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23rd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE)

UNECA, Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA)

Asmara, Eritrea
5 - 7 November 2019

Leveraging New Opportunities for Regional Integration in Eastern Africa

MEETING REPORT



INTRODUCTION

1. The 23rd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) was held from 05 to 07 November 2019, at the Asmara Palace Hotel in Asmara, Eritrea. The meeting was jointly organised by the Government of Eritrea and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Office for Eastern Africa. The theme of the ICSOE meeting was: *'Leveraging New Opportunities for Regional Integration in Eastern Africa.'*
2. The ICSOE is a forum to cement partnerships and define modalities of cooperation between and among stakeholders. It is aimed at sustaining regional integration and accelerating the pace of development in the sub-region. It is a statutory organ of the ECA in Eastern Africa, including representatives from the fourteen member States that the Office for Eastern Africa serve, plus representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) of the sub-region. This is in addition to development partners, research centres and other stakeholders.
3. With the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) now ratified by 28 countries, the meeting looked at the new opportunities that regional integration could bring, and how to ensure that the region successfully leverages these benefits. The ICSOE presented an opportunity to develop understanding and produce some clear recommendations. This was achieved through five plenary sessions, two Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meetings (AEGMs), another side-event, and a high-level dinner discussion, on the themes below.

Plenary Sessions:

- Macroeconomic and Social Overview of Eastern Africa;
- How to fast-track AfCFTA Implementation in Eastern Africa;
- Boosting Tourism Development in Eastern Africa;
- Crowding-in Investments for Energy and Infrastructure Development in Eastern Africa;
- and
- Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa: Aligning National, Continental and Global agendas.

AEGMs:

- Promoting Regional Trade for Faster Job Creation;
- The State of Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa.



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Side Event:

- Harnessing the Blue Economy for Regional Integration.

High-Level Dinner Discussion:

- Legal Perspectives on Regional Integration in Eastern Africa.

ATTENDANCE

4. Delegations from the following countries attended the ICSOE: Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania.
5. In addition to a wide number of stakeholders from the host country – Eritrea – the following national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions and organizations were also represented: African Union Commission (AUC); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs (CEPGL); East African Community (EAC); Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD); Indian Ocean Commission (IOC); Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA); Ports Management Authority for Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA); Nile Basin Initiative (NBI); University of South Africa (UNISA); Ministry of Energy of Kenya, University of Nairobi; Kenya Youth in Trade; Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development; Life and Peace Institute; National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya (NCIC); Institute for Peace and Security Studies; University of Dar-es-Salaam; Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) of Rwanda; Makerere University; Kenya Institute for Public Policy (KIPPRA); Tourism Confederation of Tanzania; Office National de Tourisme de Djibouti (ONTD); Leisure and Tourism; Howarth International; RES4Africa Foundation; International Maritime Organisation (IMO); TradeMark East Africa (TMEA); African Development Bank; Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGs C/A); Africa Public-Private Partnerships Network; Kenya Convention Bureau; Invest Afrique; ; Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI); the Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (HESPI); the Diplomatic Corps and UN Agencies in Eritrea ; the national and international media; consultants; interpreters; and UNECA Staff.



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PROCEEDINGS

Opening of the Meeting

Welcoming remarks by Susan Ngongi, UN Resident Coordinator in Eritrea

6. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Ms. Susan Ngongi, UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in Eritrea, who applauded ECA Office for Eastern Africa for choosing Asmara to host the 23rd Annual Meeting, and the Government of the State of Eritrea for facilitating it. She deemed the decision to host a signal that the country is open for business, and mentioned the relevance of the theme to the host member State, Eritrea.

Introductory remarks by Godfrey Kabrera, Director General for National Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda, on behalf of the outgoing chair of the 22nd ICSEO Bureau

7. Mr. Godfrey Kabera, Director General for National Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda, delivered a speech on behalf of the Minister; as the outgoing chair, the Honorable Minister extended his regrets for not being able to attend the meeting. Referencing the 22nd Annual Meeting, he reminded delegates that engagement of all stakeholders, particularly the private sector, is necessary for successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). He added that regional infrastructure projects will ease the flow of trade and reduce the cost of doing business, and that it is important to ensure that citizens are informed and consulted throughout the process.

Statement by Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of UN Economic Commission for Africa

8. Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Vera Songwe, welcomed participants and applauded the organisers and host country. She mentioned that, though the growth has not been as investment- or technology-led as desired, Eastern Africa has nevertheless emerged as the fastest-growing region in Africa. Ms. Songwe touted peace as one of the key factors in having facilitated this and emphasized the benefits of harvesting the 'peace dividend'. Citing the need for job creation, she pointed out that the countries need to exploit the benefits of regional integration and trade under the AfCFTA, especially in sectors such as tourism and manufacturing.



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Opening of the meeting by Honorable Minister Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea and incoming Chair of the 23rd ICSOE Bureau

9. The ICSOE was officially opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea and incoming Chair of the 23rd ICSOE Bureau, Honorable Minister Osman Saleh. After welcoming the participants to Eritrea in his key note address, he thanked ECA Office for Eastern Africa for providing Eritrea with the opportunity to host this timely and important event. He acknowledged the outgoing chair of the 22nd Bureau. Lastly, the Honorable Minister highlighted the new opportunities that peaceful relations present, mentioning the landmark peace agreement with Ethiopia recently signed in Asmara.

Election of the Bureau and Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

10. The meeting unanimously elected the following countries onto the 2019-2020 ICSOE Bureau, before the agenda was then reviewed and adopted:

Chair: State of Eritrea
1st Vice-Chair: Seychelles
2nd Vice Chair: Ethiopia
Rapporteur: Tanzania

Plenary session on Macroeconomic and Social Overview of Eastern Africa

Presentation

11. The session was moderated by Prof. Abraham Kidane, Economic Advisor, Ministry of National Development, Eritrea.
12. The meeting studied an overview of the Macroeconomic and Social Developments in Eastern Africa in 2018, presented by Mr. Andrew Mold, Acting Director, ECA Office for Eastern Africa. This was based on the annually produced ECA report of the same name, which seeks to benchmark performance, highlight achievements and challenges identify policy options.
13. The meeting noted the consistently high growth rate of the region, whilst acknowledging some of the economic risks, such as:
- The fiscal and debt situation in some countries;
 - A lack of structural transformation;



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- The weak trade performance of the region comparative compared? to its potential;
 - Climate change vulnerabilities;
 - Other global risks, such as the US-China trade dispute, oil prices in the Middle East and Brexit; and
 - A lack of employment opportunities.
14. The meeting noted the size of the regional market in Purchasing Power terms, before noting that trade deficits tend to be driven by manufactured goods. This results in the observed high dependency on imports, with 70 percent of these coming from Asian countries. By contrast, countries are notably not trading with their neighbours.
15. The meeting took stock of progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda 2030, noting that SDGs 3, 9, and 16 have been spotlighted by the SDG Centre for Africa as priority, due to slow progress in the region to date.
16. Having reflected on the improvements to life expectancy and female political representation, the meeting recounted significant gender imbalances in literacy rates and the poor food security rating of the region. The participants recognised the solutions and new opportunities presented by the AfCFTA, such as accelerating industrialization and creating up to 2 million jobs.

Panel discussion

17. Mr. Kenneth Racombo, Principle Secretary of the Department of the Blue Economy, Seychelles, presented the country's policies and strategies for development and regional integration, explaining its richness in ocean resources and its strategic approach to sustainably capitalize on this. The meeting saluted the Government's decision to create a new dedicated Blue Economy Department, as well as innovative funding mechanisms, such as blue bonds and debt swap. This supports the implementation of the Seychelles' Blue Economy Strategic Policy and Roadmap. The leading sectors of tourism and fisheries were further highlighted as key pillars of the Blue Economy, with funding available for entrepreneurs to further tap into related opportunities. The meeting noted the Seychelles' inclination for regional integration, whilst being made aware of challenges associated with membership to multiple Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
18. The meeting similarly appreciated some of Rwanda's noteworthy recent developments, presented by Mr. Godfrey Kabera, Director General for National Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda. The meeting noted: the progress that has been made in structurally transforming the economy from Agriculture to Services, the boost to the Rwandan



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textiles industry through the ban on imports of second-hand clothing, and the success of the *Made in Rwanda* policy in cultivating home-grown industries. The challenge of persistent trade deficits was stated, and social developments, such as the move to a community-based healthcare system, were also mentioned. The meeting noted the Government of Rwanda's belief and confidence in AfCFTA, before stressing the importance of joint projects and regional competitive strategies.

19. The meeting considered that global 'risks' such as Brexit and the U.S-China trade dispute could in fact be a source of opportunity for the continent. Meanwhile, more information was requested on:

- The informal element of Eastern African economies,
- Cross-border trade, and
- Migrant remittances.

Other points raised were the role of RECs in AfCFTA acceleration and the opportunities presented by shared waters for regional integration. It was raised that, at the global level, there is an implicit challenge of diversification, as with countries running the risk of producing the same product. In the case of Eritrea, the meeting's attention was drawn to the role of the informal economy and the diaspora.

20. The session ended recognising: the need for concrete plans to accelerate regional tourism; the need to involve youth in blue economy activities; and, lastly, the success of the Government of Rwanda in developing a detailed and highly-effective Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

Plenary session on How to Fast-Track AfCFTA Implementation in Eastern Africa

Presentation

21. The session was moderated by Mr. Arnold Segawa, News Reporter, NTV Uganda.

22. The meeting deliberated on a common understanding of AfCFTA implementation, understanding the backstory, current status and recommended ways forward, as presented by Mr. Stephen Karingi, Director of Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division, ECA.



23. The meeting ascertained that many technical parts of the Agreement are in place. The meeting reflected on the July 2019 Summit that was intended to “operationalize” AfCFTA, were it not for the outstanding negotiations on (1) goods schedules and (2) Rules of Origin. The five ‘operational tools’ that were launched at the July 2019 Summit, were then recollected. These were:

1. The NTB Mechanism:

The Continental Online Mechanisms for Monitoring, reporting and Eliminating Non-Tariff Barriers;

2. PAPSS:

The Pan-African Payments Settlement System, set up by Afreximbank as a clearing house for transactions between African currencies;

3. The AfCFTA Adjustment Facility:

An initial capital of \$1bn from Afreximbank to support AfCFTA adjustment costs, available at the request of Member States;

4. The Online Portal for Tariff Negotiations:

An online portal allowing exchange of offers between negotiators;

5. The African Trade Observatory:

A repository of trade information, documents and statistics, and a module for monitoring changes in trade flows and regional integration.

24. The meeting understood that services liberalization will not happen instantly – with the Protocol for services merely establishing the parameters for a first round of negotiations on business, communications, financial services, tourism and transport services.

25. Having recognised the profound benefits of the AfCFTA, the meeting recommended next steps for the African continent, including the Eastern Africa region. These were to:

- Finalize remaining critical components;
- Increase the number of state parties;
- Create institutions, establish operative mechanisms, introduce obligations into law and regulation;
- Optimise implementation, through complementary measures such as national strategies;
- Conclude Phase II of negotiations;



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- Use the AfCFTA as a vehicle for achieving the African Single Market.

Panel discussion

26. The session proceeded with a panel discussion with panelists: Mr.....Million Habte Begna, Senior Expert on Trade in Services, AfCFTA Unit, African Union Commission (AUC); Marcellin Henry Ndong Ntah, Lead Economist, East Africa, African Development Bank (AfDB); Mr Antony Mveyange, Research and Learning Director, Trademark East Africa; and Ambassador Tesfamichael Gerahtu, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eritrea. A recurring theme to the points raised was the need for greater awareness of AfCFTA and what it entails, so that countries can rally support behind the agreement. The need for collecting reliable services data was also agreed, whilst recognizing the launch of the Africa Trade Observatory to capture data on goods and services trade. The meeting heard that Eritrea is committed to regional integration, deeming it not a choice but a necessity.

