



EASTERN AFRICA

NEWS

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About the Office



The Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA), of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is located in Kigali (Rwanda) and serves 13 countries: *Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda*

Editorial

Shaping policy formulation in Eastern Africa

The end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 saw SRO-EA actively demonstrating commitment to, and facilitating, policy implementation, policy debate as well as capacity building programmes at both sub-regional and national levels on priority areas such as food security and sustainable development, knowledge dissemination, ICT for development (ICT4D), transport and trade facilitation and regional integration.

Content

- **Rwanda hosts a High level meeting on Regional integration and the establishment of a SRCM in Eastern and Southern Africa**
- **SRO-EA holds its 14th Intergovernmental Committee of Experts**
- **EAC Central Banks prepare for the 2012 Monetary Union**
- **One UN: unlocking STI to achieve the MDGs in Rwanda**
- **Addressing the Transport infrastructural challenges**
- **Trade facilitation in Eastern and Southern Africa**

The attestation of this commitment is demonstrable in (1) the organisation of the Annual Consultative Meeting on the implementation of AU/NEPAD' s ICT Programmes in Eastern Africa held in Kigali in December 2009, which helped countries and RECs in the sub-region to adopt harmonized policies and strategies on ICT; (2) the support to the Government of Rwanda with the review of its mining strategic plan; (3) the assistance to EAC Central banks to build their capacity in economic forecasting and modelling in order to be prepared for the upcoming Monetary Union in 2012, and (4) the assistance to RECs to develop and implement a Joint Programme on Food Security for Eastern Africa targeting six pilot countries.



Contained in this newsletter, is a summary of efforts towards policy advocacy and formulation in East Africa by the SRO-EA Team.

Recent Events

1. High-Level policy makers met to discuss regional integration and the establishment of a sub-regional coordination mechanism (SRCM) of UN Agencies

The event brought together high-level representatives of member States of Eastern and Southern Africa, the AUC, RECs, IGOs and Corridor Management Authorities of Eastern and Southern Africa, the UN System organisations, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other stakeholders. The objective of the two-day meeting was to review progress made in regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa and articulate modalities for enhancing coherent coordination and rationalization of the support provided by UN agencies to the programmes and activities of RECs/IGOs through the SRCM.



Opening ceremony

The Sub-regional Offices for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) and Southern Africa (SRO-SA) of the ECA, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, organized from 19 to 20 March 2010 in Kigali, a High-level meeting on regional integration and the establishment of a sub-regional coordination mechanism (SRCM) of UN-wide support to AU and its NEPAD programme in both sub-regions.

In a statement delivered on behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNECA Executive Secretary, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECA, said that regional integration is essential in helping to expand Africa’s economy and presence in world markets. “As Africa tries to integrate itself better into the global trading system, the fact remains that the developing countries which have best



exploited the opportunities of globalization have generally been those having vast markets,” she said.

The High Level Meeting discussed how the UN could reduce fragmentation in its operations at sub-regional level, and increase coherence in coordinating its work in support to RECs. “This High Level Meeting is therefore timely in that it will consider the operational framework within which the UN family will operate, taking into account the realities and priorities of the respective sub-regions” said Ms. Ben Barka.



Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwanda Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation delivering her speech

Speaking on behalf of the host country, Rwandan Minister for East African Affairs, Hon. Monique Mukaruliza said that “African member States should remember that the responsibility for advancing regional integration does not rest with the various Secretariats or RECs, but with themselves”. “The main benefits of regional integration can only be realized if regional integration is mainstreamed in national development plans and strategies and we systematically harmonize...the regional integration agenda with our overall national development plans.” ... she further remarked.

In her welcoming remarks to delegates, H.E. Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwanda’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, called regional integration “a prerequisite for Africa

to uplift the standard of living on the continent, enhance private sector companies’ competitiveness regionally and in the wider international market. Integrated Africa will easily reverse the trend of its shrinking share in world trade and allow the continent to speak with one strong voice,” she said.

The meeting was a chance for stakeholders and others interested in regional integration to have their say on the matter.

