



Progress towards Sustainable Development in West Africa



ECOWAS Commission



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Prepared with the financial support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.



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First printing May 2012

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Edited, designed and printed by the ECA Publications and Conference Management Section (PCMS).

Cover photos: From top left UN Photo/Tim McKulka, Stock.xchng/Lars Sundstrom, Robert Parzychowski, Nate Brelsford, UN Photo/Fred Noy, Stock.xchng/Patrick Hajzler, UN Photo/Martine Perret, Stock.xchng/Robert Linder.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACPC	African Climate Policy Centre
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMESD	African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development
APINA	Air Pollution Information Network for Africa
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CDP	Community Development Programme
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPG	Cross Sectoral Planning Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPADP	Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCF	Gross Capital Formation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Gross Domestic Savings
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GNI	Gross National Income
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
ICAM	Integrated Coastal Area Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LTDS	Long Term Development Strategy
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate

NAP	National Action Plan
NCSD	National Committee for Sustainable Development
NDP	National Development Programme
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
OCCGE	Organization for Coordination and Cooperation against Endemic Diseases
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
REC	Regional Economic Community
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDC	Sustainable Development Committee
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Executive Summary

This review report for the West Africa subregion was commissioned by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), to provide input for the African regional review report for Rio+20. The overall objective of this consultancy is to produce a well-informed review report on progress towards sustainable development in the subregion of West Africa, taking specific objectives into account.

The specific objectives include:

1. Providing well-articulated documentation of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) commitments, with a clear understanding of the constraints and challenges and well-informed recommendations to enhance implementation progress;
2. Increasing understanding and appreciation of the new and emerging challenges to the advancement of the sustainable development agenda in West Africa with well-informed, action-oriented recommendations to address the challenges effectively;
3. Enhancing understanding and appreciation of the institutional and strategic frameworks necessary to operationalize sustainable development in West Africa;
4. Providing a clear understanding and appreciation of the prospects and challenges for West Africa in the transformation to a green economy and realization of its sustainable development and poverty eradication goals;
5. Clearly articulating the concerns and priorities of West Africa regarding implementation of sustainable development commitments; and
6. Providing well-informed, action-oriented recommendations for the way forward in advancing the sustainable development agenda in West Africa.

Following the poor development performance of most countries in the 1970s and 1980s, many countries began to develop and implement structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the early part of the 1980s until the 1990s, followed by poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) from 1999 supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The shift to PRSs occurred as a result of the negative impacts of many of the adjustment programmes on the poor. Furthermore, there was a correlation between adjustment programmes and growing poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED/Rio Conference) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 urged countries to develop National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs) to ensure that countries achieve sustainable development. In 2002, the JPOI of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recommended that countries could formulate NSSDs as PRSs, integrating the economic, social and environmental

pillars of sustainable development. Alternatively, countries formulating PRSs were to ensure that social, economic and environmental concerns were appropriately addressed to achieve sustainable development.

To review the performance of West African countries effectively in terms of sustainable development, it is important to review the policies, strategies and programmes undertaken by the countries and the extent to which sustainable development principles are incorporated in them. It is also instructive to evaluate institutional frameworks that have supported sustainable development and review the strategies undertaken and the extent to which they have incorporated the principles of sustainable development.

The main priority sustainable development issues for the subregion converge on ensuring the well-being of people in terms of eradicating poverty in the long run. Country NSSDs contain priority issues for the three pillars of sustainable development. The prioritized issues include growth and development, utilities, education, health, employment, natural resources exploitation, and climate change.

There have been two generations of PRSs. The second generation showed significant improvements over the first in terms of formulation of the sustainable development strategy process. The key sustainable development issues included country ownership and commitment; integrated economic, social and environmental objectives across sectors, territories and generations; broad and effective participation and partnerships; capacity development; an enabling environment; and the means of implementation.

The analysis showed that the most difficult aspect of formulating sustainable development strategies, and also the most important, was the balanced integration of the three pillars. Many countries employed Cross Sectoral Planning Groups (CSPGs) to undertake the harmonization. However, these CSPGs were different from Sustainable Development Committees (SDCs), which indicated that the integration was not being properly done. The CSPGs had not been trained in the concept and objectives of integrated sustainable development. A model for integration was proposed, whereby the sectoral groups would form SDCs and these groups would become key in developing sectoral strategies. During the formulation of sectoral strategy, the group, having traced all linkages of policies, projects and programmes with other sectors, could anticipate other sector-related strategies. All sectoral strategies would therefore have their interlinkages identified. When all sectoral strategies were sent to the Planning Commission or Unit, these CSPGs or SDCs from the various sectors could do the integration.

Many countries have owned the process of NSSD formulation and this has involved broad participation. Effective participation has been a challenge but planning units have been learning and improving the situation. The major issue that needs to be addressed is the development of Long-term Development Strategies (LTDS), with monitoring and evaluation being the key to success. Countries have used different sets of indicators to monitor all the pillars of sustainable development depending on their own needs and capacities. One monitoring tool that has been absent is attention to expenditures on projects and programmes. This is a major problem not only for strategy monitoring but for all the activities in the subregion.

Countries should be assisted to develop and implement long-term sustainable development strategies that embody the key characteristics of NSSDs. Planning institutions should be staffed with capable people and be independent from the political process, the priority being to build their capacity.

Institutional frameworks, laws, regulations, conventions, customs and practices are essential for the efficient working of sustainable development strategies. Regional, subregional and national institutions are important in the achievement of sustainable development; however, national institutions are paramount. UNECA, ECOWAS and AfDB through their mandates (workshops, publication, round-table conferences, funding, etc.) have been assisting countries in the various pillars of sustainable development.

Following recommendations from the Rio Conference and from WSSD, most countries have set up various forms of institutions and strengthened others to assist in formulating sustainable development strategies. More specifically, countries have established National Committees for Sustainable Development (NCSDs) to assist mainly in integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and also to monitor and evaluate implementation progress.

Representation on NCSDs is broad based. However, representation from civil society organizations (CSOs), trade unions, parliamentarians, indigenous people, farmers, women and youth groups could be improved. The constraints include inadequate institutional capacity, both in terms of funding and human resources. The strategy for improved functioning of NCSDs should be experience sharing, exchange of information and networking. To do this, the capacity of UNECA Subregional Offices (SROs) and of ECOWAS should be strengthened to ensure that they contribute effectively to the implementation process.

In implementing the sustainable development agenda, countries in the subregion have used several of the policies, strategies and programmes within the three pillars of sustainable development. There has been some progress but challenges and constraints remain. Some achievements have been made, on the economic front especially, but have not been significant enough to affect the livelihoods of many people.

Assessment of the economic, social and environment pillars shows that the subregion has done quite well in resuscitating the growth of its economies. Despite this good performance, there are serious threats to the well-being of the population and to environmental health. The economic aspect is not being maximized while the social sector faces serious challenges. The environmental balance is negative. On the whole, the development pattern of the economies is not on a sustainable development path, owing to the fact that balanced integration of the pillars is missing in the strategies undertaken. Further, a major constraint to sustainable development has been the formulation of short-term rather than long-term strategies.

Suggestions made to accelerate the pace of sustainable development include treating all three dimensions of sustainable development with equal importance through the intersectoral approach. Many institutions have been established but the need to build their capacities remains. Building databases for monitoring, evaluation and lesson-learning while coordinating mechanisms to reduce duplication of effort and creating beneficial linkages is essential. Above all,

transparency, accountability and discipline through the enforcement of rules and regulations are of prime importance.

The transition to a green economy encompasses undertaking green policies, strategies and programmes in all sectors of the economy. In the end, a green economy is a sustainable development economy. Commitment to this transition includes enforcing laws and regulations, mobilizing resources for investments, strengthening the human resource base and embarking on effective research and development (R&D) efforts. A shift to a green growth path in areas such as energy and transportation requires major structural changes in systems dependent on infrastructure, technology and financial assistance. The initial cost of investment for transition to a green economy in certain sectors of the economy, appears to be beyond the reach of many ECOWAS countries but since this is a necessity the support of the international community is needed.

Since the Rio Conference, a number of challenges with an impact on sustainable development in West Africa have intensified. Most of these challenges are not new but substantial evidence exists to suggest that the intensity of their impact has increased and this poses fundamental challenges to sustainable development of the subregion. These challenges include climate change, desertification, coastal erosion, the energy crisis, water scarcity, and lack of transparency in the management of mineral/oil resources. Constraints also include biodiversity and ecosystem loss, food insecurity, relevance of education to developmental needs, graduate unemployment, globalization and urbanization.

Countries in the subregion need to take a long-term view of development and incorporate all these issues into their sustainable development strategies. By undertaking an integrated approach to development, most of these challenges can be addressed.

I. Introduction

The UNCED held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 was a landmark event. It marked international commitment to providing public and political support to address environmental and development issues in a holistic and integrated manner for the attainment of sustainable development. This Conference otherwise known as the Rio Summit, at which Agenda 21 was adopted, sought to build on the momentum engendered by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 and which was the first global forum that addressed the interlinked areas of environment and development.

A five-year review conducted in 1997 revealed that little progress had been made in implementing Agenda 21. The desired momentum for accelerated implementation and a political declaration affirming a renewed commitment was not generated. In view of this, WSSD was convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The goal of WSSD was to conduct a further (10-year) review of the implementation of the outcomes of the Rio Conference, particularly Agenda 21, and to reinvigorate global commitment to sustainable development.

On 11 December 2009, the Second Committee of the General Assembly adopted a resolution to organize the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, in Brazil, in 2012. The objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges.

The Conference will focus on the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process:

- (a) A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and
- (b) The institutional framework for sustainable development.

In order to ensure high-quality inputs to the Conference, the Second Committee of the General Assembly called for efficient and effective preparations at the local, national, regional and international levels by Governments and the United Nations system and encouraged the active participation of all major groups at all stages of the preparatory process. Further, it decided that the Conference and its preparatory process should take into account the decision taken at the eleventh session of the Commission (A/RES/64/236 para 20 c), to carry out an overall appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI, at the conclusion of the multi-year programme of work.

The decision of the Second Committee to convert the Regional Implementation Meetings for the upcoming session of CSD into regional preparatory meetings for the Conference in 2012 reflects the importance attached to regional-level review processes, in bridging the gap between global and national-level review processes. An effective regional preparatory process is therefore essential to guide and prepare African countries to articulate their concerns and priorities collectively at the

Conference and to ensure that these are adequately reflected in the outcomes. It will also serve to strengthen the regional consultative mechanism to support national-level implementation following the Conference.

The thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN 13) held in Bamako, Mali, in June 2010 underscored the importance for Africa to effectively preparing itself for Rio+20. In this regard, the Bamako Declaration on the Environment for Sustainable Development adopted by AMCEN 13, inter alia, calls upon UNECA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), other United Nations agencies, the African Union Commission (AUC), AfDB, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African CSOs other stakeholders and partners to effectively collaborate in the Africa preparatory process for Rio+20, with a view to ensuring that Africa's concerns and priorities are effectively tackled at the Conference.

Furthermore, the eleventh session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the African Union (AU) and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme deliberated on regional preparations for Rio+20. It adopted recommendations emphasizing the need for continental institutions including AUC, RECs and AfDB to be effectively engaged in the preparations. It also recommended that preparations and inputs to Rio+20 should be based on bottom-up approaches so as to enable the Conference to reflect on and address the real operational challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. This augurs well for the plan to undertake five subregional consultations, of which the preparation of subregional reports forms an integral part, to feed into the Africa-wide consultations for Rio+20.

Against this backdrop, this review report for West Africa is being commissioned within the framework of the Africa Regional Preparatory Process for Rio+20, in collaboration with relevant RECs operating in the subregion, with the support of AfDB, UNECA and other partners. This subregional review report, together with the reports of the other four subregions, will provide input for the Africa-wide consultations for Rio+20 and the African review report.

Objectives of the report

The overall objective of the report is to provide a well-informed review on progress towards sustainable development in West Africa, taking into account the specific objectives enumerated below.

Specific objectives

- (a) To provide well-articulated documentation of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI commitments, with clear understanding of the constraints and challenges and well-informed recommendations to enhance implementation progress;
- (b) To increase understanding and appreciation of the new and emerging challenges to advancing a sustainable development agenda and well-informed, action-oriented recommendations to address the challenges in West Africa successfully;

- (c) To enhance understanding and appreciation of the institutional and strategic frameworks necessary to effectively operationalize sustainable development;
- (d) To provide a clear understanding and appreciation of the prospects and challenges for West Africa in the transformation to a green economy and realization of its sustainable development and poverty eradication goals;
- (e) To clearly articulate concerns and priorities regarding the implementation of sustainable development commitments in West Africa; and
- (f) To provide well-informed, action-oriented recommendations for the way forward in advancing the sustainable development agenda in West Africa.

Review process

The review process was divided into two phases. The first phase entailed a desktop review of general implementation of sustainable development in West Africa. This involved review of the implementation of NSSDs in all countries that had formulated, were in the process of formulating or were implementing NSSDs. JPOI recommended that NSSDs could be formulated as PRSs that integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development where applicable. We therefore assessed the extent to which PRSs were implemented in ECOWAS countries integrate the three pillars of sustainable development. The second phase involved visits to seven West African countries, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal, to collect information on the implementation of sustainable development.

II. Priority sustainable development issues, trends and interlinkages

The inextricable link between environment and development was established at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. Specifically, Principles 13 and 14 of the Stockholm Declaration espoused the need for rational and integrated planning to ensure that development and environment objectives were addressed in a coherent manner. It was after the Stockholm Conference that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN, 1980) which highlighted the interdependence and linkage of conservation and development and for the first time threw more light on the meaning of the term “sustainable development”.

Though the World Conservation Strategy established the interlinkages between environment and development and indirectly gave meaning to the term “sustainable development”, the basic ideas and concept of “ecologically-sustainable development” was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report which came to be known in environmental circles as the Brundtland report - *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987). According to this report, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The report contributed significantly to recognition of the need to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns in the development process. Here, the definition of sustainable development implies that there should be intra- and inter-generational equity, as elaborated by the Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen.

A cursory view of the socio-economic performance of ECOWAS countries suggests that poor economic performance in the later part of the 1970s led countries to formulate SAPs in the early part of the 1980s until the 1990s, and PRSs from 1999, supported by the World Bank and IMF. The shift to PRSs occurred when it was acknowledged that many adjustment programmes had generated negative impacts for the poor. Further, it was recognized that a correlation existed between adjustment programmes and growing poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

It must be emphasized that in 1992, the Rio Conference urged countries to develop NSSDs to ensure that they achieved sustainable development. This recognition was due to the fact that growth in many countries, especially those in developing countries, had been achieved at the cost of social and environmental issues.

In 2002, the JPOI recommended that countries should formulate NSSDs as PRSs that integrate the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Alternatively, countries formulating PRSs should ensure that social, economic and environment concerns are appropriately addressed to achieve sustainable development. In light of this, ECOWAS countries have been formulating and implementing PRSs as NSSDs or have reviewed existing ones embodying the characteristics of NSSDs. In the following paragraphs, the extent to which PRSs have embodied NSSD characteristics is examined, largely as a result of the non-availability of in-country data on NSSDs.

The key characteristics of NSSDs are country ownership and commitment, integrated economic, social and environmental objectives across sectors, territories and generations, broad and effective

participation and partnerships as well as capacity development, an enabling environment and means of implementation. Information on all countries with regard to NSSD development and implementation is not available. However, a survey by UNECA on NSSDs in 16 African countries including four West African countries (the Gambia, Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone) indicated that countries had been developing and implementing NSSDs that varied in comprehensiveness. Countries have also identified several priorities that span all the pillars of sustainable development.

An examination of the relationship between NSSDs and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) showed that all NSSDs adequately addressed all eight MDGs. NSSD priorities for Senegal aimed to foster integrated, balanced and harmonious development which supported the attainment of MDGs and emphasized the institutional dimension. The Gambian NSSD, being a long-term development framework spanning a generation, embodies broad-based priorities that cover the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainable development.

2.1 Priority sustainable development issues and trends in PRSs

There have been three rounds of PRSs since their introduction in 1999. Many countries have formulated and implemented the first and second rounds and are in the process of implementing the third round. Table 2.1 provides basic information on first-round PRSs, which were formulated and implemented by almost all ECOWAS countries. Most of these PRSs were medium-term strategies that spanned between 3 to 5 years and were approved by the highest bodies. This to some extent indicated acceptance by ECOWAS Governments. However, there were and still are a few countries using LTDSs from which short-term strategies were developed. Countries with long-term strategies include Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Nigeria and Senegal.

Table 2.1: Basic information on first-round PRSs

Country	Time frame	Year of approval	Name of approving body
Benin	3 years	2002	Government
Burkina Faso	3 years	2000	Government
Cape Verde	4 years	2004	Government
Côte d'Ivoire	5 years	2009	Government
Gambia	3 years	2002 ¹	High Level Economic Committee /National Assembly
Ghana	3 years	2005	Cabinet and Parliament of Ghana
Guinea	4 years	2002	Government
Guinea-Bissau	3 years	2007 ²	Government
Liberia	3/4 years	2008-2011	Government/Cabinet
Mali	5 years	2002	Government
Niger	5 years	2000	Government
Nigeria	4 years	2004	Government ³
Senegal	3 years	2003	Senegal Council of Ministers
Sierra Leone	3 years	2005	Cabinet
Togo	3 years	2009	Government /Council of Ministers

¹ 2000-2004; 2003-2005.

² Approved in 2004 and revised in 2005 and 2006. The time frame for implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was pushed back to the period 2007-2009.

³ Nigeria did not have a PRSP, but rather a National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document and then Vision 20, which is a LTDS.

Source: Compiled from country first-generation PRSs.

Table 2.2 shows priority sustainable development areas by country, which cover all the pillars of sustainable development. Further, the interlinkages between the three pillars are analysed and components such as environment, gender, governance, HIV/AIDS and nutrition are considered cross-cutting and have been mainstreamed into sectoral policies and programmes.

