



**UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa  
(OSAA)**



**The African Union Permanent Observer  
Mission to the United Nations**

## **AFRICA'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES BRIEFING TO UN MEMBER STATES,**

**CO-CONVENORS: AFRICAN UNION PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS AND OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER FOR  
AFRICA.**

### **RATIONALE**

Since the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) was adopted in 2000 at the Lome Summit (Togo), African leaders have worked to revamp and establish new African institutions to better address conflicts and political instability, and to accelerate Africa's economic integration. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are recognized as a cornerstone and building block for this twin mission.

For Africa to achieve its goals of greater integration and political stability, better cooperation and collaborative action is needed between the AU, RECs, partners, the UN system, and other international organizations.

In this regard the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is to enhance international support for Africa's peace and development through its advocacy and analytical work, assist the Secretary General in improving coherence and coordination of the UN system support to Africa, and facilitate inter-governmental deliberations on Africa at the global level.

Towards meeting this goal, on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009 in Addis Ababa, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa convened an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on "Bridging the peace and development nexus, the role and capacities of African regional and sub-regional organizations." The EGM was held in the context of the Comprehensive Review Process of the Recommendations Contained in the 1998 Report of the Secretary General on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable peace and Sustainable development. The goal was to gain the perspectives of the RECs on issues of peace and development. African Union (AU) representatives also attended.

During that meeting OSAA was requested to facilitate the mobilization of international support for the work of RECs bearing in mind their substantial mandate and the limited resources that they have to undertake such advocacy.

Since RECs do not have any representation in New York, the support of the African Union for the organization and co-sponsoring of such advocacy work is essential. Article 3 of the Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities states that one of the objectives for harmonization of the work of the AU and the RECS is to encourage the sharing of experiences in all fields among the RECS and ensure harmonization in their cooperation with potential donors and international financial institutions. To meet that objective, it is necessary for the priorities and needs of the AU and the RECs -- as the AU's operational arms, to become better known, not just in Africa but also at the global level.

As a first step towards responding to the request for facilitation of such advocacy at global level, on 18 October 2010 OSAA and the African Union Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations took the opportunity of the RECs presence at the 2010 General Assembly Plenary Debate on Africa to provide an opportunity for the RECS to present their work and the challenges they face to Member States in New York. By providing members states with first hand information on the work of the RECS, OSAA and the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations hoped to raise understanding of what is being done to ensure durable peace and accelerate economic integration in Africa, the challenges that RECs face, and through such information create better understanding and thus enhance cooperation between RECs, potential donors and international institutions. Following the briefing Member States of the UN system indicated their interest in future briefings. OSAA and the African Union seeks to avail this opportunity on an annual basis.

## **BACKGROUND ON AFRICAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES**

The AU and the RECs share the goal of a peaceful and a socially and economically advanced Africa. Indeed Africa's regional economic integration is seen as an essential for accelerated development in Africa. Article 88 of the Abuja Treaty and article 3 of the AU Constitutive Act envisioned RECs as the "implementing arms" of the AU's goal of a peaceful and prosperous continent. They are the key building blocks for economic integration and key actors in ensuring political stability in their geographical areas. The RECs have the immense challenge of raising the standard of living of the people of Africa and contributing towards the progress and development of the continent by achieving economic growth, promoting peace and security and evolving common political values as well as systems and institutions among African countries.

The role of the RECs as building blocks of the African Economic Community (AEC) and their formal relation with the AU are governed by a series of formal agreements (Article 33 and 34 of the AU Constitutive Act, the AU-REC Protocol of 1998, Article 16 (9) of

the AU PSC Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council and the subsequent MoUs between the AU and individual RECs.)

RECs have an enormous potential. As the key implementing arms of the AU and development agents in their respective regions they can promote inter-regional trade and trans-border social and economic cooperation; address the causes of conflict in their areas, prevent and resolve violent conflict and respond to new and emerging challenges.

