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Summary of the work of the Economic Commission for Africa, 2018–2019

Summary

In the period from April 2018 to March 2019, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) achieved significant milestones in deepening its value proposition in support of the development priorities of member States as articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union. The present report summarizes notable achievements from that period that demonstrate the Commission's three core functions in action, including interventions in support of regional and subregional priorities; policy advisory services at the national, subregional and regional levels; and assistance provided at the request of member States for technical and capacity development. Information is also included on the instrumental role of ECA platforms for policy dialogue and consensus-building in advancing the capacities of African public officials in policy formulation and implementation.



I. Introduction

1. In the period from April 2018 to March 2019, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) achieved significant milestones in deepening its value proposition in support of the development priorities of member States as articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union.
2. The signing of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area by 44 African countries at the tenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Kigali in March 2018, represented a momentous milestone for economic integration in Africa. The efforts of ECA over the years in furtherance of the continent's regional integration agenda were acknowledged in the Kigali Declaration for the Launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area. As of the end of February 2019, a total of 52 countries had signed the Agreement, with 19 countries having ratified the protocols thereto. The Agreement will enter into force following the deposit of 22 instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. As of the end of February 2019, 15 countries had deposited their instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission.
3. In January 2018, the United Nations and the African Union signed the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Framework, which is anchored on nine thematic areas, has been prioritized by both the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission as an important programmatic vehicle for integrating all existing mandates requiring stronger and more effective coordination and collaboration between the two organizations. The relationship of ECA with the African Union Commission has grown from strength to strength and, with the implementation of this initiative, will only get stronger. The two organizations will continue to build on this.
4. In the same year, ECA, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system, convened the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, on the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", held in Dakar from 2 to 4 May 2018. Using this platform, ECA successfully advocated for and gained consensus among member States and regional organizations on policy recommendations on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.
5. In October 2018, ECA, with its strategic partners, established a centre of excellence on digital identity, trade and the digital economy, which is a clear example of ECA leveraging its think tank, convening and operational functions in support of member States and the African Union Commission.
6. Presented below are some of the notable achievements from 2018 that demonstrate the Commission's three core functions in action, including interventions in support of regional and subregional priorities; policy advisory services at the national, subregional and regional levels; and assistance provided at the request of member States for technical and capacity development. Information is also included on the instrumental role of ECA platforms for policy dialogue and consensus-building in advancing the capacities of African public officials in policy formulation and implementation.

II. Advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region

A. Advancing integrated development planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Integrating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national development plans

7. In 2018, African countries continued to work to align the aims of the two complementary and yet different development frameworks – the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 – with their national development frameworks and to report on them. In 2016, at the ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the need for African countries to take ownership of their continental development agendas was underscored, and ECA and the African Union Commission were requested to support member States in designing a road map for the implementation of both agendas at the national level, as well as to develop tools, including a harmonized monitoring and evaluation framework for the two agendas. In 2017 and 2018, ECA initiated the design of the integrated planning and reporting toolkit to support member States in aligning the two agendas and integrating them into their national development plans for ease of adaptation and reporting.

8. The integrated planning and reporting toolkit is a web-based software program that helps to simultaneously integrate both agendas into national development plans for ease of progress reporting in a harmonized way. With the goals, targets and indicators of the two agendas already built into the software, users can assess the level and strength of alignment between the two agendas at the click of a mouse. The built-in dashboards allow for the visualization of summary information on the alignment of the two agendas as well as country performance regarding alignment and progress in the implementation of the national goals and targets. The toolkit has three modules:

- (a) The alignment module, which brings together the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, on the one hand, and the national plan, on the other;
- (b) The monitoring module, which captures the indicators, baselines, targets and current values of the national plan;
- (c) The reporting module, which allows for progress reporting on the two agendas.

9. ECA supported the application of the toolkit in five countries: Cameroon, the Congo, Ghana, Seychelles and Uganda. The roll-out involved a series of workshops to demonstrate the toolkit, build capacity for its application and improve awareness of the two agendas and the links between them, in line with the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was signed in January 2018.