The Kigali meeting saw participants approve an outcome statement that provides a road map for the establishment of the SRCM. It defined appropriate strategies to promote regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The representatives made a number of recommendations including that UNECA up-scales its role as the strategic coordinator of the SRCM and the establishment of a multi-agency task force to meet with RECs and IGOs in the two sub-regions. The taskforce will examine the existing multi-year programmes with a view to developing a single multi-partner plan for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Closing the meeting, Minister Mushikiwabo expressed the idea that the regional integration process needs to get out of the conference centres and reach the citizens. “It must be owned by the people affected” said the Rwanda Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. “We need to get our citizens involved ...to take this much closer to the citizens that we serve and make sure they are informed and able to provide their own feedback.”

On the last day, the meeting also featured a spirited public debate on regional integration. “Regional Integration – Have Your Say” was moderated by Mr. Henry Rugamba, a Rwandan television presenter



The six-member panel consisted of representatives of the Rwandan Government, the African Union Commission, COMESA, East African Community (EAC) and ECA. Panelists shared their views on regional integration focusing on how to step up the regional integration process and responded to a variety of questions from the audience made up of stakeholders and the press.

Three factors emerged as essential for quickening the pace and acceptance of regional integration: First was the need for member countries to take better ownership of the process; second, the general public needed to

for regional integration in Eastern Africa is the lack of efficient infrastructure. “You can’t have increased trade, if you don’t have efficient infrastructure like roads, railways and air transport” she said.

Minister Mukaruliza considered Non-Tariff-Barriers (NTBs) as a hindrance to progress and added that removing these NTBs needs big investments. “Our regional integration agenda can only be fruitful if all member countries provide a political will and also receive support from development partners so that we remove these NTBs,” she said. In this context, she cited free movement of persons, labour, production as some of the other benefits.



Debate on regional integration : panel members include representatives from the Rwanda government, AU, COMESA, EAC and the ECA

be more involved and informed about the subject and finally, there needed to be better infrastructure to promote intra-regional trade.

Hon. Monique Mukaruliza, Rwanda Minister in charge of East African Community Affairs, said that political will is an important element to accompany regional integration and noted that one of the biggest challenges

Panellist Stephen Karangizi, Assistant Secretary General of COMESA, said that most regions have good plans and strategies to foster regional integration. The problem lies with the implementation. “Government representatives need to spend less time in meetings and more time in implementing plans at a national level,” he said. “We need to trans-



late those agreements made at regional level into national plans.”

Calling the High Level meeting “unique” Hon. Minister Mushikiwabo said that regional integration is an important part of developing the continent. She stressed that “economic and political integration cannot go smoothly without regional integration.”



Closing session: Minister Mushikiwabo (centre), Minister Mukaruliza (left) and SRO-EA Director Mr. Antonio Pedro

Calling for a change in methodological approach, the AUC representative Mr. Charles Awitor regretted that people on the ground who are the real vectors of regional integration are not invited to big conferences on regional integration. “If we are talking about free movement across the borders the women on the grassroots who carry out the inter-trade should be consulted so that they tell us what problems they encounter,” he said.

Mr. Alloys Mutabingwa, EAC Deputy Secretary General said that understanding the problem of regional integration or its challenge is 50 percent a solution. He added that all countries on the African continent have or share a common problem and risk of doing business. The solution is to have the continent as a one business destination for the rest of the world and that is why regional integration should be given special priority. He said that this is the reason why the East African

Community is expediting the process of integration.

SRO-EA Director Antonio Pedro, called the public debate a contribution to popularising and mainstreaming regional integration. He also pointed out that for ECA, regional integration was not new. In fact, it is part of the organisation’s mandate. “In the 50 years of the existence of the Economic Commission for Africa, regional integration has been our business,” he said. “Africa is making progress that needs to be monitored and successes celebrated. We contribute to this through our policy analysis, capacity building activities and publications such as *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA)*” he concluded.

