

MOMBASA, Kenya, Aug 5 – Public and Private sector growth that is hinged on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and environmental sustainability has been cited as the best way of achieving real economic growth for the African region.

The Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Africa Dr Tegegnetwork Gettu has challenged business entities to target growth that involves human development and capacity if they were to be beneficial to the larger population.

“While Africa has been cited as the next frontier for economic growth, it is important that this growth has a trickledown effect on the larger masses for it to achieve all the benefits that are being targeted through achieving economic growth,” noted Dr Gettu.

Speaking at the sidelines of a dinner for participants of the Africa Governance, Leadership and Management Convention hosted by the African Management Services Company (AMSCO) in Mombasa, Dr Gettu lauded ATMS for supporting over 202 Small and Medium enterprises in 23 countries in Africa in 2010.

AMSCO is the operational arm of the African Training and Management Services (ATMS) project that was initiated by the UNDP in 1989 to assist African economies by providing management and capacity building to support and strengthen African enterprises.

Dr Gettu noted that through ATMS, various projects in Sustainable Environment Management and Women Empowerment programs have seen East African farmers increase total Maize production by about 400 percent or 34,000 tons.

“For instance, In Nakuru, Kenya, UNDP has supported Rift Valley Products in training over 12,000 cotton farmers on environmental conservation and improved land productivity using such practices as reduced tillage, utilisation of organic manures instead of chemical fertilizers, and crop rotation, again through the ATMS project,” said Dr Gettu.

He challenged governments not to lose focus in achieving MDGs; while urging more private and public partnership to ensure development.

Meanwhile governments have been called upon to partner with the SMEs sector in order to boost investment in Africa.

AMSCO Chief Executive and Managing Director Paul Malherbe said more needed to be done to restore Africa’s pride and that includes the deliberate development of the Small and Medium Enterprises.

“It is through forums like these that Small and Medium Enterprises get enlightened on best practices and commit to change. Our ability to learn faster than our competitors may be our only sustainable competitive edge,” added Mr Malherbe.

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