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SECRETARIAT NEWS

World Bank Vice President and Chief Economist visits AERC



Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, François Bourguignon (left) addresses AERC workshop. Looking on is AERC Executive Director, William Lyakurwa

On 20 June 2006, the Secretariat was honored to receive François Bourguignon, Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank. To mark the occasion, AERC convened a seminar on Mainstreaming Inequality into the Development Process. Godfrey Ndeng'e presented a paper on Determinants of Children's Nutritional Status in Kenya: Evidence from Demographic and Health Surveys. This paper was based on a recently

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SENIOR POLICY SEMINAR VIII

Another look at the fight against poverty

The eighth African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Senior Policy Seminar, whose theme was *Governance and Pro-Poor Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, took place in Dakar, Senegal, on 7-9 March 2006. A total of 72 people participated. The seminar was officially opened by Serigne Diop, Minister of State and Advisor to the President, representing the president of Senegal – His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade, who was unable to attend at the last minute.

The cluster of senior government officials who participated included four ministers, nine central bank governors, seven special advisors, four permanent secretaries and five parliamentarians. The rest were also very senior policy makers, scholars and directors of various research institutes.

This seminar was hailed as one of the most successful of such events in recent times and with the highest number of very high-level participants. Besides the favourable comments made in the course of the evaluation of the seminar, a good number of participants have since written to AERC commending the

Secretariat saying they were extremely impressed by the organization of the event.

Why senior policy seminars?

These seminars are annual forums convened by AERC to provide African policy makers the opportunity to come together to learn about the results of AERC research. The seminars are among the most important of AERC events because they bring sponsored research to a very practical level.

Participants exchange policy experiences with each other and interact with AERC researchers in an atmosphere of peers, without the pressure of a donor

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AERC Executive Director escorts Serigne Diop, Minister of State, Senegal, to the official opening

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presence. The result is normally a very frank and interactive discussion.

The theme of this eighth seminar was an indication of the topical nature of the seminars: It continued the general theme that preoccupies policy makers

throughout Africa – how to reduce poverty across the continent. In spite of some very promising economic gains in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa, and in spite of the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, poverty has become an obstinate barrier to advancement. The grinding poverty that grips so many African people must be defeated, if Africa is to claim its rightful place in the global economy.

An endorsement of the seminar theme

In opening the proceedings, Mr. Diop expressed his profound thanks to the seminar organizers for choosing Senegal as the venue of “this important meeting” and welcomed everyone very warmly to the country of the *Teranga*.

He observed that the theme of the seminar was very relevant to all of sub-Saharan Africa, noting that while developing countries in East Asia and the Pacific have been able to significantly reduce the proportion of their people living in absolute poverty, the opposite has occurred in Africa. The situation in sub-Saharan Africa is such that the number of people falling below the poverty line is on the rise – both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population.

Professor Diop pointed to the findings of many recent studies, which conclude that Africa’s development prospects depend on good governance and good leadership. This means, he said, that “we have a responsibility, as African leaders, to ensure that an efficient system is put in place for running our countries’ public affairs. In other words, we need to establish good governance practices in order to encourage investment and development in our region”.



Participants at Senior Policy Seminar VIII in Dakar, Senegal

The Senior Policy Seminar VIII was indeed very successful. Congratulations to you and to all at the AERC Secretariat.

– Kerfalla Yansane, Guinea

I can only say that without your superb networking skills and professional organization of the seminar, it would not have materialized as it did.

– Mihe Gaomab, Namibia

Thank you for having organized the AERC Senior Policy Seminar in Senegal. We are willing to go further in partnership between CEPOD and your institution. It will be a pleasure for us to attend the next session.

– Oumar Diakhate, Senegal

Please, let me congratulate you for the recent Senior Policy Seminar in Dakar. All of the Malian participants acknowledge that the Seminar was very successful. So, we thank you very much for our participation, and we promise to put the seminar recommendations to good use.

– Abdrahamane Sanogo, Mali

Eight inter-linked policy threads

For this year’s theme, *Governance and Pro-Poor Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eight specialist researchers presented syntheses of relevant studies, along with their own interpretations. Among these were John Mbaku, Weber State University, Utah, USA, on *Pro-Poor Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Governance*, Christiana Okojie, Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Benin, Nigeria, on *Governance, Public Policy and Poverty Reduction*, Abdoulaye Diagne,

Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES), Dakar, Senegal, on *Governance and Social Service Delivery*, and Mwangi Kimenyi, Department of Economics, University of Connecticut, USA, on *Economic Reforms and Pro-Poor Growth*.

Nii Sowa, Acting Director General, Securities and Exchange Commission, Accra, Ghana, dealt with *Regulatory Frameworks and Pro-Poor Growth*, Tchetche N’Guessan, Coordonnateur CAPEC-CIRES, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, with *Public Sector Investment Patterns and Pro-Poor Growth*, and Mihe Gaomab, Principal Economist, Bank of Namibia, with *Corporate Governance and Pro-Poor Growth*.

Finally, Léonce Ndikumana, Senior Economics Affairs Officer at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, addressed *Corruption and Pro-Poor Growth Outcomes*. All these papers were well received by participants and discussed exhaustively at every stage.

