

Accelerating Africa's Development to meet the MDGs: Challenges and the Way Forward for Southern Africa



Report of the 13th Intergovernmental
Committee of Experts Meeting for
Southern Africa (ICE)

14 – 16 March 2007
Lusaka, Zambia



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of Experts for Southern Africa (ICE)**

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Report

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Forum
AGR	African Governance Report
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APRM-PoA	African Peer Review Mechanism Program of Actions
AU	African Union Commission
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECA-SA	Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EU	European Union Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Germany Development Agency
EIS-AFRICA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ICE	Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEP	Institute for Economic Development and Planning
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAS-NUL	Institute of Southern African Studies at the National University of Lesotho
ISTD	ICT and Science & Technology Division
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCI	Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NDCs	National development Plans
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NEPRU	Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NGOCC	NGO Coordinating Committee
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OIOS	Office for Internal Oversight Services
OSAA	United Nations Office of the Special Advisor for Africa
PPP	Public Private Partnerships

PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PSDA	Private Sector Development Association of Zambia
RCM	Regional Consultation Meeting
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SARDC	Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre
SAHRIT	Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa
SARPN	Southern African regional Poverty Network
SATUCC	Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIPO	Strategic Indicative Policy Organ
SROs	Sub-Regional Offices
SRO-SA	Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WLSA	Women in Law in Southern Africa
WTO	World Trade Organisation

INTRODUCTION

The 13th Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meeting of the Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office (ECA-SA) was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 14-16 March 2007. The meeting was held under the theme “*Accelerating Africa’s Development to meet the MDGs: Challenges and the Way Forward for Southern Africa*”.

The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts comprises senior Government experts from southern African countries, who supervise the work of the Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office and ensures that the development priorities of the sub region are fully addressed in the UNECA programme of work.

The major objective of the thirteenth ICE meeting was for Southern Africa to take stock of progress it was making towards achieving the MDGs. In 2005, the ECA-SA Office undertook a study, which reviewed the status and trends in meeting the MDGs in southern Africa. The report found that progress was very uneven with a number of countries experiencing a deterioration in human development compared to the preceding decade. Among the chief reasons for the deterioration was the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Southern African Countries also continued to face high poverty levels and income inequalities, food insecurity, environmental degradation and resource constraints in meeting their full developmental needs.

As the mid way point of the MDGs approaches in September 2007, the Economic Commission for Africa southern African office has conducted another assessment. The outcome of the 2007 assessment shows that the levels of poverty have not declined as expected and the target of halving the number of people living on less than 1\$ per day seems unachievable by 2015 for the region as a whole. In some of the countries, poverty levels have actually increased! In respect of HIV and AIDS, the epicentre of the pandemic remains firmly in Southern Africa with the sub region showing the highest HIV prevalence in the world. Poverty, HIV and AIDS coupled with the persistent high income inequalities and inadequate budgets for the social sectors have all led to reversals in the human development index for many of the countries in the sub region.

Clearly, urgent intervention is required if southern African countries, as a whole, have to achieve the MDGs. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts reviewed the above and other challenges faced by Southern African countries, which impede the achievement of the MDGs. They particularly addressed the impact of the macro-economic policies and the backward and forward linkages to job creation, the role of the private sector; and the social dimensions, especially the challenges that governments face. The meeting proposed a number of interventions to accelerate the attainment of the MDGs in southern Africa. These have been summarised in a policy statement issued at the end of the meeting. This is included in this report.

POLICY BRIEF (March 2007)

Accelerating Africa's Development to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Introduction

All countries in the world have committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, assessment by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) shows that progress in the Southern African sub-region is not sufficient to meet this deadline. Some countries in the sub-region are even moving further away from some of the goals. This policy brief outlines the current economic and social conditions in the sub-region, discusses challenges for accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs, and develops a number of key policy recommendations for the sub region. The brief captures the major outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the Economic Commission for Africa, Southern African Office (ECA-SA), which was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 14 – 16 March 2007.

Social and Economic Performance in the Sub-region

There have been some improvements in the broad macro-economic fundamentals in the region in the recent past. Economic growth was 5.4% in 2006 and is projected to remain the same for 2007, and inflation is being tamed in most countries. However, economic growth has not trickled down to the poor. Indeed, in some countries experiencing high growth rates, such as Angola, poverty is rife. Similarly, Botswana, with a consistently high growth rate over the decades, has pockets of poverty. Growth is therefore not a panacea to poverty reduction. What is of critical importance is how economic benefits stemming from such growth is distributed to reach the poor and rural communities to enable these to also become productive themselves.

HIV and AIDS prevalence also remains high with 42% of people living with the disease in sub-Saharan Africa now being in the Southern African sub-region; and one third of global AIDS deaths now occurring in southern Africa. Prevalence rates in selected countries in the sub-region are: Swaziland (33.4%), Botswana (24.1%), Lesotho (23.2%), Zimbabwe (20.1%), Namibia (19.6%) and Zambia (19%). AIDS orphans have reached a high of more than a million in South Africa alone. Other countries with large populations of AIDS orphans include Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

Key Challenges Identified in Achieving the MDGs

The thirteenth ICE meeting identified the following major impediments to the achievement of the MDGs:

1. While economic growth is a necessary condition for meeting the MDGs, growth alone is not sufficient and a big challenge remains in translating this growth into

- wealth creation for the benefit of the vast majority of the population, which continues to live in abject poverty.
2. SADC Governments are responding to the social dimensions of the MDGs through regional commitments and in-country strategies, even though progress is still below expectations. As such, SADC Governments should not only develop protocols around the core social dimensions of the MDGs but should devise systems of closely monitoring the implementation of these commitments.
 3. Capacity constraints in terms of both human and financial resources hamper efforts towards achieving the MDGs. Much effort is expended in attracting foreign direct investments, ignoring completely the need to mobilize internally generated investment, which is more sustainable and would enable the continent to be in control of its own development.
 4. Parliaments and civil societies in many countries also face capacity constraints in trying to engage in national policy debates and outcomes. Institutionalisation of political pluralism and participatory approaches to policymaking, including the establishment of formal channels to incorporate the inputs of opposition parties and the civil society into government policies is key to the development of a fully-functional tripartite alliance.

Policy recommendations

In recognition of the above challenges, the meeting made the following key recommendations:

1. Since the majority of the population in Southern Africa live in rural areas, any effort to tackle poverty must address the imbalance in allocation of resources that continues to marginalize the rural communities. There is need to increase access to productive resources such as financing and agricultural inputs; access to land and improve rural infrastructure.
2. Governments should use the improved macroeconomic environment to provide resources to build infrastructure and capacity that would set the basis for a more balanced and sustainable growth. The fiscal space created by improved growth rates should enable an injection of more resources to social sectors, paying particular attention to the quality of education and health. There is need to increase investment in, and maintenance of, improved water sources, sanitation and alternative sources of energy particularly in rural areas.
3. Member States are urged to entrench political governance through popular participation in policy making, and addressing issues of party political funding and improved electoral systems. They must work hard on the implementation of various protocols that they have signed.
4. In order to maintain the gains in broad macroeconomic conditions, good economic governance should include transparent and accountable systems such as clear and stable laws and regulations; a high level of competence in government;

fiscal, budgetary and monetary discipline; and participatory budgetary processes. To enforce adherence to MDG targets, a rights-based approach, which makes government accountable to its citizenry through, for example the constitution, is needed. Economic management organizations such as the central banks and revenue commissions should be strengthened and given operational independence.