2. SRO-EA holds its 14th Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE)

The Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, organized from 15 to 18 March 2010 in Kigali (Rwanda) its 14th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) under the theme “**Enhancing Food Security in Eastern Africa**”.

The meeting was an opportunity to assess the level of implementation of the 2008-2009 work programme of the office as well as other statutory matters.

Participants had the opportunity to review a detailed outline of the Joint Programme on Food Security for Eastern Africa. The Eastern African Community (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) are collaborating for the first time in developing and implementing this joint programme building on common priorities



identified in their respective plans, strategies and programmes.

Speaking on behalf of the host country, Hon. Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Rwanda, indicated that “countries in the sub-region know that there is a food security problem—a fact they had been aware of for a long time”. She noted that the main hurdle had been the slow pace of action as well as adoption of mechanisms needed to institute change. In this context, Minister Kalibata urged the ICE meeting to further address existing constraints to food security.

of food insecure people is still very high due to recurrent constraints and challenges linked to agriculture, livestock and fisheries development as well as financial and climate change impacts. In fact, recent FAO statistics illustrate the critical situation in Eastern Africa where “nearly 20 million people are food insecure,” said Mr. Pedro.

Mr. Pedro, further called upon the experts to collectively reflect upon the food security situation, review past initiatives, engage on in-depth discussions on the factors that continue to plague Eastern African countries with the scourge of food insecurity, exchange



Opening: Hon. Agnes Kalibata, Rwanda Minister of agriculture (centre), Mr. Antonio Pedro, SRO-EA Director (left) and Mr. Toussaint Jules Clifford, outgoing 13th ICE chair and representative of Seychelles

As an example, Minister Kalibata noted the lack of storage systems in various countries and urged governments to invest in these systems and encourage agricultural production by ensuring markets for the produce.

experiences and best practices, align policies and strategies, brainstorm on the opportunities that exist to address the problem, and formulate common positions and voice on the matter.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Antonio Pedro, Director of SRO-EA explained that the choice of the 2010 theme on food security was dictated by the fact that food security had become a top priority for member States, RECs and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in the sub-region. Indeed, the number

He finally invited the experts to explore the potential offered by regional integration to address identified challenges.

During the Kigali ICE meeting, three Ad Hoc Expert Group meetings were organised as side events, namely: (1) Economic Forecast-



ing and Modelling for EAC Central Banks; (2) The Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Remittances in Eastern Africa; and (3) The Establishment of a Sub-regional Micro-finance Framework in Eastern Africa.



Overview of participants

In parallel working group sessions, the ICE meeting also considered other issues related to food security namely: (i) Land Policy in Eastern Africa; (ii) Agri-business Development and Promotion of Agro-ecological Zones & Value Chains; and (iii) Environmental Security-as an emerging topic for Food Security.

The four-day event attracted over one hundred (100) participants including representatives from twelve SRO-EA member States. Also in attendance were the following RECs, sub-regional, regional and international organizations: East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), CEPGL, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Transit Transport Coordination Authority-Northern Corridor (TTCA-NC), the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Development Bank of the Great Lakes Countries (BDEGL), the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (TTFA), the New Partnership

for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat, the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA), the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative, the Walvis Bay Corridor Group, the Pan African Agri Business Consultation (PANAAC), the World Agroforestry Centre, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Land Coalition (ILC), the Foundation on Environmental Security and Sustainability (FESS) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Programme on Food Security for Eastern Africa builds on the findings of an exhaustive overview of the food security situation in Eastern Africa targeting a group of four RECs and IGOs including CEPGL, EAC, ICGLR and IGAD as well as six pilot countries namely Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Participants agreed that the Programme should comprise four major components revolving around trade and markets, research and development, sustainable natural resource management and safety nets.



Group session and discussion

The next steps in the finalization of the Programme Document include further consultations with all partners involved with a view to tightening up institutional arrangements, implementation modalities as well as undertaking resource mobilization. It was decided that a validation workshop would also be or-



ganized with all parties concerned to further review and adopt the final Programme Document.