The formal presentations were matched by observations from the policy makers and practitioners themselves, who absorbed the syntheses of research results and complemented these with their own experiences. As in the past, these discussions proved to be lively explorations of the issues policy makers face in attempting to achieve pro-poor growth and a joint determination to come up with some practical solutions to one of their most troubling problems.

In the end what became very clear to all participants in the seminar was that in order to reduce poverty, African policies must focus on creating an environment that nurtures transparent and accountable governance structures at all levels. ■

The Role of Political Economy in African Development – May plenary session addresses questions for economists



Scene from May biannual research workshop...

Politics and power can play havoc with neat theories of how economies ought to operate. In sub-Saharan Africa, economics scholars have long grappled with the role of political power in the continent's lacklustre economic development record. Since political power uses a combination of coercion and legitimacy in varying degrees, one question that arises is whether the improper use of political power is a contributor to Africa's underdevelopment.

While it is tacitly acknowledged that economic outcomes depend on policy choices, the role of political economy is often underestimated or even ignored. The impact can be particularly noticeable where the political office holders who formulate and implement the policies have their own objectives. How then does sub-Saharan Africa deal with its political economy issues in its development process?

This and related questions were the focus of the plenary session of the May 2006 biannual research workshop held in Nairobi. Leading economists provided African evidence of the relationships between political economy and economic development. This is a relatively new area for the AERC research network, and the session helped enhance understanding of the workings of these two phenomena and deepen insights into how to manage African economies to the benefit of the region.

The Norwegian Ambassador to Kenya, Elizabeth Jacobsen, chaired the session, which officially opened the workshop. The papers were discussed by, among others, senior network members Akpan Ekpo of the University of Uyo, Nigeria, Prof. Mwangi Kimenyi, University of Connecticut, USA, and Ernest Aryeetey, Institute of Statistical, Scientific and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana.

The biannual attracted nearly 200 researchers, students, academics, policy makers and other economists who participate in the AERC research and training network. As usual, the workshop provided a forum in which participants meet within a worldwide network of professionals, and dealt with issues relevant to Africa's economic development. And, like the last several outings, this workshop also featured the participation of students in AERC's Collaborative PhD Programme, which uses the workshop framework for presentations of thesis proposals, field work reports and draft theses.

For both research projects and PhD theses the biannuals are the primary mechanism AERC uses for monitoring the progress and quality of the research it sponsors. This helps to fulfil the Consortium's major mandate – to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Among the workshop's 82 research presentations were papers on: Determinants of the Dynamism of Poverty in Senegal and Burkina Faso; Imperatives of the Creation of the Second Monetary Zone in West Africa (notable because it marked the first ever submission from a participant from Guinea Conakry); Financial Intermediation, Savings and Growth in Swaziland; Empirical Analysis of the Determinants of Food Imports to the Congo; and Determinants of Private Investment in Benin. Other papers looked at child labour and poverty linkages in Malawi, tax modernization, taxable capacity and tax effort in Kenya, and household response to rainfall variability in Uganda.

Special sessions held during the course of the workshop featured several topics of interest to network members. Desire Vencantachellum, of the African Development Bank, presented AfDB's African Economic Outlook, 2005/06, while Joseph Attah-Mensah, UN Economic Commission for Africa, discussed a recent UNECA report on regional integration. Finally, Growth in the 1990s: Lessons from a Decade of Reforms, was the topic of a briefing by Roberto Zaghera of the World Bank. ■



.....more of the May biannual

December 2005 Biannual – Synergy, Inspiration and Quality Control



Participants listen keenly at December biannual research workshop

AERC's Research and Training programmes joined forces in a new way at the biannual research workshop held on 3–8 December 2005 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Besides the usual thematic research proposals and reports, this event saw the presentation of doctoral theses by the first batch of students in the AERC Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP). In total, 93 researchers and 19 students participated, along with a galaxy of resource persons, thesis supervisors and others.

The combined event thus served to reinforce the synergy between the Research and Training programmes, as the PhD students, who are expected to be tomorrow's trainers of new researchers, were part and parcel of the highly charged professional atmosphere that characterizes the biannuals.

Plenary Focuses on Services in Africa

The workshop opened with the 23rd in a series of plenary sessions that was chaired by the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of South Africa, X.P. Guma. The session attracted the participation of high level policy makers in government ministries, central banks and academia. Dr. Guma presided over three presentations that focused on the theme, *Services in Africa*.

Tim Besley of the London School of Economics, UK, presented a paper on

"Social Services and Economic Development in Africa" that was discussed by John Mbaku of Weber State University, USA. "Infrastructure and Economic Development in Africa" was the topic addressed by Melvin Ayogu of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and discussed by Ngila Mwase of UNDP, Mozambique. Mthuli Ncube of the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, spoke on "Financial Services and Economic Development in Africa", with Victor Murinde of the University of Birmingham, UK, as the discussant.

The policy roundtable – an annual addition to the plenary agenda – was also chaired by Dr. Guma. Focusing the exploration of services specifically on "Financial Services in Africa", the discussion featured panellists with direct experience in this area: an array of other central bank governors and deputy governors. They were Charles Soludo, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria; Speciose Baransata, Vice Governor of the Bank of Burundi; Consolate Rusagara, First Vice Governor of the Bank of Rwanda, and Louis Kasekende, then Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Uganda.

