

Concept Note

ECOSOC Dialogue with Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions

Title: Regional cooperation as a catalyst for development: examples from the regions

Venue: United Nations, Geneva (UNOG, Palais des Nations)

Date: 8 July 2011

Time: 3:00 to 6:00 PM

Panellists and discussants: The Executive Secretaries of the five Regional Commissions, with selected high-level representatives from one or more countries in each region, as well as key representatives of regional organizations, acting as discussants.

Expected outcomes:

- a) An enhanced understanding of the vital role of regional cooperation as a catalyst for development and for achieving the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- b) An exchange of best practices, drawing upon examples from each region in the area of policies and initiatives based on regional cooperation and integration.

Background and Description:

Over the past few decades, with increasing globalization and with the world being woven together by technological innovation and increased connectivity, there has been a broadening of regional integration processes. Recently, intra-regional cooperation has proved critical for mitigating the impact of the multiple crises as many key policy actions and policy dialogues were initiated at the regional and subregional levels. In this regard, this year's theme for the dialogue is timely and responds to the growing recognition among member States that regional cooperation can play a critical role in promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development as highlighted, for example, in the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development, the Outcome of the UN Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis, the Nairobi Declaration on South-South Cooperation and the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries.

There are many salient and effective regional integration and cooperation mechanisms in different regions, particularly in the areas of trade and investment; macroeconomic, financial and monetary policy coordination; regional connectivity including transport; and in the area of social policy and education. This interactive dialogue provides a forum for the exchange of information between Member States and the Regional Commissions on these initiatives and an opportunity to examine how regional cooperation can spur innovation and act as a catalyst for promoting development.

During this dialogue, the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions will highlight key examples of regional cooperation that have provided a stimulus for sustained economic growth and sustainable development and accelerated progress towards the IADGs, including MDGs in their respective regions. The presentations will also outline the actions taken and the role of the Regional Commissions in strengthening regional cooperation, and in supporting South-South cooperation. High-level representatives from countries and key regional organizations will act as discussants and provide their country or organization

perspective on the importance of regional cooperation, and their expectations from the Regional Commissions in support of regional cooperation and integration initiatives.

Target Audience:

The dialogue will provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and best practices between regions, and stimulate interest and discussion among member states on the value of regional cooperation, and its vast untapped potential. The primary target audience is member States of the United Nations, but representatives of international organizations and civil society could also contribute and benefit from this interactive discussion.