10. The results are evidenced by positive feedback from the users of the toolkit. For example, during the demonstration in Uganda, it was noted that while the country used a number of models for planning and projections, including the social accounting matrix, the integrated macroeconomic model and the computable generalized equilibrium model, none captured the three dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, a tool that brings together the two agendas, accompanied by analysis of the impacts of different policies and public investment profiles to inform strategic prioritization, is important in the context of designing the next 5-year and 10-year development plans. In the responses to the post-workshop survey, over 80 per cent of

participants in Uganda and over 60 per cent of those in Ghana and Seychelles rated the workshop as having contributed effectively to their capacity in integrating the two frameworks into national development plans. In addition, over 90 per cent of participants indicated that they would recommend the toolkit to colleagues. Furthermore, the Gambia requested support after hearing about the toolkit in different forums organized by ECA.

Renewal of development planning to increase the efficiency and transparency of public policies in Senegal

11. Following a request by the Government of Senegal for technical support to comply with a key conditionality (structural benchmarks) of its economic programme supported by the Policy Support Instrument of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the period 2015–2017, the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa provided technical and advisory support aimed at establishing a platform called the integrated projects bank. The platform contains a description of the life cycle of projects supported by IMF. The role of ECA included supporting the development and customization of a Threshold 21 model to help to further the country's efforts in comprehensive and integrated planning. In addition, several workshops involving the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning, other ministerial departments, the private sector and research institutions were organized by ECA for better ownership and application of the platform.

12. The above-mentioned interventions enabled the Government to find solutions for the increased demand for education and health services and to achieve inclusive growth. In addition, a recent analysis by ECA and several IMF reviews of the Policy Support Instrument for the period 2015–2017 demonstrated that increased efficiency and transparency of public policies was a result of the strengthened capacity of government officials to design, implement and monitor the country strategies, plans, programmes and projects. Implementation in Senegal of the electronic project platform also allowed for better communication between line ministries and the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning. By including investment projects readily available for implementation and selected on the basis of feasibility studies, the electronic project platform contributed to improving the overall public project cycle and capital spending.

Cities as drivers of wealth creation in Uganda

13. Through its National Development Plan II (2015/16–2019/20), Uganda has set a target to become a middle-income country by strengthening its competitiveness for wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth. With a projected growth rate of 5.7 per cent, one of the highest urban growth rates in Africa projected for the period 2015–2020 and its cities contributing 70 per cent of gross domestic product, well-planned and managed urbanization is a necessary ingredient to achieve the country's target of prosperity and well-being but is not strategically set as an objective in the national development plan, and capacities to address that fact have been limited.

14. Based on the analytical work, technical guidelines and national capacity-building workshops of ECA, the National Planning Authority of Uganda, working with 50 policymakers from key ministries, developed a multisectoral national action plan to strengthen the integration of urbanization as a key driver of growth and transformation. The technical guidelines provided a step-by-step process on policies to harness rapid urban growth for job creation and economic diversification, currently an area of weakness in urban policymaking in most African countries. The contribution of ECA has enabled Uganda to develop a new policy plan for job creation, poverty reduction and improved social outcomes through better planning and management of cities. A high-level policy dialogue resulted in a commitment, at

the ministerial level, to prioritize urbanization as a driver of wealth creation in Uganda for its next phase of national development planning (starting in 2020).

15. ECA support contributed to the prioritization of regional and strategic cities as vehicles for achieving middle-income status in Uganda and the initiation of guidelines for implementation. The result is evidenced by the National Planning Authority directly applying the action plan developed with ECA to finalize the implementation of its current national development plan (ending in 2020) and the design for the follow-up plan. Similar technical assistance was provided to Cameroon, Chad and Zambia, also resulting in the development of national action plans to strengthen the urban component of national development planning as a means of harnessing the potential of urban growth for job creation and economic diversification. The ECA approach to strengthening the urban component of national development planning in Africa is the first of its kind, providing a unique value addition to the attainment in the region of Sustainable Development Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities.

16. The above-mentioned interventions were further complemented by the ECA regional framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, endorsed by ministers of housing and urban development under the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization.

Mozambique infrastructure development plan based on geographic information systems

17. The Government of Mozambique has defined infrastructure development as an important investment pillar to boost its economic development. Being a transit country, Mozambique intends not only to improve provincial interconnectivity but also to reaffirm its position as a regional hub for the surrounding landlocked countries. A number of development partners are supporting its infrastructure programme. The Ministry of Transport and Communications, as coordinator for the programme, identified the need for a visual tool that could be used to improve investment planning and the objective identification of infrastructure investment priorities with the aim of boosting economic development. Geographic information systems (GIS) were recognized as the best for geovisualization and spatial statistical modelling towards the identification of potential areas for development, including infrastructure planning, monitoring and evaluation. GIS also assist in the optimization of resource allocation for development, which is vital, since they reduce the arbitrary allocation of resources often influenced by politics.

