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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFRISTAT	Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa
WAMA	West African Monetary Agency
APAI-CRVS	African Program for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Statistics
EPA-EU	European Union Economic Partnership Agreements
AfDB	African Development Bank
SRO-WA	Sub-Regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
REC	Regional Economic Community
ICE	Intergovernmental Committee of Senior officials and Experts
CoM	Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
CPD	Country Programme Document
DDDs	Demographic Dynamics for Development
M/S	Member States
UNDG	United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
WAMI	West African Monetary Institute
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
UNH	United Nations House
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
SRCM	Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
NTA	<i>National Transfer Accounts</i>
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IGOs	Intergovernmental organizations
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UNWomen	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
SFPs	Statistical Focal Points
ER(s)	Expected result(s)
SEPS	Socioeconomic prospects for the Sahel
SRDC	Sub-regional data center
SRI	Sub-regional initiatives
STEPS	Structural Transformation, Employment, Production and Society
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
ECOWAS CET	ECOWAS Common External Tariff
AU	African Union
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
MRU	Mano River Union
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

UNISS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
WAIGO	West African Intergovernmental Organization
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area

Introduction

1. Each year, the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) reports on its work to the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICE) in accordance with the intergovernmental mechanisms of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). This report covers the main activities carried out by the SRO-WA since the last session of the ICE in June 2018. These activities have been implemented in accordance with the strategic frameworks of the work programs for the 2018-2019 and 2020 periods. Their implementation continued in accordance with the mandate assigned to the ECA Sub-regional offices, and which is geared towards strengthening Sub-regional cooperation and integration, aligning with the priorities of the African Union (AU), linking with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the objectives set out in the AU's 2030 agenda for sustainable development and Agenda 2063. The transformation of the SRO-WA into a specialized center on Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD) decided under the reform has been effective since 1 January 2019 within the ECA and has started to impact on the organization and functioning of the office.
2. The main objective of the SRO-WA work program is to "strengthen the capacity of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in the formulation of evidence-based and/or empirical programs and policies in order to accelerate the achievement of structural transformation for sustainable and inclusive development in the West African sub-region". To achieve this objective, two main outcomes were expected: (a) strengthening the capacities of the West African Sub-region Member States for the effective integration of the challenges of population dynamics into the formulation of policies, programs and any economic development planning process; (b) strengthening the capacities of the West African Sub-region Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) to accelerate the implementation of the Sub-region's development priorities, while taking into account gender perspectives and specificities.
3. In line with the report presented at the previous ICE, this report describes the progress and results achieved in the implementation of the 2018 work program of the SRO-WA, with particular emphasis on outputs and changes in relation to expected outcomes, as recommended by the ICE in 2017.
4. The first four sections following the introduction of this report describe the extent to which the activities carried out have enabled the SRO-WA to : a) gain influence over policy to support the West African transformation agenda (I); b) gain credibility and trust by providing high-quality, evidence-based and responsive policy research and knowledge transfer services (II); (c) strengthen its accountability mechanisms and deeply root the learning culture within it (III); and (d) strengthen its operational effectiveness to better support the timely delivery of its knowledge production and capacity building services (IV). A fifth section focuses on the main challenges encountered in the implementation of activities and the alternative solutions adopted to overcome these difficulties (V). As a conclusion, the last part of the report draws lessons from the implementation of activities during the period under review and suggests some perspectives.

1. Influence on policies

5. The work of the ECA Sub-regional Office continues to be guided by its main objective, which is the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic and social development to support the structural transformation of West Africa, in accordance with the priorities and vision set out in the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. In order to achieve the results sought in its 2018-2020 work program, the implementation strategy focuses on the application of an

integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to knowledge production and dissemination, while ensuring that the gender approach is integrated into studies, analyses and other publications. The office's work is also guided by the principles of accountability, responsibility and learning as well as the development of strategic partnerships.

