

ECA Quarterly Newsletter

JAN - MAR



CORPORATE OVERVIEW

This edition of the ECA Bulletin highlights key achievements and activities from January to March 2025, showcasing ECA's continued efforts in consensus building, advocacy, and knowledge generation in a fast-changing environment. From the annual Senior Leadership Team Retreat in Botswana to the Conference of Ministers and the African Business Forum, ECA continues to drive high-level policy discussions, mobilize partnerships, and deliver innovative solutions to Africa's most pressing challenges.

The **Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, Claver Gatete**, started off the year by welcoming the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed, and the Executive Secretaries of the UN Regional Commissions to a high-level retreat

in Wench, Ethiopia. This strategic gathering provided a platform for deep reflection on the evolving global and regional landscape, fostering discussions on how the UN's regional entities can work more effectively to support member States in tackling complex development challenges. The Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) underscored the urgency of accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through stronger multilateral action, financial adaptability, and institutional coherence. Highlighting the pivotal role of Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), she emphasized their contribution to translating global commitments into actionable regional and national strategies. To overcome financial constraints, she called for predictable funding, repurposing of resources, and

deeper engagement with Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs). The DSG also addressed major geopolitical shifts, stressing the need for a more agile UN system that integrates climate action, sustainable development, and emerging economic trends. She advocated for a shift from excessive convening to high-impact engagements that drive real-world policy change and financing for development. Strengthening UN 2.0 reforms, leveraging technology and innovation, and addressing institutional inertia were key recommendations to modernize the UN's approach. She called for targeted interventions in priority countries, enhanced policy coordination, and improved data-driven decision-making. Looking ahead, the DSG urged a collective push for regional SDG acceleration, improved financing mechanisms, and stronger partnerships to drive sustainable and equitable development.

Strengthening UN-AUC Cooperation for Africa's Development

In a significant step towards reinforcing multilateral collaboration for Africa's development, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Claver Gatete, met with H.E. Ms. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), on January 23, 2025. The high-level discussions reaffirmed the shared commitment of both institutions to accelerating the continent's economic transformation through strengthened cooperation. At the heart of the meeting was a focus on key strategic areas, including economic integration, trade, climate action, and digital transformation—critical pillars in realizing both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing the urgency of coordinated efforts, Mr. Gatete highlighted ECA's dedication to supporting AUC's priorities through evidence-based policymaking, institutional capacity-building, and innovative financing solutions. As Africa faces evolving economic and environmental challenges, the dialogue underscored the necessity of leveraging data-driven insights and fostering synergies between the UN and AUC to drive sustainable growth and resilience. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to joint initiatives that will not only accelerate Africa's development but also position the continent as a key player in the global economic landscape. The meeting set the stage for deeper collaboration, reinforcing the role of multilateralism in addressing Africa's most pressing challenges. Through strategic engagement and collective action, the UN and AUC continue to work towards a more prosperous, integrated, and sustainable Africa.



ECA Senior Leadership Charts Bold Path for Africa's Development at Annual Retreat

The Senior Leadership Team convened in Botswana for its annual retreat, a strategic gathering aimed at sharpening the Commission's focus on accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enhancing policy adoption across African member states. The retreat underscored ECA's commitment to driving sustainable development with agility, ensuring that its initiatives translate into impactful, scalable results. A key highlight of the retreat was a high-level engagement with Botswana's government, led by Vice President and Finance Minister, H.E. Ndaba Nkosingathi Gaolathe. Discussions centered on deepening cooperation to tackle economic challenges while aligning with Botswana's Vision 2036, a blueprint for long-term prosperity. The exchange covered critical areas such as youth engagement, governance, job creation, and the expansion of tourism as a driver of economic competitiveness. Reflecting on Botswana's remarkable transformation from a low-income country at independence to an upper-middle-income nation today, ECA's Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete, praised the country's achievements:

"Botswana is recognized as a symbol of good governance, sound economic management, and resilience."

He noted that the nation's strong institutions, well-educated workforce, and emerging sectors provide a solid foundation for unlocking new pathways to inclusive, sustainable growth.