The panellists reviewed various country experiences with the contribution of financial services to economic development. They noted structural, institutional and

operational factors in the sector, as well as constraints to the sector's contribution to development. They also pointed out areas where further research is needed, such as on specific linkages between financial services and economic development in Africa.

The plenary sessions are intended to expose the network to new thinking and approaches in economics research. For the younger researchers at the biannual, the participation of Dr. Soludo and Dr. Kasekende also provided inspiration and encouragement. The researchers had the opportunity of hearing first hand from these two long-time active members of the research network and the other panellists of their experiences and how participation in AERC research may have informed the execution of their roles in policy making.

Research Presentations Aid Quality Control

In order to accommodate the CPP students and respond to relevant issues raised by various stakeholders regarding political economy, the Secretariat held five concurrent sessions instead of the usual four. In all, the workshop attracted a total of 188 participants and featured 76 presentations. These included new and revised proposals, interim and final reports, and PhD theses. The 93 researchers represented 15 countries. Eighteen researchers were participating for the first time. Notably, the researchers included 14 women (15%), up from 7 women researchers (8.5%) who took part in the May 2005 biannual workshop. This change is partly the result of AERC's determination to increase the participation of women and other under-represented groups in its programmes. ■

Gearing up for the future



JFE students at the 2006 orientation session

CMAP and CPP Dovetailing

Ensuring the full complementarity of AERC's postgraduate training programmes is so critical to their separate and synergetic effectiveness that dovetailing the programmes became one of the four strategic objectives for the 2005–2010 planning period. Action on this objective has included successful implementation of a number of joint activities such as subject specialist workshops to review electives and the Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) for the Collaborative Master's Programme (CMAP) and the Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP).

A joint CMAP and CPP subject specialist workshop met from 28 to 30 June to review three electives – *Agricultural Economics*, *Environmental Economics*, and *Monetary Theory and Practice*. The report of the workshop was immediately implemented during the 2006 JFE, which commenced on 3 July and closed on 6 October.

There were 123 students in this year's JFE, three of whom required special attention to their circumstance. Two nursing mothers participated in the session with their babies in tow, while a student who is deaf and dumb has had extra support to enable his full participation. Several students and lecturers expressed their appreciation for this support to their colleagues, observing that AERC had gone the extra mile to level the playing ground for the students.

Owing to the size of the groups, the training facility is reserved for full use by the students, thereby promoting collegiality and the seeds of a true "African union" based on the diversity of the student profiles. In addition to

the electives, a language module is offered to CPP students where anglophone students are taught French and francophone students are taught English to facilitate communication amongst them and hopefully break the language barrier.

The synergy gained from this process and cost savings due to efficiency gains are important in the dovetailing process. Other activities where the dovetailing process has worked well include a re-tooling workshop, grant accounting workshops and cross-representations in academic board meetings.

Retooling Workshop Hones Skills of Instructors for Core Courses

It has become clear since the launch of the CPP in 2002 that there is a dearth of qualified instructors from Africa for many of the CPP fields of study. This scarcity is most pronounced in two of the core fields (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics), as well as in several elective fields like Environmental Economics, Financial Economics, Health Economics, Monetary Economics and Public Sector Economics.

In fact, the lack of qualified instructors is not surprising. Given the design of the programme, only a select group of instructors – those at the ranks of senior lecturer, associate professor and professor – can teach on the programme. For this reason alone, qualified teaching staff are few. Besides, most of what is taught in CPP courses is at the cutting edge of knowledge in the various fields.

Many current PhD degree holders in sub-Saharan Africa did not have the benefit of a coursework component in their doctoral studies. In addition, given the rapid changes in frontiers of knowledge, particularly in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Quantitative Methods, even those who obtained PhD degrees with a coursework component may not be currently at the cutting edge given the disadvantages of institutions and learning infrastructure in the regional universities.

AERC is particularly concerned because the Training Programme will increasingly rely on participating universities' capacities to provide the staff complement required in training activities. At the network level, one means for addressing the situation is a series of retooling workshops to provide refresher training for CMAP and CPP instructors, particularly those who teach core courses. The intent of the re-tooling is to raise the level and currency of teaching while at the same time promoting retention of the trained personnel in the universities.

The first such workshop was held in Nairobi from 27 February to 11 March 2006. One representative for Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Quantitative Methods from each of the seven Category B CMAP universities and the eight degree-awarding CPP universities attended the workshop. There were thus three simultaneous courses. Five experts in the fields served as facilitators for the workshop.

The retooling courses have the following objectives:

- Enhance the capabilities of the faculties in the CPP and CMAP universities.
- Raise the level and currency of teaching in SSA and especially the capabilities in the CPP teaching of the core courses in AERC Training Programme's participating universities. This will also form the first step towards effective revision of the core course at both the CMAP and CPP levels.

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- Realize the goal of achieving uniformity and raising standards across universities in SSA.
- Encourage participants to form teams to develop teaching materials for the core courses.

According to the evaluations of the course by participants and facilitators, the workshop was very successful. Indications are that one more such course will be desirable before we move to electives to firm up the development of teaching materials by teams formed during the course. Watch the developments as they unfold.