5. The private sector is already investing in the MDGs at a business level and in the case of primary education it has become a significant provider in several Southern African countries. Creating a policy environment for the private sector to thrive, particularly in manufacturing for value addition to natural resources, which in turn will create jobs, is a key policy issue. More attention should be paid to value-addition to raw materials, and economic diversification. There is need to direct more attention to increasing the level of domestic private sector investment, as a counterpart to foreign direct investment. Governments should mobilize domestic resources through appropriate tax policies including improved collection of taxes.

6. Given that the MDGs are a global compact, developed countries should honour commitments made to increase the quantity and quality of overseas development assistance to least developed countries and to harmonize their policies to align aid with the priorities of recipient countries.

Conclusions

In making the above recommendations the meeting is mindful that strong political will is necessary if the millennium development goals are to be achieved by 2015. Governments therefore need to provide the necessary leadership to galvanize all stakeholders to fully play their respective roles. Only then can the vision of a Southern Africa free of poverty, hunger, and disease; a Southern Africa with better-educated children, equal opportunities for women and a healthier environment be realised.

**DONE ON 16TH MARCH 2007 AT THE 13TH ICE MEETING IN LUSAKA,
ZAMBIA.**

A. ATTENDANCE

1. Representatives from the following member States attended the meeting: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
2. The following intergovernmental, United Nations and development partner organizations participated in the meeting: African Union Commission (AUC); Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); African Development Bank (AfDB); European Union (EU); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Zambia; Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); German Development Agency (GTZ); Swedish Development Agency (SIDA); and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).
3. A number of civil society, research and private sector organizations also attended the meeting. These were: Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR); Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU); Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ); Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI); Institute of Southern African Studies of the National University of Lesotho (ISAS-NUL); NGO Coordinating Committee (NGOCC); Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EIS-AFRICA); Private Sector Development Association of Zambia (PSDA); the Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa (SAHRIT); Southern African regional Poverty Network (SARPN); Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC); Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC); Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF); and Women and Law in Southern Africa, (WLSA).

B. OPENING OF THE MEETING

(Agenda item 1)

4. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Thabsile Mlangeni, Principal Finance Officer from the Kingdom of Swaziland and outgoing Chairperson of the ICE, the Director of ECA-SA, Ms Jennifer Kargbo and Hon. Jonas Shakafuswa, Deputy Minister of Finance and National Planning of the Republic of Zambia.
5. In her statement, Ms. Thabsile Mlangeni informed the meeting that she had followed closely the activities of the ECA-SA Office during 2006. She expressed satisfaction with the progress made in implementing the activities planned for the Office. She noted that the Office had successfully convened a meeting to review a study on the impact of food aid and subsidies on food security sustainability and had organized two training workshops on ICTs for Ambassadors and Parliamentarians in the sub region. She reiterated the important role the Office continued to play in the sub region through technical assistance and policy advice to member States, and to COMESA and SADC.
6. Ms Mlangeni underscored the importance of the theme of the 13th ICE meeting and emphasized that it provided an opportunity for the sub region to assess progress made

towards the MDGs, identify the challenges faced and propose strategies for their attainment by 2015. She emphasized that the review was a platform for sharing experiences and, in this regard, invited the delegates to fully contribute to the discussions. Ms Mlangeni reminded them that their input was important in shaping the future work of the Office. She thanked the delegates and the ECA-SA Office for the support she and the Bureau had received during their tenure of office.

7. Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, the Director of ECA-SA, welcomed the delegates to the meeting. She thanked the Government and people of Zambia through Hon. Jonas Shakafuswa, for facilitating the work of the Office and providing it with support and guidance. She informed the meeting of the ongoing reforms at ECA aimed at deepening the existing collaborative activities with the RECs, which have been particularly directed at facilitating policy dialogue, programme harmonization, and providing technical assistance and advisory services. ECA's repositioning exercise and the new package of reforms contained a wide range of both programmatic and operational improvements.

8. The programmatic improvements focused on two pillars, namely *Promoting Regional Integration in Support of the African Union Vision and Priorities* and *Meeting Africa's Special Needs and Emerging Global Challenges in Support of NEPAD and MDGs*, which both resonated well with the global and continental priorities. She also informed the meeting about the General Assembly's approval to strengthen the sub-regional Offices to play an enhanced role in the delivery of the work programme as contained in the Secretary General's Action Plan on Enhancing the Role of ECA's Sub regional Offices. The most significant change was the increased levels of cooperation with RECs through the joint development of multi-year programmes. In this regard, the ECA-SA Office was consulting with both SADC and COMESA on the development of multi-year programmes. Underlying these was the emphasis on establishing partnerships and networking with all development partners and stakeholders including civil society and private sector institutions.

9. On the theme of the meeting, the Director highlighted areas in which Southern African countries had achieved progress in attaining the MDGs including the following: increased Government budget allocation to support the goals; improved policies and institutions, particularly with regard to macroeconomic policy; public financial management; and government accountability, including tackling corruption.

10. Ms. Jennifer Kargbo outlined a number of challenges to the attainment of the MDGs. These included: ensuring that the benefits of growth were shared through re-directing resources to enhance the productive potential of the poor; creating a policy environment for the private sector to thrive, particularly in creating manufacturing value-added from natural resources; improving market access for the sub region's products; making the agriculture sector more productive; leveraging regional integration to improve infrastructure, as well as building capacity to deliver essential services in health, sanitation, water supply and education.

11. In conclusion, she expressed hope that the Committee's deliberations would result in implementable recommendations, which would provide further impetus to the implementation of Southern Africa's Development agenda.

12. Hon. Jonas Shakafuswa Deputy Minister of Finance and National Planning of the Republic of Zambia, welcomed participants to Zambia and thanked them for making time to attend the 13th Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meeting.

13. He recalled the beginnings of the MDGs in September 2000 when world leaders assembled in New York and agreed on a common vision of a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, a world with better educated children, equal opportunities for women, and a healthier environment; and a world in which developed and developing countries worked in equitable partnership.

14. The Minister regretted that progress on the ground had not fully matched the vision of the World Leaders. The situation was more foreboding than before as poverty levels had increased in some countries in the subregion. The HIV and AIDS prevalence also remained high with 42% of people living with the disease in sub-Saharan Africa residing in Southern Africa and one third of global deaths occurring in the subregion.

15. Although aggregate economic growth stood at 5.4% in 2006, the subregion had not done enough to be confident that the MDGs would be achieved by 2015. He added that the Governments of the subregion essentially understood what was required to be done. For example, Governments understood the importance of mainstreaming the MDGs into national development plans, including providing more opportunities for women and better public services to rural communities. Governments further understood that social spending had to increase in the national budgets. However, capacity constraints in terms of both human and financial resources continued to hamper efforts towards achieving the MDGs. Unfavourable global trade terms were further unhelpful towards raising the required resources while overseas development assistance had not kept pace with the mounting needs of the region.

16. The Minister stated that more effort was therefore required to expand economies in the region along with an expansion in employment creation and greater attempts to attract both domestic and foreign investments. Only through wealth creation could governments put more money in people's pockets – and hence more food on the table, more children in schools, and much healthier communities.