27. With the next steps having been mapped out in the presentation, panellists pointed out that consultation of the private sector is important for the AfCFTA negotiation process. With this highlighted, the panellists also stressed the benefits of:

- Financing regional infrastructure for increased productivity;
- Collecting reliable data;
- Boosting private sector competitiveness;
- Harmonising regulations; and
- Trade facilitation (especially for small scale traders).

28. Participants of the plenary session also pointed out that ECA Office for Eastern Africa could carry out a study on the services value chain in the region, given the role of the services sector.

Plenary session on Boosting Tourism Development in Eastern Africa

Presentation



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29. The session was moderated by Mr. George Wachira, Policy Advisor, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, Eritrea.
30. With emphasis on the economic potential and importance of tourism in Eastern Africa, the meeting received a presentation by Mr. Geoffrey Manyara, tourism expert at the ECA Office for Eastern Africa, on the current state of the industry in the region. The tourism sector currently employs over 7.2 million East Africans and therefore 30 percent of the total tourism workforce of the continent. With the potential of tourism already touched on in the previous sessions, the meeting heard that the tourism sector is one of the five priority services sectors of the AfCFTA.
31. Whilst acknowledging steady growth, the meeting participants were cognised on the poor ranking of Member States in the World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) and the causes for this, namely: the narrow range of tourism products and a lack of good quality tourism statistics.
32. The meeting also looked to emerging opportunities, including the prioritisation of the sector by the Member States. It emerged that, in diversifying the range of tourism products, regional stakeholders should pay attention to the growing middle class with disposable incomes across the continent, and opportunities for new product development.
33. The ICSOE recognised national and regional initiatives being undertaken by ECA to promote regional tourism. This included the IGAD Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the Ethiopia Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the African Union Tourism Strategy, the EAC Tourism Marketing Plan, and the tourism satellite accounts for Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya.

Panel discussion

34. The subsequent deliberations maintained the regional focus. Hon. Hirut Kassaw, Minister for Tourism and Culture, Ethiopia, presented the case of Ethiopia, pointing out the large population and very rich culture. It was conveyed that tourism business cannot work without political leadership, mentioning in particular the need to:
 - Develop and enhance destinations,
 - Strengthen regional integration in tourism based on common assets, and
 - Establish facilitated visa systems.



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35. Mr. Richard Rugimbana, Executive Secretary, Tourism Confederation of Tanzania, made a presentation on tourism experiences. As a stakeholder who has worked on both the public sector and private sector side of the tourism industry, he underlined the importance of developing partnerships between the private sector and the Government. He also raised that for tourism to be sustainable, it needs to be inclusive, i.e. meaningful involvement of local communities, before also spotlighting the need to develop tourism skills, given that 80 percent of the experience relied heavily on services delivery.
36. Mr. Osman Abdi Mohamed, Chief Executive Officer, National Tourism Office, Djibouti, shared the experiences of Djibouti: in 2019, Djibouti adopted a law on tourism aiming to develop partnerships and investments to capitalise on Djibouti's destination potential. In January 2019, an e-visa was introduced, with the fee reducing to just USD 10. Djibouti's new Master Plan has the main objectives of:
- Better positioning (increasing in tourism receipts),
 - Improved competence of operators, and
 - Ensuring sustainability.
- He noted the development of tourism in Eastern Africa could contribute to regional integration with the development of regional tourism products comprising several countries (e.g. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda) and leveraging their comparative advantages. However, development of infrastructure is still a challenge.
37. Ms. Jacinta Nzioka, Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Convention Bureau, made a presentation on destination products, explaining the current trend among extra-continental visitors for adventure travel, compared to the 1980s and '90s, when demand was high for relaxation packages. She clarified the link between the need for data and the lack of new tourism products, explaining that, by contrast, it remains unknown what African tourists want, making it impossible to develop tailor-made products for the intra-regional tourist. Ms. Nzioka also emphasised the MICE model – Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions – as a highly-profitable low-hanging fruit. She mentioned the need to promote the region collectively, working as a single destination, and also pointed out that the services sector is not a high investment sector the way that other industries are (such as manufacturing).
38. The session ended with a collective understanding of the tourism concept's failure to appeal to the African market, as well as the inevitable impact of stringent visa regimes and the high cost of air transport. To improve the yield of tourism, the meeting recommended that delegates support



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the full implementation of national, regional and continental tourism initiatives. Reflecting back on the presentation, other recommendations were to:

- Improve partnership between key tourism stakeholders drawn from the private and public sectors, the academia and the civil society;
- Diversify the tourism product range in Eastern African away from nature-based products and towards those that appeal to the African tourist market;
- Jointly promote the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism concept which is high yielding;
- Promote the concept of inter-regional ‘city-breaking’, which is a low-hanging fruit in the context of AfCFTA;
- Encourage the relaxation of visa regimes particularly for African Member States;
- Support the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), whilst promoting modes of transport; and
- Integrate research into tourism development and produce good quality tourism statistics.

39. Taking stock of the advice shared, the meeting was able to agree on the following actions:

- Develop methodologies to standardise tourism data collection and analysis in Eastern Africa;
- Develop a framework to guide the diversification of tourism products in Eastern Africa, in particular the urban tourism concept;
- Work collaboratively under the existing regional and continental initiatives mentioned.

Plenary session on Crowding-In Investments for Energy and Infrastructure Development in Eastern Africa

Presentation

40. The session was moderated by Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, Independent Researcher.



41. With a presentation from Yohannes G. Hailu, energy expert at the Energy, Infrastructure and Services Section of ECA, the meeting recognized the transformation taking place in Africa's energy sector, evidenced by:

- Appreciable improvements in energy access,
- Expanding investment sources, and
- Improving infrastructure capacity.

However, remaining infrastructure gaps are affecting competitiveness of the region in terms of higher freight costs, and increased trade costs. Addressing the infrastructure gap will require USD 90 billion per year for energy development.

42. The latest ECA assessment on SDG7 progress in Africa indicates:

- Progress to date is mainly due to robust policies and investments:
e.g. Ethiopia's aim to increase access from 44 percent to 70 percent by 2025 and in Kenya from 29 percent to 70 percent – both driven by policy.
- There has been an increase in private sector participation:
By 2016, 13 percent of electricity generation came from Independent Power Producers (IPPs).
- Progress in increasing access and energy capacity:
Access to electricity has outstripped population growth since 2017, but still the number without access remain high.

Further setting the scene, the presentation noted Africa's infrastructure gap and high infrastructure services costs. The meeting noted the three largest sources of financing tend to be: African national governments, China, and the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa.

43. Given that current funding remains insufficient, crowding-in additional public, public-private and private investment resources was then discussed. It was noted that in public-private partnerships the state shares risk and responsibility with private firms, which encourages them to mobilize their funds. However, ultimately the state retains control of assets, while avoiding some of the pitfalls of privatization (i.e. unemployment, higher prices and corruption). Diversifying the investment resources also involves expanding the scope of public finance, through: expanding the tax base, leveraging diaspora remittances, tapping into private equity markets, utilizing bank revenue streams and issuing of international sovereign bonds. The session concluded with three actionable recommendations:



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- Additional investment resources should be crowded-in from public and private sectors to sustain investment in Eastern Africa’s infrastructure;
- Experience-sharing through periodic regional forums should be pursued in order to bolster the Member States that are implementing various solutions to bridge the infrastructure gap; and
- Regional infrastructure projects should leverage progress on regional economic integration, especially on the AfCFTA, to make a better business case.

Panel Discussion

44. The panel welcomed insights on infrastructure financing from a diverse range of perspectives:

- Mr. Leonhard Braun, Energy Analyst, RES4Africa Foundation, Italy, presented ideas on how to crowd-in private investment. Beginning his remarks by introducing his organization, he explained the organisation’s founding principles: energy empowers lives, communities and economies. Renewable energy is fundamental for Africa to achieve its inclusive and sustainable development. As a private sector and member-driven organization, the RES4Africa Foundation functions as a bridge between its members and partners for an exchange of perspectives, initiatives and expertise. He indicated that the energy demand is bound to increase and that, simultaneously, thermal generation contribution to the energy will also decrease. In addition, approximately 263 GW will come from renewable energy sources, with solar due to be the main source of energy due to technological advancements, by 2040. As such, the power sector requires significant investment, but the perceptions of default risks are currently hampering investments in Africa. He mentioned that attracting investments in Africa would require active public-private sector dialogue, sharing of best practices and capacity building;
- Ms. Beatrice Florah, Vice Chair of the Bureau of the Working Party of the UNECE for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Co-President of Africa PPP Network, Uganda, gave a detailed presentation explaining PPPs. She introduced the funding gap: the World Bank Studies on the status of Africa’s infrastructure reveal that the annual infrastructure financial requirement for sub Saharan Africa alone is estimated at USD 93 Billion. Approximately USD 45 Billion can be mobilized internally, a further eight percent from Multilaterals and Bilateral donors, but the rest must come from private sector in emerging economies. She explained that PPP projects must be prepared well and should demonstrate:



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- Commercial viability;
- High value-for-money or ‘value-for-people’ propositions;
- Bankability;
- Affordability; and
- Appropriate Risk Transfer.

She also highlighted the benefits of PPPs:

- They provide financing for projects that would have never been financed using conventional government funding;
- They provide a whole life approach to service delivery;
- They facilitate innovation;
- Risks are allocated to the party best able to mitigate them.

She specified that for governments to use PPPs as a mode of infrastructure delivery, selected priority reforms must be undertaken including:

- Undertake a country diagnostic study to understand the country's readiness to do PPPs;
 - Create an enabling environment for infrastructure development under a PPP arrangement, under a PPP Policy, Legal, Regulatory and Institutional Framework;
 - Develop a credible list of ‘pipeline’ priority projects that Governments would like to implement under a PPP arrangement;
 - Establish a dedicated infrastructure fund;
 - Develop PPP capacities across the board.
- Mr. Teferi Abraha, Director of Energy, Ministry of Mining and Energy, Eritrea explained Eritrea’s ethos towards infrastructure. Deeming it a vehicle for nation building, the Government of Eritrea regards infrastructure development as being the responsibility of the public sector. Due to the prevailing peace, there has been a surge in energy demand, with estimates that demand will increase three-fold between 2018 and 2030. The country has been exploring wind and solar energy sources and had a goal of exporting excess energy. Due to the fact that initial costs of energy projects tend to be quite high, the Government of Eritrea has established a revolving fund targeting 10,000 households in the rural areas; this has worked well and could be adopted by other countries.
 - Mr. Peter Thobora, Assistant Director of Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy, Kenya, started his intervention by indicating that energy lies at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, asserting that a global transition to ‘Clean Energy’ is already underway. And this provides the momentum on which national actions can be anchored. Kenya considers energy critical in its economic and social transformation. Mr. Thobora explained the progress made far, with 75 percent of Kenyans



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with access to electricity today, poised to attain universal access by 2022. In December 2018, the National Electrification Strategy (NES) was launched, using both grid and off-grid solutions. The presenter took the meeting through some of Kenya's particular Geothermal, Solar, and Wind projects. Whereas renewable energy currently accounts for 70 percent of the power mix, it accounts for 90 percent of the power dispatch.