More Dovetailing – Workshop on Grant Accounting for CMAP and CPP University Staff

Over the years, the management and accounting of Training Programme grants by the collaborating institutions has been a concern to the Secretariat. This is not small change – the grants account for more than 45% of the Training Programme budget – and funders of the Consortium have also pointed to the risks associated with poor grants management at the various institutions. The delays in accounting from the universities and hence delays in disbursements from AERC tend to lead to the erroneous conclusion that there is no absorptive capacity in these universities.

For this reason, the Secretariat organized a workshop on grant accounting for all officers responsible for managing AERC funds at the respective universities. Twelve staff members from CMAP universities and three from CPP universities (two universities participate in both programmes) took part. Held on 6-7 April, the workshop addressed in detail the perennial problems associated with grant accounting with the intention of proposing various solutions for resolving the problems and standardizing the accounting requirements across universities. The impact of the workshop will be assessed as the universities implement the grants over the 2006/07 academic year. The participants appreciated the workshop for helping them understand

The CMAP Alumni Directory on the web

The CMAP Alumni Directory has now been revised and uploaded on the website. Past students can now access a form to update their current data and coordinates and the same will be revised on the website. It is expected that with this window, CMAP alumni can stay in touch and keep abreast of each other's progress in the field. The Secretariat will also be able to monitor professional progress of its past students and members of the network. Please look out for this window.

the AERC requirements for grant accounting.

A Look at the CMAP Academic Board – Time to Restructure?

At its semi-annual meeting in April, the CMAP Academic Board considered the interim report of the Ad Hoc Committee set up last year to review the programme's management and governance structure. Among the concerns of CMAP observers is the need for mechanisms to assist maturing departments of economics to move from category A to category B – the group of universities that award their own master's degrees under the collaborative programme. (Category A universities send their students to category B institutions for studies.)

Among other things, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that departments prepare strategic plans

and annual reports that can be used to assess their progress. The Board adopted the preliminary recommendations of the committee, and mandated the committee to carry out evaluation visits to participating universities.

Between June and September, then, the Ad Hoc Committee conducted field visits that proved useful in highlighting the contribution of AERC in building capacity in the various departments, while noting that capacity is still weak in many universities. The Secretariat will visit the weaker departments to re-assess their frameworks of operation and determine what types of additional assistance may be needed.

Other universities have demonstrated significant progress in augmenting staff strength and capacity, matched by infrastructural development. Three of these, Makerere University in Uganda, the University of Namibia and University of Cape Coast, Ghana, have applied for elevation to category B status.

CPP Thesis Workshops Well Under Way

The *Operational Plan* for the Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP) calls for students to begin research for their PhD theses as soon as they complete their comprehensive examinations in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and two elective fields. Given AERC's traditional quest for excellence, the issue has been how to ensure the quality of the theses produced under the programme.

Supervision of PhD theses is the responsibility of the degree awarding



JFE lecturers and other guests at the 2006 orientation session

universities. The concern about quality emanates from the realization that capacity is weak at these institutions, and certainly capacity to supervise an increasing number of students is a major challenge. To address this challenge, the CPP introduced the thesis workshop series.

Quality Control

The thesis workshops do not intend to take away the responsibility of the universities. AERC's role is to facilitate a process that makes supervision easier, increases the exposure of the candidates and enhances the quality of the theses. Thus the design of the CPP calls for three thesis workshops during the thesis phase of the programme: The first workshop is for the presentation of the thesis proposal, the second for presentation of the post field-work report (work in progress) and the third for presentation of the draft thesis.

To enhance the synergy between AERC's Research and Training programmes and to minimize costs, the thesis workshops take place during and within the AERC biannual research workshops. The workshops are coordinated by AERC and it has become increasingly clear that there are many other benefits to the approach of holding them jointly with the biannuals. For the students, the biannual setting provides a forum for peer review and also feedback from fellow students, AERC researchers, supervisors and resource persons – in an environment that stimulates professional engagement while it helps shape the thesis process and maintain quality control. This is the *learning by doing* process that AERC is known for. It has

worked for researchers in sub-Saharan Africa, it will work for CPP students and it will make the CPP the "graduate school" of AERC.

Innovation

The inaugural thesis workshop for the very first CPP student cohort was held in conjunction with the December 2004 biannual – through the addition of a single workshop session. As the CPP has grown and gained experience, however, modifications and innovations have been necessary, primarily because of the number and stages of CPP students and the available slots in any given biannual research workshop.

The Research and Training Programmes have thus worked together to modify the biannual format. The first and perhaps biggest change has been to disperse the students throughout the biannual, rather than holding specific sessions only for the students. Besides this, three additional adjustments have been made:

- First, the Research Programme accommodated CPP students in the current slots available by making each thematic group fit 16 slots.
- Second, the number of concurrent sessions was increased from four to five to make room for CPP students, but still keeping four thematic groups.
- Finally, the Training Programme has added to the list of resource persons to lighten the load on the existing roster.

