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44th Anniversary of Africa Day

The African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (AU-SARO) marked the 44th Anniversary of Africa Day at the Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe, Malawi on 25th of May 2007. The celebration stressed the theme “Let’s Strengthen Africa’s Place in the World through Strategic, Balanced and Responsible Partnership”, - reflecting the need for better results-oriented cooperation with development partners for the development of Africa.

The Guest of Honour at the celebration was Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, of the Republic of Malawi, Hon. Joyce Banda, M.P. Other important distinguished guests included, ministers, parliamentarians, heads of diplomatic missions, representatives of intergovernmental organizations and senior officials from the private sector, academics and the civil society.

The address of the AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan highlighted the importance of this occasion as ‘the day of freedom and new beginning for Africa, to advance the development of the continent, and of resolve to make it a force to reckon with in the international community’. He stressed that the AU is vigorously pursuing the agenda of African development without losing sight of the need to consolidate peace, security and political stability. The RECs remain vital instruments for the attainment of continental integration. He welcomed the support of the international community for Africa’s development so far, but flagged that Africa’s place in the current global dispensation would be enhanced through balanced partnership in international trade, capital and technology transfer as well as in sufficient support for the alleviation of the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

In the same vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hon. Joyce Banda, in her address acknowledged the progress of AU in bringing peace to some of the countries that experienced conflicts in the continent, especially in Cote d’Ivoire and the

Great Lakes Region and reiterated that Africa’s vast minerals and natural resources can transform the continent economically and socially. She also pointed out the importance of partnerships between Africa and Europe in terms of direct investment that can help Africa in the surmounting of its economic difficulties. The Minister acknowledged that AU various Forums with India and China and the 1st African-South American Summit are important towards the development of international understanding on peace and security. The Minister emphasized that success in Africa’s partnership would hinge on the consolidation of regional and continental integration, in particular of the rationalization of the regional economic communities (RECs). She added that meaningful partnership of Africa would also depend on the promotion of peace and security in the continent. Furthermore, the Minister re-affirmed the commitment of the Malawian government to effectively support the AU in its search for a prominent role for the continent in global affairs.



R- Hon. Joyce Banda, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation



Zambia Joins the US\$6 Billion Shire-Zambezi Waterways Project

Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Shire-Zambezi Waterways Project, on 25th April 2007, in Lilongwe, Malawi.



H.E. Mr. Mweemba J. Simuyandi

This followed negotiations between and among the three (3) countries on the outlook of the final details of the MOU. His Excellency Mweemba Joshua Simuyandi, High Commissioner of the Republic of Zambia to Malawi was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Signing Ceremony on the MOU on the Shire-Zambezi Waterway Project, and accordingly signed the MOU for and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

One important objective of the Shire-Zambezi Waterways Project is to open up new outlets for the landlocked Zambia and Malawi whose cost of imports and exports takes about 60% of the transportation cost. The project will provide a direct and short waterway access to the Indian Ocean and will also promote cross-border trade among the SADC countries.

The project will stimulate economic activity along the route where products would be exported along the waterway. In agriculture, there is currently dependence on imported raw materials with high cost of transportation. The project is likely to play a major role in reducing transportation costs and

increase agriculture production. The project will create employment in the participating countries. This will offer a great potential for tourism development. Both domestic and international tourists would be able to explore Lake Malawi and Shire River to the Indian Ocean, thereby creating additional foreign exchange earnings.

The project will integrate Malawi with the neighboring countries and therefore promote economic cooperation not only in SADC region but in COMESA as well.