6. Several activities carried out by the SRO-WA to the benefit of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in West Africa have provided an opportunity for these partners to improve their capacities in the design, development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies to support the sub-regional structural transformation program. The Office's interventions in this area have focused on development planning and statistics, population dynamics for development and regional integration.

a. Development Planning and statistics

7. The influence on foresight and development planning policies is perceptible through the actions of the SRO-WA carried out in support of the Sahel region, the ECOWAS and some Member States.
8. The major actions undertaken in favor of the Sahel region are grouped into three (03) categories: support for the preparation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS or SINUS); support to existing national mechanisms for the coordination of various initiatives in the Sahel; and analytical work in support of ongoing initiatives in the Sahel.
9. As part of the support for the preparation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, significant support was provided by the Office throughout the process of formulating the Sahel Support Plan launched in Mauritania in July 2018 at a side event of the African Union Summit. ECA's technical contributions made it possible to draft and finalize 14 regional projects in the project submission portfolio in support of the Sahel, which were duly reviewed and two of which were selected by the steering committee of the integrated strategy for the Sahel. It should be noted that special support was provided to the United Nations country team in Niger in the preparation of the project portfolio as an integral part of the United Nations support plan in Niger.
10. In support of existing national mechanisms for the coordination of various initiatives in the Sahel, the SRO-WA contributed to the review and coordination of Sahel countries' positions, bringing together key stakeholders from the consortium of intergovernmental organizations (WAIGO) and the G5-Sahel, the civil society, the private sector and the regional organizations of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The Office actively contributed to the high-level consultative meeting on the Sahel, convened by the ECOWAS, the African Union Commission and the UNOWAS. This meeting, held from 17 to 18 September 2018, aimed at strengthening the complementarity of the initiatives of the various stakeholders, present in the Sub-region and their involvement in the global resolutions, including actions for the Sahel.
11. As for the analytical work in support of ongoing initiatives in the Sahel, it led to the formulation of the Vision Document 2043 for the Sahel¹, in response to the UN Deputy Secretary-General's request to ECA to conduct a study on the social and economic prospects for the Sahel (SEPS). Following several consultations that served as a basis for the development of this vision document, the following activities were carried out: a socio-economic diagnosis using a participatory approach with the strong involvement of nationals and the United Nations system; a collection of the Sahel region populations' aspirations; a structural analysis by multidisciplinary experts; and a review and examination of the

¹ The study targeted the 10 countries included in the integrated United Nations strategy for the Sahel: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

deliverables. This report provides all stakeholders with relevant analysis and policy options to assist Sahelian governments in developing programs focused on development and a common understanding of the main drivers of change. The results of the study were presented to participants during a side event on the Sahel entitled "Towards an inclusive strategy to address the challenges of sustainable development and security in the Sahel", held on 24 March 2019 in Marrakech, Morocco, as part of the ECA's 52nd Annual Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (CoM).

12. At the sub-regional level, as part of its support to Member States in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Development Agendas 2030 and 2063, the SRO-WA produced a report on progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in West Africa and initiated a study on the theme: "National capacities and mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063: Status, challenges and opportunities in West Africa". Specifically, this report aims to: (a) examine the technical capacities for the production of statistics to cover all the indicators of SDG Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063; (b) examine the financing capacities of the monitoring and evaluation process of the two agendas by States, mainly in static production and dissemination; (c) review the institutional and organizational capacities of the monitoring and evaluation process of the two agendas; (d) identify ongoing initiatives in countries to address these challenges; (e) make recommendations for strengthening the national monitoring and evaluation processes for the SDGs and the AU 2063 Agenda.
13. At the country level, substantial support has been provided by the SRO-WO to Côte d'Ivoire through: (a) the validation of the project cycle management guide at a meeting in Abidjan in December 2018; (b) the dissemination of a toolkit for integrated planning and reporting to facilitate monitoring of the national program and agendas 2063 and 2030 at the high-level workshop on the implementation of the African Union 2063 agenda also held on 24 and 25 January 2019 in Abidjan.
14. The SRO-WA also supported Benin during an exploratory mission on tourism that took place from 17 to 22 December 2018 in Cotonou. This was in response to the country's strong commitment not only to ensuring coherence between the aspirations of key tourism stakeholders and concrete commitments to economic growth, but also to identifying potential areas for ECA intervention.
15. Three country profiles were published in 2018 for Benin, Mali and Sierra Leone, with the objective of helping these Member States to implement evidence-based policies and facilitate the structural transformation of economies. It is planned to publish in the course of 2019 the STEPS profiles of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, which are currently being finalized.
16. In the field of economic statistics, the Office strengthened its collaboration with the central banks of the Sub-region, the WAMI, WAMA, AFRISTAT, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the national statistical institutes of the Member States, particularly in the areas of semi-annual and annual monitoring of the economic situation in the Sub-region, policy analysis and monitoring, as well as the application of statistical scoping, forecasting and simulation tools.

b. Demographic Dynamics for Development

17. The SRO-WA has repositioned itself as part of the ECA reform to become a specialized center for Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD). Based on its new orientation, the SRO-WA began, in 2018, to assist Member States such as Niger, Togo and Senegal in the DDDs field. The activities undertaken focused mainly on population dynamics, civil registration and related statistics.

