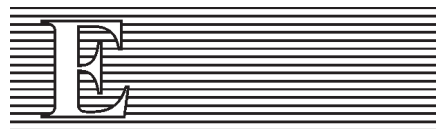




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of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and
Economic Development

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Annual Report 2005

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABSA | Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa |
| ACP/EU | African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries/European Union |
| ACSIS | African Civil Society Network in the Information Society |
| AFDB | African Development Bank |
| ADF | African Development Forum |
| AG | Africa Group |
| AGDI | African Gender and Development Index |
| AGOA | African Growth Opportunity Act |
| AGR | African Governance Report |
| AMCOW | African Ministerial Council on Water |
| AMP | Africa Mining Partnership |
| AMU | Arab Maghreb Union |
| ANSTI | African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions |
| APR | African Peer Review |
| APRM | African Peer Review Mechanism |
| ARIA | Assessment of Regional Integration in Africa |
| ARN | African Research Network |
| ATC | Agreement on Textiles and Clothing |
| AU | African Union |
| AVLIN | African Virtual Library Information Network |
| AWDR | African Water Development Report |
| AWICH | African Water Information Clearing House |
| BPoA | Brussels Programme of Action |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CEMA | Central African Economic and Monetary Community |
| CEPGL | Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries |
| CHDCS | Committee on Human Development and Civil Society |
| CODI | Committee on Development Information |
| COMESA | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa |
| CRCI | Committee of Regional Cooperation and Integration |
| CSD | Committee on Sustainable Development |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CUTS | Consumer Unity and Trust Society |
| CWD | Committee on Women in Development |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DAW | Division for the Advancement of Women |
| EAC | East African Community |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EPA | Economic Partnership Agreement |
| ePol-Net | Global Electronic Policy Resource Network |
| ERA | Economic Report on Africa |
| EU | European Union |
| FASDEV | Forum on African Statistical Development |
| GIAS | Geneva Inter Regional Advisory Services |

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GTZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation Ltd.) |
| ICE | Intergovernmental Committee of Experts |
| ICPD-PoA | International Conference on Population and Development - Programme of Action |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| ICTDAR | ICTs for Development of the Arab Region |
| IDEP | Institut for Economic Development and Planning |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IHSN | International Household Survey Network |
| ITCA | Information Technology Centre for Africa |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union |
| JPA | Joint Parliamentary Assembly |
| LDC | Least Developed Country |
| LG | Learning Group |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MRU | Mano River Union |
| NAMA | Non-agricultural Market Access |
| NCSD | National Councils for Sustainable Development |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NICI | National Information and Communication Infrastructure |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PANAFCON | Pan-African Conference on Water |
| Paris 21 | Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21 st Century |
| PICTA | Partnership for ICTs in Africa |
| PoA | Programme of Action |
| PRS | Poverty Reduction Strategy |
| PRSP-LG | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Learning Group |
| REC | Regional Economic Community |
| S&T | Science and Technology |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SDD | Sustainable Development Division |
| SEAMIC | Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre |
| SRO | Subregional Office |
| SSATP | Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Programme |
| SWDR | Subregional Water Development Report |
| TRID | Trade and Regional Integration Division |
| UNCSTD | United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UN-DESA | United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNGIWG | United Nations Geographic Information Working Group |
| UNHQ | United Nations Headquarters |
| VICI | Village Information and Communication Infrastructure |
| WAMU | West Africa Monetary Union |
| WSIS | World Summit on the Information Society |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

Summary

The Annual Report is one of the ways in which the ECA secretariat reports on the implementation of its programme activities to its principal legislative body, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as well as other stakeholders.

The present annual report which is being submitted to the Thirty-ninth Session of the Commission covers the period from June 2004 to May 2005. The report provides an overview of the major trends, events and activities undertaken by the Commission and its secretariat in the context of its broad mandate of fostering the economic and social development of Africa. The report will inform policy-making at the country, regional and global levels, and ensure that the challenges confronting the continent are firmly established on the international development agenda.

The period covered by this report was marked by an intensification of activities in support of the efforts of member States in addressing the development challenges they confront. In 2004, ECA played an important role in preparing African countries for a number of important international events which would have a significant impact on their development prospects. These include the forthcoming global review of progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be held in September 2005; the ten-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action which took place in February 2005; and the ongoing preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) scheduled to take place in Tunis in November 2005.

In the same vein, the report identified some of the challenges facing Africa, including an analysis of how ECA has positioned itself to respond to them with an overall view to progress towards the MDGs. ECA's leadership on development issues of relevance to Africa has been commended by the 2004 Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development when they considered and endorsed the report of the independent external review panel. The Ministers also recognized that ECA had achieved many successes despite its resource challenges.

The findings of the external evaluation also produced a number of recommendations. The secretariat has focused on implementing a number of these recommendations that require immediate attention. For example, an intergovernmental consultation of experts was organized in December 2004 to, among other things, critically reflect on and provide guidance in the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. As a result, the secretariat made some adjustments to the programme of work to take into account the challenges facing the member States now and in coming years before submission to UN headquarters.

As in past years, partnerships are a constant theme throughout ECA's programme of work. In fulfilling its mandate, ECA has further strengthened its collaboration with a wide range of partners – both from within and outside the UN system including the major donors. One example of this partnership is the work jointly undertaken with the OECD Secretariat in developing a framework for mutual accountability which is aimed at improving aid effectiveness in

Africa. Similarly, ECA made significant contributions to the work of the Commission for Africa, an initiative launched in 2004 by British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair with the aim of galvanizing further international support for the continent's development.

The period under review also saw some significant achievements in several areas of ECA's work. These include the launch of several new flagship publications in such areas as governance, regional integration as well as in the development of the African Gender Development Index, a path-breaking index which will provide a tool for measuring the performance of countries in addressing gender equality. Much progress was also made in advancing work on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of NEPAD. ECA participated in the six country missions undertaken during the period under review, and its technical work will continue to inform the self-assessments.

To focus attention on the essential linkages between good governance and achieving the MDGs and NEPAD, the secretariat, in collaboration with the AU and ADB, organized the fourth African Development Forum (ADF IV) in October

2004 on the theme, Governance for a progressing Africa. The importance of good governance for sustainable development and poverty reduction was underlined in the outcome document of the Forum, which also outlined recommendations and mechanisms for strengthening good governance practices on the continent.

Capacity building has become an explicit priority for the UN system and remains a core component of ECA's mandate and work. The present report contains a section which reviews the main accomplishments under the regular programme of technical cooperation. The report also includes a separate chapter on the outcomes of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission which have held meetings since June 2004. The chapter highlights key issues requiring the attention or action of the Commission through its Committee of Experts.

The final chapter of the report provides an analysis of the constraints and challenges faced in delivering the work programme, including lessons learned in the implementation of the results-based management framework and recommendations for improving future programmes.

CHAPTER I

Addressing Africa's Development Challenges

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, African countries have experienced higher and more stable economic growth. These positive results follow the implementation of comprehensive reform strategies aimed at improving the economic, social and political conditions at both country and regional levels. Consequently, growth has increased from 2.6 per cent, on average, over the period 1975-1994 to about 3.5 per cent for 2000-2003. Estimates for 2004 indicate further acceleration to 4.6 per cent, the highest level in almost a decade.

In spite of these improvements, extreme poverty remains a major concern in the region. Africa has actually grown poorer over the past decades and is the only region in the world where the number of people living on less than \$US1:00 a day has increased. In this context, fulfilling the development agenda in Africa and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) require increased and sustained rates of economic growth.

The key to achieving necessary growth lies in adopting effective policies. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is committed to helping African governments make prudent decisions and seize opportunities based on timely and relevant information. Against this background, ECA has undertaken a number of projects and been involved in several initiatives that are considered of critical importance to the future of Africa.

1. Some of ECA's recent contributions to achieving the MDGs

To fulfill its mandate, ECA addresses a broad agenda of issues ranging from the imperative of fostering good governance and developing the capable State, deepening regional integration efforts, enhancing trade opportunities and advocating policies geared at improving overall macroeconomic conditions in the region.

Over the past year, ECA has played a leading role in monitoring and tracking performance of African countries towards achievement of the MDGs. The results of this work constitute a key input into the United Nations global review of the MDGs, whose conclusions will be considered at the 60th UN General Assembly in September 2005. Overall, the research findings of ECA highlight the fact that it is important to take a closer look at specific country experiences and consider disaggregated data to fully comprehend the challenges facing Africa. For instance, North African countries are generally on track to achieving most, if not all, of the MDGs, while in sub-Saharan Africa, a few countries are on track toward some of the eight MDGs. Another important result is that the linkages between growth, employment creation and poverty reduction need further investigation to be fully understood and to lead to the required policy improvements.

ECA's most recent analyses, contained in the Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2005 as-

sesses the employment and poverty challenges facing Africa, proposes a series of employment-enhancing strategies to increase demand for labour, develop the quality, skills and productivity of the workforce, and improve workplace policies and conditions.

Another area of work that has a great potential to reduce poverty in the region is the key role of ECA through the African Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers Learning Group (PRSP-LG). Informed by lessons shared in the LG since early 2000, ECA is contributing to defining an African position on the poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs) and assessing the impact that certain design and implementation factors may have on the second generation of national plans. The PRSP-LG work has shown that the first generation of PRSPs did not put enough emphasis on comprehensive growth strategies and the importance of employment creation to reduce poverty. The second generation planning will need to increase this emphasis and pay attention to the sources of growth with a focus on the agriculture sector and the benefits Africa could reap from a better integration into the global economy through enhanced trade opportunities.

Based on this work, ECA will be organizing an African Plenary on national PRSPs. The plenary will be held in June 2005 in Egypt and will synthesize country experiences in achieving the MDGs and reducing poverty through structural transformation. On that basis, the plenary will draw lessons for African countries as they implement existing strategies and develop the second generation of African PRSPs.

Recent ECA work has clearly put into perspective the need to develop analytical tools to better understand Africa's challenges in certain critical areas and to make results and methods easily available to member States. In addition, the work has highlighted the critical importance of timely and reliable statistical data to better track and analyze performance. In this regard, ECA is putting more emphasis on the need to make serious progress in addressing these issues and equip member States with the

necessary statistical capacities to design and implement adequate policies.

To this effect, ECA is strengthening collaboration with the African Development Bank (AFDB), the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris₂₁) and the World Bank, and has established the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa in 2004. The Board will help in identifying relevant and emerging issues in the field and ways of promoting and disseminating good practices in statistical development to member States and subregional organizations.

