



## Directorate of Information and Communication

## PRESS RELEASE

## Africa Development Week opens in Dakar with clarion call for policies that cater for youth

**Dakar, Senegal, 23 March 2017** – African Experts in Finance and Economic affairs have gathered in Dakar from 23-25 March 2017 to exchange views on “ Growth, inequality and unemployment” in preparation to the Tenth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa’s Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development scheduled to take place on 27 and 28 March 2017, within the framework of the weeklong activities marking the Africa Development Week 2017.



Addressing participants at the opening on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, AUC’s Economic Affairs Commissioner, Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, said it was symbolic that the meeting was taking place in Senegal, where Africans were forcibly taken to work as slaves in America and Europe.

“We are in the right place to come up and work on strategies to make sure our young people don’t voluntarily and involuntarily leave the continent to look for opportunities elsewhere,” said Mr. Maruping, adding growth on the continent so far has not been inclusive.

“We need to grow Africa. The time to do so is now,” he said, adding Agenda 2063 is seeking to achieve accelerated, stable, inclusive and real economic job-creating growth in Africa. Mr. Maruping said no form of poverty was acceptable as he urged the continent to work hard to eradicate all inequalities.

He said Africa is clear on what needs to be done as it deals with challenges it is facing on the ground, in particular spurring economic growth that positively impacts everyone.

“Africa knows what to do, how to do it, with what and when to do it as we target this growth and inequality,” said Mr. Maruping. “We really want to transform our economies, raise our productivity, promote integration and trade and all.”



On her part, the Economic Commission for Africa’s deputy Executive Secretary, Giovanna Biha, said it is imperative for African governments to adopt coherent strategies and national development plans that address the continent’s challenges of growth, inequality and unemployment.

In her opening speech to the Tenth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ms. Biha noted

that “the absence of decent jobs for young Africans has fueled outward migration, both within and from Africa resulting in tragic loss of lives as young people attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search for greener pastures.” She said since this year is the year of harnessing Africa’s demographic dividend through investment in the youth, more needs to be done by all stakeholders to promote investment in job creation and human capital development.

“It is the imperative for African countries to adopt coherent strategies and national development plans that promote structural transformation and address the challenges of growth, inequality and unemployment within the context of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” stressed Ms. Biha .

She further noted that discussions on unemployment in Africa were not new, adding it was now time for action on the ground.

Senegal's Budget Minister, Birima Mangara, in his welcome address to the meeting of experts said his country was doing all it can to structurally transform its economy for the benefit of every citizen.

He said inequalities and youth unemployment were being tackled as well as other related problems that lead to poverty, adding youth and women on the continent should be prioritized in job creation.

Mr. Mangara lauded the ECA, the AUC and their partners for convening a meeting to specifically tackle growth, inequalities and unemployment on the continent.

"It is these meetings which serve as outstanding platforms to discuss Africa's problems," he said. "I'm convinced that the debates will lead to very important recommendations that are important for the future development of our dear Africa."



The Tenth Joint Annual Meetings will deliberate on the theme of "Growth, inequality and unemployment". The conference will explore measures for reducing inequality and extreme poverty on the continent in order to achieve the targets of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2013-2023) of Agenda 2063 and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other issues.

Meanwhile, the Conference of Ministers will commence with a high-level policy dialogue on the 2017 theme, followed by a series of plenary sessions on various sub-themes. The discussions will draw on the concept note and technical background materials, which synthesize the results of recent research on the subject. It is expected that seasoned and high-level panelists from within and outside Africa will build on the overarching theme towards an outcome that will have important implications for Africa's future.

The conference will also explore measures for reducing inequality and extreme poverty on the continent in order to achieve the targets of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2013-2023)

of Agenda 2063 and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the Meetings will consider statutory issues in relation to the Economic Commission for Africa and the Specialized Technical Committee.

Among the high-level delegates present were the Chairperson of the outgoing bureau of the committee of experts, Mr. Lizenga Maluleka, representatives of UN agencies, the African Union Commission, African Development Bank and civil society. Also present was the Director for Economic Affairs of the AUC, Dr. Rene N'Gueta Kouassi.

As in previous years, the proceedings will feature a number of significant high-level side events and other meetings, including the eighteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa). In addition, and following the well-received 2016 African Development Week, there will be a number of side events taking place on 25 and 26 March 2017. These 90-minute events, with inspiring discussions and solutions, will be held in parallel over the two days.

**Journalists are invited to cover the Tenth Joint Annual Meetings of the AU/ STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Dakar, Senegal from 23 – 28 March 2017.**

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