Despite the formally recognized role of RECs and their importance in achieving the global goals of the AU, the capacity of each REC to achieve its mandate largely depends on the level of resources and political commitment from its member states. Given the institutional and resource limitations that most RECs and the AU are facing, assistance of the international community is critical to strengthen their roles, meet the capacity constraints and foster the effectiveness of sub-regional organizations in peace and development efforts.

Generating those resources requires that their goals and priorities are better understood at global level. The briefing seeks to provide Member States of the UN and the wider UN system in New York an opportunity to hear from the respective representatives of the RECs about their work, their challenges as well as their successes.

It is the hope of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Africa Union Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations (The Convenors) that the annual briefings by African RECs to UN Member States will enhance understanding of what African countries are doing, and in particular the role of the RECs as the implementing arms of the AU and generate greater support for the work, goals, aims and priorities of the AU and the RECS.

## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

The East African Community (EAC) unites the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The EAC was originally founded in 1967, collapsed in 1977. The Community was re-established by the East African Community Treaty signed on 30 November 1999 and which entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi acceded to the EAC Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full Members of the Community with effect from 1 July 2007.

EAC countries established a Customs Union in 2005. In November 2009 member states signed a Common Market Protocol which was ratified in 2010 by all the Partner States. The protocol will lead to the free movement of labour, capital, goods and services within the EAC. It is expected that the legislative process to create free movement may take up to five years for each of the countries to enact fully. Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi have already agreed to waive work permit fees for EAC citizens. The Common Market is seen as a step towards implementation of a common currency and full political federation. Consultations on a Monetary Union commenced in 2009.

The EAC regional economic bloc encompasses a combined population of more than 125 million people, land area of 1.82 million sq kilometres and in 2009 the combined Gross Domestic Product stood at \$73 billion.

The main organs of the East African Community are the Summit of Heads of State, the Council of Ministers, the Co-ordination Committee, the East African Court of Justice, the East African Legislative Assembly, and the Secretariat.

The current Secretary General of the East African Community is His Excellency Ambassador Juma Mwapachu.

EAC headquarters are in Arusha, Tanzania.

## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES**

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) began as the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (CEUCA- UDEAC in French Acronym) established by the Brazzaville Treaty in 1966.

In December 1981, the leaders of UDEAC agreed to form a wider economic community of Central African states. ECCAS was established on 18 October 1983 with São Tomé and Príncipe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda as member states and Angola as an observer until 1999, when it became a full member.

The Brazzaville Treaty of 1966 had also established a free trade area between members. UDEAC also signed a treaty for the establishment of an Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). The monetary union was to promote sub-regional integration. The Central Africa CFA franc was to act as a common currency. UDEAC was officially superseded by CEMAC in June 1999 (through an agreement signed in 1994).

To date, CEMAC has not achieved its objective of creating a customs union. CEMAC and ECCAS are expected to integrate into one organization as CEMAC is now seen as an institution of ECCAS. ECCAS began functioning in 1985, but was inactive for several years due to financial difficulties and conflict in the Great Lakes region which proved divisive to its member states.

ECCAS became active again in 1998 following a Summit of the Heads of State and Government. The 10th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government took place in Malabo in June 2002. This Summit adopted a protocol on the establishment of a Network of Parliamentarians of Central Africa (REPAC) and the standing orders of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), including the Defence and Security Commission (CDC), Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and the Early Warning Mechanism of Central Africa (MARAC). In that summit Rwanda was also officially welcomed upon its return as a full member of ECCAS.

The current Secretary General of ECCAS is his Excellency General Louis Silvain-Goma. ECCAS Headquarters are in Libreville, Gabon.

## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen West African countries, namely Benin, BurkinaFaso, CapeVerde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Two members, Guinea and Niger have had their memberships suspended following the 2008 and 2009 coup d'états in those countries respectively.