Plenary session on Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa: Aligning National, Continental and Global Agendas

Presentation

45. The session was moderated by Amb. Peter Gabriel Robleh, the Horn of Africa Economic and Policy Institute.
46. The UN itself also operates on various geographic scopes across a multitude of frameworks. Drawing on the challenges that the UN too experiences, Mr. Andrew Mold, Acting Director of the ECA Office for Eastern Africa, introduced the session – doing so on behalf of Susan Ngoni, UN Resident Coordinator in Eritrea. In the plight for Sustainable Development across the world (and, most particularly, the African continent) International Organizations, Regional Communities and National Governments have crafted a number of global, continental and regional 'Agendas'. The meeting understood how there was scope for 'mismatched', and that clearly, governments face a big challenge in integrating all the relevant agendas in the optimal way for their particular country context.
47. The meeting considered the importance of ensuring alignment and compatibilization of national, regional, continental and global frameworks. Taking the example of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, the meeting acknowledged where there was convergence, but also deciphered areas which do not converge, touting timelines as one source for this 'conflict'. Areas of convergence between the EAC and UN agendas were: social development; economic development; climate change and environmental sustainability; peaceful and inclusive societies; and responsive institutions. Unlike the SDGs, the Agenda 2063 does not emphasize: inequality within and among countries; sustainable consumption and production; and terrestrial ecosystems, forests, desertification, land degradation and biodiversity. Meanwhile, unlike the Agenda 2063, the SDGs do not cover: continental integration and a politically-united Pan-Africa; a Pan-African cultural identity; or a continental security agenda. The meeting then acknowledged that there were plenty of other



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agendas for governments to also consider when they are developing their national development plans, such as: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015); the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (2015); the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015) ; Agenda 2040 (2016)

48. The meeting then showcased some instruments for alignment:

- Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS),
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT),
- Africa Sustainable Development Report,
- 66 core indicators – AUC/NEPAD/ECA ,
- Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD),
- SDGs Gateway – ESCAP.

The panel emphasized the need to follow up on these current tools, and to capture lessons learnt to preserve and build on gains.

Panel Discussion

49. Panelist Mr. Enock Nyorekwa Twinoburyo, Senior Economist at the SDG Centre for Africa, clarified the three pillars of the SDGs: growth, inclusion and climate change. He gave insights stressing that this is more an issue of “domestication” than it is alignment per se. He pointed to limited data and the financing gap, in terms of challenges, also mentioning that social inclusion reforms are being outstripped by population growth.

50. Panelist Ms. Susan Ngongi, UN Resident Coordinator in Eritrea, mentioned the challenge of coordination and, referencing the financing gap, concluded by clarifying that there is no ‘Marshall Plan’ for either agenda and hence the financial pressure of alignment. With reference made to ECA-led Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit, the meeting noted that the core alignment of strategies has to take place at the national level, both for planning purposes and because *national* developments have the highest felt impact on people’s lives.

51. Methodologies for governments to adopt were shared by Mr. Godfrey Kabera, Director General for National Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda, who was also on the panel. One such ‘tactic’ was for Governments to prioritize the most ambitious goals as a way to vertically synchronise the various targets. He also mentioned that there was another layer to this issue of alignment for East African Community members like Rwanda, who also have Vision 2050. Participants applauded the basket fund approach to data collection used in Rwanda, which



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has facilitated the pooling of resources for meeting statistical needs by mobilizing resources and avoiding duplication.

52. During the panel discussion, Mr. Andrew Mold, Acting Director of the ECA Office for Eastern Africa mentioned a lack of resources to tackle cross-border issues and reiterated the need to close the financing gap in order to see results.

53. Speaking for the Government of Eritrea, Mr. Samson Berhane, Deputy National Authorization Officer, Ministry of National Development, Eritrea, asserted Eritrea's commitment to all Agendas mentioned, and mentioned that historically they have been consistent with Eritrea's political, social and economic programmes. He demonstrated how the SDGs translate in Eritrea, mapping out their priority goals and corresponding achievements in:

- Water infrastructure and distribution;
- Road, rail, cableway and oil pipeline renovation and expansion;
- Reviving ports and coastlines;
- Power generation and electricity supply;
- Modernized transportation and communication;
- Housing;
- Modernization of health and inclusivity of quality education services;
- Developing a roadmap for Eritrea's industrial sector;
- Efficient implementation, with diaspora engagement; and
- Regional partnership and stability.

He concluded by mentioning the optimism brought about by last years major development in the region and the importance of interconnectivity through infrastructure developments.

54. Ambassador Tesfamicael Gerahtu, chair, closed by suggesting that the answer is in nation-building and that alignment should be seen as an opportunity for harmonization across borders, and thereby a way to create and sustain peaceful relations. He highlighted the importance of equitable distribution of wealth, and the need for a people-based approach.



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Parallel session on Promoting Regional Trade for Faster Job Creation (AEGM)

55. The AEGM on “Promoting Regional Trade for Faster Job Creation” unanimously elected the following ICISOE participants to serve on the AEGM bureau:

Chair: Anthony Mveyange, Trademark East Africa.

Rapporteur: Arnold Segawa, NTV Uganda.

Presentation

56. The theme was introduced by Ms. Jessica Atsin, Research Fellow at ECA Office for Eastern Africa. She explained the fast-growing supply of new entrants to the workforce, such as 2.1 million people joining the labor market every year in Ethiopia. The meeting therefore noted the need to train the youth to connect to emerging opportunities. The meeting also recognised that the bulk of the employment in the region is in the agricultural sector, with growing importance of the services sector. The presenter touted the tourism sector as an important source of employment (with employment contribution reaching 66.7% in Seychelles in 2018) and demonstrated that the ICT sector is also a promising source of job creation. However, she acknowledged the slow response of employment to GDP growth and asserted that employment impact of regional trade in the case of AfCFTA implementation will depend on responsiveness of import and export sectors. She mentioned that AfCFTA implementation stands to unlock more opportunities for manufacturing job creation, before concluding that increased intra-regional trade associated with AfCFTA implementation will create between 800,000 and 2 million jobs, drastically changing the state of the labour market.

57. The AEGM also benefitted from contributions from:

- Mr. Vincent Leyaro, Economics Lecturer at University of Dar es Salaam, who mentioned the need to train the youth to position them well for the emerging opportunities. Referring to a 2014 study showing a mismatch, he said African youth will risk being observers;
- Ms. Maureen Were, UNU-WIDER Research Fellow, who mapped out the challenges for job creation (namely: importation of cheap goods, limited intra-African trade, poor interconnectivity and other non-tariff barriers). She also highlighted the role of trade and free movement (and therefore of AfCFTA) in job creation;
- Mr. Mike Okumu of the Makerere University School of Economics, who asserted that reliability of energy supply is crucial to support industrial activities and highlighted the need for a competition policy and competition commission, having mentioned the need to transition from informal to formal economies for fair competition. He also emphasized



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- that easy movement of labor in the region is needed, recommending a qualifications framework;
- Mr. Weldeyesus Elisa, Director General at the Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare of Eritrea, who made a contribution on the Eritrean case of unemployment estimation and presented the Eritrean employment statistics, which demonstrate the need for a youth focus; and lastly
 - Mr. Kato Kimbugwe, who stressed that linkages are crucial for value addition in agriculture – and all sectors – under the AfCFTA. He mentioned that Tech is disruptive in the way jobs are created: i.e. it takes jobs but also creates new ones. He also pointed to the importance of disaggregated unemployment data.

Panel Discussion

58. The meeting acknowledged the importance of standards, certification (etc) for exports outside of the continent; the same needs to be done within AfCFTA, with information made readily available. The meeting also noted concerns of labour export to the diaspora. Ms. Atsin then provided some added clarity on the models being used to predict job creation when AfCFTA is implemented: limitations to the model mean the informal sector cannot be added, whilst when the service sector is included in the model, the effect depends on the elasticity of employment in the service sector.
59. The meeting led to the formation of the following five actionable recommendations:
- Enable labor mobility through regional harmonization of qualification standards;
 - Leverage the opportunities for job creation that new technologies can offer, despite the disruption they can also sometimes cause;
 - Formalize as much of the informal sectors as is possible, to encourage fair competition;
 - Encourage and facilitate improvements to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to resolve education and job mismatches; and
 - Support the implementation of the AfCFTA Free Movement Protocol to enhance regional and continental labour mobility.



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Parallel session on The State of Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa (AEGM)

60. The AEGM on “The State of Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa” unanimously elected the following ICISOE participants to serve on the AEGM bureau:

Chair: Yohannes Isaac Yehdego, Director General, Inland Revenue
Department, Ministry of Finance

Rapporteur: Berhe Araya Mana, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Eritrea.

Presentations

61. The session opened with a presentation of the report by the author, Timothy Murithi, ECA Consultant summarised the findings of the report. The report on the State of Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa is premised on a perceptions survey, which is disaggregated around five themes:

- belonging, social inclusion and a shared vision;
- safety, peace and security;
- inequality and migration;
- the effects of cross-border trade; as well as
- citizen participation and active engagement.

Though consensus has not been established on the ultimate definition of ‘Social Cohesion’, these pillars of the report capture its principles in a bid to measure the current state of Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa, both within and between countries. According to the report, there is currently:

- A weak sense of belonging and shared vision in Eastern Africa, and discrimination accordingly;
- A large number of internally displaced peoples, high levels of gender-based violence and xenophobia, and relatively low levels of safety and peace between social groups;
- Economic inequality and uneven developments in governance and inclusion increases social fragmentation and affects the flow of labour migrants;
- Bureaucracy, prohibitive tariff and non-tariff restrictions that restrict entrepreneurship and cross-border trade;
- A perceived low level of citizen participation and active engagement in the Eastern Africa region.

In the context of the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of People, and the political and economic aspiration to increase the degree of social cohesion and Pan-African unity across the continent,



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the report also reveals the role of Social Cohesion in fostering the development of regional value chains. Having been discussed at length in other sessions of the 23rd ICSOE Annual Meeting, the economic benefits of this were well-understood by the participants of the AEGM.

62. The AEGM interacted with a presentation by Christopher Louise, Senior Adviser at SeeD (The Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development) that reiterated the threats to Social Cohesion owing to uneven growth and perceived inequalities, which are known fuel social tensions and conflict. As a result, he recommended that this was one avenue through which to enhance Social Cohesion: by reducing inequality and improving the lived day-to-day experiences of people across Eastern Africa. With emphasis on the favorability of early intervention for conflict prevention, the meeting noted the existence of the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) and its potential usefulness as an empirical assessment instrument that teases out the anatomy of society in terms of cohesiveness and propensity for conflict.
63. The meeting heard a final presentation by Paul Kamau IDS of the University of Nairobi and Core Partner of Afrobarometer Eastern African Region, who gave a preview of Afrobarometer's new data (Round 8), still being finalized and not yet released to the public, on social cohesion in Kenya. Overall, the findings indicate that nearly half of the Kenyan population believe that people are treated unfairly based on ethnicity, religion and/or economic status. There is a sense of national identity among Kenyans beyond ethnicity. Most Kenyans repress tolerance for other ethnic groups, religion, immigrants and party supporters, but *not* people of different sexual orientation.