18. Thus, as part of the consolidation of the Office's contribution to the African Program for the Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Statistics (APAI-CRVS), the SRO-WA provided technical support and advisory services to review legislation relating to the civil registration and vital statistics system (APAI / CRVS) in Niger². From 12 to 16 September 2018, it participated in the workshop held in Dosso on the review and amendment of draft texts on the National Civil Registration Policy, the Civil Registration Act and the revision of the Decree on Civil Registration Personnel. These draft documents were officially submitted on 22 January 2019 by the Directorate General of Civil Registration, Migration and Refugees to the Minister of the Interior, Public Security, Decentralization, Customary and Religious Affairs of Niger.
19. In addition, the SRO-WA joined the UNICEF and UNFPA country programs to help refine Niger's new population policy during a workshop held in Dosso from 10 to 12 December 2018. For Niger to expect benefiting from the demographic dividends in the long term, the SRO-WA noted in particular the need to further analyze the impacts of the still very high population growth on land, the environment and migration flows.
20. The Office also contributed to the finalization of the formulation of the Niger Spotlight³ country program document (CPD), following the call made by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Niger. The related retreat workshop, held in Dosso from 24 to 28 July 2018, enabled the Office to share the key findings of the study on "The socio-economic costs of violence against women in Africa, with a focus on the intimate partner" conducted in 2013 by UNWomen and ECA.
21. At the request of the Government of Togo, an ECA exploratory mission on the digital identity initiative was conducted in Lomé from 11 to 14 December 2018. This mission, which included representatives from the New Technologies and Innovation Sector, the African Centre for Trade Policy, the African Centre for Statistics and the SRO-WA, was supported by a team of experts from Dalberg. To support Togo's efforts already undertaken through the e-ID Togo initiative, the mission stressed the need to extend the institutional mechanism for monitoring and implementing this initiative to the Ministries of Health and Education and Trade and to ensure better representation of the private sector. While noting positive signals in the integration of some key principles such as the non-mandatory and inclusive nature of access to digital identity, it recommended that particular attention be paid to respect of, inter alia, technological neutrality, interoperability, good governance, security and the right to privacy.
22. With regard to Senegal, a high-level mission composed of representatives of the AfDB, the UNICEF and the ECA, led by the Director of SRO-WA, visited Dakar from 18 to 21 June 2018. The mission, organized at the request of the Senegalese government, was carried out by the regional group of partners supporting the implementation of the Accelerated Improvement of Statistics Program for Africa (APAI-CRVS). The objective was to provide technical and financial support to these partners (whose secretariats are managed by the ECA) in drafting a strategic plan to improve the CRVS system. At the end of the visit, the ECA and the Senegalese authorities agreed on developing a roadmap that will provide Senegal with a strategic plan for its CRVS system and for the country's alignment with the best standards.

² Niger adopted its strategic plan for the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics (APAI-CRVS) in August 2016.

³ Global initiative for a multi-year program under the aegis of the UN General Secretariat and the European Union to shed light on the situation of gender-based violence, of which Niger is one of the four (4) Sahel countries (Niger, Nigeria, Mali and Liberia) that are concerned.