2. ECA has positioned itself to better address the regional challenges

Over the last decade, ECA has strengthened its efforts to build stronger partnerships in the region so as to better address Africa's development challenges. These efforts have led to significant positive results such as a sharper programmatic focus and improved intergovernmental machinery. However, as pointed out in the review of ECA's work completed in 2004, there is need to deepen these reforms and further enhance linkages with member States. In particular, ECA was advised to: enhance the existing modalities and mechanisms for disseminating and delivering its products and services; strengthen its intellectual leadership in Africa and set the research agenda to enhance networking with the growing community of African research and academic institutions, regional economic communities (RECs) and UN agencies; and strengthen feedback, monitoring and evaluation of its work.

Toward this end, ECA has redoubled efforts during the past year to make this happen. To strengthen the role of member States in setting its agenda and priorities of work, ECA organized, in December 2004, an Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting to review its proposed work programme for the biennium 2006-2007. The meeting commended the strategic approach of placing the subregional offices (SROs) at the

centre of technical cooperation activities and giving them more resources. The vital role of the SROs as links between the policy-oriented analytical work generated at headquarters and policy making at the subregional level was also given full recognition. SROs undertake subregional preparation for major regional forums including follow-up to the global conferences at the subregional level. They also serve as hubs for the dissemination of policy analytical work, through workshops, training, data collection and knowledge sharing.

With respect to partnerships, ECA is firmly committed to improving the effectiveness and expanding the scope of its policy dialogue. To do so, ECA is working on expanding fellowship programmes, by undertaking joint studies with research centres and universities, collaborating more proactively with issues-based networks and other knowledge hubs, and further expanding programmatic linkages with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), which has become the training arm of the Commission.

Furthermore, ECA is significantly intensifying its efforts to peer review its work more broadly and deeply by involving a wider network of experts in the continent. All these commitments are clearly translated into the proposed programme of work and priorities for the biennium 2006-2007.

3. Strengthening partnerships to address Africa's development challenges

The improved strategic position of ECA at the regional level is also complemented by a stronger presence and influence at the international level. ECA has effectively established itself as a leading development actor in Africa and a promoter of international partnerships in support

of an African-driven and African-owned development agenda. Through such initiatives as the Big Table and the African Development Forum (ADF), ECA has sought to foster dialogue and build consensus on priority policy issues on Africa's development agenda. In October 2004, ECA hosted the fourth meeting of the Big Table in Addis Ababa on the theme Stimulating private sector investments in Africa. The consultation brought together Ministers of Finance and Planning from 7 African countries and senior officials from 10 OECD countries, joined by senior representatives from the AU, UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as the private sector to discuss the major constraints to private investments in Africa and propose practical measures for overcoming such constraints. In this regard, the meeting proposed the creation of an Investment Climate Facility (ICF) to improve the policy environment for private sector growth.

ECA is also playing a key role in the Strategic Partnership with Africa (SPA), a bilateral and multilateral donor group established to mobilize support for Africa and ensure progress by donors in aligning their support with national PRSs including tracking results. ECA is co-chairing, along with Canada, the SPA Coordinating Forum on budget support and sector support.

A fundamental policy challenge in international support for Africa is achieving coherence of policy actions, particularly as they relates to aid, debt and trade. To address this challenge, the ECA and OECD/DAC recently completed work on a framework for monitoring progress of Africa and its development partners in support of the objectives of NEPAD based on existing commitments, and ensuring harmonization of donor policies. A draft of the Mutual Review Report was presented at the 4th meeting of Africa Partnership Forum (APF) in Abuja in April 2005. The APF was established in 2003 to deepen the policy dialogue on support for Africa's development. The Forum brings together G-8 countries, other OECD countries, representatives of the 20 countries that serve on

the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, the AU Commission and the regional economic communities.

The past year witnessed a series of international actions that will potentially benefit Africa. Key among these is the work of the Commission for Africa, launched in February 2004 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in February 2004 to generate increased support for Africa from the international community. The ECA Executive Secretary is a member of the Commission, and some of ECA's technical work informed the

work of the Commission. The report of the Commission, which was released in both Addis Ababa and London in March 2005, provides a set of clear recommendations on actions that need to be taken in support of Africa's development against the backdrop of the forthcoming comprehensive review of progress in achieving the MDGs scheduled to take place in September 2005. The recommendations are bold and innovative and have aroused great expectations. The challenge now is to build international consensus on and generate momentum for action in support of the recommendations.

CHAPTER II

Major Activities Undertaken by the Secretariat Since June 2004

A. Implementation of the regular programme of work

1. Facilitating economic and social policy analysis

The activities carried out under this subprogramme during the period under review were aimed at strengthening the capacity of member States to design and implement appropriate economic and social policies and strategies for achieving sustained economic growth for poverty reduction in line with the priorities of the Millennium Declaration and NEPAD. In this regard, particular emphasis was placed on economic policy analysis, development issues related to social policy and poverty analysis, issues related to financing for development and to statistical development.

With millions of Africans unemployed or underemployed, including many of the continent's youths, pro-poor policies targeted at employment generation need to be mainstreamed into national PRSs in order to achieve the MDGs. Addressing the critical employment-poverty nexus was the focus of the Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2005 on the theme Meeting the Challenges of Employment and Poverty in Africa. The report identifies priority policy issues and practical initiatives in support of Africa's efforts to make employment creation a strategic objective for poverty reduction.

Among the policy challenges addressed in the report to ensure the provision of decent em-

ployment in Africa were the need for deeper reforms in several areas including agriculture, trade, enhancing market access and technological advancements, education, creating incentives for private sector development including development of small and medium enterprises, removing gender barriers to employment and acknowledging the impact of HIV/AIDS on the workforce.

ERA 2005 also reviewed economic and social developments in the region in 2004 including the outlook for the near-term, taking into account developments in the global economy. The report notes that the economic performance of African countries in 2004 had shown improvement over 2003. Africa's GDP grew at an average rate of 4.6 per cent, compared with the growth rate of 4.3 per cent recorded in 2003. More significantly, this is the highest GDP growth rate recorded for the continent since 1996, and considerably higher than the average of 3.4 per cent of the previous five years. The improved growth performance was driven by both internal and external factors.

At the domestic level, most governments continued to implement sound macro-economic policies as evidenced by a lower average fiscal deficit, which stood at 0.8 per cent of GDP in 2004, compared with 1.5 per cent in 2003. Similarly, the average inflation rate continued its declining trend, reaching a 20-year low of 8.8 per cent, from 11 per cent in 2003. Africa's improved economic performance is also partly explained by the resolution of some long-standing conflicts on the continent, a strong global recovery resulting in improvements in the prices of major primary commodities, higher oil production and prices, improved performance in

agriculture, and improved donor support in the form of aid and debt relief.

However, the report concludes that despite the impressive growth performance achieved by many African countries in 2004, the growth rate falls considerably short of that required to attain the poverty reduction targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report emphasized the need for African countries to accelerate their growth rates to increase incomes and reduce poverty, with the assistance of the international community. It highlighted three areas of support that are particularly important for Africa, namely, increased official development assistance (ODA), enhanced debt relief and greater market access as envisaged in the Doha Development Round of the WTO negotiations. ERA 2005 was extensively peer reviewed by various expert groups from within and outside Africa, and is scheduled for release in mid-June 2005.

As an input to the comprehensive global review of progress in the implementation of the MDGs scheduled to take place in September 2005 during the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, ECA prepared a report *Progress and Challenges of Achieving the MDGs in Africa*. The report reviewed progress towards reaching the MDGs in Africa and highlighted key policy and operational challenges and how these can be addressed. The report notes that Africa is not likely to meet most of the MDGs by the target date of 2015 on current trajectories unless urgent actions are taken by both sides, African countries and their development partners alike, to accelerate progress.

On the part of African countries, this will require continued progress in deepening the structural reforms that are already underway, including developing long-term poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) in the context of NEPAD. These efforts must, however, be matched by increased support from developed countries in the form of increased market access and more aid, which is predictable, timely and effective. The report will also inform discussions at the 2005 ECA

Conference of African Ministers to be held in Abuja in May 2005 on the theme *Achieving the MDGs in Africa*, and will also serve as an input to the Secretary-General's report to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Another important report produced by ECA during the period under review is the progress report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which highlighted the major challenges and constraints to economic development of African LDCs as well as the required policy interventions for achieving progress. Among the recommendations contained in the report is the urgent need to improve national statistical capacities for tracking progress by African LDCs towards achieving both the MDGs and PoA targets. The report will serve as an input to the global five-year review of progress of the BPoA scheduled to take place in May 2006.

As a follow-up to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, an ad hoc experts group meeting on Financial systems and resource mobilization for economic development in Africa was held in Nairobi in November 2004 to identify the challenges constraining the emergence of well-functioning capital markets in the continent. Among the recommendations made by the meeting were the call for the establishment of an African Monetary Fund, improving and streamlining of regulatory and supervisory infrastructure, improving transparency, regional harmonization of laws and regulations, and adoption of policies for attracting remittances and mobilizing foreign resources through capital markets.

ECA also continued to support the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) during the period under review. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process got underway in 2004 with the roll-out of Country Support Missions to six participating countries: Ghana (May 2004),

Rwanda (June 2004), Kenya (2004), Mauritius (June 2004), Uganda (March 2005) and Nigeria (March 2005). The main objective of the missions was to assess the processes and mechanisms put in place by the respective countries to undertake their self-assessment and draft their Programme of Action, which will subsequently be reviewed by the APR Panel. The country self-assessment is the first of the five stages of the peer review process. It is followed by a country review visit by the panel, which then prepares a country review report. The overall aim of the country review, and more generally of the peer review itself is to help countries identify institutional, policy and capacity weaknesses, suggest remedial measures to such shortcomings and seek support in addressing them.

ECA participated in all six country missions along with the other NEPAD strategic partner institutions, namely ADB and UNDP, and its work in the areas of governance, gender as well as the Economic Report on Africa (ERA) will continue to underpin the process. It is envisaged that missions will be fielded to all the 23 acceding States to the APRM within the next few years.