*H.E. Mr. Mweemba Joshua Simuyandi
High Commissioner,
Republic of Zambia, Malawi.*

Activities of the Regional Office

The Senior Policy Officer, Dr. Tarek A. Sharif addressed the Technical Committee meeting of the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) Lilongwe, Malawi on the 17th June 2007. The Director of the GCYDCA, Mr. Kenneth Hamwaka and the visiting Technical Committee visited AU-SARO on 19th June 2007. The discussion at the meeting focused on the strategic plan for the Centre and its proposed programs. The Office participated at the Southern Africa Regional Civil Society Poverty (SARPN) Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa on 13th-14th June 2007. Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan gave the Keynote Address in which he emphasized that the conference is timely while poverty continues to constitute an intolerable menace' in the SADC region. He also indicated that the AU is in the forefront in the efforts to reduce poverty in Africa. The AU has underscored the linkage of poverty eradication to peace, security and political stability. Poverty eradication is one of the main objectives of the Constitutive Act and has been further reaffirmed in The AU Strategic Plan of 2004, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In addition, AU Summit Declarations and Decisions have further provided policy frameworks through which member states and RECs

could tackle poverty issues. He highlighted that civil societies are important partners in African development. The Conference should therefore among other things, seek to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the CSOs and assist in the definition of clearer strategies for their meaningful contributions to poverty alleviation in the region. He flagged that the marginalization of Africa in the global system is real and could remain problematic for lack of responsible partnership.

On June 8 2007, the AU Regional Delegate to SADC delivered Keynote Address at the Center for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases at the opening of the course in applied epidemiology for veterinarians. He reiterated the importance of epidemiology as the core course of the Center since 1999. He drew attention to the present global health circumstances and the need for veterinarians to have basic skills to handle and analyze animal health and production data. Also, that they should be able to interpret data of clinical experiments, surveillance, diagnosis of diseases and control and eradication of economically important diseases. Besides, there is need for their full grip of ecology and epidemiology of diseases and strong capacity to predict future patterns of diseases.

The AU Regional Delegate participated in a debate for radio Malawi, organized by the Lilongwe Press Club, on 24th May 2007 to mark the Africa Day. The debate was on "The Role of the AU and other Regional Bodies in Solving Africa's Problems."

The Office was represented at the COMESA Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, 17 to 23 May 2007 where the theme was "Deepening Regional Integration for Diversification and Value Addition." The Summit among other things agreed on value addition as critical to meaningful engagement in common external tariffs by the community. Common external tariffs for the community would effectively take off from December 2008.

(cont. p. 3)



NATIONAL DAY OF SOUTH AFRICA

27 APRIL 2007

The High Commissioner of South Africa to the Republic of Malawi, H.E. Ntshadi Martha Tsheole, celebrated the National Day of South Africa on 27 April with a befitting reception for the members of the international community, top government officials, and high officials of the private sector and the civil society. The High Commissioner in her address succinctly presented the achievements of the government over the past thirteen years. She underscored that there have been major achievements in political, economic and social developments in South Africa that represent the basis for hope for the peoples of South Africa. At the continental level, the country had made strong efforts for the promotion of benign international relations. While there have been achievements, there have also been some challenges which the country will need to pay attention to resolve in the coming years. Some of the highlights of the address include the following: The building in, 2007, of approximately 2.4 million houses for the poor which translates into 500 houses for the poor per day since 1994. Also, 80% of households in South Africa currently have electricity and 76% running water. Additionally, South Africa's social security beneficiaries had attained a high level of 11 million with the majority being children. On the issue of employment and relevant skills, the driver of this process has been the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA) and the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA).

At the international level, beyond Africa, she pointed out that the election of South Africa as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period of two years is a significant development period. Further, she stated that "South Africa needs to use this important position to advance the cause of Africa in international



H.E. Ms. N.M. Tsheole, High Commissioner,
Republic of South Africa, Malawi.

affairs..". The High Commissioner flagged the policy of South Africa to build bridges through relations. This derives from "the spirit of Ubuntu". "Ubuntu acknowledges the truism that no person is an island, but an integral part of broader society and humankind, and therefore that our individual fortunes are intimately connected to the fortunes of the whole."

In this context she added that South Africa's "involvement in other parts of the continent, while it is an automatic response to this ideal of Ubuntu, is not and will never be unilateral". Furthermore, she added that South Africa is humbled by the trust that the African Union, SADC, and the whole world, have in the country by involving her in peace keeping missions as well as conflict resolutions.