Panel Discussion

64. Experiences and reflections were also shared by National Cohesion Integration Commission of Kenya (NCIC)'s representative, Ms. Olive Chepkorir, Assistant Director and Head of Communication and Knowledge Management, with emphasis on the strong positive correlation between the Social Cohesion Index and Human Development Index, and Gender Studies expert from the University of Nairobi, Lanoi Maloiy, Researcher and Lecturer at the African Women Studies Centre, University of Nairobi, who among other things drew attention to the ageing population of the future.
65. The AEGM noted Eastern Africa's reservoir of potential for increased Social Cohesion regionally, and its relative resilience in this regard historically, especially given challenges such as displacement, disparity in levels of economic development, conflict, and the prevalence of national and local identities. Clear diagnosis of the challenges allowed the meeting to put forward actionable recommendations:



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- There is need to:
 - Promote policy interventions that leverage cross-border ethnic and cultural affinities,
 - Advocate for the usefulness of the concept of social cohesion at regional level,
 - Undertake a study of regional cohesion that consults ICSEO on the methodology,
 - Promote peace and civic education in schools, universities, communities, and
 - Establish a specialized framework to understand the state of cohesion in the region's island states in order to cater for their specific needs;
 - Establish regional money-transfer platforms.
- Governments are advised to:
 - Understand the soft skills that foster a culture of entrepreneurship, and to adopt and implement policies accordingly;
 - Address inequities;
 - Reframe cross-border migration as a driver of regional social cohesion;
 - Ratify the African Union's Protocol on the Free Movement of People;
 - Finance policies that alleviate social tensions, such as those that develop social safety nets;
 - Reduce cross-border trade barriers to increase socio-economic interaction and therefore understanding;
 - Implement the African Union's adoption of the prominent regional language – Kiswahili – and more generally promote cultural exchange and educational programmes.

Parallel session on Harnessing the Blue Economy for Regional Integration

66. The side-event on “Harnessing the Blue Economy for Regional Integration” identified the following participants as:



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Chair: Ambassador Tewelde Weldemichael, Director General, Department of Marine Development, Ministry of Marine Resources, Eritrea.
Rapporteur: Mr. Aboud S. Jumbe, Policy Planning Research Analyst, Department of Environment, Zanzibar, Tanzania

Presentations

67. Daya Bragante, Blue Economy expert at ECA Office for Eastern Africa, welcomed delegates to the meeting and highlighted the objectives of the side-event, indicating that the session was to be interactive. She provided the background of the side-event, explaining that the process started in 2015 at the ICISOE in Madagascar, with the key recommendation being to have a policy handbook for policy formulation. This toolkit, launched in 2016, provides a step-by-step methodology for Blue Economy policy formulation at all levels. Other key points were:

- The definition of 'Blue Economy' adopted was that of AU Agenda 2063 and African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) 2050, i.e. covering all water bodies (both aquatic and marine) including coasts, seas, oceans, underground, rivers and lakes.
- A study was also conducted on key Blue Economy sectors in Eastern Africa and launched in 2016. Hence the side-event is an additional step towards Blue Economy development in the sub-region.
- Support has been provided by ECA to Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) on Blue Economy policy formulation.
- The session was to provide a forum for experience sharing, networking and partnership forging.

She then introduced the Chair and handed over the meeting.

68. Amb. Tewelde Weldemichael, Director General, Department of Marine Development, Ministry of Marine Resources, Eritrea, highlighted the rich blue economy resources of the host country. Having previously lacked fisheries infrastructure, there is now a policy framework aiming to contribute to food security through provision of cheap protein to citizens. There are other specific objectives too e.g. increase productivity, earn hard currency etc. Meanwhile specific strategies include:

- Development of fisheries along the coast and islands;
- Organising fishermen cooperatives, and
- Building capacity of fishermen by providing training and access to credit etc.



There are also several research and conservation initiatives projects. Challenges include: no stock assessment to date, commercial fishing also not developed, lack of entrepreneurship, no hatcheries. There are also opportunities, including: marine aquaculture, development of infrastructure, research, human resources, fisheries management, fish handling and processing, human resources development, development of aquaculture. All of these are areas that invite public and private investment across the value-chain. The presentation also noted that the Red Sea is a major international waterway, on which Eritrea occupies a strategic location.

69. Mr. Alem Kibreab, Director General at the Ministry of Mining and Energy, Eritrea, highlighted the exploration history of hydrocarbon potential in Eritrea. He noted that the geochemistry is promising and that hydrocarbons have been found. However, exploration anywhere in the Red Sea will require top quality seismic reflection data. The presenter also recognized the Atlantis II Deep Deposited Project, a joint project run by Saudi Arabia and Sudan regarding sulphite sea floor. He recommended that the project could be replicated in East Africa. He also recommended that data gaps to be addressed at all levels through also research partnerships.
70. Ms. Fatime Kante, Economist at the Department of the Blue Economy, Seychelles, pointed out that Seychelles has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.37 million sq km, relative to its land area of just 455 sq km; meanwhile, its population is concentrated on three main islands. She noted that the sustainable growth of the Seychelles' blue economy has been identified as the country's development pathway. Consequently, the government established the Department of the Blue Economy in 2015 to ensure proper coordination and strategic direction. Moreover, the Seychelles' Blue Economy Strategic Policy Framework and Roadmap was devised and approved by the government in January 2018.
71. The presenter posited that there are immense opportunities for youth that will stem from this development – mainly in the areas of academia, research, employment and investment, in the fisheries and tourism sectors. She emphasized the need for sustainability in both, noting the and highly vulnerability existential ecological risks, as well as to security risks. Positive outcomes of the implementation of the Blue Economy Concept include the launching of the World's First Sovereign Blue Bond – a debt-swap conservation and climate change adaptation Trust. Next steps include the finalization of a national Blue Economy Action Plan aligned with IOC Blue Economy Regional Action Plan.
72. In concluding, Ms. Fatime Kante highlighted the following areas of focus for successful delivery of the Blue Economy Concept:



- Adequate absorptive capacity for implementation, enforcement of measures and monitoring and evaluation are challenges shared across all sectors.
- Successful delivery and implementation of BE principles over time will require the adoption of transparent and accountable decision-making processes, clear monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning indicators, robust institutional arrangements and a culture of ocean stewardship.
- Government, private sector, civil society, communities and all Seychellois and the international community are all important stakeholders in this process.
- Knowledge generated through research and development and fostering an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship which draws upon opportunities for regional and international cooperation, can provide much needed support.
- Seizing these opportunities to take advantage of the Blue Economy in traditional and emerging blue economy sectors remain key.

73. Mr. Ahmed Ouledi, Representative of the Research and Training function of the Blue Economy Committee, Comoros, gave a presentation on the strategic framework in Comoros. He pointed out that historically, the Comoros archipelago is a major stop on the route of the Indies and is a main gateway to the Mozambique Channel. As well as demonstrating the geography, he showcased the country's socio-economic indicators e.g. 2.1% population growth rate, HDI ranking of 160, economic growth rate of 2.5%, GDP of 0.66 billion and trade deficit of USD 192 million. The country faces major challenges in blue economy such as fragility of maritime safety, lack of valorization of the sectors of the blue economy and lack of jobs created and training courses for young people, degradation of aquatic and marine ecosystems, shortcomings in appropriate legislative and institutional arrangements and insufficient elements of regional rapprochement. Nonetheless, the country has a strategic framework for a national Blue Economy policy. The main objective of the strategic framework is to provide a means of integrating the Comorian maritime space and the various resources with which the country abounds, within a long-term sustainable socio-economic development policy. The presenter also noted the importance of harnessing the Blue Economy for regional integration, emphasizing the need for more consultations to therefore achieve a common vision as well as the need to industrialize the Blue Economy and mainstream sustainability.

74. Mr. Andriantsilavo Jean Michel Rabary, Blue Economy expert, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Madagascar, also presented. Showcasing the headway that Madagascar has made, he communicated how finalization and national validation of the National Blue Economy Strategy Ocean Governance Directorate took place in 2018. Meanwhile, this has been coupled with a Blue



Economy Investment Strategy, scheduled for 2019-2020. The national strategy document has suggested solutions to the aforementioned challenges such as:

- Promoting blue growth and job creation;
- Developing sustainable management of marine resources in order to preserve maritime space;
- Popularization of marine and maritime knowledge;
- Establishing an effective implementation plan; and
- Strengthening the pillar sectors of the blue economy.

He recommended that: national strategies are compatible with regional ones; countries should collaborate rather than compete.

75. Mr. Gilles Ribouet, Head of Communications, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), spotlighted that the IOC is the only regional organization in Africa comprising of Island States. It is thus a unique platform to advocate for the specific needs of Islands States. The Blue Economy is considered as the new frontier for the development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) since they have control of large maritime areas. To date, the IOC has been working in several sectors of Blue Economy:

- Fisheries,
- Management of natural resources,
- Fight against pollution.

To secure the emergence of a sustainable Blue Economy, the IOC is:

- Mobilizing regional and international stakeholders in the setting up of a modern maritime security architecture in Western Indian Ocean (with the support of the EU);
- Promoting circular economy in African and Indian Ocean islands (with the support of the World Bank; and
- Working with ECA on an Action Plan that capitalizes on its accumulated experience and expertise.

76. Mr. Eshete Dejen, Blue Economy Unit Coordinator, IGAD, highlighted that Africa has an inland water surface area of 220.8 sq km and a number of coastal and land linked states. IGAD has established a Blue Economy Unit that is currently implementing a number of projects, including the assessment of the Blue Economy and organisation of the Blue Economy conference. As a way forward, the presentation recommended:



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- The engagement of Eritrea in the on-going initiatives,
- The need for baselines reports,
- The establishment of a Blue Economy platform,
- The preparation of joint calendars, and
- The need to collaborate in organising the BE conference.

Mr. Eshete Dejen also briefly presented on behalf of the AU Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), pointing out that harnessing the potential of Africa's aquatic endowments is a goal for the attainment of Aspiration 1 in the AU Agenda 2063. African Blue Economy sectors and components generate today a value of USD 296 billion. It is projected that by 2030, figures will be USD 405 billion. African Blue Economy sectors and components generate today 49 million jobs. It is projected that by 2030, figures will be 57 million. This is in line with the African Blue Economy Strategy, which seeks to guide the development of an inclusive and sustainable Blue Economy that becomes a significant contributor to continental transformation and growth, through:

- Advancing knowledge on marine and aquatic biotechnology;
- Environmental sustainability;
- The growth of an Africa-wide shipping industry;
- The development of sea, river and lake transport and fishing; and
- Exploitation and beneficiation of deep sea minerals and other resources.

77. Mr. Dave Muli, Regional Coordinator, Eastern and Southern Africa, International Maritime Organization (IMO) pointed out that IMO is one of the specialized UN agencies. It has a mandate of international regulation of shipping and a department of technical cooperation and maritime department. The IMO instituted the Integrated Technical Cooperation Program (ITCP), which assists developing countries, Least Developed Countries and Island States to meet its obligations under the International Conventions including the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The IMO regards the Blue Economy as a catalyst for SDG achievement, hence its support in mainstreaming the maritime sector in national development plans. Countries are therefore welcome to request technical assistance through their national focal points. The presentation highlighted the role of IMO in global standard-setting, as a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its main role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is fair and effective, universally adopted and universally implemented.



78. Professor Joseph Chisasa, University of South Africa (UNISA), made a presentation in which he recognized that approximately 38 out of 55 African countries are coastal states. With this in mind, the presenter set the scene, explaining that development is to be propelled by areas such as fisheries, eco-friendly coastal tourism and marine biotechnology products. In South Africa, the 'Blue Economy' has been dubbed the 'tenth province' geared to create jobs as well as boosting economic growth. Further to a 2014 Memorandum of Understanding with the AU, UNISA has identified six priority areas for achieving the Agenda 2063, namely:

- Marine transport and manufacturing,
- Offshore oil and gas exploration,
- Aquaculture,
- Small harbours,
- Coastal and marine tourism, as well as
- Marine protection services and ocean governance.

UNISA support short learning programmes in fields of marine protection, governance and any other sub-fields as may be determined by its blue economy stakeholders. A Masters degree in sustainable management has been conceptualized jointly with the University of Seychelles. This is in response to the increasing need for high level skills in managing enterprises in the blue economy. The project relies on networking and developing partnerships to enable UNISA to leverage its research capacity to address the industry challenges. Professor Chisasa then clarified what these challenges were:

- Skills shortage,
- Data management deficiencies,
- Climate risk management,
- Illegal and unregulated fishing.

