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Inside this issue:

<i>Continental Conference on Economic Empowerment of African Women in the Context of Integration</i>	1
<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>AU-SARO Activities</i>	2
<i>AU Summit</i>	3
<i>First Mental Health Facilitation Training in the World held at GCYDCA</i>	4
<i>The African Union Centre for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases in Lilongwe: Training Component</i>	5

CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION

The Commission of the African Union (AUC), through its two departments of Women, Gender and Development (WGDD) and Economic Affairs in collaboration with the African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (AU-SARO) in Lilongwe organized, the first African Union Continental Conference on the Economic Empowerment of African Women in the Context of Integration. The meeting was held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 17-19 March 2008. The Minister of Women and Child Development, Hon. Anna Kachikho, M.P., was the Guest of Honour at the Conference. In her statement, she welcomed all participants to the warm heart of Africa and also extended her thanks to the AUC for choosing Malawi to host this important Conference. The Minister in her remarks, expressed the importance of economic empowerment of African women with particular to Malawi, as women make up a large section of the population estimated around 52 percent. Further, she highlighted a number of agreements that support women such as the protocol on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Benin and Dakar Declarations as vital mechanism that promote women's development. Also, she recognized that the empowerment of women is an important tool for development and poverty reduction in Africa. The Minister further acknowledged the efforts of H.E. President Bingu Wa Mutharika in ensuring women's role in decision making in Malawi.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Joyce Banda, M.P., was also present at the opening session to show her support on issues affecting African women. In her brief mes-

sage, she called for financial support for women seeking parliamentary seats, so that they can play a role in decision making process.

Mrs. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, the AUC Director of Women, Gender and Development in her statement explained that the Conference was held in line with AU Decision 134-164 (VIII) of January 2007 to establish an African Women Trust Fund and called for AUC to ensure its operationalization. She emphasized that the Fund is an important means to target marginalized African women and discussed ways to set it up.

Speaking on economically empowering women, Ms. Emelang Literame, the Representative of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) observed the cooperation between the AU and ECA in support of women issues. *(cont'd p.6)*



Guest of Honour, Hon. Anna Kachikho, MP., Minister of Women and Child Development (centre); Hon. Joyce Banda, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation (2nd left); Mrs Musyimi Ogana, AUC Director of Women, Gender and Development (2nd right) ; Ms. Emelang Literame, UNECA Representative (far right) and Ms. Soanirenela Tsilimbiasa, AUC Director of Trade and Industry (far left) during the Opening Ceremony of the Conference in Lilongwe, Malawi.



Editorial African Youth

The Youth in Africa are facing many challenges including HIV/AIDS, lack of employment opportunities, inadequate participation in decision-making processes and inadequate recreational facilities amongst others. The Second Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of the Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY II) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 12 to 15 February 2008. The meeting was an acknowledgement of the important role of Youth in the Continent and the challenges facing them. Without doubt, the African Union vision towards the importance of the role of African Youth in the socio-economic development is in full swing. This was evident following signing and ratification of the African Youth Charter by AU Member States.

This enthusiasm towards Youth can be further observed in the newly formed African Youth Empowerment Fund, which would help transform the Youth into a dynamic part of the African societies.

The conference viewed that the creation of the Fund will enable African Youth to access the much desired resources aimed at developing comprehensive and youth based development programmes as all member states of the AU will access the Fund.

Certainly, the Fund will provide resources to support programmes aimed at empowering youth through training in vocational skills, such as carpentry and provision of fees and scholarships to secondary and university students in need and capacity building of youth structure such as youth clubs, youth NGOs, youth networks and youth action committees. It is also expected that the Fund will enable young people to establish viable business projects.

Hence, the Conference in general can be seen as a step towards addressing the necessary requirements to build up the self-reliance in African Youth and to ensure that youth can be a force in Africa's desired development.

AU-SARO ACTIVITIES

The Senior Policy Officer, Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, on 15 January 2008 was the Guest of Honour at the opening ceremony of the course on Regional Training on Peer Health Education at the Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA). The Senior Policy Officer in his statement underscored the necessity for the development of courses of this nature to reach the grassroots, in order to meet the need of children and the community at large. He also indicated that such programs derive from the Declarations and Decisions of the AU.

The AU-SARO participated at the One Village One Product (OVOP) International Seminar from 22 to 24 January 2008 in Lilongwe, Malawi. The AU Regional Delegate to SADC, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan represented the Office at the Seminar. The seminar was to develop an understanding of the OVOP Movement objectives, by sharing the experience of Japan and those of other participating countries. Also how OVOP could assist rural communities and reduce poverty in Africa.

On 25 January 2008 the Office had a meeting with a delegation of Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) headed by Mr. Nagatsuka Seiichi, the Vice President of JICA. The Office was informed about JICA support to the OVOP Movement as a new concept of development in Africa. Also the delegation discussed ways of enhancing co-operation with the African Union in the development of Africa.