c. Regional Integration

23. Particular attention was also given by the SRO-WA to supporting Member States and RECs in their efforts to make progress towards regional integration through a number of activities.
24. The Office strengthened its technical support to ECOWAS in the context of the implementation of the decision taken on 24 October 2017 in Niamey, Niger, by the Presidential Working Group to accelerate the establishment of an ECOWAS monetary union by 2020. Thus, the report prepared under the auspices of the ECA on "ECOWAS' single currency: achievements and scenarios for 2020" was validated by the Ministerial Council of the Presidential Working Group, which requested that the scenarios be submitted to the Heads of State at its June 2018 session in Niamey. In particular, the study helped to inform decision-making by Heads of State and Government on the process that would lead to the ECOWAS single currency program. At the end of the 53rd session of the ECOWAS Ordinary Summit held on 30 July 2018 in Lomé, Togo, the Heads of State took note of the study's conclusions and called for the strong involvement of central banks and Member States in the implementation of the single currency roadmap.
25. As part of the support to Member States to ensure that they derive the maximum benefit from the AfCFTA agreement, the SRO-WA conducted a study on "the transformation of West African countries: the implications of the prospective expansion of the ECOWAS and of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)". This study gave food for thoughts to an ad hoc expert group meeting (AEGM) organized by the SRO-WA in Cotonou, Benin, from 25 to 26 June 2018. The discussions focused on the socio-economic implications of the ECOWAS' expansion, the methodology for identifying tariff lines related to the AfCFTA and the economic implications for countries. Issues related to the Aid for Trade initiative and intra-ECOWAS trade were also addressed on the basis of presentations from research institutes in the host country.
26. In addition, from 27 to 29 June 2018, the SRO-WA organized a Round Table on: "Regional integration in West Africa: new challenges and prospects". The discussions highlighted the importance of: (a) deepening the reflection on the conditionality attached to the fulfilment of the convergence criteria for the transition to the single currency; (b) to accompanying the establishment process of the AfCFTA with the conduct of impact studies and support for consultations with the various stakeholders concerned; (c) removing the various barriers to the effective free movement of persons and goods in order to take full advantage of the AfCFTA and the ECOWAS Customs Union.
27. Furthermore, the Office, in collaboration with the African Centre for Trade Policy, is heavily involved in country support activities in the West African region for the ratification of the AfCFTA agreement and/or development of national strategies to maximize the benefits of the agreement. It is in this capacity that the SRO-WA actively participated in the organization of the March 2019 Awareness and Consultation Forums on the AfCFTA in The Gambia and Togo. Other forums are scheduled for the first half of 2019 in the following countries: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Senegal.

2. Credibility and trust

28. The SRO-WA continued to work to gain credibility and trust among Member States, IGOs, RECs, and even the public, by ensuring that the recommendations of the previous ICE are implemented and by improving the dissemination of knowledge products.
29. The SRO-WA has indeed endeavored to implement most of the recommendations addressed to it at the 2018 ICE (see Annex), paying particular attention to : (a) deepening and broadening analyses of countries' experiences in economic diversification; (b) promoting exchanges of experiences between

countries based on best practices at the West African country level; (c) continuing its support to national statistical systems; (d) supporting countries in improving quality and data collection in order to adequately measure progress towards the achievement of agendas 2030 and 2063; and (e) supporting countries in conducting studies in preparation for the AfCFTA.

30. As part of the communication to enhance its credibility and confidence, the Office continued to build on its Network of Economic Journalists for West Africa, officially launched in 27 September 2017, as a vehicle for expected change and a conveyor of ECA's key messages through the print and audio-visual media, following the results of the various analytical and research work. As such, a workshop on the AfCFTA was initiated by the SRO-WA from 5 to 8 February 2019 in Monrovia, Liberia, for 30 journalists from the West African Sub-region and members of its network of journalists. This was an opportunity for SRO-WA to discuss with journalists the many socio-economic benefits of implementing the AfCFTA so that they could be actively involved in advocacy efforts for the ratification and implementation of the AfCFTA in West Africa.
31. The relaying, disseminating and popularizing of economic information continued to be supported by a virtual platform on the social network "Yammer" which currently has 104 members, the vast majority of whom are communication specialists based in the 15 ECOWAS countries. In addition, key messages are strategically disseminated through the Office's specific pages on the main social networks (Facebook and Twitter), visibility tools, synthesized media elements such as short videos, press releases on the sub-site of the ECA official website and advertisements in newspapers considered the most widely read in the host countries of the Office's meetings. Facebook interactions for the period from March 15 to April 11, 2019 were estimated at 417, with nearly 2400 followers. As for the office's Twitter page, nearly 1123 information relays had been counted as of April 15, 2019.
32. Efforts have been made to publish the Office's knowledge products in both English and French. As a result, the following documents were produced in these two ECA working languages in 2018: (i) the ECOWAS single currency: achievements and scenarios for reaching 2020, (ii) the preliminary global report of the Sahel 2043 vision; and (iii) the STEPS profile of Benin as well as the country profiles of Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia and Guinea Bissau.