17. Turning to his country, the Minister stated that Zambia had focused its strategy on wealth creation. As a direct result of recent policy changes a reasonable economic growth rate had been achieved, including bringing inflation down to single digits for the first time in 30 years, the production of a surplus in staple foods, and an increase in investment in the mining, agriculture and tourism sectors. Social spending had also increased directly in line with the favourable economic climate.

18. In conclusion, the Minister challenged the experts to interrogate the structural elements of southern African economies and what needed to be done to diversify them. The ICE should assist the region move from descriptions of symptoms to road maps for addressing the intractable structural weakness that prevented the subregion from developing more robust and sustainable economies.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Election of Officers

(Agenda item 2)

19. The meeting elected the following countries to the bureau:

Chair	:	Zambia
Vice Chair	:	Malawi
Rapporteur	:	Zimbabwe

Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

(Agenda Item 3)

20. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of the Bureau
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work
4. Review of the Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa in 2006.
5. Presentations and discussion on the theme of the meeting – *“Accelerating Africa’s Development to meet the MDGs: Challenges and the Way Forward for Southern Africa”*
6. Review of UN support to the Implementation of NEPAD.
7. Review of Progress on Governance in Southern Africa
8. Review of the Work of ECA
 - Report of ECA work in Southern Africa
 - Reports from ECA Headquarter Divisions and IDEP
 - ECA’s 2008/2009 Programme of Work and priorities.
9. Reports from Cooperating Partners
10. Any Other Business
11. Date and venue of the next meeting
12. Adoption of the Report
13. Closure of the meeting

21. The meeting adopted the following hours of work:

Morning:	09.00 - 13.00 Hours
Afternoon:	14.30 – 17.30 Hours

Review of the Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa in 2006

(Agenda item 4)

22. The Secretariat introduced the report ECA/SA/ICE/2007/3 on Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa in 2006. The report outlined the global economic performance for 2006 and outlook for 2007 as well as the Sub-regional comparative economic performance. The implications of the world economy to Southern Africa were also outlined. In 2006, world economic growth had improved slightly to 3.8 percent from 3.5 per cent in 2005. World prices for African commodities had risen due to buoyant demand, and the depreciation of the United States dollar. This in turn enabled Southern African exporters of minerals to improve their external accounts and offset the negative effects of high oil prices on terms of trade.

23. Overall, some countries in the sub-region registered a marked increase in GDP with growth rates in 2006 of 7.9% to 19.5%. However, aggregate GDP growth in the sub-region declined from 5.6% in 2005 to 5.4% in 2006.

24. From the viewpoint of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the report stated that Southern African countries still faced difficulties in raising GDP growth rates and sustaining them at high levels over an extended period.. Very few countries had achieved a sustained growth rate of at least 7% necessary to reduce poverty. Even in those countries experiencing high growth rates, poverty was still high.

25. Major macroeconomic factors that influenced economic performance in the sub-region included: inflation, exchange rates, fiscal performance and trade balances. Economic, political and corporate governance as well as the on going efforts towards macroeconomic policy convergence also influenced economic performance in the sub-region.

26. Although inflation rose in a number of countries in the sub region, it remained within SADC's single digit Macroeconomic Policy Convergence criteria with the exception of Angola and Zimbabwe. Some countries in the sub region experienced depreciation of their currencies while others, like Angola and Zambia, experienced an appreciation mainly due to large inflows of foreign exchange from oil and mineral exports, respectively.

27. The report pointed out that a large inflow of foreign exchange from oil and mineral exports could potentially lead to an economic problem known as the Dutch Disease syndrome, where the dominant natural resource sector usurps the development of other economic sectors thereby distorting national economic growth. If not managed, large inflows of foreign exchange from oil, diamond and copper exports could lead to an appreciation of the real exchange rate and an increase in prices of non-oil or mineral goods with a potential to reduce the competitiveness of non-oil and mineral exports.

28. Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia received debt forgiveness in 2005 and 2006 leading to significant reductions of their debt stock. As a result, Zambia was no longer a

highly indebted country. As regards trade, performance continued to be characterized by trade deficits. Trade continued to be with mostly the EU, China and India. Intra-SADC trade remained at only 10-20%.

29. On economic and corporate governance, the report noted that Southern African countries were increasingly adopting good economic and corporate governance practices such as in fiscal discipline, budget control, audits and overall public expenditure management. As for macroeconomic policy convergence, this had become one of the top priorities of regional integration in Southern Africa. Attempts to monitor progress towards its achievement were under way but needed support.

30. At sectoral level, the performance was mixed. In agriculture the report noted that although food availability from the 2006 harvest had generally been satisfactory, access to food remained a problem for the nearly 3.1 million resource poor people in the sub region. The mining sector continued to experience improved performance. For example, in Botswana and Zambia, the sector grew by 9% and 11.8% respectively, while with the development of a new mine in Lesotho, export earnings increased by 86.9%.

31. Most countries continued to record positive growth rates in the manufacturing sector as a result of emphasis on value addition. A number of transport infrastructure projects involving several countries were being implemented under the COMESA/SADC transit transport facilitation programme with support from the Sub-Sahara Africa Transport Policy Programme and the NEPAD Infrastructure and Services component. In the energy sector, a number of regional inter-connector projects were in the pipeline or being implemented. Governments were facilitating negotiations for the financing of new hydropower projects to militate against the power deficits in the SADC region anticipated during 2007/2008.

32. In the Gender and Development area, progress continued to be recorded at decision-making levels. For example representation at legislature ranged from 5.4% in Tanzania to 16.6% in Zimbabwe with lady Prime Ministers in Angola and Mozambique, and Vice Presidents in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Gender disaggregated data, however, continued to be a constraint for gender inclusive policy design.

33. In relation to the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, countries such as Malawi and Swaziland had adopted new ICT policies. In the case of Botswana, a liberalisation package was implemented in 2006 coupled with the provision of rural telecommunications services. While mobile telephone coverage continued to record rapid expansion in all the Southern African countries, unit costs of operation remained high.

34. With respect to social conditions, the report noted that population growth rates in most countries were positive with the exception of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. On migration, the report further noted that the majority of people in the sub-region lived in rural areas with the exception of Botswana and South Africa. Apart from Mauritius, most countries in the sub region registered negative net migration rates.

35. On HIV and AIDS, the report observed that prevalence in the sub-region remained the highest in the continent. The infection rates were as follows: Swaziland (33.4%), Botswana (24.1%), Lesotho (23.2%), Zimbabwe (20.1%), Namibia (19.6%) and Zambia (19%). Orphans due to AIDS related deaths had reached a high of more than a million orphans in South Africa. Other countries with large populations of AIDS orphans included Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

36. On water and sanitation, the report observed that access to water supply had improved but the majority of the population in the sub-region do not have access to improved sanitation.

37. The report outlined a number of policy recommendations covering macroeconomic performance, sectoral developments and social developments.

- **With regard to macroeconomic performance**, the major policy recommendations related to currency appreciation and diversifying national economies. These included:
 - (i)
 - i. the creation of short-term strategies to manage boom earnings from oil and mineral exports; (ii) improvement in the coordination between the fiscal policy and the exchange rate policy; and (iii) the adoption of prudent fiscal policies to complement improve the absorption capacity of boom period earnings.
- **Good economic governance** should include transparent and accountable systems such as clear and stable laws and regulations; a high level of competence in government; fiscal, budgetary and monetary discipline, and participatory budgetary processes.
- **Macroeconomic policy and institutional convergence** achievement required a regular and systematic assessment by national authorities, RECs and ECA.