Read full statement here: [Remarks by Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete at the ECA-Government of Botswana Meeting | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#)



Celebrating Dedication: UNECA Long Service Awards and Staff Recognition Ceremony

On January 27, 2025, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) hosted its Long Service Awards and Staff Recognition Ceremony, a momentous occasion to honor the dedication and commitment of staff members who have served the organization with unwavering dedication. The event, co-hosted by the ECA Management and Staff Union, took place at the UN Conference Centre Banquet Hall in Addis Ababa, with Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) joining virtually. The ceremony was a testament to UNECA's appreciation for the invaluable contributions of its workforce, recognizing staff members who reached service milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35+ years of uninterrupted service to the United Nations. Executive Secretary Claver Gatete delivered opening remarks, followed by an address from the President of the Staff Union, setting the stage for the distribution of awards and certificates. A total of 72 staff members at UNECA headquarters were recognized, along with 14 honorees from SROs and IDEP, each celebrated for their long-standing service. The Long Service Awards were more than just a recognition of tenure; they highlighted the dedication, perseverance, and institutional knowledge that UNECA staff bring to the organization. Their commitment has played a crucial role in advancing UNECA's mission and driving sustainable development across Africa. **Watch the celebration here:** [ECA 2024 long service award and staff recognition ceremony](#)





ECA AT THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

Advancing Africa's Development Agenda: The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) played a pivotal role at the 2025 African Union (AU) Summit, reinforcing its commitment to supporting the continent's economic integration, financial reform, and sustainable development. Throughout the Summit, ECA engaged in high-level discussions, policy dialogues, and key initiatives aimed at shaping Africa's growth trajectory.

Executive Council: Driving Strategic Policy Engagement

At the AU Executive Council, ECA emphasized the urgent need for financial reform to support Africa's development aspirations. Executive Secretary Claver Gatete called for a more equitable global financial architecture, highlighting the structural barriers that keep African economies in a cycle of debt and dependency. His remarks resonated widely, gaining significant media coverage across Africa and beyond, as he underscored the necessity of aligning financing mechanisms with Africa's development needs.

APRM Breakfast: Strengthening Governance for Africa's Future

ECA participated in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Breakfast Dialogue, a platform dedicated to advancing governance and accountability across the continent. The discussions focused on leveraging governance reforms to drive economic transformation, enhance policy implementation, and ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. The session reinforced ECA's commitment to evidence-based policymaking and strengthening institutional capacities to support good governance practices.

Africa Visa Index: Facilitating Regional Integration

In partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), ECA contributed to discussions on the Africa Visa Index, an initiative aimed at enhancing continental mobility and trade integration. The index serves as a benchmark for tracking visa openness across Africa, encouraging policies that ease movement for business, tourism, and investment. ECA stressed that removing mobility barriers is crucial for deepening economic integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

UN Secretary-General's Engagements: A Global Call for Action

The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, addressed the Summit, reinforcing the UN's support for Africa's economic and climate resilience. During his press conference, town hall, and high-level meetings, he echoed ECA's advocacy for:

- Financial reform – Calling for an overhaul of the global financial system to better serve developing economies.
- Climate financing – Urging developed nations to fulfill their \$100 billion commitment, recognizing Africa's disproportionate impact from climate change despite contributing only 4% of global emissions.
- Debt relief and SDR rechanneling – Emphasizing the need for special drawing rights (SDRs) to be swiftly reallocated to support African economies in recovery and growth.

The Executive Secretary's participation at the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) event further amplified ECA's stance on Africa's infrastructure challenges, stressing the need for strategic investments in transport, energy, and digital infrastructure to unlock economic potential.

Shaping the Narrative: Media Impact

ECA's leadership at the Summit sparked extensive media coverage, with top publications highlighting the call for financial system reform, reparative justice, and infrastructure development. Articles published by APA News, Xinhua, People Daily, African Leadership Magazine, and RT Africa captured ECA's advocacy for a fairer financial system, economic sovereignty, and inclusive development.

As Africa continues its journey toward Agenda 2063, ECA remains committed to working alongside the AU and member states, providing strategic insights and policy recommendations to accelerate sustainable development and economic transformation.





AFRICA BUSINESS FORUM 2025: ADVANCING VALUE CHAINS FOR AFRICA'S GROWTH

On the sidelines of the 2025 African Union Summit, the Africa Business Forum took place on February 17, 2025, at Africa Hall in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum brought together policymakers, business leaders, and development partners to discuss Africa's economic transformation through value chain development.

Hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), the forum provided a platform for high-level dialogue on strengthening Africa's business ecosystem. Discussions focused on leveraging intra-African trade, industrialization, and private sector investment to drive sustainable growth and job creation across the continent.

Key Highlights from the Forum

- **Unlocking Africa's Value Chains:** Participants emphasized the need to move beyond raw material exports and focus on local manufacturing, innovation, and industrial development. Enhancing value addition across various sectors would ensure maximum economic benefits for African nations.
- **Private Sector as a Catalyst for Growth:** Business leaders and investors shared insights on scaling up investments in priority sectors, including agriculture, digital economy, renewable energy, and infrastructure. Strengthening public-private partnerships (PPPs) was identified as a key driver of economic growth.
- **Strengthening Trade Under AfCFTA:** The forum highlighted the importance of harmonizing policies, reducing trade barriers, and improving logistics to fully capitalize on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Removing bottlenecks in cross-border trade will enhance regional and continental economic integration.
- **Financing Africa's Industrialization:** ECA underscored the need for innovative financing mechanisms, including blended finance, impact investing, and sovereign wealth funds, to accelerate value chain development and economic diversification.



