



Report on sustainable development goals for the West Africa subregion



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Acronyms	iv
Executive summary	vii
Recommendations for operationalizing the implementation of the goals	xi
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Technical approach and methodology used in producing the report	3
2. Overview of progress on sustainable development in the subregion	6
2.1. Economic sustainability	6
2.2. Social sustainability	12
2.3. Environmental sustainability	20
2.4. Governance	23
3. Prioritization of sustainable development issues	26
3.1. National level priority sustainable development issues	26
3.2. Subregional level priority sustainable development issues	28
3.3. Prioritization of sustainable development issues for the subregion	31
4. Overview and justification of prioritized sustainable development issues	36
4.1. Education	36
4.2. Health	38
4.3. Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)	39
4.4. Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation	41
4.5. Good governance, the rule of law, peace and security	43
4.6. Agriculture and food security	43
4.7. Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)	44
4.8. Social protection for the poor and vulnerable	46
4.9. Sanitation and urban management	47
5. Conclusions and recommendations	58
5.1. Conclusions	58
5.2. Recommendations	58
5.3. Member countries	58
5.4. Subregional and regional bodies	61
5.5. International community	62
References	63
Annexes	66
Annex 1: Questionnaire	66
Annex 2: List of respondents	68

List of tables

Table 1:	Proposed sustainable development goals and targets.....	x
Table 2:	Trends in real GDP growth by country, 1995-2011	7
Table 3:	Trends in GDS and GCF as a percentage of GDP by country, 1995-2011	8
Table 4:	Trend in FDI (netinflows as a percentage of GDP) by country, 1995-2011	9
Table 5:	Trends in external balance on goods and services by country, 1995-2011.....	10
Table 6:	External debt stocks as a percentage of GDP, by country, 1995-2011	11
Table 7:	Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 per day (PPP) (percentage of population).....	12
Table 8:	Total unemployment and youth unemployment for selected countries	13
Table 9:	Average annual rate of population change by major area, region and country, 1990-2010 (percentage).....	14
Table 10:	Urban population (percentage of total population and growth) by country, 1995-2012	16
Table 11:	Trends in total fertility rate (births per woman), 1995-2011	17
Table 12:	Trends in life expectancy and IMR by countries	17
Table 13:	Primary and secondary school enrolment, by country, 1995-2011.....	19
Table 14:	Improved sanitation and water sources by country, 1995-2010	20
Table 15:	Trends in CO2emissions (metric tons per capita) by country, 1995-2009	20
Table 16:	Trends in forest area as a percentage of total land area by country	23
Table 17:	2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG).....	24
Table 18:	IIAG Index on National Security	25
Table 19:	Summary of subregional and national sustainable development issues.....	30
Table 20:	Prioritized sustainable development.....	32
Table 21:	Priority sustainable development issues in order of decreasing importance	33
Table 22:	Comparison of sustainable development issues raised by regional bodies and subregional bodies/member states	35
Table 23:	Primary and secondary pupil-teacher ratio	36
Table 24:	Total public spending on education (percentage of GDP).....	37
Table 25:	Proposed Sustainable Development Themes, Goals, Targets and Indicators	51

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Frequency of sustainable development issues addressed by first, second and third-generation PRSs.....	27
Figure 2:	Frequency distribution of priority sustainable development issues.....	30

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Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
Africa-RIM	Africa Regional Implementation Meeting
AUC	African Union Commission
AMESD	Africa Monitoring of the Environment and Sustainable Development
ANS	Adjusted Net Saving
APINA	Air Pollution Impact Network for Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDP	Community Development Program
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbon
CFL	Compact Fluorescent Light
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPG	Cross-Sectoral Planning Group
CSD-20	Commission on Sustainable Development (twentieth session)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPADP	Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FSSDD	Food Security and Sustainable Development Division
GCF	Gross Capital Formation
GCLME	Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Gross Domestic Savings
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index

HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HIV	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus
IIAG	Ibrahim Index for African Governance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESTI	(Ghanaian) Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation
MoFEP	(Ghanaian) Ministry for Finance and Economic Planning
NDPC	National Development and Planning Commission (of Ghana)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODP	Ozone Depletion Potential
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAD	Public Aid Development
PRs	Poverty Reduction Strategies
RCs	Regional Commissions
REP	Regional Economic Programme
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SD	Sustainable Development
SEI	Stockholm Environmental Institute
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

STI	Science Technology and Innovation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The present report on sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the West Africa subregion is one of five subregional reports prepared within the framework of the Africa Post-2015 and Rio+20 follow-up processes to support African countries in their efforts to effectively engage in the global SDG process and to ensure that the goals to be agreed are well aligned with the region's sustainable development priorities. The subregional reports informed the Africa regional report on SDGs and were presented at the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the SDGs, which was organized by ECA jointly with the AUC and AfDB from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The report:

- Identifies and analyses priority sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion;
- Identifies, analyses and articulates key priority areas/issues of sustainable development for West Africa to inform the formulation of SDGs;
- Proposes SDGs as well as related targets and indicators for the subregion;
- Provides recommendations for the operationalization/implementation of the SDGs for the subregion.

