

# ECA Quarterly Newsletter

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## CORPORATE OVERVIEW

*From accelerating transformative trade frameworks to forging new partnerships across public finance, energy, food systems, and climate action, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) remained steadfast in shaping Africa's policy agenda from April to September 2025. In a year marked by converging global and regional crises, the ECA has sharpened its focus on policy influence, regional integration, and high-impact collaboration.*

**At the AU Mid-Year Coordination Meeting in Malabo**, the Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete, called for urgent, collective action as Africa navigates converging headwinds—slow growth, rising debt vulnerabilities, and tightening concessional finance—underscoring that “the question is no longer what

to do, but how urgently we can do it.” He reaffirmed ECA's commitment to help Member States translate ambition into measurable outcomes through three levers: rigorous, comparable data; implementable policy tools; and partnerships that mobilize finance and execution capacity. This means strengthening country diagnostics and debt sustainability analytics; deploying toolkits on domestic resource mobilization, investment facilitation and trade logistics; and convening coalitions with regional institutions and the private sector to accelerate delivery. **Watch his full speech here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKT5u12-lgs>

Throughout the week, ECA helped drive several flagship tracks. At the High-Level Dialogue on

Economic Transformation and Private Sector Development, discussions centered on de-risking productive investment, activating regional value chains (notably in agrifood and critical minerals), and aligning infrastructure finance with trade corridors to reduce logistics costs.

Looking ahead, ECA outlined near-term deliverables with Member States and AU organs: corridor and port efficiency assessments to inform prioritization and financing; stylized policy playbooks on debt, DRM and expenditure efficiency; and an AfCFTA implementation dashboard to track rules-of-origin uptake, NTB resolution and services liberalization. The throughline from Malabo is clear: marry evidence with execution; crowd in private capital where public budgets are tight; and sustain a continental focus on integration so that growth is not only faster, but more resilient and inclusive by design. **Read full statement here** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/statement-by-mr.-claver-gatete-at-the-47th-ordinary-session-of-the-executive-council> and here <https://www.uneca.org/stories/un%E2%80%99s-claver-gatete-champions-africa%E2%80%99s-integration-and-transformation-at-african-union-mid>

### Somalia's Centennial Vision 2060: A Long-Term Agenda for Peace, Prosperity

#### and Integration

Somalia officially launched its Centennial Vision 2060—a 35-year transformation roadmap anchored in macroeconomic stability, state-building, and regional and global integration. Ahead of the launch, H.E. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud received ECA's Executive Secretary, USG Claver Gatete, at the Presidential Palace to review priority actions and delivery milestones. ECA is proud to have accompanied Somalia throughout the formulation process and will continue to support implementation in three core areas: (i) advancing a national AfCFTA strategy to expand markets and catalyze industrialization; (ii) reinforcing public-private partnership (PPP) frameworks to mobilize quality investment in infrastructure and services; and (iii) building inclusive data ecosystems—including CRVS systems—to strengthen evidence-based policymaking, social protection targeting, and fiscal planning. Together, these pillars position Vision 2060 as a credible pathway to jobs, resilience, and shared national pride.

**Read about it here :** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/at-launch-of-somalia-centennial-vision-2060%2C-un-commends-somali-progress-and-plans>



### Banking on Africa, Financing from Within

At the 32nd Afreximbank Annual Meetings in Abuja, Executive Secretary Claver Gatete underscored Afreximbank's role as a "financial engine of Africa—by Africa, for Africa," applauding its counter-cyclical leadership from vaccines to trade finance and AfCFTA enablement. He set out five imperatives to move from resilience to transformation: recapitalize African financial institutions at scale; operationalize an African credit rating agency to curb bias and borrowing costs; strengthen coordination among Afreximbank, AfDB and DFIs for joint investments and risk-sharing; align trade finance with AfCFTA priorities and regional value chains (from BEVs to textiles and e-commerce); and institutionalize research, data and risk-informed finance through joint knowledge hubs and IDEP-led capacity building.

On the margins, the ES met Nigeria's Minister of Budget & National Planning, H.E Abubakar Bagudu, and Finance Minister H.E Wale Edun to deepen collaboration on derisking investment, sharpening policy implementation, domestic resource mobilization and tax rationalization, and accelerating digitalization of revenue and expenditure systems. ECA and Nigeria also explored expanded macroeconomic modelling, knowledge sharing, and tailored investment narratives to crowd in private capital. Together, these engagements signal a focused push to unlock affordable finance, extend maturities, and channel capital toward value-adding industries and integrated supply chains—advancing Africa's financial sovereignty and the AfCFTA's promise.