Table 2.2: Priorities addressed by first-generation PRSs by country

Country	Priorities addressed	Soc	Eco	Env	Inst
Benin	Key intervention areas and priorities of the PRS include strengthening the macroeconomic framework; development of human capital and management of the environment; strengthening of good governance and institutional capacities; promotion of sustainable employment, strengthening the capacities of the poor to take part in decision-making and production processes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Burkina Faso	Promotion of a stable macroeconomic framework; strengthening growth by diversification of the economy; stimulation of the private sector; development of infrastructure; natural resources and environmental protection; acceleration of regional integration within the framework of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC); strengthening the social sector and human resources development; improvement of the institutional framework and governance; refocusing the role of the State; sustainable natural resource management; promotion of a new partnership with donors; promotion of good governance; due consideration of regional integration; reduction of regional disparities; and due consideration of the gender dimension.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cape Verde	Five pillars for PRS: Promote good governance, strengthening effectiveness and guaranteeing equity; promote competitiveness to foster economic growth and employment creation; develop and upgrade human capital; improve and develop basic infrastructure, promote land use management and protect the environment; improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the social protection system. These pillars are guided by the following policies: growth and macroeconomic stability; decentralization; employment; agricultural development; maximizing the impact of productive sectors with a multiplier effect on employment; income distribution; social protection; and the environment.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Côte d'Ivoire	Consolidation of peace, protection of life and property; promotion of good governance; stabilization of the macroeconomic framework; creation of jobs and wealth through support for the rural sector; promotion of the private sector; improved accessibility and quality of basic social services; preservation of the environment, promotion of gender equality and social security; decentralization; and reduction of regional disparities.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gambia	Agriculture, natural resources and the environment; education; health; nutrition, population and HIV/AIDS; infrastructure; social fund for poverty reduction; support to cross-cutting poverty programmes; ICT research and development; decentralization and capacity-building at the local level; government and civil service programmes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Sound economic management for accelerated growth; increasing production and promoting sustainable livelihoods; support for human resource development and provision of basic services; special programmes for the vulnerable and excluded; ensuring good governance and increased capacity for development of the public sector and the private sector.	Yes	Yes	NEx	Yes

Country	Priorities addressed	Soc	Eco	Env	Inst
Guinea	Boosting economic growth: macroeconomic and financial stabilization; basic infrastructure for water, electricity, transportation and telecommunications; support to growth sectors-rural sectors, mining, tourism and craft industries and small and medium enterprises (SMEs); management of natural resources and the environment; development and equitable access to basic services: education, health and nutrition; combating HIV/AIDS; village water supply; rural electrification and promotion of renewable energy; urban planning, housing and sanitation; social protection; gender and equal-opportunity issues; improving governance, institutional and human capacity-building; decentralization and delegation of authority to improve governance; transparency and the fight against corruption; participation and accountability of beneficiaries; stability and security; and strengthening of the institutional and human framework.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guinea-Bissau	Strengthening governance, modernizing public administration and ensuring macroeconomic stability; promoting economic growth and job creation; expanding access to social services and basic infrastructure and raising the living standard of vulnerable groups. Priorities were adjusted in view of the changing political and social context. Thus, special attention was given to combating drug trafficking and organized crime which had not been specifically targeted at the outset.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia	Promoting peace and security; creating a secure and peaceful environment conducive to sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth and development; economic revitalization: rebuilding basic infrastructure, especially roads; restoring production in the leading natural resource sectors, while ensuring that the benefits are widely shared; reducing production costs to establish the foundation for diversification of the economy over time; enhancing governance and the rule of law; enhancing citizen participation in and ownership of government policy formulation and implementation; building effective and efficient public institutions; strengthening and enhancing the integrity of legal and judicial institutions; expanding access to justice and enhancing the protection and promotion of human rights; infrastructure and basic services; transportation, water and sanitation; energy; post and telecommunications.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Mali	Institutional development, improved governance, and participation; rehabilitation of justice, the fight against corruption and financial delinquency; correct management of public expenditure; decentralization; sustainable human development; and strengthening access to basic social services; strengthening health, nutrition and population services; development of basic infrastructure and support to productive sectors; establishment of a road authority and privatization of road maintenance; reforming the telecommunications industry through creation of a Telecommunications Regulating Committee (TRC) and granting licences to other operators; enhancing support services to productive sectors such as irrigation; and improving rural infrastructure.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Country	Priorities addressed	Soc	Eco	Env	Inst
Mauritania	Rural and urban development; education to achieve universal schooling (by 2004) and to boost the retention rate; and health and water supply.				
Niger	Sustained and sustainable economic growth; macroeconomic stability; development of productive sectors, income generation and growth; agriculture and herding; development and use of surface resources; development of basic social services; promotion of good governance; a Rural Development Strategy to foster access to economic opportunities for rural producers, anticipate risks, improve food security and provide sustainable development of natural resources; building the capacity of rural institutions and organizations; private-sector revitalization: infrastructure, health, education, living conditions and sanitation; urban development; mining development; microfinance; technical and vocational training; and youth employment.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Privatize, deregulate and liberalize key sectors of the economy; coordinate national sectoral development strategies for agriculture, industry (especially SMEs) and services (especially tourism); develop infrastructure, especially electricity, transport, and water; address the problems of financing the real sector and mobilize long-term savings and investment; create effective regulatory regimes that include environmental standards; and target programmes to promote private-sector growth and development. Developed to facilitate the Nigeria Vision 2020.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Senegal	Wealth creation; capacity strengthening and basic social services; improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable groups; decentralization and issues relating to implementation and financing of activities.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sierra Leone	Good governance; peace consolidation; national security, food security, infrastructure development: private-sector development, human development (which addresses education, health-care delivery, water and sanitation); cross-cutting issues such as environment, HIV/AIDS, youth issues, gender equality and empowerment.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Togo	Strengthening of governance: consolidation of the foundations of strong and sustainable growth: structural reforms; industry; craft; commerce; tourism; infrastructure; natural resources and environment; disaster management; job creation. development of human capital: education, health; sanitation; drinking water; gender equity and equality; social protection; youth; sports and recreation; community development and reduction of regional imbalances.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

NEx – Not explicit;

Source: Compiled from country PRSs.

Table 2.3 shows the improvements made to the second-generation PRSs, in that they covered issues that were not included in the first. Analysis of the table suggests that the priority sustainable development issues converge on ensuring the well-being of the people.

Table 2.3: Priorities of second-generation PRSs

Country	Time frame	Year of approval	Approving body	Priorities
Benin	3 years	2007	Government	<p>Stress on diversification policies in order to accelerate economic growth; promote good governance; strengthen the social sector in support of poverty reduction efforts and sustainable human development.</p> <p>Priority areas: Acceleration of growth (stabilization of the macroeconomic framework; stimulation of the private sector; diversification of the economy; promotion of regional integration); development of infrastructure; human capital building; promotion of good governance; balanced and sustainable regional development and environment.</p>
Burkina Faso	3 years	2004	Government	<p>Regionalized to ensure high participation; action programme to ensure greater consistency and increase the visibility of public policies in the area of poverty reduction; consensual matrix of indicators to measure the progress made each year.</p> <p>Priority Action Programme: accelerating broad-based growth; promoting access to basic social services and social protection for the poor; increasing employment and income-generating activities for the poor in an equitable manner; promoting good governance.</p>
Cape Verde	4 years	2008	Government	<p>Major strategic aims: good governance; human capital; competitiveness; infrastructure building; and social cohesion. Adopting a Transformation Strategy closely linked to the consolidation of democracy based on sound institutions.</p>
Côte d'Ivoire	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gambia	5 years	2006	High Level Economic Committee	<p>Five pillars or areas of intervention namely: create an enabling policy environment to promote growth and poverty reduction; enhance the capacity and output of productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, industry, trade and tourism, with an emphasis on productive capacities of the poor and vulnerable populations; improve coverage of the basic social services and social protection needs of the poor and vulnerable; enhance governance systems and build the capacity of local communities and CSOs to play an active role in economic growth and poverty reduction; mainstream poverty-related, cross-cutting issues into poverty reduction.</p>

Country	Time frame	Year of approval	Approving body	Priorities
Ghana	3 years	2005	Cabinet and Parliament	Better integration of the various dimensions; MDG targets and indicators internalized and mainstreamed. Whereas the first-generation PRS was directed primarily towards attaining the anti-poverty objectives of the United Nations MDGs, the second-generation PRS introduced a shift in strategic focus, towards accelerating the growth of the economy so that Ghana could achieve middle-income status within a measurable planning period.
Guinea	4 years	2007	Government	Revival of the strategies in the first-generation PRSs: good governance; development of basic infrastructure and social services; revival of sustainable economic growth and of efforts to expedite implementation of MDGs in Guinea.
Guinea-Bissau	5 years	2011	Government	N/A
Liberia				N/A
Mali				Priority areas: development of the productive sector; food security and rural development; development of SMEs; protection and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources; development of infrastructure; pursuance of reform of the business environment; development of the financial sector. Pursuance and consolidation of structural reforms; consolidation of public administrative reform; promotion of democratic governance and public freedoms; capacity- building for civil society; strengthening of regional and subregional integration initiatives; strengthening of the social sector: creation and promotion of long-term jobs; increased access to basic social services and HIV/AIDS control.
Mauritania ⁴	5 years	2006	Government	Maintained and augmented the priority areas, with a cross-cutting focus intended to strengthen leadership, monitoring, evaluation and coordination.

Country	Time frame	Year of approval	Approving body	Priorities
Niger	5 years	2008	Government	Equitable access to quality social services; control of population growth; reduction of inequalities; strengthening of social security for vulnerable groups; gender equity; protection of children; youth development; social protection for the disadvantaged; disaster risk prevention; promotion of good governance; strengthening local governance; improving economic governance; enhancing the rule of law; reforming the judicial sector; consolidating political governance; infrastructure development; consolidating public real estate assets; developing energy supply; developing ICT; developing the transport sector; effective implementation of the strategy: developing partnerships; strengthening the capacities of both public and the private sectors, as well as those of civil society.
Nigeria	N/A			N/A
Senegal	5 years	2006	Government	Wealth creation and pro-poor growth - new priority sectors such as transport and energy; more vigorous promotion of access to core social services with emphasis on attainment of the social sector MDGs; social protection; risk and disaster prevention and management (e.g., capsizing of the Le Joola ferryboat, floods, locust swarms, unseasonable rainfall, etc.); good governance; decentralized and participatory development.
Sierra Leone	5 years	2008	Government	Enhancing national electricity supply; developing the national transportation network; agriculture and fisheries; education; gender equality; school feeding programme; water and sanitation; gender and children; health (malaria, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS).
Togo	N/A			N/A

⁴ Mauritania prepared a PRS for the period 2001-2015. The first four-year action plan covered the period 2001-2004 and the second action plan covered 2006-2010.

Source: Compiled from country PRSs.

While the time frames of the second-generation PRSs of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea and the Niger remained unchanged, those of the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone decreased. In general, improvements made to the second-generation PRSs show that countries have continued to improve sustainable development strategy formulation.

The greatest challenge lies in the dynamic implementation of these policies and strategies. Results of policy and strategy implementation will be discussed in section 3.

2.2 Integration of pillars of sustainable development

Integration of the three pillars of sustainable development is the most difficult balance to achieve in formulating a national strategy. Yet, it is this integration that will allow strategies to successfully achieve sustainable development objectives. Discussions with key officials of some countries (including Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal) indicated that the three pillars were treated in an integrated manner. After further probing during discussions, it was also revealed that a tremendous challenge to integration existed, namely, the role of CSPGs.

In many countries, after Governments submitted their sectoral strategies, they employed CSPGs to undertake the harmonization so as to ensure integration. In almost all countries, these CSPGs were different from CSDs and this indicated that integration was not being properly done. The reason for this was that CSPGs were not well versed in the concept of sustainable development and its integration. What they mainly did was to look at the overlap and consistency of the programmes but this did not ensure effective integration. Key personnel who had knowledge of integration issues often did not attend CSPG and CSD meetings. Rather, they were always represented by lower-ranking officials who usually had little knowledge of the subject matter.

Proper integration examines the impact of policies, projects and programmes in one sector on other sectors and how that impact can be mitigated. Some ideas for improving integration in sustainable development strategy formulation are presented in box 1.

Box 1: Improving integration in sustainable development strategy formulation

The problem of integration could be resolved in the following way. CSPGs or CSDs should be formed in each priority sector of the economy that submits a strategy during national strategy formulation. These CSPGs or CSDs should then be trained in integration of sustainable development strategies. The integration should begin at the sectoral level during strategy development. Sectoral strategy development should not be the responsibility of the CSPGs or CSDs alone. When the vision of a sector strategy is laid out by the Government, staff of all sectors should brainstorm on this over the planning period. Then, a subcommittee that will formulate the sectoral strategy is set up and this will be either the CSPG or the CSD for the sector.

While the strategy is being formulated, the group will trace all the linkages of policies, programmes, projects and plans with other sectors and anticipate the impact of other related sector strategies on that particular strategy. This should be done for all sectors. When all strategies are sent to the Planning Commission or Unit, it is these CSPGs or CSDs from the various sectors that will do the integration. It is easier when sectors have already outlined the areas in which to undertake synergy-building or integration.

To ensure ownership and comprehensiveness of sectoral strategy, CSPGs or CSDs must from time to time make presentations to the respective staff of the sector about progress with strategy development for their input. This should continue until the strategy is completed.

In terms of country ownership, it was realized that all countries organized broad participation with stakeholders, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, ministries, departments and agencies (MDA) and local governments. Although some of the consultations were not very effective, planning units have been learning and improving the situation. In some countries such as Ghana and the Gambia, local districts submitted district plans. The major issue discovered in terms of sustainable development was the lack of LTDS. There were few countries

that had such strategies. For countries in West Africa to make any headway in terms of what and where they should be in the next 20 years, there should be a LTDS from which short- to medium-term strategies can be developed.

2.3 Challenges

Challenges facing countries in ensuring effective integration include resources constraints; the challenge of meeting sectoral development priorities; capacity-building for sustainable development, particularly in terms of integrating environment and natural resources management concerns; strengthening the capacity of local government to improve service delivery and sustainable local-level planning, as well as putting in place a coherent and clearly identified sustainability R&D programme.

Sustainable development strategy processes need to be recognized as a learning process in which information about progress towards sustainability or otherwise is used constructively to revise the mechanism and the means of realizing objectives (OECD/UNDP, 2002). In this regard, they should embody mechanisms for monitoring, follow-up, evaluation and feedback, including the setting of realistic and flexible targets. Countries have used different sets of indicators to monitor the pillars of sustainable development depending on their own needs and capacities. Almost all the indicators used have been selected from the sustainable development indicators.

One monitoring tool that has been absent is the need to monitor expenditure for projects and programmes. This is a major problem not only for sustainable development monitoring but also for the monitoring of all activities in the subregion.

Monitoring is key to the success of any programme because it is acknowledged that many countries have significant resource leakages during implementation of projects and programmes. There should be ongoing monitoring and evaluation at critical points in project implementation, not only to ensure that the specified amount of resources budgeted for the project or programme actually goes into it, but also to ensure that there is value for money in terms of efficiency of expenditure. Rigid monitoring of this indicator will help reduce the financial challenge that confronts many countries in implementing their sustainable development agenda.

2.4 Recommendations

In order to properly address priority sustainable development issues and ensure interlinkages of the three pillars, there is a need to:

- (a) Assist countries to develop and implement sustainable development strategies that embody the key characteristics of NSSDs;
- (b) Ensure that NSSDs address intergenerational equity through the development of long-term strategies of 20 to 25 years from which short- to medium-term strategies are derived;

- (c) Ensure that planning institutions are staffed with capable people and make them independent from the political process;
- (d) Integrate NSSD/PRS into budget processes to generate the budget support required. In this regard, the leadership role of ministries/agencies responsible for planning and finance in strategy development and implementation should be enhanced;
- (e) Build synergies from the sectoral levels during strategy development to ensure a balanced integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development;
- (f) Decentralize implementation to subnational levels, build capacity and ensure adequate resources at local level for implementing agencies;
- (g) Monitor and evaluate implementation to ensure continuous learning and improvement in strategy development and implementation. This will require improved data collection, especially at the district level;
- (h) Create platforms for learning groups on the development of NSSDs; and
- (i) Put mechanisms in place for coordination of MDA activities.

III. Institutional framework for sustainable development

Institutions are the bedrock for the efficient functioning of any system. When examining institutions in sustainable development management, the behavioural patterns of entities have to be included. These patterns pertain to both the formulation and implementation of frameworks, laws, regulations, conventions, customs and practices that guide sustainable development. ECOWAS, since its inception in 1975, focused on promoting cooperation and development until 1993, when the treaty was revised to make the Community focus more on deepening social and economic integration in the subregion.

The highest policymaking body is the Authority of Heads of State and Government which is made up of the Heads of State and Government of member States. The Council of Ministers, comprising Ministers in charge of ECOWAS affairs, finance and foreign affairs, assumes the role of the Governing Board for the Commission. It meets twice a year and reports directly to the Authority. The Commission of ECOWAS comprises a President, Vice-President and seven Commissioners who hold the executive authority of the Community.

3.1 Subregional institutional framework

ECOWAS has made some progress in the area of peace and security as well as with the free movement of its citizens within the Community. However, it faces many challenges, including poverty and a lack of synergy among the various regional programmes. Additionally, regional trade threatens the fragile peace and security situation of the subregion. These problems, among others, prompted the Authority of Heads of State and Government to adopt Vision 2020 in June 2007, with the following objectives:

- (a) Moving from an “ECOWAS of States” to an “ECOWAS of People”;
- (b) Creating a conducive environment in which people live in dignity and peace under the rule of law and good governance;
- (c) Achieving a borderless West African subregion; and
- (d) Establishing a subregion that is well integrated into the global village and that derives maximum benefits from globalization.

The Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched in 2007 as the main framework for sustainable development in the implementation of Vision 2020. The aim of CDP is to translate the LTDS of the subregion into an integrated and specific programme of actions. The framework lays emphasis on the following ten strategic axes that focus on ensuring coordination and convergence for regional action programmes:

- (a) Financial and monetary integration;
- (b) Human development;
- (c) Development research and innovation;

- (d) Common policies for management of natural resources and the environment;
- (e) Integration of people;
- (f) Cooperation among member States;
- (g) Development of common agricultural and industrial policies;
- (h) Interconnection of transport infrastructure;
- (i) Interconnection of communication infrastructure; and
- (j) Interconnection of energy infrastructure

The regional and sectoral policies that CDP integrates include the PRSP, national strategies to achieve MDGs, overall objectives of NEPAD, the UEMOA Regional Economic Programme (REP) and the Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme (EPADP).

In formulating the programme, the Community took into consideration the principles of subsidiarity, collegiality, coherence and use of regional experience in economic development, comprising four main stages: sensitization and capacity-building; inventory of existing programmes; prioritization; planning and impact assessment; and the donors' roundtable. The process was also participatory since it involved stakeholders from the ECOWAS Commission, member States, regional and national CSOs, the private sector, academia and development partners.

Within the ECOWAS Commission, CDP is under the supervision of the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy, who is in charge of the coordination of programmes within the Commission. It is headed by a Coordinator who ensures information flow among all stakeholders involved in the CDP process. There is also the Internal Technical Committee chaired by the Director of Cabinet of the President, which is responsible for making technical proposals during CDP formulation. It plays a role in internal coordination and information dissemination by keeping all Commissioners abreast of the CDP activities under implementation.

Also, there is a regional consultation body made up of major regional actors involved in CDP formulation, which is responsible for coordination and information dissemination at the regional level, to ensure that all activities within the subregion are tackled from the same perspective. This National Committee for Economic Policy for UEMOA countries and the National Coordinating Committee for non-UEMOA countries are the institutional anchor of CDP in each member State, responsible for implementation at national level. They are constantly in touch with the Commission through the Office of the Coordinator.