The Africa Business Forum 2025 reaffirmed the strategic role of value chains in transforming Africa's economy. It reinforced the need for collaborative action between governments, the private sector, and development partners. As Africa strives to achieve Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, participants emphasized that scaling up business and investment initiatives will be key to unlocking the continent's full potential. **More stories on ABF2025 here:** [Africa Business Forum 2025](#)



ECA at G20: ECA's Claver Gatete Calls for Unified African Voice, Fair Finance, and Climate Justice

At the 2025 G20 meetings in South Africa, Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), emphasized the need for a unified African voice to address the continent's pressing economic challenges. He highlighted that South Africa's G20 presidency offers a pivotal platform for Africa to articulate the aspirations of its 1.5 billion citizens on the global stage. [Read the full article here.](#)

Mr. Gatete underscored the urgency of establishing a fair debt resolution framework, noting that approximately 20 African nations are currently facing severe debt distress. He advocated for financial solutions that promote growth and development rather than imposing further constraints. Addressing climate change, Mr. Gatete pointed out that while Africa contributes only 4% of global carbon emissions, it disproportionately suffers from climate-related impacts. He called for increased access to climate finance and urged the fulfillment of the US\$100 billion annual commitment to support African nations in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Furthermore, Mr. Gatete emphasized the importance of reforming the global financial architecture to better serve Africa's development needs, including enhanced access to affordable financing and the reallocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). He also highlighted the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a transformative initiative, calling for strategic partnerships with G20 nations to unlock Africa's economic potential. Read his full statement here: <https://www.uneca.org/stories/statement-by-mr-claver-gatete-at-the-first-g20-foreign-ministers%E2%80%99-meeting>

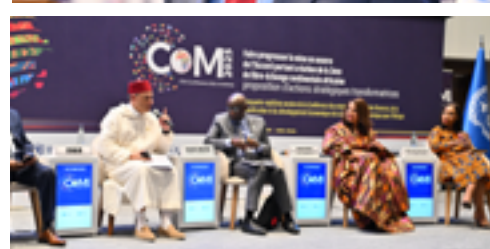
Through these engagements, Mr. Gatete reinforced the ECA's commitment to ensuring that Africa's priorities are effectively represented in global economic governance discussions.

CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

The 57th Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development took place from March 12 to 18, 2025, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Centered on the theme "Advancing the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area: proposing transformative strategic actions", the conference addressed critical issues such as digitalization, technology, food security, and energy transformation. The event commenced with the Committee of Experts meeting from March 12 to 14, followed by side events on March 15 and 16. The ministerial segment occurred on March 17 and 18, featuring a high-level policy dialogue, the annual Adebayo Adedeji Memorial Lecture, and round-table discussions on various sub-themes. More: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/cfm2025>







The **side events at #COM2025** provided a dynamic platform for in-depth discussions on key economic and development priorities for Africa. Held on March 15–16, these sessions brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and experts to explore innovative solutions in areas such as regional trade, digital transformation, climate finance, and economic governance. Discussions focused on leveraging the AfCFTA for industrialization, enhancing Africa's access to sustainable financing, and strengthening policy frameworks to drive inclusive growth. The side events served as a critical space for knowledge exchange, fostering actionable strategies to accelerate Africa's economic transformation.

At #COM2025, the **Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2025** was presented by Mr. Stephen Karingi, Director of the Regional Integration and Trade Division at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The report, titled «Boosting Africa's Economic Integration and Resilience: Enhancing the productive capacities required for the AfCFTA», emphasizes the urgent need for Africa to strengthen its productive capabilities to fully benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Mr. Karingi highlighted how investing in sectors such as infrastructure, energy, agriculture, and digital technologies can help unlock Africa's potential, reduce dependence on external markets, and build resilience against global shocks. The ERA 2025 also calls for greater policy coherence, regional collaboration, and tailored national strategies to enable African countries to participate more competitively in regional and global value chains. [Download the full ERA 2025 Report here.](#)



The **Adebayo Adedeji Memorial Lecture**, a significant feature of the 57th Session of the Conference of Ministers, honored the enduring legacy of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, a pivotal advocate for Africa's economic integration. This year's lecture was delivered by H.E. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, former Vice President of Nigeria, who spoke on "Advancing the Implementation of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA: Proposing Transformative Strategic Actions." In his address, Professor Osinbajo emphasized that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is not merely a trade agreement, but a transformative instrument tailored to address Africa's unique economic development challenges. He underscored the necessity of innovative and bold approaches in implementing the AfCFTA, reflecting Professor Adedeji's vision of homegrown strategies that cater to the continent's specific needs and aspirations.

