AU-SARO BULLETIN

AU Southern Africa Regional Office

Vol. 2. No. 1. March 2007

AU SUMMIT: Science, Tech. Scientific Research & Dev.

The Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 29 to 30 January 2007. This was preceded by the meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee Thirteenth Ordinary Session from 22-23 January 2007, Executive Council, Tenth Ordinary Session, 25-26 January 2007 and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) meetings, the 6th Summit of the APRM Forum of Heads of State and Government, 27 January 2007 and the 16th Summit of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee 28 January 2007. This was another important session on the review of African integration and development in world affairs.

The Theme of the Session was **Science and Technology and Scientific Research for Development**. This reflects increasing importance attached to the role of science and technology and scientific research in the promotion of accelerated development in Africa since these have been the main drivers in globalization and development in other continents.

The eminent personalities in the field of Science and Technology and Scientific Research for Development, in their presentations, broadly came to identical conclusions on Science and Technology and Scientific Research for Development in Africa. Africa lags behind other regions of the world in science and technology advancement. The continent is seriously deficient in indigenous technology development. African governments should encourage youths to take up studies in science, technology and engineering and there should be an increase in funding for national, regional and continental programs for science and technology and support for the creation of national and regional centers of excellence in science and technology.

The Summit also dealt with Climate Change. Again in this, there was convergence of views in the observations and conclusions of respected authorities on Climate Change in Africa. Africa, would, more than other regions, be more adversely affected. Africa's development partners were therefore urged to support African countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in their efforts to integrate adaptation and mitigation measures into their development plans.

Other important events of the Summit include the Launching of International Year of African Football. The Commissioner for Social Affairs, H.E. Adv. Bience Gawanas, stressed the significance of football in the social and cultural lives of African youths, the necessity to enhance the promotion of football in the continent, and the need for all to robustly support South Africa in the hosting of the World Cup in 2010. Besides, there were also landmark decisions and declarations, especially the decision on African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the declaration on WTO Negotiations.

H.E. Mr. John Kufuor, President of Ghana and Chairperson of the African Union

President John Kufuor of Ghana was elected as the Chairperson of the African Union to replace President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo.

The 9th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union would be held in Accra, Ghana. Starting with:

(a) PRC, 25 – 26 June 2007.
(b) Executive Council, 28 – 29 June 2007 and
(c) Assembly of the Union, 1 - 3 July 2007.

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The Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU could thus be seen as significantly successful as it redefined the relevant trajectory for the development of the continent in a changing international environment. The Member States are encouraged to continue to take necessary steps to create the environment for economic growth and development; to maintain political stability and implement appropriate sound macroeconomic policies. In doing these however, they are enjoined to pay more attention to the relevance of Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Development as drivers for sustainable development in our contemporary world. In order to get this right, the Member States must, inter alia, engage the right policies, and commit themselves to capacity and institutional building. In addition, the constraints of Africa's external trade and the inflow of capital must be removed to release additional resources.

Activities of Regional Office

The AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan addressed the Third Annual Forum of SADC Authorities meeting held in Blantyre, Malawi on 12th December 2006. The Regional Delegate in his statement highlighted that HIV/AIDS 'has had more devastating impact on the continent than elsewhere in the world'. He indicated that the AU had been in the forefront to develop continental policies to guide the efforts of African countries in the fight against HIV/AIDS. An example of this effort was illustrated in the adoption of the Declaration and Framework of Action at the AU Summit of April 2001 in Abuja, Nigeria. This provided a comprehensive and an integrated approach to address the question on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases. He emphasized that one important central issue is the prevention of HIV. There is need to address those issues impeding the curtailment of the spread of HIV which, among other things include, the fear fed by widespread stigma and discrimination, violence against women, homophobia and other HIV-related human right abuses that discourage people from seeking the information and services that will protect them from HIV infection or determine whether they are already carrying the virus.

More importantly, stigma and discrimination often prevent people living with HIV from adopting safe behaviors and seeking access to HIV treatment and care programs.