In addition to the CDP, ECOWAS has specific programmes on environment, agriculture, energy and health. In 2007, the Commission set up the Environment Directorate under the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water and mandated the Directorate to formulate and implement policies on a range of environmental concerns. In 2008, the Directorate developed an Environmental Policy and Action Plan that focused on strengthening environmental governance, promoting sustainable resources management, and preventing pollution and cross-border trafficking in hazardous waste. It also focused on assisting with educational and sensitization programmes to help local people understand the importance of these new priorities. Further,

ECOWAS has put programmes and policies in place on desertification, climate change, forest management, biotechnology and biosafety. In collaboration with Africa Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), the Community has also taken the initiative to increase the monitoring of environmental factors, such as cropland water management, rangeland management and monitoring of sustainable management of environmental resources.

In the area of agriculture, the Commission developed the ECOWAS Common Agriculture Policy in 2005, as a regional version of AU/NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. The policy has seven objectives: food security; reducing dependence and increasing self-sufficiency in food; involving producers in markets; improving living conditions through job creation; intensifying production systems in a sustainable manner; reducing the vulnerability of regional economies to instability and insecurity; and adopting funding mechanisms. With respect to energy, the Commission established the West Africa Power Pool in 2000, which served as a blueprint for a regional electricity grid that will quadruple capacity by 2020. The Commission also established the West African Gas Pipeline programmes for taking natural gas from Nigeria to Benin, Ghana and Togo.

In 1987, ECOWAS formed the West African Health Organization by merging the Francophone Organisation de Coordination et de Cooperation pour la Lutte Contre les Grandes Endemies (OCCGE) and the Anglophone West African Health Community. The organization is a Specialized Agency of ECOWAS with the mission of attaining the highest possible standard in protecting the health of the peoples in the subregion through harmonization of the health policies of member States, pooling of resources and cooperation for a collective and strategic response to the health needs of the subregion. Various strategic plans of the organization have focused on support for quality improvement of health systems and services, sustainable financing of health and institutional development of the West African Health Organization. These strategic plans have been implemented through: coordination and harmonization of policies; health information provision; development of research; promotion and dissemination of best practices; development of human resources for health, medicines and vaccines; traditional medicine diversification of health-financing mechanisms; and strengthened capacity-building programmes.

In spite of the achievements and the vertical linkages at both programme and institutional level with NEPAD and UNECA, some institutional challenges still exist, making it difficult to ensure integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. First, the three pillars are handled by several Commissioners. The Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources handles agriculture and deals with environmental issues such as climate change and desertification. The Commissioner for Human Development and Gender deals with social issues. Mining falls under the purview of the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy, and energy issues are handled by the Commissioner for Infrastructure. Though the Commissioners meet regularly, very little evidence of coordination exists at the programme level.

3.2 National institutional framework

Before the Rio Conference, the concept of sustainable development was not in place to ensure harmonization of the economic, social and environment aspects of the pillars. Strategies were focused entirely on economic growth to the detriment of the other pillars, especially the

environmental pillar where the lack of focus led to degradation and over-exploitation of natural resources.

Following the Conference, Rio+5 and WSSD, most countries established various forms of institutions and strengthened others for formulating sustainable development strategies. More specifically, countries have established NCSDs to create awareness on sustainable development and to ensure that development strategies integrate the three pillars. According to the Earth Council Report 2000, the roles of NCSDs include:

- (a) Facilitating participation and cooperation between civil society and governments;
- (b) Integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development as well as policy and action at different government levels;
- (c) Localizing global agreements and other international, regional and subregional conventions related to sustainable development;
- (d) Assisting Governments in decision-making and policy formulation and providing clear guidance on policy tools, regulations and indicators of sustainable development;
- (e) Disseminating information to relevant stakeholders; and
- (f) Monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, including acknowledgement of best practices and milestones.

Complete information on NCSDs in the subregion is not available. However, a survey conducted by UNECA in 2005 on the NCSDs of 16 countries in Africa revealed some of the strengths and weaknesses of these institutions. In the following paragraphs, analysis of these institutions is done, based on this study and on the observations made.

According to the survey, most countries have developed or are implementing their NSSDs using different approaches. Some countries are restructuring their decision-making process to achieve integration of social and environmental issues. Others have developed strategy documents that embodied the broad strategic framework while some updated other strategies and planning instruments to incorporate the sustainability principles. Countries are progressively applying the principles of multi-stakeholder participation and ownership, sound leadership and good governance. Also, the ministries responsible for planning and finance are playing a key role in the NSSD process. The types of NSSD being developed and implemented are quite diverse and include those that highlight the environmental or the economic dimension, poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and national long-term visions. The time frames of the different strategy documents vary from three years (poverty reduction strategies) to 25 years (national long-term visions). Also, most NSSDs were approved at the highest political level.

Priorities addressed by the different NSSDs varied in comprehensiveness, but most covered the economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainable development. An important observation was that in some cases, activities that were being implemented and the key players involved were at variance with the priorities defined by the strategy and the stakeholders specified. Countries regularly monitored progress in implementation using indicators that covered the different dimensions of sustainable development which resulted in improvements to the NSSD process. Appraisal of the extent to which PRSs embodied NSSD characteristics in

section 2, revealed that PRSs incorporated NSSD objectives and integrated the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development in the implementation stage. The problem came in the implementation stage, when integration, synergies and prioritization were not very effective.

The location of the NCSD within the administrative structure of government is used as an indicator of the political clout that could be exercised by the body in influencing decisions and actions on sustainable development. NCSDs that are located under the Office of the President/Prime Minister obtain the requisite attention and achieve effective implementation and coordination of policies and plans. In the seven countries visited, many did not have their NCSDs in that location and there was a lot of evidence to suggest that coordination and integration of policies and plans by NCSDs was not the best. This to some extent explains the marginal success achieved in the area of sustainable development, which will be discussed in section 3.

Many NCSDs are located in the ministries in the hope that locating them there would ensure continuity and effective collaboration with other sectoral ministries. However, inter-ministerial rivalries present a major threat to the effective functioning of NCSDs. NCSDs also collaborate and coordinate activities with different agencies operating at all levels to promote synergy and ensure effective delivery. Most countries use local and national institutions, subregional and regional intergovernmental agencies, bilateral and multilateral development partners for their coordination. The mode of coordination takes the form of general assemblies, committees, task forces or boards that allow for direct communication. This is the case for Benin, the Gambia and Ghana.

Representation on NCSDs cuts across all key sectors of the economy ranging from environment and natural resources, planning and finance-related government ministries and agencies. However, representation from social sector-related ministries and agencies, as well as some major groups, particularly workers, trade unions, parliamentarians, indigenous people, farmers, women and youth groups could be improved.

Almost all countries in the subregion have decentralized local government administration but have not decentralized NCSDs. The non-availability of NCSDs at local level makes it difficult to involve local entities in implementation of the sustainable development agenda. The structure for decentralizing the NCSD in Nigeria could serve as a good example. In Nigeria, each State Government has a Ministry/Agency responsible for environment. All Commissioners of Environment at State level work closely with the Minister for Environment, as members of the National Council on the Environment, along with partners representing the respective pillars of sustainable development. Thus, all the pillars of sustainable development are taken into consideration at the local level.

Integrating sustainable development through horizontal (different sectors) and vertical (different levels) linkages is a key function of NCSDs. Countries use different combinations of tools and approaches to achieve integration. Most do so by organizing various types of consultations and using environment-related tools and approaches. Only Benin and Ghana cited the use of Strategic Environmental Assessment as an integration tool. In essence, institutions that have the legal mandate for the formulation and implementation of sustainable development exist but most of them are functioning poorly due to various challenges.

3.3 Challenges

ECOWAS countries face a number of challenges in their quest to develop strong institutions for sustainable development strategy formulation and implementation. Challenges reported by the UNECA survey of the four participating West African countries are presented in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Challenges

Country	Challenges								
	Owner-ship/ commit-ment	Govern-ance/ partici-pation	Integra-tion/ co-ordina-tion	Capacity			Sectoral development		
				Inst	Tech	Fin	So-cial	Econ	Env
Benin			X				X		
Ghana	X	X	X	X	X				
Senegal							X		X
Sierra Leone				X	X	X			

Source: UNECA, 2011, National Strategies for Sustainable Development in Africa: A Sixteen-Country Assessment, available at: <http://www.uneca.org/fssdd/documents/NatlStratsForSustDev.pdf>

Discussions with key officials in the seven countries visited also confirmed the challenges outlined in table 3.1. Many of the officials mentioned the challenges shown above as constraining factors to the effective functioning of NCSDs. Other constraints mentioned included: inadequate human capacity; poor governance; political and policy inconsistencies; low level of awareness among the populace and even among policymakers; lack of harmony between national and subregional policies; inability to monitor and evaluate the process with the view to learning lessons; poor donor commitment to meeting development-assistance pledges; insufficient understanding of the concept of sustainable development and integration tool by different stakeholders; insufficient synergy and communication between the different MDAs; political interference as well as poor alignment of development-assistance objectives to recipient country priorities; inadequate incentives for policymakers and implementers; low wages and benefits for public-sector workers which do not encourage them to give their best in terms of policy formulation and implementation. These challenges are crucial to NSSD formulation and implementation and need to be addressed for process effectiveness.

3.4 Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, the following recommendations will help strengthen these institutions:

- (a) UNECA, ECOWAS, AfDB and other partners should collaborate and coordinate actions to assist countries in strengthening and resourcing regional policies to translate them into visible National Action Plans;
- (b) Countries should be assisted in designing or strengthening sustainable development policies and strategies that address their priorities, embody the key characteristics of

- NSSDs and include investment plans that address resource constraints;
- (c) Countries should be assisted to identify and establish innovative financing mechanisms to supplement government and donor funds;
 - (d) Countries should be assisted to adopt or enhance the use and application of integrative approaches and tools;
 - (e) Like the United Nations, ECOWAS must establish a permanent Commission for sustainable development;
 - (f) ECOWAS should also establish centres of excellence for training in sustainable development, which will also undertake research on sustainable development;
 - (g) The Community should also promote experience sharing, information exchange and networking among the NCSDs;
 - (h) ECOWAS and NEPAD should make efforts to strengthen and resource focal points in translating regional policies into visible actions at national level;
 - (i) UNECA SROs, RECs and partners operating at subregional level should be more involved in promoting implementation;
 - (j) NSSDs should address intergenerational equity through the development of long-term strategies of 20 to 25 years from which short - to medium - term strategies are derived;
 - (k) Planning institutions should be staffed with capable people and be independent from the political process. To ensure continuity of plans, the composition of planning units or commissions should include representatives of identifiable political parties;
 - (l) In view of the need to integrate NSSDs into budget processes to generate the budget support required, the leadership role of ministries/agencies responsible for planning and finance for strategy development and implementation should be enhanced;
 - (m) Since NSSDs should ensure balanced integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development, synergies should be built from sectoral levels during strategy development;
 - (n) NSSD processes should adequately recognize the need to decentralize implementation to subnational levels, build capacity and adequately resource local-level implementing agencies for effective implementation;
 - (o) Countries need assistance to improve monitoring and evaluation with a view to continuous lesson learning in improving strategy development and implementation;
 - (p) Development agencies should work with countries to determine how best to address their challenges and needs and should be flexible enough to cater to their specific needs and circumstances;
 - (q) Regional and subregional bodies such as UNECA and ECOWAS should create platforms for learning groups on the development of NSSDs;
 - (r) Countries should ensure consistency in all development policies in all departments at both local and national levels through the proper harmonization of ECOWAS policies; and
 - (s) More effort should be made to incorporate the private sector and CSOs in policy formulation, in order to gain their acceptance.

IV. Concrete actions taken to highlight best practices, achievements, challenges and constraints

Countries in the subregion have taken several measures to ensure sustainable development and are achieving some positive though marginal results. Specifically, all countries have adopted and are implementing environmental action plans. They have also adopted strategies addressing land degradation and desertification, biodiversity and climate issues, economic stabilization and social improvement. Some countries have adopted Integrated Water Resources Management and Integrated Coastal Area Management plans. Legislation has also been enacted to support implementation of the respective strategies and plans. Education and sensitization as well as institutional strengthening programmes are continuously being implemented.

In the area of environmental planning, countries have institutionalized and are implementing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Information Systems programmes. Plans are far advanced for some of them to begin implementing Natural Resource Accounting and using economic instruments to facilitate progress towards sustainable resource management. Additionally, countries are implementing climate services such as extension services for agriculture, observation networks for the planning and management of water resources and climate-prediction facilities for forward planning of many economic activities.

Community-Based Natural Resources Management programmes are increasingly being adopted to promote the sustainable management of forest and biodiversity resources. This entails ensuring that communities fully participate in the planning and management of the natural resources from which they derive their livelihoods. Furthermore, some initiatives to promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of forest genetic resources have, to some extent, been taken within the framework of the Convention of Biological Diversity. In recognition of the transboundary nature of environmental resources, countries are increasingly adopting and implementing regional approaches and initiatives to resource management. River Basin Organizations have been formed and these are implementing programmes of transboundary significance.

In the area of climate change, climate-services centres have been established. Mitigation and adaptation strategies to climate variability are being adopted. In a bid to enhance air quality, the Air Pollution Information Network for Africa (APINA) was formed in 1997 to provide a coordinated framework for addressing the region's air pollution problems. Many ECOWAS countries also made good progress in meeting their commitment under the Dakar Declaration to ban leaded gasoline by the end of 2005. Within the framework of the environmental initiative of NEPAD, programmes focusing on priority environmental issues in Africa have been prepared to enhance regional implementation and ensure a coordinated approach to addressing environmental problems.

ECOWAS countries are parties to relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity

and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and their respective Protocols. The revised version of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources of 1968 was adopted in Maputo in 2003. The Abidjan Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environments of West and Central African States has also been adopted by almost all countries. Countries have been meeting their reporting obligations under the various Conventions and are at various stages of implementing their respective strategies and action plans. Details of country- specific sustainable development strategies have been discussed in section 2. The next subsection elaborates on the achievements under the three pillars of sustainable development.

4.1 Economic performance

At the onset of decolonization in Africa, many countries adopted national development plans with the State serving as the engine of growth in the 1960s and the early parts of the 1970s. This period was very significant in terms of improved development for African countries. Many of the development indicators on agriculture, manufacturing, investment, savings, exports and imports were commendable. In the later part of the 1970s and the early 1980s the situation deteriorated. Most West African economies performed poorly, basically due to higher oil prices and poor governance. The poor economic performance during this period led to the formulation of SAPs. These strategies were made up of trade and payments liberalization, generous incentives for the extraction of natural resources, privatization, labour retrenchments and removal of subsidies on social services such as education, health and utilities. The poor were severely affected while skilled human resources and financial resources leaked out of Africa. Lack of accountability, frustration and the lack of progress created conditions in which many political leaders resorted to rent seeking (Tutu and others, 1993).

The economies of many West African countries have picked up since the 1990s, but the gains made were quite fragile due to weak domestic savings and the vulnerability of the subregion to external shocks (ECA 2001a). This was also due to the lack of infusion of resources into agriculture modernization and development of the agriculture value chain. Over the past 20 years (1990-2010), all West African countries have achieved an overall modest positive average annual real growth rate in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Trends in real GDP by country, 1985-2010

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	7.5	3.2	4.6	5.8	2.9	3.8
Burkina Faso	8.5	-0.6	5.7	1.8	6.4	3.5
Cape Verde	7.9	0.7	7.5	6.6	11.9	3.6
Côte d'Ivoire	4.5	-1.1	7.1	-3.7	1.3	3.8
Ghana	5.1	3.3	4.1	3.7	5.9	4.7
Guinea		4.3	4.6	1.9	3.0	-0.3
Gambia	-0.8	3.6	0.9	5.5	-0.9	6.2
Guinea-Bissau	4.2	6.1	4.4	7.5	4.3	3.0
Liberia	-0.8	-51.0	-4.3	25.7	5.3	4.6
Mali	-11.4	-1.9	6.2	3.2	6.1	4.5
Niger	7.7	-1.3	2.6	-1.4	4.5	-1.2
Nigeria	9.7	8.2	2.5	5.4	5.4	7.0
Senegal	3.3	-0.7	5.4	3.2	5.6	2.2
Sierra Leone	-5.3	3.4	-8.0	3.8	7.2	3.2
Togo	5.6	-0.2	7.8	-0.8	1.2	3.2

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank

Average annual real GDP growth rate was around 5 per cent for the subregion during this period. Burkina Faso (5.6 per cent), Cape Verde (5.9 per cent), Ghana (5.0 per cent), Guinea-Bissau (5.0 per cent) and Nigeria (5.2 per cent) were the best performers in terms of average annual GDP growth rate. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo appeared to be the worst performers. Generally, from 1990 to 2010, 10 out of 15 ECOWAS countries achieved an average real GDP growth rate of less than 5 per cent per annum. Only five countries achieved a growth rate of 5 per cent or more during this period. Despite these successes, West African countries still face the challenge of raising and sustaining growth for a long period.

Disaggregation of growth by decades (1990-1999 and 2000-2010) shows that countries such as Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo improved their overall average annual growth rate in the 2000s (2000-2010) compared to the 1990s (1990-1999). On the other hand, for countries such as Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Mali, the overall average annual growth rate for the two periods decreased. The highest decrease in growth for the period was recorded by Liberia.

The above-average performance of Nigeria could be attributed to the spillover effects of the reforms in the 1990s that saw diversification of the economy from oil dependency and the improvement in governance emanating from competition among states. In general, growth in West Africa over the past two decades can be attributed to political stability and the strong global demand for the main West African export commodities, especially crude oil, minerals and cash crops such as cocoa.

Despite the fact that prices of mineral resources, especially gold, have been increasing on average for the past two decades, countries have not benefitted much from this. Exploitation of mineral resources in the subregion is very capital-intensive and most of the benefits go to the foreign companies that develop them, since indigenous companies do not have the capital and expertise. In Ghana, a study showed that out of US\$ 3 billion earned from gold mining in 2009, only 22 per cent was injected into the Ghanaian economy. Yet, the environmental and social cost was close to the 22 per cent (Tutu, 2011). The oil and gas exploration in Nigeria has not improved the well-being of most citizens of the country. Indeed, even the people of Benin and River States where the resource is abundantly exploited, do not benefit much from it; hence, the constant uprisings in the area.

Similar examples can be found in almost all ECOWAS countries. The inability to make the transition from poor local participation in key sectors of the economy and from the overconcentration in the economic pillar of sustainable development to some extent reflect the difficulties countries face in formulating and implementing integrated strategies. This inadequacy also underscores the need to develop and implement credible sustainable development strategies by properly mainstreaming social and environmental issues into the development strategies that are mainly economic. Such strategies should include renegotiating contracts and developing codes to ensure that the mining sector sustainably benefits countries.