Professor Osinbajo highlighted that the AfCFTA serves as a crucial missing piece in solving Africa's development puzzle, aiming to overcome structural weaknesses that have historically impeded economic growth, industrialization, and integration across the continent. He called for strategic actions to activate regional value chains, eliminate trade barriers, and foster industrialization, thereby ensuring that the AfCFTA fulfills its promise of expanding intra-African trade and promoting sustainable development.

The lecture provided a platform for policymakers, economists, and development experts to engage in discussions on accelerating AfCFTA implementation through targeted investments, policy coherence, and regional collaboration, aligning with Professor Adedeji's enduring vision of African integration as a pathway to economic self-reliance and prosperity. [Read the full Adebayo Adedeji Memorial Lecture here.](#)

Advancing AfCFTA Through Strategy and Cooperation: As #COM2025 concluded, leaders reaffirmed that the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is not a singular event but a strategic and evolving process that requires patience, coordinated action, and strong political will. H.E. Riyad Mezzour, Chair of the Bureau and Morocco's Minister of Industry and Trade, emphasized that realizing AfCFTA's full potential requires transformative actions, including activating regional value chains and eliminating barriers to intra-African trade. The conference also highlighted the importance of digitalization, youth empowerment, and sustainable development in driving economic transformation. Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of UNECA, underscored the urgency of fostering intra-African trade and investment amidst a shifting global financial landscape, advocating for tailored national strategies to enhance competitiveness. Additionally, H.E. Professor Nthuli Ncube, Zimbabwe's Finance Minister, called for the establishment of an African credit rating organization to enhance financial credibility and support AfCFTA's objectives. The conference concluded with a collective resolve to advance economic integration, digital innovation, and sustainable trade practices, positioning AfCFTA as a cornerstone for Africa's future prosperity. More here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/stories/implementation-afcfta-needs-patience-and-strategy>



g job creation and economic growth
gh sustainable, inclusive, science- and
nce-based solutions for the
Agenda and Agenda 2063



ARFSD-11: ACCELERATING AFRICA'S PATH TO 2030 AND BEYOND

Held under the theme *“Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,”* the Eleventh Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-11) brought together over 1,200 participants from across the continent and beyond. Co-organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Government of Uganda, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and UN system partners, the Forum served as a vital platform to align Africa's development priorities with global momentum and emerging challenges.

With stark figures showing that only 10 of Africa's 144 measurable SDG targets are on track, the Forum called for urgent, large-scale action. High-level sessions, ministerial dialogues, expert panels, youth engagements, and side events ran from 3–9 April 2025 at the Speke Resort Convention Centre in Kampala. Participants addressed pressing challenges such as debt sustainability, climate resilience, financing gaps, technology inclusion, and regional integration.

Key outcomes and messages included:

- **Accelerated Implementation:** Member States committed to fast-tracking the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, recognizing the urgency to reverse regressing trends and scale up transformative actions.
- **Sustainable Financing:** Calls were reinforced for increased domestic resource mobilization, debt restructuring, fairer credit ratings, and accessible climate financing. Emphasis was placed on innovative instruments such as green and blue bonds, sustainability-linked bonds, and blended finance.
- **Regional Integration and Value Addition:** The Forum urged the acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and investment in regional value chains, particularly in agriculture, energy, and minerals, to stimulate inclusive growth and job creation.

- **Youth, Gender, and Inclusion:** Delegates stressed the need for stronger youth engagement, gender-responsive policies, and inclusive development frameworks that leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities, older persons, and marginalized communities.
- **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI):** Strong support emerged for leveraging digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and innovation ecosystems to address development challenges and bridge knowledge gaps across the continent.
- **Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability:** The Forum called for enhanced adaptation strategies, nature-based solutions, and accountability mechanisms to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss, particularly in vulnerable regions.
- **Data and Evidence-Based Policy:** Participants emphasized the critical role of quality, timely, and disaggregated data in policy formulation, monitoring progress, and ensuring accountability. Support was expressed for strengthening national statistical systems and investing in geospatial data infrastructure.
- **South-South Cooperation and Multilateral Reform:** ARFSD-11 highlighted the value of peer learning between Africa and other regions, especially Latin America and the Caribbean, and reiterated Africa's position on the urgent need for UN system and global financial architecture reform.
- **Outcome Document and Kampala Declaration:** The Forum adopted a set of key messages to inform global processes, including the 2025 HLPF, the Fourth FfD Conference, COP30, and the Second World Summit for Social Development. The **Kampala Declaration** was endorsed as a guiding framework for sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based development across the continent.