Methodology and approach

A three-tiered approach was used in preparing this report. The first step involved reviewing all regional, subregional and global reports and publications that had a bearing on priority sustainable development issues and challenges within the subregion. The second step involved undertaking a survey among Member States and civil society organizations on priority SDGs in the subregion, using a structured questionnaire; and consulting with key officials. SDG targets and indicators were developed on the basis of the survey and the consultation. The third phase entailed the presentation of the report at the African Regional Consultative Meeting on SDGs. The report was finalized taking into account the comments and recommendations of the meeting.

Key sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion

Economic sustainability

The subregion has, over the past two decades, experienced stable political governance, which has translated into stable economic growth even though increasing and sustaining this growth over the long term remains a challenge. Growth in the subregion has been driven more by donor inflows rather than by domestic savings, as gross capital formation has been consistently higher than gross domestic savings for the past two decades. In addition, although foreign direct investment (FDI) in the subregion increased, it failed to generate the employment needed to significantly boost incomes and reduce poverty largely because it focused more on the exploitation of mineral resources with no value addition. Furthermore, the balance of trade has deteriorated for all the countries over the period, except for oil-producing countries that benefited from high oil prices. In general, growth in the subregion over the past two decades can be attributed to the following factors: (i) relative political stability; (ii) strong global demand for the main export commodities of West Africa; (iii) better macroeconomic management; (iv) rapid recovery of post-conflict countries and new mining ventures.

Most countries in the subregion are not undergoing the structural transformation needed to significantly improve the quality of life and to ensure sustainable development. The shrinking of the agricultural sector's contribution to GDP and the increase in the service sector's contribution accompanied by a decline or, at best, a stagnation in the contribution made by the industrial sector – more specifically, the manufacturing

sector – suggests a pseudo-transformational process, of which the overall impact on growth and poverty needs to be properly assessed.

Social sustainability

Countries in the subregion lag behind in terms of human development, in particular education, health, access to drinking water and other basic infrastructure services in spite of marginal improvements. These persistent social challenges have seriously hampered the efforts of countries to accelerate growth and reduce poverty, as envisaged in national poverty reduction strategies (PRSs). Poverty is the main challenge that countries in West Africa face, and the incidence of poverty in the subregion is among the highest in the world. Although considerable progress has been recorded in access to basic services such as safe drinking water, not much progress has been registered in the sanitation sector. In addition, life expectancy and infant mortality rates have improved, while fertility rates have declined as a result of the relative success of population control measures. Literacy rates recorded for countries in West Africa show relatively higher figures and an improving situation at both primary and secondary levels of education.

Population growth and increasing urbanization continue to pose threats to sustainable development in the subregion although many countries are making progress in reducing population growth rates. While population growth in the subregion has been declining on average, it is relatively higher compared to other subregions in the continent and poses a considerable challenge to families and governments in their quest to improve the social and economic conditions of their people. Advancing urbanization largely attributed to rural-urban migration in all the countries also poses a challenge due to the inability of governments and the private sector to create the required infrastructure and employment in urban areas.

Almost all Member States enjoy some level of partial protection through social security even though this does not fully cover the main branches of social security (health insurance, pensions, unemployment protection and tax-based social benefits) and only a small segment of the population have access to such schemes. Most countries have schemes designed to provide contributory old-age pensions although, in many, coverage is limited only to a small formal economy and the benefits are very low. Inadequate social security provision is also reflected in government expenditure on social security as a share of GDP, which is one of the lowest in the world.

Although the informal sector has a handful of social security schemes, none of the countries in the subregion has yet developed comprehensive policies and programmes designed to consistently address the welfare of this segment of the society. Most employees in the informal sector are unpaid family workers, self-employed, micro-entrepreneurs, farmers, craft employees, artisans, traders, etc., who not have any social protection against insecurity when they retire from active work unless they have personal pension plans.

Environmental sustainability

Climate change and the occurrence and severity of natural disasters remain key challenges to sustainable development in the subregion. Many countries are experiencing climatic variability and extreme events such as floods and droughts as well as frequent high maximum temperatures. Even though the subregion ranks among those contributing the least to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it is among the most vulnerable globally in terms of the impact of climate change, largely as a result of its limited adaptive capacity.