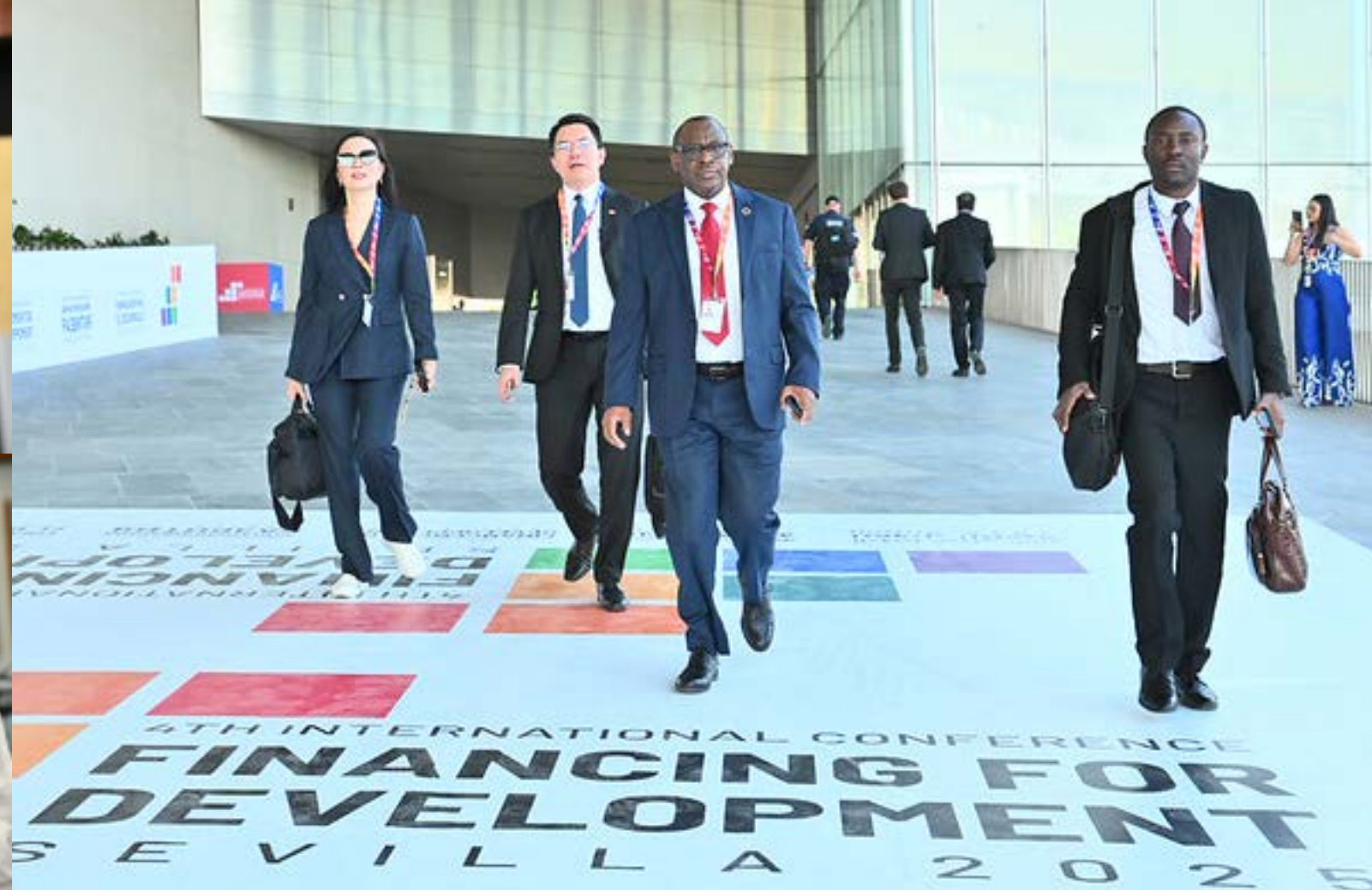
### Brand Africa 100 Launch: Owning Africa's Narrative, Scaling Africa's Brands

ECA hosted the launch of the 2025 Brand Africa 100 at Africa Hall—spotlighting the continent's creative power, enterprise, and rising consumer market. In his remarks, Executive Secretary Claver Gatete celebrated this year's ranked brands as ambassadors of Africa's promise and stressed that Africa is no longer asking for a narrative shift—it is taking charge of it. With the world's youngest population and a fast-growing middle class, Africa's brand story is increasingly defined by innovation: mobile finance corridors in Nairobi, creative industries in Lagos, green industrial zones in Addis, and design hubs from Dakar to Cape Town.

Beyond celebration, the event set out a practical agenda to scale African brands. Priorities include: investing in youth-led innovation and creative industries; building regional value chains under AfCFTA so "Made in Africa" becomes a mark of quality; integrating branding into trade and investment promotion (with the diaspora as global brand ambassadors); strengthening real-time data systems on market perception; and establishing a pan-African creative innovation fund to finance and globalize high-potential African brands across sectors from fintech and fashion to agribusiness.

For ECA, Brand Africa aligns with core mandates on inclusive industrialization, regional integration, and private-sector development. The Commission reiterated its readiness to partner with the AU, AfCFTA Secretariat, RECs, national statistics offices, research institutions, youth networks, and industry to elevate Africa's visibility—and convert brand momentum into jobs, exports, and investment. **Watch the launch here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7ROiDOq3s0>





## SEVILLA FFD4: FROM PRINCIPLES TO PAYOFFS FOR AFRICA

At the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in Sevilla, ECA made a clear case: Africa doesn't need another communiqué, it needs a financial system that works in practice. With growth slowed by costly debt, climate shocks, and shrinking concessional flows, ECA's message focused on actionable fixes that can unlock affordable capital and convert it into jobs, resilience, and regional integration.