18. Having identified that meaningful development policies cannot be implemented without adequate spatial information and knowledge, and lacking the requisite domestic capacity, the Ministry called upon the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning to develop its expertise on the use of GIS for spatial planning.

19. In 2018, as part of its tailor-made training based on its catalogue of courses, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning responded to the request of the Ministry to organize a training-of-trainers course on the use of GIS for spatial planning. The training benefited eight officials, including five women, from five government departments. It contributed to the creation of the first multidisciplinary team of experts, who subsequently shared with their colleagues the knowledge and skills acquired on spatial planning using GIS. All the participants found the training course relevant and appreciated the strategic importance of GIS in their planning work, which was shown by the results of post-training evaluations as well as the contributions made by the respective departments to the integrated infrastructure

business plan developed using spatially referenced data. Through the initiative, Mozambique expects an increase in revenue, improved road safety, better infrastructure management and job creation, among other significant benefits.

20. Based on the success of the training course, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning decided to proceed with the scaling up of the use of GIS across the continent in 2019 through awareness-raising efforts on its benefits. The Institute will simultaneously offer tailored skills training, digital learning and a joint master's degree programme to build capacity for GIS usage in infrastructure spatial development planning, among other things. In doing so, the Institute will also build communities of practice for experts to promote information-sharing, peer learning and research.

Common position and peer learning to drive the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

21. In 2018, ECA, in collaboration with regional organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, convened the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. ECA and the partner organizations prepared background papers and working documents to review and reach consensus on the status and progress of implementation of activities aimed at the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 15 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda and the goals set out in Agenda 2063, the results of which would serve as an input to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

22. The Forum reached consensus on policy recommendations in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa (see www.uneca.org/arfsd2018). Among the key messages were the following:

(a) Resilient structural transformation in Africa, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, requires integrated national frameworks, including sectoral strategies and approaches that mainstream and prioritize inclusion, activities aimed at protection against climate change, disaster risk reduction and the value of natural capital;

(b) Momentum to ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation should be increased alongside the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Countries in Africa need to invest more in providing potable water access points in urban and rural communities, improving sanitation facilities to reduce open defecation and ensuring appropriate waste management;

(d) Safeguarding and responsible management of Africa's natural resources, on which most growth is predicated, should remain a priority;

(e) Funding, capacity development and technology support linked to achieving outcomes on the ground need to be scaled up to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, land degradation neutrality targets and national plans and programmes for sustainable forest management;

(f) A multi-stakeholder Africa forum on science and technology innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals should be held on the margins of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to identify and address the science and technology innovation needs of Africa and to prepare for the annual global multi-stakeholder forum on the same topic.

23. Consensus was built around common messages that constituted Africa's regional input to the 2018 high-level political forum. The messages were intended to be used for policy dialogue, policymaking and implementation at the national, regional and global levels towards the realization of the Sustainable Development

Goals in the 2030 Agenda and the aspirations in Agenda 2063, with emphasis on the five Goals indicated above.

B. Progress in advancing the trade and regional economic integration agenda

The road to the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area

24. The continent has embarked on important regional integration processes that are complex, broad and ambitious, requiring greater support to regional institutions with the capacities to spearhead the advancement of the African regional integration agenda. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area is one of the critical phases of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

25. The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area was adopted at the tenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Kigali from 17 to 21 March 2018, representing a significant milestone in Africa's journey on the path to economic integration. ECA provided technical support and training to member States and the African Union Commission in the negotiations for the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area. ECA also provided the draft text that was used as the basis for the negotiations, which led to a successful conclusion by member States. The result was four main legal instruments underpinning the African Continental Free Trade Area: (a) the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area; (b) the Protocol on Trade in Goods; (c) the Protocol on Trade in Services; and (d) the Protocol on Rules and Procedures for the Settlement of Disputes. As of the end of February 2019, a total of 52 countries had signed the Agreement, with 19 countries¹ having ratified the protocols to the Agreement through their respective national constitutional processes. The Agreement will enter into force following the deposit of 22 instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Efforts by ECA and the African Union Commission are under way to provide support to facilitate the timely signing of the protocols by the remaining countries.