3. Accountability and learning

33. The work of SRO-WA continues to be guided by its main objective, which is to promote inclusive and sustainable economic and social development to support West Africa's structural transformation in line with priorities. To this end, the SRO-WA has undertaken to strengthen its accountability mechanisms and to more deeply anchor the culture of learning within it by providing quality assurance to its program on the one hand, and by providing ongoing education for its staff on the other.
34. As part of the program's quality assurance, the internal monitoring and evaluation process of the program's activities, as well as the reporting on the results achieved by the Office, are carried out through a new platform for the ECA's activities called "SharePoint". Currently in a period of experimentation, this platform proceeds in particular from the digitization of the annual work plans. In addition, a quarterly briefing note for Ambassadors of Member States based in Addis Ababa continues to provide highlights of the ECA's interventions across the African continent. Finally, with a view to improving its services in the future, each meeting is concluded with a live session evaluation, which provides an opportunity to gather aspirations and opinions on the quality of service provided to the ECA's clients.

It should be noted that, as part of its efforts to improve its internal functioning, the Office organized

a general retreat with the central theme of "enhancing the effectiveness of the Office in the context of the United Nations and ECA reforms". The objective of this meeting was to deepen the reflection on the implications of these ongoing reforms, in order to identify positioning strategies and interventions for greater leadership, visibility, influence and effectiveness in interventions provided to clients. This retreat, held in Dosso, Niger, from 20 to 22 February 2019, led all staff to learn and understand the components of the reforms, to carry out a SWOT analysis of the Office in the context of these reforms and, above all, to make recommendations to improve the quality of the services provided by the Office.

35. With regard to continuous training, the participation of its staff in training and meetings focused on improving its framework has served the Office not only to strengthen its accountability mechanisms, but also to more deeply anchor the learning culture within it.
36. In particular, the Office's staff received training on writing techniques in French and English in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 27 September to 05 October 2018. In addition, as part of the ongoing reforms, several staff members, as part of their direct and/or indirect tasks, participated from 15 to 19 October 2018 in the United Nations Secretariat's annual budget planning workshop, which included a new approach to the formulation of the annual work plan. The workshop held at the ECA Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, focused on beneficiary-centered results as an integral part of the narrative of changes brought about through the ECA interventions. Furthermore, clear links have been established between the objectives to be achieved in relation to the secretariat's mandate and the contribution of the subprograms to the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs), where the annual business plan focuses on expected results and stakeholder accountability.

4. Operational efficiency

37. As part of the ECA's strategic repositioning exercise initiated under the United Nations system's reform, the mandate of the SRO-WA now focuses on population dynamics for development (DDD), beyond its ongoing support to sub-regional initiatives. This change, approved in January 2019, should in the long-term help member countries to improve their understanding and policies on the effective control of population growth and changes in its age structure, fertility rates, access to education and health, which have an impact on economic growth, public finances and other important characteristics of macroeconomic aggregates.
38. Some activities carried out during the period under review contributed to strengthening the operational effectiveness of the SRO-WA both in areas related to population dynamics for development as well as those associated with Sub-regional initiatives.

a. In the field of DDDs

39. The SRO-WA participation in training sessions and the organization of expert meetings in the field of population dynamics for development enabled it to better support its transformation into a specialized center on issues related to the impacts of demographic trends and changes on sustainable development in West Africa. Thus, from July 23 to 27, 2018, the office participated in the 12th Global Meeting of the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) Network in Mexico City, Mexico. This participation served to strengthen the Office's capacity in generational economics, focusing on the opportunities and challenges of demographic transition for progress towards achieving the objectives of Agenda 2030.

40. In addition, in November 2018, the SRO-WA undertook a study including an assessment of the current situation regarding demographic dynamics for development in West Africa and a development plan. This development plan, which is the study's flagship deliverable, provides the strategic framework including the operations master plan, organizational chart, resources, funding and communication strategy for the new center as well as a four-year indicative program of activities (2019-2022).
41. A first meeting of experts from the "Think-Tanks" on DDDs coming from the Universities of Ghana, Ibadan in Nigeria, the Centre de recherche en économie générationnelle, IFORD and the Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Population de Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso as well as from Member States, was held from 19 to 21 November 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. It helped define a revised strategic framework and a development plan that corresponds to the objectives of the center. It provided an opportunity to discuss the reform of the ECA, the issue of population dynamics for development and the interim report of the study. The experts welcomed, inter alia, the relevance of the "DDD" theme, particularly in West Africa, and made recommendations for improving the study.
42. Another expert group meeting held from 22 to 23 April 2019 in Accra, Ghana, validated this study, in particular the following components: (i) Demographic dynamics and development: linkage analysis, demographic dividend, state of play and challenges in West Africa; (ii) Vision, Strategic Direction and Development Plan 2019-2022; (iii) Coordination and monitoring and evaluation mechanism; (iv) Work or action plan.