ECA's priorities in Sevilla centered on five deliverables. First, a fairer debt workout: expand and accelerate restructurings (beyond the G20 Common Framework), lengthen maturities, and hard-wire state-contingent features to protect budgets from shocks. Second, more and cheaper liquidity: rechannel SDRs at scale through MDBs, boost callable capital, and deploy guarantee platforms to crowd in private investment where risk is mispriced. Third, lower the price of African risk: reform credit-rating practices, adopt a vulnerability/resilience index, and use blended finance to bring down sovereign and project spreads. Fourth, domestic resource mobilization with integrity: close loopholes that drain revenues, advance international tax cooperation, and digitize revenue/expenditure systems to improve transparency and service delivery. Fifth, climate finance that matches need: operationalize Loss & Damage, scale adaptation finance, and grow green/blue/sustainability-linked instruments aligned with credible pipelines, especially for energy, food systems, and resilient infrastructure.

Sevilla also advanced investment in Africa's value chains under AfCFTA, from critical minerals and green manufacturing to agrifood logistics—linking concessional “soft” capital for project preparation with “hard” capital for build-out. ECA will work with the AU, AfDB, Afreximbank, RECs and national authorities to translate FfD4 outcomes into bankable country and corridor programs, ensuring that each dollar mobilized is measured in megawatts delivered, kilometers of trade corridors upgraded, SMEs financed, and livelihoods protected. **Learn more about this event here:** <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/ffd4>





## High-Level Political Forum: Unlocking the Means of SDG Delivery

At the 2025 HLPF in New York, the Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete, opened and moderated the Town Hall on “Unlocking the means of implementation: Mobilizing financing and STI for the SDGs,” convened in the UN General Assembly Hall. The session drilled into how countries can build a coherent financing and science-technology-innovation (STI) framework, drawing explicit links to outcomes and momentum from the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4). It asked, plainly: what can be acted on immediately to accelerate SDG progress.

The discussion, featuring Sanda Ojiambo (UN Global Compact), Robbert Dijkgraaf (Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science), and Robert Kirkpatrick (UN Global Pulse)—surfaced four operational priorities: (1) scale affordable finance by strengthening domestic resource mobilization and de-risking vehicles that crowd in private capital; (2) align MDB portfolios and concessional windows to SDG-critical investments with clearer country platforms; (3) mainstream digital public infrastructure and data systems to cut non-tariff and service-delivery friction; and (4) direct STI toward inclusion, particularly women, youth, MSMEs, and informal producers, so innovation translates into jobs and incomes.

ECA's contribution centered on delivery: using robust statistics, geospatial data, and policy toolkits to help Member States turn pledges into pipelines, linking FfD4 follow-through (debt architecture, blended finance, SDR re-channeling) with SDG-ready projects in energy, food systems, and value-addition. The Town Hall's framing, finance plus STI as a single delivery system mirrors ECA's integrated approach at regional level and set a clear workplan for partners to translate global commitments into measurable results ahead of 2030. **More stories on HLPF2025 here:** <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/high-level-political-forum>

## UNFSS+4: FROM PRODUCTION TO NUTRITION—ECA'S FINANCING & TRADE PUSH IN ADDIS ABABA

Ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit +4 in Addis Ababa, Executive Secretary Claver Gatete joined UN DSG Amina J. Mohammed on field visits to emblematic sites across the city—Lemi Kura Market, Dejazmach Wondirad School and Gulele Injera Bakery—illustrating Ethiopia's pivot from production volumes to nutrition-driven value chains and school-meal impacts. Building on these insights, ECA steered a ministerial conversation on “Public Finance, Trade and Responsible Investment,” spotlighting three levers: (1) crowding in concessional and blended finance for climate-smart storage, cold chains and SMEs; (2) deepening regional trade under AfCFTA to scale staples-to-nutrition corridors; and (3) embedding accountability through data systems that track affordability and dietary quality. The thrust: make nutrition outcomes bankable, align fiscal tools (tax, guarantees, green/blue bonds) with food-system priorities, and unlock private investment while safeguarding standards. This complements UNFSS+4's global emphasis on finance, trade, resilience and equity, positioning ECA to help member States translate national pathways into investable, cross-border programs. **Watch DSG's field visit here:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7qryK\\_6V1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7qryK_6V1k)





# ECA AT THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDC3)

At the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in Awaza, Turkmenistan, the Executive Secretary Claver Gatete, issued a clear call for bold action to transform the structural realities facing Africa's 16 landlocked nations. Speaking during the General Debate, Mr. Gatete emphasized that being landlocked should not determine a country's economic destiny. He underscored that African LLDCs account for only 0.25% of global exports and face transport costs up to 40% higher than coastal states, making investment in connectivity, energy, and digital infrastructure an urgent priority.

ECA's participation in LLDC3 reinforced its commitment to addressing these disparities through data-driven solutions, regional integration, and innovative financing. At a high-level special event on the Infrastructure Investment and Financing Facility (IIFF), a key delivery of the Awaza Programme of Action. Mr. Gatete called for a paradigm shift in finance infrastructure. He urged increased blended finance, de-risking mechanisms, and private sector participation to close Africa's \$160 billion infrastructure gap, particularly in energy, digital, and transport systems aligned with the AfCFTA.

ECA also highlighted ongoing support to African LLDCs through initiatives that promote value-added manufacturing, such as the transboundary Battery and Electric Vehicle Special Economic Zone between the DRC and Zambia, and the operationalization of the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol. With transport corridors like LAPSET and trans-African highways under development, ECA is helping member States integrate trade, industrialization, and digital transformation agendas.