C. Accelerating economic diversification and job creation on the continent

Breaking the vicious cycle of overdependence on the export of commodities

26. Since 2014, the subregion of Central Africa has suffered severe macroeconomic instability owing to the sharp drop in oil prices, which has led to worrying fiscal and current account deficits necessitating fiscal consolidation measures in some countries, such as Chad. The crisis stemmed from structural economic vulnerability owing to high dependency on oil exports. In response to that crisis, the ECA Subregional Office for Central Africa convened a wide range of stakeholders on the margins of the thirty-second session of its Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, held in Douala, Cameroon, from 26 to 29 September 2017, with a view to reviewing the state of the economies in the subregion and articulating structural and durable responses to the crisis.

27. The meeting adopted the Douala Consensus, a groundbreaking agreement which stressed the imperative of economic diversification through resource-driven and trade-induced industrialization as one of the most credible and durable pathways to

¹ Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo and Uganda.

building resilient and competitive economies in Central Africa and to breaking the vicious cycle of overdependence on the export of commodities.

28. Following the adoption of the Douala Consensus, countries in the subregion sought the support of ECA for its implementation. In 2017 and 2018, of the seven Central African countries covered by the Subregional Office, four requested technical assistance from ECA to formulate economic diversification strategies to address the structural vulnerabilities of their economies, which remain highly dependent on oil exports.

29. With the technical assistance of ECA, the Government of Chad developed and approved an industrialization and economic diversification master plan, which was launched on 17 September 2018 in N'Djamena. The success of the master plan required skill sets and capacities for the conception and formulation of projects. Other key conditions were improvements in the business environment, notably access to finance, productivity growth and sufficient fiscal space to pursue long-term investments to catalyse industrialization and economic diversification, while restoring macroeconomic stability through short-term measures. In order to operationalize the plan, the necessary growth diagnostic studies, value chain analysis and other studies were undertaken, which helped to identify the key economic pillars and enablers for economic diversification in the country. These included agribusiness, livestock development with a focus on meat and leather exports, harnessing of renewable energy, establishment of clusters and the emergence of the knowledge economy. Green industrialization was chosen as the preferred route to expanding the share of manufactured products in total exports and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

30. The result included the identification of realistic sources of financing for the master plan and the enhancement of the role of the digital economy. The master plan generated a lot of interest and was included in the programme of work of the United Nations country team in Chad. In addition, extensive consultations were undertaken with development partners operating in the country, including the World Bank, IMF, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the French Development Agency, to ensure the alignment of their interventions with the plan as part of an integrated financing framework for development.

Charting the course to industrialization in Southern Africa

31. The thirty-fourth Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in August 2014, reviewed progress towards regional integration and economic development in Southern Africa and noted that industrialization was a major gap in the development of the region. It was decided that there was an urgent need for the region to leverage its abundant and diverse resources, especially in agriculture and mining, to accelerate industrialization through beneficiation and value addition. In order to operationalize the regional integration agenda, the Summit resolved to develop a long-term strategy and road map for industrialization in the SADC region. To implement that decision, the secretariat of SADC approached ECA for support in developing the long-term strategy and road map.

32. In the period 2014–2017, ECA provided support to the secretariat of SADC through interventions focused on the formulation of the long-term industrialization strategy and road map, namely, developing the project concept, preparing the background papers, providing technical backstopping, convening and servicing national and regional consultations, and resource mobilization. As a result of that support, the SADC industrialization strategy and road map, 2015–2063, was developed and subsequently adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of

State and Government in April 2015. With ECA support, an action plan for the implementation of phases I and II of the strategy, covering the period 2015–2030, was also developed and subsequently adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government held in Mbabane on 18 March 2017.

33. In 2018, at the request of the secretariat of SADC, ECA provided technical support on the elaboration and implementation of the industrialization strategy and road map and the action plan in the following critical areas: (a) a mining sector skills audit; (b) a minerals beneficiation profiling exercise for the identification of potential mineral value chains for development; (c) development of a regional mining vision; (d) a template for facilitating the increased role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the industrialization process; (e) a regional intellectual property rights framework that could support innovation, technology and industrialization; and (f) a regional stakeholder forum on the role of the private sector in support of the industrialization process. Those areas of intervention were examined through the development of concept notes, the preparation of background papers, the organization of workshops and expert meetings and the preparation of policy documents.