In line with its mandate of promoting the development of statistics in support of the economic, social and environmental development of Africa, ECA organized the first annual meeting of the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) in Addis Ababa in May 2004. The meeting brought together 15 experts drawn from national statistical offices, subregional organizations, statistical training institutes and other agencies to review the objectives, scope, institutional arrangements and governance structure, including the future direction of ECA work in the area of statistics. To this end, the Advisory Board reviewed a document prepared by the ECA secretariat entitled, *Statistical Development in Africa: A Strategic Framework*, which was also discussed during the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV), jointly convened by ECA, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century Consortium (Paris₂₁), and the World Bank. FASDEV was established to help

advocate for national statistical programmes, consider financing needs and suggest modalities for creating more synergies in the area of statistical development. ECA provides the Secretariat for both ABSA and FASDEV.

2. Fostering sustainable development

The activities implemented under this subprogramme during the period under review were aimed at: (a) promoting awareness of the environmental foundations of sustainable development with particular focus on strengthening national capacities for better integrating the nexus of food security, population growth, environmental sustainability and sustainable natural resources management into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies; and (b) improving stewardship of the natural resource base by strengthening capacities for sustainable exploitation, management and effective utilization of mineral, energy and water resources.

As a contribution to the 10-year review of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-PoA), ECA prepared a regional review report whose findings were presented and discussed at a regional Ministerial review conference held in Dakar in June 2004. A major outcome of the conference was adoption of a Ministerial Declaration reaffirming the commitment of member States to the further implementation of ICPD goals as well as those contained in the Millennium Declaration and NEPAD.

As part of efforts to ensure integrated follow-up and implementation of World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) outcomes at the regional level, the Commission also undertook a regional study on the role of National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD) in achieving sustainable development in Africa. The study reviewed best practices, policies and strategies for effective establishment and functioning of NCSDs.

The Commission also prepared a number of studies to create awareness of the potential contribution of S & T in achieving food security and sustainable development. These include a study entitled, *Emerging Issues in Science and Technology: Principles, Methodology and Strategy for Promoting the African Green Revolution*, which was reviewed and adopted at an Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting in November 2004. As a direct follow-up to this, ECA is currently working on the development of an African Green Revolution Design and Training Manual, as a contribution to the African Green Revolution. It could also provide a tool for achieving the sustainable development targets of the MDGs in Africa.

ECA continued to provide support to member States in promoting an integrated approach to national policymaking that includes issues related to mineral resources development. For example, Tanzania received assistance in integrating mining development into its second generation of PRSP through a project jointly implemented by ECA, UN-DESA, UNCTAD and UNDP. Assistance was also given to several regional organizations such as the Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre (SEAMIC), and the Africa Mining Partnership (AMP) in the elaboration of their programmes on mineral resources development. In addition, the secretariat rendered assistance to the Government Sierra Leone in the formulation of a national energy policy.

During the period under review, ECA remained actively involved in the work of the S & T cluster of the Regional Consultation of United Nations Agencies, in the framework of United Nations support for NEPAD at the regional level. Activities undertaken in this regard included: participation in an engineering education workshop in Lagos, Nigeria in September 2004, which was jointly convened with UNESCO and other agencies; the ANSTI Governing Council meeting in November 2004 and a meeting on the restructuring of the Nigerian Science and Technology Initiative in October 2004. ECA also participated in the 7th Session of United

Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), the highest policymaking body within the United Nations on S & T issues.

Also within the context of the regional consultations of UN agencies, the secretariat participated actively in the work of two subclusters of the infrastructure development cluster, namely water and sanitation; and energy. Under the water sub-cluster, the secretariat organized three regional training workshops for decision makers and technical personnel in Geo-Water Information Development and Management - in Yaounde, Cameroun in June 2004 for Central African countries; in Accra, Ghana in September 2004 for West Africa; and in Mombassa, Kenya in October 2004 for East Africa. The objective of the training is to facilitate the development of an African Regional Water Clearinghouse that will provide the basis for strengthening cooperation in the area of integrated water resources management. Similar meetings are planned for Southern Africa in Pretoria in March 2005 and North Africa in Cairo, Egypt in April 2005. ECA also launched the African Water Journal during the period under review to disseminate information and knowledge and facilitate documentation and sharing of experiences on water-related issues.

The sub-cluster on energy held two meetings during the period under review to adopt a work programme for the United Nations Energy Africa (UNEA) which brings together all UN entities working in the field of energy in Africa to concert their efforts in support of the NEPAD priority on energy development. The meetings agreed that UNEA would actively engage other organizations outside the UN, AU/NEPAD and United Nations Energy Global (UNE Global) to enhance linkages between global and regional energy issues. As part of the UNEA work programme, ECA and UNEP jointly planned and started implementing the project Making African Power Sector Sustainable, which aims to facilitate integration of socioeconomic and environmental concerns into the Power Sector Reform (PSR) programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

3. Strengthening development management

The central role of good governance in building a capable State and achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction is now widely recognized. A system of good governance is also required for all sectors of society to participate and contribute to the development process, as well as for the implementation of NEPAD and achieving the MDGs. Addressing the challenge of establishing good governance was the focus of ECA's work under the subprogramme, Strengthening development management. ECA's work in this area is aimed at improving and sustaining good governance practices for broad stakeholder participation in the development process in order to strengthen the foundations for sustainable development in Africa.

ECA organized the Fourth African Development Forum (ADF IV) during the period under review on the theme, Governance for a Progressing Africa. The Forum, which was held in Addis Ababa from 11 to 15 October 2004, was organized in collaboration with AfDB and the African Union (AU). It brought together over 1000 participants representing governments of member States, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), research and academic institutions, and the private sector, to address key issues related to the challenges of achieving good governance in Africa. Daily plenary sessions focused on issues such as: conflict prevention and sustainable economic development; strategies for fighting corruption; strengthening the judiciary; ensuring effective political parties and a strong civil society.

An issue that received considerable attention was the role of traditional systems of governance in the modern State, and some traditional rulers were invited to share their perspectives on it. The Consensus Statement adopted at the end of the Forum contains a number of major policy recommendations and time-bound actions for follow-up at the country level. Among the

many recommendations contained in the Consensus Statement is the need to enhance the role and participation of the youth and civil society in the governance process in Africa.

ADF IV also provided an opportunity for the secretariat to present the findings of its project on the development of indicators for measuring and monitoring progress towards good governance in Africa. The findings were summarized and presented as an overview of the first African Governance Report (AGR) entitled, *Striving for Good Governance in Africa*, due to be released in mid-2005. The overview, which served as a background paper for the Forum, highlighted 10 priority areas for action in building capable and accountable States in Africa, and identified capacity deficits at the regional, subregional and country levels that need to be addressed. The findings of AGR 1, which covered an initial 28 survey countries, are already being used to inform the APRM process, and the results are expected to stimulate more action on key issues.

The second edition of the report to be published in 2006 will present analyses on the state of governance in 12 additional countries. Other important outcomes of the study are the country profiles that are drawn from the National Country Reports on governance. These profiles provide analysis of the prevailing situation encompassing the political, social and economic dimensions of governance to facilitate better understanding and provide guidance in assessing the specific features of governance in each of the countries where the survey was administered.

ECA organized and serviced the third meeting of the Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDCS) in May 2005 under the theme, Participation and Partnerships for Improving Development and Governance in Africa. The meeting underlined the importance of participation and partnerships among civil society, government and private sector with a view to enhancing transparency, strengthen checks and balances in government and improve efficiency and accountability in the national bud-

getting process and in the delivery of basic social services. The Committee reviewed three policy research papers prepared by the Commission, which highlighted best practices and challenges in broadening participation and partnerships for development: (a) Participatory approach to national budgeting, (b) Public-private partnerships to social service delivery: water and sanitation, and (c) Strategies for promoting effective stakeholder participation in the APRM.

4. Harnessing information for development

The main objective of this subprogramme is to strengthen national capacities for the utilization of ICTs, including strengthening capacities in the development and use of information and knowledge systems (bibliographic, referral and spatial database) as decision-support tools for socio-economic development. Key to the attainment of this objective is the promotion of national policies and programmes geared towards building efficient information and communications infrastructure and creating an enabling regulatory environment for public and private sector participation in the delivery and application of ICTs.

Assisting member States to achieve the above objectives continued to be the focus of ECA's work under its subprogramme, Harnessing information for development in the period under review. To this end, a wide range of activities were undertaken aimed at promoting the growth of the information society in Africa and harnessing ICTs to achieve broad development goals including the MDGs.

A major achievement under the subprogramme is the increase in the number of African countries that have developed National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans and policies since May 2004. Four countries: Comoros, Ghana, Mali and Niger, received assistance from ECA in developing strategies for the adoption and use of ICTs. Other countries such as The Gambia and Malawi received support in

integrating their policies on ICTs with Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and MDGs, and in building capacity for sectoral application in social sectors such as health (telemedicine) and education (e-learning).

The Commission also commenced implementation of a pilot project on the development of e-strategy at the village level with the development of Village Information and Communication Infrastructure (VICI) policies and plans for Ghana in late 2004. VICIs are aimed at making ICTs accessible to rural communities across the continent.

In February 2005, ECA organized a regional preparatory meeting to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Accra, Ghana to prepare African countries for their participation in the second phase of the WSIS scheduled to take place in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2005. (The first phase was held in Geneva in December 2003). The meeting also addressed the challenges of achieving the information society in Africa and bridging the digital divide, capacity building for Internet governance, and operationalization of the Digital Solidarity Fund established at the Geneva Summit.

The conference was an excellent example of collaboration among stakeholders in the development of an information society in Africa. Hosted by the Government of Ghana, the event was organized with support from the Governments of Finland, Switzerland, Canada and OECD. Other partnership initiatives strengthened during the period under review include the Global Electronic Policy Resource Network (ePol-Net) project, designed to mobilize international support for African countries and their intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in national and regional e-strategy policy formulation and implementation; the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) and the Partnership for ICTs in Africa (PICTA), an informal group of partners, with ECA as secretariat, which assists in mobilizing resources in support of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII).

In response to the need for measuring the impact of ICTs in various sectors, ECA continued to implement its benchmarking initiative, SCAN-ICT, to provide assistance to member States in the development of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring and assessing progress in the development of the information society. In this context, the Commission will continue to work closely with other UN regional commissions, international agencies and national statistical offices in developing harmonized and standardized information society indicators at the global, regional and national levels.

An important aspect of ECA's national policy formulation is the development of national geo-information policies, as well as their integration into national e-strategies. A major policy document on this was produced during the period under review. Another policy initiative in this area is on the implementation of a functional address system in Africa for both urban and rural areas. The Commission plans to convene an Ad Hoc Experts Group meeting during 2005 to produce guidelines on geoinformation support for implementing and maintaining a functional address system tailored to Africa's needs. This will improve the situation in many African cities and towns that do not have proper address systems for navigating and locating places.