Calling for the new Awaza Programme of Action to be bold and transformative, Mr. Gatete reaffirmed that ECA stands ready to work with LLDCs, transit countries, and partners to turn geographic constraints into opportunities, anchoring Africa's landlocked nations in a future of shared prosperity and sustainable growth. **More here:** [ECA calls for bold action to unlock the potential of Africa's Landlocked Developing Countries at LLDC3 | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#)



## Investing in Africa's Food Corridors and Value Chains

The ECA played a central role at the 2025 Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) in Dakar, convening leaders, investors, and innovators to accelerate the continent's transition from subsistence agriculture to a dynamic, investment-driven food economy. In his interventions, Executive Secretary Claver Gatete emphasized that Africa's food systems transformation must be anchored in economic opportunity, inclusion, and sustainability.

At a special event on the Sahel, Mr. Gatete underscored that "every dollar invested in Sahel food systems yields six to seven dollars in returns," calling for bold, transformative investments in key agricultural value chains to reduce food imports and create jobs. He spotlighted the \$4 billion Central Sahel Flagship Programme as a model for mobilizing coordinated action, combining infrastructure, technology, and private sector engagement to drive food security and regional integration.

The Executive Secretary also highlighted the Sahel Gender Compact, which commits to allocating 15% of budgets to gender-specific actions and directing 30% of resources to women-led organizations. "Success in the Sahel requires placing women and resilience at the core," he noted, adding that climate-smart practices are "non-negotiable for lasting impact."

Underscoring the limits of public funding, Mr. Gatete called for innovative financing through blended mechanisms, green bonds, and de-risking instruments to attract private capital. "Public budgets alone are not enough," he said. "The UN is committed to walking this journey with Sahel governments to turn food systems into investment assets for prosperity."

Closing the Forum, Mr. Gatete turned attention to Africa's youth, stating that "six in ten Africans are under 25; our food systems transformation must be co-created and led by youth." He urged policymakers to scale agri-tech start-ups, expand access to land and credit, and align vocational training with agricultural innovation.

Reaffirming ECA's broader agenda, the Executive Secretary called for "connected food corridors, integrated markets, empowered youth, and fair credit ratings through an African Credit Rating Agency." He also noted that 94 promising agricultural value chains, if effectively developed could anchor private investment and enhance Africa's competitiveness in regional and global markets.

The 2025 AFSF reaffirmed ECA's commitment to transforming Africa's food systems from local supply chains into engines of prosperity, inclusion, and climate resilience.

the adaptation gap, strengthening data and climate information systems, securing fair finance, advancing a just energy transition, safeguarding ecosystems, and enhancing governance and accountability.

ECA's engagement at ACS2 centered on translating these priorities into actionable, investable frameworks. The Commission presented new analytical tools and research quantifying the cost of climate inaction and the economic returns of resilience investments up to \$14 in avoided losses for every \$1 spent. It also reiterated Africa's call for a reformed global climate finance architecture, ensuring greater access, transparency, and predictability of funds, especially for adaptation.

Through its Climate Change, Food Security and Natural Resources Division (CFND), ECA showcased pioneering work on green industrialization, carbon markets, and data-driven policymaking. The Commission underscored that integrating climate metrics into fiscal and macroeconomic planning is

essential to make public investment sustainable and growth-oriented.

Building on Africa's growing climate innovation ecosystem—from the Green Legacy Initiative in Ethiopia to renewable energy corridors across the continent—ECA called for scaling homegrown solutions, mobilizing private capital, and embedding climate-smart practices in all sectors.

With over 250 leaders, scientists, and partners participating, ACS2 in Addis Ababa demonstrated that Africa's climate agenda is not aspirational, it is operational and investment ready. As the continent looks toward COP30 in Belém, ECA remains committed to supporting member States to turn policy commitments into bankable, evidence-based actions that strengthen resilience and drive sustainable development. **Learn more about the event here:** <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/eca-second-africa-climate-summit>

## Africa's Climate Agenda: From Evidence to Investment



At the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), held under the theme "***From Evidence to Investment: Africa's Pathway to a Just and Climate-Resilient Future***," the ECA reaffirmed its leadership in advancing a unified African position ahead of COP30.

In his closing remarks at the Thirteenth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-13), which directly informed the outcomes of ACS2, Executive Secretary Claver Gatete declared: "Africa's climate agenda is evidence-based, just, and investment-ready." He outlined six priority areas to guide the continent's climate response: closing







## ECA AT UNGA80: ELEVATING AFRICA'S VOICE FOR FAIR FINANCE, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

At the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80), held under the theme ***“Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights,”*** the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) played a leading role in positioning Africa’s development priorities at the heart of the global agenda. Led by Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete, the Commission’s delegation engaged in a full week of high-level dialogues, bilateral meetings, and strategic partnerships to advance Africa’s voice on issues ranging from financial reform and debt sustainability to digital transformation, industrialization, and poverty reduction.

Throughout the High-Level Week, ECA reinforced its reputation as a trusted policy partner and convener, emphasizing evidence-based solutions and coalition-driven implementation. The Executive Secretary’s

interventions underscored the urgency of aligning global financial systems with Africa’s realities, advocating for equitable access to climate finance, reforms to sovereign credit rating practices, and stronger regional mechanisms such as the African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA).

