



Economic Commission
for Africa

Fifth Joint Meeting
AU Conference of Ministers of Economy
and Finance and ECA Conference of African
Ministers of Finance,
Planning and Economic Development
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



African Union

Theme: *"Unleashing Africa's Potential as a Pole of Global Growth"*.

Closing remarks at the Media Workshop
21 March 2012

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Colleagues from the African Union Commission
Friends and colleagues from the media

Let me begin by passing on the apologies of the Director of Information and Communication, Mrs. Habiba Mejri Cheikh who had confirmed her presence at this workshop and had worked hard together with our ECA colleagues to realise its success. She wanted to be here with us, but was called away on another urgent matter at the last minute.

I speak to you today on her behalf.

It is my pleasure to address this very important media workshop ahead of the Fifth Joint Annual Meetings of the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which will open tomorrow 22 March and end on the 27th under the theme: “Unleashing Africa’s Potential as a Pole of Global Growth”.

This conference as you know is jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It is my hope that you have found the workshop to be worthy of your time and that it has prepared you for the meeting to come.

This is a gathering of very senior members of the media. Your presence at this time is very crucial as the world relies on the media to know what our two organisations are doing to improve the lives of ordinary citizens. Therefore they depend on you for credible information right from the source. That is why this workshop has been organised:- to facilitate your access to that information and enable you to report truthfully, and on time.

You will recall that the African Union aims to achieve a prosperous, peaceful and integrated Africa:- one in which its citizens are free from fear or want. The ECA on the other hand aims to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa’s development

In this process of integration and development, the media is a critical partner through its ability to report on and analyse issues ranging across the full socio political spectrum. The media has the responsibility and duty to report on all issues concerning Africa- the good and the bad. It has the responsibility also to hold states accountable on the issues they agree on and sign up to; and those that bind them by virtue of their being part of the international community.

The AUC is a public body and as such its information is for public consumption. It takes decisions and represents Africa’s common position on issues of continental significance. As such the media has a role in reporting on and analysing these positions so that the continent can take its rightful place in the global arena. I need not belabour the fact that an enlightened citizenry is a key ingredient in the development process.

The African Union Commission values and encourages a free and independent media. That is why it is engaged in media development on the continent. The Directorate of Information and Communication has a comprehensive programme in this respect. I will share some aspects of it for your information.

Some of the activities undertaken within the scope of media development are:
Media briefings, press conferences; coverage of AU events, issuing of press releases etc..

The Commission has established a media center to enable the media to produce and publish their materials on site and on time.

A media portal is under construction, which will gather information about media houses; list the national legislations of AU Member States on media, present journalism and communication schools, and provide a full list of all relevant media stakeholders in each African country. As such the portal will be a one stop shop for information on media in Africa

An African media network is in the final stages of establishment. It aims to –

- formulate a strategy to promote media for Africa and to work collectively for the implementation of that strategy by members States , donors, international institutions and other relevant parties.
- The network will serve as a sounding board for media development initiatives in Africa, or involving Africa.
- The network can function as a platform to propose media development initiatives and advise the AUC on media development policy in Africa.

To enhance knowledge on key African issues among Africa's media, the AUC regularly partners with development partners such as the ECA and others to engage African journalists on key thematic areas. This workshop is one of the activities under this project.

The DIC seeks to promote the provisions of AU instruments on access to information and freedom of speech. Already, a number of Declarations and Charters exist to that effect. Time does not permit me to go into details but we will happily share them with you

The DIC publishes a number of publications:

The AUC NEWS LETTER: covers all events organised by the AU on a monthly basis

The AUC Herald is a compilation of articles written by high level journalists and thinkers from Africa with a view to analyse important issues of the day.

The AUC Journal publishes the calendar of meetings of the AUC. It is produced in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) Communication service.

The AU website is a tool that media and other stakeholders can use to get the most updated information. Our address is www.au.int

In addition, the Commission has a dedicated officer to arrange interviews for media personnel with the leadership of the Commission.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues

These are some of the initiative being undertaken by the Commission to facilitate easier access to information. I hope you will find some of the resources useful in your day to day business.

I thank you