ECA has also continued to play its vital role as a major geoinformation knowledge hub, by maintaining a clearinghouse system for researchers and decision makers, providing the space for member States to publicize their metadata holdings. The system is currently made up of the Ethiopian Natural Resources and Environmental Metadatabase (ENRAEMED), the African Water Information Clearinghouse metadata system and the ECA cartographic inventory on African countries.

During the period under review, the Commission continued to provide capacity-building support to member States to promote awareness of the importance of ICTs for socioeconomic development. To date, a significant number of countries have benefited from training pro-

vided by the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA), an ICT-focused exhibition and learning centre at ECA. During 2004, 80 members of the Ethiopian parliament received training from ITCA, and a training workshop is planned for May 2005 in Tanzania, which will bring together more than 100 parliamentarians from several African countries.

In the area of information and knowledge development, the ECA library launched the African Virtual Library Information Network (AVLIN) portal in January 2005 as a platform for sharing development information and knowledge on Africa. Other AVLIN outputs include CD-ROMs, e-mail alert services and other materials on economic development.

As part of efforts to enhance outreach and communications services to raise public awareness on ICTs for development, ECA produced radio and video documentary programmes with support from GTZ. The programmes were distributed to 5 radio and TV stations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin and Niger. Other information outputs produced and distributed include the African Development Topics and Journal Contents and the establishment of an information kiosk managed by ITCA using the Ethiopian Amharic language, which currently provides land management information to the public in Ethiopia. ITCA is also developing the ITCA Virtual Learning Academy, which will provide online capacity-building training to policy and decision makers.

5. Promoting trade and regional integration

The period under review was marked by an intensification of activities under this subprogramme in support of strengthening of the regional integration process in Africa. The Trade and Regional Integration Division (TRID) continued its work as a catalyst for promoting the effective integration and participation of African countries in the global economy. Its work programme also aims at strengthening

the process of regional integration in Africa through promoting intra-regional and international trade, and physical integration, with particular emphasis on the transport and communication sectors.

The activities undertaken towards realizing the above objectives can be grouped into three broad areas, namely, trade promotion and multilateral trade negotiations; facilitating and enhancing the process of regional economic integration; and transportation infrastructure development. The efforts under each of the three areas were underpinned by enhanced support to RECs as the essential building blocks for the regional integration process in Africa.

As the agenda of the multilateral trade negotiations expanded in recent years, most African countries have found their capacities inadequate to deal with the complex issues that have emerged in the WTO processes. The heavy workload imposed by the agenda does not match with the small size of many of the Permanent Missions of African countries in Geneva. This concern led ECA to establish an office in Geneva in 2003 to provide support to the African WTO Geneva Group in dealing with the complex issues on the WTO agenda.

During the period under review, the Geneva Office continued to provide assistance and technical support to the Geneva Africa Group in the preparation of their negotiating positions within the framework of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and in the preparation of their proposals and submissions on various WTO issues under negotiation. In addition, the Office, working in collaboration with AU and other partners, provided support and participated in three separate retreats for the African WTO Geneva Group to brainstorm on WTO issues. Because of the activities of the Office, African countries are now in a better position to synchronize negotiating positions than in the past.

ECA's work of building sustainable trade capacities of African countries was further enhanced with the operationalization in 2004 of the Af-

rica Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), which was established with initial funding from the Government of Canada to strengthen Africa's trading capacity in line with the trade-related objectives of NEPAD. ECA has already conducted some training courses in collaboration with UNCTAD and the WTO for African trade officials and others with trade-policy responsibilities.

The Centre will continue to support the capacity-building efforts of African countries through its policy research and training activities, focusing on such areas as: accession to WTO and negotiations on the trade protocol of the ACP/EU Agreement; promoting intra-African trade; mainstreaming trade into national development policies and programmes; assessing the revenue implications of trade liberalization; assessing the impact of OECD agricultural subsidies for Africa's growth; and giving support to the African WTO Geneva Group.

Despite the failure of the 2003 WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun to reach agreement on issues of interest to African countries, the spirit of compromise and engagement evident in the negotiations showed that the continent has not lost the commitment to work together in addressing these issues. ECA responded by organizing a number of meetings during the period under review, which highlighted the importance of the issues, and sought to assist countries of the region in developing and refining their strategies for further negotiations. In this regard, the Commission organized a high-level brainstorming meeting of African trade negotiators under the theme, WTO Post-Framework Meeting in Addis Ababa, in November 2004 to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the outcome and implications for African countries, of the so-called July Framework Agreements at the WTO. These set out certain modalities for negotiations in key areas such as agricultural, and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), and for an accord that better defines the framework for negotiations on cotton subsidies and the so-called Singapore issues – the most problematic areas in the negotiations at Cancun. The meeting mapped out a strategy for future negotia-

tions in those areas, based on policy research by ECA and other partner institutions.

As the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) negotiations between ACP/EU countries entered a crucial new phase in 2004, ECA increased its support to member States in building a coherent strategy for the negotiations. Although the EPAs are expected to generate enormous benefits to ACP countries, their implementation will also pose enormous challenges such as: managing the expected losses of fiscal revenue; coping with more competition expected as a result of the reciprocity entailed; ascertaining net benefits from the EPAs, especially for LDCs; and enhancing the limited capacity for negotiations in most African countries.

In response to these challenges, ECA undertook a comprehensive impact assessment of EPAs, on which Africa can build an effective strategy for negotiations with the EU. ECA also organized four subregional Expert Group Meetings during the period review to examine the main challenges of the on-going negotiations and the potential implications of the EPAs on the respective subregional economies. A regional meeting to agree on Africa's positions for future negotiations is planned for late 2005.

A major accomplishment in the area of promoting regional integration was the launch in July 2004 of a new flagship publication, *Assessment of Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA 1)*, which provides the first comprehensive assessment of progress towards regional integration in Africa. The publication, produced in collaboration with AU and ADB, and with support from EU and the World Bank, was initiated about four years ago to fill an apparent void in the lack of credible statistical data on the status of regional integration in Africa.

The report aims to support policymaking and priority-setting through integrated and comprehensive assessments of the status of regional integration in Africa, assessing trends, and analyzing the content and impact of policies, plans and interventions. In addition to institutional

aspects, the assessment covers integration performance in major sectors such as trade, money and finance, infrastructure, natural resources, industry, commodity production, agriculture and human resources development, labour mobility and other emerging issues.

An important component of ECA's work in strengthening the regional integration process is focused on building the technical institutional capacities of (RECs, as the main building blocks for achieving subregional and regional integration in Africa. ECA and its subregional offices (SROs) have been providing support to the main RECs in such areas as the preparation of feasibility studies on the establishment of self-financing mechanisms, analysis of alternative financing mechanisms, and technical studies to address the issue of trade policies and the establishment of free trade areas. In further support of the integration process, the second edition of *Assessment of Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA II)* will focus on the challenges of achieving effective integration in Africa with particular emphasis on rationalization of the RECs.

In this context, the report is expected to examine the long-standing issue of proliferation of RECs and their overlapping mandates and memberships and the challenge that this poses for Africa's integration. The report will propose policy recommendations for streamlining the RECs towards achieving effective integration. Work is currently underway on preparation of the report, which will be ready for publication by the end of 2005.

An important objective of ECA's work in the area of infrastructure development is to help establish an efficient, integrated and affordable transport and communications system as a basis for the physical integration of Africa and to facilitate national and international traffic. In this context, the Commission has continued to assist member States and RECs in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on air transport liberalization, particularly in strengthening their capacity to implement the Decision and incorporate it into national policies.

ECA and the sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP), in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, organised the annual general meetings of SSATP, which took place in September 2004. The meeting highlighted improvements in the level of collaboration between the regional economic communities (RECs) and SSATP; increased participation of countries in the programme (33 countries joined the SSATP in 2004); increase in the number of partners; and the inclusion of road safety in SSATP action plan. The meeting has also identified priority activities to be implemented as part of corridor development and the increased movement of people and goods.

Other notable activities in the area of transport included a study on the development of multi-modal transport in Africa, endorsed by an Expert Group Meeting on the same subject, and a study on best practices for commercialization and privatization of rail, air, road and maritime transport. The study highlights the importance of private sector involvement in the development of transport infrastructure and transport services. ECA also contributed to preparation of the NEPAD Short-term Action Plan on infrastructure. In addition, it organized and serviced the fourth meeting of the Committee on Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration in Addis Ababa in March 2005, to review ECA's current and future work priorities in support of trade promotion and economic integration in Africa.

6. Promoting the advancement of women

Promoting the advancement of women in Africa continued to be a major priority of ECA's work programmes during the period under review. ECA conceives and perceives its role in this area as threefold: as an advocate, promoting the mainstreaming of gender issues into development activities of member states; as a catalyst, monitoring and reporting on progress in the implementation of globally and regionally agreed plans and strategies for the advancement

of women; and, as a facilitator, assisting member States to implement policy measures and actions for the advancement of women.

Work continued during the period under review in the elaboration of appropriate tools and mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the goal of gender equality set in the global and regional platforms for action, and for mainstreaming gender into national planning instruments. A key tool for achieving these objectives is the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), which the African Centre for Gender and Development launched in 2002. AGDI entered an expanded new phase in 2004 with field trials in 12 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda. The initial phase of the project in 2002-2003 covered 13 countries. The index will provide a tool for measuring the performance of member States in addressing gender equality, promote political awareness of gender issues and help streamline reporting on various human rights issues as they relate to gender, the MDGs and NEPAD. An in-depth analysis of the results using this index will be reported in the forthcoming edition of the African Women's Report to be published in mid-2005.

African Ministers in charge of Gender and Women Affairs **and their experts endorsed the Index during the seventh African Regional Conference on Women held in Addis Ababa, in October 2004. The conference, which was organized as the regional decade review of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10), adopted an outcome document on the way forward.** The outcome document reviewed progress achieved and major constraints still hindering the advancement of women in Africa. It also highlighted further actions required to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, especially in such critical areas as poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, human rights of women, health, education, the girl-child and women's participation in peace-building and reconstruction. In January 2005, the Assembly of African Heads of State and

Government endorsed the outcome document as Africa's contribution to the global review process of the Beijing Platform of Action.

In support of promoting the collection of gender-disaggregated data, the Commission produced 53 country gender profiles based on secondary data collection in the following thematic areas: women in decision-making; education - school dropouts; health - maternal mortality; HIV-AIDS; women's participation in the labour market; women's access to credit; and, the human rights of women and girls. Dissemination of the country profiles is underway and inputs are expected from member States and other users.