Overview of participants

3. EAC Central Banks to be prepared for 2012 Monetary Union

Organised as a side event to the ICE 2010, the ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting (AEGM) on capacity building in macroeconomic forecasting and modelling for EAC Central Banks took place from 13 to 14 March 2010 in Kigali, Rwanda. This meeting was a response to a request by the national bank of Rwanda and the EAC Secretariat to initiate a stocktaking exercise to evaluate the capacity building needs of ECA Central Banks. In attendance were representatives from central banks of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

In his welcoming statement, Ambassador Claver Gatete, vice-Governor of the Central Bank of Rwanda (BNR) underscored the importance of economic modelling and forecasting for monetary policy. He noted its usefulness in “monitoring where the economy stands and how to make short and long term projections in order to determine what monetary policy to follow.”

On his part, Mr. Antonio Pedro said that achieving monetary union would be neither quick nor easy, and noted that “this is a long and difficult process which will require pa-

ience, tact, expert knowledge and above all ownership and commitment of all key stakeholders involved..”

Organisers explained that the main objective of the proposed training programme was to build the Central Banks ‘capacity to handle quantitative techniques to analyse financial data, understand the mainstream financial models and forecast financial variables. In other words, it aimed to give participants a sound knowledge of key modern econometric techniques commonly used in the finance literature.



Group photo: AEGM on the economic forecasting and modelling for EAC central banks

4. One UN: Unlocking the potential of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to achieve the MDGs in Rwanda

As part of One UN Programme in Rwanda, ECA responded to a request from the government of Rwanda for support with reviewing draft laws on Science and Technology as well as with the formulation of a Sectoral Innovation Strategy and the establishment of an Innovation Endowment Fund.

In this context, UNESCO and UNECA in collaboration with the government of Rwanda jointly organized a workshop on STI and the MDGs in Kigali, from 21-22 January 2010.

This event brought together representatives



from the One UN Family operating in Rwanda, the Rwanda MDG Taskforce, SRO-EA, ISTD and other international cooperation stakeholders as well as representatives of different governmental sectors and national STI institutions.

The objectives of the workshop were two-fold namely to:

- (1) identify concrete actions and simple steps that Rwanda has used and can potentially use to enable STI to contribute to achieving the MDGs and other national development aspirations as outlined in its Development Action Plan called Vision 2020;
- (2) bring together all stakeholders involved in the One UN program to take stock of the achievements, challenges and obstacles faced in integrating STI into national development strategies.



Group photo: workshop participants

During the two-day meeting, several presentations were made and discussions held on existing STI Projects and their impact on Rwanda's Vision 2020. SRO-EA made a presentation on "*ICT and application role in governance enabler technology promoting a global partnership for development*". The presentation focused on how ICT is enabling and facilitating Rwanda's socio-economic development. The ECA representative noted that ICT as a cross-cutting issue is a pertinent tool that impacts on each goal of the MDGs. The presentation stressed the fact that Rwanda's major goal is to transform its cur-

rent agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based economy by year 2020 through the use of:

- Science, Technology and ICT as a key enabler of this transformation;
- ICT capacity building in Rwanda as a tool for improving the lives of the rural poor, reducing poverty, and achieving the MDGs; and
- ICT as a tool for generating wealth and diversifying the economy.

The assessment of the Rwanda STI projects was deemed a timely exercise in terms of evaluating performance by the various stakeholders. It provided an opportunity for an in-depth look into how Rwanda could possibly enhance its objective of attaining the MDGs and other national development goals through the use of STI.

Within the context of delivering as one UN, the initiative was lauded and agreement reached to intensify policy dialogue on STI in Rwanda.

5. Modern and efficient infrastructure needed to unleash the structural transformation of economies in Eastern Africa

Kigali hosted an African Roads & Rail Infrastructure Summit from 22 to 23 April 2010. The event officiated by the Minister of Infrastructure of Rwanda, Vincent Karega, brought together key players on the African transport development scene including representatives from private firms, donor agencies and regulators to discuss how infrastructure development in Africa, mainly roads and rail, can be fast tracked.

