and successful African Union, is shared by all. There is a momentum towards integration, that must be nourished effectively. This requires the engagement of leaders, like yourselves”, Amoako said.

Amoako recalled this was at least the fourth time that African leaders have set out very ambitious agendas for integration, the results of which have fallen far short of the expectations, each time.

“If this time, regional integration is to succeed, to the point that we become a true community of nations and economies, we had better be sure, that the designs truly meet the needs of customers: governments, business and civil society”, the ECA Head said.

Abdul Mohamed, Executive Director of the Inter-Africa Group, also lamented the many “false starts” in the last few decades, but said that “things may be different this time around”.

The decision of better governance, improved economic management and for greater democracy, among others, are made because of inescapable pressures that force African countries to come to terms with the collective reality that they are facing, Abdul said.

He added: “the root of Africa’s reentry at the national, and sub-regional and continental level, is recognizing what has gone wrong, and accepting realities”.

The symposium was meant to provide an opportunity to clarify the status, process and objectives of the establishment of the African Union, to obtain input from a range of stakeholders, and chart the way forward.

Speakers scheduled to address the official ADF-III opening ceremony on Monday, 4 March, are Ethiopian Prime Minister Mr. Meles Zenawi, OAU Secretary-General Mr. Amara Essy, and African Development bank President Mr. Omar Kabbaj.

The ADF III brings together a wide spectrum of stakeholders-governments, parliaments, business, finance, labour, civil society, international organizational and the Diaspora, including experts from different part of the world to discuss the milestones, bring clarity to the issues and chart the future of Africa’s regional integration.

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