In addition, the lack of human rights protection, poverty and marginalization allow HIV to take root in society's most vulnerable populations. He also pointed out that HIV/AIDS remain high in the agenda of discussions of the international community. Consequently, he stressed that the way forward should among other things address the question of institutional deficiencies. Relevant institutions should be created at both national levels where they do not exist. National and regional authorities should coordinate and harmonize strategies with appropriate development partners. Also, sufficient resources should be made available to tackle HIV/AIDS. In addition, those countries that have not attained the Abuja and Maputo Declaration target of 15 percent of national budget should strive to do so as soon as possible. African countries should lay emphasis on capacity building. The inadequacies in human resources in terms of numbers, mix of skills, motivation and retention constitute major obstacles to HIV prevention. The health systems should more imaginatively address the question of mother-to-child transmission as an important factor to halt and reverse the spread of HIV. He stressed that it is vital for countries to strengthen procurement and supply of essential medicines and commodities including ARVs and condoms and remove the transportation difficulties associated with them. Finally, he urged those countries that have not done so to adopt policies and legislation to protect the human rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS in order to effectively arrest the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The AU Regional Delegate to SADC officially visited Swaziland on 14 March 2007 to exchange views on the deepening of African Union integration. He was warmly received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Swaziland, Senator. Dr. Mathendale M. Dlamini

AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Swaziland, Senator. Dr. Mathendele Moses Dlamini

The AU Regional Delegate to SADC officially visited the SADC Secretariat on 16 March 2007 and was cordially received by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Tomaz Salamão. He exchanged views on regionalism and development priorities in Africa. Discussions also dwelt on the building of synergies of SADC and the AU Regional Office to ensure rapid accomplishment of continental integration and development.

AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan and the Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr. Tomaz A. Salomão

The 4th World Congress of Rural Women

The 4th World Congress of Rural Women will be held in South Africa from 23 to 26 April 2007, at the Durban International Convention Centre.

The congress will be preceded by an African Consultation of Rural Women that will be held at the same venue from 19 to 21 April, 2007.

The World Congress of Rural Women is a global event held every four years to focus on the challenges that continue to face, in particular, rural women. It was initially held in Australia in 1994 and was later hosted by the United States of America in 1998. In 2002, it was held in Spain where the next congress was allocated to Africa. The hosting of the 4th World Congress of Rural Women in Africa was informed by the resolution of the 2002 Congress held in Spain, when Ms. Graca Machel received the ceremonial bowl marking acceptance for South Africa to host on behalf of Africa. The theme of this congress is **"United in our diversity: Working together towards the total emancipation of rural women from poverty and hunger"** Governments are encouraged to include members of Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations in their national delegation to the Congress. Registration for the congress can be done through the South African Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs' website: **http://www.nda.agric.za.** The draft program, registration form, accommodation request form, background document and a general information note can be accessed on this website.

Mr. W.M. Jiphethu
Charge` d' Affaires, High Commission Republic of South Africa, Malawi

AFRICAN GROUP MEETINGS

The African Group, in Lilongwe, had two Ordinary Meetings to discuss the developments in the continent and Southern Africa. The February 2007 meeting, among other things, discussed the outcome of the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union. The meeting highlighted the theme of the Summit and essential decisions and declarations. It further discussed the urgency to integrate the decisions and declarations into regional and national policy programs in order to effectively and speedily address the development challenges of the continent, identified in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The meeting also discussed the emerging problems of immigration within the Southern African region. The March 2007 meeting involved the exchange of views on the development in Zimbabwe and the need to speedily find sound solutions to the political crisis. Other matters discussed include those on natural disasters; in particular the flood in Mozambique and Zambia resulting from heavy rainfall. National efforts to tackle the problems in Mozambique and Zambia were satisfactory. But regional, continental and international support would be welcomed for robust long-term action to address the problem and other natural disasters.

Zimbabwe: An Update

Zimbabwe, had in the first two decades of independence made considerable strides in the advancement of education, health care delivery system, infrastructural development, roads and bridge construction etc. But currently the country is facing some economic challenges, partly resulting from the Land Reform Program that the government had inevitably to implement. The program essentially sought to economically empower the hitherto marginalized indigenous people by giving them the important resource, land, and to decongest the rural areas. Unfortunately, our former colonizers sought to internationalize a bilateral dispute by mobilizing EU, USA, Commonwealth and multilateral institutions to deny the country any balance of payment support, lines of credit etc.

H.E. Ms. T. Dumbutshena

Despite the illegal sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, the Government has embarked on socio-economic policies whose main objectives and goals have been to uplift the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans and rid the country of corruption and illegal activities. In 2006, Operation Sunrise was launched to rid the country of illegal foreign currency dealings and externalization of Zimbabwe currency.