The High Commissioner further emphasized that South Africa pays significant attention to bilateral relations and in this context she informed the gathering of the forthcoming signing of the Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) between South Africa and Malawi. She reminded the gathering of the forthcoming Soccer World Cup tournament in South Africa in 2010 and stated that South Africa is humbled to host this on behalf of Africa. The High Commissioner stressed that there are opportunities in this event for Malawi and other African countries.

Activities of the Regional Office (cont. from p.2.)

The Office was represented at the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) regional stakeholders meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2-4 May 2007. The Regional Delegate in his statement stressed that the development of agriculture is a central matter and priority at the AU. He brought to the attention of the meeting the decisions, declarations and initiatives of the African Union Commission, including the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). The key areas of the AUC Agriculture and Food Security Program include the following, (a) agriculture development and finance, (b) early warning for food security, (c) food product market/African common market for food products, (d) fisheries—review and harmonized fisheries policies, (e) African seed and biotechnology program, (f) genetically modified organisms in agriculture: an African position, (g) food safety and SPS, (h) centers of excellence and (i) African Agricultural Development Fund. He emphasized that the broad central issues in agriculture and food security in Africa consist in resources, capacity building, strong institutions, better research and sharing of research results by countries and regional institutions and the bouts of natural disasters. Thus, the way forward would among other things include addressing these issues plus the systemic integration of nutrition considerations into agricultural and food security interventions as stipulated in the Declaration and Resolution Abuja Food and Security Summit of 7 December 2006.

The Regional Delegate addressed the Opening Session of the Stakeholders Workshop on the Study of Malawi's Dual Membership in SADC and COMESA, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 26th April 2007. He reminded the Workshop that the advancement and consolidation of the AU, *inter alia*, hinges on the strengthening and deepening of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that have been identified as the building blocs.

(cont. p. 4)

**PICTURES ON AFRICA DAY CELEBRATION 25 MAY 2007**

Some of the distinguished guests who attended the Africa Day celebrations

AUC: SOME UP COMING EVENTS

1. 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Social Development. 15-17 October 2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. 3rd Conference of AU Ministers on Drug Control, 25-29 October 2007, Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.
3. AU-EU Summit, 4 November 2007, Lisbon, Portugal, .
4. 2nd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture, 3-7 December 2007, Algiers, Algeria.

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Activities of the Office (cont. from p.3)

Also, that continental integration is inevitable for Africa in the present global systemic dispensation in which individual African countries have little leverage on international development issues. He called on the participants to dispassionately examine the concept of regionalism, the rationale for participation in integration process, including in particular the long-term benefits; trade expansion, investment, industrialization, capacity building, research and development. He concluded that regionalism offers us the best hope for complementing national economic development policies for the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development for an authentic alleviation of poverty.

The Office participated in the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 9-13 April 2007. The Senior Policy Officer represented the Office. The theme of the Session was "Strengthening of Health Systems for Equality and Development." The Conference developed a health strategy for Africa for 2007 to 2015. The Conference was a follow-up to earlier series of meetings of Ministers of Health; October 2005 in Gaborone, Botswana, and September 2006 in Maputo, Mozambique. The conference also witnessed the launching of the "Japanese Hideyo Noguchi African Prize" by the Japanese Ambassador to South Africa. The Prize aims at the promotion of medical research and medical service by individuals and institutions active in the field of health, especially in the fight against infectious and other diseases.

The Finance and Administrative Officer, Mr. Misbahu A. Ibrahim represented the Office at the MDSA Workshop on "Human Capital Mobility, Labor and the Millennium Development Goals" at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 26 to 28 March 2007. He presented a paper on "AU Common Position on Migration and Development and the AU Strategic Framework on Migration in Africa." He stressed in his presentation that Migration was a cross cutting issue that was bound to occur in different forms with complex consequences. Consequently, member states should formulate relevant migration policies and laws to mitigate its adverse impacts.

NOTE

The views expressed in the articles of the AU-SARO Bulletin are not those of the AU-SARO, but of the individual authors.

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