In response to the lack of gender-disaggregated data, particularly at the household level, ECA developed and produced a guidebook, *Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives and Household Production in National Accounts, Budgets and Policies in Africa*, to improve the skills of statisticians, national accountants and policy analysis experts in collecting, analyzing and integrating gender-disaggregated micro- and macro-economic statistics into national planning instruments. These activities will assist member States in preparing regular National Satellite Accounts of Household Production (NSAHP) as part of the System of National Accounts (SNA). The guidebook was endorsed by an experts group meeting in September 2004.

The Commission also prepared the first National Satellite Accounts (Input-Output Tables) of Household Production for South Africa and developed a gender-aware macro-economic model to evaluate the impact of policies on poverty reduction and welfare using the South African economy as a pilot case. These tools will assist member States to strengthen their statistical systems for collecting gender-disaggregated data and defining macro- and micro-economic policies that take household production into account and women's contribution to the economy.

To ensure effective outreach and information dissemination, ECA utilized a combination of its annual newsletter *GenderNet*, the divisional

website, its special Beijing +10 website and its Regional Network of Gender Focal Points to facilitate knowledge and information sharing among government officials, NGOs, partners and other stakeholders. The information focused on advocacy, technical activities and best practices.

7. Supporting subregional activities for development

The activities under this subprogramme were implemented by ECA's five SROs, located in Kigali (East Africa), Lusaka (Southern Africa), Niamey (West Africa), Tangiers (North Africa), and Yaounde (Central Africa). The activities were primarily aimed at providing support to member States and RECs in identifying and addressing development priorities and challenges specific to each subregion, with particular emphasis on harmonizing national policies in various sectors, in support of integration efforts at the subregional level. In this context, the SROs provide a subregional dimension to ECA's work of providing support to member States in the articulation of development strategies and policies and in the implementation of regionally and globally agreed initiatives. They also serve as vital hubs for the dissemination of ECA's policy analytical work, through workshops, training, data collection and knowledge sharing to strengthen outreach.

The period under review saw the strengthening of policy dialogue by sharing information with African experts through Ad Hoc Experts Group meetings, Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meetings including participation in the meetings of the policy organs of the major RECs, production of advocacy papers and reports, and provision of advisory services. The SROs also actively participated in meetings, seminars and workshops organized at ECA Headquarters, to enhance collaboration and strengthen the link between the work at Headquarters and field-level operations in the subregions. In addition, the SROs continued to collaborate with the UN system through the

United Nations Resident Coordinator System and CCA/UNDAF. A major outcome of this collaboration is the joint report on the assessment of progress towards meeting the MDGs, which was undertaken in some subregions during the period under review.

Across the board, the SROs organized ad hoc experts group meetings to facilitate better understanding of trade issues in the context of the Doha work programme and the current negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements between Africa and Europe, with particular emphasis on issues related to agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services. Similarly, the SROs continued to assist the RECs in the implementation of the sub-Saharan Transport Policy Programme (sSATP) and the Yamoussoukro Decision on air transport liberalization, including the development of appropriate action plans for implementation.

A major priority in the work of the SROs related to providing support to member States and RECs in translating the priorities and objectives of NEPAD into concrete projects and programmes at the country level, including formulation of subregional strategies for infrastructure development and the assessment of progress in implementation. The major accomplishments of each SROs during the period under review are highlighted in the section below:

SRO-Central Africa

During the period under review, the SRO for Central Africa organized two ad hoc experts group meetings. The first meeting, held in Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo in December 2004, under the theme Trade and Development and the WTO issues for Central Africa outlined the urgency of strengthening capacities of the existing national committees set up by member States of the sub region to deal with trade negotiations within the framework of EPAS and the WTO. The second meeting which was held in Douala, Cameroon in April 2005 under the theme Role of employment in the national strat-

egies to reduce poverty in Central Africa examined the constraints imposed by unemployment on poverty reduction efforts within the sub region and underlined the need for employment issues to be integrated into national poverty reduction strategies (PRs).

The Office focused its policy interventions on strengthening regional integration and enhancing policy dialogue on development issues in the sub region. In this regard, the Office continued to provide advisory services to the two major RECs in the sub region, namely CEMAC and ECCAS in support of their work programmes. Notably, the Office undertook and completed a study on informal trade within the CEMAC zone and also provided assistance to ECCAS in the preparation of its work programme in the area of transport infrastructure development to be submitted to the forthcoming statutory meeting of ECCAS for adoption. Furthermore, the Office contributed substantively to the preparation of the sub Saharan Africa Transport Policy Programme (SSATP) for the sub region as well as in the harmonization of the programmes of ECCAS and CEMAC.

The Office is currently developing a project, together with the "Banque des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (BDEAC), aimed at setting up a Fonds de Garantie in Central Africa so as to attract and boost investments in Central Africa.

Within the context of the UN Resident Coordinator system, the Office was actively involved in the activities of the UN thematic group on NEPAD. The Office has been assigned the lead role in the thematic group on economic growth, which is a recognition of its analytical work on the socio-economic performance in the sub region.

SRO-East Africa

The SRO for East Africa focused its policy support to its member States on infrastructure development; support to NEPAD; food security; strengthening the regional integration process; gender mainstreaming and poverty reduction.

Several activities were carried out by the office in support of these strategic issues during the period under review.

In the context of NEPAD, the Office continued its activities as part of the Great Lakes Initiative by launching a sub-regional Standing Group of Experts on Infrastructure Development with membership extending to all Great Lakes countries. The Office prepared analytical documents and a compendium of programme activities for transport and communications, energy and water infrastructure, which will be part of the working documents for the forthcoming UN/AU sponsored International Conference on the Great Lakes (phase II, Nov.2004 – May 2005).

The Office also continued to provide support to the Northern Corridor Transit Transport Agreement by proposing a re-structuring plan for the Secretariat and the revision of its Treaty. The Office also completed a feasibility study for a Cargo Tracking System with a Backbone Information System (BIS) linking Rwanda to the existing system (ACIS Kenya -Uganda).

The Office also provided assistance to COMESA, by promoting the Southern Corridor Multi modal project (rail and inland waterways) by linking Eastern and Southern Africa through Zambia with Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. This project stems from the old Kagera Basin Organization (KBO)–ECA railways project for which the Office provided the pre-feasibility study. The Office also promoted ICT related projects including coordinating the COMESA Business Summit related workshop and the COMESA ICT high level policy meeting. In a similar vein, the Office contributed to the promotion of the East African Submarine Cable System project (E.A.S.S.Y.). The Office also undertook a technical study on Lake Victoria ports for re-structuring them and upgrading their navigation safety systems.

In the area of human resources development, a standing Group of Experts in Education was established in collaboration with UNESCO and WHO which met in Kampala in June 2004 to

review country case studies prepared by ECA that identified various programmes and recommendations for strengthening the health and education systems of countries of the Great Lakes region. The Office also provided assistance to the Great Lakes Initiative on HIV/AIDS (GLIA) and its launching phase and formulated a subregional programme for Eastern Africa with focus on institutional development, capacity building and cooperation.

In the area of Food Security, the Office prepared reports and organized brief sessions at the ninth meeting of its intergovernmental committee of experts in cooperation with International Center for Research in Agro-forestry (ICRAF) to promote awareness on soil fertility losses in Eastern Africa and the need to promote alternative approaches including agro-forestry to arrest it and mitigate the need for chemical fertilizers. The Office also contributed to the formulation of a proposal for a food security programme for the Great Lakes International Conference in collaboration with ICRAF and FAO.

The Office worked closely with COMESA, EAC, IGAD and CEPGL and their specialized agencies in furthering the regional integration processes. To this end, reports have been prepared and assistance provided in areas such as policy harmonization, regional integration financing proposals and strengthening of institutions/programmes, which included contributions of the Office to on-going initiatives for the re-launching of CEPGL and its bank, the “Banque de Développement des Grands Lacs”.

In addition, the Office organized a number of Expert Group Meeting on a wide range of development issues of concern to member States, and prepared country case studies and other technical publications which were discussed at such meetings. A notable example was the ad hoc experts group meeting on trade liberalization schemes and harmonization, which involved all RECs within the Eastern Africa subregion. The meeting provided the opportunity to deepen the understanding of East African trade experts of the issues at stake in the ongoing negotiations

and define policies and strategies for the future negotiations.

SRO-North Africa

In addition to strengthening its partnerships with the Secretariat of the Arab Magreb Union (AMU), the programme focus of the Office during the period under review was aimed at enhancing policy dialogue on a wide range of development issues. The following issues were addressed during the period under review include: telecommunication infrastructure development, New Information Technologies and development of e-commerce, post WTO agreement on textile and clothing and its impact on the economies of North Africa countries, and gender, employment and entrepreneurship.

During the period under review, the SRO for North Africa organized an ad hoc expert group meeting in Casablanca, Morocco, under the theme Long-term perspectives in the development of telecommunication infrastructure in North Africa. The meeting brought together telecommunications experts from the member States to share experiences and agree on strategies for strengthening the role of telecommunications in regional integration. The major conclusions of the meeting pointed to the need to: (i) establish a common platform for cooperation (ii) strengthen human capacity in the telecommunications sector and (iii) harmonize telecommunications policies in the sub region.

In collaboration with the AMU and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Programme for ICTs for development in Arab Region (ICTDAR), the Office organized a seminar on New Information Technologies and Development of e-commerce among Magreb Union Countries held in Tangiers, Morocco. The seminar provided a forum for participants to exchange experiences with a view to inform policy making in the use of ICTs for trade and commerce with special focus on the tourism sector.

The office also organized, in collaboration with the AMU Secretariat a seminar on Post WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) and its impact on Magreb Union Countries held in Tunis, Tunisia in February 2005. Prior to the seminar, the Office undertook fact-finding missions to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and the outcome analysis served as a background document to the seminar.

In preparation for the 20th meeting of its ICE, the Office organized a workshop in April 2005 under the theme Women: source of wealth and job opportunities, which brought together experts on women entrepreneurship promotion in North Africa, including in innovative sectors such as indigenous/traditional knowledge, social services and ICTs. The participants shared experiences and agreed on strategies for empowering women in the dual context of gender equality and poverty reduction strategies. The outcome recommendations were submitted to the ICE meeting.