He ended by mentioning that as well as publishing academic articles and policy briefs through the AUC, UNISA is willing to participate in information-sharing sessions in the form of workshops and trainings to facilitate good policy-making by governments.

Panel discussion

79. With insights shared and well-understood, the session unanimously recommended the following actions:

- Align methodologies on how Blue Economy progress is measured in the framework of 2030 UN Agenda and 2063 AU Agenda;



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- Work together as regional platforms to avoid duplication and promote good practices so regional policies can be aligned and complementarity achieved at RECs, Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) and Regional Seas Programs (RSP);
- Design and formulate strategic communication on the Blue Economy in order to create awareness and mobilize all stakeholders effectively;
- Promote circular economy as a strategy to conserve critical habitats, encourage entrepreneurship and address marine pollution;
- Invest in mitigation and adaptation measures to combat climate change and address issues related to natural risks;
- Strengthen maritime safety and security through regionally-owned mechanisms so as to address IUU (Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing), Marine Pollution, Illegal trafficking, search and rescue;
- Involve academia and research institutions in the science-policy nexus for addressing the Blue Economy in the region;
- Incorporate all stakeholders, through dialogue and consultations, including youth and private sector, so as to ensure synergies with all other regional initiatives;
- Work together at the regional and continental levels to address innovative financing in the implementation of Blue Economy frameworks through leveraging partnerships with RECs, IGOs and RSPs and adequate budgeting and co-funding;
- Develop adequate policy and legislative frameworks to foster deep seabed mining and hydrocarbons in a sustainable approach, capitalizing on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) initiatives;
- Raise awareness and organize an annual or biannual Blue Economy Forum at the regional level;
- Adopt, replicate and upscale successful regional initiatives on the Blue Economy;
- Formulate national and sub-regional Blue Economy strategies or action plans where needed, building on ECA Blue Economy Policy Handbook and African Union Blueprint for Africa's Blue Economy.

High-Level Dinner Debate: “Accelerating Regional Integration in Eastern Africa – A Legal Perspective”



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80. Mr. Jenerali Ulimwengu, Board Chairman of the Raia Mwema Newspaper and Advocate of the High Court in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, moderated the discussion. Mr. Ulimwengu was in conversation with Justice Isaac Lenaola, Judge of the Supreme Court of Kenya and Retired Deputy Principal Judge of the Court of First Instance, East African Court of Justice, Arusha, Tanzania. There was an introduction by Mr. Andrew Mold, Acting Director, ECA Office for Eastern Africa. Together, he and the moderator set the scene, communicating that regional integration entirely depends upon there being legal infrastructure to uphold it. Through discussion, Justice Lenaola then provided valuable insights about the East African Court of Justice and the legal framework of the East African Community (EAC).
81. In portraying legal dynamics at play, the moderator recalled the acrimonious collapse of the East African Community in 1977. This was due to political issues between members coupled with a lack of legal understanding. Justice Lenaola explained how the legal aspect of today's EAC guarantees the prosperity and longevity of the treaty (i.e. the legal infrastructure makes impossible another such collapse).
82. To avoid a repeat of 1977, provisions are captured in the preamble of the EAC treaty. The document is solid and has been tested. There are four fundamental areas: the custom union, common market, monetary union and political federation. There is also provision for leaving, removal and joining. According to Justice Lenaola, the treaty has been designed to avoid the possibility of one country undermining others based on size of economy or population. There is equality in the decision-making, with each country being allocated the same number of seats. Nevertheless, the slow pace of the establishment of a political federation in East Africa can mainly be attributed to mistrust among the countries, the judge explained. The meeting noted that public participation is an integral part of the treaty. Therefore, instead of leaving the implementation of the treaty to leaders, civil society should champion regional integration too: the legal framework exists to facilitate this.
83. Audience members responded to the conversation, with some of the key points being:
- Despite this infrastructure, there are currently no programmes where the public is deeply involved in matters of regional integration and cooperation.
 - The community is not well-endowed; it is sustained by some European funding and EAC Member States are struggling.
 - There have been a lot of gains under the EAC Custom Union and Common Market.



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- The East African Court of Justice is mandated to stand for justice, fairness, equality and equity. It will remain protective of plaintiffs, as long as it has mandate to do so.
- The EAC treaty is solid and there are mechanisms to punish errant state parties.

84. Overall, the following recommendations were drawn out:

- Every East African should be a regional integration champion, and encouraged to make use of the advantages awarded by treaty (such as the East African passport);
- The public should be carried along in the process of regional integration to avoid a Brexit-like outcome in the future, and the public should be kept aware of the problems faced;
- In the case of the AfCFTA, one important recommendation for success is to learn from mistakes in existing RECs, as well as to allow the institutions created to carry out their respective functions.

Field Trip

85. Courtesy of the Government of Eritrea, international participants were taken on a tour outside of the city of Asmara, during which participants admired Gergera and Logo dams, a solar farm and Halhale Dairy Farm.

Discussion of the Outcomes of the Breakout Sessions

86. The rapporteurs reported back to the ICSEO on their respective sessions in a plenary session, welcoming comments, critiques and questions.

Interview with Mr. Gabriel Negatu, former Director General of East Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office at the African Development Bank



87. The ICSOE participants enjoyed a Q&A session with Mr. Gabriel Negatu, former Director General for Eastern Africa, African Development Bank (AfDB), which was carried out by Mr. Arnold Segawa, News Reporter, NTV Uganda. The pair discussed the nature of regional integration and the recent history of the AfDB. Mr. Segawa mentioned the bank's doubling of its capital base, and raised the question of what this might mean for the ordinary East African citizen. Mr. Negatu explained that, by virtue of the augmented capital base, the 'firing power' of the institution is also doubled. Mentioning that such a positive development for the bank is also a vote of confidence in Africa, he explained that the 'ordinary man or woman' are impacted through a 'cascade down' effect: citizens benefit from improved infrastructure, better schools etc. The interlocutors took time to highlight that – at the given time – it is 'all hands on deck' in terms of spurring on regional integration and the associated developments, with particular emphasis on the need for national governments to be pro-active. With attention drawn to the AfDB's Triple-A rating, Mr. Negatu was challenged on why there were not more guarantees, backed by the bank, to de-risk important development projects – such as those discussed in other sessions. Mr. Negatu outlined the difficulties some infrastructure projects have in successfully mitigating risks, explaining the role of 'first loss capital' in allowing the banks to play a more supportive role.
88. Mr. Segawa then served as moderator as Mr. Negatu took questions from the floor. Thanking Mr. Negatu for his participation, Mr. Andrew Mold, Acting Director, ECA Office for Eastern Africa acknowledged the high growth rates of the East Africa region and asked the former Director General for his insights on investment levels accompanying that growth going forward. Mr. Negatu recognized the success of the region and credited peace and security, as well as good economic management of the region. He shared the experience he had had interacting with investors in his previous role at the AfDB, explaining they tend to be well-informed, price their risks, and remain enthusiastic about investing in East Africa. He went on to express that optimism was warranted on this front, given that AfCFTA implementation is in the pipeline. Other questions from the floor explored trends and observations outside of the East Africa region, elsewhere on the African continent.

Review and Adoption of the 23rd ICSOE Communique

89. The participants were presented with the Communique and a small number of minor changes were suggested, noted and incorporated.



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Official Closing of the Meeting

90. Participants expressed a sincere vote of thanks to the Government of Eritrea for hosting the 23rd ICSOE Annual Meeting and the excellent hospitality and facilities provided. The theme and venue of the 24th meeting (2020), will be determined at a later date, in close consultation with the Bureau of the 23rd ICSOE.

List of Participants

91. The following participants were in attendance of the 23rd ICSOE Annual Meeting.

MEMBER STATES		
	N ^o	Full name of participant and contact details
COMOROS	1.	<p>M. Ismael Mmadi YOUSOUF Conseiller des affaires Economique, du Tourisme et de l'Artisanat Ministère des Finances, de l'Economie, du Budget de l'investissement et du Commerce Extérieur, chargé des privatisations B.P. 8298 Moroni, Comores Tel/Office: +269 773 5205 Tel/Mobile: +269 335 72 45 E-mail: koumsone@gmail.com; mineconomie2019@gmail.com</p>
	2.	<p>Dr. Ouledi AHMED Professor of University of Comoros Member of the National Committee of Blue Economy B.P.228 Moroni, Comores Tel: +269 333 2757 E-mail: aouledi@gmail.com</p>



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DJIBOUTI	3.	S.E. M. Samir Aden CHEIKH Advisor to the Minister Ministry of Economy and Finance Tel/Office: +253 21 325 105/6 Tel/Mobile: +253 77 686 868 E-mail: samir.aden@economie.gouv.dj Twitter: @samiraden
ERITREA	4.	Mr. Alamin Hassen Head of International Affairs Office of the President
	5.	Mng. Ghetachew Merahitsion Head of Cartographic and Information Center of Eritrea Office of the President
	6.	Hon. OSMAN SALEH Minister of Foreign Affairs
	7.	Mmb. Issa Ahmed D/G, Dept. of Research and Information Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	8.	Ms. Zahra Jaber D/G, Dept. of Administration Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	9.	Mr. Tsehay Fasil Director, Minister's Office Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	10.	Mr. Bereket Fitwi



		Director of General Service Ministry of Foreign Affairs
11.	Mr. Michael Weldemariam Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
12.	Mr. Habte Gheresus Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
13.	Mr. Yohannes Yissihak D/G, Dept. of Inland Revenue Ministry of Finance	
14.	Mr. Efrem Tesfai Head Unit, International Cooperation Ministry of Finance	
15.	Mr. Solomon Binega Head Unit of Tariff Ministry of Finance	
16.	Mr. Mogos Weldemichael D/G of Department Internal Trade Ministry of Trade and Industry	
17.	Mr. Zeferwerki Fissehaye Director of Division International Organization Ministry of Trade and Industry	
18.	Mr. Abdurahman Ibrahim Head Unit of African Desks Ministry of Trade and Industry	
19.	Mr. Ghebregabher Ghebremedhn Director Division of policy and Legal Affairs	



		Ministry of Trade and Industry
20.	Mr. Brhane Mesfn Head Unit of Research Ministry of Trade and Industry	
21.	Mr. Andebrhan Haile Director Division of Planning and Statistics Ministry of Trade and Industry	
22.	Mr. Hassen Alamin Data Analysis Ministry of Trade and Industry	
23.	Mr. Alem Kibrab D/G Depa. of Mining Ministry of Energy and Mining	
24.	Mr. Teferi Abrha Director of Energy Ministry of Energy and Mining	
25.	Mr. Mebrahtu Okubazghi Director of Mining Ministry of Energy and Mining	
26.	Mr. Beyene Haile Director of Energy Ministry of Energy and Mining	
27.	Mr. Abrham Zbai Head Division of Electricity Ministry of Energy and Mining	
28.	Mr. Ermias Yohannes	



		Director of Mining Ministry of Energy and Mining
	29.	Mr. Ghebremedhn Hagos Head of Department----- Ministry of Energy and Mining
	30.	Mr. Mohammed Idris D/G Depar. of Tourism Service Ministry of Tourism
	31.	Ms. Lia Ghebreab D/G Depar. of Tourism Ma'akel Region Ministry of Tourism
	32.	Mr. Habtom Bairu Director Division of Finance and Administration Ministry of Tourism
	33.	Ms. Akberet Teshale Director of Human Resources and Development Ministry of Tourism
	34.	Mr. Irdi Isaias Director Division of Promotion Ministry of Tourism
	35.	Mr. Hagos Tesfazghi Head Unit of Marketing Research Ministry of Tourism
	36.	Mr. Tekeste Asghedom Chairman of Travel Agency of Tourism Service Association Ministry of Tourism



