

Meeting Report

Preparatory Meeting

Briefing by African Regional Economic Communities to UN Member States

Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under Secretary General and Special Adviser on Africa thanked the African Union Permanent Observer Mission for the support that the office had given OSAA in making the briefing a success. Mr. Diarra noted that the briefing, which was co-organized by OSAA and the Permanent Observer Mission of the AU was aimed at enhancing the awareness and understanding of UN Member States, with a view to generate greater support from the UN and the international community at large for the work, goals, aims and priorities of the AU and the RECs. (

Ambassador Tete Antonio, the African Union Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, welcomed the opportunity given to RECs to brief member states. He noted the need to do more to balance the focus on Africa so that there is not too much concentration on peace and security issues to the exclusion of economic and social development. He noted the need for greater support for the work of the continental and regional mechanisms particularly in building their capacity to respond to Africa's needs. .

Briefing by East African Community (EAC) by Hon. Beatrice Kiraso (see full statement)

The EAC briefed the Member States on the different integration stages that it has set, namely: the Customs Union, the Common Market, the Monetary Union and the Political Federation. The EAC highlighted peace and security interventions such as exchange of criminal intelligence among the Partner States, adoption of a UN Model law on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, improvement of common communication facilities for border and inter-state security, combating illicit drug, narcotic and human trafficking, management of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs within the context of the common market, addressing the challenge of cattle rustling among pastoral communities and combating terrorism and fighting piracy on the Indian Ocean coastline.

Representatives from Liberia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya and OSAA commented on the EAC presentation.

The discussion focused on the issues of food security and how it was vital for East Africa; on the adoption of regional strategies for food security and climate change; on the cooperation with the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and how duplication was avoided; On the lessons-learned from the European model of economic integration; on challenges of integration. (See Annex III for full statement).

Briefing by the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) by Amb. Sebastien Ntahuga (see full statement)

ECCAS briefed the Members States on its structure, implementations mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives. It informed the participants that so far the priority has been on peace and security because of the recent history of conflict in the region. ECCAS stated that the next mechanism to be put in place would be a judicial instrument. It also established that the priorities for the region were the control of small arms and light weapons and combating terrorism.

Representatives of Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the World Bank, Liberia, Uganda and Cameroon commented on the presentation.

Participants raised the issue of the importance of regional and sub-regional projects and sub-regional mechanisms, the cooperation between the UN and ECCAS when it comes to peace and security, the importance of institutional legitimacy and of engaging the trust of stakeholders, the funding of activities, the importance of focusing on the causes of conflicts, the importance of having a domestic perspective on regional problems and efforts made to support neighbouring countries affected by the Libyan crisis. (See Annex IV for full statement).

Briefing by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) by Remy Makumbe (see full statement)

SADC briefed the Member States on regional integration and the implementation of the SADC, EAC, COMESA free trade area, the Tripartite Cooperation agreement. It also talked about the specific needs of landlocked countries and how it affected development. It further informed Member States of the main existing transport corridors in Eastern and Southern Africa and of infrastructure supported by SADC.

Representatives of Ethiopia, OSAA and Ghana commented on the presentation.

Participants raised the issue of the heavy administrative burden of integration when it comes to movements of people and goods. Civil society also needs to play a major role in an effective integration. It is important not to create too many administrative layers with new organisation but rather replace the obsolete mechanisms with new ones. Participants also raised the issue of women and development and how SADC efforts to facilitate trade and access to funds should be also aimed at women and youth. Trade, infrastructure and industrialization are the priorities that have been adopted by SADC and all will address specifically the issues of women and youth. ((See Annex VI for full statement).

During the question and answer session the Permanent Representatives of the missions of Liberia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Chad, Mozambique, among other speakers thanked the speakers and convenors of the meeting and called for the institutionalization of the briefings to at least once a year and noted that they provided an important platform for the international community to learn about what was being done in Africa.

They also noted that in future it may be useful to take a thematic approach to the issue, with each REC presenting what they are doing in a specific area.