

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

ECOWAS COMMISSION



COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

**EPAU - ACBF Sponsored Think Tanks Meeting
Abuja, March 3, 2011**

REPORT

March, 2011



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

Introduction

Participants to the first EPAU-ACBF sponsored Think Tanks meeting met in Abuja, Nigeria (ECOWAS Commission, Room 155), at the invitation of the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy to reflect on a possible platform for collaboration.

The meeting was called to order following an introduction of the Program by the EPAU Project Manager, Dr. Felix N'zué at t around 10.00 am on Thursday, March 3, 2011.

1. Participants

The participants included the following:

- Prof. Lambert N. BAMBA - Commissioner Macroeconomic Policy
- Dr. Coffi NOUNON - ACBF
- Dr. Felix N'zue FOFANA - Project Manager, EPAU
- Dr. Sylla KALILOU - Macroeconomic Policy
- Prof. Tunji AKANDE - NISER , Nigeria
- Dr. Mohamed JALLOH - EPAU
- Dr. Wumi OLAYIWOLA - EPAU
- Dr. Boubacar MACALOU - CERCAP , Mali
- Dr. Aliou FAYE - CEPOD, Senegal
- Dr. Epiphane ADJOVI - CAPOD, Benin
- Dr. Zonon ABDOULAYE - CDP

2. Absence with apology

- Madame D. A EKOUE - CADERDT, Togo
- Dr. Mahamadou A. DIALLO - CAPED, Niger
- Dr. Basga E. DIALLA - CAPES, Burkina-Faso
- Dr. J. L. S. Abbey - CEPA , Ghana
- Prof. Aké G. M. N'GBO - CIRES – CAPEC , Cote d'Ivoire

The contacts of participants are attached to this report.

3. Agenda of the meeting

1. 09:30 - 10:00am Registration of participants
2. 10:10 - 10:15am Brief Remarks by ACBF
3. 10:00 - 10:10am Introductory remarks by Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy
4. 10:15 - 11:25am Presentation of the Think Tanks Each Think Tank has 10min to make presentation
- 5. 12:25 - 11:40 am Coffee Break**
6. 11:40 - 12:00noon Presentation of EPAU work program
7. 12:00 - 12:15 Presentation of the proposed Collaboration platform
8. 12:15 - 13:00 Discussion
- 9. 13:00 - 15:00 Lunch Break**
10. 15:00 - 16:00 Wrap up and next steps
11. 16:00 - 16:30 Presentation and adoption of the Aide-Memoire
- 12. 16:30 Closing remarks and Coffee Break**

2- Proceedings of the meeting

2.1.Introductory remarks

i) ACBF, Dr. Coffi

Dr. Coffi informed participants that he would not be able to talk much about ACBF in the course of the day's deliberations since most of the participants are already familiar with ACBF. He, however, emphasized that his deliberations will be focused on the genesis of Policy units sponsored by the ACBF, which according to him have been making remarkable success in bringing changes in most countries in the ECOWAS sub-region. He reiterated that the idea behind the establishment of the Economic Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) was borne out of the need to replicate the successes achieved at the country level policy units to a regional Policy unit within the Macroeconomic Policy Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission. He said that the idea was first brought to the attention of ACBF by the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy, Prof. Bamba. On that note, Dr. Coffi urged the ECOWAS secretariat to work very hard to make EPAU very successful. He further informed participants that a similar request has been made by SADC for the establishment of a regional Policy Unit in Southern Africa. He also said that he was very happy when he got the invitation but was , however, not well pleased to realize that many ACBF sponsored Think Tanks never turned up for the meeting despite efforts made in

sending invitations to them. Dr. Coffi continued by saying that he was somehow encouraged for seeing some of the old ACBF sponsored Policy Units like CEPOD from Senegal, CAPOD from Benin, and CERCAP from Mali. He therefore appealed to the representatives from Country Policy Units to give full cooperation to EPAU, which he described as a regional policy unit that will be playing a leadership role for all ACBF sponsored Policy Units in ECOWAS Member States.

ii) CMEP, Prof. Bamba

Prof. Lambert Bamba thanked Dr. Coffi for his commitment and support in pushing the idea that eventually lead to the establishment of EPAU. He deliberated on the composition of the Macroeconomic Policy Directorate and elaborated on the need for capacity building which motivated him to seek support from the ACBF. He therefore impressed participants that the main purpose of the meeting was to foster an effective platform for collaboration between ACBF sponsored Policy Units in the sub-region and the Economic Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) established under the Macroeconomic Policy Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission. The Chairman further elaborated on a plethora of benefits that may certainly arise from such collaboration and thus appealed to participants to cooperate with the newly established regional Policy Think Tank.