Unsustainable exploitation of forest resources has persistently threatened the survival of terrestrial habitat and increasing desertification. In addition, many West African countries have been experiencing serious soil degradation as well as the continuous devastation of the subregion's biodiversity, which can result in natural habitat loss, loss of species or subspecies, invasion by alien species, among others. Land tenure insecurity has made it difficult for many people to make sustainable investments in land while communal ownership, poor farming practices, the rise in sea levels, the disposal of toxic materials from the developing world have resulted in land degradation. In some countries, the scarcity of arable lands has led to the migration of inhabitants to other areas, which has the potential to cause local conflict. Furthermore,

some countries are confronted with land grabbing arising from the use of land for growing cash crops by foreign companies, which have the potential to reduce food production by locals.

Desertification has been the consequence of prolonged land degradation, resulting partly from deforestation, high population growth, land tenure insecurity and the lack of alternative income-generating opportunities in the subregion. It continues to be a major problem and has serious linkage with poverty, migration, availability of grassland for farm animals and overall food insecurity. A worrying fact is that climate change and desertification may increase water stress, which may have an adverse impact on every economic activity.

Many water bodies in the subregion are polluted due to poor waste management, agricultural and industrial discharges, and mining activities, especially small-scale mining. In addition, overfishing is leading to the depletion of aquatic resources, especially fish stock while farming along the banks of rivers, and deforestation is leading to the drying up of rivers, lagoons and lakes. The coast of West Africa supports a diversity of habitats and resources such as rocky shores, sandy beaches, deltas, estuaries and coastal wetlands, coral reefs and lagoons, which contribute significantly to the livelihoods of coastal communities and have other intrinsic values but are being seriously degraded. In general, the institutional, financial, technological and capacity constraints notwithstanding, countries have made strides in all three dimensions of sustainable development. However, more effort is needed if sustainable development is to be addressed in a holistic and integrated manner.

Prioritization of sustainable development issues

Using information from the subregional SDG survey, poverty reduction strategies, and national and subregional development strategies, plans and programmes, as well as review reports on sustainable development, the priority sustainable development issues in order of importance in the subregion are the following: education; health; sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport); inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation; good governance and the rule of law; agriculture and food security; environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils); social protection for the poor and vulnerable; sanitation and urban management; and peace and security.

Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

Poverty reduction remains the key challenge and consequently development goal for all West African countries. Countries also recognize that poverty is multidimensional and poverty reduction is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Thus, achieving poverty reduction requires multidimensional policies that cater to all the priority issues and take into consideration the linkages between the different dimensions of policy effects. In the SDG survey, six out of the eight countries in the subregion preferred to have the MDGs that were suitably modified and updated for post-2015 integrated into a larger sustainable development framework. The development of the goals and targets therefore took this into consideration. Based on the prioritized sustainable development issues for the subregion, nine SDGs in order of importance and 42 targets to be realized if these goals are to be achieved (table 1) have been proposed. Additionally, 178 indicators have also been proposed.

Table 1: Proposed sustainable development goals and targets

Goal	Target
Goal 1: Reduce extreme poverty and hunger	<p>Target 1: Reduce by three quarters, between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 (PPP) per day</p> <p>Target 2: Reduce by three quarters between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p> <p>Target 3: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially the vulnerable (women and the youth)</p>
Goal 2: Achieve gender equality, and universal equitable primary and secondary education	<p>Target 4: Ensure by 2030 that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of quality primary schooling.</p> <p>Target 5: Ensure by 2030 that 60 per cent of boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of quality secondary education</p> <p>Target 6: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2025 and at all levels of education no later than 2030</p> <p>Target 7: Ensure that practical Science Technology and Innovation (STI) training, especially ICT training is an integral part of secondary and tertiary education by 2025 and at all levels by 2030</p>
Goal 3: Ensure universal access to quality health care delivery	<p>Target 8: Reduce by three quarters the under-five mortality rate by 2030.</p> <p>Target 9: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by 2030.</p> <p>Target 10: Achieve, by 2025, universal access to reproductive Health and overall health care</p> <p>Target 11: Reduce annual new infections of HIV/AIDS by three quarters in 2025 and ensure universal treatment for HIV/AIDS patients by 2030</p> <p>Target 12: By 2025, stabilize the incidence of malaria and other major diseases at 2015 levels and ensure that deaths caused by these diseases are reduced by two thirds in 2030</p> <p>Target 13: By 2030, to have achieved a universal access to health care delivery, especially in the rural areas.</p> <p>Target 14: Reduce by three quarters the number of people living in slums by 2030</p>
Goal 4: Increase and improve infrastructure and urban management	<p>Target 15: Increase by half access to sustainable energy by 2030.</p> <p>Target 16: Increase the share of renewable energy in total energy by 25 per cent by 2030 and improve energy efficiency in production and consumption.</p> <p>Target 17: Increase by a 50 per cent, between 2016 and 2030, waste collection, disposal and management</p> <p>Target 18: Increase by a fifth between 2016 and 2030 sustainable transport</p> <p>Target 19: Increase by a quarter the length of motorable roads and by a third rail and water transport between 2016 and 2030</p> <p>Target 20: Reduce by a third the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2030;</p>
Goal 5: Improve inclusive economic growth	<p>Target 21: Increase and maintain between 2016 and 2030, GDP and GDP per capita growth to 10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively</p> <p>Target 22: Increase by a third overall investments and the share of investments in public expenditure by 2030</p> <p>Target 23: Reduce foreign aid dependency by a third by 2030</p> <p>Target 24: Ensure inclusive economic growth by 2025 and begin the transition to green economy by 2030</p>
Goal 6: Achieve structural economic transformation	<p>Target 25: Increase by a third the share of manufacturing in GDP by 2030</p> <p>Target 26: Increase by a third, between 2016 and 2030 the share of local content in FDI and the contribution of natural resource to GDP</p>