A key highlight was ECA’s participation in the Global Africa Business Initiative (GABI): “Unstoppable Africa,” which gathered heads of state, global CEOs, and youth innovators to champion investment and growth on the continent. Mr. Gatete stressed the need to shift the global narrative from ***risk to opportunity***, citing Africa’s low default rates on infrastructure projects and vast untapped potential in renewable energy, creative industries, and agribusiness. The call was clear: ***Africa must move from potential to performance*** through institutional reform, private-sector engagement, and regional value chains under the AfCFTA.

ECA also played a central role in advancing Africa’s digital transformation agenda. During the inaugural ***Digital Cooperation Day*** led by the UN Office of Digital and Emerging Technologies, Mr. Gatete highlighted the need for equitable access to digital infrastructure, noting that while mobile money now reaches 80% of Africans, fewer than 40% have internet access. In discussions with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), GSMA, and Safaricom, ECA strengthened partnerships to promote digital inclusion, data-driven policy, and technology-enabled growth. The Commission will co-launch the next ***Economic Report on Africa “Growth through Innovation”*** focusing on the nexus of data, technology, and fiscal policy.

Financial reform and industrialization featured prominently in Mr. Gatete’s engagements with African leaders and development partners. At side events on Financing for Development and the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA IV), ECA called for scaling up local currency bonds, strengthening domestic capital markets, and mobilizing blended finance for Africa’s \$130–\$170 billion annual infrastructure gap. The Executive Secretary underlined that ***industrialization is not optional but urgent***, linking it to green energy transition, youth employment, and value chain integration.

Bilateral meetings with the Presidents and Ministers of Ghana, Namibia, Lesotho, Mauritius, and Morocco

further cemented ECA’s role as a technical partner supporting national transformation agendas. These engagements covered green bonds, diaspora financing, renewable energy, tourism, and agro-industrial value chains, all aimed at fostering sustainable, inclusive growth. The idea of an Africa Economic Forum, proposed by ECA and welcomed by Ghana, emerged as a potential flagship platform for mobilizing investment and showcasing Africa-led solutions.

Finally, during the APRM High-Level Dialogue on AfCRA, ECA reaffirmed its advocacy for a fairer global credit architecture that reflects Africa’s true risk profile and investment potential. The Executive Secretary underscored that ***“Africa’s cost of capital is not a technical issue; it is a justice issue.”***

Through its comprehensive engagements at UNGA80, ECA elevated Africa’s strategic priorities on the world stage, from financing and trade to data, technology, and governance. The mission not only strengthened ECA’s partnerships with governments, regional bodies, and the private sector, but also set in motion key follow-ups: launching the Africa Economic Forum, operationalizing AfCRA, expanding digital collaboration, and reinforcing domestic resource mobilization ahead of 2026.

Africa’s message was clear: with data, technology, and partnerships, the continent stands ready to shape its own development destiny.







## CHAMPIONING FINANCIAL REFORM, CLIMATE ACTION, AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

Deputy Executive Secretary (DES) Hanan Morsy continued to advance Africa's economic, financial, and climate agenda on the global stage throughout 2025. Her active participation across G20, IMF–World Bank, AfDB, and UN platforms highlighted ECA's thought leadership and commitment to reshaping the global financial architecture, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, and positioning Africa as a co-architect of solutions for sustainable growth.

**At the G20 and International Financial Architecture (IFA) Working Groups,** DES Morsy played a central role in shaping Africa's contribution to global financial reform under South Africa's G20 Presidency. She underscored the need to align market incentives with development priorities, encourage pre-emptive debt restructuring, and expand eligibility for concessional finance to middle-income countries. Her interventions at the Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR) and the Africa Expert Panel emphasized that Africa's infrastructure projects are undervalued by global markets, calling for data-driven risk assessments and regulatory reforms to unlock long-term private investment. She also championed increased local-currency financing, blended finance instruments, and

SDR rechanneling through MDBs as essential tools for scaling affordable capital.

**At the IMF–World Bank Spring Meetings,** DES Morsy co-led ECA's participation in the G20 Africa Expert Panel, contributing to the flagship report to be presented to Heads of State. She also spoke at high-level roundtables, including the OMFIF discussion on external debt and currency risks, where she highlighted Africa's need for tailored solutions to balance fiscal responsibility with development imperatives. During a panel on the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, she stressed that equitable global tax rules and stronger African coordination are vital to curb illicit flows and strengthen domestic revenues. Morsy called for the use of digital tools and evidence-based analytics to modernize tax systems, enhance transparency, and reduce harmful incentives, ensuring that taxation becomes a driver—not a deterrent—of sustainable development.

**At the African Development Bank Annual Meetings,** DES Morsy joined the Africa High-Level Working Group to brief ministers on the evolving trade and

health financing landscape. She urged accelerated implementation of the AfCFTA, strengthened regional value chains, and improved efficiency in public spending to shield economies from global volatility. Her message was clear: Africa's fiscal sovereignty depends on regional solidarity, innovation, and investment in people and institutions.

**On climate action, Morsy co-led ECA's advocacy at preparatory events for the Africa Climate Summit and UNFCCC Climate Week 2025,** emphasizing Africa's role as a provider—not just a recipient—of climate solutions. She cited landmark initiatives such as Ethiopia's Green Legacy (40 billion trees planted), the AFR100 restoration target (100 million hectares by 2030), and Africa's leadership in green bonds and renewable energy. She reiterated that mobilizing blended finance, reforming the G20 Common Framework, and ensuring just energy transitions are prerequisites for resilience and growth.

