ECA appointed a new Director to its Sub-regional Office in Eastern Africa

Antonio M.A. Pedro of Mozambique is the new Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) from 1 May 2009. He is a mineral exploration geologist with 28 years of broad experience and exposure at national, sub-regional, and continental levels. He has held several managerial and leadership positions nationally and regionally including having been the Director-General of a sub-regional research centre in Tanzania (Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre or SEAMIC) and several state-owned mining companies in Mozambique.

Mr Pedro joined ECA in 2001, coming from SEAMIC. At the time of his appointment as the new Director of the SRO-EA, Antonio Pedro was Chief of Infrastructure and Natural Resources Development Section at ECA’s headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In that capacity, he was responsible for promoting, at continental level, integrated infrastructure and natural resources development; spearheading policy analysis, raising awareness and building consensus on emerging issues, disseminating best practices, building capacity and rendering advisory services in the fields of mining, water, transport, and energy, key sectors for implementing NEPAD’s sectoral priorities and programmes, as well as encouraging the establishment and functioning of effective institutional frameworks for co-operation and collaboration on infrastructure and natural resources development among member States and other stakeholders.

This Special Issue of Eastern Africa News focuses on the 13th meeting of Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) which was held in Victoria, Mahe (Seychelles) from 27 to 29 April 2009.
13TH ICE Meeting held in Victoria, Mahe (Seychelles)

The Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, organized its 13th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) from 27 to 29 April 2009 in Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles. The meeting was organized under the theme “Tracking Progress in Implementing ICTs for Development in Eastern Africa.”

The event brought together experts from Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other ECA partner Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) within the sub-region. The meeting considered the report of activities of the work programme of the SRO-EA for the biennium 2007-2008 and assessed the economic and social conditions of the sub-region with a focus on progress made in the implementation of ICTs for development in Eastern Africa and on the strategies for accelerating the achievement of those objectives, including through regional integration and appropriate mechanisms for enhancing domestic resource mobilization. It also considered the status of preparation and implementation of Multi-Year Programmes of cooperation between SRO-EA and RECs and made recommendations on the way forward.

Speaking on behalf of the host country, Mr. Jacquelin Dugasse, Minister for National Development of Seychelles indicated that the meeting was timely organized given the financial turmoil that engulfed the globe and the need to organize fora to reflect on strategies to address it.

Minister Dugasse of Seychelles also indicated that ICTs are an engine of economic growth and continue to spur the globalization of the world economy. “Governments, industry players, private sector and international organizations have a role to play in order to transform the digital divide into digital opportunities for national development and enhancement of..."
regional integration” added Minister Dugasse.

In her statement, Mrs Lalla Ben Barka, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, informed the participants that ECA accords special attention and importance to the work of the SROs offices in support to the regional integration agenda of RECs, IGOs and Member States. She praised the Government of Seychelles for hosting the meeting and for its recent past good economic performance.

Ms. Lalla Ben Barka acknowledged the growing level of cooperation between the RECs and the SROs as evidenced by the Multi-Year Programmes (MYPs) being signed by the two parties. She noted that this was contributing to the implementation of the two pillars on which ECA’s reposition exercise is anchored, namely “Promoting regional integration in support of the African Union vision and priorities” and “Meeting Africa’s Needs and the Emerging global challenges”.

She commended SRO-EA for completing MYPs and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with IGAD and ICGLR and for the efforts deployed to finalize the same arrangements with CEPGL, EAC and IOC.

Two ad-hoc Expert Group Meetings and two training sessions were held as sideline events of the ICE, namely on: 1) “Tracking progress towards the development of ICTs in Eastern Africa and prospects” and 2) “Assessing Multi-Year Programmes (MYPs)” and a) “The implementation of ICT in the areas of e-government and/or e-trade”, and b) “Developing strategies and communication infrastructures”, respectively.

Eastern African countries to sustain and enhance economic development for poverty reduction

Under this topic, the meeting discussed the 2009 Report on Economic and Social Conditions in Eastern Africa. It was noted that overall there was a slowdown of economic growth
in the region from 6.3 percent in 2007 to 5.3 percent in 2008 two; digit inflation rates, and persistent high levels of poverty. This was caused mainly by the contagion effects of the global economic down which led to weakened exports and financing, lower commodity prices and a decline in investment flows to the sub-region.

**Enhancing domestic resource mobilization**
Participants underscored the urgent need for countries to pursue and strengthen economic reforms, in particular, to identify alternative mechanisms for increasing domestic resources. The meeting called for a collaborative framework to improve the harnessing of remittances from the diaspora with a view to channelling them to development activities.