34. ECA interventions resulted in the formulation of the following:

- (a) A template for the development of the capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises for an enhanced role in the industrialization process;
- (b) A mining sector skills database;
- (c) An SADC regional mining vision for identifying and developing value chain minerals in Southern Africa;
- (d) The institutionalization of the regional stakeholders forum on private sector development in Southern Africa;
- (e) An SADC intellectual property rights framework on industrialization.

35. As a result, in 2018, SADC adopted a template for the development of the capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises; the regional mining vision; the intellectual property rights framework on industrialization; and the institutionalization of the regional stakeholders forum on private sector development in Southern Africa.

D. Promoting sustainable natural resources management through the blue economy and climate action

The blue economy: paradigm shift towards transformational growth in Eastern Africa

36. The subregion of Eastern Africa is registering rapid economic growth and transformation as a result of the pro-growth policies and public investments of Governments. In order to sustain such progress, member States are interested in new sources of growth, including from the blue economy, which promotes the use of aquatic and marine ecosystems and associated resources for sustainable development. Interest in the blue economy was demonstrated at the nineteenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the ECA Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, held in Antananarivo from 2 to 5 March 2015, which focused on the topic of harnessing the blue economy for Eastern Africa's development. The Committee acknowledged the untapped potential of the blue economy and the existing policy gap among productive sectors, both traditional and emerging, such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, deep sea mining and energy. With a view to addressing that challenge, the Committee recommended the development of a policy

handbook for the blue economy, aimed at providing a step-by-step methodology towards the formulation of multisectoral policy frameworks for the blue economy. The strategic policy framework was officially launched at the forty-ninth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa from 31 March to 2 April 2016. The framework was later complemented by a detailed study focusing on the subregion of Eastern Africa.

37. Member States, together with regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, reiterated the need to develop and better mainstream blue economy policies into their national development plans at the twenty-first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, held in Moroni from 7 to 9 November 2017. The meeting explored the topic of catalysts for and constraints on transformational growth in Eastern Africa. Furthermore, the blue economy has emerged as an important facilitating factor for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area through optimal use of multimodal transport and connectivity between inland waterways and seaports.

38. In 2018, at the request of the Comoros and Madagascar, the ECA Subregional Office for Eastern Africa provided technical support for the development and consolidation of strategic frameworks focusing on prioritization of sectors and related trade-offs alongside policy orientations and actions. In the case of the Comoros, energy was identified as a priority sector for intervention. Low energy generation capacity, inefficient energy transmission and distribution and limited long-term energy planning capacity were identified as recurrent challenges affecting other sectors of the blue economy, such as tourism.

39. The ECA interventions resulted in the formulation of a strategic policy framework on the blue economy for the Comoros, accompanied by three thematic national studies, focusing on institutional and regulatory features on how to institutionalize the blue economy, stocktaking of sectors of the blue economy and regional dimensions, as well as a study on energy balance statistics and an energy systems model. In the case of Madagascar, the support of the Subregional Office resulted in the development of a strategic document highlighting challenges and opportunities in the blue economy and providing policy orientations.

40. As a result, in 2018, the Comoros and Madagascar adopted respective policy frameworks, which will be put to further use to leverage their potential for the blue economy. In the Comoros, the strategic policy framework was mainstreamed in the national strategy for accelerated growth and sustainable development. Madagascar will pursue similar mainstreaming efforts following completion of the presidential election.

Advancing climate research for sustainable development

41. At the African Climate Conference, held in 2013, it was noted that there was a disconnect between climate science and development in Africa and there was an urgent need to bridge this gap in order to address climate change and development in Africa. ECA, the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology, the World Meteorological Organization and the Global Framework for Climate Services were tasked with looking into the issue. The partners consulted African climate scientists and collaboratively designed Climate Research for Development in Africa as an African-led programme with the objective of strengthening the links between climate science research and climate information needs in support of development planning. The programme has grown to an outfit that is drawing climate scientists back to the continent and has elevated the climate research agenda.

42. Climate Research for Development in Africa has also matured to a stage where it is nurturing, mentoring and building the capacity of young African climate scientists from African institutions through the African Academy of Sciences. The first cohort of 21 researchers, over half of whom are women, will focus on research addressing climate change impacts on key economic sectors, such as agriculture, energy, water, forestry, health and food security. The initial funding for the research is provided by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and amounts to \$2.5 million. Efforts are under way to mobilize more resources to expand the programme.