Goal	Target
Goal 7: Ensure good governance, peace and security	<p>Target 27: Reduce public perception of corruption by a third between 2016 to 2030</p> <p>Target 28 : Reduce by a third the average time needed to access justice from 2016 to 2030</p> <p>Target 29 : Ensure rule of law, peace and security</p>
Goal 8: Reduce environmental degradation and pollution	<p>Target 30 : By 2030, keep CO₂ emissions and other air pollutions at 2015 levels</p> <p>Target 31: Ensure that sustainable development principles are integrated into countries' policies and programmes and well implemented to reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>Target 32: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2030, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</p> <p>Target 33 : Increase recycling, recovery and re-use by 10 per cent between 2016 and 2030</p> <p>Target 34: Reduce deforestation and forest degradation by a half between 2016 and 2030.</p> <p>Target 35: Reduce by a third pollution of surface water resources and ensure sustainable land management by 2030.</p> <p>Target 36 : Reduce post-harvest losses by a half between 2016 and 2030</p>
Goal 9: Enhance regional and global public-private partnerships for development	<p>Target 37 : Through foreign-local and public-private partnerships ensure science, technology and innovation transfer, adaptation and diffusion for development</p> <p>Target 38 : Ensure an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory regional and global trading and financial system by supporting the increasing of intra-regional trade, finance and the share of subregional trade in global trade by a third in 2030</p> <p>Target 39 : In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</p> <p>Target 40 : Assist developing countries to meet the SDGs by providing additional, predictable and appropriate funding</p> <p>Target 41 : Ensure debt sustainability and trade facilitation for developing countries</p> <p>Target 42: Respond to particular needs of landlocked developing countries and island states.</p>

Recommendations for operationalizing the implementation of the goals

Member States, regional and subregional bodies and the international community will all have to make significant efforts and commitments to operationalize the SDGs. Member States must: ensure good governance; ensure that education is provided and awareness raised about SDGs; develop long-term strategies to guide implementation; better involve both private sector and civil society organizations; ensure linkages/coordination of the goals; strengthen institutions by making them more proactive and independent; provide adequate and innovative finance; and develop capacity for implementation and effective systems for monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

For subregional and regional bodies, there is a need to improve sustainable development governance in the subregion. In line with improving sustainable development governance, there is also a need to enhance the role of subregional and regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the African Union in the operationalization and implementation of SDGs.

As a way of properly and effectively monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals, the subregion could consider developing a subregional sustainability index to concisely monitor process. It is also imperative to learn from the implementation of the MDGs, as well as to undertake extensive subregional consultations on the SDGs and to intensify the provision of platforms for countries to share

experiences and knowledge as well as to network in the operationalization phase of the SDGs. It will be equally important to assist countries to obtain current and reliable data and to institute an efficient evaluation and follow-up system.

Ensuring the proper assessment of achievements made in the operationalization of the SDGs so that lessons may be learned and further implementation improved would entail: (a) developing a comprehensive framework for effectively monitoring and evaluating SDG implementation; (b) undertaking baseline studies on the state of sustainable development; (c) strengthening data collection, especially at the local level; (d) improving mechanisms for verifying information provided by identifying focal persons in ministries, departments and agencies and other entities such as the private sector, other public sector institutions, research institutions and civil society, by capacitating them to monitor and provide regular feedback; (e) having a separate and adequate budget for monitoring sustainable development implementation; and (f) developing mechanisms that would measure efforts or the pace of progress and not only the shortfall from the target.

The international community has been supporting the implementation of the MDGs since 2000. It is therefore necessary to properly assess the implementation of the MDGs with a view to informing the SDG process. Effective operationalization of the SDGs will require the availability of adequate resources, thus the need for meaningful support from the international community. This calls for a genuine commitment to aid and development effectiveness. The international community should promote, facilitate and finance appropriate environmentally sound technologies and their diffusion, as well as capacity-building, institutional strengthening and global partnership for development.