**Implementing Multi-Year Programmes (MYPs) with RECs**

The salient points which emerged from the debate of this topic were the following:

♦ The mobilisation of resources to facilitate the implementation of MYPs is a joint responsibility of ECA and the RECs and IGOs concerned. Both were urged to scale up their resource mobilization efforts and engage their partners to that effect;

♦ The MYPs should have more technical assistance programmes to strengthen institutional capacities within RECs and provide necessary support to their development agenda priorities;

♦ Given the role that IGOs such as the CEPGL and the ICGLR as well as initiatives or institutions such as the Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor (TTCA) play in the regional integration efforts of Eastern Africa, SRO-EA should also be encouraged to sign MYPs or MoUs with these types of organisations and not restrict itself only to the RECs officially recognised by the AU.

**Implementation of Regional and International Agendas, including NEPAD, MDGs and other special initiatives in Eastern Africa subregion**

Discussions on this agenda item focused on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and on the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) of UN agencies and other stakeholders in support of the African Union, its NEPAD programme and RECs. Participants sought clarifications on the APRM process and modalities of acceding it. Explanations were provided on the RCM cluster arrangement and on the outcomes of the 9th RCM held in November 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The meeting noted the need to establish a Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM) to minimize fragmentation, reduce transaction costs, realize economies of scale, and ensure a more coordinated and coherent UN System-Wide (and other stakeholders) support to regional integration efforts and agenda in Eastern Africa.

It was recognized that at sub-regional level, the SRCM should not mimic the 9 cluster RCM. Instead, the SRCM should be anchored on the priorities and programmes of RECs, IGOs and specialized institutions and initiatives, as well
as the MYPs and/or MoUs which SRO-EA entered into with its stakeholders. The SRO-EA was urged to convene, as soon possible, a meeting of all UN Agencies, RECs, IGOs, and specialized institutions and initiatives active in Eastern Africa to discuss the establishment of the SRCM.

**Fostering ICTs for development**

The meeting recognized the necessity to promote the harmonisation and coordination of ICT policies and strategies in order to create a favourable environment for commercial exchanges, enhance collaboration in the resolution of cross-border political problems, as well as enhance the flow and exchange of data. To accelerate ICT cooperation in the sub-region, participants made the following recommendations:

**Action points for ECA**:  
- Support member States in developing and implementing harmonized ICT policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, including through the RECs;
- Accelerate the setting up of sub-regional Knowledge Management platforms to foster the exchange of experience and best practices;
- Finalize the setting up of the Regional Integration Observatory, with a view to ensuring follow-up of the sub-regional integration process;
- Enhance human and institutional capacity building in collaboration with the RECs; and
- Participate in regional internet governance forums such as AfriNIC, AfLTD, GAC of ICANN, etc.

**Action points for member States**:  
- Formulate policies and laws governing ICTs, learning from international best practices and models;
- Promote a national strategy in the field of ICTs;
- Encourage the development of sub-regional networks to foster trans-border connectivity;
- Promote public-private sector partnerships in order to build a knowledge economy;
- Participate in regional Internet governance forums such as AfriNIC, AfTLD, GAC of ICANN, etc.; Structure the ccTLD for the benefit of the community (multi-actor organisation); and
- Promote local content in e-platforms.

**Action points for the RECs**:  
- Foster ICT standardisation across the different RECs and IGOs (COMESA, EAC, IGAD, etc.); and
- In collaboration with the ECA, strengthen capacity of experts in the sub-region in the fields of legislation, strategy and formulation of ICT policies.
Towards a new compact to address the challenges posed by climate change in Africa

The Third Ministerial Conference on Financing for Development (F4D) was held in Kigali, Rwanda from 21 to 22 May 2009, under the theme “Climate Change: Financing Opportunities and Challenges to achieve the MDGs in Africa”.

This high level event was hosted by the Government of Rwanda in partnership with ECA and African Development Bank (AfDB) and co-sponsored by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The main objectives of the Conference were threefold: (i) Assess the current situation with regards to climate change and its direct consequence on economic growth; how it affects growth projections, its impacts on the livelihood of the poor; and to showcase some non-cost methods and tools to address those impacts; (ii) Review the financing opportunities offered by the carbon market, and other global facilities and mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including capacity-building for developing countries, reducing emissions from deforestation (REDD), technology transfer and adaptation; (iii) Articulate an African common position on climate change issues in future international negotiations and exploit opportunities to build consensus on the complex issues of climate change and sustainable development of the African continent.