Long-Term Benefits

AERC's training activities – as well as the students themselves – are sure to reap the

benefits of the process. Moreover, in most cases these workshops should also be seen as a form of indirect support to PhD thesis supervision, and especially where the supervision capability is weak. The resource persons, together with the students and their supervisors, put their heads together to ensure that the theses are indeed of high quality. Finally, this will help the Training Programme and the individual student push for speedy completion of the thesis so as to adhere to the four-year target of the PhD programme. These three factors ensure that these workshops provide the necessary pressure and guidance to students to complete their theses in time, in addition to inculcating a research culture in them.

The process has worked now for three biannuals, with the May 2006 workshop featuring presentations of work-in-progress by the CPP 2003 students (the second cohort), and thesis proposals by the third cohort (CPP 2004). The Training Programme is happy that CPP thesis workshops are a permanent feature in biannual research workshops. We have advised students to take advantage of this forum to speed up their thesis preparation and ensure the quality and timeliness of the final product. We have provided the necessary safeguards and minimize academic conflicts by also inviting supervisors to the workshops. This is a process that has long-term benefits to graduate training and capacity retention in SSA – and to AERC. ■

CMAAE

Milestone for Agricultural Economics Programme

The first cohort of students participating in the Collaborative Master's in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) is now attending the programme's inaugural Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. The 56 students – 39 men and 17 women – have been hard at it since July and will complete this phase of the programme on 30 November. Successful

students at the Shared Facility will then return to their universities for their second and final year of study involving thesis research.

CMAAE is the flagship programme of the African Agricultural Economics Education Network (AAEEN) initiated by the Agricultural Economics Education Board (AEEB). It is managed by the Programme Executive Committee and a small secretariat currently housed at

AERC. The Board convened its annual meeting on 18–19 September and the Executive Committee on 21–22 September. Both bodies took time to visit the Shared Facility and reported that they were satisfied with the arrangements and progress.

The Shared Facility is a key element of the programme's actions towards its overall goal of building the capacity of

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Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank visits AERC...continued from page 1

completed study by a team led by Jane Kabubo-Mariara under the AERC collaborative research project on Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Markets in SSA. The presentation highlighted the ways in which the outcome of the study provided useful inputs into poverty reduction strategy paper processes in Kenya.

"AERC is certainly a fantastic success story in Africa," said Mr. Bourguignon. He noted that hitherto,

research was practically nonexistent in the continent, but now AERC has a generation of people who have done research within its framework and then moved to policy making positions in the region, thus reinforcing the whole process of research-policy linkages. Mr. Bourguignon said that AERC had evolved significantly, moving from research by people trained abroad to training its own people here in Africa. Attending the seminar were Constance Freeman, Regional Director of the International Development Research

Centre (IDRC), Fred Kilby, Deputy Country Director of the World Bank, Kenya, Somalia and Eritrea office, Moses Ikiara, Acting Director of the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), Peter Kimuyu, Head of the Economics Department of the University of Nairobi, and senior officials from the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). ■

Network News

In Memoriam

AERC received with shock and regret the news that Allechi M'Bet, one of Africa's most reputable scholars and a longstanding member of the AERC network, had passed away on 3 September 2006. Professor M'Bet – Allechi, as he was known to AERC – embodied a shining example of AERC's capacity building activities, and served as a role model to new researchers.

Professor M'Bet had been the Chief Economic Advisor to the President of Côte d'Ivoire since 2003, having served as the Dean of the Faculty of Economics

and Management at the University of Cocody in Abidjan. At the time of his death he was also a member of the AERC Programme Committee and was a long time resource person within the AERC network.

Allechi had joined the AERC research network soon after its inception in 1988. Like any junior researcher he completed several thematic research studies, then took part in a number of collaborative research projects. In recognition of the quality of his contribution and intellectual leadership, he was later

named an AERC resource person, which culminated in his appointment to the AERC Programme Committee in March 2001. Within this committee, he consistently provided valuable insights on the management and incorporation of the francophone student and research community in AERC's research and training activities.

Allechi M'Bet's amiable presence and cogent contributions will be sorely missed by the entire network. ■

CMAAE

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agricultural and applied economics education in Africa, thereby contributing towards food security and poverty reduction in the region. The CMAAE mission is to train graduates with a solid foundation in economic concepts and methods for applied analysis in the public, civil society and private sectors and also to offer opportunity for advanced academic pursuits.

Modelled after AERC's Collaborative Master's Programme, CMAAE is a collaborative undertaking by 16 public universities in 12 countries of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Like CMAP, it combines core course work at the participating universities and a shared facility that presents elective and specialty courses. The intention is to expand to cover the whole of Africa in response to demand.

So far five departments/universities have been accredited following AEEB criteria to offer the programme. The five are Egerton University (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), University of Nairobi (Kenya), University of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe) and University of Pretoria (South Africa). A total of 202 students applied through the accredited universities during the 2005/06 academic year. Of these, 93 were qualified and 56 admitted. The five accredited universities began admitting the second cohort of students in September 2006. Bunda College of Agriculture was accredited in



Top: CMAAE Academic Board Chair, Bernard Bashaasha (standing), addresses students at the Shared Facility for Electives and Specialization at the University of Pretoria. Other Board members are, from left, Abdi Edriss Khalil, Thulasizwe Mkhabela, Mario Falcao and Mark Odhiambo. Looking on is Willis Oluoch Kosura, CMAAE Programme Director. Bottom: Vivian Buisenei, a student from Egerton University, Kenya, responds to a question from the Chair.