b. In the field of Sub-regional initiatives

43. The Office has initiated or actively participated in activities that have helped strengthen its capacity to support Member States and RECs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Community policies in areas such as trade, peace and security.
44. As such, in the area of trade, the SRO-WA participated in the training of trainers seminar on "Measuring the contribution of the services sector to regional value chains" held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 29 to 31 January 2019. As a result, the office's capacity to support the development of evidence-based trade in services policies in support of the creation and deepening of regional service value chains in African countries has been strengthened.
45. The involvement of the office in the various mechanisms for coordinating the actions of international partners such as the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), the Sub-regional Coordination Mechanism for the United Nations System Support (UNSCR) and the United Nations country team, particularly in support of Niger (UNCT), as well as collaboration with other United Nations' agencies, have also enabled it to better intervene in support of the ECOWAS member states and sub-regional bodies .
46. For example, from 17 to 18 September 2018, the SRO-WA participated in the high-level consultative meeting on the Sahel, convened by the ECOWAS, the African Union Commission and UNOWAS. The meeting was a continuation of the consultations convened by the African Union and held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in March 2018. Its main objective was to strengthen the complementarity of the various stakeholders' initiatives in the sub-region and to consolidate their full involvement in actions in favor of the Sahel.
47. In addition, the November 2012 MSRC meeting in Dakar, Senegal, focused on mobilizing efforts to make the Sahel a driver of development in West Africa. The central question was how the United Nations system could better coordinate its interventions by being "united in action" for greater

positive impact.

48. In terms of both analysis and research as well as capacity building, the operational effectiveness of the SRO-WA continued to benefit from the use of partnerships with universities and other institutions, whether or not through Memoranda of Understanding, as is the case with the Institut de Formation aux Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication-IFTIC Niger, the Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey/FSEG of Niamey and the Senghor University of Alexandria-Egypt.
49. The optimal use of the resources mobilized during the year also contributed to the operational effectiveness of the SRO-WA. Indeed, for a budget allocation of US\$1,017,700 (USD), net of staff costs, the regular resources consumption rate was around 99.59% at the end of 2018, almost in line with the implementation of programmed activities (100%). Similarly, the utilization rate of extra budgetary resources, which can be received at any time of the year and managed in accordance with the requirements of partners and/or donors, is estimated at 99.65%.

5. Major challenges

50. The period under review was marked by the reforms undertaken by the General Secretariat of the United Nations and the Executive Secretariat of the ECA. As such, initiatives focused on capacity building and partnership development have been undertaken by the SRO-WA to assist Member States in designing and implementing policies that integrate demographic challenges. However, these new directions pose threats if the Office does not have the necessary resources to respond effectively to the additional demands that would result from its transformation into a center specializing in population dynamics for development issues.
51. Other risks that the Office continues to face in the implementation of its work program include the weakness of national statistical systems and the insufficient capacity of Member States to collect reliable statistical data, which limit the effective execution of analytical and research work, especially the production of flagship publications, including STEPS profiles. In addition, the socio-economic, institutional and international security environment in the sub-region remains challenging. Socio-political instability, persistent conflicts, particularly in the Sahel region, insecurity and extreme violence fueled by the new geopolitical dynamics in the Sahel are among the main factors that could compromise the full achievement of the expected effects of changes from the ECA's interventions in the sub-region, and in particular undermine ongoing efforts for the structural transformation of the sub-region's economies.

Conclusion and outlook in 2019

52. Of the 52 products (outputs) expected for the 2018-2019 biennial program, 25 were completed in 2018 and the remaining 27 products would be completed in 2019, representing an estimated 100% physical implementation rate of the planned activities. In light of the findings of this report, it appears that all the activities carried out since ICE 2018 have once again enabled the SRO-WA to: (a) gain policy influence to support the West African transformation agenda; (b) gain credibility and trust with its key clients and partners; (c) strengthen its accountability mechanisms and embed the learning culture more deeply within it; and (d) strengthen its operational effectiveness to better support the timely delivery of its knowledge production and capacity building services.
53. For the year 2019, of the 27 products (outputs results) expected under the 2018-2019 work program, 12 have already been completed for this year 2019, representing an annual achievement rate of 44.4%.