Read the full report here: https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/sites/default/files/resources/documents/CFND/ARFSD2025/arfsd_11_key_messages_en.pdf

A highlight of the Forum was the **Presidential Dialogue**, chaired by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, and attended by H.E. Emmerson Mnangagwa (President of Zimbabwe), H.E. Gaudencio Mohaba Mesu (First Deputy Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea), H.E. John Mbadi (Cabinet Secretary, Kenya), former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, and the President of the UN Economic and Social Council.

Key messages from the dialogue included:

- A strong call for African countries to **move beyond raw material exports** and prioritize **value addition and industrialization**, particularly in sectors such as mining and agriculture (e.g. coffee, tea, and cocoa).
- Renewed urgency to **fully implement the AfCFTA** and **ratify the Free Movement Protocol**, recognizing regional integration as a pillar for inclusive and sustainable growth.
- A push for **sustained investment in education and skills development**, especially for Africa's youth, by promoting STEM education, gender equality, and embracing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things.
- Emphasis on **leveraging domestic resources** to finance development, while calling for external partnerships rooted in mutual respect, humility, and inclusive dialogue—affirming African agency and self-determination.
- A call for governments and non-State actors to **foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship**, improving access to finance and channeling investments into green growth and strategic sectors to unlock new sources of wealth and job creation.

Africa left Kampala with a unified voice, actionable priorities, and renewed urgency to deliver on the SDGs and Agenda 2063—before the window of opportunity closes.

Find out more about this event here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/arfsd2025>





ECA Advocates for Stronger Global Financial Reforms at G20 Meeting in South Africa

Deputy Executive Secretary Hanan Morsy led the ECA delegation at the 2nd Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting under South Africa's G20 presidency in Cape Town, South Africa. In her remarks, DES Morsy emphasized the urgent need for stronger alignment between the G20 and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) to address the financial challenges facing African economies. She called for a comprehensive overhaul of the global debt architecture, ensuring fairer financing mechanisms that support Africa's long-term development.

Furthermore, she highlighted the need for robust support in mitigating exogenous shocks, particularly in supply chain disruptions and climate-related crises, which continue to hinder economic stability across the continent. Stressing the importance of regional value chains, DES Morsy urged for enhanced investment in local production and industrialization to drive inclusive economic transformation.

The meeting underscored the ECA's commitment to advocating for Africa's financial resilience and equitable integration into the global economy, reaffirming the necessity for systemic reforms that place Africa at the center of global financial decision-making.



At the closing of the Experts Segment of #COM2025, **Ms. Hanan Morsy**, Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), commended participants for their deep engagement and constructive dialogue throughout the session. She highlighted the importance of the Experts Segment as a foundation for evidence-based policymaking, emphasizing that the technical discussions had laid the groundwork for impactful ministerial deliberations. Ms. Morsy reiterated the urgency of advancing the implementation of the AfCFTA through strategic investments, strengthened regional value chains, and policy coherence. She also emphasized the need for innovative solutions to address Africa's financing gaps, digital transformation, and climate resilience, encouraging member States to leverage ECA's analytical tools, data platforms, and technical support to drive their national and regional development agendas. **Read her full remarks here:** <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/stories/closing-remarks-deputy-executive-secretary-hanan-morsy-com-2025-experts-segment>

Deputy Executive Secretary **Hanan Morsy** closed the first quarter with a well-deserved recognition, earning a spot on *Exquisite Magazine* and the Africa Women CEOs Network's 50 Power List. Known for her strong advocacy for **gender equality and women's economic empowerment**, DES Morsy has consistently advanced these priorities through her leadership in economic policy. During her tenure at the African Development Bank (AfDB), she led impactful research on gender-responsive policies and women's financial inclusion, highlighting the economic toll of gender disparities.

She joins an inspiring group of African trailblazers on the 2025 Power List, including influential CEOs, entrepreneurs, public servants, and changemakers across the continent who are transforming leadership and driving inclusive development in their sectors. She was also appointed to the newly established **G20 Africa Expert Panel**. Convened under South Africa's 2025 G20 Presidency, the panel aims to develop actionable policy proposals that enhance Africa's role in the global economy and strengthen international financial cooperation. As one of five eminent African economists on the panel, DES Morsy will contribute her deep expertise in macroeconomic policy, debt sustainability, and structural transformation to shape recommendations that reflect Africa's development priorities. Learn more about the Africa expert panel here: [Media Statement – G20 Africa Expert Panel](#)

ECA Enhances Programme Support for Greater Impact

Deputy Executive Secretary Antonio Pedro concluded a two-day retreat focused on strengthening the integrated planning of the ECA Programme Support pillar, setting a new benchmark for monitoring, implementation, and delivery standards. The retreat aimed to enhance coordination, streamline processes, and reinforce accountability mechanisms to ensure more effective support to African member states.