I. Introduction

1.1. Background

One of the key commitments of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was the compelling need for elaborating sustainable development goals (SDGs) because of their potential usefulness for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development at global, regional, national and local levels. Among other things, SDGs are intended to address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (i.e. economic, social and environmental) and their inter-linkages without diverting focus or effort from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rio+20 also recognized that the goals should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

To develop global SDGs to be agreed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Rio+20 resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on SDGs that is open to all stakeholders. To this end, an open working group comprising 30 representatives¹ was constituted with the aim of achieving fair, equitable and balanced geographic representation from the five United Nations regional groups. The group is expected to propose SDGs for consideration by the UNGA during its sixty-eighth session in 2013. Rio+20 also recognized that progress towards achieving SDGs needs to be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development.

In order to ensure an effective and inclusive process for elaborating SDGs, Rio+20 requested the United Nations system to provide the necessary input to and support for the SDG work and to assist its Regional Commissions (RCs) in collecting and compiling national inputs to inform this global effort.

As a follow-up to the Rio+20 outcomes, ECA in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting (Africa-RIM) to deliberate on the main outcomes of Rio+20 and their implications for Africa. This multi-stakeholder meeting, which brought together participants from the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and governance aspects, adopted the Africa-RIM Outcome Document² for the post-Rio+20 follow-up processes including the twentieth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-20). It represents among other things Africa's collective input to the CSD-20 and the UN General Assembly processes on the Rio+20 follow-up, including the SDGs.

The RIM called on the international community to provide Africa with adequate support to enable the region establish and implement an effective, broad-based bottom-up consultative process to flesh out goals, indicators and targets that should underpin the SDGs. The meeting identified the following priority areas.

1. Poverty eradication;
2. Equity, universal access to social services and social protection;
3. Food security and nutrition, and combating hunger;
4. Combating unemployment and creating job opportunities;
5. Infrastructure development;

¹ Africa is represented by seven countries – Algeria/Egypt/Morocco/Tunisia, Ghana, Benin, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Congo, Zambia/Zimbabwe – of which two – Ghana and Benin – are from the West Africa subregion.

² See appendix 2, the Africa RIM Outcome Document.

6. Health;
7. Education;
8. Access to affordable/sustainable energy;
9. Sustained and inclusive economic growth;
10. Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women;
11. Reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, including to climate change;
12. Favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology, including climate-change adaptation and mitigation;
13. Combating land degradation and desertification, drought and deforestation;
14. Water resource management and access to safe water;
15. Peace and security; and
16. Climate-change adaptation and mitigation.

An effective bottom-up process is considered pertinent in the case of Africa in order to:

- (i) Adequately prepare Africa to speak with one strong voice to articulate and rally international support for SDGs that are well aligned with its sustainable development priorities;
- (ii) Lay a firm foundation for the ownership, championship, domestication and implementation of activities towards the achievement of SDGs by regional and subregional organizations, African countries and major groups;
- (iii) Mobilize, enhance understanding and strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional organizations, African countries and major groups on the development and subsequent implementation of programmes and activities towards the achievement of SDGs in particular and sustainable development in general; and to
- (iv) Enhance linkages between national, subregional and global levels.

Furthermore, ECA, AUC, AfDB and UNDP jointly organized subregional and regional consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Africa. These consultations were held as follows: Accra in November 2011; Mombasa in October 2012; Dakar in December 2012; and Hammamet, Tunisia in March 2013. The regional consultation in Hammamet aimed among others things at identifying Africa's priorities for the post-2015 agenda; identifying enablers and critical success factors for the Post-2015 Development Agenda; and aligning the post-2015 priorities with other development programmes and agendas including Rio+20 and NEPAD – (the) New Partnership for Africa's Development. The meeting adopted an outcome document in which it agreed that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should incorporate the Rio+20 outcomes and the outcomes of Africa-wide initiatives, national and regional consultations as well as United Nations forums.

The meeting also agreed that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should: (a) emphasize inclusive economic growth and structural transformation; (b) reorient the development paradigm away from externally-driven initiatives towards domestically-inspired and funded initiatives that are grounded in national ownership; (c) prioritize equity and social inclusion and measure progress in terms of both the availability and quality of service delivery; (d) pay greater attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, displaced persons; and (e) focus on development

enablers as well as development outcomes, particularly structural economic transformation and inclusive growth, innovation and technology transfer, human development, and financing and partnerships.