**At the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in Seville,** Morsy delivered opening remarks at the joint ECA–UN–Habitat–UNCDF roundtable on “Unlocking Fiscal Potential for Sustainable Urban Development.” She announced the launch of ECA's studies on the financial performance of six pilot African cities and a new tracking dashboard for local government finance. Her address underscored the importance of fiscal decentralization, private investment, and city-level innovation to drive inclusive and sustainable urban growth.

Through these engagements, DES Hanan Morsy continues to embody ECA's mission of bridging policy with practice. From global finance to digital equity, from urban governance to climate resilience, her leadership reinforces Africa's agency in shaping fairer, more inclusive systems, which are anchored in partnership, innovation, and evidence-based reform.







## Celebrating Service and Vision: The Legacy of Antonio Pedro

As he concluded his tenure as Deputy Executive Secretary (DES) of the Economic Commission for Africa, Antonio Pedro was celebrated for his exemplary leadership, intellectual rigor, and enduring contribution to Africa's sustainable development agenda. His departure marked the close of a chapter defined by policy innovation, advocacy for economic diversification, and unwavering commitment to multilateralism.

In his farewell lecture, titled *"Extractive Industries and Economic Diversification in Africa: Can Africa Break New Ground?"*, Mr. Pedro urged African countries to leverage their abundant natural resources not merely for export, but as springboards for structural transformation and inclusive growth. He emphasized the urgent need to move from commodity dependence toward value addition, regional value chains, and green industrialization. Drawing on decades of work at ECA, he highlighted how smart fiscal regimes, local content policies, and responsible governance of mineral resources can fuel sustainable development and create high-quality jobs. "Africa must no longer be defined by the volatility of its commodities, but by the strength of its innovation and the resilience of its people," he concluded—a message that resonated deeply across the ECA community. **Listen to his lecture here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1rTeEUpXJI&t=53s>

Beyond his economic leadership, DES Pedro championed **multilingualism and cultural diplomacy** within the UN system. Under his patronage, the ECA Language School, in partnership with the Embassy of Portugal in Addis Ababa and the Camões Institute, successfully completed its Portuguese course for staff, strengthening cross-cultural communication and professional development. Alongside H.E. Luisa Fragoso, Ambassador of Portugal to Ethiopia, Mr. Pedro presented certificates to graduates, commending their dedication and reaffirming ECA's commitment to linguistic diversity as a bridge for cooperation among Lusophone member States.



In May 2025, Mr. Pedro delivered **opening remarks at the celebration of World Portuguese Language Day**, hosted by the Portuguese Embassy in Addis Ababa. In his address, he reflected on the historical and cultural bonds uniting Lusophone nations and the central role of language in fostering shared identity, diplomacy, and South-South collaboration. He underscored that linguistic heritage is also an instrument for economic and knowledge exchange, particularly in science, innovation, and sustainable development.

Through his visionary leadership and eloquent advocacy, **Antonio Pedro leaves behind a legacy of purpose and partnership**, one rooted in the conviction that Africa's transformation must be anchored in its people, its resources, and its capacity to innovate. His tenure at ECA will be remembered for bridging ideas with action and for advancing the Commission's mission to promote prosperity, inclusivity, and resilience across the continent.

**Listen to his Exit Interview here:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AN6FpCQWXK4&list=PLcfKplk33JTiyoyuMrq5bFVwxqBXQEUKD>





## HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS ECA'S KEY ACTIVITIES:

### Macroeconomic Policy and Finance

- The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) warned that African nations pay far higher borrowing costs than peers due largely to biased global credit ratings. Despite sound fundamentals, most remain labeled “high risk,” inflating debt-service costs and limiting growth. To counter this, ECA and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) are advancing the Africa Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA) to provide fair, context-based assessments rooted in local realities. As ECA's Claver Gatete stressed, the issue is not capacity but perception—one that AfCRA aims to correct by giving Africa a stronger voice in global finance. **More here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/africa%E2%80%99s-battle-for-fair-credit>
- The Africa Annual Credit Ratings Conference, held in Cape Town under the theme “*Unlocking Domestic Financing through Credit Ratings*,” called for fairer, more transparent credit assessments that reflect Africa's economic realities and progress. ECA's Director Zuzana Schwidrowski stressed that Africa's development “should not be held hostage by narrow perceptions of risk,” urging improved sovereign ratings and stronger debt data systems to boost domestic resource mobilization. Speakers underscored that Africa's new Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA) must offer context-specific, governance-driven evaluations to reduce bias and borrowing costs. Co-hosted by APRM, ECA, UNDP, and Africatalyst, the forum emphasized ratings as a lever for fiscal confidence and financial independence across the continent. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/africa-must-rethink-credit-ratings-to-unlock-domestic-financing>

### Technology and Innovation

- ECA's Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure Division, in partnership with the Government of Ethiopia, marked the 8th UN Global Road Safety Week under the theme