Savings in the subregion over the past two decades reduced on average, with a significant impact on investment. Gross Domestic Savings (GDS) as a proportion of GDP, which averaged 4.7 per cent between 1990 and 2000 reduced to 1 per cent between 2000 and 2010. The average subregional performance was approximately 2.8 per cent for the period 1990 to 2010. the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal maintained an average savings to GDP ratio of more than 7 per cent between 1990 and 2010, while Cape Verde and Sierra Leone maintained a negative savings to GDP ratio over the same period (table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Trends in GDS and GCF as a per cent of GDP by country, 1985-2010

Country	Gross domestic savings (per cent of GDP)						Gross capital formation (per cent of GDP)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	-4.1	2.2	6.7	6.0	6.9	10.7	8.9	14.2	19.6	18.9	19.6	25.0
Burkina Faso	1.8	5.4	11.5	0.6	4.8		23.0	18.9	23.9	16.8	20.5	
Cape Verde		-8.1	2.4	-14.2	4.4	12.0		22.9	42.4	19.7	37.3	53.8
Côte d'Ivoire	27.3	11.3	22.9	17.9	17.2	19.4	13.0	6.7	15.6	10.8	9.7	11.4
Gambia	5.0	10.7	-3.9	8.5	4.0	6.3	15.1	22.3	20.2	17.4	26.8	25.9
Ghana	6.6	5.5	11.6	5.6	3.7	8.7	9.6	14.4	20.0	24.0	29.0	19.6
Guinea		22.2	18.0	15.4	18.3	16.9		24.5	21.4	19.7	19.5	21.6
Guinea-Bissau	-12.9	2.8	-1.2	-8.5			35.1	29.9	22.3	11.3		
Liberia	-0.3				2.4						16.4	
Mali	-11.4	6.4	7.8	12.0	11.0		15.8	23.0	22.9	24.6	22.6	
Niger	0.6	1.2	0.2	3.5	13.4		12.7	8.1	7.3	11.4	22.6	
Senegal	5.8	2.4	7.2	11.2	14.1	8.0	17.2	9.1	13.6	20.5	29.7	27.9
Sierra Leone	9.1	8.7	-2.3	-14.3	4.1	2.3	10.9	10.0	5.6	6.9	17.0	15.1
Togo	7.9	14.7	11.2	-2.2	1.5		16.6	26.6	16.1	17.8	18.4	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank

Low savings in the subregion can be partly attributed to low income. For Liberia and Sierra Leone, the rebuilding after the war may have been a significant factor for the low savings. It must be emphasized that it is through savings that investment in a country is sustained. With very little savings, most of the investment must come from donors, which is not sustainable financing. Gross Capital Formation (GCF) has been consistently higher than GDS and has seen some marginal increase over the years, with the exception of a few countries including Burkina Faso and Cape Verde, where some fluctuations were recorded. The consistently higher GCF compared to GDS was due to inflow from donors.

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) almost stagnated in the 1990s and even saw a slight decrease in the 2000s. ODA as a proportion of GDP averaged about 0.3 per cent for the period 1990 to 2000. Disaggregated figures showed the average for the period 1990-2000 was 0.3 per cent but decreased to about 0.2 per cent in the following decade (2000-2010). Guinea-Bissau and Liberia appeared to be the highest beneficiaries in terms of ODA to GDP ratio while Togo was the lowest.

Table 4.3: Trend in FDI and ODA by country, 1985-2010

Country	FDI, net inflows (per cent of GDP)						ODA (per cent of GDP)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	0.0	3.4	0.7	2.6	1.2	1.4	20.2	30.3	20.7	18.0	15.2	21.5
Burkina Faso	-0.1	0.0	0.4	0.9	1.0	2.1	37.4	34.0	34.6	13.1	23.7	26.7
Cape Verde		0.1	5.3	6.3	8.0	7.7	0.0	59.2	40.1	29.7	29.0	22.1
Côte d'Ivoire	0.4	0.4	1.9	2.3	1.9	1.7	4.5	13.1	17.4	5.5	1.1	20.9
Gambia	-0.2	4.5	2.0		11.3	5.4	52.1	51.0	17.6	17.9	14.3	22.4
Ghana	0.1	0.3	1.6	3.3	1.4	6.4	20.0	26.4	19.9	17.4	21.1	20.0
Guinea		0.7	0.0	0.3	3.6	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Guinea-Bissau	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.3	1.5	1.7	102.8	109.9	70.6	66.4	38.0	62.9
Liberia	-1.7	58.6	3.4	3.7	15.6	24.9	15.7	40.8	133.8	18.2	58.4	89.0
Mali	0.2	0.2	4.5	3.4	4.2	1.2	78.7	47.5	37.3	19.6	25.6	25.5
Niger	-0.7	1.6	0.4	0.5	1.3	13.7	58.9	40.5	22.9	18.5	28.4	18.7
Nigeria	1.7	2.1	3.8	2.5	4.4	3.3	0.3	1.1	0.7	0.5	12.1	2.2
Senegal	-0.5	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.5	1.6	25.3	36.6	22.2	14.9	14.2	15.6
Sierra Leone	-3.6	5.0	0.8	6.1	6.7	3.8	17.9	9.2	35.5	44.9	33.0	30.3
Togo	2.1	1.1	2.0	3.2	3.7	1.8	32.3	38.4	23.9	8.5	6.8	30.2

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has over the years been seen as a potent tool for economic growth in the subregion. As a result, many governments have implemented policies geared towards attracting FDI. Consequently, FDI to the subregion has increased over the past two decades (table 4.3). As a ratio of GDP, it averaged about 3.7 per cent for the period 1990-2010. Disaggregation of the figure shows that the 2000s saw an increase compared to the 1990s. FDI as a ratio of GDP averaged 2.3 per cent for the period 1990 to 2000 but more than doubled to 5.2 per cent for the period 2000 to 2010. Cape Verde, Gambia and Liberia were the largest recipients using the average share of FDI to GDP for the period 1990-2010 as a yardstick. Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Senegal were among the low recipients for the same period, with an FDI to GDP ratio of less than 2 per cent.

One important observation is that FDI in the subregion focuses on the exploitation of natural resources with very little focus on adding value to the resources, thereby providing little employment and incomes for the majority of the citizens. In Ghana for instance, more than 60 per cent of the FDI that came to the country from 1990 to 2000 went to the mining sector, more specifically, gold. However the contribution of the mining to GDP never exceeded 5 per cent (Twerefou, Aryeetey and Baffour, 2007). Such trends can neither lead to sustainable development nor help the country make the transition to a green economy.

Table 4.4: Trends in external balance on goods and services and current account balance by country, 1985-2010

Country	External balance on goods and services (per cent of GDP)						Current account balance (per cent of GDP)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	-13.0	-12.0	-12.9	-12.9	-12.6	-14.3	-3.7	-1.0	-8.3	-3.6	-5.3	
Burkina Faso	-21.1	-13.5	-12.5	-16.1	-15.6		-4.1	-2.5		-12.2	-11.7	
Cape Verde		-31.0	-40.0	-33.9	-32.9	-41.8		-1.1	-12.6	-10.9	-4.1	-9.9
Côte d'Ivoire	14.4	4.6	7.3	7.1	7.5	8.1	1.0	-11.2	-4.5	-2.3	0.2	7.2
Gambia	-10.1	-11.7	-24.1	-8.9	-22.8	-19.7	3.4	45.6	84.3	123.0	161.7	192.7
Ghana	-2.9	-9.0	-8.4	-18.4	-25.3	-10.8	-3.0	-3.8	-2.2	-7.8	-10.3	-4.6
Guinea		-2.4	-3.4	-4.3	-1.3	-4.7		-7.6	-5.9	-4.5		-9.8
Guinea-Bissau	-48.0	-27.1	-23.5	-19.8			-52.7	-18.6	-13.9		-1.8	
Liberia	6.6			-4.5	-14.0		6.0				-34.6	-31.6
Mali	-27.2	-16.6	-15.1	-12.6	-11.7		-16.0	-9.1	-11.5	-10.5	-8.3	
Niger	-12.1	-6.9	-7.2	-7.9	-9.2		-4.4	-9.5	-8.1	-5.8	-9.1	
Nigeria	3.7	14.6	2.1	21.9	15.5	8.7	9.2	17.5	-9.2	16.2	32.5	12.5
Senegal	-11.4	-6.8	-6.5	-9.3	-15.6	-19.9	-12.1	-6.4	-5.0	-7.1	-7.8	
Sierra Leone	-1.8	-1.3	-7.9	-21.2	-12.9	-12.8	0.3	-10.7	-13.6	-17.7	-8.5	-9.9
Togo	-8.7	-11.9	-5.0	-20.0	-16.9		-3.6	-5.2	-9.3	-10.5	-9.7	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

One important observation is that the adjustment programmes that have been implemented over the past three decades did not succeed in improving the balance-of-payment problem that confronted the subregion. Rather, these programmes worsened the situation. The average external balance on goods and services as a per cent of GDP was in deficit of 12.7 per cent for the period 1990 -2000 and worsened further to a deficit of about 17.8 per cent in the following decade (table 4.4). Deterioration of the trade balance in the 2000s can be attributed to the global food, energy and financial crises that led to increases in the global demand for these commodities, which pushed up prices.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the export of primary products did not encourage value addition and high prices for producers. Additionally, the dumping of goods from some countries, particularly Asian countries, made local industries uncompetitive and contributed to the worsening balance of trade.

Surprisingly, export crops accounted for a small proportion of GDP. For example, cocoa accounted for about 14 per cent of GDP in Côte d'Ivoire and 5.5 per cent in Ghana. Cotton contributed about 7 per cent of GDP for Mali, 6 per cent for Benin and 6 per cent for Chad, in 2008. The special attention that was given to export crops to the detriment of indigenous crops could also have been a contributory factor to the persistent poverty in the subregion. Value addition to these primary products would have been the best way to solve many of the poverty-related problems

that existed in the subregion in that it could have improved the terms of trade and affected the trade balance positively.

Similar trends can be observed in the current account balance. The current account balance as a ratio of GDP recorded a surplus of about 0.2 per cent in the period 1990-2000 but improved significantly to about 4.2 per cent in the period 2000-2010. There were some variations across the subregion as oil-producing countries such as Nigeria had improved the current account deficit, while the non-oil-producing countries experienced current account deficits, accentuated by rising oil prices.

Structural transformation is meant to improve the quality of life of the people by increasing productivity in agriculture and transferring the labour force to higher-earning sectors of manufacturing and services. This strategy will create higher earnings, employment and demand for the value chain of outputs of other sectors. Thus, one could expect that a reduction in the share of agriculture and increased shares of manufacturing and services would correspond with high employment, increased incomes and significantly reduced poverty. However, the kind of transformation taking place in most countries in the subregion at present makes it difficult to ensure sustainable development.

On average, West African economies are composed of GDP with a higher proportion of services (43 per cent), followed by industry (21 per cent) and agriculture (34 per cent). This theoretically suggests that the subregion is moving in the right direction. However, the manufacturing subsector of the industrial sector, which is an important component of the transformation process, is very small, accounting for only about 4 per cent of GDP. Productivity remains stagnant and the informal sector is horizontally expanding especially in the retail and wholesale of imported goods with no value addition. The shrinking of the agriculture sector accompanied by a decrease, or at best, a stagnation of the manufacturing sector suggests a pseudo-transformation process that needs to be well assessed, in terms of its overall impact on growth and poverty.

External debt continues to be a major challenge confronting countries in West Africa, largely as a result of the negative trade balance, the fiscal indiscipline that has resulted in huge budget overruns and the inability of many Governments to mobilize revenue from internal sources.

Table 4.5: External debt stocks as a percentage of GNI, by country, 1985-2010

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	88.3	62.1	71.2	62.0	36.1	16.1
Burkina Faso	33.1	26.9	53.6	54.6	36.9	22.9
Cape Verde		39.3	44.1	60.9	49.2	47.2
Côte d'Ivoire	153.4	187.3	188.7	124.9	76.2	53.0
Gambia	112.5	126.7	113.0	120.7	160.2	75.3
Ghana	50.7	64.7	86.9	126.6	63.6	37.3
Guinea		98.4	90.0	101.0	108.9	48.3
Guinea-Bissau	200.2	297.7	379.4	466.5	349.5	253.2
Liberia	154.8			723.0	939.7	257.5
Mali	113.1	102.6	122.3	123.7	63.9	29.6
Niger	87.5	72.5	87.6	95.9	59.4	18.8
Nigeria	68.1	130.7	131.7	77.9	22.3	5.1
Senegal	90.3	68.0	82.9	78.7	45.1	27.1
Sierra Leone	85.4	202.9	149.0	193.1	130.9	23.4
Togo	128.9	80.1	116.7	110.0	81.0	57.5

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Overall external debt as a ratio of Gross National Income (GNI) averaged about 131.3 per cent over the period 1990-2010. The expectation that implementation of the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries Initiative would lead to a significant reduction in the debt of West African countries, appeared not to have materialized. External debt as a ratio of GNI improved marginally from an average of about 134.0 per cent between the periods of 1990-2000, to about 128.7 per cent between the periods of 2000-2010. Countries such as Guinea-Bissau and Liberia were running huge foreign debt using average external debt to GNI ratio as a yardstick over the past two decades, while Burkina Faso and Nigeria appeared to be doing well with an average external debt to GDP ratio of about 41.2 per cent over the period 1990-2010 (table 4.5).

4.2 Social performance

A major pillar of sustainable development is social sustainability that addresses the issue of social well-being and quality of life. To assess progress in this pillar we focus on social and human development indicators such as infant mortality, life expectancy at birth, maternal mortality, TB prevalence rate, reported cases of malaria, population growth rate, total fertility rate, rate of urbanization, poverty, access to improved sanitation and water, enrolment ratios and unemployment.

Table 4.6: Total and urban population growth by country, 1985-2009

Country	Total population growth (annual per cent)						Urban population growth (annual per cent)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	2.5	2.8	2.8	3	3.4	3.4	8.3	5	4.5	4.8	5.3	5.5
Burkina Faso	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.1	5.2	5.4	4.6	3.9	4.2	4.1
Cape Verde	2.1	2.3	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.4	7.3	8.1	4.2	3.6	3	2.6
Côte d'Ivoire	3.9	3.4	2.9	2.1	1.6	1.9	4.7	4.1	3.8	3.0	3.0	3.2
Gambia	3.4	3.7	4	3.8	3.5	3	6.3	6.5	6.8	6.3	5.7	4.8
Ghana	3.3	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.1	4.3	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.8	3.5
Guinea	2.7	3.6	3.4	1.9	2	2.4	5	4.6	4.4	2.9	3.2	3.8
Guinea-Bissau	1.7	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.2	6.2	6.6	3.8	2.1	2.4	2.5
Liberia	1.8	-2	1.7	6.4	3.3	4.2	3.5	-1	7.1	6	5.2	
Mali	1.8	1.9	2.7	2.9	3.1	3	4.3	4	3.7	3.8	4.1	
Niger	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.9	4.4	4.2	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.4
Nigeria	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3
Senegal	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.8	3.6	3.1	3	3.1	3.2
Sierra Leone	2.4	1.3	-0.4	2.5	3.6	2.4	4	2	0.3	3.2	4.3	3.3
Togo	3.7	2.8	2.8	3.2	2.5	2.4	5.5	4.7	4.7	5	4.2	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Population growth in the subregion can be considered as rapid and poses a challenge to sustainable development. Average total population growth in the subregion is about 2.8 per cent, far higher than other subregions on the continent. Countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Liberia and the Niger have had average annual population growth rates of above 3 per cent over the past two decades with Cape Verde being the only country with an average growth rate of less than two per cent (table 4.6). With the exception of Benin, Mali, the Niger and Sierra Leone, all the countries have witnessed an overall decrease in average population growth rate in the 2000s. High population growth has been putting a considerable burden on families and governments in their quest to invest in social, economic and health needs, and consequently, in achieving the MDGs.

Urban population growth has been higher than overall population growth in most of the countries and poses an additional challenge to sustainable development due to the inability of Governments and the private sector to create the needed infrastructure and employment in urban areas. Countries recording average urban population growth rates of 4 per cent and above over the period 1990-2010 included Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, the Niger and Liberia. Urban population growth rates in the 2000s fell, compared to the 1990s, while the urbanization rates defined as the percentage urban of the total population, increased.

There has been some reduction in total fertility rates over the past decades in almost all West African countries indicating that the overall impact of population control measures was positive though marginal. All West African countries had total fertility rates of more than five children per woman in 1990s. Five countries (Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Senegal) managed to reduce their fertility rates to below five children per woman in 2009. Overall, efforts at controlling population in the subregion appeared low in comparison to other subregions which suggest that more needs to be done in order to achieve the MDGs (table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Trends in total fertility rate (births per woman)

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	7	6.8	6.6	6.3	6.1	5.8
Burkina Faso	7	6.7	6.4	6	5.6	5.4
Cape Verde	5.9	5.3	4.5	3.7	3	2.7
Côte d'Ivoire	7.0	6.3	5.6	5.2	4.9	4.5
Gambia	6.4	6.3	6.1	5.9	5.6	5.3
Ghana	6.1	5.6	5.1	4.7	4.4	3.9
Guinea	6.9	6.7	6.4	6	5.6	5.3
Guinea-Bissau	5.7	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7
Liberia	6.6	6.5	6.2	6.1	5.9	5.8
Mali	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.6	
Niger	8	7.9	7.7	7.5	7.3	7.1
Nigeria	6.9	6.6	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.6
Senegal	7.1	6.7	6.2	5.6	5.1	4.7
Sierra Leone	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.2
Togo	6.9	6.3	5.7	5.1	4.6	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Though the rates were high for some countries, infant mortality rates showed general improvement, especially for countries with better social and economic conditions, free of conflict and drought conditions and relatively free from the scourges of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis (TB). In 1990, there were about eight countries with relatively high infant mortality rates (at least 100 per 1000 live births). However, in 2009 only three countries (Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Sierra Leone) had high infant mortality rates largely as a result of poor social and economic conditions. Guinea and Sierra Leone continued to exhibit the worst mortality conditions in the subregion as of 2009 (table 4.8). With respect to under-five mortality rates, information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on relative and absolute progress¹ on MDGs, indicated that all countries in West Africa had improved on their under-five mortality rates from 1990 to 2007 with Benin, Ghana, Guinea, the Niger and Nigeria being the best performers.

¹ Top performers on relative progress are countries with the fastest rates of progress relative to their starting positions – this highlights the degree to which they have closed the gap with the MDG target. Top performers on absolute progress are countries that have seen the biggest positive change on the indicators regardless of their initial conditions.