E. Advocacy and support to the High-level Panel on Migration

43. The analytical work of ECA on the trends, causes and impacts of African migration, as well as the evidence-based regional report, which was highly appreciated and recognized by the African Group of Negotiators, contributed to the development of the common African position on migration, which formed the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations. ECA also provided technical support in the negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration through a series of subregional and regional consultations. The High-level Panel on Migration, established in response to resolution 940 (XLIX) of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, on international migration in Africa, with ECA support and chaired by the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, is working to change the narrative that has tended to distort the real picture of African migration, which presents considerable evidence that most Africans migrate within the continent and contribute immensely to their countries of destination. In support of the work of the High-level Panel, ECA, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the African Union Commission, produced an evidence-based report entitled “African migration: facing facts, embracing opportunities and mitigating challenges”. That report will continue to be used for advocacy and awareness-raising activities by member States, citizens and international development partners.

F. Statistics in support of evidence-based policymaking and strategy implementation

Strengthening statistical systems

44. During the reporting period, ECA had significant influence on policy in the area of statistics. A total of 27 African countries undertook comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems. Within the framework of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, ECA provided technical assistance to member States on conducting comprehensive assessments and developing national action plans for improving such systems. In addition to the 27 African countries² that assessed their systems and formulated improvement plans, at the time of reporting 8 countries³ are undertaking the assessment process. Furthermore, ECA provided technical assistance to Benin, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Sudan in support of the reform and modernization of their national statistical systems. Benin reported the update of its National Statistical

² Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

³ Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Act and a revamp of the coordination mechanism at the national level, including the expanded involvement of key sectoral producers of data.

Adoption of the System of National Accounts

45. African countries face challenges in the production of economic statistics that are timely and of high quality, owing to limited human, financial and technical resources, as well as weak institutional capacity and statistical infrastructure. In order to address those challenges, in January 2014, ECA launched a project on the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts. The overall objective of the project was to improve the quality and availability of national accounts and related economic statistics in support of good economic governance, regional integration and sustainable development in Africa. The project formed part of the continent-wide project for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts, which was developed by the African Group on National Accounts under the aegis of the Statistical Commission for Africa.

46. In response to a request from the Government of Mauritania for technical assistance to support the adoption of the 2008 System of National Accounts, the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa, in partnership with the Government of Morocco, the World Bank, IMF and the Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa (Afristat), provided technical support and advisory services to the Government. That assistance helped to ensure the alignment of the national accounts and economic statistic concepts of Mauritania with the System of National Accounts and to enhance methodologies, tools, practices and standards for the collection and analysis of economic, social and environmental data.

47. As a result, the Government of Mauritania decided to implement the 2008 System of National Accounts. The Government is now employing the system methodology to come up with an accurate estimate of the contribution to gross domestic product of the fisheries, cattle, public administration, finance and informal sectors.

G. Narrowing the gender gap, harnessing the demographic dividend and promoting women's land ownership in Africa

How the African Gender and Development Index informed effective policymaking in South Africa

48. The African Gender and Development Index was introduced by ECA in 2004 in response to requests by member States for a tool to assist them in reporting on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since all African countries have adopted those international treaties, they have an obligation to report periodically on progress. Moreover, member States needed to measure progress made towards gender equality in the social, economic and political dimensions and develop national policies, programmes and strategies to narrow gender gaps for inclusive and sustainable development.

49. In June 2018, at a national workshop organized by ECA in Pretoria, the Department of Social Development of South Africa presented its most recent report, which was reviewed by the Cabinet. The report was aimed at developing a national strategy for South Africa in order to ensure that necessary investments in education and health were made to tackle high youth unemployment and harness the demographic dividend. However, the report was returned by the Cabinet for revision because of its gender blindness. In response, the Commission for Gender Equality of

South Africa, a strong partner of ECA in the implementation of the African Gender and Development Index, presented its latest research with the support of ECA.

50. That contributed to a strong partnership between the two national institutions, which led to the mainstreaming of gender dimensions into prospective national strategies, with a view to harnessing the demographic dividend. Specifically, the Department of Social Development was influenced by the Commission for Gender Equality, with insights drawn from the African Gender and Development Index that provide a comprehensive gender dimension beyond simply disaggregating data by sex.

51. The result is evidenced by the inclusion of gender dimensions drawn from the national report of the African Gender and Development Index into the final report, entitled “South African population dynamics: trends, structure, causes and consequences”, which is to be submitted to the Cabinet. It is expected that the final report will inform the national policy framework on harnessing the demographic dividend.