The Office and UN-Water Africa Cluster for which ECA serves as the Secretariat, produced a Sub regional Water Development Report (SWDR), which addresses the linkages between water resources, competing water needs and environmental degradation. It is expected that the report will contribute to better knowledge about the need for effective policies and strategies in support of integrated water resources management in countries of the sub region.

SRO-Southern Africa

During the period under review, the SRO for Southern Africa organized an ad hoc experts group meeting on Harmonisation of Mining Policies, Standards, Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks in the SADC Region in Lusaka. The meeting, which was organized in collaboration with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), reviewed a draft framework for harmonizing mining policies in the sub-region through standardization of technical issues. The framework for such a harmonization

would be the regional indicative strategic development plan (RISDP), NEPAD and the African Mining Partnership programme. The meeting reviewed a technical publication prepared by the office on the theme of the meeting.

The SRO-SA participated in a number of meetings organized by RECs, member States and other intergovernmental bodies. These included the SADC extra-ordinary summit on agriculture and food security; the SADC Summit; the SADC Ministerial Workshop on NEPAD; the 14th Meeting of the Trade and Customs Committee of COMESA; the 17th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of COMESA; the 9th Summit of the COMESA Heads of State and Government, the 5th COMESA Meeting of the Technical Committee on Agricultural Cooperation and the 2nd COMESA Ministers of Agriculture Meeting; 7th Meeting of Ministers of Finance of COMESA; EPA-ESA Regional Negotiating Forum; a Stakeholder Workshop on Formulating the Medium Term Investment Plan in Zambia's Agricultural Sector; and a Regional Workshop on Ageing organized by HelpAge International Africa.

The Office collaborated with a number of ECA headquarters Divisions in organizing joint activities including providing advisory services to countries of the subregion. A notable example in this regard is the collaboration with TRID in organizing a workshop on the EPAs and WTO Negotiations held in Maputo, Mozambique. The workshop made recommendations covered issues related to WTO negotiations, market access, content of EPAs and the results of the EPAs impact studies, with particular focus mining, agriculture and fisheries and mineral development in Southern Africa.

Consistent with its mandate, the Office rendered assistance to several member States and their intergovernmental organizations, on request, to help them address specific policy and technical challenges that they confront. These included SADC, EAC and COMESA, in the development of the Terms of Reference on implementing a regional Overload Control Programme

in the framework of the SSATP programme; COMESA, in the formulation of its Gender Action Plan that was adopted by the COMESA Ministers of Gender/Women's Affairs; the Government of Zambia, in the organization of a NEPAD National Sensitization Workshop; the Centre for Land, Economy and Rights of Women, in standardization of land profile indicators in Eastern and Southern Africa, and Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa, in the development of an operational plan for the network organization.

SRO-West Africa

During the period under review, the SRO for West Africa focused its support to its member States and their intergovernmental organizations on the following priorities: (i) Advocacy for peace building and strengthening capacities of civil society participation in national and sub-regional processes, giving emphasis to countries emerging from conflict; (ii) strengthen the operational capacities of the ECOWAS secretariat; (iii) support to the implementation of trade liberalization schemes; (iii) support in monitoring macro-economic policy harmonization in the framework of the monetary cooperation programme; and (iv) review of implementation of internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Beijing Platform for the advancement of women and the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The Office organized an ad hoc experts group meeting on WTO and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) issues. Furthermore, the Office also organized the annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) to assess the socio-economic performance of the sub-region. The Eighth Session of the ICE also discussed a major report on progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by West African countries, a related report on Employment, and a public lecture on the Challenges and Benefits of Creating a Viable Middle Class as a follow-up to the

conclusions and recommendations of the Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) on Employment and Poverty Reduction.

In support of the integration process, the Office provided assistance to ECOWAS in the preparation of background documents, containing comprehensive action plans for each of the four priority areas identified in the ECOWAS Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP). These include: (i) Maintenance of peace, security and stability; (ii) Promotion and facilitation of intra-sub-regional trade, including e-commerce and economic partnership arrangements with other regional blocks; (iii) Migration management; and (iv) Institutional rationalization.

The Office also continued to collaborate with other UN agencies in the context of the UN Resident Coordinator system in harmonizing programmes and activities. A good example of this collaboration was the joint work carried out in monitoring progress towards achieving the MDGs in the countries of the sub region.

In collaboration with ECA headquarters, the ADB and UNDP, the Office participated in the first APRM country support advisory services to Nigeria in March 2005 to assess the country's preparedness for the self-assessment, and to provide support to the national institutions and stakeholders engaged in the review process. The mission interacted with a broad range of stakeholders and provided substantive inputs to the process.

The Office is currently preparing to organize the West African Investment Forum in Bamako in collaboration with ECOWAS, UEMOA and CEN-SAD.

B. Regular programme of technical cooperation

In addition to the core work programme described above, ECA is mandated to assist its member States and their institutions in developing and strengthening capacities to design and implement development policies and pro-

grammes through technical cooperation activities, of which the regular programme of technical cooperation is a major component. In this respect, ECA's technical cooperation activities are a useful complement to activities carried out under the regular programme of work. Technical cooperation which takes the form of on-demand regional advisory services, training workshops and seminars, fellowships and field projects are geared towards supporting national capacity in addressing critical development challenges. The ECA team of regional advisers, deployed in the various programme Divisions, undertake advisory missions and provide technical assistance to requesting member States in addressing clearly defined policy and technical challenges in different sectors. While implementing the programme of assistance, ECA pursues stronger collaboration and cooperation with other providers of technical assistance at national, subregional and regional levels. Most of the resources made available to the secretariat for funding technical cooperation activities come from the UN Regular Budget – section 23, the UN Development Account as well as from UN partner organizations.

In recent years and as part of its revitalization process, the secretariat has made efforts to sharpen the focus of its technical cooperation programme towards longer-term, integrated, multidisciplinary activities in niche areas where it enjoys a comparative advantage. These efforts continued in the period under review with a focus on building the capacity of member States in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration as well as the outcomes of other major global conferences; and the goals and priorities of NEPAD. Accordingly, the current focus of technical cooperation is on the following areas: statistics; water resources management and sustainable development; promoting good governance practices for achieving sustainable development; integrating gender concerns in development with emphasis on promoting women's human and legal rights and the economic empowerment of women; harnessing information and communications

technology for development; and capacity-building for trade negotiations within the WTO multilateral framework.

Technical assistance in the area of statistics is aimed at building national capacities for data collection and indicators required for planning, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes including progress towards the MDGs. To meet the growing demand for robust, reliable and comprehensive data from member States, much effort was devoted during the period under review to revitalizing the statistics functions in the ECA programme of work. As part of these efforts, ECA, in close collaboration with the ADB, PARIS 21 and the World Bank established the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) in May 2004 to provide a forum for consensus-building on relevant and emerging issues in the field of statistics. The first meeting of ABSA, which was held in Addis Ababa in May 2004, brought together statistical experts from within and outside Africa to review the strategic framework and work plan including the governance arrangements of the board. Preparations are currently underway for the second meeting of the board, scheduled to take place in April 2005. Other technical cooperation activities in the area of statistics included participation in the second meeting of the International Household Survey Network (IHSN) held in Geneva in September 2004, which formally established the network; and a group training workshop on the management of statistical systems organized for students of Ecole National d'Economie Applique – Département de Statistiques et de Démographie scheduled to take place in Dakar, Senegal in April 2005.

ECA focused its technical assistance in the area of water development and management on the river basin organizations and RECs to strengthen their capacities to develop integrated water management strategies and plans with particular emphasis on irrigation, domestic water supply and sanitation, and innovative financing mechanisms. To translate the policy commitments of the Pan African Conference on Water

into practical action, ECA continued to provide capacity building support to African countries to help them develop and implement treaties and protocols on shared water resources, which will address such issues as water quality and utilization, hydropower generation, flood management, and conflict resolution.

ECA published the interim African Water Development Report (AWDR) to serve as a monitoring tool for measuring progress made in achieving the targets of the African Water Vision 2025 and global targets such as the MDGs. The report was based on a small sample of 10 Country Reports. Since March 2004, an additional 20 Country Reports have been commissioned that will provide the basis for developing sub regional Water Development Reports. An ECA capacity building program has been launched at the sub regional level to facilitate the operationalisation of the African Water Information Clearing House (AWICH). The purpose of this programme is to introduce the Clearing House, develop subregional Networks of stakeholders who will not only use the information provided but also contribute country information on a regular basis. A major achievement of the capacity building component was the organization of five regional training workshops with over 200 participants in the water sector across Africa who will serve as focal points in extending the reach of the AWICH at national levels in the next phase to start from 2006 to 2008.

On policy development, ECA developed the National Water and Energy policy for Sierra Leone and based on its success, similar requests have been received from the Republic of Congo and will become one distinct component of future work at national level. As part of the efforts to support Networks who represented the African Scientists and Academics at PANAFCON, the UN Water/Africa Group launched the African Water Journal based on the main challenges identified in the African Water Vision 2025, in order to stimulate indigenous research into issues related to Africa's water resources in the broadest sense and not only limited to technical but also social, economic and

environmental. ECA organized the 11th Annual Session of UN Water/Africa in Addis Ababa in March 2005 to define an implementation plan for the International Decade for Action: Water for Life 2005-2015.

In the area of promoting good governance, technical assistance was focused on implementing some of the key recommendations of ADF IV which was held in October 2004 on the theme, Governance for a progressing Africa. Capacity development was identified as a key element in reviewing governance and its challenges in Africa in the ADF Consensus Statement. In this context, strengthening Africa's governance institutions has been a major activity of ECA, with particular focus on enhancing the technical quality of the APRM instruments; background documentation and analysis of concept papers as part of ECA's contribution to the technical assessments currently underway. As part of the efforts to strengthen institutional capacities of parliaments, technical assistance was focused on improving and adapting indicators for global and thematic evaluation of governance at the national, sub regional and regional levels. ECA also rendered assistance in strengthening the capacities of institutions (state and non-state) to monitor and evaluate the state of good governance in Africa, while examining the relevance and appropriateness of current governance indicators (quantitative and qualitative analysis) on measuring the state of governance in Africa.

The year under review saw an intensification of activities aimed at sustaining progress towards the development of the information society in Africa with assistance in the design and finalization of National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans and strategies in Cameroon, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Lesotho, Swaziland, The Gambia and Uganda. As a complement to these activities, assistance was provided to several RECs (COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS and WAMU) in the development and implementation of regional information and communication infrastructure (RICI) plans and in the harmonization of policies and

plans. In addition, several member States received assistance in strengthening their capacities for negotiations on ICT-related issues in preparation for the second phase of the WSIS to be held in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2005.