Table 4.8: Trends in life expectancy and IMR by countries

Country	Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)						Life expectancy at birth, total (years)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	118.4	109.8	109.3	102.4	95.8	90.8	46.2	47.4	48.6	50.3	52	53.3
Burkina Faso	119	110.8	98.7	89.3	81	74.8	51.9	53.8	56.3	58.2	60.1	61.8
Cape Verde	58.5	48.7	40.4	33.3	27.4	23.3	63.9	65.8	67.3	68.7	70.2	71.3
Côte d'Ivoire	104.9	104.6	105.3	100.2	92.8	87.3	53.1	52.6	51.1	50.2	51.6	54.1
Gambia	133	113.7	103.6	101.9	93.2	84.6	46.5	49.2	51.2	52.6	53.9	55.1
Ghana	88.7	75.9	70.2	67.9	55.4	46.7	54.5	57.3	59.1	57.9	56.5	56.8
Guinea	151.4	136.7	124.3	111.4	97.7	87.8	45.8	48.3	50.7	53.3	56.2	58.3
Guinea-Bissau		142.1	138	129.1	121.1	115.2	42.5	43.8	44.7	45.8	46.9	48.2
Liberia	160.8	165	169.3	133.5	100.3	79.9	47.3	48.5	51.4	54.4	57	58.7
Mali	148.7	138.8	132.3	119.9	108.7		41.6	43	44.2	45.6	47.3	
Niger	146.7	144.2	129.4	107.2	88.4	75.7	40.3	41.6	43.5	46.4	49.7	52
Nigeria	125.9	125.5	125.1	113.8	97.3	85.8	44.9	44.6	44.7	45.9	47.2	48.1
Senegal	76.7	72.7	67.9	61.2	55.1	50.7	50.1	52	53.2	54.1	54.9	55.9
Sierra Leone	174.9	166.1	161.2	150.2	134.2	122.8	42.4	40	38.2	41.9	46.3	47.9
Togo	91.8	88.9	86.1	77.6	69.9		56.7	57.7	58.7	59.7	61.3	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Life expectancy over the past decade has generally been increasing for all the countries apart from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana where some marginal fluctuation was observed. The general increase in life expectancy is good. However, life expectancy in some countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, and Sierra Leone has never exceeded 50 years over the past decade and this is worrying. Worsening social and economic conditions and the grave impact of malaria, HIV/AIDS and related diseases account for the observed life expectancy at birth in the subregion. In all situations, regardless of the level of survival, females enjoy higher life expectancy than males.

There is a problem with reliable data on Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) which gives an idea of the state of maternal health and the health of women in general. Available information indicates that MMR is high and that progress made in this area is mixed. While some countries are making progress others are retrogressing. For example, Burkina Faso and Cape Verde saw their MMR reduced from about 76 and 498 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to about 15 and 397 in 2005 and 2009 respectively. Liberia and Guinea increased theirs from about 530 and 578 per 100,000 live births in 1990 and 2000 to about 980 and 994 in 2005 and 2009 respectively. There is need for concerted action if the MDG goal of reducing MMR by three-quarters is to

be achieved in the subregion by 2015. Information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on the progress of MDGs indicated that in the subregion the average annual absolute and relative progress in the proportion of births attended by skilled person was 0.9 per cent and 1.6 per cent respectively from 1991 to 2006, with Cape Verde being the top performing country for this indicator.

The lack of capacity to acquire and use information through reading and writing is reflected in illiteracy rates. Within the continent, West Africa had the highest proportion of countries with illiteracy rates of 60 per cent and above in 1990 (69 per cent). Over the period 1990 to 2009 the situation improved, reflecting the concerted effort on the part of West African countries to eliminate illiteracy. The overall good performers in 2009 were Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. There is some disparity in the illiteracy rate in favour of men. It is therefore imperative to undertake policies to reduce the gender gap by increasing the literacy rate among women.

Net primary enrolment ratio saw a marginal change over the period for both sexes but the gender gap has persisted, with more males than females getting access to primary education. Countries such as Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal, consistently maintained net primary enrolment ratios above 40 per cent with Cape Verde maintaining a high net primary enrolment ratio of above 90 per cent from 1990-2009 (table 4.9).

Information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on the progress of MDGs indicated that from an initial rate of 45 per cent in 1991, West Africa witnessed an average annual absolute progress rate of 1.6 per cent in enrolment and an average annual relative progress of 2 per cent in enrolment. The top performing countries were Benin and Mauritania in terms of both absolute and relative progress. Data from the report also indicated that the ratio of boys to girls in primary enrolment improved from 1991 to 2006.

Table 4.9: Primary and secondary school enrolment 1985-2009, by country

Country	Total enrolment, primary (per cent net)						School enrolment, secondary (per cent gross)					
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	21		31.6	36.4	45.6	64.4	3.7	6.7		10.4	14	19.8
Burkina Faso	53.2	41.2	59.6	65.3	87.1	94.7	19.5			22.6	36.3	
Cape Verde	92.5	93.4		99.4	91.5	82.8		20.3			68.4	81.5
Côte d'Ivoire				55.5		57.2	18.7			23.1		
Gambia	46.1	64.9	51.4		73.2	70.8	14	20.1	18.6	24.7	34.9	51.8
Ghana				63.7	66	76.2	37	35.2		39.7	46.1	57.2
Guinea	28.8	25		46.9	68.1	72.9	15.6	10.4		15.9	30.1	37
Guinea-Bissau	42.6			52.3			10.8			19.9	33.9	
Liberia				75.2						36.9		
Mali	6.5	6.7	11	17.6	25.9			26	29	32	35	
Niger	19.6	22.9		26.7	42.2	54	4.8	6	6.4	6.6	9.6	11.7
Nigeria				64.3	67.3		28.9	24.3		24.9	35.1	
Senegal	40.8	45.4		57.9	72.4	75	12.2	15		15.9	22.6	30.1
Sierra Leone	48						19.5	16.5				
Togo	18.2	20.8	21.5	30.7	42.5			13	13	12	12	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Gross secondary school enrolment ratios showed marginal increase for the subregion, with the gender gap in favour of males. In 2005, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Nigeria were the countries with gross secondary school enrolment ratios of above 20 per cent. The difference between primary and secondary enrolment implied that a large number of children had dropped out of school before they had reached secondary level, many of whom had not been properly educated and could not read or write properly.

Another worrying aspect is the privatization of basic education. All the rich, privileged and high-class people take their children to private preparatory schools. Children who are literate get admission into the better endowed schools and continue on to the tertiary institutions. A very negligible proportion of students with basic education from public schools, children of the poor and under-privileged have access to endowed schools. Thus, the majority of these countries are perpetuating poverty and the class structure at the basic education level.

Table 4.10: Improved sanitation and water sources by country, 1990-2009

Country	Improved sanitation facilities (percentage of population with access)					Improved water source (percentage of population with access)				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009
Benin	6	7	8	11		41	49	60	70	
Burkina Faso	5	8	9	11		56	61	66	72	
Cape Verde		40	45	52			82	83	84	
Côte d'Ivoire		20	21	22	23		76	77	78	79
Gambia		60	60	63	65		74	79	84	89
Ghana	7	8	9	11		54	63	71	78	
Guinea	9	12	15	17		52	58	62	68	
Guinea-Bissau		16	18	20	21		52	55	58	61
Liberia	11	13	14	16	17	58	61	65	67	68
Mali	36	44	51			36	44	51	56	
Niger	5	5	7	9		35	39	42	45	
Nigeria	37	36	34	32	32	47	50	53	57	58
Senegal	38	41	45	49	51	61	63	65	68	69
Sierra Leone	10	11	12	13		57	55	51	49	
Togo	52	55	58			52	55	58	60	

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

In 1995, five out of 14 countries in the subregion had 40 per cent or more of their population with access to improved sanitation (table 4.10). This figure did not improve in 2009 though many countries improved on the percentage of population with access to sanitation, except Nigeria, which witnessed a deterioration of the sanitation situation.

Access to improved water sources also increased marginally over the past two decades. Cape Verde and the Gambia made the highest progress in providing water to their people with about 84 per cent of its population having access to improved water sources in 2005. The situation was precarious in the Niger where only 45 per cent of the populace had access to improved water. Information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on the progress of MDGs indicated that West Africa had an annual average absolute and relative progress rates of 0.8 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively from an initial position of 56 per cent in 1995 to 66 per cent in 2008. Top performing countries in both absolute and relative progress were Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana and Mali.

Malaria has been and continues to be one of the most prevalent diseases in the subregion, claiming many lives. In spite of the various efforts being made to combat malaria, reported cases of malaria were quite high in all the countries apart from Cape Verde (table 4.11). A notable

cause of the high incidence of malaria was poor sanitary conditions that enabled the breeding of mosquitoes in most communities. Although no data were available to support this argument, one could safely conclude that many of the affected people were the poor who lived under challenging sanitary conditions where mosquitoes thrived very well, and where the people were not able to take preventive measures against malaria infection due to poverty. In fact, the need for West Africa to reduce the incidence of malaria and other major diseases requires renewed efforts if the MDG are to be achieved.

Table 4.11: Trends in reported clinical malaria cases and incidence of tuberculosis

Country	Reported clinical malaria cases (total)					Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000) people)				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	1990	1995	2000	2004	2007
Benin	92,870	579,300	709,348	803,462	1,256,708	77	80	85	88	91
Burkina Faso	496,513	501,020	867,866	1,563,768	4,399,837	95	137	198	241	226
Cape Verde	69	127	144	68	65	175	168	160	155	151
Cote d'Ivoire							177	255	368	443
Gambia	222,538	135,909	127,899	329,426	479,409	185	204	225	244	258
Ghana	1,438,713	1,928,316	3,349,528	3,452,969	1,899,544	223	217	211	206	203
Guinea	21,762	600,317	816,539	850,309	812,471	119	154	200	246	287
Guinea-Bissau						158	174	192	207	220
Liberia			777,754	44,875	871,560	199	219	242	261	277
Mali	248,904	95,357	546,634	962,706	1,633,423	275	287	300	311	319
Niger	1,162,824	778,175	815,895	745,428	309,675	125	138	152	164	174
Nigeria	1,116,992	1,133,926	2,476,608	3,532,108	4,295,686	131	188	272	331	311
Senegal		628,773	1,123,377	1,346,158	222,232	195	215	237	256	272
Sierra Leone			460,881	224,584	646,808	207	279	377	479	574
Togo	810,509	328,488	412,619	437,662	618,842	314	346	382	413	438

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

It is unfortunate that instead of addressing the root cause of malaria, that is, getting rid of the insanitary conditions that allow the breeding of mosquitoes, many Governments have focused on curative policies rather than preventive. With regard to TB incidence, the trends have generally been increasing since 1990 for all the countries with the exception of Cape Verde and Ghana. Benin appears to be doing well by maintaining an incidence of below 100 per 100, 000 while Mali and Togo have a relatively high incidence compared with the subregional average. The high incidence of TB attests to the fact that TB continues to be a major disease burden for the subregion.

Information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on the progress of MDGs indicated that between 2001 and 2007 the proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa declined marginally from 1.9 per cent to 1.8 per cent. Access to antiretroviral drugs improved between 2006-2007 from an initial level of 22 per cent with an average annual absolute progress of 5.1 per cent, and an annual relative progress of 6 per cent. Nigeria and Togo were the countries with the highest adult population (15-49 years) living with HIV, while the Gambia, the Niger and the Senegal were the best performers.

Poverty and income inequality are widespread and remain a serious threat to the development of West Africa. Available information on poverty suggests that poverty has reduced since 1990 though the reduction is marginal for many countries. However, the level of poverty was high for some countries. Benin, the Gambia, Liberia and the Niger had 84 per cent (in 2009), 67 per cent (in 2005), 65 per cent (in 2005) and 57 per cent (in 2005) of their population living on \$1.25 a day (PPP), respectively. The Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI) of UNDP indicated that there was extreme poverty in Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger and Sierra Leone. However, the percentage of countries with a HPI of 40 and more confirmed that West Africa had made a marginal reduction in poverty.

Also, information from the Overseers Development Institute (2010) on the progress of MDGs indicated that six West African countries - Benin (1), Mali (2), the Gambia (4), Ghana (14), Burkina Faso (15) were ranked among the top 20 achievers in terms of absolute progress with the MDGs, while 2 - Benin (16) and the Gambia (16) were ranked among the top 20 achievers in terms of relative progress in achieving the MDGs. Added to the problem of poverty was the uneven income distribution in the subregion. For many countries, the GNI index was more than 40 per cent and deteriorating.

Urban poverty, accompanied by rapid urbanization, has been a major problem in Africa. In spite of data limitations on the scale and depth of urban poverty, it has been increasing (Sachs and others, 2004). Increasing urban poverty is associated with rapid growth of slums, poor housing and sanitary conditions, and high pressure on urban-based social services (water, education, electricity, transport, etc.). It is, therefore, clear from available evidence that the majority of countries in the region will find it difficult to meet the MDG on halving the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar per day, within the time period 1990 and 2015. A report by ECA (2005a) concluded that with regard to the achievement of MDGs in West Africa, Burkina Faso and Ghana were the only countries likely to meet the poverty-reduction target.

A positive correlation was shown between unemployment and poverty since increasing levels of unemployment and underemployment had led to reduced incomes and, consequently, increased poverty. Consistent data on unemployment in the region was unavailable. However, available data for a few countries in the subregion as well as realistic situations in the countries suggested that unemployment increased by varying degrees over the past two decades for many of the countries. Some countries including Benin (0.15 per cent in 1990, 1.5 per cent in 1995 and 0.7 per cent in 2004), Burkina Faso (1.3 per cent in 1985, 2.4 per cent in 1995 and 2.4 per cent in 2000) and the Niger (1.5 per cent in 2004) managed to maintain low unemployment rates. Cape Verde (23 per cent in 1990), Ghana (4.7 per cent in 1995 and 10.4 per cent in 2000) and Mali (3.3 per cent in 2000 and 8.8 per cent in 2004) had relatively high unemployment. In many of these countries, youth and more specifically, graduate unemployment, was higher than total unemployment.

The inability of the economies to add value to primary products, which leads to increased job creation, is a major contributor to youth unemployment and underemployment. Serious attention is needed in this area. Many International Labour Organization (ILO) reports argue that one important asset of Africa is the human resource that can be utilized for economic growth. Unfortunately, policies to harness this asset for development are mainly on paper and are hardly translated into reality.

The unemployment data also show that females are not only disproportionately worse off than men in most countries but also are mostly found at the lower ranks in the workplace and in the informal sector where labour conditions are below standard. A major factor affecting employment opportunities in most countries is population growth. High unemployment is largely caused by population growth which is higher than employment growth. This has seriously negative implications for poverty and the environment. Increased rural unemployment and poverty imply that rural farmers cannot afford improved agricultural technologies and therefore cultivate marginal lands, which leads to increased land degradation and reduced fallow periods.

4.3 Environmental performance

One of the important pillars of sustainable development is environmental sustainability which deals with maintenance of the integrity of different environmental media and systems to ensure that their functions and beneficial uses are upheld for present and future generations. In this section, the performance of West African countries in environmental sustainability is assessed using indicators such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, emissions of common anthropogenic pollutants, degraded land, forest cover, and water pollution, among others.

Table 4.12: Trends in CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita) by country, 1985-2005

Country	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Benin	0.18	0.15	0.23	0.24	0.33
Burkina Faso	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.09
Cape Verde	0.26	0.25	0.29	0.43	0.62
Côte d'Ivoire	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5
Gambia	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.21
Ghana	0.26	0.26	0.31	0.32	0.34
Guinea	0.19	0.17	0.17	0.15	0.15
Guinea-Bissau	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.21
Liberia	0.33	0.22	0.17	0.15	0.22
Mali	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Niger	0.15	0.12	0.11	0.07	0.06
Nigeria	0.82	0.47	0.32	0.63	0.78
Senegal	0.41	0.42	0.40	0.40	0.49
Sierra Leone	0.18	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.25
Togo	0.16	0.20	0.21	0.26	0.22

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Climatic variability and climate change were observed in many parts of Africa. These changes were to some extent caused by natural phenomena. Human activities intensified this change and in almost all of Africa an increasing trend in the frequency of high maximum temperature events was observed (WMO, 2003). With regard to precipitation, many African countries experienced climatic variability and extreme events such as floods or droughts (UNEP, 2002a).

The main causes of climate change are known to be: greenhouse gases (GHG) emission from the use of energy from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) in industrial processes, transportation and in homes; and agricultural production and deforestation (UNFCCC, 2005). One unfortunate thing is that Africa contributes very little to GHG emissions, but is the region most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change largely as a result of widespread poverty and limited adaptive capabilities. The most important contributor to climate change is CO₂, accounting for about 50 per cent of the overall global warming effect arising from human activities.

Table 4.12 shows that the per capita CO₂ emissions for 11 West African countries are below the world average. Senegal accounts for the highest emissions per capita followed by Cape Verde and Ghana. There is a positive relation between economic development and emission since industrialization leads to a greater demand for energy, including fossil fuels. However, many West African countries have low per capita GDPs and correspondingly low per capita emissions.

Air quality reduction is one of the important issues identified by NEPAD. Air pollution is

mainly caused by unsustainable consumption and production of energy resources by industry, transport and households, especially in urban areas. UNEP (2005a) argues that transportation is the highest polluter in key urban cities largely as a result of the use of old fuel-inefficient vehicles, followed by industrial pollution. The use of leaded petrol is responsible for increased blood levels of lead concentration with corresponding neuropsychological and developmental effects, particularly in children. Forest and savannah fires, desert sandstorms, and indoor air pollution are also major concerns.

Pollutants from these sources include carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide, suspended particles of less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) and lead (Pb). Women and young children are particularly exposed to high levels of indoor air pollution for several hours each day, increasing the risk of acute respiratory infections. Such infections are known to be some of the leading causes of infant and child mortality on the continent (APINA/SEI, 2004). Apart from health effects, air pollution also results in negative environmental impacts such as acid rain deposits, which adversely affect vegetation, soils, water and infrastructure. To curb this problem, many African countries including Ghana and Nigeria are gradually shifting from the use of leaded fuel to unleaded fuel. Measures are also being taken in some countries to develop improved stoves that increase efficiency, and to limit the importation of used vehicles.

The heavy economic dependence of many West African countries on agricultural and mineral resources has created unique production pressures and competition for resources (UNEP, 2002a). Many of the lands in the subregion have undergone soil degradation since the 1960s. There has been damage to soil structure, depletion of nutrients and increased susceptibility to erosion. This has been largely due to heavy application of chemicals, use of inappropriate equipment and technologies, commercial mono-specific plantations and inefficient irrigation systems.

In Ghana, for example, the annual cost of degradation from agricultural activities was estimated to be about 1.57 per cent of GDP in 2005 (World Bank and others, 2006). Prolonged land degradation in the drylands of West Africa has intensified desertification, which has serious linkages to poverty, migration and food security. The most important causes of land degradation are poverty and an increasing population. Other causes include inequitable land access, land-tenure insecurity and lack of alternative income-generating opportunities.

A relatively large portion of West Africa especially, along the equatorial zone, used to be under forest cover. Forests contain 70 per cent of the earth's terrestrial biodiversity and as such are among the world's richest and most diverse ecosystems. They also provide a wide range of ecological, social and cultural services and are central to food security and the livelihoods of the poor in rural areas.

