



ADF III FORWARDS PRIORITIES FOR CHALLENGING AND COMPLEX REGIONAL INTEGRATION TASKS

Addis Tribune, Vendredi 8 mars 2002

www.addistribune.com/Archives/2002/03/08-03-02/ADF.htm

Recognizing the need to focus on defining priorities for regional integration, African Development Forum, ADF III, forwarded ideas and recommendations to deal with challenging and complex regional integration tasks.

Where a wide spectrum of stakeholders from the government, parliaments, businesses, finance, labor, civil society, international organization and the Diaspora have taken part at the conference, the issue of regional integration among all others was top on the agenda for the issue is timely and pertinent for dialogue and building consensus on priority strategic issues for the development of Africa, according to the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

Integration is the premier political and economic challenge that Africans are facing today, Prime Minister Meles said in his opening remark. "At the highest political level in the continent, we have committed ourselves to the maximum practical level of economic and political integration. There can be no other meaning for the constitutive act of the African Union, which we have embraced," Meles said.

The issues involved in regional integration are among the most complete that leaders will face, requiring outstanding thinking and political courage, said K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary, ECA.

"First, I believe we must be sure that our economic integration fosters enterprise at all levels we need for our development," said Mr. Amoako, adding that African government wants to support the informal sector, small and medium sized firms to grown, reduce and eliminate trade based upon corrupt practices and foster trade and investment by large local and international firms that can pursue subregional and regional economies of scale.

The history and prospects for regional integration, assessing economic integration in Africa, integration in other regions, physical integration through infrastructural

development and economic policies for accelerating regional integration, among other issues, were highlighted and discussed by the participants of ADF III.

According to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the conclusions and recommendations of ADF III will be conveyed, through the OAU, to the summit of Heads of state and Government, due to be held in Pretoria, South Africa, in July 2002. "Africa's leaders will be asked to consider the outcomes of ADF III as a contribution towards concretizing the African Union implementation agenda," read a press release from ECA.

ADF III is expected to conclude today.

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