Against this backdrop, the present report is one of five subregional reports prepared within the framework of the Africa Post-2015 consultations and the Rio+20 follow-up processes. The subregional reports and the Africa regional report aimed at preparing African countries to effectively engage in the global sustainable development goal process and to ensure that the goals to be agreed upon are well aligned with the region's sustainable development priorities. All the reports were presented at the Africa regional consultative meeting on the sustainable development goals jointly organized by ECA, AUC and the African Development Bank from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The report:

- (i) Identifies and analyses the priority sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion;
- (ii) Identifies, analyses and articulates key priority areas/issues of sustainable development for West Africa to imbue the formulation of the SDGs taking into account data availability;
- (iii) Submits SDGs as well as associated targets and indicators for the subregion;
- (iv) Provides recommendations on the way forward for the operationalization/implementation of the SDGs.

1.2. *Technical approach and methodology used in producing the report*

The analysis was informed by the following key points:

- Identification of sustainability trends for the West African subregion based on the three dimensions of sustainable development— economic, social and environmental;
- Review of subregional development strategies, plans and programmes, as well as national review reports on progress towards sustainable development;
- Review and analysis of the priority sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion;
- Analysis of priority sustainable development areas/issues for the region to inform the proposed SDGs. This included a relational analysis to establish a hierarchy of priorities that allowed a systematic ordering of the priorities for the purpose of rationalization and streamlining.
- Proposing SDGs, targets and indicators for West Africa, taking into consideration the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
- On the basis of the findings, proffering recommendations, including capacity-building for the domestication and operationalization of the SDGs in the subregion.

The above analysis comprised three phases. The first phase involved mapping out and reviewing all relevant literature including existing reports, publications and policies that have a bearing on priority sustainable development issues and challenges within the subregion and using data gap analysis to refine activities. Documents that were obtained and reviewed include:

- Rio+20 Outcome Document -The Future We Want;
- Africa RIM Outcome Document for CSD-20;
- Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20;
- Africa Regional Review Report on Progress towards Sustainable Development;
- Review Report on Progress Towards Sustainable Development in West Africa;
- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and Agenda 21;
- Africa Report on New and Emerging Challenges;
- Africa Report on Institutional and Strategic Frameworks for Sustainable Development;
- A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication:What are the Implications for Africa?
- Outcome Document of the Regional Consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda;
- Initial Input of the Secretary-General to the Open Working Group on SDGs;
- Post-2015: Framing a New Approach to Sustainable Development;
- Sustainable Development Indicators Framework for Africa and Initial Compendium of Indicators;
- Concept Paper by the South Centre on SDG;
- Concept Note- Interactive Discussions on SDG;
- Realizing the Future We Want for All;
- A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty And Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development; and
- Poverty reduction strategy papers of countries.

The second phase entailed a review of the literature providing knowledge on the data gaps, which were addressed via consultations with countries in the subregion. Specifically, both the public and private sectors, as well as NGOs and academia were consulted in the countries in the subregion. The main survey tool was a structured questionnaire, which is provided as Annex 1, and the list of institutions consulted is provided as Annex 2. Information was obtained from the stakeholders related to the priority sustainable development issues, priority sustainable development goals, targets and indicators, among others. Furthermore, consultations were made with one of the West African representatives on the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the first, second and third-generation PRSs of all the countries and other relevant documents were reviewed for information on the priority sustainable development issues in these countries. Based on this information, issues/ areas for SDGs were developed together with associated goals, targets and indicators.

The third phase involved a peer review of the report, including the proposed goals. This was achieved through the presentation of the report at the African Regional Consultative Meeting on SDGs organized by ECA jointly with the AUC and AfDB from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The report was finalized based on the comments and recommendations of the consultative meeting.

1.3. Organization of the report

The report is organized as follows: Section 2 provides the status of implementation of the sustainable development agenda in West Africa. Section 3 discusses the prioritization of sustainable development issues and challenges as well as a relational analysis of the priority sustainable development issues. Section 4 provides an overview and justification of prioritized sustainable development issues. The proposed SDGs, targets and indicators for the subregion are outlined in section 5. Section 6 concludes the report and proffers recommendations on the way forward for the operationalization of SDGs in the subregion.

2. Overview of progress on sustainable development in the subregion

2.1. Economic sustainability

Many African countries soon after gaining independence from colonial rule in the late 1950s and during the 1960s adopted national development plans underlined mostly by the nationalistic urge for Africans to take charge of their destiny. The period marked the prominence of the state as the driver of economic activity and the engine of growth. This period was very significant in terms of improved development for many African countries. After a decade of commendable success on many development indicators, the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s witnessed a deterioration in economic performance in most African economies. Countries within the West African subregion were no exception. Economic performance deteriorated as a result of varied reasons, including notably economic mismanagement, higher oil prices, poor governance as well as structural and institutional challenges. The poor economic performance of the mid-1970s and the early 1980s led to the implementation of World Bank/IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programmes, which was misconceived to some extent due to the inability to holistically assess the cause of the poor economic performance, a reason that may partially explain the inability of West African countries to transform economically. Among the strategies implemented in many West African countries were fiscal discipline, the removal of subsidies on social services such as education, health and utilities, trade and payments liberalization, the removal of capital controls and the resort to generous incentives for the extraction of natural resources, privatization and rationalization of the public sector, and financial sector reforms.

