

Press Release

Colloquium on Regional Integration

A three-day colloquium on Regional Integration organised by the **UN Economic Commission for Africa and Third World Network-Africa would be held from 6-8 May in Accra, Ghana.**

Under the theme: 'Africa's economic Integration: Strengthening Internal Coherence and Resilience to External Challenges', the colloquium, seeks to promote the integrity of Africa's integration agenda from the threats and challenges of the international trade regime.

The 2007 financial crisis exposed once more the vulnerabilities of Africa's fragmented and fragile economies and has led to renewed efforts at realising the much-talked about economic integration agenda. Unfortunately, these efforts are vulnerable to two emerging trends, internal and external. Paramount is the challenge of internal coherence of policy. Many of the policy initiatives and their various elements do not seem to correlate and therefore lend themselves to various forces with different purposes that purport to be working to fulfill the same goals. On the other hand, at the external level, the same African governments are either 'locked in' or negotiating positions in international trade and investment agreements whose logic run counter to the integration agenda of the continent.

Underlying all these are conflicting perspectives on the purpose and essence of economic integration driven by contrasting economic policy options applied in the post-independence history of Africa.

To this end two specific objectives have been set for the colloquium. These are:

1. Contribute to a better and coherent framing of the elements of Africa's integration Agenda and
2. Strengthen African stakeholder and policy-maker interaction on the African integration and international trade regime.

Participants include academics, policy makers and civil society. Among topics to be looked at are: ***Regional integration and Structural transformation; Continental Free Trade Area; Regional Economic Commissions and Integration; Cross-border policy harmonization and the African Mining Vision; Gender Challenges of economic transformation; institutional challenges and agriculture, industry and mining.***

The colloquium is expected to harvest ideas from participants that would help put into a comprehensive framework economic integration in Africa. Conclusions from the colloquium would be disseminated widely and subsequently there would be engagement with policy makers. UNECA and TWN-Africa are collaborating with the Council for Development and Social Research in Africa, CODESRIA, among other institutions to implement the project.

For further clarification please call 0269613132/0244858331

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