	37. Eng. Medhanie Teklemariam Director Division of Historical Heritage of Asmara Ministry of Tourism
	38. Eng. Samson Ghebrensaie Division of Tourism Resources development Ministry of Tourism
	39. Mr. Michael Tsehaye Director Division of Research and Promotion Tourism Ma'akel Region Ministry of Tourism
	40. Mr. Ogbe Beyene Director of Tourism Product Development Ministry of Tourism
	41. Mr. Ogbe Beyene Director of Tourism Product Development Ministry of Marine Resources
	42. Amba. Tewelde W/Michael D/G of Department Marine Resources Development Ministry of Marine Resources
	43. Mr. Haile Awalom Director General of General Service Ministry of Marine Resources
	44. Mr. Andom Ghebrensaie Director General of Regulatory Services Ministry of Marine Resources
	45. Mr. Saleh Osman Acting Director General of Regulatory Services



	Ministry of Marine Resources
46.	Mr. Yohannes Teklemariam Acting Director General of Research and Human Resources Development Ministry of Marine Resources
47.	Mr. Negasi Goitom Manager of Salt production of Massawa Ministry of Marine Resources
48.	Haile Hailemariam Ministry of Marine Resources
49.	Mr. Mussie Belay Assistant Manager of Salt Production of Massawa Ministry of Marine Resources
50.	Mr. Mohammed Saleh Director of Alhadisa News Letter Ministry of Information
51.	Mr. Luul Ghirmai Director of Amharic Program Ministry of Information
52.	Mr. Kalid Mohammedbrhan Director of Radio Numa Ministry of Information
53.	Mr. Eyob Tesfayohannes Director of Radio Bilien Ministry of Information
54.	Mr. Petros Mengs



		Director of Hrmnet Programme Ministry of Information
	55.	Mr. Amanuel Tesfai Manager of International News Ministry of Information
	56.	Mr. Michael Teklai Director of Youth Programme Ministry of Information
	57.	Mr. Mukuria Woldu Chief of Newspaper Ministry of Information
	58.	Mr. Paulos Netabay Chief Newsroom Ministry of Information
	59.	Mr. Raffael Guisepe Journalist Ministry of Information
	60.	Mr. Samuel Yohannes Journalist Ministry of Information
	61.	Ms. Lidia Teclemariam Newsroom Ministry of Information
	62.	Mr. Yohannes Mebrahtu Newsroom Ministry of Information



	63.	Mr. Mulubrhan Habtegebriel Newspaper Tigrinya Ministry of Information
	64.	Ms. Asmait Fitsumbrhan Newspaper English Ministry of Information
	65.	Ms. Kalshium Mohammed Newspaper Tigre Ministry of Information
	66.	Mr. Saleh Abderkadr Camera Man Ministry of Information
	67.	Mr. Exob Tesfahanes Radio Ministry of Information
	68.	Mr. Kalao Mohammedbrhan Radio Ministry of Information
	69.	Mr. Mahmoud Abdella Arabic Programme Ministry of Information
	70.	Mr. Hruy Asghedom D/G Depa. of Agricultural Extension Ministry of Agriculture
	71.	Mr. Tekleab Misgina D/G Depa. of Legal Service and Monitoring Ministry of Agriculture



72.	Mr. Tsegai Brhane D/G Depa. of National Institution of Agricultural Research Ministry of Agriculture
73.	Mr. Ermias Solomon Head Unit of Information and Communications Ministry of Agriculture
74.	Mr. Tedros Kebrom Minister's Office Ministry of Land, Water and Environment
75.	Mr. Mebrahtu Iyassu D/G Dept. of Water Resources Ministry of Land, Water and Environment
76.	Mr. Tsegai Teamrat Acting Head Dept. of land Ministry of Land, Water and Environment
77.	Eng. Mekonen Fssehatsion D/G Dept. of Communications Ministry of Transport and Communication
78.	Mr. Kidane Ghebremichael Acting D/G Dept. of Marine Transport Ministry of Transport and Communication
79.	Mr. Tesfamariam Weldeghebriel Head of Planning and data Ministry of Transport and Communication
80.	Mr. Solomon Zerabruk Head of Planning and Information



		Ministry of Transport and Communication
81.	Eng. Debesai Haile Head of Standard and Regulation Ministry of Transport and Communication	
82.	Kokob Ghebrehiwet Head of Marketing Asmara air port Ministry of Transport and Communication	
83.	Mr. Eyob Araya Planning Expert Ministry of Transport and Communication	
84.	Mr. Nega Weldeab Head of Radio Network Ministry of Transport and Communication	
85.	Mr. Abraham Arefaine Head of Telecommunication Traffic Ministry of Transport and Communication	
86.	Mr. Biniam Abrham Supervisor of Duty officer Ministry of Transport and Communication	
87.	Mr. Ghirmatsion Tewelde Manager postal Service of Eritrea Ministry of Transport and Communication	
88.	Mr. Amha Kidane D/G Dept. Of Finance and Administration Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
89.	Mr. Teame Weldekidan	



		Director Division of planning and Research Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare
90.	Ms. Natsinet Ghebreyesus Head Unit of Project Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
91.	Mr. Saleh Mohammed Director Division of Saving and Secure Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
92.	Mr. Berhe Araya Division of Rehabilitation and Demobilisation Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
93.	Mr. Hagos Mebrahtu Director Division of Employment Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
94.	Mr. Woldeyesus Elisa D/G Department of Employment Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	
95.	Prof. Abrham Kidane Ministry of National Development	
96.	Mr. Afewerki Tesfai Head of Minister's Office Ministry of National Development	
97.	Mr. Samson Brhane D/National Authorizing Office (EU) Ministry of National Development	
98.	Mr. Nemariam Yohannes	



		Head of UN Cooperation Desks Ministry of National Development
99.	Mr. Afewerki Habte Expert Ministry of National Development	
100.	Mr. Tewelde Tsighe Manager, Dept. of Accounting Bank of Eritrea	
101.	Mr. Temesghen Ghebremariam Manager, Dept. of Economics Bank of Eritrea	
102.	Mr. Ghebrezghabher Ghebremedhn General Auditor Office of Auditor General	
103.	Mr. Gebreslassie Mehari Director, Human Resources and Development Office of Auditor General	
104.	Mr. Amanuel Issak Director Technology and Information Office of Auditor General	
105.	Mr. Tekeste Baire Secretary General of NCEW National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW)	
	Mr. Abrham Bereket Ac/Head of Dept. Of Foreign Affairs National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW)	



		Mr. Ghirmai Abrham Head Division of Public Relations National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW)
106.	Dr. Tseghai Medin Head Division of Archaeology and Anthropology Commission of Culture and Sports	
107.	Mr. Yohannes Ghebreyesus Head of National Museum Massawa Commission of Culture and Sports	
108.	Mr. Mohammed Hamd Director General on Investment Center Investment Center	
109.	Mr. Tewelde Weldemichael Director General on Investment Center Investment Center	
110.	Mr. Ahferom Tewelde Head of PFDJ Political Education and Campaign PFDJ Political Affairs	
111.	Mr. Kelab Haile Head of PFDJ Higher Board Education PFDJ Political Affairs	
112.	Dr. Temesghen Tesfamariam Senior Researcher PFDJ / RDC	
		Mr. Hizbawi Mengsteab Economic Affairs- PFDJ



		Mr. Zekarias Ghrmai Economic Affairs- PFDJ
	113.	Mr. Mihretab Medhanie Senior Researcher PFDJ / RDC
	114.	Mr. Zeru Weldemichael Manager of National Insurance Corporation of Eritrea Insurance
	115.	Mr. Tukabo Mobae Head of Finance and Administration Insurance
	116.	Mr. Yonas Ghebrehiwet Head of Research and Consultancy ERCOE
	117.	Ms. Betiel kidane Internal Auditor ERCOE
	118.	Mr. Yemane Andemariam Director of National Security NPSF
	119.	Eng. Tesfalem Weldemichae Head of Dept. of Public Development Ma'akel Region
	120.	Dr. Andab Ghebremeskel Director of ECSS ECSS



	121. Mr. Yemane Beyene Senior Researcher ECSS
	122. Mr. Nebai Tekle Expert ECSS
	123. Ms. Senait Mehari Head Dept. Of Economic Services NEUEW
	124. Mr. Asmerom Goitom Head Division of Economic NEUEW
	125. Dr. Yonas Mesfin C/Higher Education
	126. Dr. Estifanos Hailemariam C/Higher Education
	127. Prof. Zemenfes Tsighe C/Higher Education
	128. Dr. Weldetnsae Tewelde C/Higher Education
	129. Dr. Melake Tewelde C/Higher Education
	130. Dr. Giorgis Tekle C/Higher Education
	131. Ms. Tiebe Kindia



		National Representative of ECOSOC ECOSOC
132.	Mr. Istifanos Habtemariam National Representative of ECOSOC ECOSOC	
133.	Mr. Sead Romodan Head of Dept. Of Project EUEYS	
134.	Ms. Fiori Tesfai Head Unit, Division of Project EUEYS	
135.	Mr. Berhane Berhe Voice of America	
136.	Ms. Suzan Namondi Ngongi United Nations Resident Coordinator	
137.	Mr. James Wakiaga UNDP / Eritrea Office	
138.	Dr. Martins Ovberedjo UN WHO	
139.	Shaheen Nilofer UNICEF	
140.	Ms. Marielle Sander UNFPA	
141.	Soufiane Adjali UNHCR	



	142. Saeed Abubakar FAO
	143. Ms. Miriam Tesfaldet UNWFP
	144. Mr. Vadaste Kalima UNOCHA
	145. Ms. Elisabetta Pietrobon European Union Delegation
	146. Mr. Gabriel Leonte European Union Delegation
	147. Ms. Lucia Di Troia European Union Delegation
	148. Ms. Carmen Grlica European Union Delegation
	149. Lothar Jaschke European Union Delegation
	150. Zerihun Megersa Ethiopian Embassy
	151. Zewdu Nigus Ethiopian Embassy
	152. Amb. Francois Goldblatt Embassy of France
	153. Mr. Mohammed Naeem Embassy of the Republic of Egypt



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154.	Saad Fahad Saudi Arabia Embassy
155.	Abdulelah L. Almawash Saudi Arabia Embassy
156.	Mr. Teclu Ghebrehiwet Netherlands Consulate
157.	Mr. Santana Gabriel Embassy of South Sudan
158.	Amb. Abdulla Ali Embassy of the Republic of Yemen
159.	Mabrouka M.A. Sohaib Embassy of Libya
160.	Amb. Aykut Kumbaroglu Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
161.	Hassen Khalifa Embassy of the State of Qatar
162.	Jonas Westerlund Embassy of Sweden
163.	Mr. Amanuel Tesfay Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia
164.	Mulugheta Kusmu Consulate of Canada
165.	Mr. Zerai Haile



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		Consulate of the Republic of Korea
	166.	Safi Ahmed Said Consulate of Austria
	167.	Bahta Gebremariam Consulate of Poland
	168.	Amb. A. Yarakhmedov Embassy of Russian Federation
	169.	O. Koshcheev Embassy of Russian Federation
	170.	Mohamud Hamza Embassy of the Republic of Sudan
	171.	Dumisani Rasheleng Embassy of the Republic of South Africa
	172.	Embassy of the United Kingdom
ETHIOPIA	173.	Hon. Dr. Hirut Kassaw WONDIM Minister Ministry of Culture and Tourism P.O. Box 1907 Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 751 930 415 431 E-mail: hirutkasa@yahoo.com