38. The sectoral recommendations were as follows:

- **Agriculture and Food security** would require the management of the real exchange rate and increased investment to improve agricultural production as a strategy to diversification. Agriculture and Food security would also require increased smallholder access to productive resources including land and extension services.
- **The mining sector** needed a more competitive and transparent licensing system to encourage all potential mine operators and generate an increase in state revenues
- **Transport infrastructure and services** could benefit from innovative private public partnership arrangements to be developed.

- **Manufacturing sector** should emphasise value addition with a special focus on agro-industry and downstream mining activities such as production of copper wire in Zambia.

39. With respect to **gender and development**, more efforts were needed to build the capacity of national experts to collect gender-disaggregated data to enhance integration of gender perspectives in the development process

40. In discussing the report, the Committee noted with satisfaction that growth rates in the sub-region had improved. However it expressed concern that this growth had not trickled down to the poor. Indeed, in some countries experiencing high growth rates, such as Angola, poverty was rife. Similarly, Botswana, with a consistently high growth rate over the decades, had pockets of poverty. Participants therefore concluded that growth was not a panacea to poverty reduction. What was of critical importance is how economic benefits stemming from such growth were distributed to reach the poor and rural communities to enable these to also become productive themselves.

41. The Committee expressed displeasure at the sub-region's propensity to export raw materials. It observed that this minimized the benefits from increased trade with the rest of the world. More attention should be paid to value adding activities while rich nations needed to open their markets to Africa's manufactured goods. This would help countries in the sub region to diversify their economies from mineral and other resource sectors.

42. In discussing China and India's relationship with Africa, the Committee emphasized that Africa could not fully benefit from the relationship by exporting only raw materials. Furthermore, the region needed to be particularly mindful of the concessionary loans coming from China. These threatened to take many countries to heavy indebtedness that they have just emerged from under the HIPC Initiative and this could undermine diversification of the economies. Countries should align the loans to the strategic needs of their national economies.

43. The Committee expressed deep concern that much effort was expended in attracting foreign direct investments, ignoring completely the need to mobilize internally generated investment. This was more sustainable and would enable the continent to be in control of its own development process. Further the Committee was concerned that private sector investment could be worse than that from the public sector if not underpinned by a sound competition policy. Examples were cited from the mobile telephony where private sector entrance had led to higher prices than those under government.

44. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- **Governments should ensure that the current growth rates are translated into benefits that trickle down to communities and the most marginalized groups such as women and children.**

- **Governments should use the improved macroeconomic environment to provide resources to build infrastructure and capacity that would set the basis for a more balanced and sustainable growth.**
- **Member States should make greater effort to diversify and export more value added goods. The sub region should take advantage of WTO rules and where necessary work to change the rules of trade for its benefit.**
- **Governments should mobilize domestic resources through appropriate tax policies including improved collection of taxes.**
- **Governments should strengthen and enforce appropriate competition policies.**
- **ECA should take stock of what countries are doing to implement existing protocols on such areas as gender, mining, food security, trade, transport, and others.**
- **ECA should beef up its efforts to assist in building capacity in the sub region, especially in human resources, and assist countries to build an environment that would ensure that this human capital is retained.**

Presentations and discussion on the theme of the meeting – “Accelerating Africa’s Development to meet the MDGs: Challenges and the Way Forward for Southern Africa
(Agenda item 5)

45. The Secretariat presented the report ECA/SA/ICE/2007/4 on Progress and Prospects for the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Southern Africa. The report reviewed progress being made towards the achievement of the MDGs in Southern Africa in the eleven countries served by ECA-SA. It also discussed the supportive environment and the challenges faced by governments and proposed strategies towards achieving the MDGs in the sub region.

46. The review showed that the sub-region was likely to achieve the universal primary education goal. However, poverty, food insecurity, gender inequality in secondary and tertiary levels of education, and in the economic and political spheres all remained major challenges. Further challenges included high child and maternal mortality; deforestation, rural water supply and sanitation. While child immunization coverage had generally been high, the trend was falling and this was a cause for concern. The region remained the epicentre of HIV and AIDS with double-digit prevalence, underlying the high morbidity, mortality and orphan burden.

47. The report stressed that the above was happening against the backdrop of declining official development assistance (ODA) and a high debt burden. In order to accelerate progress towards the attainment of MDGs, interventions should transcend the symptomatic treatment of poverty and food insecurity and begin to address the structural causes of these problems through broad based comprehensive development strategies. Southern Africa needed to implement comprehensive agrarian reform programmes that included greater access to productive land, support to improve agricultural productivity, environmental conservation and creation of decent employment opportunities. National budget allocations should continue to emphasise the social sectors, paying particular attention to quality of education and health. There was need to increase investment in,

and maintenance of, improved water sources, sanitation and alternative sources of energy particularly in rural areas. Gender equality and women empowerment should remain a priority for the sub region with all policies and programmes being gender-sensitive not just in both design but also in implementation.

48. Given that the MDGs were a global compact, developed countries should honour their commitments made at different international fora to increase the quantity and quality of ODA to least developed countries and to harmonize their policies to align aid with the needs of recipient countries. Global and local partnerships with all stakeholders such as the private sector, NGOs, civil society and communities were pivotal to the attainment of MDGs.

49. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion comprising five discussants. The discussant from the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) addressed the impact of macroeconomic policies on the attainment of the MDGs.

50. In his presentation, he stated that appropriate macroeconomic policies and frameworks lay at the centre of the attainment of the millennium development goals (MDGs) by member States in Southern Africa. Fundamentally, macroeconomic policy consisted of the triad of monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policies. Within the broad objectives of macroeconomic policies, governments in the region aimed to promote high growth rates, maintain low inflation levels and reduce government borrowings.

51. The kind of macroeconomic policies pursued determined the pace to achieving the MDGs. Macroeconomic policy also affected its rate of wealth accumulation as it determined access to productive assets, returns on these assets as well as access to social services. While growth was highly critical to the attainment of the MDGs, even more cardinal was the distribution of the gains from economic growth for poverty reduction. It was evident that where an increase in national income favoured the poorer sections of the population (particularly women and youth) it did much more to reduce poverty than if income was concentrated in the hands of those already well off. In this regard, supportive macroeconomic policies and more direct interventions to support 'growth with livelihoods and equity' required a focus on a new macro economic framework, including a re-examination of the role of development partners.

52. The discussant stressed that given the many development challenges in Southern Africa, it was important to up scale the intake of development aid and at the same time as increase public spending in areas that were critical to the attainment of MDGs. Policies should therefore be put in place to ensure that there was absorptive capacity to manage increased aid flows to avoid distortions in the economies. There was also need for governments to strike a delicate balance between inflation management and increased public spending in critical focus areas.

53. The discussant from the International Labour Organization (ILO) presented the new global agenda on decent work whose primary objective was to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom,

equity, security and human dignity. The decent work agenda was underpinned by strategic objectives aimed at rights, dignity, safety and protection, and voice and dialogue. A crosscutting element of this agenda is gender equality. The discussant also provided examples of decent work country programmes. He indicated that so far nine countries in the subregion had embraced the programme and gave the example of Zambia's experience which focused on job creation for women, youth and persons with disabilities, prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS in the workplace and the elimination of worst forms of child labour.