Table 4.13: Trends in forest area as a percentage of total land area by country

Country	1990	2000	2005
Benin	52.1	45.8	43.5
Burkina Faso	25.0	22.8	21.7
Cape Verde	14.4	20.3	20.8
Côte d'Ivoire	0.5	0.4	0.5
Gambia	44.2	46.1	47.1
Ghana	32.7	26.8	24.2
Guinea	29.6	28.1	27.4
Guinea-Bissau	44.2	46.1	47.1
Liberia	51.17	48.06	46.50
Mali	11.5	10.9	10.6
Niger	1.5	1.0	1.0
Nigeria	18.92	14.42	12.18
Senegal	48.6	46.2	45.0
Sierra Leone	43.5	40.8	39.4
Togo	12.6	8.9	7.1

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.

Unfortunately, forests in Africa are under threat due to unsustainable exploitation of the resource. Table 4.13 provides information on forest areas as a percentage of total land area for some West Africa countries. It can be seen that the forest area as a percentage of total land has been decreasing consistently for most countries, except for countries such as Cape Verde, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau where increases have been recorded. At this rate, the MDG target of increasing the proportion of land area covered by forests will not be met by most countries. Underlying causes of deforestation are complex and varied. For example, the pressure to use forestland for agriculture and grazing and for exploitation of forest products, at an unsustainable level, is rooted in poverty. In some places, owners may face pressure to sell forest land for development projects.

West Africa has rich and varied biological resources on which its social and economic systems are based. The humid tropical forests of equatorial West Africa are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. JPOI urges countries to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010. However, biodiversity in Africa has been under threat from loss of natural habitat, species and subspecies as well as invasion by alien species and lack of recognition of indigenous knowledge and property rights.

The ultimate causes of habitat loss in Africa are shown to be human population growth and the resulting demand for space, food and other resources; widespread poverty; a dependence on natural resources and economic pressures to increase exports, particularly agricultural produce, timber and mineral products. Species loss is found to be mainly a result of loss of natural habitats, illegal hunting for food, medicinal or commercial use and national and international trade

(UNEP, 2002a). Although many African countries have signed the UNCCD, they are at various levels of implementation. However, technical and financial constraints are serious hindrances to its implementation.

West Africa is also generally endowed with abundant freshwater resources such as big rivers, large lakes, vast wetlands and limited but widespread groundwater. In addition, the West African coastal zone supports a diversity of habitats and resources, encompassing mangroves, rocky shores, sandy beaches, deltas, estuaries and coastal wetlands, coral reefs and lagoons. These ecosystems not only contribute significantly to the livelihoods of coastal communities and to national economies (fishing, agricultural activities, tourism, oil and mineral mining and infrastructure development), they also have intrinsic value including shoreline stability, beach enrichment, nutrient generation, recycling and pollution moderation.

Coastal areas in West Africa are experiencing rapid population growth due to the diverse and attractive resources of the coastal and marine environments. The World Bank estimates that by 2025, the coastal zone from Accra to the Niger Delta will have an unbroken chain of cities with a total population of 50 million along 5000 km of coastline. Unfortunately, these water bodies and coastal and marine environments are being depleted due to poor waste management of agricultural and industrial discharges. Various measures have been put in place to reverse this, including within the framework of regional cooperation, some of which will be further discussed below.

Overall, the subregion has not done very well in terms of environmental sustainability. This was confirmed by the 2010 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) of Yale University that ranked 163 countries on 25 performance indicators tracked across ten policy categories that covered both environmental public health and ecosystem vitality. According to the ranking, eight countries in the subregion obtained scores of between 55 to 40 per cent while 5 countries obtained scores of 40 to 25 per cent. This was viewed as very unsatisfactory. Concentration on primary-product production especially oil and minerals, in the midst of weak enforcement of environmental regulations, poor value addition, poverty and the poor bargaining power of many West African countries, has led to serious environmental pollution. To some extent, this has confirmed the Pollution Haven Hypothesis which theorizes that income differences between countries generate differences in the tightness of environmental regulations. Higher-income countries have stricter regulations than lower-income countries and consequently, higher production costs, while low-income countries become more pollution intensive as a result of international trade.

4.4 Recommendations

A number of issues should be dealt with in order to ensure proper outcomes in the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. These include:

- (a) Treating all three dimensions of sustainable development as equally important;
- (b) Taking an intersectoral approach in dealing with identified challenges;
- (c) Identifying all interested stakeholders and involving them in the planning, policymaking, programming and implementation processes;
- (d) Adopting policies, programmes, strategies and related instruments with a focus to achieving sustainable development;
- (e) Making concerted effort to properly implement policies, programmes, strategies and related instruments after they are adopted;
- (f) Implementing ECOWAS directives and regulations on mining which was passed in 2009;
- (g) Establishing and building capacity of institutions for implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- (h) Building databases for monitoring, evaluation and learning lessons;
- (i) Setting up coordination mechanisms to reduce duplication of effort and creating beneficial linkages;
- (j) Promoting good governance through transparency and accountability;
- (k) Promoting useful national, regional and international partnerships;
- (l) Enhancing education through the provision of classrooms, ensuring free basic education, improving the working conditions and wages of teachers, reviewing teaching programmes and adapting them to development needs, equipping graduates with practical knowledge, orienting research to the developmental needs of countries as well as introducing children from early to work ethics that enable future employment;
- (m) Adding value to local raw materials not only to increase their value but also to increase their shelf life in the case of agricultural products; and
- (n) Monitoring development projects that are effectively using EIA procedures, especially in the mining sector

V. Transition towards a green economy within the context of poverty reduction and sustainable development

Discussions with key informants as well as the actual implementation of policies for poverty reduction and for achievement of the MDGs indicate that the subregion perceives a green economy or a green growth path as desirable. Green growth is seen as one that leads to reduction in poverty, creation of jobs, wealth and incomes for a majority of the people, maintenance of a sound environment, reduction in resource use, integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, sound urban management; as well as sustainable consumption and production with low carbon emissions, among other benefits. In this regard, the subregional perspective on the green economy is in line with the working definition of UNEP (2010), which defines it as a system of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human wellbeing over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

The green economy defined in this way is an omnibus term like sustainable development and comprises policies and instruments to exploit natural resources in support of sustainable development goals. In other words, the green economy is not a substitute for sustainable development, but rather, is a way of realizing it. The Community therefore considers the green economy as comprising activities that not only lead to reduction of poverty and creation of decent employment and income to benefit the people but which also ensure the well-being of everyone by maintaining a healthy environment, promoting human rights and guaranteeing social cohesion.

Many countries in the subregion have been implementing policies over the years that have implications for transition to the green economy, largely as a result of implementation of the sustainable development agenda. Several consultations have been organized by countries on the transition to a green economy in the areas of green budgeting, agriculture, energy, forest, water, transport and, to a lesser extent, urban environmental management and infrastructure (roads, buildings and industrial installations, finance, manufacturing and tourism).

Evidently, the quest to engage in green projects stems from the fact that the subregion realizes that these projects are the engine for sustainable development and have the potential to create employment for speeding up poverty reduction. Such projects help to attain the economic and social growth desired in several areas, through improved efficiency in resource use and investment in cleaner production technologies. Further, these projects use cleaner energy technologies and improve access to energy services. They also increase food security through the use of more sustainable agricultural methods and through access to emerging new markets for green goods and services. From the ECOWAS perspective, transformation to a green economy means use of policies that target specific sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture, water, forestry, and urban management, among others.

5.1 Energy

West Africa is rich not only in non-renewable resources such as minerals, and renewable resources such as forests, but also natural fuels such as wind, water and solar. Energy is a critical input to the process of development. However, the subregion has huge energy infrastructural and supply deficits that will require massive investment. Renewable energy resources such as wind, water and sun abound and offer great opportunity for bridging the energy supply gap.

The share of renewable energy in the world's primary energy demand is about 15 per cent and continues to grow. Many research studies show that investment in renewable energy has the potential to catalyse the efforts of developing countries to achieve the MDGs, by adding significant health, employment and economic benefits. In the area of employment, it has been shown that development of the photovoltaic industry could create 50 per cent more jobs than highway construction, while wind programmes could create 60 per cent more jobs than tax cuts. Similarly, a shift from the use of fossil fuels such as crop residues, fuel wood and charcoal to more efficient fuels such as LPG, kerosene, ethanol or biogas could decrease indoor air pollution by approximately 95 per cent, thereby creating a significant health impact. Furthermore, availability of hot water through solar water heating systems has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on health and sanitation.

Many countries in the subregion have realized the importance of renewable energy and have made some efforts to harness their renewable energy resources. However, efforts made in this direction focus primarily on renewable resource assessment, mapping and pilot projects to demonstrate the efficacy of renewable energy alternatives. In the area of energy efficiency, programmes such as retrofitting existing buildings and other infrastructure to make them more energy efficient have been undertaken especially in government buildings, on a pilot basis and, to a lesser extent, by some private entities and individuals. The need to undertake such projects is due to the fact that improving energy efficiency reduces waste and the production costs of firms and household expenditure. Additionally, alternative energy such as thermal energy generation reduces carbon emissions. Some countries have also provided support for R&D on environmentally-friendly technologies using *Establish Energy* and other Funds. A major challenge facing these countries is the up-scaling of these projects based on the outcome of the pilots.

Transition to a green economy in the area of improved energy efficiency and use of renewable resources will require an increase in the supply of and access to such technologies and materials. Clear policies are also needed to encourage the private sector to participate in the delivery of such technologies. Many have argued that with recent energy-efficient building technologies, ECOWAS countries could reduce energy consumption in buildings by about 60 per cent compared to conventional designs. The good thing is that these technologies are commercially available, though at prices higher than what an ordinary citizen can afford. Government provision of legal instruments should allow local government to support such investment activities and should promote the harnessing of renewable energies. This would greatly enhance the recommendation for energy-efficient buildings.

Significant commitment from development partners, Governments and individuals is also required. Efforts in this direction should focus on developing infrastructure for transmission and distribution of energy and on investing in financing schemes that help to lower the high initial

fixed costs of renewable energy technologies. Further, efforts should also focus on: providing finance and support for renewable energy service companies; expanding the assessment and mapping of renewable resources; developing the renewable energy markets through tax support and insurance; and providing funding for research and development of renewable energy technologies. In order to achieve widespread use, there is also need to invest in skills upgrading and capacity development.

A complete promotion of green energy, at the expense of other conventional types of energy, will make it difficult to drive economic growth in the industrial sector, especially in the short run, since renewable energy has an initial cost outlay that may be huge. Focusing on the appropriate mix of green energy with other conventional energy types is therefore imperative for facilitating a smooth transition. The starting point could be ensuring that renewable energy technologies such as solar are made available in villages where the cost of extending grid electricity is high and where the demand for energy is low and mainly for household lighting.

Graduated and differentiated green taxes on non-renewable energy sources could be used to absorb ecological costs as well as to subsidize the development of renewable energies in deprived communities. Such tailor-made transitions to a green economy could serve the dual purpose of ensuring energy security and reducing risks associated with the use of conventional energy, such as price volatility and depletion of oil and gas resources. In essence, policy instruments that have the potential to facilitate the transition to green-energy supply and demand include: addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers; ensuring energy efficiency in domestic appliances; promoting eco-labelling; developing and implementing standards; and developing incentive systems.

5.2 Forestry

The majority of the population in ECOWAS countries live in rural areas and depend on the forest for both traditional and non-traditional products for their livelihoods. Therefore, maintenance of this resource is very important for sustainable livelihoods and development. Unfortunately, forests are being degraded at a rapid rate because of over-harvesting and pressure from other land uses, including agriculture.

At the international and national levels, initiatives such as the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus (REDD+) have been negotiated and are being implemented. This programme has not only impacted on employment, livelihoods and revenues but has also enabled local communities to be custodians of forests and ecosystem services. Community forestry management has also promoted pro-poor growth. Some forest communities have been able to initiate programmes for savings, credit and income generation, and for empowering communities to have greater influence on decision-making through participation in planning and management. In line with these programmes, some countries are revising their forestry policies to place more value on ecosystem services, as well as on involving communities in forest management.

Transition to a green economy requires intensification of current programmes, and assessment of the value of forest products, in order to enable economic pricing of forest resources. Incentives aimed at enhancing the development of woodlots serve the dual purpose of providing forest

products for rural communities as well as for carbon sequestration. Public investment to restore, maintain and enhance the stock of forestry through subsidized loans and incentives to the private sector, as well as partnerships with the private financial sector can also facilitate the transition.

5.3 Fisheries

Many ECOWAS countries share the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) belt which is very rich in fisheries resources. In addition, several water bodies (lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands) can be found in the subregion. These fishery resources provide significant economic benefits and are also an important source of protein for people in the subregion. A study by Chukwuone and others., (2009) put the total value of output in the GCLME belt, namely, marine fishery, offshore oil production, non-traditional fish products (periwinkle) and mining at about \$49,941.4 million. Oil production has the highest accounting with approximately 59 per cent of this output.

One problem that confronts ECOWAS countries today, especially countries within the GCLME belt, is the unprecedented degradation, pollution and over-exploitation of resources. This has significant implications for livelihoods at the micro level, and for the sustainable development of these nations at the macro level. Economic activities, such as mangrove and timber exploitation, mineral extraction, agriculture, manufacturing, hunting, fishing and other productive and consumptive livelihood activities have led to negative impacts on water bodies (the marine ecosystem and related aquatic resources, wetlands, fisheries) and general biodiversity. Specifically, the consumptive, life-support and sink functions of these resources have decreased and will diminish further if conservation measures are not taken to reverse the trend. Over-fishing through the use of unsustainable methods such as pair trawling, use of dynamite and small fishing nets is also leading to depletion of the resource beyond the maximum sustainable yield.

Governments in the subregion have individually and in collaboration worked to reduce pollution of water bodies and degradation of fish stock. For example, through the GCLME projects, about 12 countries in the subregion, together with donors, are collaborating to restore and maintain sustainable fisheries, reduce pollution and restore degraded habitats. In the context of fisheries in the subregion, greening the economy will require intensification of these programmes and combating the living resource depletion and coastal area degradation which have led to unsustainable fisheries. This will require capacity-building in the area of aquaculture development as well as education of coastal communities on sustainable fishing. Development and enforcement of rules pertaining to sustainable fisheries management will also help in the transition to green economy.

5.4 Transport

It is generally accepted that efficient transport impacts on the economy through consumer access to places where they can engage in income-generation activities. It also impacts as an intermediary input or complement to the production process. One estimate by the AfDB (1994) shows that road transport in Africa, although inefficient in terms of time and energy consumption compared to other transport modes such as rail, water and air transport, handles about 97 per cent and 94 per cent of road passenger and freight transport, respectively. In addition, the majority of

inhabitants use private cars which are more energy inefficient in terms of passenger-kilometres covered than buses, owing to the poor development of rapid mass transport in urban and other areas.

A study by Akoena and Twerefou (2002) in Ghana revealed that light vehicles and buses covered 59,654 million passenger-kilometres but consumed 356 thousand tons of oil, while taxis and private cars covered 13,786 million passenger-kilometres but consumed about 537 tons of oil in 2002. Additionally, these energy-inefficient modes of road transport were powered with fuels mainly imported with scarce foreign currency. Further, poor combustion from these inefficient vehicles caused high levels of pollution in many urban centres.

Transport costs, which can add up to nearly 10 per cent of a country's GDP, are likely to rise further under the current trends of increased importation of inefficient private motor vehicles. With investment in green transport, public road and rail transport would make cities cleaner by reducing congestion, air pollution and other costs. Green transport increases the creation of green jobs and helps to reduce poverty through increased affordability of transport, and improved access to markets and other essential facilities.

It is obvious that the different modes of road transport have their own advantages and disadvantages in terms of services provided. For example, small cars such as taxis and private cars are faster and can access remote communities whereas buses might not. Similarly, buses can move a large number of people to a goal destination whereas small vehicles cannot. However, the high efficiency of buses and light buses compared to private cars and taxis suggests that ECOWAS countries will benefit immensely from policies aimed at encouraging the use of public transport systems. These have the capacity to move more people with more efficiency in terms of road space and energy consumption. Public transport systems, if made more convenient, accessible and comfortable to the working populace, could reverse the trend of middle-income groups striving to have their own means of transport. Efforts should also be made to encourage other efficient modes of transport particularly, rail and water transport, which have the capacity to move a large amount of freight and large numbers of passengers and which are also more fuel efficient.

Policies aimed at differential taxation and duties on vehicles, area licensing, parking fees and tolls, could be applied to the less efficient modes of road transport such as private cars and taxis. This could increase operational costs to the users of these modes and cause them to shift to the use of more efficient modes. Revenue generated from this differential taxation could also be used to promote sustainable road transport development in the country, especially in urban areas. In fact, the operation of road tolls in the United States, area licensing in Singapore, electronic road pricing in Santiago and parking fees in some European cities, has yielded significant results from which ECOWAS countries could draw lessons.

It is also imperative to encourage the use of efficient engine technologies and cars with smaller engine capacities; improve standards and regulations; improve driver and vehicle maintenance habits; upgrade road infrastructure and traffic management; and promote cycling and walking which are by far the cheapest, least space occupying and the most economic means of transport for short distances. Basically, integrated transport planning takes diverse policy objectives into consideration in the provision of public transport facilities, road infrastructure, fuel pricing and environmental quality management and monitoring. Such planning should be taken more

seriously by ECOWAS countries. The introduction of biofuel could also have the triple advantage of decreasing foreign exchange through reduced importation of crude oil, creating employment and reducing environmental degradation. All these benefits require substantial capital investment and capacity development.

5.5 Agricultural land use and management

The agricultural sector can be considered as the main sector that holds the key to the growth, development and transformation of many ECOWAS countries. World Bank estimates indicate that agriculture provides about 70 per cent of employment, is the largest contributor to GDP and is the largest source of foreign exchange, with the exception of a few oil-producing countries such as Nigeria. With approximately two-thirds of manufacturing value added in ECOWAS countries relying on agricultural raw materials, the sector can be described as a significant provider of industrial raw materials. Also, directly or indirectly, agriculture supports about 70-80 per cent of the total rural population, the majority of whom are extremely poor.

Agricultural practices in the subregion are mainly subsistent, employing primitive tools such as the hoe and cutlass, with low productivity. Such practices make it difficult for many rural communities to be self-sufficient in food. Added to that, poor farming practices such as 'slash and burn' have led to land degradation, soil quality depletion and biodiversity loss. Further, a major challenge that confronts ECOWAS countries is climate change, which has the potential to deepen ecosystem degradation and seriously reduce productivity in rain-fed agriculture which is a characteristic of agriculture in the subregion. The exploitation of natural resources, particularly mineral resources, poses serious land degradation challenges with serious implications for food security.

Sustainable agriculture is an effective strategy for improving food security and reducing poverty in that it promotes the production of ample food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting its environment. It offers opportunities to achieve economic development through increased savings, employment creation and reduced poverty. It also provides food security to poor and smallholder farmers, helps to ensure food safety of consumers, offers trade opportunities for developing countries, restores and improves ecosystems and ensures reduction of GHG emissions. Also, improvement in sustainable agriculture could increase the number of attractive, safe and knowledge-intensive jobs in farming operations, non-farm supply chains and market access, as well as increase rural incomes, thus uplifting people from poverty. Furthermore, with greater affluence and prosperity, there is increased aggregate demand for other industrial goods, which spurs economic growth.