Advancing the implementation of the “30 per cent” campaign for women’s land ownership in Africa

52. ECA continued to promote the 2017 decision of the African Union in which it urged member States to review policies and programmes to facilitate the achievement of the target of 30 per cent of documented land rights allocated to women by 2025, through awareness-raising on women’s land tenure security issues, and advocated for the gender-responsive implementation of the African Union agenda on land. Furthermore, ECA mainstreamed gender in its programme to implement the African Union agenda on land through the application of the gender strategy developed in 2014. In that regard, the following actions were taken:

- (a) A gender and land expert was seconded to ECA and the African Land Policy Centre;
- (b) The minimum gender target of 30 per cent was applied and tracked in order to ensure women’s participation in land governance activities to promote knowledge, advocacy and capacity development;
- (c) African Land Policy Centre documents were reviewed through a gender lens;
- (d) A gender programme was developed as part of the medium-term strategy of the African Land Policy Centre, for the period 2019–2023;
- (e) Gender mainstreaming modules formed part of all training programmes;
- (f) A pilot project for the monitoring and evaluation of land governance in Africa, covering 12 African countries, was launched to track progress in the development and implementation of good land governance on the continent.

III. Strengthening the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda

A. Curbing illicit financial flows and corruption

53. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 all highlight the importance of tackling illicit financial flows. Stopping such flows from Africa is a key policy priority both for the African continent and for the world as a whole, given the challenges that they pose for financing the Sustainable Development

Goals. These risks are also recognized in the 2030 Agenda, where the reduction of illicit financial flows is listed explicitly as target 16.4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Over the past few years, ECA has been making continued efforts, including through the establishment of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, groundbreaking research work on the methodology used to obtain estimates of illicit financial flows, advocacy for the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the High-level Panel on such flows and the provision of policy advice to member States, on such issues as tackling illicit financial flows, tax evasion and trade misinvoicing. Attention is drawn to the creation of the Consortium for the Eradication of Illicit Financial Flows, comprising key players and partners, which aims to support the implementation of and follow-up to the recommendations of the High-level Panel. The Consortium supported member States in their efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which includes specific measures to finance sustainable development, to align all financing flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities and to ensure that financing is stable and sustainable.

54. ECA promoted leveraging of the African Peer Review Mechanism as a more effective tool to address the challenges of financing Africa's development, in particular by improving the landscape of domestic resource mobilization and public financial management. ECA influenced policies on the mobilization of domestic and external resources for development. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tunisia have begun to implement policies on illicit financial flows that were recommended by the High-level Panel in its report.

B. Centre of excellence on digital identity, trade and the digital economy

55. In October 2018, ECA, with its strategic partners, launched the ECA centre of excellence on digital identity, trade and the digital economy. The centre, whose work is overseen by a high-level advisory board, serves as an on-demand source of technical advice for countries on digital identity, trade and the digital economy and will undertake research on the multifarious dimensions of the digital economy. The centre will also seek to backstop ECA support towards the creation of a digital common market under the African Continental Free Trade Area. In this regard, the partnership between ECA and the Omidyar Network Fund is aimed at supporting the establishment of a digital identity platform for Africa. The partnership will also support capacity-building for African senior officials and the establishment of a centre of excellence on digital identity and data privacy, thus contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 16.

C. Contribution of ECA to promoting information and communications technology in member States and regional economic communities to advance economic development

56. The analytical and advocacy work by ECA on roaming and cybersecurity enables ministers for telecommunications and information and communications technology of member States of the Economic Community of Central African States to engage in a process to harmonize and reduce roaming charges. The member States adopted a road map for the establishment of Central Africa mobile phone roaming by 31 March 2019. The outcome of this process constitutes a major boost to reducing the cost of doing business in the subregion, as well as to facilitating intraregional trade in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area. It will also be an enabler for digital transformation in Central Africa.

57. Furthermore, ECA support in the development of the national information and communications technology strategy of South Sudan, as well as in the design and establishment of national governance structures and policymaking institutions for science, technology and innovation in South Sudan and the East African Community, is worth noting as ECA is well positioned to be a partner of choice at strategic policy design levels to influence policy decisions.