**#MakeWalkingSafe #MakeCyclingSafe.** Held at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa, the event highlighted the importance of non-motorized transport for equitable, healthy, and climate-resilient mobility. H.E. Bareo Hassen, Ethiopia's Minister of State for Transport & Logistics, reaffirmed the government's commitment through its 30-year transport roadmap and ongoing efforts to expand walking and cycling infrastructure. ECA officials underscored the Commission's support in strengthening road safety policies, data systems, and capacity building—emphasizing that safe, inclusive mobility must be central to Africa's urban and transport planning. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-and-partners-urge-for-safe%2C-inclusive-mobility-in-africa-at-the-8th-un-road-safety-week>

- The ECA and Google have expanded their partnership to advance digital transformation across Africa through targeted training in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, robotics, and cloud computing. The initiative—featuring flagship programmes like *AI Sprinters*—equips policymakers and young innovators with practical tools to harness emerging technologies for inclusive and sustainable growth. Building on past successes such as the World Robot Olympiad Africa, the collaboration aims to bridge Africa's digital skills gap, strengthen governance through data-driven decision-making, and accelerate AI readiness across the continent. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-and-google-partner-to-unlock-africa%27s-ai-potential-with-tailored-policy-making-courses>
- The **WSIS+20 Africa Summit** opened in Benin, marking 20 years of Africa's digital transformation journey. Convened by ECA and the Government of Benin under the theme “*Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives*,” the summit reviews progress in narrowing the digital divide and shaping an inclusive digital future. ECA's **Mactar Seck** noted Africa's leap from 91 million to over 1.18 billion mobile subscriptions but warned that

71% of Africans remain offline. Leaders called for greater investment in digital skills, infrastructure, and inclusion—particularly for women and youth—to ensure technology drives sustainable growth across the continent. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/cotonou-hosts-wsis%2B20-africa-summit-reflecting-on-two-decades-of-digital-transformation>

### Climate Resilience

- ECA and partners trained 66 African experts in advanced energy modeling tools under the **Energy Modelling Platform for Africa (EMP-A)** to support low-carbon, climate-resilient development. The initiative, co-led with **Climate Compatible Growth (CCG)** and funded by the UK's FCDO, equips policymakers with open-source tools for long-term energy planning and investment analysis. Participants from over 15 African countries gained hands-on skills to design sustainable energy pathways, advance SDG 7, and accelerate Africa's clean energy transition. **More here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/regional-experts-trained-on-modelling-energy-systems>

### Regional Integration and Trade

- The Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship of Botswana, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the AfCFTA Secretariat, held a validation workshop in Gaborone to review Botswana's Draft AfCFTA National Implementation Strategy. The strategy outlines Botswana's roadmap to harness trade opportunities under the AfCFTA by identifying competitive sectors, promoting value addition,

and supporting MSMEs, women, and youth. Officials emphasized that the AfCFTA is more than a trade pact—it is a tool for structural transformation, diversification, and job creation. ECA reaffirmed its support in finalizing and operationalizing the strategy, which will be guided by a National Implementation Committee to ensure coordinated, inclusive, and results-driven execution. **Find out more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/botswana-holds-a-validation-workshop-for-the-afcfta-national-implementation-strategy>

- The ECA and the Government of Japan have launched a landmark \$1 million partnership to advance Africa's digital and economic integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The project — “*Boosting Intra-African Trade through Leveraging Digitalization for Effective and Inclusive AfCFTA Implementation*” — will enhance trade information accessibility, build digital ecosystems, and empower women-led MSMEs in Namibia, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Tanzania. Supported by Japan's 2025 Supplementary Budget, the initiative marks Japan's first direct financial support to ECA's integration agenda. Deliverables include national digital trade portals, a continental database on production inputs, AfCFTA trade guides, and targeted training for policymakers and entrepreneurs. The partnership, to be showcased at TICAD9, highlights a shared vision for a digitally connected and inclusive African market. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-and-japan-launch-first-ever-joint-project-to-boost-intra-african-trade-through>





## Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (GPSPD)

- The ECA and the African Union Commission (AUC) are advancing a joint initiative—*International Migration in Africa: Shaping a Positive Narrative and Removing Barriers to Mobility*—focused on the economic empowerment of returnee migrant women, particularly former domestic workers in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. The project seeks to strengthen reintegration and create sustainable livelihoods through capacity-building, grants, and policy reform. Following an ECA-led workshop in October 2024, partners agreed to establish a working group to guide long-term implementation and collaboration. As ECA's Keiso Matashane-Marite noted, supporting women returning from the Gulf region is vital to ensuring their inclusion and dignity within local economies. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-and-auc-join-forces-to-enhance-economic-opportunities-for-returnee-migrant-women>
- A Regional workshop in Harare, co-organized by ECA, the African Union, and IOM, spotlighted Africa's urgent need to strengthen legal identity systems as a foundation for inclusive growth and free movement. Officials from Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan shared progress and challenges in documenting citizens, migrants, and refugees. ECA's Gideon Rutaremwa stressed that “legal identity is not a privilege but a right,” while experts called for stronger political will and investment to ensure every African is counted—and empowered to access services, work, and protection. **More here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/no-identity%2C-no-access%2C-no-progress>
- Hundreds of millions across Africa still lack legal identification, leaving migrants and stateless persons excluded from education, healthcare, and justice. A five-day workshop in Harare, organized by ECA with the AUC, IOM, and IGAD, reviewed findings from Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan and introduced a new Good Legal Identity Toolkit to strengthen inclusion. ECA's Christian Oldiges called legal ID “a foundation for inclusive development,” while experts urged cross-border cooperation and rights protection. With less than five years to meet SDG 16.9 (legal

identity for all), delegates agreed that solutions must tackle both policy and legal barriers, not just technical gaps. **More here :** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/millions-of-migrants-across-africa-remain-undocumented-as-id-systems-struggle-to-keep-pace>