Box 2: Models of green agriculture in Bamako, Mali and Porto-Novo, Nigeria

A model of green agriculture is being demonstrated by Tambaroua Business Farming in Bamako, Mali. A farm of about four ha (10 acres), made up of livestock, vegetables and fruits, is being developed using solar technology and drip ferti-irrigation. Irrigation is sourced from underground bore-holes that are extracted by submersible solar water pumps using an overhead water tank. In addition, a centre of excellence that incorporates research, and a school are being established. The centre will teach young entrepreneurs the modern art of agriculture to enable them to either establish their own commercial farms or work as co-entrepreneurs. The research and training at the centre will ensure that best practices and ethics are adopted, including development of improved seedlings and the use of inputs (fertilizers and chemicals) at the optimal level. Soil, water and other relevant tests will be conducted to ensure optimal farming conditions that ensure minimum input residue in the soils and quality products, which will fetch higher prices in niche markets. The farm has achieved high productivity with minimum inputs. Production is all year round because of the use of subterranean water for irrigation.

The Songhai Programme was established in 1985 by Dr. Godfrey N'Zamujo, a Dominican priest from Nigeria. The project aims at training young agricultural entrepreneurs and developing sustainable agricultural production systems based on agrobiology. After over two decades in operation, the project has more than 200 students at any time attending 18-month training programmes at Porto-Novo, Savalou, Parakou and Kinwédji. The project has more than 500 farms established and managed by young people trained in Songhai Centres and more than 300 participants from various backgrounds and countries taking part in training courses each year. It also has over 150 permanent staff, facilitators, technicians and administrators, over 5,000 visitors every year, and more than 40 partners from public and private institutions, NGOs and international institutions. Despite these successes, the project has some challenges including access to land, uncertain climatic conditions, financial problems (especially access to suitable credit), difficulties in selling products at a profitable price and the problems of organizing and facilitating the farmers' networks. (http://www.rural21.com/uploads/media/R21_SONGHAI_0309.pdf)

Estimates by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements indicated that the global market for organic foods and drinks was close to \$50 billion and increased at a rate of between 10-20 per cent annually between 2000 and 2007. Also, about 97 per cent of the revenue was generated in Europe and North America while over 80 per cent of the producers was in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Transformation to a green economy in the area of agriculture means shifting towards sustainable agriculture, more specifically, the production of organic products from which ECOWAS countries stand to benefit through increased export earnings and incomes for farmers. Already, the experiences of Mali and Nigeria (box 2) are there for countries to emulate. With affordable capital, Governments, individuals and organized groups could establish such facilities and collaborate with small-scale farmers. Universities should also be introduced to action-oriented research of direct use to farmers. This should be viewed as an excellent demonstration of green agriculture that boosts farm yields and incomes, enable the youth to enter agriculture, lead to high-value employment and contribute to eradication of poverty in rural areas.

Studies by UNEP and UNCTAD (2006) indicated that the farm-gate prices of organic pineapple, ginger and vanilla were 300 per cent, 185 per cent, and 150 per cent respectively, higher than conventional products. This translated into premium prices and high income for farmers. In terms of employment, 30 per cent more jobs per hectare were created in organic farming compared to conventional farming in East Africa. In addition, ECOWAS countries were contributing to climate-change mitigation, since organic fields sequestered 3–8 tons more carbon per hectare than conventional agriculture.

It is important to note that sustainable agriculture may not be able to provide the solution to the perennial food-insecurity problems that confront the subregion today. Therefore, complementary policies on agricultural development are required. In essence, transition to a green economy in the area of agriculture will require policies in four main areas as indicated in the subsequent paragraphs.

Provision of agricultural infrastructure and mechanization. It is imperative to focus on the development of agricultural infrastructure for poor rural farmers. Roads, small-scale technologies that target smallholder farmers in processing, storage, and transport, community-based irrigation schemes and hand-fixed pumps or boreholes are the basic infrastructure required by subsistence farmers, especially women. Key elements in the area of large-scale agricultural development include efficient irrigation, mechanization, better ways of production and absorption of the negative externalities that affect livelihoods. Other complementary policies in agro-biodiversity conservation, water pollution reduction and land degradation could help ensure a long-term supply response in agriculture. It is also imperative for ECOWAS countries to ensure structural transformation of the agricultural sector by participating in all the value chains that ensure value added, youth employment, diversification of agricultural production and vertical and horizontal linkages with other sectors.

Provision of research, extension services and marketing. There should be extensive research on disease-resistant and high-yielding roots and tubers as well as commercial crops, animals and birds with the view to increasing productivity. Adequate responses should be provided to the many plant diseases through genetic screening and breeding for resistance. Research in the agricultural sector should be evidence-based and linked to the needs of the farmer. This requires strong links between research institutions and end-users. Government efforts should also focus on promoting market associations and on using these associations to disseminate relevant market information with regard to access, production, business and financial management, as well as on an incentive structure for farmers, scientists and other stakeholders in the agricultural value chain. The establishment and promotion of an efficient extension service at all stages of agricultural production, processing and marketing is imperative for sustainable agriculture in ECOWAS countries. Training, re-training and the establishment of Extension Information Centres as well as the provision of resources to make extension service providers efficient are required.

Provision of access to inputs and credit. Effective use of land to increase productivity requires inputs such as organic fertilizers. Such inputs cannot be obtained by many small-scale producers because of the non-availability of finance to invest in the development of organic fertilizers. Since many banks are reluctant to lend to risky sectors such as agriculture, special interventions should be initiated to improve access to affordable credit by farmers. Government and the international community should promote and support the establishment of farmer-based organizations to enhance access to group credit and other crucial inputs and services.

Reforming land-tenure systems. Land-tenure systems in many ECOWAS countries are problematic, making it difficult to acquire large tracts of land for sustainable farming. Tenure insecurity makes it difficult for people to make sustainable investments in land, while communal ownership tends to lead to land degradation. Government should institute reforms that will make tenure more secure through easy registration and development and enforcement of environmental laws and property rights. Also, the establishment of agri-business zones and land banks is in the right direction for transition to a green economy.

5.6 *Water and sanitation*

Water scarcity is a major issue in ECOWAS countries, since the majority of the inhabitants have no access to potable water. Water supply in the subregion faces several challenges in terms of quality and quantity, largely as a result of low tariffs which are below cost recovery and that encourage inefficient use of water; low investments that lead to the use of obsolete infrastructure; poor management; and pollution that has had many adverse health effects. In Ghana, for example, diarrhoea accounts for about 12 per cent of childhood deaths and it is the third largest cause of death for children under the age of five, after malaria and pneumonia (World Health Organization, 2006). United Nations (2002) confirmed that with adequate supplies of potable drinking water, the incidence of illness and by extension, mortality, could drop by as much as 75 per cent. The Research by World Health Organization (WHO) has also shown that improvement in drinking-water quality through household water treatment such as chlorination at point of use and adequate domestic storage, can lead to a reduction of diarrhoea episodes by 39 per cent for each \$1 invested in safe drinking water and sanitation. It has been estimated that the economic gain to Africa for providing access to safe water and basic sanitation through investment in small-scale projects is about \$28.4 billion a year, or around 5 per cent of GDP.

Sustainable irrigation fulfils the dual role of enhancing productivity and of adapting to climate change. However, land under irrigation in ECOWAS countries is far below what is required, due largely to the lack of investment in the sector. Addressing this issue, especially in the rural areas, will make it easier for rural communities to increase their productivity, enhance climate-change adaptation, increase ecosystem benefits and, consequently, reduce poverty. The challenges associated with provision of potable water are bound to increase given the growth in population, urbanization and climate change, and the decreasing reliability of supply. These challenges need to be considered in the transition to a green economy. A green economy in the context of water requires policies that address the challenges associated with sustainable demand and supply of water for all economic activities. In this regard, the Integrated Water Resource Management offers a good framework for promoting sustainable water use and water resource protection.

Ecosystem protection policies that allow users to pay for the resources should be an essential component of this framework and should aim at addressing variation in supply, use, storage and management of water resources. "Green" irrigation models as well as investing in wastewater treatment from industrial and municipal wastewater as well as flood prevention are all opportunities that can be explored. Basically, instruments for water resource use and management should focus on removing harmful environmental subsidies and the differentiated economic pricing of water that protects the poor; and promotion of water harvesting, development of mini dams, re-use of water and the promotion of technologies that reduce water use.

5.7 *Urban management*

Africa is one of the fastest urbanizing continents in the world. Urbanization in Africa is estimated to be around 39 per cent. Within 25 years, the urban population of Africa is expected to be larger than that in Europe, Latin America or North America. The situation is not different in the ECOWAS subregion. Unlike Asia and Europe, urbanization has been taking place in the absence of significant industrial expansion. What is being observed in ECOWAS countries and in Africa as a whole is the

outward expansion and conversion of prime agricultural lands into residential and industrial uses with little inward expansion of built-up areas.

Unplanned urban management has resulted in many environmental and social problems such as poor sanitation and an increasing disease burden; increased distance to school and clustering in schools; increased crime, violence, traffic congestion and growth of slums; polluted air and water bodies; inadequate supply of clean drinking water; youth unemployment and underemployment; social inequality and exclusion; and food insecurity, among others. More importantly, rapid urbanization in ECOWAS countries has led to massive increase in waste, which, if not well managed, will have an intergenerational impact on the quality of water and public health. The encouraging factor is that this waste can be managed properly to create employment and other ecological advantages.

Transition to a green economy in the context of urban management entails well-designed cities with opportunities for greening through the proximity of urban functions, modal shifts in transportation and increased efficiency in provision of infrastructure, utilities and energy. Specifically, an integrated land use and urban planning framework that ensures efficient provision of adequate resources and management of the urban waste that has engulfed many cities in ECOWAS countries, is required. In this regard, efficient waste management through reuse, recovery and recycling of waste will defer the process of returning waste to the environment. Retrofitting existing buildings could have huge market potential and offer employment opportunities in ECOWAS countries, while new green buildings could help to meet the additional demand for buildings and reduce energy consumption at a low incremental investment cost. In all these areas, venture capital funds can be an innovative financing mechanism.

5.8 Challenges

The widely accepted concept is that green economic policies are likely to have some marginally negative impact on other policies and policy domains (e.g. poverty, growth, employment, trade, etc.) in the short-term. However, the impact may taper off in the long run with appropriate and complementary policies. For example, the introduction of emission charges may lead to an increase in transport fares, which can affect all sectors of the economy since transport is an intermediary input to all production processes. To address this issue, revenue from emission charges could be used to replace growth-inhibiting taxes on capital. However, in the context of ECOWAS and Africa in general where market and government failures abound, one has to be very careful since these complementary policies may not be implemented and even when implemented, may not achieve the desired results owing to these failures. There are many challenges that confront ECOWAS in its quest for transition to a green economy. These include:

- (a) The high initial cost of investment in the transition, which appears to be beyond the reach of many ECOWAS countries and even where available, may go against the immediate development challenge of poverty reduction in these countries;
- (b) The social dimensions, especially poverty issues, are sometimes not adequately covered in policy prescriptions on the green economy. Some of these policy prescriptions may satisfy external conditions and standards but may not have favourable impacts on the lives of the citizenry. Many sacrifices will have to be made by the poor if complementary policies are insufficiently poverty-reducing;

- (c) Commitment to transform to a green economy, enforcement of regulations, mobilizing resources for investments, strengthening the human-resource base and embarking on effective research and development efforts are all real-life challenges.;
- (d) Perceived green economy policies in ECOWAS countries are mainly derived from short-to medium-term policies, whereas green-growth paths are intended to set the direction for decades, if not generations to come. The challenge is to develop a long-term plan;
- (e) The shift to a green economy or onto a green-growth path in areas such as energy and transportation requires major structural changes in systems dependent on infrastructure, technology and financial assistance, which are beyond the reach of many ECOWAS countries;
- (f) Pledges from the international community that are not wholly fulfilled owing to harmful conditionalities and the inability of some ECOWAS countries to negotiate better deals, could pose a serious challenge to the transition process; and
- (g) Law reforms, standardization and infrastructure, and quality control in many countries are required for an effective transition.

5.9 Recommendations

Determinants of success in the transition to a green economy and its requirements hinge on a number of factors, including strong institutions, good governance, technical capacity, political support, broad engagement of business and civil society and international support. Strong political support, institutions and good governance provide the needed leadership and policies as well as the financial leverage to support the transformation. Providing a conducive environment will not only encourage the private sector to invest in a green economy but also build the public-private partnerships that reduce the expected risks to the private sector, provide additional resources for implementation, facilitate the establishment of markets for environmental goods and services as well as spread the benefits from the skills of the private sector.

Practical implementation of the green economy agenda should start from the grassroots. Alienating the masses could frustrate efforts. In this respect, public participation not only at the implementation stage but also at the design stage is very critical for successful implementation. Such participation can also strengthen good governance, accountability and transparency. Individuals, governments, and regional and international organizations have a significant role to play in the transformation to a green economy. It is imperative that Governments undertake significant capacity-building at all levels, define roles clearly, set clear objectives with quantitative monitoring indicators and set in motion a vehicle that can help achieve set green goals.

Activities for sensitization, creation of awareness and educating CSOs and the general public are very critical. However, such measures should be accompanied by legal enforcement. For regional and international organizations, what is very crucial in the transformation to a green economy is genuine commitment to making aid effective, satisfying pledges made, cooperating and coordinating with all stakeholders to ensure both vertical and horizontal integration, and creating synergies that ensure technology transfer and deployment, financial support, capacity development and institutional strengthening.

There are a number of policies that ECOWAS might consider adopting or strengthening in order to stimulate the green economic transition, ranging from regulatory and economic instruments to public-private partnerships and voluntary initiatives. The following should be pursued in areas where they are feasible and implementation cost is low: market-based policies such as fiscal instruments (progressive taxes or tariffs on energy, water and other natural resources); introduction of ecological taxes which can facilitate a gradual shift in taxes away from labour to the environmental “bads” and encourage the ‘polluter pays principle’; and removal of environmentally-harmful subsidies that promote ineffective use of resources

Regulatory policies in the form of standards, permits licenses and land-use controls are all instruments that are also required for a smooth transformation to the green economy. Further measures are also critical, such as complementary policies for public and private investments, procurement rules, trade rules, research and development, specific sectoral policies (e.g. industrial development, transport, employment creation, etc.) and government provision of public goods and safety nets to cushion the poor, especially informal sector workers.

A legal framework that facilitates green economic activities and regulates harmful forms of production and consumption is also necessary. In this regard, ECOWAS standards and norms for controlling the quality of export products should be implemented to improve competitiveness and protect consumers in the Community. Harmonization of national trade and customs laws to facilitate trade, as well as the implementation of ECOWAS directives and codes on mining will go a long way to facilitating the transition. Building the capacity of Governments and other stakeholders with the view to having a common understanding of the green economy and the opportunities that it offers and promoting actions that increase public support for change may also be required in the transition. The ECOWAS Commission and regional and subregional financial institutions such as AfDB should be encouraged to design innovative financing mechanisms and products to support green investments.

Other equally important steps to supporting the transition to green economy include: developing action plans; creating a platform for, as well as providing information on education and awareness to all member countries on the green economy; and encouraging the private sector, especially financial institutions, to buy into the green economy transition and facilitate technology transfer to developing countries.

Paramount in the transition to a green economy are investments in natural capital assets (soils, forests, fisheries, air, water bodies). These provide livelihoods to many local communities and to sustainable production, focusing on more efficient and less resource-intensive processes that ensure job creation and equitable growth. Further, it must be ensured that the poorer segments of society are not overburdened. This can be accomplished through enhancement of existing opportunities for low-cost, win-win transformation possibilities. Measures that help the transition process also include implementing ECOWAS norms and standards for quality control, ensuring technology transfer, harmonizing laws, ensuring fair trade, creating an information platform on the green economy, and educating the masses on sustainable production and consumption. Advocating for fair and equitable trade, especially trade in agricultural products, will also help obtain remunerative prices for farmers in the subregion.

VI. New and Emerging Issues Facing the West African Subregion

Since the Rio Conference, a number of challenges that impact on sustainable development in West Africa have intensified. Most of these challenges are not new but there is substantial evidence to suggest that the intensity of impact has increased and this poses fundamental challenges to the sustainable development of the subregion. These issues include climate change, desertification, coastal erosion, the energy crisis, water scarcity, lack of transparency in the management of mineral and oil resources, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, food insecurity, relevance of education to developmental needs, graduate unemployment, globalization and urbanization.

Of these challenges, those that can be considered as new since Rio are climate change, desertification, globalization, water scarcity, relevance of education to development needs, and graduate unemployment. One important observation is that none of these challenges stand alone. Each affects the other in a complex manner. At present, there is inadequate knowledge of the relationship between these challenges. For example, climate change can affect the food crisis and water scarcity and this in turn affects the energy crises, etc. The theoretical relationship between these challenges is not too difficult to analyse. It lies in the practical intensity of the direct and indirect impact of these challenges. Many of these challenges have in some way been addressed in other sections of the document, especially sections 4 and 5. In the following section, a number of these challenges that need special attention are highlighted.

6.1 Climate change

Climate change is one of the most serious threats to sustainable development and poses serious threats to sustained economic growth and poverty reduction in the subregion. All the countries are expected to experience reduced average annual rainfall and increased aridity and droughts. This combination is expected to result in net drying and increased aridity for a large part of the subregion. Yet, the contribution of ECOWAS countries to world GHG emissions is quite negligible, since Africa as a whole contributes only about 4 per cent of world GHG emissions, of which, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa alone contribute about 97 per cent. ECOWAS countries are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as a result of poverty, poor infrastructure, high illiteracy rates, over-exploitation of natural resources, persisting conflicts and high economic dependency on climate-sensitive activities, including agriculture. All this makes it difficult for the subregion to mitigate, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change.

Changes in rainfall patterns lead to increased water stress, with results such as decreased crop yields and food security and loss of revenues from cash crops such as cocoa. Water stress also leads to reduced potential for hydropower generation due to decreased precipitation, reduced groundwater recharge, loss of biodiversity and increased land degradation. The impact of climate change on water resources will have profound effects on society. This impact includes:

- (a) Reduction in runoff and river flow, leading to reduced water availability for irrigation and hence, reduced agricultural productivity and output;
- (b) Reduced groundwater recharge, affecting groundwater supplies particularly for rural

communities that depend on boreholes;

- (c) Strains on human life created by reduction of available water for drinking and sanitation;
- (d) Rainfall extremes, including excessive rainfall and run-off leading to more frequent occurrences of floods, damage to crops, land cover, human habitations and infrastructure; and
- (e) Increased occurrence of drought, which impacts on crop yields.

Basically, the impact of climate change is multi-dimensional, in that the interlinkages of one impact on the others. Such impact is quite vast, and to date, not all the downstream effects are well known. Added to this, the intensity with which the impact is being felt in recent times makes it a serious emerging issue. The Climate for Development in Africa Programme (ClimDev) a joint initiative of AUC, UNECA and AfDB, was established with the aim of overcoming the lack of necessary information and analysis about the options available to policymakers and decision makers at all levels. The programme responded to the urgent challenge that climate change poses for achievement of development objectives in Africa. Establishment of the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC/ECA) was also of immense help to West Africa, as it has become the hub for assisting African countries to build capacity for effectively addressing climate policy issues.