D. Health financing

58. The Africa Business: Health Forum aims to strengthen partnerships, promote an ongoing dialogue between the African private and public sectors and foster opportunities for the private sector to contribute to strengthening national health systems in Africa. The Forum helped to establish the Africa Business Coalition for Health, which brought together ECA, the Global Business Coalition for Health, the Aliko Dangote Foundation and the Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria and was launched on the margins of the thirty-second ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, in January 2019.

IV. Spotlight on the African Poverty Clock: a tool for evidence-based decision-making

59. One of the landmark events at the end of 2018 was the launch of the African Poverty Clock (see www.uneca.org/africa-poverty-clock-2018), which was developed in partnership with World Data Lab. The Clock monitors progress towards achieving target 1.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 1, providing real-time data on poverty forecasts at the regional and national levels. It also contributes to raising awareness on poverty dynamics within countries and can be a useful tool for evidence-based policymaking and decision-making. While the focus of the current data is on income poverty, the plan is to extend that focus to include other dimensions of poverty, such as gender, age, education and nutrition.

V. Leveraging partnerships for sustainable development

A. Collaboration and coordination for the implementation of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

60. The conclusion of the first year of implementation of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was marked in 2018. United Nations entities and the African Union made progress in the joint implementation of the nine priority thematic areas. An example of progress towards improved collaboration and coordination was the organization by ECA, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Union of a side event during the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, with a view to raising awareness of and undertaking advocacy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The event focused on the implementation of the two agendas and the sharing of experiences and the way forward following sessions of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the voluntary national reviews. The event resulted in recommendations on support for member States in enhancing national mechanisms for the coordination and integrated implementation of the two agendas.

61. Under the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, United Nations entities and the African Union continued to provide coordinated support to the Sahel countries. One such example is the second regional conference on impunity, access to justice and human rights in West Africa and the Sahel, which was organized by United Nations entities and the African Union and resulted in the establishment of a ministerial platform to monitor and report progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the conference.

B. Partnerships for the implementation of the programme of work of the Economic Commission for Africa

62. During the reporting period, ECA collaborated with partners on a broad range of issues to implement its programme of work. Its partners included the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, the African Economic Research Consortium, the London School of Economics and Political Science, IMF, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the International Renewable Energy Agency and a range of United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes.

63. For instance, ECA collaborated with the Confederation of Indian Industry and prepared a joint report on deepening the trade and investment partnership between Africa and India, which was launched at the thirteenth Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Export-Import Bank of India. ECA also prepared a report on the African Growth and Opportunity Act for the meeting of senior trade officials of the African Union Commission.

64. In November 2018, ECA concluded a partnership agreement with the National Development and Reform Commission of China on the Belt and Road Initiative, with the aim of leveraging public-private partnership models for sustainable development and for infrastructure networks supporting regional connectivity in Africa. The partnership framework will contribute to sustainable development and regional connectivity through the achievement of the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals 9 and 17), the Belt and Road Initiative, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

VI. Concluding remarks

65. The key lessons learned include the following:

(a) The political vision of and commitment by Southern African leaders at the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government in directing that the SADC industrialization strategy and road map should be developed were central to its timely and effective delivery by the SADC secretariat with technical support from ECA;

(b) Successful policy delivery tends to attract other regional and international actors, which reinforces the agenda-setting and strategic role of ECA and the United Nations in policy articulation and formulation;

(c) An important role was played by technology in empowering member States in aligning their national development plans with both regional and global agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and reporting on them in a harmonized way. Leveraging the opportunities provided by data technology can help to improve the collection and reporting of data on progress towards the Goals and overcome existing challenges with regard to data collection;

(d) Owing to the rapid evolution of geospatial technology, there is a strong need to constantly update and enhance the knowledge and skills of geospatial stakeholders. Formal training by academia or software providers is often expensive and not readily accessible to all. It is therefore important that institutions such as ECA continue to promote means by which staff can attain current trends and knowledge or enhance geospatial skills through webinars, online courses, mentoring, sponsorship and conferences, among other methods;

(e) The Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems has helped to build significant momentum towards the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems on the continent. The political commitment at the national level, coupled with regional technical and capacity-building support for countries, has brought a paradigm shift from a fragmented and ad hoc approach to a holistic and systematic improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in member States. At its twenty-ninth ordinary session, in 2016, the Executive Council of the African Union declared the period 2017–2026 to be the decade for repositioning civil registration and vital statistics in Africa, and at its thirty-second ordinary session, in 2018, the Executive Council declared 10 August as Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day and called upon African Union member States to observe the Day.