54. The representative from the Private Sector Development Association of Zambia (PSDA) pointed to the need to involve the private sector if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved. He gave the example of Zambia where the private sector had been identified by Governments and Civil Society as an essential partner for the attainment of the MDGs. The private sector had already invested in the MDGs at a business level and in the case of primary education, it had even become the lead service provider. He stressed that it should be understood that private sector investment in the MDGs was not out of benevolence, but out of a need to create win-win partnerships. Government could motivate the private sector to invest at much higher levels to ensure that the MDGs were attained within a few years. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) with built in concessionary measures and incentives on investment should be explored. The big challenge was for a sincere partnership to underpin the tripartite team of Government, Civil Society and the Private sector. A consultative and collaborative partnership would ensure that economic and social development was enhanced and that upliftment of societies took place.

55. The discussant from Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) addressed the social dimension with regard to the attainment of the MDGs. She observed that Southern African countries faced many social challenges, which were mostly MDGs centred. On the one hand, SADC Governments had responded through the development of various treaties and protocols urging member States to set up objectives, cooperate and define the scope for commitment on various issues, including, addressing the poverty situation through social and economic strategies. To date, SADC governments had signed a number of protocols on Health (Maputo, 1999), Education (Blantyre, July 2000) and Water and Sanitation (Abuja Ministerial **Declaration on Water**, 2002).

56. In addition to protocols, countries across Southern Africa had implemented various national strategies aligned to the achievement of the social dimensions of the MDGs. Many of these strategies had been in the form of World Bank/IMF initiated Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and more recently, nationally driven National Development Plans (NDPs). Many PRSPs reflected a number of MDGs. Reviews from the Zambia and Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategies and National Development plans reflected this assessment while the South African Governments response to enshrine the social dimensions, such as Health and Education, as explicit rights in its constitution was noteworthy.

57. Indications therefore suggested that SADC Governments were responding to the social dimensions of the MDGs through both regional commitments and in-country strategies though progress was still below expectations. However, SADC Governments should not only develop protocols around the core social dimensions of the MDGs but, through SADC, should devise systems of closely monitoring the implementation of these commitments. Citizens should hold governments accountable to delivering their social commitments directly and through their mandated representatives to parliaments. To this end, the capacity of parliaments should be strengthened to take charge of this function. In addition, Civil Society had a critical role in engaging Governments and Parliamentarians in a call to action. In terms of the quality of aid, poor countries should be offered grants rather than loans for social service provision.

58. The discussant from the MDGs, Poverty Analysis and Monitoring Section of the Africa Centre for Gender and Social Development in ECA emphasized the need to integrate national development strategies with the MDGs and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to avoid the proliferation of parallel institutions and the dissipation of limited financial and human resources. He stressed that both the MDGs and APRM Program of Actions (APRM-PoA) could be successfully achieved through a coherent strategic framework.

59. The process of integrating the APRM and MDGs with the PRS involved creating an MDGs-based PRS and linking the APRM-PoA to various phases of the PRS; consultation; policy design, financing and; monitoring and evaluation. Ghana and Rwanda had the longest experience in integrating the APRM with the PRS. In Ghana, the institution responsible for drafting the PRS (National Development Planning Commission) participated in the preparation of the PoA to ensure links between the PoA and PRS. Similarly, in Rwanda, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction strategy (EDPRS) Sector Working Groups comprising civil society, private sector, public sector, development partners and media had committed to incorporating the POA in their respective sector programs. However, Ghana's Planning Ministry had a limited role in costing the APRM-PoA. The Ministerial Committee chaired by the Minister for Regional Cooperation and NEPAD coordinated the costing.

60. Notwithstanding country level experiences the integration could benefit from a standard framework that assisted countries that had either been peer reviewed or just about to be reviewed. To this end ECA would initiate a training program aimed at building the capacity of member States to carry out the integration process.

61. In discussing the presentations, the Committee expressed concern about some of the statistics used in the ECA-SA report presented by the Secretariat. In light of the lack of uniform data from the member States, the Committee urged national statistical offices in the sub region to harmonize data collection methods.

62. The Committee indicated that, while job creation should be an integral component in programmes to achieve the MDGs, governments should monitor the extent to which labour conventions and protocols were adhered to by the private sector. It noted that the

supervisory mechanism for monitoring the implementation of these conventions/protocols was through submission of annual reports to ILO and that the ILO was working with governments and employers to build national capacities to implement the conventions. The Committee urged Governments to improve resource allocations to the ministries of labour to allow them to fulfil their mandate. Furthermore, there was need to fight cultural practices which perpetuate the exploitation of women in the workplace. In this regard, a strong partnership involving government, the private sector and civil society could play a key role in ensuring that gender equality was mainstreamed into national policies and programmes.

63. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the positive numbers in terms of primary education enrolment. However, it noted that quality issues needed to be addressed. In that regard, governments should allocate adequate resources to upgrade infrastructure and service delivery in the education sector.

64. In respect of HIV and AIDS, the Committee noted that the high maternal and child mortality was not only due to the pandemic but due to poor resource allocation to the health sector, lack of drugs, insufficient focus on obstetric care and shortages of health care staff due to the brain drain. The Committee underscored the need to pay particular attention to the causes of high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in order to implement appropriate policy responses to the pandemic. In that regard, the meeting recommended that access to treatment, especially for rural women and children, be enhanced. The issue of gender-based violence and human trafficking, as contributors to the pandemic, should also be tackled. The Committee observed that the ongoing decentralization process and community participation be enhanced in order to improve social service delivery. Furthermore, it noted the need for greater accountability through public expenditure tracking instruments such as Medium Term Expenditure Framework. To enforce adherence to MDG targets, a rights-based approach, which makes government accountable to its citizens through, for example the constitution, is needed. The Committee noted that the attainment of MDGs could be accelerated through an integration of the APRM, PRSs and national development frameworks with the MDGs.

65. The Committee adopted the report of the Secretariat and made the following recommendations:

- **Governments should ensure that the benefits of growth are shared to enhance the productive potential of the poor; including access to productive resources. This required the implementation of comprehensive agrarian reform programmes that provide for greater access to land, and improvement in productivity through the provision of inputs particularly to smallholder farmers. Environmental conservation should be implemented as part of the agrarian reform;**
- **Governments should build national capacities to ratify, domesticate and implement international conventions including those focusing on labour and provide adequate resources to Ministries of Labour to enable them to monitor the adherence to labour laws and regulations by employers. To this**

- end, a range of stakeholders should be involved in capacity building activities for wider impact and for taking the decent work agenda forward;**
- **Governments should develop a strong partnership with the private sector and civil society. Social rights related to the MDGs should be enshrined in the various Bill of rights of the countries constitutions. Governments should further create a conducive policy environment to enable the private sector to thrive especially in value addition industries;**
 - **National Statistical Offices should place emphasis on developing poverty related statistics and make these available for planning purposes;**
 - **Governments should allocate adequate budgetary resources to the social sectors with emphasis on improving the quality of education and healthcare, as well as including local government in social service delivery. Governments should further scale up interventions to address HIV/AIDS and in this respect provide strong political leadership;**
 - **Governments should increase investment in and maintenance of improved water and sanitation as well as alternative sources of energy particularly in rural areas. This is also an area where local government should participate;**
 - **Governments should mainstream gender in all policies and programmes including actions to scale up the representation of women in key decision making institutions and processes;**
 - **Developed countries should honour commitments to increase the quality and quantity of ODA to developing countries.**
 - **Countries that have acceded to the APRM should work to integrate it with the PRS and MDGs**

Review of UN support to the Implementation of NEPAD

(Agenda item 6)

66. The Secretariat presented the report ECA/SA/ICE/2007 on the Review of UN Support to the Implementation of NEPAD. The report stated that since its adoption in 2002, NEPAD had become the main support mechanism by the United Nations to African countries. In this regard, there were three levels of support: a) at the global level coordinated by the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA), b) the regional level where the Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM) takes place, and c) the country level where the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) operate within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

67. Southern Africa had established various coordination mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of NEPAD. These included alignment of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan to the NEPAD Framework. To this end, the SRO-SA worked closely with both RECs to assist in the operationalisation of their respective work programmes.