Most countries in the subregion have formulated action plans to address climate-change adaptation and mitigation. Those that have not completed them are in the process of doing so. The primary challenge concerning climate change in West Africa remains that of resources. Only about a third of funds earmarked for adaptation measures have been received to date. Access to global funds such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and other carbon markets has been very difficult for countries in the subregion. Sectors such as agriculture and forestry, where enough gains can be made in terms of mitigation of climate change, do not receive the requisite funds. The capacity within the countries to effectively address climate change impacts remains low. Additionally, international efforts to reduce the adverse results of climate change are more on mitigation to the detriment of adaptation, which is what ECOWAS countries require the most.

6.2 *Water scarcity*

Even though water is abundant in West Africa, many countries still do not have adequate access to potable water. Also, areas developed for irrigation to facilitate socio-economic development are still far below the potential. Substantial challenges face West African countries in their quest to improve water supply for household and agricultural purposes, irrigation and management of water resources. These challenges are: managing quality, flooding, drought and maintaining ecosystem services; trans-boundary nature of river basins that poses a challenge for cooperative management; inequality in access to drinking water; limited water storage capacity; and limited exploitation of groundwater owing primarily to poor knowledge of groundwater resources and the high cost of development, among others.

According to FAO (2007), water scarcity has been affecting all social and economic sectors and this threatens the sustainability of the natural resource base. Addressing water scarcity and water management has required intersectoral and multidisciplinary approaches. There have been several regional and national action plans to improve water management in West Africa. At the

regional level, ECOWAS collaborated with other institutions such as AfDB and NEPAD in establishment of the following:

- (a) The Africa Ministerial Council on Water and the Africa Water Task Force established to enhance cooperation and promote the development and implementation of coherent policies and strategies for water resources management.;
- (b) Development of the African Water Vision 2025 and the Framework for Action;
- (c) Implementation of the Water Partnership Programme and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative;
- (d) The African Water Facility; and
- (e) Development of the Senegal River Basin Water and Environmental Management Project, among others.

At national level, many ECOWAS countries have collaborated with development partners such as AfDB to undertake water-sector reform programmes, develop new policies, strategies and laws for water-resource development and management based on the principles of the Integrated Water Resources Management initiative, develop water infrastructure and improve the performance of water service utilities, as well as other targeted investments in water and sanitation, irrigation and hydropower. In Liberia, for example, water supply and sanitation studies led to approval of a follow-on investment project of about Euros 30.3 million in 2010, funded by AfDB.

6.3 Desertification

Desertification is one of the most serious challenges negatively impacting on sustainable development in West Africa. It is closely linked to poverty and affects health, food security, natural resources exploitation, water, biodiversity, energy, migration patterns and the overall environment. Two thirds of Africa is either desert or dryland and a great part is in West Africa. Most land in West Africa is susceptible to land degradation and bears the greatest impact of such drought and desertification. This phenomenon is likely to increase as a result of climate change. Under a range of climate scenarios, it has been projected that there will be an increase of 5-8 per cent of arid and semi-arid lands in West Africa. In several countries, desertification is already advancing at an alarming pace. Estimates of the area prone to desertification in some countries are given in table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Area prone to desertification and or degradation in selected countries

Country	Area prone to desertification (km ²)	Percentage of country area affected
Burkina Faso	82,260	30
Ghana	83, 489	35

Source: ECA, 2007.

Several actions have been undertaken to combat desertification. UNCCD was adopted in 1994 and came into force in 1996. The objective of this Convention was to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification. All West African countries have been contracting parties to the Convention, engaging in various activities and making progress in meeting their obligations in its implementation. Specifically, by 2005, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo had all completed and adopted their National Action Plans (NAPs). In other countries, the NAP elaboration process had been launched by 2005. Burkina Faso mainstreamed NAPs into National Development Programmes (NDPs) with results at various levels. To complement national programmes, several initiatives and programmes focusing on agriculture and natural resources (table 6.2) were implemented at subregional and regional levels, with implications for combating desertification.

Table 6.2: Subregional and regional programmes

Initiative/ programme	Objectives	Organizations involved
The NEPAD Environment Initiative	Combating desertification, finalizing subregional action plans. With support from Norway, UNEP is providing support to Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya and Mozambique, to develop their NAPs.	UNEP, AMCEN, CILSS, IGAD, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, SADC, ECOWAS
The Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative	Slowing the advance of the Sahara Desert, enhancing environmental sustainability, controlling land degradation, promoting integrated natural resources management, conserving biological diversity, contributing to poverty reduction, and creating jobs. Country coverage: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.	AU, UNECA, FAO, UNEP and UNCCD
Initiative on Land policy in Africa	Building consensus among key players in Africa in the vision of successful land policy and land reform and agreeing on a comprehensive framework and guidelines for formulation and implementation of land policies.	AU, UNECA, AfDB

At national level, many West African countries have formulated and are implementing national environmental policies, strategies and plans. The National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs), which were first formulated in the early 1990s, provided the broad-policy framework for coordinated management and protection of the environment. NEAPs articulated policy interventions for conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources, including land management and integrated resource planning. Drought and desertification control constitutes an important pillar of policy interventions.

For example, in the Gambia, the NAP was drawn within the framework of the country's NEAP and in Benin desertification control has been an important pillar of the country's NEAP. The Niger National Environmental Plan for Sustainable Development also includes NAPs. In terms of financing the implementation of UNCCD recommendations and Sustainable Land Management initiatives, almost all bilateral and multilateral funding agencies have provided support. At national level, national budgets, although limited, provide support for implementation through agriculture, environment and natural resources sectoral allocations.

A major challenge that confronts implementation is the slow and ineffective process of integrating NAPs into NDPs and PRSs largely as a result of lack of capacity and resources and of limited political commitment. This has made it difficult to integrate desertification control plans into planning and budgetary frameworks at various levels and has resulted in limited progress in implementing NAPs. Also, poverty in most countries is a limiting factor in implementation of local-level measures to address desertification.

6.4 Globalization

Globalization is the process whereby all major activities and results of countries are interlinked. In the economic (trade, financial and human resources), political, social and environmental areas, actions in one country affect almost all other countries. This has been magnified by current information and communication technology. There is mass consumption of goods and services with its accompanying wastes and pollution. In recent years, ECOWAS countries have been intensively importing many used items such as electrical gadgets, clothes, building materials and household consumables which are virtually waste in developed countries. The e-waste in these countries has also increased even though they do not have the technology to properly dispose of them.

The social activities of countries are affecting and modifying the social norms of other countries. For example, homosexuality and lesbianism, which used to be taboo in many ECOWAS countries, have gradually been gaining roots in some countries. Also, the digital divide that exists between the developed world and Africa, more specifically West Africa, make it difficult for these countries to benefit fully from globalization. Furthermore, dumping of cheap goods by Asian countries, specifically by China, makes local industries become uncompetitive. More importantly, the global financial crises in the developed world have significantly impacted on the subregion through the contagion effect of globalization.

In recent years, the issue of globalization and its effects on developing countries have become the focus of much research because of the growing concern about the impact that globalization has on growth, income distribution and poverty. Though empirical evidence on the impact of globalization is mixed, there is a general consensus that the relative impact is more on developing countries, including West Africa.

6.5 Lack of transparency in management of mineral and oil resources

West Africa abounds in different kinds of mineral resources, making the extractive sector the backbone of economies endowed with such resources. Lack of transparency in the management of these resources has led to rampant social conflict in resource-rich countries. The widespread discontent in mining communities is the result of their total or partial alienation from active part in the decisions affecting them, in the false belief that planners and policymakers know best (Twerefou, 2009). These conflicts have resulted in the destruction of property and in deaths and have seriously affected livelihoods in some mining communities. In fact, many of the wars that plagued the subregion in the 1980s and 1990s (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) as well as

the current strife in the Niger Delta in Nigeria, could be wholly or partly attributed to non-transparent and unequal mineral wealth distribution.

Conflicts in mining communities arise from four main issues - distribution of royalties, land use conflict, resettlement and the survival of small-scale mines (Twerefou, 2009). In recent years, some countries such as Ghana have discovered oil and there is a high possibility that other countries in the subregion could discover oil and gas along the coast. Even though Nigeria has been exploring extensively for oil in the past three decades, the country has little to show in terms of efficient use of oil resources. Many Nigerians are poor and struggle for survival. The challenge is for countries that are joining the 'oil club' in the subregion to not only manage the revenue from oil but also to obtain the maximum benefit from exploitation of oil resources. Efforts should be made to avoid the type of development that is being observed in oil-rich countries such as Nigeria.

6.6 *Food insecurity*

There are many challenges facing the subregion in terms of achieving economic growth and transformation. In many agricultural production systems, nutrients are reconstituted through shifting cultivation. In the lowland tropics, soils are acidic, with low absorptive capacity and are also poor in nutrients. Furthermore, risk in the agricultural sector has been unreasonably high partly as a result of land tenure insecurity which has deterred investment. Insect pests are also important constraints to the development of agriculture in the subregion. The use of pesticides and herbicides has not been extensive enough due to its cost, non-availability in certain cases and their negative effect on the environment.

Another major challenge that faces agriculture in Africa is inadequate and poorly linked research and development. This has resulted in the low productivity that characterizes agricultural production. Research has not been able to solve the most limiting factors to increased production, while those undertaken have not been properly linked with the production and marketing sectors of agriculture. Seeds are performing poorly because very few improved high-yielding varieties are being used by farmers, leaving the great potential of plant breeding untapped. Similar situations can be found in animal husbandry and the fisheries sectors of agriculture.

Production systems in West Africa are still subsistent in nature with many farmers producing to feed their families and occasionally selling surpluses. Poor farming practices such as the slash and burn method of farming has led to destruction of microorganisms that enrich the soil and degradation of this natural resource. Marketing of agricultural products has also remained a major problem for many countries. With the exception of a few countries where marketing has been provided for cash crops such as cocoa and coffee which are foreign exchange earners, many West African countries have not made efforts to organize marketing for local producers. This has made it extremely difficult for local producers to participate in the international market.

Structural adjustment and privatization programmes have left many small farmers without access to key inputs and services, while State agencies no longer provide many direct marketing and service functions to small farms, leaving a vacuum that the private sector has yet to fill in many countries (Kherallah and others, 2002). Trade liberalization and the broader processes of globalization are making it difficult for small farmers to compete in markets that are much more

demanding in terms of quality. In recent years, the rise in supermarkets, the growing importance of quality standards and poor access to markets increasingly threaten the ability of smallholding farmers to compete with large-scale commercial farmers from developed countries. Further, many countries are confronted with land grabbing and resettlement issues arising from the use of land for growing cash crops and for mining by foreign companies respectively. This has reduced food production by locals. All these factors have led to food insecurity in the subregion.

6.7 Relevance of education to developmental needs

In many countries in the subregion, as discussed in section 4, evidence shows that various Governments are committed to the development of labour force skills through formal or informal education. The formal educational institutions in many countries in the subregion basically provide general academic training to equip students with minimum skills for entering the labour market, expressing themselves and understanding the dynamics of society. Many students who pass out from the tertiary education system are technically incompetent and unsuitable for the world of work due to the general nature of the training received. Thus, the slow pace of employment generation coupled with the overproduction of tertiary graduates and the few linkages with enterprises have led to low employability of tertiary graduates.

The current formal education/training system has little impact on the employment situation because it has not been able to address the needs of the formal sector, which happens to be the target for employment of those who undergo formal training. The current formal training system determines the overproduction of skills for which demand on the labour market is insignificant. It sometimes employs instructors whose skills are obsolete and who are incapable of changing. In addition, they cannot be dismissed. Shortage of qualified instructors in the skilled areas for which there is substantial demand on the labour market and the limited coverage of formal training are also cited as reasons for the insignificant impact of formal training on the employment situation. Apparently, the excess of tertiary educational output over the ability of the economy to absorb this output and the lack of required skills and competence among the “tertiary educated” have caused high unemployment rates for university and polytechnic graduates in the subregion.

With respect to vocational and technical training, many Governments have put emphasis on training and retraining to make labour-market entrants employable. Vocational and apprenticeship training, as well as training programmes in entrepreneurial skills for graduates, have been on the priority list of Governments for curbing the growing incidence of youth and graduate unemployment. One notable problem associated with vocational education is the difficulty in placing qualified graduates from vocational schools in waged employment although specific opportunities exist. For instance, it is not uncommon to observe that vocational and technical schools are producing qualified typists who end up being unemployed in the wake of a shortage of computer operators. The lack of linkages between vocational schools and the job market has been identified as the reason for the mismatch in labour demand and supply. All this raises questions about the relevance of the educational system to the developmental needs of the subregion.

6.8 Graduate unemployment

Unemployment fundamentally results from excess labour supply over labour demand. In the subregion, the slow growth of the economy, the rapidly expanding labour force and the marginally declining formal sector employment provide evidence of low absorption capacity, creating excess labour in the economy. The issues of unemployment have been discussed in section 4. The prime issue here is the high graduate unemployment that is being experienced in the subregion. Private universities have been growing in number and have managed to produce a considerable number of graduates in addition to those that were produced by the public universities.

In the 1980s and 1990s, graduate unemployment increased and this was attributed to several factors including retrenchment in the public sector; globalization and unfair trade practices; high domestic production costs due to high interest rates and rapid depreciation of the domestic currency making local firms uncompetitive; and lack of access to credit, among others. In the 2000s, an important conditionality in the implementation of the PRSs was for government to control inflation. Monetary policy in this direction, especially towards the end of the decade, has been to limit government expenditure. This has seriously constrained the creation of decent jobs for graduates. Graduate unemployment is more an urban phenomenon than rural, largely as a result of the rural-urban migration resulting from the deterioration of the social and economic conditions in rural areas.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations on the way forward

7.1 Conclusions

ECOWAS countries, and individual countries to varying degrees, have made progress in establishing institutions, putting in place policies, strategies, coordinating and collaborating mechanisms and other relevant processes to facilitate the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. However, these institutions are weak and fall short of fulfilling the role of NCSDs, which has had significantly negative implications on policy implementation outcomes. Much remains to be done, particularly with regard to eliminating the environmental bias and addressing the three pillars of sustainable development in a holistic and integrated manner.

The findings on the three pillars on sustainability indicate that the subregion has made some gains on the social and economic fronts. However, the gains made are marginal and can dissipate with even a small shock. Specifically, stable governance has led to a stable growth rate since 1990 in almost all the countries. Despite this improved performance, very few countries have achieved the 8-9 per cent growth rate required to halve poverty by 2015. This implies that the subregion is still faced with the critical challenge of raising growth rates and sustaining them over an extended period in order to meet the MDGs. Unfortunately, FDI and ODA as a ratio of GDP have been decreasing while the trade balance and current account are always in deficit. West African countries still experience low levels of investment. This is partly due to low domestic savings, which deepens dependency on external aid and places countries in perpetual debt.

In the social dimension, countries have made efforts to improve education and health by implementing policies, programmes, strategies and related instruments that facilitate sustainable development. The expected outcomes of such policies and programmes are often thwarted by HIV/AIDS, the persistence and resurgence of TB and malaria, as well as deepening poverty and high population growth. With regard to the environmental dimension, the situation is challenging since all the environmental indicators are deteriorating, due largely to insufficient focus on the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Transition to a green economy is seen in the subregion as the surest way of achieving sustainable development. In line with this conviction, West Africa has identified sectors with greening potential, including energy, transport, agriculture, water, forestry, and urban management as areas where attention should be focused. The challenge is that the transition will require huge resources and technology transfer which are out of the reach of most countries. Additionally, the opportunity cost of this transition in terms of its immediate impact on poorer segments of the society could be high and needs to be well managed. The emerging issues that confront the subregion, even though many are not new, cause uncertainty regarding the intensity of their impact.

7.2 Recommendations

In this section, some generic recommendations that are crucial to the implementation of sustainable development are presented. It is imperative for countries to improve intersectoral coordination for environmental management, strengthen human resources and institutional capacity for policy formulation and implementation and enforce legislation. For effective transboundary management of resources, countries should harmonize their policies and legislation.

Given the role of population factors in environmental degradation, countries should aggressively integrate population concerns into environmental policies and strategies as well as strengthen decentralized government administration and political processes at the local level. Furthermore, participatory approaches to facilitate dialogue and exchange of knowledge and information on natural resource management should be enhanced. This will increase the knowledge base of communities, promote practices which are compatible with the environment, create awareness and foster partnerships among policymakers and civil society.

Criteria and indicators for sustainable environmental management are recognized as important to the framework for assessing the status and trends in environmental management. Countries should therefore develop and apply these indicators and strengthen data collection for effective monitoring especially at the local level. This should be combined with enhancement of technical and institutional capacities for environmental monitoring and prediction to enable countries to better analyse existing vulnerabilities and constraints.

Given the diversity of resources and actors in the utilization and management of environmental resources, countries should adopt and/or strengthen integrated resource management approaches for their sustainable exploitation. Governance regimes of such resources should also be improved to ensure more systematic planning and coordinated development. To enable the subregion to fully meet their obligations under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, developed countries should provide support in the spirit of the relevant conventions. Such assistance should focus on the needs of the subregion with relevant conditionalities and easy access. The capacity of West Africa should also be strengthened to enhance its negotiation skills and increase the benefits from their resources.

Reversing environmental degradation calls for more sustainable consumption and production patterns. West Africa, which suffers from under-consumption of food, housing, energy, transportation and other basic needs, should now focus on increasing consumption while conserving resources and protecting environmental systems. Transition to a green economy will require financial resources. West African countries should therefore develop innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms for environmental management through the mobilization of local, national and regional resources as well as through innovative partnerships with the private sector.

Given the link between environmental resources and the social and economic development of Africa, adequate integration of the environmental pillar of sustainable development into the development process is necessary, if the continent is to meet its sustainable development goals. It is also imperative to develop and implement a long-term development framework into which

short- and medium-term plans will be embedded. Such long-term strategies have to be realistic and should be tied to medium- term and annual budgets to ensure effective implementation. Equal treatment should also be given to all the three pillars of sustainable development, unlike the current situation where the environmental pillar is given less attention. In order to achieve all this, good governance and the provision of a conducive, political environment for effective development are paramount. This will require that government is transparent and accountable to their citizens, instead of the current situation whereby elected officials act as lords over their citizens.

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(Footnotes)

- 1 2000-2004; 2003-2005.
- 2 Approved in 2004 and revised in 2005 and 2006. The time frame for implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was pushed back to the period 2007-2009.
- 3 Nigeria did not have a PRSP, but rather a National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document and then Vision 20, which is a LTDS.
- 4 Mauritania prepared a PRS for the period 2001-2015. The first four-year action plan covered the period 2001-2004 and the second action plan covered 2006-2010.