

The report of the Committee of Experts of the First Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

Extract pertaining to Legal Empowerment of the Poor

Legal Empowerment of the Poor

147. The presentation highlighted the positive economic impact that could arise from the legal empowerment of the poor, noting, however, that legal empowerment was not a substitute for development initiatives. Economic development through legal empowerment of the poor created and expanded fiscal space for government. The State delivered on the rule of law and protection of human rights and the poor reaped the resulting benefits. The Committee appreciated that legal empowerment could be used to bring about poverty reduction.

148. The Committee recognized the need for the application of the rule of law with regard to increasing growth and employment, as well as the link between development of human capital, including empowerment of women, and the reduction of poverty.

149. The Committee noted that the key complement to debt reduction and effective ODA for the achievement of the MDGs was domestic resource mobilization. It reflected on the issue of legal empowerment of the poor and why it was necessary to address that challenge. It recognized that empowering the poor legally was the most concrete way of fostering broad-based, pro-poor growth.

Recommendations

150. The Committee recommended that:

- The legal empowerment of the poor should necessarily be incorporated into the MDGs, aid-for-trade and EPA negotiations;
- ECA should conduct Africa-specific research on socially excluded and other vulnerable groups, to provide a solid knowledge base for policy and programme formulation;
- The AU Summit could be used as an occasion for launching the report of the CLEP; and
- AU should take that agenda through G77 and China to the General Assembly for appropriate resolutions to encourage the multilateral and bilateral systems in support of developing country efforts on LEP.