In the area of promoting the advancement of women, technical assistance was focused on two main areas –promoting women's human and legal rights and strengthening economic empowerment of women. In the context of promoting women's rights and gender equality, ECA provided assistance to the government of Djibouti in the implementation of its national strategy for the promotion of women and a programme was developed to strengthen the capacity of the members of the Committee responsible for drafting Djibouti's first national report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In addition, a sensitization program to mainstream women's human rights in the formal and informal education systems was conceptualized in order to enhance the country's capacity to implement the CEDAW Convention and attain gender-related MDGs. Assistance was also provided to the Ministers of Women, Family and Children Affairs of ECOWAS in organizing two Inter-Ministerial Consultative Meetings (Lomé, July 2004 and Burkina-Faso, December 2004). which led to the establishment of the Ministerial Consultative Mechanism on Gender in ECOWAS and a sub-regional Council of Women for Peace in West Africa. These decisions were reviewed and adopted by the ECOWAS Ministers of Women and Family Affairs at a consultative meeting held in Ouagadougou, in December 2004. ECA provided technical support during this meeting, which passed a Resolution urging the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government to implement the Declaration of the AU Heads of State on Gender Equality adopted in July 2004 in Addis Ababa.

In the area of promoting the socio-economic empowerment of women, ECA provided technical assistance to the governments of Liberia and Uganda in developing gender-mainstreaming

strategies for achieving the gender-related targets of the MDGs. Several government officials as well as officials of NGOs received training on gender sensitization. During the period under review, two sub-regional development centres known as the Enterprise Development Facilities were established (in East Africa and West Africa) to enhance market access of women through information sharing and networking.

In the area of enhancing trade and regional integration, assistance focused on trade negotiations and the impact of trade liberalization under the EPAs currently under negotiation between Africa and the EU; as well as the challenges and opportunities, for Africa, of special initiatives like the EU's Everything But Arms initiative and the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA). For example, Ethiopia received assistance on issues related to the assessment and negotiations of EPAs. ECA also provided an active input to the third COMESA regional negotiating forum on the impact assessment of EPAs held in Antananarivo, Madagascar in October 2004, which resulted in a common negotiating position for the region. Prior to the sixth Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of COMESA members of the ACP-EU, a seminar was organized to sensitize the representatives of JPA of the challenges EPAs pose for COMESA. ECA also participated substantively in a workshop organized in October 2004 by Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), a regional NGO based in Nairobi, Kenya on conceptualization of linkages between trade and poverty.

C. Other programmes: United Nations support for NEPAD

As the implementation of NEPAD gathers momentum, the UN system has emerged as one of the major pillars of international support for the initiative. The nature and scope of that support has broadened in the past year. The support of the UN system encompasses a variety of activities, including technical assistance for institu-

tional development, capacity building, project development, resource mobilization and advocacy. The regional consultation meeting of UN agencies working in Africa, convened by ECA, is the mechanism for providing support at the regional level. The regional consultation has established seven thematic clusters around which UN support for NEPAD is organized. These clusters, which broadly correspond to the policy priorities and strategies of NEPAD are: infrastructure development; governance, peace and security; agriculture, trade and market access; environment, population and urbanization; human resources development, employment and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS); science and technology; and communication, advocacy and outreach.

In July 2004, ECA convened the Sixth Regional Consultations in Addis Ababa to review progress made by the clusters and consider immediate UN assistance needed to advance progress further, as well as address some of the challenges and concerns, and chart the way forward. The meeting that significant progress had been made by all seven thematic clusters, ranging from identifying areas of common concern in their work, to drawing up plans of action, mobilizing resources, working with African regional and subregional organizations as well as the NEPAD Secretariat, and actual implementation of projects and activities.

In spite of the progress made, the United Nations system faces a number of challenges and constraints in supporting NEPAD at the regional level. First, increased financial commitment by the United Nations system for NEPAD programmes will much depend on whether the agencies receive additional resources for these programmes. A closely related problem is that, while the organizations of the UN system are currently working together in many areas, the lack of additional financial resources limits the scope and flexibility in undertaking any additional joint activities. Thirdly, if further progress is to be made, the entities of the UN would need to deepen their collaboration to

achieve greater operational coherence in their various programmes in support of NEPAD using existing coordination mechanisms at the regional level.

In addition to the collective activities undertaken by the UN system in support of NEPAD, specific assistance was offered by various entities of the UN, within their individual mandates to complement the work undertaken in the relevant thematic clusters. For example, ECA actively supports the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism. It helped develop some of the Mechanism codes and standards, provides country economic and governance data to the Mechanism secretariat and has participated in the support missions fielded by the Mechanism secretariat to six countries. ECA has also collaborated closely with United Nations system agencies and other partners, in particular ADB and the regional economic communities, in supporting NEPAD infrastructure development.

ECA has supported NEPAD in a number of other ways. In response to NEPAD's emphasis on partnerships, ECA is working with the OECD Secretariat in developing a framework for mutual accountability and policy coherence, which will form the basis for a new relationship between African countries and their development partners.

This effort will potentially yield dividend in the form of increased aid effectiveness.

To address the various governance challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, the UN Secretary-General established a high-level Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in February 2003 under the chairmanship of the ECA Executive Secretary. The Commission, which has its secretariat at ECA, will complement the policy analytical work and advocacy activities of the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as other ongoing initiatives. Since its establishment, the secretariat has consulted extensively with a wide range of experts to arrive at a research framework that will examine the impact of the pandemic on key areas of governance and economic development and advocate for measures to reverse the epidemic. To ensure that the Commission's research findings are buttressed by empirical work on the ground, five interactive forums were organized during 2004 in Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Mozambique, with plans for more in 2005. The outcomes of these forums will feed into the final report of the Commission, due at the end of 2005. In addition, ECA supports the implementation of NEPAD priorities, most of which are at the core of its mandate, through its analytical work and technical assistance in several important areas.

CHAPTER III

Meetings of Subsidiary Bodies, Including The Intergovernmental Committees of Experts (ICEs) of the Subregional Offices (SROs)

This chapter contains the summary of discussions, including decisions, resolutions and recommendations adopted by the subsidiary organs which have held meetings since the last session of the Commission in May 2004. During the period under review, the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission held meetings: Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDS); **Committee on Development Information (CODI)**; Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for North Africa; Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Central Africa; Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Southern Africa; Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration (CRCI); Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for East Africa; Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for West Africa; and Bureau of the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD).

Generally, these meetings brought together policymakers and other stakeholders including development experts to inform and guide ECA's work in various sectoral areas. Across the board, the meetings of the ICEs provided a forum for reviewing the economic and social conditions prevailing in each of the subregions and recommend policies, strategies and programmes aimed at accelerating economic growth towards attaining the MDGs.

1. The Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDC), 4-6 May 2005

The third meeting of the Committee on Human Development and Civil Society (CHDS) was

held in May 2005 under the theme, Participation and Partnerships for Improving Development and Governance in Africa. The meeting underlined the importance of participation and partnerships among civil society, government and private sector with a view to enhancing public transparency, strengthening checks and balances in government and improving efficiency and accountability in the national budgeting process and in the sustainable delivery of water and sanitation services.

ECA prepared and submitted three policy research documents that served as background documentation to the discussions. These documents focused on issues related to the participatory approach to national budgeting, public-private partnerships for social service delivery of water and sanitation, and strategies for promoting effective stakeholder participation in the APRM. The documents highlighted valuable lessons and experiences as best practices, including approaches, strategies and mechanisms to address the many challenges associated with stakeholder participation and partnership in the development and governance processes in Africa.

2. The Committee on Development Information (CODI), 23-28 April 2005

The fourth meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI IV) was held in Addis Ababa in April 2005 under the theme "Information as an Economic Resource". Building on the successful outcome of CODI III, the meeting sought to address key issues on

Africa's development agenda as set out in the ECA work plan, as they relate to information and knowledge economy.

The Committee adopted a Plan of Action (PoA) aimed at accelerating progress in building an effective information and knowledge economy that could enhance economic growth and sustainable development. The PoA also contained recommendations on harnessing information resources for achieving growth in several key areas such as statistics, geoinformation and library development.

3. The Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for North Africa, 13-15 April 2005

The tenth meeting of the ICE for North Africa was held in Tangiers, Morocco in April 2005. Issues discussed included economic and social conditions in the subregion, from the viewpoint of improved macro-economic policies, diversification, women's economic participation, attainment of the MDGs and NEPAD objectives, and greater utilization of ICTs for development.

In reviewing the economic and social conditions in North Africa, the Committee emphasized the need for policy- and decision-makers to pay particular attention to addressing the issues of employment and entrepreneurship development in the subregion.

On the status of progress made in the implementation of NEPAD and the attainment of the MDGs in North Africa, the Committee welcomed the progress report prepared by the Office and noted that it would provide an important tool for monitoring the implementation of the MDGs within the framework of NEPAD goal. The discussions also highlighted key challenges faced by the subregion in its efforts to attain the MDGs by the target date of 2015.

In this regard, the Committee called for greater utilization of ICTs in addressing major development challenges in the subregion.

4. The Twenty-Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for Central Africa, 13-15 April 2005

The twenty-third ICE meeting for the subregional Office in Central Africa (SRO-CA) was held in Douala, Cameroon in April 2005. The meeting discussed issues related to economic and social development in Central Africa, challenges and prospects of regional integration, especially from the viewpoint of sectoral development, the future orientation of the work programme of the SRO, and progress made in implementing NEPAD and attaining the MDGs. As the ICE meeting was immediately preceded by the Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting on employment and poverty reduction strategies in Central Africa, the outcomes of that technical gathering were also considered. The ICE meeting was also an opportunity to disseminate the outcomes of ECA major meetings, such as the Fourth African Development Forum and the 7th Regional Conference on Women.

Participants at the meeting shared experiences on key issues of development such as economic growth, trade, employment, and implementation of regional initiatives, including for infrastructure development and improved governance. With regard to reinforcement of the integration process in the Central Africa subregion, participants called for the expansion of economic convergence tools that can allow effective implementation of such efforts as the "Central Africa Regional Economic Programme". To this effect, SRO-CA has been requested to pursue its technical assistance to two RECs, namely, the Economic and Monetary Union of Central Africa (CEMAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), for help-

ing to harmonize their programmes and activities. In this regard, it was agreed that SRO-CA would focus its support on furthering regional integration, pursuing the development of infrastructure and trade and implementing the MDGs and NEPAD.