These measures – in addition to substantial development aid – allowed many West African economies to recover from the period of economic stagnation in the 1970s and early 1980s to a period of modest growth and economic recovery beginning in the mid-1990s. According to ECA (2001), the modest gains made by most of these countries were quite fragile due to weak domestic savings and the vulnerability of the subregion to external shocks arising from deterioration in terms of trade. In addition, the slow pace at which countries implemented some of the reforms, particularly in diversifying the economies from their reliance on natural resource exports in raw form, accounts for the modest growth.

Growth in real gross domestic product (GDP)

Trends in real GDP growth since 1995 show that almost all West African countries experienced modest positive economic growth rates. Over the period from 1995 to 2009, average annual real GDP growth was 4.5 per cent for the subregion while four out of the 15 countries in the subregion posted higher growth rates (table 4.1). Liberia, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso and Mali, which were the best performers, grew at an annual average rate of 15.7 per cent, 6.2 per cent, 5.4 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively. Ghana's average annual growth was representative of the subregion's average of 4 per cent. The worst performers – Guinea-Bissau (1.4 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (1.9 per cent), Togo (2.8 per cent) and Guinea (2.9 per cent) – all grew at less than 3 per cent per annum.

Despite these moderate successes, most West African countries still face the challenge of generating and sustaining economic growth over the long haul. With the exception of Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone, the other countries in the subregion grew at a faster rate in the second half of the 1990s compared with growth recorded over the decade 2000-2010. As shown in Table 2, where growth rates are disaggregated over five years (1995-1999, 2000-2004 and 2005-2009), countries like Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo recorded a deterioration in overall average annual growth in the 2000s (2000-2009) compared to the second half of 1990s (1995-1999). Notably, Liberia registered the steepest decline in growth for this period while Côte d'Ivoire witnessed a significantly downtrend in GDP growth in the period beginning from 2000.

Table 2: Trends in real GDP growth by country, 1995-2011

Country	1995	2000	2005	2010	2011	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	1995-2009	2010-2011
Benin	6.0	4.9	2.9	2.6	3.5	5.1	4.5	3.2	3.9	3.0
Burkina Faso	5.7	1.8	8.7	7.9	4.2	7.6	5.2	3.8	5.4	6.1
Cape Verde	7.5	7.3	6.5	5.2	5.0	8.4	5.5	5.7	6.2	5.1
Cote d'Ivoire	7.1	-3.7	1.3	2.4	-4.7	5.4	-1.0	1.7	1.9	-1.2
Gambia, The	0.9	5.5	-0.9	6.5	-4.3	3.6	4.4	3.4	3.3	1.1
Ghana	4.1	3.7	5.9	8.0	14.4	4.4	4.6	5.1	4.5	11.2
Guinea	4.6	2.5	3.0	1.9	3.9	4.3	3.0	1.8	2.9	2.9
Guinea-Bissau	4.4	3.6	4.9	1.7	5.7	-0.9	1.4	3.1	1.4	3.7
Liberia	-4.3	25.7	9.5	10.9	9.4	33.3	8.3	10.0	15.7	10.2
Mali	6.2	3.2	6.1	5.8	2.7	5.8	5.8	3.8	4.9	4.3
Niger	2.6	-1.4	4.5	8.0	2.3	3.7	2.8	3.4	3.2	5.2
Nigeria	2.5	5.4	5.4	8.0	7.4	2.5	6.2	5.1	4.4	7.7
Senegal	5.4	3.2	5.6	4.1	2.6	4.5	4.2	2.6	3.7	3.4
Sierra Leone	-8.0	6.7	4.3	5.3	6.0	-2.5	8.3	4.2	3.2	5.7
Togo	7.8	-0.8	1.2	4.0	4.9	6.2	0.7	2.4	2.8	4.5

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

In general, growth in West Africa over the past two decades can be attributed to the following factors: political stability; strong global demand for West Africa's main export commodities especially crude oil and cash crops such as cocoa; better macro economic management; the rapid recovery of post-conflict countries and new mining exploitation. The poor performance by Côte d'Ivoire was the result of political instability since the early 2000s. For West African countries that mainly export minerals, increased global demand and the subsequent increase in prices have not transformed into robust growth. Despite the fact that the prices of mineral resources, especially gold, have been increasing for the past two decades, countries such as Ghana have not benefited much because the gains obtained accrue mainly to foreign companies. Exploitation of mineral resources in the subregion is so capital-intensive that most mining activities are carried out by foreign companies with very little local participation. In Ghana, Tutu (2011) estimated that only 22 per cent of US\$3 billion earned from gold mining in 2009 was injected into the Ghanaian economy.