68. In respect of the Regional Consultation Meeting, its objective was to enhance cooperation and coordination between the United Nations organisations and the African intergovernmental machinery. The RCM was structured around the priority areas of

NEPAD and organised around nine thematic clusters with each cluster convened by a different UN agency. The recommendations of the last RCM held in November 2006 included the following:

- Strengthening the role of ECA as convener of the RCM;
- Strengthening the SROs to enable them respond to the implementation of NEPAD at the subregional level;
- Improving cooperation and coordination between the AU, RECs and the United Nations;
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation, and reporting of outcomes;
- Mobilising resources for the implementation of NEPAD; and
- Enhancing partnerships to facilitate the implementation of NEPAD

69. With regard to the way forward, the Secretariat indicated that ECA had signed an MoU with NEPAD and was engaging the RECs to better define its support to them. Further ECA planned to position a senior member of staff at the SADC Secretariat to improve dialogue with the REC. There was also a need to improve the integration of NEPAD in the development programmes at the member State level.

70. The Secretariat requested the ICE to endorse ECA's overall coordination of UN support to NEPAD.

71. In the ensuing discussions, the Committee raised issues pertaining to: a) the NEPAD- Secretariat and AU Commission relationship, b) modalities for coordination of the RCM with Regional Economic Communities, c) the relationship between ECA and UN country teams.

72. Regarding the relationship between the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission, the Secretariat informed the meeting that in 2003 in Maputo, the AU Heads of State and Government had decided that NEPAD should be integrated into the AU within three years. The process was well under way in terms of programme, structure and processes, and could be completed by the end of 2007.

73. With regard to modalities for the coordination of the RCM activities with RECs, the Secretariat acknowledged that the challenge still had to be addressed. However, it was emphasized that the issue of overlap of national membership in RECs did not adversely affect the implementation of programmes on the ground as invariably, the beneficiaries were Member States. In this regard, ECA was in the process of strengthening its Sub-regional offices to provide the anchor for coordination of UN support to NEPAD through the RECs.

74. The Secretariat further explained that although ECA's mandate was at the regional and sub-regional levels, it was still able to contribute to national programmes through the UNCT work programmes in which it participated in selected areas. Its participation, however, was uneven due to capacity constraints. As a result, ECA-SA was

more involved in the work of the UN Country team in Zambia, compared to other Southern African countries.

75. The Committee endorsed ECA's overall role in coordinating UN system-wide support to AU and NEPAD and adopted the report. More specifically, the experts endorsed the following recommendations:

- **The expansion of the RCM to include the African Union Commission and the RECs.**
- **The establishment of a mechanism for subregional coordination of UN system wide support to NEPAD anchored at ECA's SROs and focusing on the RECs.**
- **Greater integration of NEPAD into national development strategies.**
- **ECA's effort to provide greater support to the private sector and to promote more outreach to civil society.**
- **UN system-wide efforts to foster timely delivery of pledges and commitments by Africa's development partners.**
- **ECA's efforts to prioritise and intensify advocacy for NEPAD in support of efforts by African governments, the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat.**
- **The declaration on "Enhancing AU-UN Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU" signed by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, President Alpha Oumar Konare and the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan in 2006.**
- **ECA's efforts to give the RECs the necessary support to strengthen their capacity as called for by the Resolution of 14 November 2006 on NEPAD, presented by South Africa on behalf of the member States of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China to the Sixty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly and by the September 2006 Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the role of Subregional Offices of ECA.**

Review of Progress on Governance in Southern Africa

(Agenda item 7)

76. The Secretariat presented the report ECA/SA/ICE/2007/6 on the Status of Governance in Southern Africa: Implications for the Millennium Development Goals. The report highlighted the progress made to date in achieving good political and economic governance. In particular, the report noted that good political governance was illustrated by the embrace of multiparty democracy since the 1990s; the expanded operating space that civil society now enjoyed; the progressive measures adopted to achieve gender equality and women empowerment in both public and private sectors; and the efforts expended to strengthen Parliaments, the Judiciary and the Executive to entrench checks and balances in State affairs. The report asserted that good political governance and the accruing 'peace dividend' had spawned good economic and corporate governance in Southern Africa. With

macroeconomic indicators having been largely stabilized, attention had now turned to poverty reducing social and infrastructure sectors, with a direct and favourable impact on the MDGs.

77. The report argued that notwithstanding the above achievements, a number of challenges still remained. These included the institutionalisation of political pluralism and participatory approaches to policymaking, including the establishment of formal channels to incorporate the inputs of opposition parties and the civil society into government policies. Noting that poverty affected women more than men, the report strongly urged a faster pace to meeting the agreed targets on gender equality, stressing that this would achieve social justice, improve maternal and children's health and reduce poverty. It further called for strong leadership to tackle HIV/AIDS, which threatened to unravel the sub-region's socio-economic achievements.

78. The report recommended the faster implementation of economic reforms to promote transparency and accountability in economic management, as well as the strengthening of economic organizations such as the central banks and revenue commissions. It called for reinvigorated resource mobilization efforts, including strengthened tax collection and administration. Finally, the report called upon the private sector to intensify its efforts on corporate social responsibility, including going beyond government regulations to protect the environment.

79. The presentation generated a lively discussion due to the importance of good governance to development in the sub region. The Committee observed that the report painted a rather positive picture of the sub region's performance but emphasized that much more needed to be done to attain international standards.

80. The Committee further observed that efforts at improving governance were usually driven by the requirements of external partners. There was therefore need to strengthen internal processes to enhance the role of civil society and citizens in entrenching accountability at local, national and subregional levels. To ensure maximum results, the Committee underscored the need to institutionalise participation of civil society organizations in the political process. The Committee noted that parliaments in the sub region continued to face challenges related to the capacity of MPs to discuss issues in an informed manner. The Secretariat indicated that, the work done on the first African Governance Report (AGR), suggested that the limited involvement of educated people in the political process negatively impacted on the quality of MPs.

81. The Committee noted that the measurement and indicators of governance were covered extensively in the AGR and welcomed the undertaking by the Secretariat to share the report with member States in the sub region.

82. The Committee observed that to meet the governance challenges, countries in the sub region, along with their development partners, needed to strengthen the capacities of MPs and CSOs. The Committee underscored the need for Governments to promote a conducive environment for openness, transparency and accountability.