	174.	Mr. Workneh Aklilu JEMBERE Advisor to the Minister for Culture and Tourism Ministry of Culture and Tourism Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 912 853 747 E-mail: worknehaklilu@gmail.com
KENYA	175.	Mr. Joshua Otieno OPIYO Acting Director Macro Econoplanning and International Cooperation State Department of Planning The National Treasury and Planning P.O. Box 30005 Nairobi 00100 Tel: +254 710 310 928 E-mail: joshua_opiyo1@yahoo.com
	176.	Mr. Peter Thobora MWANGI Assistant Director of Renewable Energy Ministry of Energy P.O. Box: 30582 - 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel/Office : +254 20 331 0112 Tel//Mob: +254 712 239 518 Email: thov.pet@gmail.com
MADAGASCAR	177.	Ms. Solonavalona Rolly ANDRIANINA Civil Servant in charge of Economic Analysis Ministry of Economy and Finance Antananarivo, Madagascar Tél: +261 34 05 511 53 E-mail: asrolly@gmail.com
	178.	M. Andriantsilavo Jean Michel RABARY Assistant Technique Direction Générale de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture



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Economic Commission for Africa

		<p>Ministère de l’Agriculture, de l’Elevage et de la Pêche Lot IV J 12, Mandialaza Ankadifotsy Antananarivo, Madagascar Tel: +261 34 49 102 79 / +261 34 90 714 87 E-mail: rabary.andriantsilavo@gmail.com</p>
RWANDA	179.	<p>Mr. Godfrey KABERA Head of National Development Planning and Research Department Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning Kigali, Rwanda Tel: +250 788 478 597 Email: godfrey.kabera@minecofin.gov.rw</p>
SEYCHELLES	180.	<p>Mr. Kenneth Jacques Gervais RACOMBO Principal Secretary Department of Blue Economy Office of the Vice-President 3rd Floor, Oliaji Trade Centre P.O. Box: 1303 Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles Tel: +248 432 6200 / +248 27 22 366 E-mail: kracombo@statehouse.gov.sc</p>
	181.	<p>Ms. Fatime KANTE Economist Department of Blue Economy Office of the Vice-President 3rd Floor, Oliaji Trade Centre P.O. Box: 1303 Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles Tel: +248 432 6106 Tel/Mob: +{248 281 4763 E-mail: fatime.kante@statehouse.gov.sc; fkfitti@gmail.com</p>
SOMALIA	182.	<p>Mr. Mohamed Moalim AHMED Director of Planning</p>



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		<p>Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mogadishu, Somali Republic Tel: +252 615 561 309 E-mail: planning@moci.gov.so; ugaas2m@gmail.com</p>
<p>UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA</p>	183.	<p>Dr. Aboud Suleiman Aboud JUMBE Head-Policy, Planning and Research Unit Department of Environment Second Vice-President's Office Government of Zanzibar United Republic of Tanzania P.O. Box: 628 Zanzibar, Tanzania Tel/Office: +255 242 239 007 Tel: +255 778 900 448 E-mail: aboud.jumbe@gmail.com</p>
	184.	<p>Ms. Amina Khamis SHAABAN Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance and Planning Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel: +255 773 268 765 E-mail: aminashaabani@yahoo.co.uk</p>
	185.	<p>Ms. Jesca Justo MBOHO Economist Ministry of Finance and Planning P.O. Box 2802 Dodoma, Tanzania Tel: +255 654 003 280 E-mail: jesca.mboho@gmail.com</p>
	186.	<p>Ms. Glory Geoffrey SINDILO Finance Management Officer Ministry of Finance and Planning Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</p>



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

	Tel: +255 714 192 222 E-mail: glory.sindilo@hazina.go.tz ; gsindilo@hotmail.com
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



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REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs) AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (IGO)		
	N ^o	Full name of participant and contact details
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	187.	Mr. Thomas Paul Molo OKORE Consultant, Resource Mobilization & International Cooperation Unit COMESA Secretariat Ben Bella Road P.O. Box 30051 Lusaka, Zambia Tel: +260 211 229 725 /32 Cell: +254 722 579 830 E-mail: tokore@comesa.int
Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)	188.	Mr. Gilles Andre RIBOUET Head of Communications Indian Ocean Commission 41D Dr Lesur St, Lotus Lane Beau Bassin, Mauritius Tel: +230 402 6100 Tel/Mob: +230 59 101 448 E-mail: gilles.ribouet@coi-ioc.org
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	189.	Mr. Keflemariam Sebhatu KIDANE DRM, Program Coordinator IGAD Climate Prediction & Application Centre (ICPAC) P.O. Box: 10304-00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya Tel/Office: +254 20 351 4426 Mobile: +254 71 616 7017 E-mail: kefle.sebhatu@igad.int
	190.	Dr. Eshete Dejen DRESILIGN Fisheries expert, Agriculture and Environment Division Intergovernmental Authority on Development P.O. Box: 2653 Djibouti, Djibouti



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		<p>Tel : +251 919 374 431 E-mail: eshete.dejen@igad.int</p>
African Union Commission (AUC)	191.	<p>Mr. Million Habte BEGNA Senior Trade Expert African Union Commission (AUC) AfCFTA Unit/Interim Secretariat Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 911 412 642 E-mail: millionh@africa-union.org</p>
	192.	<p>Mr. Yagouba TRAORE Chief of Infrastructure Information Unit PIDA Coordinator (Interim) Department of Infrastructure and Energy African Union Commission P.O. Box 3243 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 115 182 407 E-mail: traorey@africa-union.org</p>
East African Community (EAC)	193.	<p>Mr. Samson MANIRAKIZA Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer EAC Secretariat Arusha, Tanzania Tel: +255 686 317 747 E-mail: smanirakiza@eachq.org</p>
	194.	<p>Mr. Simon Kiarie WATHIGO Principal Tourism Officer EAC Secretariat P.O. Box 1096 Arusha, Tanzania Tel: +255 746 184 527 / +254 722 829 309 E-mail: skiarie@eachq.org</p>
COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE DES PAYS	195.	<p>S.E. M. Epimaque NSANZURWANDA</p>



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

DES GRANDS LACS (CEPGL)		Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Administration and Finance Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs (CEPGL) Rubavu, Rwanda Tel: +250 788 305 923 E-mail: nsanzeprima@yahoo.fr
The Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)	196.	Ms. Mishambi Mukabakooba Sheila KAWAMARA Executive Director East African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) Plot 87, Block 1998, Bukoto-Ntinda Road P.O. Box 24965 Kampala, Uganda Tel/Office: +256 393 266 451 Tel/Mob: +256 772 403 120 E-mail: sheila.kawamara@eassi.org ; eassi@eassi.org
Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA)	197.	Mr. Mubarak Adam Esmail SODHA ICT Officer / Projects Development Officer Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA) P.O. Box 99209 - 8017 Mombasa, Kenya Tel/Office: +254 20 238 1184 Tel/Mobile: +254 41 2223 245 / +254 725 411 066 E-mail: msodha@pmaesa.org
Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NC-TTCA)	198.	Mr. Emile SINZUMUSI Director of Customs and Trade Facilitation Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority P.O. Box 34068, 80118 Mombasa, Kenya Tel: +254 41 4470734 /2000881 Mobile: +254 700 738 092 E-mail: esinzumusi@ttcanc.org



The State of Eritrea



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Economic Commission for Africa

Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)	199.	Prof. Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla HAMAD Executive Director Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) P.O. Box 152 Entebbe, Uganda Tel/Office: +256 414 321 424 /759 302 708 /417 705 000 Mob: +256 757 152 563 E-mail: seifeldin_eltwaim@nilebasin.org; nbisec@nilebasin.org



OTHER INSTITUTIONS	
N°	Full name of participant and contact details
University of South Africa (UNISA)	<p>200. Prof. Joseph CHISASA Chair of Department: Finance, Risk Management & Banking College of Economic and Management Sciences University of South Africa (UNISA) AJH vd Walt Building 5-121 P.O. Box 392 Pretoria, South Africa Tel/Office: +27 (0)12 429 4613 Tel/Mobile: +27 732 934 365 E-mail: Chisaj@unisa.ac.za</p>
	<p>201. Mr. Stephen Khehla Ndloun Vice Principal – Strategy Risk & Advisory Services University of South Africa Tel: +27 124 292 551 Mobile: +27 836 661 570 E-mail: ndlouks@unisa.ac.za</p>
	<p>202. Ms. Sanele Nhlabatsi Senior Lecturer School of Business Leadership University of South Africa South Africa Tel: +27 11 652 0306 Mobile: +27 82 466 2802 E-mail: nhlabw@unisa.ac.za</p>
	<p>203. Ms. Cristal Peterson Director of Communication & Marketing University of South Africa Tel: +27 11 652 0315 Tel: +27 84 698 8728 E-mail: petercr@unisa.ac.za</p>
	<p>204. Prof. Vinesh Basdeo Executive Dean</p>



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		University of South Africa Mobile: +27 83 417 216 E-mail: mbasdeo@unisa.ac.za
	205.	Prof. Mpfarisent Budeli NemaKonde Director of School of Law University of South Africa Tel: +27 429 8427 Mobile: +27 82 936 1237 E-mail: budelm@unisa.ac.za
University of Nairobi	206.	Dr. Lanoi MALOIY Researcher University of Nairobi P.O. Box 30197 - 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 790 990 915 E- mail: lmaloiy01@gmail.com
	207.	Dr. Paul Kuria KAMAU Institute for Development Studies University of Nairobi P.O. Box 30197-00100, GPO Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254-20-318262; Ext 28177 Cell: +254 722 970 366 E-mail: pkamau@uonbi.ac.ke ; kamaupk2011@gmail.com
Kenya Youth in Trade and Business	208.	Ms. Linda Cheptoo CHEPKWONY President/Founder Kenya Youth in Trade and Business P.O. Box 9046-00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 722 525 307 E-mail: lindachepkwony6@gmail.com



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development	209.	Prof. John Christopher LOUISE Consultant Seed London, United Kingdom Tel: +44 7505 433 936 E-mail: louise@seedsofpeace.eu
Life and Peace Institute	210.	Ms. Yemisrasch Bruck KEBEDE Horn of Africa Programme Manager Life and Peace Institute P.O. Box 20002/1000 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 115 579 049 Mobile : +251 913 865 187 E-mail: yemisrach.kebede@life-peace.org
National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya (NCIC)	211.	Ms. Olive Chepkorir METET Assistant Director and Head of Communication and Knowledge Management National Cohesion and Integration Commission P.O. Box 7055-00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 72 681 1233 E-mail: chepkorir.metet@hotmail.com
Institute for Peace and Security Studies	212.	Dr. Tigist Yeshiwas ENGIDAW Assistant Professor /Global Goodwill Ambassador on Humanitarian Research Coordinator, Academic Programmes Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) P.O. Box 1176 Addis Ababa University Tel: +251 911 82 44 61 E-mail: tigist.y@ipss-addis.org Twitter: DrTigistY



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Horn of Africa Economic and Social Policy Institute	213. Amb. Peter Robleh GABRIEL Chairperson Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (HESPI) Tel: +251 115 150 521 /84 ; +251 911 523 706 E-mail: contacthespi@hespi.org ; probleh@gmail.com
University of Dar-es-Salaam	214. Dr. Vincent Peter LEYARO Senior Lecturer University of Dar es Salaam Tel: +255 782 285 275 E-mail : vleyaro@yahoo.com
Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) Rwanda	215. Ms. Eugenia KAYITESI Executive Director Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) Rwanda Tel: +250 788 305 506 E-mail: e.kayitesi@ipar-rwanda.org ; ek.kayintag@gmail.com
Makerere University	216. Prof. Ibrahim Mike OKUMU Senior Lecturer School of Economics, Makerere University Kampala, Kampala Tel: +256 752 016 887 E-mail: okumuim@gmail.com
Kenya Institute for Public Policy (KIPPRA)	217. Mr. Paul Odhiambo ODONGO Policy Analyst Trade and Foreign Department Kenya Institute for Public Policy (KIPPRA) P.O.Box 56445-00200 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 717 671 026 E-mail: podhiambo@kippra.or.ke