September 2006 and will begin offering courses under the programme in September 2007 if additional core funding is secured.

The AEEB membership comprises the heads of department of the various universities that came together to establish CMAAE. The Programme Executive Committee, chaired by Harris Mule, Chancellor of Kenyatta University in Kenya, draws its membership from various national and international organizations. Current members include Josue Dione (Director, Sustainable Development Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa – UNECA) and Constance Freeman (Regional Director, International Development Research Centre – IDRC). Other members are William Lyakurwa (Executive Director, African Economic Research Consortium – AERC), Isaac Minde (Senior Scientist-

Economics, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics – ICRISAT), and Rajul Pandya-Lorch (Chief of Staff, International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI). Bernard Bashaasha, Chair of the AEEB, and Willis Oluoch-Kosura, CMAAE Programme Director, are ex-officio members. The Rockefeller Foundation and the African Capacity Building Foundation have observer status on the committee.

The programme's successful take-off comes in spite of several challenges, including high demand by eligible applicants, insufficient core funding to absorb all the eligible applicants and inability of some registered students to continue with studies because of lack of fees. The CMAAE management at all levels – from board to staff – are working hard to ensure the programme's success in the face of these challenges, with

particular emphasis on mobilizing funding support. Prospects for additional support from a variety of donors and national governments appear good, given the goodwill the programme has received so far. Once these fund raising efforts bear fruit, the challenge of eligible students being unable to continue their studies because of lack of funds will be overcome. At the same time, the activities that require core funding, such as expanding to additional universities, programme management, the Shared Facility, PhD scholarships and staff upgrading, will be able to proceed even more vigorously. CMAAE thanks all the donors who have already provided valuable financial support from the planning stage to the implementation to make the programme a reality. ■

Outreach

Feeling left out? Research and Training Programmes seek wider participation

In her Foreword to the Strategic Plan for 2005–2010, the Chair of the AERC Board pointed out that the “earlier focus on under-represented groups worked well, but not comprehensively”. As part of the Strategic Plan, both Research and Training programmes have redoubled their efforts to pull in participants from countries and groups that have so far seen little representation in network activities.

Staff of the Training Programme conducted three sensitization visits to Namibia, Mozambique and The Gambia – among the countries deemed under-represented in the network. The visits were part of a new plan to increase outreach. They presented information about AERC research and training opportunities to the economics research, training and policy communities in these countries so as to sensitize them about AERC and elicit their participation in AERC activities.

On the research side, the May 2006 biannual research workshop saw a presentation by a researcher from Guinea (Conakry) – the first time someone from this country has

participated – as well as researchers from Swaziland, Congo and Benin, which are other countries that are rarely represented in the proceedings.

Women as a group are scarce in the economics profession in Africa, and AERC is challenged to increase their involvement across the board, as researchers, students and resource persons and in other capacities. There were nine women researchers at the May 2006 biannual, nine in December 2005 and seven in May last year. As a rule, a few women serve as resource persons at the biannuals (we intend to do better!), while the policy roundtable at the December 2005 biannual plenary session featured the participation of two women who happen to be deputy central bank governors in their respective countries – thus serving as role models to the younger women researchers who attended the biannual.

Women's participation in training activities has been improving over the past three years. At the 2005 Joint Facility for Electives, for example, the proportion of women rose to 23%, while MA scholarships and PhD thesis grants to women students stood at 31%

and 29%, respectively. For the Collaborative PhD Programme, the trend has also been encouraging. This year, out of a total of 21 students, 6 are women, about 28%. The percentage has been slightly higher in previous years, hovering around 30%, and we can certainly do better. This is a challenge for the future.

Going a step further, the Research and Training programmes recently launched a joint *Situation Analysis on the Status of Women in Economics Research and Graduate Training in SSA*. Four regional teams are currently in the field conducting interviews and gathering data. The study is expected to suggest innovative ways of enhancing women's participation in AERC activities, including target benchmarks for measuring progress.

Altogether, the steps being taken bode well for increasing the representation of heretofore neglected countries and groups, meaning that the benefits and impact of participation in the AERC network will continue to expand across the continent. ■

Corruption, Trade, Political Crisis and Pro-Poor Growth Occupy National Policy Workshops



National Policy Workshop in Côte d'Ivoire

Promoting the research-policy interface at the national level is the purpose of AERC's National Policy Workshops. The events have proved increasingly popular in the recent past, with many institutions in the sub-Saharan region submitting proposals to convene them.

The workshops are totally organized and conducted by local research institutes and other organizations, with modest financial support from AERC. During the last fiscal year, five institutions benefited from these grants:

- Development Policy Centre, Nigeria, for a workshop on *Fighting Corruption in Nigeria: Challenges for the Future*
- The Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya, whose workshop considered *National Economic Policy on Trade*
- Cellule de Suivi du Programme de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté, of Senegal, which considered *Mise en oeuvre du document de stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté* (Implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper)
- The University of Cocody, Côte d'Ivoire, which convened a workshop on *Performance Factors of the Ivorian Economy after the Political Crisis*
- Makerere University of Uganda, where the workshop theme will be *Sustaining Growth Acceleration and Pro-Poor Growth in Uganda*

In all these workshops, participants included senior government officials – ministers, members of parliament, central bank officials, anti-corruption and anti-fraud chiefs, and high court officials, among others.