In conjunction with the main guidelines of the recent Summit of African Heads of State and Government on the role of employment in poverty reduction in Africa, participants aligned their position with the conclusions of the studies carried out by SRO-CA and other UN agencies, particularly with regard to the shortcomings of macro-economic reforms vis-à-vis social issues. They recommended that SRO-CA should pursue its analytical work on PRSs, with emphasis on employment as a catalytic means to poverty in the subregion.

The recommendations made by the participants will help SRO-CA to improve alignment of its activities to the needs of the subregion. It will also help address issues of capacity for economic development, regional integration and sectoral development in Central Africa.

5. The Eleventh Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for Southern Africa, 6-8 April 2005

The eleventh meeting of the ICE for Southern Africa was held in Maputo, Mozambique in April 2005. The Committee reviewed economic and social conditions in the subregion, with particular focus on progress and prospects in implementing NEPAD and attaining the MDGs. It also received a report from ECA Headquarters and development partners on the EPA negotiations workshop. The following recommendations were made:

- (a) On the economic and social conditions, the Committee requested ECA to assist

member States to build subregional capacity in the area of statistics. It further requested that a strategy to overcome food insecurity in the subregion should be developed, supported by subsidies and other credit facilities that boost production.

- (b) On NEPAD, the Committee underscored the need to ensure complementarities of objectives and activities in the implementation of NEPAD, MDGs and PRSs. Emphasis must be placed on diversifying productive capacities as a way of reducing poverty levels in the subregion. Member States were requested to mainstream NEPAD priorities into existing programmes and policies. A request was made for another report on NEPAD at the next ICE meeting, to be prepared in consultation with the NEPAD Secretariat.
- (c) On achieving MDGs, the Committee called for a matrix, for purposes of comparison, to be prepared to reflect progress made on each MDG for all countries. It also identified a need to quantify existing gaps in achievement of the goals. The Committee further requested that an analysis of the effects of the brain drain in the social sector be undertaken. It also requested improved data collection, and monitoring and evaluation, particularly at the household level where the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is greatest. The Committee also called for the participation of UNAIDS at the next ICE meeting, due to the gravity of the pandemic in the subregion.

6. Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration (CRCI), 23-25 March, 2005

The fourth session of the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration was held in Addis Ababa in March 2005.

The Committee reviewed the current work programme and future activities of ECA in the area of trade promotion and economic integration in Africa, as well as the work priorities of the Commission for the next biennium of 2006-2007. The Committee also addressed policies and modalities for implementing regional integration at the national level, reviewed progress and prospects for greater inter-African trade, and assessed the status of international WTO trade negotiations and the EPAs with EU.

To guide the discussions, ECA prepared three reports addressing the issues of regional cooperation and integration, as a means of overcoming major obstacles to intra-African trade and implementation of regional integration programmes at the national level. To improve intra-African trade, the Committee recommended that African countries reinforce and accelerate the implementation of Free Trade Areas (FTAs) in the subregions. To this end, they should intensify efforts to diversify their economies. They should also strengthen intra-regional and inter-regional infrastructure, and adopt policies that ensure the stability of macro-economic frameworks that are supportive to trade development. The recommendations of the Committee will be submitted to the African Ministers of Trade at their next meeting, to be held in Cairo, Egypt in May 2005.

7. The Ninth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for East Africa, 14-18 March 2005

The ninth meeting of the ICE for East Africa took place in Kigali, Rwanda in March 2005 under the theme "Accelerating poverty reduction and creating better socio-economic conditions in Eastern Africa". The meeting reviewed the social and economic conditions in the sub-

region, with special reference to issues related to agriculture, food security and youth employment. The Committee also discussed crosscutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, outcomes of international conferences on the Great Lakes, and linkages between the various development cooperation programmes.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) On socio-economic conditions, the Committee recommended that the macroeconomic definition of PRSs be brought in line with the MDGs, and that the preparation of PRSs should continue to be participatory and inclusive of all the different sections of the population. The Committee expressed concern on the negative impact of conflicts and the resulting population displacement. It further recommended that issues relating to good governance and conflict prevention be integrated into the PRSs.
- (b) With respect to agricultural development and food security, the Committee stressed the need to integrate science and indigenous knowledge into the African Green Revolution. In this regard, ECA was requested to assist member States to acquire technical skills and resources to prepare the MDG business plans for scaling up existing agricultural and agro-processing technologies. ECA was further requested to establish a forum for sharing information and knowledge on natural resource management and food security, best practices in extension services and technologies that reduce post-harvest losses.
- (c) On youth employment, the Committee noted that ECA should formally convene a working group on youth employment and poverty alleviation alongside the next ICE meeting of the SRO-EA.

CHAPTER IV

Enhancing Programme Planning, Management and Oversight at ECA: Lessons Learnt

The introduction of results-based management by the United Nations Secretariat nearly four years ago has led to growing demands from member States for greater accountability in the use of resources for achieving tangible results. In the past three years, ECA has been under similar pressures from its member States and stakeholders to demonstrate the impact of its work in Africa.

While expectations by member States of impact at the national level are always legitimately high, the inherent limitations imposed by the Commission's mandate as a regional body largely restrict it from operating at the country level. Moreover, as a knowledge institution whose main products are policy analysis and advocacy, the impact of ECA's work is not easily measurable because of the many factors that interact to contribute to any given development outcome. Therefore, institutions like ECA require particularly innovative methods of monitoring and evaluation to track their impacts in order to inform next-generation strategic planning, ensure a more efficient and effective use of resources and generate demand based on demonstrable outcomes.

To address concerns about the impact of its work, ECA has undertaken wide-ranging reforms in recent years to improve programme performance in general and monitoring and evaluation in particular. This includes the establishment of a results-based management (RBM) system aimed at strengthening strategic planning, performance monitoring and evaluation with a focus on results achieved. ECA has also made tremendous progress in recent years in improving the management of its financial and human resources, through greater delegation of

authority and increased accountability and by ensuring quality recruitment and enhanced staff performance management.

A. Improved programme planning, monitoring and evaluation

As part of ongoing efforts to improve the quality and impact of its work, ECA is placing new emphasis on the use of performance monitoring indicators. These indicators, which are based on a logical framework of programme objectives, expected accomplishments, outputs and resources relationships will help improve the ability of both member States and programme managers to monitor and determine the implementation, effectiveness as well as the relevance of programmes and activities by strengthening the link between desired results and resources. It is also expected that the use of indicators will help ECA to obtain feedback on programme performance in a way that will clarify the relationships between results and outputs and activities carried out by ECA, helping to identify problems along the way that can impede the achievement of programme objectives.

Following the external review of the work of ECA, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, at its session in Kampala in May 2004 concluded that realistic and measurable performance indicators should be integrated with the monitoring and evaluation procedures used by ECA.

During this past year, ECA has stepped up efforts aimed at designing appropriate feedback

mechanisms, an outreach strategy and improving dissemination of its products and publications within the framework of a comprehensive communication strategy. Operational guidelines for better programme management have been designed and existing ones have been revised. A new programme performance reporting system has been adapted to include lessons learnt from monitoring of programme implementation, assessment of programme results and systematic self-evaluations to be carried out in the last quarter of 2005.

In conformity with the management trend throughout the UN system, ECA programme managers are held fully accountable for the achievement of results under their respective subprogrammes. To this end, ECA is currently exploring the possibility of linking programme performance to the individual performance of programme and line managers through a performance compact-type of arrangement currently being developed as part of the institutional strengthening programme (ISP).

Central to the increased focus on results is the need to better anchor performance assessment in the broader context of member States' priorities and objectives. The preparation of ECA's programme budget for the period 2006-2007 is an important step in this desirable direction as it provided an opportunity for member States to endorse a clear policy direction for the work programme, and took into account the observations and recommendations that have been made by various legislative reviews and internal oversight bodies.

ECA intends to further strengthen its evaluation function so as to enable it to use the evaluation findings effectively, through timely performance reporting and feedback. These findings will serve as the main basis for the next programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation cycle, as well as for policy development. In addition, the internal and external evaluations will be enhanced to achieve specific priorities, objectives and expectations of member States and other ECA stakeholders.

B. Improved financial and human resources management systems

The quest for excellence in programme implementation and delivery calls for strengthening human resources management including enhancing staff skills through training; and improved programming and budgeting systems. A central feature of the reforms of ECA was the emphasis placed on staffing and staff development through selective recruitment and a comprehensive skills-upgrading programme for all categories of staff. Building on the achievements of previous years, considerable progress in this regard was registered during 2004 with the filling of 57 professional posts and 90 general service posts, and 145 general service staff were promoted with the implementation of the reclassification programme.

Similarly, staff development has been improved through better planning and more targeted substantive skills training. Annual plans for the upgrading of substantive and IT skills, managerial and supervisory skills training, general service development training, writing workshops have been instituted. A new Career Resource Centre was established in October 2004 to provide support to staff on issues related to career planning and personal skills development. Mini workshops on interviewing skills, writing of curriculum vitae, communication skills, stress management, time management will soon be established.

The UN Regular Budget is the main source of funding for ECA core activities. However, with the zero growth policy of the last several years in the UN, this funding base has been shrinking in real terms, leading to an inability to implement some key priorities. In addition to the UN regular budget, the total ECA operational budget includes additional resources from bilateral and multilateral donors, including the specialized agencies of the UN.

Impressive results were achieved in 2004 in mobilizing extrabudgetary resources through a number of established partners as well as some new partners who have provided funding in support of strengthening capacity in selected priority programme areas. In addition to an expanded donor base, ECA's enhanced relationship with some major donors has resulted in a shift in direction - from fragmented support to activities, to one in which the donors provide multi year institutional support for some of the Commission's programmes in key areas. This form of support provides greater flexibility in the allocation of resources and adds more predictability in this source of funding.

The current positive trend in extrabudgetary funding needs to be further strengthened to ensure successful implementation of ECA's

expanding programme of work. ECA is planning to achieve this by mobilizing additional resources from member States through the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development which has been relaunched following a decision by the 2004 ECA Conference of Ministers. Such contributions would enhance a sense of ownership of ECA's work among member States and would stand it in good stead in mobilizing additional resources from outside the region.

With the expected launch of new projects in the areas highlighted above under the ongoing ISP in 2005, ECA's capacity to be a responsive and client-focused institution would be further enhanced with improvements in its organizational business processes and service delivery standards.