83. While the Committee observed that there was need to regulate the activities of NGOs and CSOs, emerging legislations could potentially restrict their operations to the detriment of development. The Committee noted, with satisfaction, the importance of gender equality in the SADC agenda and appreciated the new target for women's representation in parliaments, which had increased from 30 to 50 per cent.

84. The Committee noted that the report did not sufficiently discuss issues of human rights and corruption and recommended that future work should look at these two issues thoroughly. They also indicated that the report should discuss SADC instruments relating to governance such as the SADC Tribunal, SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Strategic Indicative Policy Organ (SIPO), and the Declaration on Gender.

85. The Committee adopted the report and made the following recommendations:

- **Member States should promote popular participation by all stakeholders in policymaking. To this end, civil society should be strengthened to play a watchdog role;**
- **Governments should ensure that all registered political parties have equitable access to state resources. In this regard, the SADC guidelines for regulating the activities of political parties during elections should be observed:**
- **Member States should strengthen the electoral systems and processes including enhancing the capacity of elected officials;**
- **Governments should enforce and monitor gender-related protocols, conventions and agreements;**
- **Member States should adopt and implement sound economic, political and corporate governance practices;**
- **Member States should strengthen institutions of governance particularly with regard to the separation of powers between the Judiciary, Parliament and the Executive.**

Review of the Work of the ECA

(Agenda item 8)

86. This agenda item covered presentations on the repositioning and strategic direction of the ECA, progress report on the implementation of the work programme by the ECA Southern Africa Office and reports by the ICT, and Science and Technology Division (ISTD) and the Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).

87. The Secretariat informed the Committee that in 2006, the new Executive Secretary of ECA put together a task force to review the strategic direction, programmes, organizational structure, management and administrative processes of the Commission, with a view to repositioning it to better respond to Africa's emerging challenges. The 2006 ECA Annual Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development endorsed the main outcome of the review. It also received a warm welcome

from African Heads of State both in July 2006 in Banjul and in January 2007 in Addis Ababa when they reaffirmed the role of ECA as a key and necessary UN institution to support the work of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

88. A major part of the challenges to be addressed was the very high prevalence of poverty in Africa. In this context, the overall objective of a repositioned ECA for the period 2008-2009 would be to exploit its comparative advantages in support of continental efforts to achieve sustained growth and development. The new programme directions would focus on two thematic pillars; these were *Promoting regional integration in support of the African Union vision and priorities* and *Meeting Africa's special needs and emerging global challenges*. Accordingly, ECA's work, within the two pillars, would be undertaken through ten sub-programmes. The sub-programmes had been arranged so as to avoid duplication of functions, promote complementarities, eliminate inconsistencies and place emphasis on important sectors.

89. Within the new framework, ECA would address crosscutting outcomes across the work programmes. Particularly ECA would continue to mainstream gender concerns in its programmes, and support measures towards improved governance, post-conflict resolution and a more human rights-based approach to development. The programme would leverage its comparative advantage through the use of strategic partnerships to pool resources, ensure coherence, build synergies and avoid duplication of effort. It would also enhance coordination and collaboration among UN agencies working in Africa through a strengthened Regional Consultation Mechanism to support NEPAD priorities.

90. A further important aspect of the repositioning was the action taken with respect to the General Assembly resolution 60/235 of December 2005 requesting for a comprehensive plan for the ECA sub regional offices (SROs). The outcome was presented in the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Enhancing the role of the subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa* (A/61/471). The report proposed an effective decentralization of activities, including advisory services, as well as increased redeployment of human and financial resources to the SROs. The decentralization was necessary to bring ECA's services closer to its clients and ensure effective programming and delivery of technical assistance to meet the demands of the member States. The key features of the report included the implementation of the ECA agenda at the sub-regional level and provision of technical support to the RECs. It also emphasized specific sub-regional priorities and programmes and the use of SROs as sub-regional nodes for knowledge management. Furthermore, it underscored the need to partner with other relevant actors in support of the AU agenda at the sub-regional level. The implementation of the report effectively started in January 2007.

91. The Secretariat also presented the report on the work of ECA in the sub region. The report addressed issues arising from the twelfth ICE meeting held in Manzini, Swaziland in April 2006; the status of implementation of the work programme during the period April 2006 to March 2007, activities planned for 2007, a preview of the 2008-

2009 programme of work and an update on efforts to enhance the role of the ECA-SA Office.

92. In respect of issues arising from the last meeting, the report pointed out that the report considered by the 13th ICE meeting on the achievement of the MDGs was more detailed as requested by the last ICE. The last meeting had also requested the ECA-SA to focus on translating decisions into national level actions. The ECA repositioning addressed this in a comprehensive manner through the strengthening of the SROs.

93. With respect to activities implemented during the intervening period, the report outlined that these had been in the areas of macro-economic policy analysis and harmonization; gender in development; support for efficient and integrated transport, communications and information technologies infrastructure services development; regional approach to the exploitation and management of mineral resources; food security and sustainable agriculture development; and information and communications technologies (ICTs). The activities included undertaking a number of analytical studies on behalf of the member States, organising, meetings, seminars and workshops for the member States, providing technical support in the form of advisory services to member States and their institutions and participating in the broader activities of the United Nations at the country and sub regional levels.

94. The report further outlined that among the analytical studies undertaken included the integration of gender into development programmes in Southern Africa with a focus on practical job creation measures; a framework for harmonizing new and renewable energy policies in Southern Africa; the status of governance in Southern Africa; and the impact of food aid and agricultural subsidies on the sustainability of food security in Southern Africa. In respect of advisory services, these were mainly to SADC and COMESA, which benefited from technical support in areas such as air transport, transit corridor surveys, strengthening capacities for trade negotiations, and mining. The ECA-SA office also attended a number of meetings of policy organs of the two RECs and was in the process of discussing possible multi year programmes with each of them.

95. In respect of activities for 2007, a number of technical studies were planned for the sub region. The office would provide further additional advisory services and training programmes. The report outlined a number of activities planned for the 2008-2009 biennium. In reference to the repositioning at ECA, this had been designed to improve programme focus on regional integration and Africa's special needs with NEPAD, the AU and RECs providing key partnerships. The SROs were being strengthened to better play the operational role for which they were created, while partnerships with the African Development Bank, the United Nations agencies as well as other bilateral and multilateral donors were also being emphasised. The report concluded that during this transition period, the ECA-SA would rely on the guidance of the ICE to seek improved ways of doing business.

96. The activities of ECA in Africa, especially in Southern Africa attracted a lot of interest among the experts. Responding to a question on how ECA disseminates

information to its stakeholders, the Secretariat informed the meeting that it used print and electronic media and meetings, including workshops, seminars and experts group meetings.

97. The Committee expressed the need for ECA to be involved in building the capacity of civil society organisations in the Sub-region, including the utilisation of their expertise when appropriate. In response, the Secretariat informed the meeting that ECA had been involving CSOs in its meetings and studies with a view of strengthening their capacities.

98. In response to a question regarding the knowledge of member States about ECA's advisory services, the Secretariat explained that member States were indeed aware and that these services were provided on request. In this regard, the Secretariat emphasized that member States could submit requests for services allowing time for internal processing.