These workshops are sponsored in both anglophone and francophone African countries to provide a forum at national level for discussing policy-oriented syntheses of AERC research and other

studies of interest to the AERC network, and to obtain feedback from policy makers on the AERC research agenda.

Mali – Governance and Pro-Poor Growth

So impressed were they by the proceedings of Senior Policy Seminar VIII (see story on page 1), that participating staff from the University of Bamako resolved to convene their own national policy workshop on the same theme, *Governance and Pro-Poor Growth* under the direction of AERC network member, Professor. Sanogo of the University of Bamako. AERC was more than pleased to provide modest grant support for this effort because it was in line with the Consortium's dual objective of reaching not just policy makers, but particularly those in regions considered under-represented in AERC activities.

Several senior government policy makers and academicians participated. The workshop was opened by the Minister for Social Development and Solidarity with the Aged in Mali, Djibril Tangara, amidst broad press coverage on radio and television for the duration of the two-day meeting.



H.E. Mr. Djibril Tangara (left), Minister for Social Development and Solidarity with the Aged, officially opens the Bamako National Policy Workshop. On the right are Siby Ginette Bellegarde and Abdrahamane Sanogo both from the University of Bamako.

Papers presented at Mali workshop:

- Governance, decentralization and poverty reduction in Mali, by Leopold Traoré, University of Bamako
- Economic reforms and pro-poor growth: Lessons for Mali, by Abdramane Traoré, University of Bamako
- Governance, public politics and poverty reduction in Mali, Arouna Dembele, University of Bamako
- Governance, public investment and pro-poor growth in Mali, by Issa Sacko, University of Bamako
- Corruption and pro-poor growth outcomes: Lessons for Mali, by Modibo Traoré, University of Bamako

Nigeria – Fighting Corruption in Nigeria: Challenges for the Future

The urgency of the concern about the corrosive effects of corruption on economic and social development was underscored by the presence at this workshop of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, who gave the keynote address. A foremost apostle of good governance, he has spent a good part of his life fighting corruption so passionately that he has been imprisoned several times for it. There could not have been a more fitting honour.

Development Policy Centre convened the workshop to sensitize Nigerian policy makers on the ravages of corruption. Held

in Ibadan on 16–17 January 2006, the workshop focused on four broad objectives:

- To identify and examine the magnitude, nature, types and patterns of manifestation of corruption as they affect Nigeria.
- To sensitize participants to the adverse implications of corruption for a prosperous and sustainable democracy, political stability, national security, and a desirable international image.
- To generate ideas and develop strategies for the effective prevention, control and punishment of corruption in the context of the present administration's anti-corruption drive.
- To exchange ideas and experiences among participants from within and outside government with a view to developing national frameworks for tackling the problem.

Presentations of ten papers, lively floor discussions and study group sessions highlighted the programme, which also included preparation of a policy brief that was circulated to participants and key stakeholders, including relevant organs of the Nigerian government. There were more than 150 participants cutting across the entire Nigerian society.

Representation included Nigeria's Chief Justice, Central Bank Governor, and the Chair of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. Others came from parliament, the civil service, academia, and the business and finance communities.

The event received extensive coverage on local and national television networks. One network devoted a 30-minute programme to a discussion of the workshop deliberations conducted by the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), a body established by government to check corruption in Nigeria.

The Development Policy Centre is an international and interdisciplinary centre with the mandate to help improve public policy design and development management. It is also committed to working towards poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals within Nigeria. Following this workshop DPC was

formally requested to become ICPC's consultant and strategic partner in the process of fighting corruption in Nigeria.

Miriam Rahedi, the Publications and Communications Assistant, represented AERC at the workshop.

Senegal – Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

This workshop was convened as a follow-up on the campaign against poverty and was done within the framework of the implementation of Senegal's poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP). Its principal objective was to reinforce the capacity of researchers in the region by providing statistical tools to support the coordination of development activities. These tools are both theoretical and practical. They enhance information collection and make it possible to identify ground resources.

Of importance are the practical methods that can be used to fill in the information gaps. In a nutshell the significant areas covered included a revision of the PRSP and indicators of poverty in Senegal, the social accounting matrix, technicalities of the sectors and methodology of enumeration of activities, and development of an inventory of fixtures of data. Charles Owino, the AERC Publications Administrator, participated in this workshop held at Saint Louis from 14–16 December 2005.

Kenya – National Economic Policy on Trade

Sponsored by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), this workshop was organized to disseminate the findings of research studies on trade facilitation, Kenya's agricultural market access to the European Union, and linking trade, development and poverty reduction, all of which are of interest to the AERC network. Participants also discussed Kenya's position in the negotiations at the sixth ministerial World Trade Organization conference in Hong Kong, China.