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Tourism Confederation of Tanzania	218.	Mr. Richard Obadiah Buberwa RUGIMBANA Executive Secretary, Tourism Confederation of Tanzania P.O. Box 13837 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel: +255 754 488 642 E-mail: richard.rugimbana@gmail.com
Office National de Tourisme de Djibouti (ONTD)	219.	Mr. Osman Abdi MOHAMED Chief Executive Officer National Tourism Office Cité Haramouse Djibouti, Djibouti Tel/Office: +253 21 352 800 Tel/Mobile: +253 77 81 83 50 E-mail: osmanabdim@gmail.com
Leisure and Tourism Howarth International	220.	Dr. Carmen NIBIGIRA Project Director, Leisure and Tourism Howarth International Rusororo – Kigali, Rwanda Tel: +250 72 462 4538 / 78 066 3646 E-mail: cnibigira@horwathhtl.com ; carmen-nibigira@hotmail.co.uk
RES4Africa Foundation	221.	Mr. Leonard Joseph BRAUN Energy Analyst RES4Africa Foundation Rome, Italy Tel: +49 174 208 5888 E-mail: leonhard.braun@res4africa.org
DELOITTE	222.	Mr. Amaha Admassie BEKELE East Africa Technology Leader DELOITTE Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 E-mail: abekele@deloitte.co.ke



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

<p>International Maritime Organisation (IMO)</p>	<p>223. Capt. Dave Ngui MULI Regional Coordinator for Eastern Africa Sub-Region International Maritime Organisation (IMO) P.O. Box 30219 – 0010 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 729 403 588 E-mail: dmuli@imo.org</p>
<p>TradeMark East Africa (TMEA)</p>	<p>224. Dr. Anthony Francis MVEYANGE (Ph.D) Director, Research and Learning TradeMark East Africa Ltd 2nd Floor, Fidelity Insurance Center Waiyaki Way, Westlands P.O. Box 313-00606 Nairobi, Kenya Tel/Office: +254 20 423 5000; Ext: 131 Tel/Office: +254 700 141 220 E-mail: anthony.mveyange@trademarkea.com</p>
	<p>225. Mr. Mugenyi Eugene TORERO Director, Trade Policy/ Facilitation TradeMark East Africa Fidelity Insurance Centre, 2nd Floor, Waiyaki Way P.O. Box 313, 00606 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 20 423 5000 Mobile: +254 780969 654 E-mail: eugene.torero@trademarkea.com</p>
<p>African Development Bank</p>	<p>226. Mr. Marcellin Ndong Ntah Lead Economist, East Africa African Development Bank Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 748 459 386 E-mail: m.ndongntah@afdb.org</p>



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

<p>Sustainable Development Center Goals for Africa (SDG) Center</p>	<p>227.</p>	<p>Mr. Enock Twinoburyo NYOREKWA Senior Economist Sustainable Development Center Goals for Africa (SDG) Center Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office : +250 783 433 7111 Tel/Mobile: +250 78 831 00 04 / +256 702 889 253 E-mail: enyorekwa@sdgcafrica; info@sdgcafrica.org</p>
<p>Economic Commission for Europe in Africa for PPPs</p>	<p>228.</p>	<p>Ms. Beatrice Florah Aeko IKILAI Representative of Economic Commission for Europe in Africa for PPPs based in Uganda P.O. Box: 5393 Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 77 290 5291 E-mail: ikilai2015@gmail.com</p>
<p>Kenya Convention Bureau</p>	<p>229.</p>	<p>Ms. Jacinta Mutete NZIOKA Chief Executive Officer Kenya Convention Bureau P.O. Box 30630 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 72 246 4221 E-mail: jacinta.ktb@gmail.com</p>
<p>Invest Afrique</p>	<p>230.</p>	<p>Mr. Gabriel NEGATU Managing Partner, Invest Afrique Previously DG, AfDB Betasda 20817 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +1 240 778 8117 (USA) ; +254 707 645 685 (Kenya) E-mail: gabenegatu@gmail.com</p>
<p>East African Court of Justice</p>	<p>231.</p>	<p>Mr. Isaac Lisoria LENAOLA Judge of the Supreme Court of Kenya Kenya Judiciary P.O. Box 1014 Nairobi,00502 Tel: +254 20 221 2221</p>



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		Cell: +254 72 184 1109 E-mail: isaaclenaola@yahoo.co.uk , ilenaola@courts.go.ke
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CONSULTANTS	
N°	Full name of participant and contact details
232.	<p>Prof. Timothy Kimathi MURITHI Professor / Senior Researcher University of Free State 18 Oberon Way, Meadowridge Cape Town 7680 South Africa Tel/WhatsApp: +27 714 237 209 E-mail: tmurithi@ijr.org.za; tkmurithi@hotmail.com</p>
233.	<p>Ms. Laura Naliaka NAPWORA Economist Freelance P.O. Box 12573 - 20100 Naikuru, Kenya Tel: +254 707 131 757 E-mail: lauraanne.naliaka@gmail.com</p>
234.	<p>Ms Natasha Rosabel EREIRA-GUYER Communication consultant Kigali, Rwanda E-mail: natasha.ereira-guyer@one.un.org Tel/Mobile: +250 78 944 79 78 Tel/WhatsApp: +44 787 528 7285</p>
235.	<p>Mr. Kato Mukasa KIMBUGWE Managing Partner Dynamic Analysis Ltd Kigali, Rwanda Tel: +250 788 05 587 E-mail: katoliverpool@gmail.com</p>



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Economic Commission for Africa

UN AGENCIES		
	Nº	Full name of participant and contact details
United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU WIDER)	236.	Dr. Maureen Kefina WERE Research Fellow United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU WIDER) P.O. Box 105753 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel/Office: +254 22 260 2917 Tel/Mobile: +255 766 040 834 E-mail: were@wider.unu.edu
World Trade Organisation (WTO)	237.	Ms. Maika OSHIKAWA Director Accessions Division World Trade Organisation (WTO) Geneva, Switzerland Tel/Office : +41 22 739 5643 Tel/Mobile: +41 79 898 8074 E-mail: maika.oshikawa@wto.org



MEDIA	
N°	Full name of participant and contact details
238.	<p>Mr. Jenerali Twaha ULIMWENGU Chairman of the Board of the Raia Mwema Newspaper and Advocate of the High Court in Dar es Salaam Mbezi Beach, Block G, Plot 487 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel: +255 754 949 594 E-mail: jenerali@gmail.com</p>
239.	<p>Mr. Girum Chala GEMECHU Journalist CGTN Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251-911549916 E-mail: groomchala@yahoo.com</p>
240.	<p>Mr. Ashalew Chala GEMECHU Cameraman CGTN Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 924 594 677 E-mail: Aschalewchala2005@gmail.com</p>
241.	<p>Mr. Nega Gebreselassie DEMIE Producer CGTN Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 989 165 735 E-mail: negasselassie27@gmail.com</p>
242.	<p>Mr. Juma Alawi MASARE Journalist The Citizen Newspaper P.O. Box: 19754 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel: +255 784 339 318 E-mail: masarealawi@yahoo.com; malawi@tz.nationamedia.com</p>



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

	<p>243. Mr. Andualem Sisay GSESSE Journalist New Business Ethiopia/ BEHAK Multimedia Addis Ketema, Sub city 101195 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 91 140 7539 E-mail: andualemsis@gmail.com</p>
	<p>244. Mr. James KARUHANGA Reporter The New Times Kigali, Rwanda Tel: +250 78 030 34 36 /78 229 66 79 E-mail: karuhanga_james@yahoo.com</p>
	<p>245. Mr. Frederick GOLOOBA-MUTEBI Independent Researcher / Analyst (Rwanda/Uganda) Kamuli Zone A, Kamuli Road, Kireka Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 782 673 107 / +250 788 502 365 E-mail: fgmutebi@gmail.com</p>
	<p>246. Mr. Segawa ARNOLD News Anchor NTV Uganda 390, Kitakule Road – Mengo Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 757 104 377 / +256 782175116 E-mail: segawarr@gmail.com</p>



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Economic Commission for Africa

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)	
	N ^o Full name of participant and contact details
UNECA HQs Delegation Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	247. Ms. Vera SONGWE Executive Secretary Economic Commission for Africa Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
	248. Mr. Stephen Njuguna KARINGI Director Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia E-mail: karingi@un.org
	249. Mr. Yohannes HAILU Energy Policy Expert Addis Ababa, Ethiopia E-mail: hailu15@un.org
	250. Ms. Sandra NYAIRA Communications Officer UNECA Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: +251 929 417 895 E-mail: nyaira@un.org
	251. Ms. Emmanuella MATARE Fellow UNECA E-mail: Emma.matare@un.org
	252. Ms. Andrew MOLD Acting Director UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office : +250 815 5427 Mobile: +250 78830 2153 / +250 7881 55427



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

UNECA Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) Kigali, Rwanda		E-mail: mold@un.org
	253.	Ms. Daya BRAGANTE Cluster Lead, Sub Regional Initiatives UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel /Office: +250 788155426 E-mail: bragante@un.org
	254.	Ms. Emelang LETEANE Social Affairs Officer UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 7881 55415 E-mail: leteane.uneca@un.org
	255.	Mr. Geoffrey Masaki MANYARA Economic Affairs Officer UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788155430 E-mail: manyara@un.org
	256.	Mr. Rodgers MUKWAYA Economic Affairs Officer UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788155431 E-mail: mukwayar@un.org
	257.	Ms. Priscilla Berenice LECOMTE Information Officer -UN HQS New York, USA E-mail: lecomte@un.org
258.	Ms. Mekdes Asmare WORKNEH Acting Administrative & Finance Officer	



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 412 E-mail: asmare.uneca@un.org
	259.	Ms. Marie-Françoise UMURINGA Programme Officer UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 405 E-mail: umulinga@un.org
	260.	Mr. Didier HABIMANA Communication Officer UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788155411 E-mail: habimanad@un.org
	261.	Mr. Jean-Claude UMUGABA IT Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 414 E-mail: umugaba@un.org
	262.	Ms. Jackline INGABIRE Programme Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 406 E-mail: ingabirej@un.org
	263.	Ms. Médiatrice NYIRAKIMONYO Senior Staff Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA



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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 401 E-mail: nyirakimonyom@un.org
	264.	Ms. Angelique NTAGENGERWA Finance Assistant SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 424 E-mail: ntagengerwa@un.org
	265.	Ms. Alphonsine NYIRANSABIMANA Procurement Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 413 E-mail: nyiransabimana@un.org
	266.	Ms. Martine MUKANDEKEZI Library Assistant SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 428 E-mail: mukandekezi@un.org
	267.	Ms. Rosemary Akiiki BAGIZA Research Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda Tel/Office: +250 788 155 425 E-mail: bsgiza2@un.org
	268.	Mr. Charles MULHIRA Team Assistant UNECA/SRO-EA P.O. Box 4654 Kigali, Rwanda



The State of Eritrea



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

		Tel/Office: +250 788 155 419 E-mail: cmulihira@un.org
	269.	Ms Achiapo Jessica Lisette ATSIN Research Fellow UNECA/SRO-EA Tel/Office: +250 788 155 421 E-mail: jessica.atsin@gmail.com Kigali, Rwanda