2.2. Presentation by ACBF sponsored Think Tanks

The following people made presentations on behalf of their Policy Units during the course of the meeting:

- Dr. Epiphane ADJOVI presented for CAPOD, Benin
- Mr. Aliou FAYE presented for CEPOD, Senegal
- Dr. Boubacar MACALOU presented for CERCAP, Mali
- Prof. Tunji AKANDE presented for NISER, Nigeria

The above presentations, whose details are attached to this report, mainly focused on the activities, achievements and challenges of their respective units.

3.3 Presentation and Discussion of EPAU's Work Program and the platform for collaboration.

The Project Manager, Dr. N'zué, presented EPAU's Work Program focusing mainly on its objectives, program highlights and foreseen challenges. He dilated on several issues pertaining to the project's research agenda for which he called upon the cooperation of the various Policy Analysis units, especially with respect to country case studies.

With respect to EPAU's in-house research activities, he said that stakeholders will be involved in the identification of topics to investigate on. With respect to Commission studies, EPAU will closely work from other Policy units for better networking and capacity building. Participants were informed that national validation workshops will be held for commissioned country case studies and will be subsequently followed by a regional workshop. The findings from these studies will be published in a special issue of the Journal of West African Integration. In the area of thematic research, a call for proposals on a wide range of themes that have to do with the ECOWAS integration process has been posted on the Commission's web-site to attract researcher's contributions in member states.

In the area of networking and outreach, he mentioned that the unit is planning an exploratory mission with a view to touch base with member sates NCCs, Research Institutions and other relevant institutions. The unit also plans to develop a web-site to facilitate an online discussion platform for issues pertaining to the ECOWAS integration process. On capacity building activities the unit sees inadequate funding as a possible constraint in meeting the objectives set forth. (See attached document for details of EPAU Work Program presentation).

On the platform for collaboration, EPAU suggested that the best way to collaborate among institutions is to have something that can bring them together. On that note EPAU proposed that as a connecting nod, ACBF sponsored Think Tanks undertake every year country case study on a mutually identified topic relevant to the sub region. For the first year, EPAU proposed "Domestic Resource Mobilization" as the topic to be investigated at country level. Future topics will be decided during an Agenda setting meeting in August of every year. The Terms of reference for this study were presented and discussed.

Discussions

Discussions on the various presentations commenced after a lunch break. The following transpired during the discussions.

1. Research work produced by EPAU and its partner Think Tanks must be scientifically sound.
2. It is the responsibility of the various directorates at the ECOWAS Commission to translate research findings into policy papers that are easily accessible to decision makers.
3. EPAU's budget as agreed in the signed Agreement cannot be altered. However, EPAU will save money for the coming years by not paying for national Think Tanks participating in its activities.
4. Agree that the platform for collaboration between EPAU and the national ACBF Sponsored Thin Tanks be materialized with country case studies on Domestic Resource Mobilization (TOR).
5. Topics for future country case studies will be determined during a stakeholders meeting including all the national ACBF-sponsored Think Tanks (Agenda setting).
6. EPAU's in-house research should also address emerging issues, for instance the possible food crisis and the impact of the crisis on the sub-region.
7. Country case studies to be completed by August (including national and regional dissemination) workshops if research findings are to be presented to the meeting of Heads of States in October.
8. Chairpersons of national units will be informed officially on the topics to be investigated at national level to facilitate inclusion into national units' work programs.
9. EPAU should take advantage of ACBF organized regional meetings to save money.
10. EPAU's activities (networking), especially the country case studies should be extended to other Think Tanks that are not sponsored by ACBF.
11. National Think Tanks and EPAU to exchange their respective publications.

In his the concluding remarks, the Chairman, Prof. Bamba, thanked participants for what he considered a very fruitful deliberation. He reiterated that, as the Economic Community of West African States is principally established for an effective coordination of economic activities in Member States, his Commission will continue to push hard on ECOWAS agenda for economic integration. He again thanked participants for their time and patience in making the meeting a very successful one.

The meeting was brought to an end at 17:30.

List of Participants

| Name | Title/Organization | Telephone | E-mail |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
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