During the discussions, Mr. Pedro emphasized the critical role of data-driven decision-making, performance tracking, and strategic alignment in optimizing ECA's impact across its priority areas. He underscored the need for rigorous monitoring frameworks and clear operational standards to facilitate efficient execution and measurable outcomes. The retreat reinforced ECA's commitment to delivering high-quality technical assistance and policy support, ensuring that its interventions remain responsive to the evolving development needs of the continent.

At the opening of the **57th Session of the Conference of Ministers (COM2025)**, **DES Antonio Pedro**, set the tone for the deliberations by calling for bold and strategic action to accelerate Africa's development. He emphasized the urgent need for **economic diversification, industrialization, and productive investment**, noting that despite Africa's abundant resources and potential, growth remains too slow and uneven to meet the continent's ambitions. Mr. Pedro also highlighted the **importance of implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** as a pathway to deepen regional integration, enhance resilience, and stimulate inclusive growth. He urged member States to prioritize reforms that strengthen institutions, attract private investment, and advance regional value chains—critical elements to transform Africa's economic and social landscape. Read his full remarks here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/stories/opening-remarks-mr-antonio-pedro-committee-experts-2025-conference-african-ministers>





At the signing of a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** on March 18, 2025, in Addis Ababa, Deputy Executive Secretary Antonio Pedro underscored the pressing need to build resilient, climate-smart agricultural systems across Africa. Highlighting the continent's vulnerability to climate shocks, Pedro stressed that strategic foresight and early planning are critical for countries to effectively respond to changing environmental conditions and ensure long-term food security.

The renewed MoU signals a strengthened commitment between ECA and FAO to promote sustainable agriculture, regional integration, and climate resilience. It builds on years of joint efforts to reshape Africa's agri-food systems in line with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the continent's broader development priorities. Pedro reaffirmed ECA's dedication to working with FAO and national governments to leverage data, innovation, and policy to unlock agriculture's potential as a driver of inclusive growth and environmental sustainability. Read more: <https://www.uneca.org/stories/optimism-for-agri-trade-and-sustainable-agriculture-in-africa-with-renewed-eca-fao>

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS ECA'S KEY ACTIVITIES

Macroeconomic Policy and Finance

- ECA in collaboration with Liberia's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, conducted a workshop in Monrovia to train officials on the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT), a digital tool designed to align Liberia's upcoming National Development Plan with regional and global development agendas. Participants praised the toolkit's usability and recommended its expansion to sectoral and county-level planning, with UN Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni emphasizing its potential to strengthen development planning across all 15 counties. [More here.](#)

Technology and Innovation

- In Addis Ababa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure Development Division (TICID), held a workshop to strengthen sustainable transport systems in Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) as part of the 2024–2034 Programme of Action. Participants emphasized the need for regional cooperation, strategic infrastructure investment, and policy alignment to unlock trade opportunities and advance inclusive, climate-resilient development in LLDCs. [Read the full article here.](#)
- Organized under the mandate of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, a technical workshop held on 23 January 2025 in Addis Ababa focused on strengthening the resilience of Africa's civil aviation sector post-COVID-19. Experts, policymakers, and industry leaders emphasized the need for structured crisis management, increased investment in digital infrastructure and cybersecurity, and stronger government support.

ECA's Robert Lisinge and AFRAA's Abderahmane Berthe called for a coordinated framework to build a more sustainable and shock-resilient aviation industry across the continent. [More here.](#)

Climate Resilience

- A Validation Workshop for the **African and Indian Ocean Islands Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP)** was held from January 27-28, 2025, in Mauritius, aiming to refine strategies for promoting a circular economy across the region. [More details can be found here.](#)
- In February 2025, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT held a workshop in Addis Ababa to address the growing impact of climate change on human security in Ethiopia. Using the "Three Horizons" foresight method, participants from government, academia, and civil society examined how climate risks are affecting food, water, and livelihoods, while identifying strategic responses for the future. The workshop called for stronger data systems and integrated, people-centered solutions to tackle the complex links between climate change and human security. [Find out more here.](#)
- In February 2025, over 38 financial experts convened in Cape Town for the «Doing More with Less: Innovating to Tackle Debt and Climate» roundtable, organized by the Sustainable Debt Coalition and the Climate Policy Initiative.