## SRO SOUTHERN AFRICA

- The ECA Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa organized a study tour to promote automotive value chains via Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Southern Africa, attended by officials from Namibia and Lesotho. The tour, facilitated by the Gauteng Provincial government and TASEZ, showcased the significance of effective policies and private sector involvement. Ms. Olayinka Bandele emphasized ECA's role in supporting industrial development through AfCFTA, anticipating improved regional cooperation and job creation. Mr. Msokoli Ntombana highlighted integrating SMMEs into the automotive sector for comprehensive growth. A visit to seven manufacturing plants demonstrated current capabilities and the need for enhanced local content utilization, skill development, and the adaptability against challenges such as the European Union's CBAM. ECA plans to further engage stakeholders and study SEZ standards in Africa. **More here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/special-economic-zones-%28sezs%29-essential-for-robust-automotive-regional-value-chains>
- On April 1, 2025, Malawi's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) held a meeting in Lilongwe to review draft regulations for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), supported by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Attendees included representatives from various government and private entities. The meeting emphasized the potential of SEZs for economic growth, industrial diversification, and attracting foreign investment. Ms. Christina Zakeyo highlighted the importance of regulations that include investment incentives. ECA's Oliver Maponga discussed how SEZs can enhance value chains and promote local industries. Discussions focused on refining the draft regulations, informed by lessons from previous programs, ensuring alignment with national goals and frameworks for implementation. Find out

more: <https://www.uneca.org/stories/validation-of-special-economic-zones-regulations-to-support-implementation-of-the-sez-act-in>

The ECA Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) held a consultative meeting on 8 April 2025 in Windhoek, Namibia, to refine an automotive policy framework aimed at integrating Namibia and Lesotho into Southern Africa's regional automotive value chain. The meeting, which brought together policymakers, private sector actors, and ECA experts, reviewed the draft framework's alignment with trade and industrialization strategies, highlighting gaps in skills, regulatory coherence, and regional harmonization. ECA's Olayinka Bandele emphasized the Commission's ongoing efforts to strengthen the sector through policy dialogues, capacity-building, and study tours. Participants underscored the need for harmonized regulations, skills development, and stronger linkages between small enterprises and major industry players to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. **More here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-support-namibia-and-lesotho-to-review-an-automotive-policy-framework-to-integrate-into>

## SRO CENTRAL AFRICA

ECA, in partnership with UNCTAD and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Central African Republic (CAR), is supporting efforts to strengthen SME participation in regional value chains through a new national impact study. The report, to be validated in Bangui, analyzes the structural barriers and market opportunities for CAR's small businesses—particularly in agro-processing, timber, and minerals—within the AfCFTA framework. ECA's Jean Luc Mastaki highlighted the study's data-driven recommendations to boost productivity and competitiveness. The initiative, part

of UNCTAD's regional project on SME integration, aims to enhance access to finance, promote value addition, and position CAR's enterprises as active players in regional and continental supply chains. **Learn more here :** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/strengthening-the-participation-of-central-african-republic%E2%80%99s-small-businesses-in-regional>

## SRO NORTH AFRICA

The ECA in partnership with Lesotho's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, held a workshop on leveraging the Basotho diaspora for sustainable development. The meeting gathered over 50 stakeholders from government, the UN, private sector, and civil society to explore how remittances and diaspora savings can be channeled into productive investments. ECA's Khaled Hussein highlighted the resilience of remittances as a key domestic resource, while the Ministry urged a shift “beyond traditional flows” to drive inclusive growth. The workshop concluded with an agreement to establish a national technical working group to guide implementation and enhance diaspora engagement in Lesotho's development agenda. **Learn more here:** <https://www.uneca.org/stories/leveraging-the-contribution-of-basotho-diaspora-to-lesotho-sustainable-development>





## Knowledge Generation

In the last quarter of the year, ECA produced the following key publications.

- [\*Rethinking Tax Incentives in the Mining Sector in Africa\*](#)
- [\*Assessing Regional Integration in Africa ARIA XI\*](#)
- [\*Macroeconomic and Social Developments in Eastern Africa 2025\*](#)

Find more publications here: <https://www.uneca.org/?q=publications> and the ECA Institutional Repository here: <https://www.uneca.org/knowledge-services-section/institutional-repository>

## LOOKING AHEAD - SOME KEY EVENTS



### [2025 Conference on Land Policy in Africa \(CLPA2025\)](#)

10 November, 2025 > 13 November, 2025

ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Learn more here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/clpa2025>



### ECA support to Africa's participation at COP30

10 November, 2025 21 November, 2025

Belém, Brazil



Learn more here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/COP30>

**ECA's Sustainable Africa Podcast Series:** From ECA's key events, we bring the human narrative to the themes we work on and speak to stakeholders, celebrities and more who are contributing to sustainable development. Check out our *Sustainable Africa Podcast Series* on the ECA YouTube Channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcfKplk33JTgQGtMWgEYcSmQLFXEd3yTz>

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