

Side-Event

Launch of the Joint Publication by the five UN Regional Commissions on “The Global Economic and Financial Crisis: Regional Impacts, Responses and Solutions”

Date: Thursday, 25 June 2008

Time: 1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Duration: 1 hour and a half

Venue: Conference Room 7, UN Headquarters, New York

Translation: Side-Event will be in English, translation will not be available.

Refreshments: Light lunch and refreshments will be provided

Organizers: The five UN Regional Commissions through the Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO).

Objective

To provide and enhance regional perspectives as part of the ongoing global discussion on the economic and financial crisis, including by analyzing impacts and policy responses, and providing policy options and solutions at the regional level that could contribute to recovery, increase resilience and prevent recurrence of a similar crisis in the future.

With this in mind, the side-event is intended to launch the joint publication produced by the five UN Regional Commissions on “The global economic and financial crisis: regional impacts, responses and solutions.” The launch would take place during the UN High-Level Conference on the Economic and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development scheduled to take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 24 to 26 June 2008.

Background

The global economy is experiencing the unfolding of the worst economic recession since World War II. Since the economic and financial crisis became full-blown in September, 2008, it was uncertain to what extent and in what way the different regions would be affected by it. Initially, there was the perception that some regions, including Asia, would be shielded from the impact of the crisis, - which was initially mainly financial in nature-, because of the sound macroeconomic policies put in place by countries in the regions, and because of the large volumes of foreign exchange reserves some countries had accumulated in the past decade. There was also the perception that most countries in Africa would not be as severely affected because they were not as exposed to the financial channels of contagion. Both of these

hypotheses proved wrong once the crisis began affecting the real economy with a decline in global aggregate demand and the consequent contraction of trade and other private investment flows.

It is now evident that all regions are experiencing enormous challenges emanating from the crisis. Shared impacts across regions include a plunge in stock markets and in the value of assets, reduced credit for investment, trade and consumption, a sharp decline in trade volumes and prices, a decline in private capital flows, including foreign direct investment and remittances. Regions also confront a number of challenges specific to their unique circumstances.

Consensus has emerged about the need for enhanced cooperation, coordination and coherence in the response measures at the regional and international levels. While policies must be centered at the national level, greater international cooperation is needed to avoid exacerbating cross-border strains. Strong regional platforms could serve as a basis to address development challenges and implement innovative solutions through enhanced and strengthened coordination and cooperation.

The joint publication analyses the impacts of the crisis on the various regions. It identifies and analyzes the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the response measures that have been put in place so far and, based on this analysis and on experiences with prior financial crises in some regions, lessons will be identified and shared so as to effectively mitigate the impact of the current crisis and increase the resilience of the various regions against recurrence of a similar crisis.

For more information and regional perspectives on the crisis, please visit www.un.org/regionalcommissions/crisis.html.