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Africa's structural transformation via commodity-based industrialization gets nod from Ministers



Abidjan, 26 March 2013—The Sixth Joint Annual Meetings of ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance ended with a unanimous call to pursue commodity based-industrialization as an impetus to Africa's aspirations for structural transformation.



In a Ministerial statement issued at the end of the meeting, the Ministers said; "Industrialization has become an imperative for Africa's development and its careful pursuit cannot be postponed any longer." The Ministers stressed the imperative of industrialization in order to create much needed jobs for Africa's youth and to generate the knowledge

and skills base to manage a rapid process of urbanization and to reap the potentials of a demographic dividend. To translate growth into an all-encompassing structural transformation will require clarity of vision, effective coordination of actions and an unwavering focus on effective and coordinated actions to adopt and implement a coherent industrialization policy. The Ministers underscored the need to develop infrastructure and provide energy, as major drivers of a successful programme of industrialization.



The 2013 Economic Report on Africa, which was launched here Monday, advances the case for commodity based industrialization as both feasible and beneficial.

The Ministers expressed concern with the slow

advances in achieving the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs). Looking ahead to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the ministers underemphasized the importance of context, self-effort, ownership, resource availability and other enablers to the prospects for more robust outcomes in the achievement of set target. “(We) request the institutions (ECA, AUC, and African Development Bank (AfDB) to ensure that the African priorities are effectively reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals,” the statement said.

To enhance Africa’s competitive advantages, the Ministers called for immediate measures to capitalize on its demographic dividend through sustained investments in health and education, particularly for women, the girl-child, and the youth. “These investments should be further enhanced by the adoption of appropriate social, urban planning, and macroeconomic policies,” the read the Ministerial statement.

On the Follow-up-to Rio +20, the joint ministers meeting urged the integration of Rio+20 outcomes into national development policies, strategies and plans.

The Ministers called on the United Nations Secretary-General “to provide required support to ECA to enhance its work in accordance with Africa’s priorities.” ECA is restructuring its programming to align and strategically serve the African transformation agenda. In the new strategic orientation ECA will place statistics for evidence-based policy making and effective planning at the core of generation of research, policy, knowledge and consensus.

About global partnerships and effective development cooperation, the ministers proposed the creation of an African consultative reference group to consult regularly on the Global Partnership.

Meanwhile, ECA Executive Secretary Carlos Lopes and AUC Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma in their joint closing remarks welcomed the ministers’ decision to give impetus to Africa’s aspirations for structural transformation.

“Another key message emanating from this meeting is that Africa must tell its own story and should take control of the narrative. Thus, while not disregarding the positive gloss put on its current growth performance, this continent should lead the discussions relating to its future prospects by undertaking its own analysis and generating robust statistics to back its case,” they said.

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