IEA's mandate is to promote an informed discourse on key policy issues, both economic and political, and to examine and promote feasible policy alternatives in these areas. It provides important research and analytical support to policy makers and implementers in all three arms of government, the executive,

the legislature and the judiciary. Marjory Gichohi, the immediate former Communications Division Manager, represented AERC at the workshop, held in Mombasa on 11–12 November 2005.

Côte d'Ivoire – Performance Factors of the Ivorian Economy after the Crisis

This workshop was convened by Mama Ouattara, a member of the AERC network and the director of CIRES. It was held in Abidjan on 30–31 August 2005 with more than 100 participants – policy makers, local academic fraternity and other stakeholders – attending.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of Economics and Finance, Paul-Antoine Boure. In its tackling of the theme of *Factors of post-crisis performance of the economy of Côte d'Ivoire*, the workshop was a CIRES initiative aimed at contributing to the country's dynamic post-conflict economic revival.

The workshop revolved around five themes:

- Convergence criteria and economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire: Policy lessons for a post-conflict economy.
- Social constraints and post conflict economic policy for Côte d'Ivoire.
- Fiscal policy and resource allocation in a post-conflict context.
- Post-conflict performance of non-government organizations in the mobilization of funds in Côte d'Ivoire
- Impacts of WTO trade agreements on Ivorian agriculture in a post-conflict situation.

The minister noted that post-conflict economic research and economic policy programmes should assist policy makers in identifying the fundamental and priority policy areas for implementation in order to hasten economic revival. Forums like this one, he said, allow researchers to share their results with policy makers, especially regarding the post-conflict economic factors and conditions that affect growth and development. Representing the Consortium at the proceedings was Winston Wachanga, the AERC Information Resources Administrator. ■

AERC Books and Other Publications

The long awaited title *L'Afrique et les défis de l'OMC* was issued by Karthala Publishers earlier in the year. Two hundred copies of this collection, which contains updated materials presented at the Yaoundé trade project dissemination workshop, were delivered to the Secretariat and are being provided to selected institutions within the AERC network. The book was edited by Dominique Njinkeu, former deputy director of Research, AERC, and published jointly by AERC and Editions Karthala.

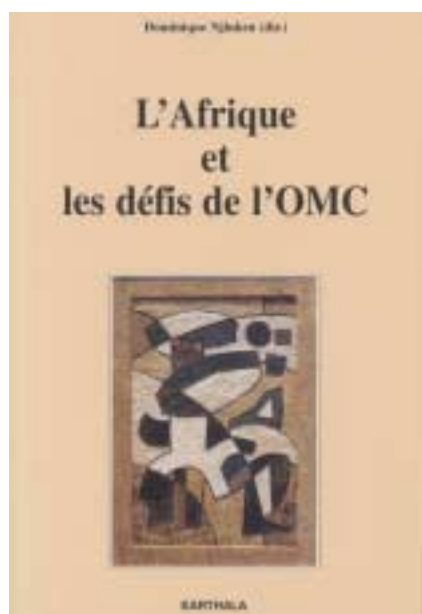
The book illustrates the complexity of the stakes of economic integration for developing countries in the system of international exchanges. These countries in particular hope to use trade negotiations to promote the increase in commercial opportunities and, consequently, to draw advantage from reforms undertaken over the last two decades. The African countries are also continuing the negotiations of the trade section of the Cotonou accord. All these negotiations are placed in the framework of respective programmes of regional integration and other questions of development.

A number of other publications also came to fruition in recent months. The *Journal of African Economies* Volume 15 Supplement 1 for 2006, containing the papers from the December 2003 plenary session, was published in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2006/07 and distributed during the May 2006 biannual research workshop. Other important publications distributed electronically and in hard copy over the past several months include:

- The 2005/06 AERC Annual Report
- Issue No. 9 of *Research News*
- The AERC Strategic Plan for 2005–2010
- *Report on AERC in Phase V*
- The report and papers of Senior Policy Seminar VII, in two volumes
- Various Research Papers and their Executive Summaries

Print copies of most of these publications are provided to universities and other institutions that are part of the AERC network, while Executive Summaries are sent to a wide array of policy makers and others. The Research Papers, *Research News* and the SPS VII report are also available on the website – www.aercafrica.org.

To enhance quality control of AERC's publications and other communications products, the in-house editorial style guide and the *AERC Communications Handbook* were posted to the intranet (the Secretariat's internal electronic network). A draft publication strategy has also been developed to guide the publication and distribution of AERC publications to complement the communications strategy produced earlier. ■



AERC Newsletter

Number 25
October 2006



www.aercafrica.org

AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (AERC) CONSORTIUM POUR LA RECHERCHE ECONOMIQUE EN AFRIQUE

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988, is a public not-for-profit organization devoted to advanced policy research and training. The principal objective is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa. In response to special needs of the region, the AERC Research Programme has adopted a flexible approach to improve the technical skills of local researchers, allow for regional determination of research priorities, strengthen national institutions concerned with economic policy research, and facilitate closer ties between researchers and policy makers. The Training Programme augments the pool of economic researchers in sub-Saharan Africa by supporting graduate studies in economics, as well as improving the capacities of departments of economics in local public universities. AERC is supported by donor governments, private foundations and international organizations. Further information concerning AERC and its programmes can be obtained from:

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