

- and fosters sustainable development. Growth is necessary to reach the Millennium Development Goals and more ambitious targets after 2015. Annual growth rates of 7 per cent and more are achievable and will be crucial.
23. The Commission agreed that high and sustained economic growth is necessary to create significant employment for all, including youth and women and to make progress on the Millennium Development Goals. African countries need to improve their competitiveness. Productivity is low and lack of infrastructure remains a constraint.
 24. The Commission underlined the right of each country to develop its own strategies, but also to take into account the need for regional integration to create bigger and more effective markets.
 25. The Commission discussed the importance of involving stakeholders such as the business community in the economy; labor market organizations etc. in the formulation and implementation of private sector strategies. This will improve accountability, predictability of the business environment and transparency. South-South cooperation could play an important role in these areas.
 26. The Commission underlined that agriculture plays a critical role for growth, employment and poverty reduction in many countries. Improving productivity in food production is an urgent need to ensure adequate food availability and adaptation to climate change. Focusing on women's access to resources is important in this regard.
 27. The Commission agreed that there is a need to increase aid for productive sectors in a more effective way. This could include investing in infrastructure, agriculture, promoting good governance, reducing bureaucracy, ensuring access to finance, combating corruption, and expanding education, including technical and vocational education and training. There is a need to look into modalities for effective development cooperation for private sector development.
 28. The Commission stressed the importance of free trade, and the need to urgently secure an agreement at the WTO negotiations which would be beneficial to Africa and provide African countries with better access to markets.
 29. The Commission discussed the key role that free trade plays for fostering economic growth, employment, peace and prosperity. The Commission found that more efforts should be put into supporting pro-development liberalization of trade at global and regional levels. This could include enhancing trade between African countries by e.g. phasing out duties on imports from countries outside Africa more slowly than duties between African countries; considering more liberal and development-friendly rules of