



Economic Commission for Africa

A service of the UN system-wide support to the African Union and its NEPAD Programme

NEPAD TODAY

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Africa loses from poor management of natural resources, says Lopes

UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has come out strong against the immense losses Africa incurs yearly through lack of adequate strategy and focus on the management of its natural resource base.

In a statement at the opening of the 8th African Development Forum which kicked off in Addis Ababa today, Mr. Carlos Lopes drew the attention of African policy makers and politicians to four situations in which deals of global magnitude are made on the African continent with little or no financial benefit to the impoverished people and their economies.

He cited the Glencore-Xstrata merger which is expected to create a US\$ 70 billion mining powerhouse that will control over half of the global zinc and copper markets, but noted that little of the value created is likely to benefit the Democratic Republic of Congo, the host country.

Lopes described the recent South African Marikana incident as one where there is “power asymmetry between mining companies and their workers, and the lack of institutional protection of workers leaves them exposed to poor working conditions and minimal remuneration”.



Mr. Carlos Lopes, UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECA

He recalled that while the Marikana tragedy resulted in the death of 34 people, the news headlines wrongly focused on the violence and economic impact of the incident, while “there is an untold story of marginalised workers and limited communal benefits”.

“It is about workers who cannot survive on R4000 a month because they have to pay R800 rent for one room in corrugated iron shacks, pay their living expenses and also send money to their families back home”, he said.

He also mentioned “the annual losses of \$629 million from illegal fishing along Africa's coastline”, saying it “could have bridged the financing gap for infrastructure development in a country like Mozambique, whose economy depends on fisheries”.

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Experts applaud UN media book on reporting NEPAD

The Director of the Department of Information and Communication of the African Union Commission has praised the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for its draft of a reporting manual for journalists to enhance regular reporting of successes and challenges of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme.

Ms Habiba Mejri-cheikh who is also the co-chair of the Advocacy and Communication Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for UN support to African Union and NEPAD was speaking at an Expert Group Meeting on the review of the reporting manual drafted by ECA's Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND) on behalf of the RCM Cluster on Advocacy and Communication. She said that once the manual is reviewed and published, it would be one of the most concrete achievements of the Cluster that she co-chairs with Ms. Mieke Ikegame, who heads the Coordination, Advocacy and Programme Development Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA).

The two media dialogues, which brought together officials of the AUC, the NEPAD Secretariat, representatives of UN agencies, including ECA and media executives from across Africa, concluded that a reporting manual for the media might help strengthen the capacity of African journalists to better cover NEPAD issues, the NEPAD Agency, enhancing its ownership by the people of Africa.

Nnadozie said he was convinced that the Advocacy and Communication Cluster is responding to one of the most critical challenges of NEPAD ---more effective com-

munication ---with the production of the manual.

Source: *Special to ECA*

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Africa loses...

Stressing the theme of this year's Forum which is "Governing and Harnessing Natural Resources for Africa's Development", Lopes said "time has come for Africa to profit from the 156% increase in mining companies' profits".

He did not stop at cataloguing the ills, but proposed four principles that Africa could adopt to ensure that the vast natural resources of the continent effectively serve the people of this region and transform their economies.

Focusing on mining which one of the Forum's sub themes, he proposed that rather than focusing mainly on collecting taxes on the sector, Africa ought to be using the sector and its resource rents to drive socio-economic development.

"This means investment in infrastructure, research and human capital development, through conditionality for local content. This is what other regions have done; this is what Africa needs to do", he said.

For full story: <http://new.uneca.org/ArticleDetail/tabid/3018/ArticleId/2196/Africa-loses-from-poor-management-of-natural-resources-says-Lopes.aspx>

Upcoming Event

- African Development Forum (ADF VIII), 23-25 October 2012 "Governing and Harnessing Natural Resources for Africa's Development", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- RCM-Africa, November 14-15, 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, UNCC

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