Operation Chikorokoza Chapera/Isitsheketsha Sesiphelile/No to Illegal Panning was also launched to weed all illegal mines, and smuggling of precious stones to neighboring countries. Operation Maguta was launched as a way of ensuring production of grain and ensuring food security.

Following the successful Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order launched by Government in 2005 to deal with crime, squalor and lawlessness, Government under Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle effectively restored dignity of the people. This program saw the reorganization of micro, small and medium enterprises and the building of factory shells as well as the construction of decent accommodation. All the policies of the Zimbabwe Government are consistent with the aspirations of the peoples of Zimbabwe.

The current challenges facing Zimbabwe are not going to be there forever. I believe very soon they shall be part of history and Zimbabwe will prevail over the challenges.

The persistent strong support and solidarity of the SADC region and the African Union, despite concerted attempts by the UK and its allies to divide the region and Africa and turn it against Zimbabwe, is greatly appreciated. United we stand, Divided we fall. **LONG LIVE AFRICA, VIVA AFRICA, TAHIYA AFRICA, VIVE L´ AFRIQUE.**

H.E. Ms. T. S. Dumbutshena
Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Malawi.

AU-SARO Activities cont.

The AU-SARO, upon the invitation of the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa, in January 2007, advised the Centre on some administrative activities through Mr. Misbahu Ibrahim, the Finance and Administrative Officer.

The Senior Policy Officer, Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, represented the Office at the official opening and handover ceremony of the Centre on 23 January 2007. The President of the Republic of Malawi. H.E. Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika conducted the ceremony. The representative of the AU Office in his statement congratulated the Centre management and the Government of Malawi for the support given towards the construction of the building and indicated that the AU Office will continue to work closely with the Centre in its activities, especially those related to AU decisions and declaration on youth and development in Africa.

Senior Policy Officer
Dr. Tarek A. Sharif

The AU-SARO Office on the 24th January 2007 hosted the African Ambassadors Group meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa, and Minister of Education of the Republic of Zambia, Hon. Prof. Geoffrey Lungwangwa, MP. The discussion at the meeting addressed the objectives of the Centre for Africa, and brainstormed on new strategies that could lead to improvements in the role of youths in the development of the continent.

The Office participated at the South African Migration Project (SAMP) national migration workshop, in Lilongwe, Malawi on 2nd February 2007. The office was represented by the Senior Policy Officer. The objective of the workshop was to encourage national debate on key migration issues, especially those confronting Malawi. The participants at the workshop benefited from some latest research results on migration.

The Director of the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDA), Mr. Kenneth Hamwaka and a delegation of nine Zambian Senior Education Officers in charge of Guidance and Counseling in the Ministry of Education visited AU-SARO on the 6th March, 2007. The delegation met with the AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan. The discussion at the meeting addressed the objectives and activities of the African Union in particular in relation to the Role of Youth in contemporary Africa Development.

Prof. Geoffrey Lungwangwa M.P. addressing African Ambassadors at the AU Regional Office

MAURITIUS

The AU Regional Delegate officially visited Mauritius on 28 March 2007 where he was well received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation, Hon. Madan Murlidhar Dulloo. The Foreign Minister expressed support for African integration and the activities of the AU. He noted that the development of infrastructure is vital for regionalism. In this connection all integrating countries large and small should be effectively included in regional and continental infrastructural development. He further emphasized the need for enhanced collective approach to multilateral negotiations so that African countries could exercise better leverage and secure better advantages and opportunities in trade and capital inflow.

The Regional Delegate also met with other top Officials in the Ministry, including, Amb. Jagdish Koonjul, Head of Bilateral Directorate, Amb. Patrice Cure, Head of Multilateral Political Directorate, for more indebth exchange of views on African integration, development and global affairs relating to Africa. He also called on the Ag. Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius for increased sensitization to the activities of the AU. He was well received by the Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Soonil D.D. Rughooputh. It was noted during the discussion that there was need to create greater awareness about the AU in the University and to involve the Regional Office in its activities as appropriate. The Regional Delegate also discussed with the Officials of the Mauritius Council of Social Services that is associated with the operationalization of the AU ECOSOCC.

Published by
AU Regional Office to Southern Africa
P.O. Box 30898,
Lilongwe 3,Malawi
Tel: +265-1-775-335
Fax +265-1-775-337
E-mail oau-saro@malawi.net

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2007

AU-SARO Bulletin Volume 2, Issue 1 March 2007

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