99. On how ECA could enhance coordination among the different RECs in Southern Africa, the meeting was informed that ECA-SA planned to work with SADC and COMESA on a multi-year programming cycle of specific activities according to ECA's Business Plan.

100. The meeting also sought to know the rationale for raising the ICE meeting to Ministerial level. The meeting was informed that the proposal arose from the recommendation of the Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), which considered among other issues, logistics, and the need to strengthen the authority of the Committee in its functions.

101. Another presentation by the Secretariat was on information and communication technology, which highlighted the role information could play in the attainment of the MDGs. The Secretariat emphasized that it provided support to African countries to use information as a tool for development.

102. The Secretariat stated that the development and proliferation of ICT's had accelerated economic and social change across all areas of human activity worldwide. Emerging evidence indicated that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) were central to the creation of a global knowledge based economy and could play an important role in accelerating growth, promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty in developing countries. This in turn would facilitate the effective integration of the sub region into the global economy.

103. The Secretariat informed the Committee that, in general, there was a data problem in most African countries. To this end, governments and the UN were working together through national statistical offices to come up with comprehensive data. Furthermore, the Secretariat was working with the RECs to develop legal frameworks for ICT.

104. The Director of IDEP presented the institute's strategy for the period 2007-2010. He highlighted the fast growing volume of activities in training, policy research and advisory services. He underscored the continent-wide focus of IDEP's mission and its responsiveness to Africa's development priorities as identified by AU.

105. He stated that IDEP's challenges included a growing demand for its training activities, the need to increase the participation of women in its programs and the need for African countries to pay their assessed contributions thereby asserting ownership of the Institute. The Director announced that beginning in 2008, the number of scholarships for its M.A. program would increase to 10 annually and that 5 would be earmarked for female candidates.

106. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- **IDEP should find additional channels of publicizing its work to enable more Southern African countries to benefit from the training they offered;**
- **IDEP should offer more opportunities to women to enable them make better and informed decisions in all areas of development.**

Reports from Cooperating Partners

(Agenda item 9)

107. Under this agenda item, representatives of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) made presentations.

108. The representative of DBSA informed the Committee that his organization was committed to sub regional development and the eradication of poverty on the African continent. DBSA's strategic goals focused on social and economic infrastructure; building human and institutional capacity; broad based economy growth; being a centre of excellence for development finance; engendering sustainability; and regional integration. Further details could be found on their website at www.dbsa.org

109. The presentation by SADC focused on its Statistics Programme as this was an area in which there was a project currently being implemented with regard to the MDGs. The key functions of the SADC Statistics Programme included: harmonization of statistics among the member States; provision of relevant statistics for purposes of promoting regional integration; statistical capacity building; and development and management of statistical databases. There were two projects currently being implemented as part of statistical capacity building. More information on SADC could be found at www.sadc.int

110. The SARDC representative informed the Committee that the organization was an independent regional information resource centre specializing in the management of

knowledge for development. Reliable and accessible information relevant to the SADC region was generated through a process of participation, networking, wide consultation and ownership. SARDC also generated information through reaching out to national, regional and global policy processes. SARDC had a Virtual Library for Southern Africa, which was available at www.sardc.net.

111. The representative of the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council's (SATUCC) informed the Committee that membership of his organization comprised 14 National Trade Union Federations. SATUCC's objectives included the promotion of: gender equality; workers education; use of International Labour standards; trade union and workers' rights. The objectives also included the coordination of trade union activities and networking with NGOs.

112. Areas of current activities included: facilitation of movement of people; HIV/AIDS in the work place; gender; productivity; and social rights. SATUCC's main challenges were the diminishing number of workers in the formal economy and the growing numbers in the informal sector. Further details could be found on the website at www.satucc.co.bw

113. The Committee wanted to know whether DBSA was working with other countries in the sub region apart from South Africa, how countries could access DBSA funding and their experience in financing small businesses. The DBSA representative indicated that they had partnered with the World Bank and ADB to finance projects in other countries in the sub region. On access to financing, he stated that countries needed to submit their applications for evaluation by DBSA before approval and loan disbursement.

114. In further discussions, the Committee inquired what role SADC played in the provision of gender disaggregated statistics by different national statistical for use by stakeholders and progress achieved by the member States in keeping gender-disaggregated statistics. In response, the SADC representative indicated that his organization merely facilitated capacity building processes to address key issues of disaggregation, harmonization and methodology in statistical compilation.

115. The Committee enquired what challenges SATUCC faced, how it handled independence in its operations and whether it made follow-ups on SADC protocols on the free movement of persons. SATUCC indicated that they advocated for independent, free and strategic trade unions and were also involved in policy formulation and changes that were of socio-economic importance. Women were also increasingly taking up leadership roles due to SATUCC's advocacy and affirmative action policy. On matters dealing with the free movement of people, he informed the meeting that the SADC protocols had not yet taken effect.

116. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- **Gender disaggregated statistics should be developed at the methodology formulation levels;**

- **ECA should find a platform for depositing regional information in electronic and other forms to facilitate informed analysis and decision-making on various development issues;**
- **There was need to package relevant information for use by various stakeholders in the sub region to accelerate the pace of achievement of MDGs;**
- **ECA should provide a forum for dialogue and consultations among sub-regional institutions and networks.**

Any Other Business

(Agenda item 10)

117. The Ambassador from the Democratic Republic of Congo expressed regret that third world countries had continued to supply primary commodities to the global economy and that historically any new economic order, including globalization, simply perpetrated the political and economic marginalisation of Africa. The Ambassador stressed the need for African countries to find ways of fostering their own development basing their endeavours on good governance and South-South cooperation. Notwithstanding this, Africa should exploit to its advantage whatever technology and financial assistance developed countries offered.

118. Some Committee members expressed the view that civil society organizations should meet prior to the next ICE so that they could speak with one voice during the meetings. The Committee, however, endorsed the current arrangement, which enhances the cross-pollination of views. The Committee stressed that the report of the meeting should underscore the need for consolidating the tripartite approach.

119. It was agreed that the Secretariat develops a concept note to enable the Chair of the Bureau to consult with SADC on possible linkage of the ICE to the SADC reporting structures.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

(Agenda item 11)

120. The Secretariat proposed that for the future, the elected Vice Chair of the Bureau should automatically be the next Chair and the host of the meeting. This would, however, need consultations, prior to the meeting with those countries that have not previously hosted the ICE.

Adoption of the report

(Agenda item 12)

121. The draft report of the 13th ICE meeting was adopted with amendments, which have been incorporated in this final report.

Closure of the Meeting

(Agenda item 13)

122. The Director of ECA-SA expressed her gratitude to the Government of Zambia for hosting the meeting. She also acknowledged with great appreciation the high level of interaction during the deliberations, which contributed to the successful outcome of the meeting. She thanked the staff of the ECA-SA office for their hard work in organising the meeting. She finally wished all participants safe passage to their respective homes.

123. Ms Monde Sitwala, the Chairperson of the Bureau, thanked the Committee for the lively discussions. She stated that the Committee had challenged itself in debating the theme of the meeting, among the other issues, and she was happy to note that the meeting did not disappoint. She observed that the meeting had come out with many important messages that could address the challenges that the sub region faced. She reminded the delegates that it was most important to return home and embark on a rigorous networking campaign to implement the recommendations. She wished all delegates a safe return to their respective countries and closed the meeting.

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