54. The activities of the Office for the coming period will focus on achieving the objectives assigned to the new specialized center on population dynamics for development, continued support for Sub-regional initiatives, including support for the development of national strategies to enable Member States of the Sub-region take full advantage of the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, as well as assistance to countries in assessing their progress towards structural transformation of their economies and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of agendas 2030 and 2063.
55. In terms of in-depth analyses and non-recurrent studies, publications are planned on the following topics:
- STEPS profiles of Liberia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire;
 - National capacities and mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of agendas 2030 and 2063: situation, challenges and opportunities in West Africa;
 - Challenges and opportunities of demographic dynamics in West Africa;
 - Socio-economic prospects for the Sahel: Towards a resilient, inclusive and prosperous Sahel region;
 - Sahel 2043: Long-term prospective study for the Sahel;
 - Single currency and regional integration in West Africa;
 - Impacts of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and the Common External Tariff (CET) on the dynamics of the integration process and the structural transformation of West African economies.
56. The following measures are being taken or planned by the office to improve the implementation of future activities: (a) mobilize both financial and human resources to effectively meet the continuing training needs of managers in statistical data collection and analysis methods; (b) develop partnerships, identify structures, institutions and research centers working in the new area of interest of SRO-WA in order to develop the potential for synergies; (c) actively participate in the evaluation of public policies and facilitate the availability of reliable, regular and gender-disaggregated data and statistics; (d) implement an additional resource mobilization strategy; (e) strengthen collaboration with headquarters divisions and have a matrix of joint interventions in support and advice to countries.

Annex:

Implementation of the ICE 2018 recommendations by the ECA

Following each ICE meeting, the final communiqué makes recommendations to the various stakeholders, namely the ECA, Member States and RECs. The table below presents, by heading, the seven recommendations made to ECA by the experts at the 21st ICE held in Cotonou, Benin, from 27 to 29 June 2018, as well as the actions carried out or planned in the context of their implementation.

Recommendations	Actions taken by the ECA
<i>Report on the sub-regional profile of West Africa</i>	
Deepen and broaden analyses of countries' experiences in economic diversification.	Apart from the STEPS profile of Benin published in 2018, those of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire are in the process of being finalized. These profiles are intended to help Member States pursue evidence-based policies and facilitate the structural transformation of economies.
<i>Report on the implementation of the SRO-WA work program in 2017 and outlook for 2018</i>	
Promote the exchange of experiences on good practices between countries at the level of West African countries	A session dedicated to country presentations is regularly included on the agenda of expert meetings organized by the Office and generally attended by all ECOWAS Member States.
Strengthen support to national statistical systems, and in particular accelerate support to the re-basing of national accounts.	The Office contributed to strengthening collaboration with the central banks of the Sub-region, the WAMI, WAMA, AFRISTAT, ECOWAS, UEMOA and NSIs of Member States, particularly in the areas of monitoring the economic situation in the Sub-region, policy analysis and monitoring, and the application of statistical scoping, forecasting and simulation tools.
<i>Report on the implementation of sustainable development goals</i>	
Support countries to improve the quality and collection of data in order to adequately measure progress towards the achievement of agendas 2030 and 2063.	The SRO-WA initiated a study on the theme: "National capacities and mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of agendas 2030 and 2063: Status, challenges and opportunities in West Africa". This report will be discussed at an expert meeting and will make it possible to formulate recommendations for strengthening national monitoring and evaluation processes for the SDGs and the AU's Agenda 2063.
Make the Joint Monitoring Kit for Agenda 2063 and 2030 available to States and strengthen their capacity in this regard.	The pilot phase is ongoing, likewise the tool is ready and is still being tested in some countries.
Round table: "Regional integration in West Africa: New challenges and opportunities"	
Support countries in carrying out impact studies and bringing the regulatory and legal frameworks of member countries into line with the AfCFTA	The SRO-WA is involved with the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) in a project to support the implementation of the AfCFTA agreement in 8 ECOWAS countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Gambia, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo). As part of the development of national the AfCFTA strategies, impact studies and analyses of regulatory and legal frameworks have been carried out or are planned for some countries.

<i>Launch of the Benin STEPS profile</i>	
Strengthen the participatory and ownership process of the STEPS development process.	Several major actors were involved in the preparation of the STEPS profiles for Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, including the ministries of the two countries in charge of planning and development, the UNDP and experts from Central Banks and National Statistical Institutes. Regular exchange and sharing of information is ongoing with these actors to ensure full ownership of the process and its quality control.