In his opening remarks, Minister Vincent Karega urged senior executives from major infrastructural companies as well as decision makers from African governments to im-



prove continental accessibility if development is to be achieved faster.

“We need to invest in the development of long-term master plans for both roads and railway infrastructure and beyond.” said Minister Karega. He added that the meeting was a platform to generate ideas on how to develop Africa’s infrastructure in a bid to achieve country by country development goals as well as promote business growth in the region.

SRO-EA was represented in the event by Mr Antonio Pedro, Director of the Office who made a presentation on “*The Case of Transport and Trade Facilitation in Eastern Africa: Challenges and the Way forward*”. The presentation explored the links between transport facilitation and intra-Africa trade, discussed challenges of transport infrastructure and services development in the sub-region; and outlined opportunities as well as policy and strategic options for expanding transport infrastructure and services.

Talking about trade facilitation, Mr. Pedro stressed that the absence of efficient transport infrastructure and services limited the depth and scope of intra-African trade. “Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest transport cost in the world. Transport costs in Eastern Africa average 30% of the value of exports and imports, which impacts on the competitiveness of the sub-region” noted Mr. Pedro.

He further indicated that the expansion of Africa’s transport infrastructure stock required significant financial resources which most times were not easily accessible to African countries. He suggested the recourse to innovative financial mechanisms as a means to reducing the financing gaps including bartering (through, for example, access to mineral resources rights in host countries), smart capturing and channelling of remittances and domestic savings, and increased use of levies (fuel and road taxes) and infrastructure indexed bonds.

The Summit was an ideal opportunity for networking and business, providing a platform to profile the transport (rail and road) infrastructure sector, exchange ideas, discuss and share information on challenges facing the sector. A highlight was also placed on technologies, innovation, efficiency and expertise for optimised capacity in the rail and road infrastructure.

Deliberations at this Summit culminated in among others, formulation of ideas on what it would take to successfully develop and sustain Africa’s transport infrastructure.

6. Experts meet to discuss transport and trade facilitation in Eastern and Southern Africa

The Joint UNECA/ATPC and Central Corridor Workshop and Study Tour on Transport and Trade Facilitation and the Promotion of Intra-African Trade for the Eastern and Southern African Sub- Regions was organized from 28 to 30 April 2010, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The workshop was also supported by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development of Tanzania and its Ports Authority.

In attendance were representatives of Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The following institutions were also represented: the AUC, AfDB, ECA, COMESA, SADC, EAC, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and several corridor groups in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The workshop was organized specifically with objectives to among others: share best experiences through presentations and a study tour of the Dar es Salaam Port in the implementation of trade facilitation and corridor management programs across the Eastern and Southern African sub-regions; and



identify the challenges and bottlenecks facing trade facilitation within the two sub-regions with a view to proposing solutions to address them.

The workshop deliberated on a number of issues pertaining to transport and trade facilitation, including challenges affecting the promotion of trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, and took note of efforts being deployed by the RECs and corridor management institutions within the sub-regions to facilitate and promote trade, including intra-African trade.

The workshop called for increased private sector involvement in decision making processes and the implementation of activities designed to address the challenges and issues of trade facilitation. It also urged member States and development partners to support efforts to enhance the institutional capacity of RECs, corridor management institutions, and other IGOs for the implementation of trade related programmes and activities.

The case of landlocked countries in the two sub-regions received particular attention. Expansion and modernization of the infrastructure stock and improvement of the quality and efficiency of infrastructure services were considered priorities in addressing the special needs of landlocked countries.

The establishment of one-stop border posts and extension of operating hours of borders and ports were also deemed highly critical for trade facilitation.

Member States were further encouraged to use ICT in port operations and customs procedures, including cargo tracking systems.

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Upcoming Events

June 2010 (Djibouti): Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on IGAD's Trade Policy Framework .

June 2010 (Kigali): Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Impact of ICT on Climate Change.

July 2010 (Kampala) : East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) 2010.

October 2010 (TBD): New trends in South-South and triangular Cooperation and its Implications for eastern African Countries.

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