ECOWAS was founded on May 28, 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos. In 1976 Cape Verde joined ECOWAS, and in December 2000 Mauritania withdrew. The treaty was revised in Cotonou on July 24, 1993. The ECOWAS Commission, The ECOWAS Community Parliament, and The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice are the main institutions that implement policy in the region. The ECOWAS Fund became the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development in 2001 and is responsible for enhancing growth by financing programmes and projects of ECOWAS.

ECOWAS member states signed a non-aggression protocol in 1990 and a Protocol on Mutual Defence Assistance, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on May 29, 1981, that provided for the establishment of an Allied Armed Force of the Community called the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG is multilateral armed force established by a formal arrangement for separate armies to work together. Its backbone was Nigerian armed forces and financial resources, with sub-battalion strength units contributed by Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and others. Its most successful deployments were in Sierra Leone where it helped to end a 10 year old civil war. ECOMOG soldiers were also deployed in Liberia and Guinea to help end the conflicts in those countries.

The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice was created by a protocol signed in 1991. The protocol entered into force on 5 November 1996. The jurisdiction of the Community Court of Justice includes ruling on disputes between states over interpretations of the Revised Treaty and providing the ECOWAS Council with advisory opinions on legal issues. It also has jurisdiction over gross human rights breaches.

The current President of the ECOWAS Commission is his Excellency Ambassador James Victor Gbeho.

The Headquarters of the Commission is in Abuja, Nigeria.

## **BACKGROUND NOTE**

### **THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT**

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a seven-country regional development organization in the East and Horn of Africa Region. They include Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

IGAD began in January 1986 as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). Member states set up the organization as a way of improving relations between member states who at the time were dealing with several intra regional conflicts and alleged support for each other's insurgents.

At an Extraordinary Summit of IGADD Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 18 April 1995, leaders expanded the areas of regional co-operation and created a fully-fledged regional political, economic, development, and trade and security entity.

On 21 March 1996, the Heads of State and Government at the Second Extraordinary Summit in Nairobi, Kenya approved and adopted an Agreement Establishing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Most cooperation has focused on conflicts in armed pastoralist border regions of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan.

IGAD has also been at the lead of the Somali and Southern Sudan Peace processes. IGAD led the talks that created the Somalia's Transitional Federal Government in 2004.

IGAD cover an area of 5.2 Million sq. km and have a population of more than 180 Million.

The Executive Secretary of IGAD is his Excellency Mr. Mahboub Maalim, The Headquarters of IGAD are located in Djibouti.

## **THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed on April 1, 1980 as a loose alliance of nine States; Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At inception it was known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).

Its initial aim was coordinating development projects in order to lessen economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. SADCC transformed into SADC on August 17, 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia when the Summit of Heads of State and Government signed the SADC Treaty and Declaration thereby giving the organization a legal character.

Current Member States are: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SADC comprises eight institutions, namely, the Summit of Heads of State & Government, SADC Tribunal, Council of Ministers, Organ on Politics, Defence & Security Cooperation, Sectoral/Cluster Ministerial Committees, SADC Secretariat, Standing Committee of Senior Officials, and SADC National Committees. The Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation plays a vanguard role as part of the institutional mechanisms for promoting and maintaining peace and stability in the region. The SADC Mutual Defence Pact of 2004 guides the implementation of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

The SADC region has a population of Population 257.7 Million inhabitants. The SADC Free Trade Area (FTA) was launched on August 17, 2008 at Sandton, South Africa during the 28th Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government. SADC is currently working towards becoming a Customs Union.

On Wednesday October 22, 2008, SADC joined with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the East African Community to form the African Free Trade Zone. The leaders of the three trading blocs agreed to create a single free trade zone, the African Free Trade Zone, consisting of 26 countries with a GDP of an estimated \$624bn (£382.9bn). It is hoped the African Free Trade Zone agreement would ease access to markets within the zone and end problems arising from the fact that several of the member countries belong to multiple groups.

The current Executive Secretary is his Excellency Dr. Tomaz Augusto Salomão. SADC headquarters are located in Gaborone, Botswana.