In his opening address, President Kagame stated that the Conference was timely and would facilitate discussions of the environmental challenges facing the continent to permit Africans to achieve a key imperative: placing the environment at the centre stage of development processes. The President noted that Africa relies mainly on agriculture, natural resources extraction, fisheries, and tourism for its economic growth and that these activities could not be carried out in a sustainable manner without effective and efficient environmental management. He considered this a top priority.

The President articulated a vision of development where economic success would not be achieved at the expense of environmental stewardship and where the government, the private sector and international community, all had an important role to play. President Kagame noted that Africa should not afford to be at the sidelines of global development. Instead, it should undertake to strengthen its self-reliance, reclaim its rightful place and help
shape the solutions to global problems. In this respect, he urged that following the joint Ministerial conference in Kigali, the continent should plan to be heard as a coherent, united voice at the Copenhagen Summit taking place this December 2009 by ensuring that Africa engages more robustly in the global dialogue on climate change and environment, and undertakes to honour its commitments. He added that the Kigali Conference should also explore innovative financing schemes for protecting Africa’s environment.

In a statement on behalf of the Financing for Development Secretariat, the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr Abdoulaye Janneh situated the Kigali Conference within the context of the 2002 Monterrey Conference and the 2008 Doha Review Conference as well as of the decision taken by African Ministers of Finance to organize regular Ministerial Meetings on Financing for Development to keep track of the progress on the Monterrey Consensus. He noted that the outcomes of the Conference would help shape Africa’s common position for the negotiations of a post-2012 global climate change regime and would inform the special session of the African Conference of Ministers responsible for Environment (AMCEN) to be held end of May 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya as well as the 13th session of the African Union Summit in July 2009.

Mr. Abdoulaye Janneh noted African countries had placed high expectations on the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol but international responses were not commensurate with the scale of the anticipated impacts of climate change. He observed that less than 15% of the funds pledged had actually been disbursed. He pointed out that going forward, it was important to ensure greater accessibility to resources and equity, predictability, coherence and accountability in resource allocation. He said that the launching of the Climate for Development (ClimDev) initiative as well as the establishment of the ECA-based African Climate Policy Centre would help scale up the capacities of key institutions and stakeholders to improve climate-related data and observation, information services, policies, investment processes and risk-management practices in climate-sensitive sectors.

The Conference centred its deliberations on four key themes, namely:

- Vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation aspects of climate change on communities;
- Climate risk management and adaptation strategies;
- Climate change: best practices and success stories; and
- Innovative financing mechanisms and access to new investment funds.

In its recommendations, conclusions and made way forward, the two-day Conference requested, among others, that “the financial resources required to address climate change should be additional, adequate, predictable and sustainable, and provided primarily in the form of grants”. It expressed its concern about the wide gap existing between aid commitments and fulfilment by donor partners and actions by African countries.

Closing ceremony on 22 May 2009
Furthermore, the Ministers called on:

- **National Governments**: to strengthen their planning and budgeting frameworks taking into account Climate Change needs; mobilize domestic resources through new financing instruments, appropriate pricing and payment mechanisms; implement an accelerated programme of capacity building to address knowledge gaps on Climate Change; strengthen the national coordination function for Climate Change; strengthen advocacy and presence in the regional and global Climate Change dialogue through collaboration and joint programmes; and encourage private sector and Civil Society participation in addressing Climate Change challenges.

- **Development Partners**: to align their assistance programmes on Climate Change to national planning frameworks, sectoral development strategies and priorities and ensure significant new resources as well as reforming existing instruments and develop more effective ones; assist African countries in bridging the knowledge gap in climate science and building local capacity for adopting low-carbon development strategies in all sectors; and honour their commitments made at previous international fora.

At regional level, the Kigali Conference undertook to:

- Promote regional initiatives, e.g. Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), the Climate for Development in Africa Program (CLIMDEV-AFRICA), and the Africa Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD).
- Strengthen the capacity of regional institutions handling climate change issues.
- Develop sustainable regional strategies and follow up of key actions on the road to COP 15.

The Conference recognized the vital role that the private sector and the civil society can play in generating resources and offering solutions to addressing climate change issues and in advocacy, mobilizing participation and monitoring the implementation of climate change programs and initiatives, and in ensuring their sustainability, respectively.

President Kagame will table the outcomes of the Kigali Conference to the forthcoming African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in Sirte, Libya in July 2009.

30 June 2009: Joint AfDB and ECA Launching of the “African Economic Outlook”.

June/July 2009: Joint UNCTAD and ECA Launching of a “Policy Handbook on Enhancing the Role of Domestic Financial Resources in Africa’s Development”.