Discussions centered on innovative financial instruments to address unsustainable debt and climate finance gaps in emerging markets. Key topics included debt-for-climate conversions, credit enhancement facilities, and the importance of collaborative institutional efforts to develop actionable policy frameworks ahead of COP30. [Read more here.](#)

Regional Integration and Trade

- Botswana has initiated the development of a National Implementation Strategy for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to enhance its participation and economic diversification. At a National Consultative Forum in Gaborone, Goemeone Mogomotsi, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship, emphasized aligning Botswana's strengths with continental demand to fully leverage the AfCFTA's opportunities. This strategy aims to integrate Botswana into continental value chains, fostering industrial expansion and economic transformation. The AfCFTA, established in 2018, seeks to create a unified market across Africa by eliminating trade barriers, thereby promoting deeper economic integration and sustainable development. The forum, organized in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), gathered diverse stakeholders to shape a comprehensive action plan, providing a clear pathway for private sector engagement and national. [More here.](#)





- the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held its 5th Steering Committee Meeting in Addis Ababa. The gathering included representatives from the AfCFTA Secretariat, Global Affairs Canada, Regional Economic Communities, and various development and private sector partners. The meeting reviewed ATPC's 2024 achievements, endorsed its 2025 work programme and budget, and explored strategies to accelerate the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Discussions emphasized the need for broader stakeholder engagement to ensure the AfCFTA's benefits are widely shared across African societies. [More details here.](#)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union Commission (AUC) convened a two-day meeting in Mombasa, Kenya, bringing together government officials, migration experts, diaspora representatives, private sector actors, civil society, and youth leaders. The gathering aimed to advance the ratification of the African Union's Free Movement of Persons Protocol, emphasizing its potential to drive economic growth and integration across the continent. Participants reviewed and validated a report titled «Enhancing Free Movement of Persons and Pathways for Labour Mobility and Skills Portability in Ghana, Kenya, and Zambia,» part of a broader initiative to reshape the narrative around African migration and dismantle existing mobility barriers. Francis Ikome, Chief of the Regional Integration Section at ECA, highlighted that, contrary to global perceptions of migration as a challenge, within Africa, it serves as a catalyst for opportunity. The meeting underscored the need for accelerated ratification of the protocol to facilitate greater labor mobility and economic integration across African nations. [Find out more.](#)

Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (GPSPD)

- A workshop held in Addis Ababa by ECA's Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (GPSPD) highlighted the role of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in localizing the SDGs. Bringing together policymakers and civil society, the event emphasized the importance of local planning, data, and participation in aligning national goals with community needs. [Read about it here.](#)
- A Senior Officials and Experts Meeting on Dar es Salaam's financial performance assessment was held in Zanzibar on 13-14 February 2025. The meeting brought together high-level representatives from Tanzania and across Africa to review and validate the financial health of Dar es Salaam City and to identify strategies for strengthening its fiscal space amid ongoing urban challenges. [More details here.](#)
- Senior officials and experts from six African city councils—Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, Kigali, Nairobi, Lusaka, and Yaoundé—gathered in Kigali to strategize on enhancing municipal finance for resilient and sustainable urban development. The meeting underscored the critical need for robust financial management to address challenges like rapid urbanization and climate change. Discussions focused on empowering city governments through innovative and sustainable financial strategies to meet both immediate and long-term development goals. [More here.](#)
- ECA announced plans to mobilize stakeholders in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe to enhance urban living conditions through UN-Habitat's Quality of Life Initiative. This initiative utilizes the Quality-of-Life Index, which assesses urban life across nine critical domains, including access to basic services, housing, and economic opportunities. [More here.](#)

- CSW69: The ECA actively participated in the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York, marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30). During a high-level interactive dialogue, ECA's Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete, emphasized Africa's commitment to gender equality and the urgency of removing structural barriers to women's empowerment. He highlighted both progress and persistent challenges in areas such as education, political representation, economic inclusion, and the gender digital divide. Mr. Gatete outlined ECA's strategic priorities, including legal and policy reforms, enhancing gender data and accountability, advocating for debt relief to fund gender-responsive investments, and promoting women's economic resilience and leadership in climate action. Concurrently, ECA commemorated International Women's Day 2025 under the theme: «For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.» This observance celebrated achievements like improved gender parity in education and increased female political participation while acknowledging ongoing challenges such as economic barriers, gender-based violence, and underrepresentation in leadership roles. ECA reaffirmed its dedication to accelerating efforts toward comprehensive gender equality across Africa. [More details here](#).

