

THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS FOR CENTRAL AFRICA
(ICE)

Yaounde, Cameroon
05-09 October 2020

“Skills for economic diversification in Central Africa”

**Webinar on:
Skills for Economic diversification in Central Africa: leveraging experiences
from successful comparators and building partnerships**

CONCEPT NOTE AND EVENT CONTROL SHEET

Virtual conferencing, 10:00 – 12:15 (GMT+1), Thursday 30 July 2020

Context

This is the second and final webinar in a two-part series prior to 36th session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICE) for Central Africa to be organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) from 05 to 09 October 2020 in Yaounde, Cameroon. While the ICE’s theme is: “Skills for economic diversification in Central Africa,” this online event will focus on *“leveraging experiences from successful comparators and building partnerships.”*

Before the ECA Office for Central Africa gathers key stakeholders to produce first-rate answers to the question of plugging the skills gap for economic diversification in the subregion, it will be necessary to get a good picture on the experiences from countries whose economic structures were similar to those of Central African states only a few decades ago. This, in a bid to document how such nations succeeded to leverage industrial growth to diversify their economies and how their experiences can be domesticated in our subregion.

Objectives

1. To maintain a great level of interest among key actors on the central thrust of the 36th ICE – a process which would have already started with a first webinar

2. To continue collecting feedback on the overall theme of the ICE and more ideas on how to render the session productive and practically beneficial for Central African countries
3. To get final inputs that can be used to enrich the background study for the 36th ICE
4. To build on the list of partners with whom to work consistently for content creation and policy advocacy on Skills for economic diversification in Central Africa

Expected results

1. Webinar is well attended by experts and senior officials of key ministries across the seven countries covered by ECA/SRO-CA and beyond
2. Experts' ideas on leveraging experiences from successful comparators for Central Africa's own economic diversification are advanced and documented
3. More partners to contribute to SRO-CA content on skills for economic diversification are identified
4. Communication on the event is published via ECA channels and via the news media

Participating parties (in categories)

1. Development partners, economists, from or who understand the story of the model countries cited above
2. Senior civil service officials across Central Africa (Ministries of: Industry; Trade; Economic Planning; Employment/ Vocational Training; Secondary Education; Higher Education; SMEs; Finance; Scientific research; Digital Development/Telecoms; Agriculture, Mining)
3. Representatives of national development agencies (standards and norms; investment authorities; national employment agencies; national enterprise upgrading agencies)
4. Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (ECCAS, CEMAC, AMU, EAC, SADC, ECOWAS)
5. IDEP officials
6. Officials from the private sector (Central African federation of employers' association – UNIPACE and country based ones; big data consultants; investment consultants; ICT Activists; leadership coaches)
7. Public-Private bodies (chambers of commerce and industries; chambers of agriculture)
8. Representatives from the academia and think tanks
9. Youth and start-uppers; informal sector representatives

10. UN partners and officials from other development bodies (ACBF, UNIDO, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP AfDB, Smart Africa, AfCFTA Secretariat, International Trade Centre,)
11. Officials of IFIs (World Bank, IMF, IDB)
12. Media

Webinar Structure

PART I: Statements

1. Pre-introduction by Moderator
2. Welcome by the Director, ECA/SRO-CA
3. Presentation by Head of the Economic Diversification Policy and Reforms Section, ECA/SRO-CA, on “The great leap into industrialization and economic diversification: notes from some model Asian and African countries.”

PART II: How did they do it and how can Central Africa tap from them?

A) THEIR STORIES:

1. Ethiopia: aviation, agribusiness, leather and leather products, floriculture
2. Japan: Adaptive skills development for boosting economic growth: the experience of post-WWII Japan
3. Morocco: Automotive industry, agribusiness, phosphates and derivative products, textile and leather products, tourism
4. South Africa: Over a century of mineral beneficiation, manufacturing and quality services – Lessons on skills for economic diversification from South Africa
5. Chile: Treading the pathway towards innovative, knowledge-based and service-oriented mining hinged on skills – capturing progress on Chile’s theory and practice of change
6. And many more....

B) HOW TO TAP FROM THEIR STORIES

7. From these examples, what role has mentality revival and leadership competence, played?
8. How did they capture and domesticate technology and how can Central Africa copy?
9. How did they hone their skills in energy production, transportation and distribution for a smooth industrialization process?
10. How should Central African countries collaborate with the success stories?
11. Skills acquisition for implementing industrialization masterplans in Central Africa – Who can our countries partner with?
12. Is there a need for immersion of Central Africa's engineers in samples of these countries' most successful industrial outfits? If yes, which ones?
13. Time for schools twinning partnerships? How?

PART III:

Concluding word from the Director, ECA's central Africa office