On 22 February 2008, the AU Regional Delegate to SADC was the Guest of Honour at the Closing Ceremony of the Course in "Mental Health Training for Facilitators" at the GCYDCA in Lilongwe, Malawi. The course was the first of its kind to be initiated by the Centre in its effort in capacity building of

member states. The Regional Delegate acknowledged the importance of such activities organized by the Centre to help develop African Youth socially, personally and vocationally.



AU SUMMIT: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA

The 10th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 31 of January to 2 February 2008. The Summit was preceded by the meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee 15th Ordinary Session from 25 to 26 January 2008 and the Executive Council, 12th Ordinary Session from 27 to 29 2008.



*A cross-section of the Delegates at the 10th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
31 January—2 February 2008*

The theme of the Summit was **Industrial Development of Africa**. The theme underscored the importance of industrial development in the continent by promoting it as a means for accelerating Africa's economic prosperity and highlighting the challenges facing member states.

The session also considered a number of ministerial reports of the second half of the year 2007, as well as reports of the ongoing 15th Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), that was held from 25 January, the Budget for 2008, and the Audit of the Union.

Furthermore, the following elections took place:

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union :

- Burundi and Chad (Central Africa)
- Rwanda and Uganda (Eastern Africa)
- Tunisia (Northern Africa)
- Swaziland and Zambia (Southern Africa)
- Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali (Western Africa)

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the AUC:

Mr. Jean Ping, Gabonese Foreign Affairs Minister was elected as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. He replaces Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, from the Republic of Mali. Mr. Erastus Mwencha (Kenya) was elected as the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union and he is also the Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The Commissioners of the AUC

- Peace and Security: Mr. Ramtane Lamamra (Algeria)
- Political Affairs: Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner (Gambia)
- Infrastructure and Energy: Mrs. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim (Egypt)
- Social Affairs: Advocate Bience Philomina Gawanas (Namibia)
- Human Resources, Science and Technology: Mr. Jean Pierre Onvehoun Ezin (Benin)
- Trade and Industry: Mrs. Elisabeth Tankeu (Cameroon)
- Economic Affairs: Dr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba (Malawi)



*Current African Union (AU)
Chairperson, H.E. Jakaya Kikwete,
President of the Republic of Tanzania*

- Rural Economy and Agriculture: will be elected at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers in April 2008 in Arusha, Tanzania.

Election of the new Bureau of the African Union

- Chairperson: Republic of Tanzania: H.E. Jakaya Kikwete.
- First Deputy Chairperson: Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.
- Second Deputy Chairperson: Kingdom of Lesotho.
- Third Deputy Chairperson: Cameroon.
- Rapporteur: Ghana



*H.E. Mr. Jean Ping
Newly elected Chairperson of the
African Union Commission*



GCYDCA holds the first ever Mental Health Facilitation Training in the World.



*Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka
Director, GCYDCA*

The Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Center for Africa (GCYDCA) held the first ever training in Mental Health Facilitation in the world from 18 to 22 February 2008. The training was conducted jointly by the GCYDCA with the National Board of Certified Counsellors (NBCC) based in the USA. The training attracted 20 participants from Malawi, Tanzania and Botswana.

The training was officially opened by the South African High Commissioner, H.E. Ms. Ntshadi M. Tsheole. Her Excellency demonstrated her expertise in the field of Mental Health training. Using her experience coupled with the training theme of promoting Mental Health facilitation, the Guest of Honour emphasized on the need to avoid stigma and discrimination on some individuals in society who may be perceived to have mental challenges. She praised the Director of the Centre, Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka, for initiating the first ever mental health facilitators training in the world and for networking with globally recognized professional bodies such as NBCC.

Some areas tackled during the training included topics like investigation in

mental health, human development, helping skills, mental distress and disorder, assessment, making referrals, suicide and peer support.

The training was officially closed by Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan, AU Regional Delegate to SADC. He applauded the Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa and the National Board of Certified Counsellors for agreeing to work together on a programme that is high on the AU agenda. He particularly appreciated the choice of inaugurating a global programme at the Centre. The AU Regional Delegate pledged to continue working with the Centre and wished the institution well in its endeavours. After the first training, other similar trainings have rowed out in other parts of the world.

The Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa has embarked on ambitious programmes and networking strategies. From 14 to 18 January 2008, the Centre held a regional training in Peer Education for Zambia, Malawi, Nigeria and other countries. Between 11 and 15 February 2008, the Centre took part in the promotion of entrepreneurship networking conference in Bangkok. On 4 April 2008, the Centre will be part of the Southern Africa Partnership Forum in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Being determined to promote youth development in Africa, the Office will with effect from April 2008 start electronic training in 15 countries for Guidance and Counselling teachers. The regional institution is grateful for the support received from diplomatic missions and international organizations, African Union and indeed the Government of the Republic of Malawi.

*Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka
Director, GCYDCA*



THE AFRICAN UNION CENTRE FOR TICKS AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES LILONGWE, MALAWI: TRAINING COMPONENT

Introduction

The productivity and socio-economic success of the livestock sector within the African continent is hampered by various constraints and among these, diseases play a major role. Other than reducing productivity in all agro-ecological zones, diseases prevent the introduction of more productive breeding stock and new technologies.

It is against this background that the mission of the Centre for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases, CTTBD, is to provide demand-driven support services to the region in the control of livestock diseases, especially those transmitted by tick vectors, through the production of quality controlled vaccines, provision of appropriate training in delivering control strategies and research in the field of vector-borne diseases. The Centre's vision is to make a significant and lasting impact in the development of the African continent through improved food security and uplifting livelihoods of smallholder livestock farmers by promoting animal health and production.

Understanding that a Nation's most valuable capital lies in its people, training remains one of the Centre's priority activities. Further to this, the changing landscape of livestock diseases, introduction of new diseases to new areas as well as dynamism of science makes the refresher courses very important as they bring people from different areas in the continent with different experiences together to revitalize and broaden their existing knowledge and skills. The ultimate goal of the training courses is therefore to provide animal



*Dr. Mrs. N.C. Gondwe-Mphepo
Deputy Director, AU-CTTBD*

resource personnel with the best possible learning experience, skills and support for recognizing livestock diseases and planning, monitoring and support for sustainable animal disease control and production programs.

Courses Offered

The courses offered by the Centre (either in English or French) include Veterinary Epidemiology, Livestock Economics (Animal Health), Advanced Veterinary Laboratory Diagnostics and Risk Analysis. In addition, the Centre provides tailor-made courses in livestock development to both local and international clients. For instance, the Centre has been engaged in contract research in the field of tsetse and trypanosomiasis both on the human and the livestock aspect. In this regard, it hosted a short tailor-made course in *Clinical and Laboratory Diagnosis of Human African Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping Sickness)* for medical personnel from Malawi and an 8 weeks course in *Veterinary Epidemiology with Particular Reference to Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis* for participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2007.

Since its inception in 1999, over 450 participants from many African countries have attended courses at the Centre. In 2007 alone, a total of 79 participants attended various courses in the fields of Veterinary Epidemiology, Animal Health (High Impact Diseases) and Livestock Economics. The participants

were from 14 African countries (Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

In the first quarter of 2008 the Centre conducted a course in Veterinary Epidemiology at the request of the Rwandan Government for staff. The course was for 8 weeks and conducted in both English and French. Resource persons were from South Africa and CTTBD. Participants were given skills in Statistics, Epidemiology, GIS and a number of Statistical packages. It was sponsored by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), University of Columbia (UC) and the Project a'appui au Development de l'Elevage Bovin Laitier (PADEBL) from Rwanda. The sponsorship included a laptop for each participant which should enable them store, analyse and interpret animal health and production data. It is hoped that the long term effects will be better and efficient disease control strategies and improved productivity of the livestock which in turn will contribute to the re-building and development of Rwanda and the African continent as a whole.

The Centre hails several donors for financially supporting its activities notably the Belgian Government through the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), FAO, SADC and the EU. Last but not least the CTTBD is greatly indebted to its mother body, the African Union, for the moral and logistical support and advice throughout its tenure.

*Dr. Mrs. N.C. Gondwe-Mphepo
Deputy Director
AU-CTTBD*



*Economic Empowerment of African Women Conference
(cont. from p.1)*

In the same vein, Prof. R. Omotayo Olaniyan, AU Regional Delegate to SADC, thanked the effort of the Government of Malawi in hosting the Conference and put emphasis on the importance of this Conference to women development and empowerment in Africa.

The Opening Session was followed by an exhibition of products made by Malawian women. Hon. Anna Kachikho, led delegates to view and sample products made and produced by Malawian women.

The forum was designed to serve as a platform for interaction, as it was attended by representatives from AU member states, women associations from Malawi and experts responsible for Women and Gender Affairs. The main objective of the meeting was to re-examine the status of implementation of action plans at global and continental level on the empowerment of women, propose mechanisms for the creation of an African Women Trust Fund and propose a Road Map for the establishment of the Fund. Indeed, participants put forward recommendations for the creation and operation of the African Women Trust Fund. The Forum further expressed the urgency to the operationalization of the Fund and called on the AUC to ensure that the meeting's outcome be included at the upcoming 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in January 2009 and Fund is launched by July 2009.



Group photograph of the delegates who attended the Continental Conference on the Economic Empowerment of African Women, 17-19 March 2008 in Lilongwe, Malawi.



Delegates, led by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Anna Kachikho, M.P., Minister of Women and Child Development of the Republic of Malawi view and admire some of the products exhibited by Malawian women

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NOTE

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