SRO NORTH AFRICA

- The ECA's subregional office for North Africa held an inception workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, as part of its project on strengthening the migration-development nexus in Africa, for a better understanding of the diaspora's contribution to sustainable development, identification of tools and policies to maximize remittance benefits. [Find out more on the workshop here](#).
- SRO North Africa has been assisting Egypt in enhancing its tax efficiency to bolster domestic revenue mobilization. A recent five-day workshop in Cairo focused on training senior officials from the Egyptian Tax Authority in auditing state-owned enterprises (SOEs) within the cement and food processing industries. This initiative is part of a broader effort to empower tax auditors and establish a unified tax auditing framework, especially within the newly formed Large Taxpayers Centers. With taxes contributing over 75% of Egypt's general revenues, these capacity-building measures are vital for sustaining social programs and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals amid economic challenges. [More here](#).





SRO CENTRAL AFRICA

- SRO Central Africa in collaboration with the African Union, African Development Bank, UNIDO, and UNDP, convened a symposium in Douala to harmonize frameworks for developing new-generation Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Africa. The event brought together experts from ECCAS and CEMAC member states, financial organizations, development partners, and the private sector to accelerate the establishment of SEZs as tools for inclusive and sustainable industrialization and economic diversification in Central Africa. [Read about it here.](#)
- Over 60 experts were convened in Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to address the environmental and social impacts of mining amid the surging global demand for minerals essential to the green energy transition. Recognizing the DRC's strategic reserves of lithium, copper, manganese, nickel, and cobalt—key components for electric vehicle batteries—the workshop emphasized integrating sustainable and inclusive practices into the burgeoning battery and electric vehicle (BEV) regional value chain. [Read the article here.](#)
- ECA organized a session in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to address the challenges and opportunities of developing a climate-resilient blue economy in Central Africa. The session introduced ECA's Blue Economy

Valuation Toolkit (BEVTK), designed to assess the economic, social, and ecological contributions of aquatic resources, thereby informing data-driven policymaking for sustainable development in the sector. [More information here.](#)

- The ECA's Subregional Office for Central Africa convened chief negotiators, national experts, economic operators, and academics to share best practices for implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The consultation revealed that while most Central African countries have completed technical prerequisites, such as notifying tariff offers to the AfCFTA Secretariat, only Cameroon has integrated these offers into its national legal framework, facilitating trade under the Guided Trade Initiative. [Find out more here.](#)

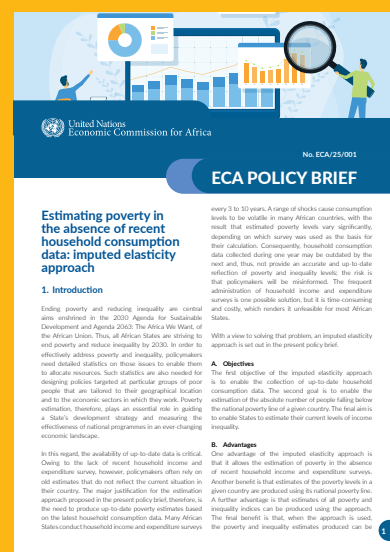
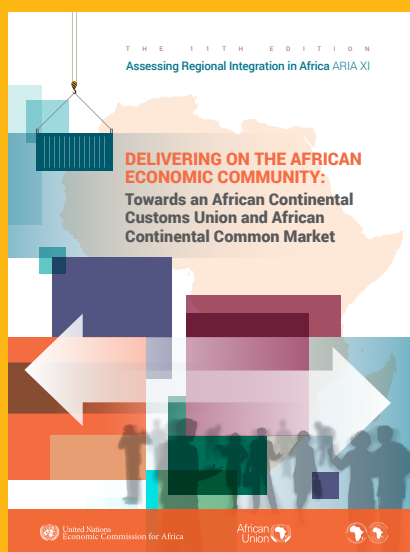
SRO WEST AFRICA

- Togo, with technical assistance from the Subregional Office for West Africa, advanced its commitment to integrating Budgeting Sensitive to Demographic Dividend (BSDD) into its 2026 budget cycle. This initiative aims to optimize public resource allocation by considering demographic dynamics, particularly the needs of the country's predominantly youthful population. [Find out more here.](#)

Knowledge Generation

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

ERA | ARIA | Policy Briefs



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

- **World Summit on the Information Society in Africa (WSIS+20) – 2025 Africa Regional Review**
Theme: Successes, challenges and prospects
Dates: 14–16 May 2025
Location: Cotonou, Benin (hybrid format)

This regional review will bring together stakeholders from across the continent to assess progress since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), identify ongoing challenges, and chart strategic directions for Africa's digital future.

- Learn more here: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/africa-wsis-annual-review-2025>

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=PLcfKpIk33JTgQGtMWgEYcSmQLFXEd3yTz>