In Nigeria, oil and gas exploration has not improved the well-being of most of the country's citizens, even among the people from the Benin and River States where these resources are abundantly exploited. As noted by ECOWAS (2012), the inability of the subregion to transition from poor local participation in key sectors of the economy and the over-concentration in the economic pillar of the sustainable development reflects to some extent the inability of countries to formulate and implement integrated strategies and underscores the need to develop and implement credible sustainable development strategies by properly mainstreaming social and environmental issues into development strategies that are mainly economic. Such strategies should include re-negotiating contracts and developing codes to ensure that the mining sector sustainably benefits Member States.

Gross domestic savings (GDS) and gross capital formation (GCF)

Economic growth within the subregion has been driven by inflows from donors rather than by domestic savings. Over the 1995-2011 period, GCF was consistently higher than GDS across countries, indicating the contribution of donor inflows to investment (table 3). The relatively lower level of savings in the subregion is partly attributable to low income.

Table 3: Trends in GDS and GCF as a percentage of GDP by country, 1995-2011

Country	Gross capital formation (percentage of GDP)					Gross domestic savings (percentage of GDP)				
	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011	1995-99	2000-04	2004-09	2010	2011
Benin	18.80	19.55	20.26	21.04	17.64	13.12	11.50	11.84	11.50	5.66
Burkina Faso	23.75	18.21	23.40	25.46	23.55	8.72	4.15	2.98		
Cape Verde	37.44	33.74	41.27	37.80	36.52	0.50	-1.39	9.95	9.27	6.20
Côte d'Ivoire	13.72	10.59	9.85	13.77	16.43	21.49	21.03	17.73	18.94	9.77
Gambia, The	5.70	11.45	19.99	21.42	19.21	0.02	4.54	4.77	2.80	0.91
Ghana	22.03	24.32	21.41	28.03	18.56	8.55	6.87	3.50	16.21	5.43
Guinea	20.45	18.77	15.99	10.57	17.62	16.07	17.01	12.11	2.39	-0.27
Guinea-Bissau	19.50	11.98	0.00			-1.10	-13.20	0.00		
Liberia	0.00	6.29	23.54	26.37	25.04	0.00	9.52	-61.42	-36.62	-40.80
Mali	21.70	23.88	21.86	21.16	22.44	8.96	11.83	12.89		
Niger	9.86	13.15	22.59			2.59	4.43	13.41		
Nigeria	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.00	0.00	0.00		
Senegal	14.71	19.55	29.37	29.00	30.63	8.30	8.79	9.34	10.77	10.90
Sierra Leone	3.96	9.14	10.16	24.48	40.93	-3.59	-9.62	-1.12	6.49	2.99
Togo	16.19	15.17	16.60	18.81	18.94	5.11	0.07	-0.43	1.77	1.41

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Foreign direct investment (FDI)

The contribution of external sources to investment within the subregion is also evident from trends in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In view of the importance of FDI to a developing country's economic growth, most governments within the subregion have over the years implemented policies geared towards attracting FDI under structural adjustment. As shown in table 4, Liberia, Cape Verde and The Gambia were the largest recipients of FDI (net inflows as a percentage of GDP) for the period from 1995 to 2009. Disaggregation of the trend into periods shows that the period from 2000 to 2009 saw an increase, compared to the second half of the 1990s. Over the period from 1995 to 1999, FDI as a ratio of GDP for the subregion averaged 3 per cent, and this increased to 4.1 per cent for the period from 2000 to 2009 and, furthermore, to a subregion average of 6.1 per cent and 11.7 per cent in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Over the period from 2010 to 2011, Liberia and Niger recorded the highest net FDI inflow to GDP ratio of 17.5 per cent and 8.7 per cent, respectively.

An important observation is that FDI in the subregion has failed to generate the necessary employment expected to ensure an increase in income and a reduction in poverty in countries within the subregion. The main reasons for the failure of FDI to generate employment are attributable to the increasing focus of FDI in the capital-intensive extractive industries/sectors, especially the exploitation of mineral resources in the subregion. There has been very little focus on adding value to the exploited resources, thereby providing both meagre employment and income for most of the citizens.

Table 4: Trend in FDI (netinflows as a percentage of GDP) by country, 1995-2011

Country	1995-1999	2000-2004	2004-2009	2010	2011
Benin	1.3	1.5	0.5	0.8	1.6
Burkina Faso	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.1
Cape Verde	4.8	4.5	11.2	7.0	5.5
Côte d'Ivoire	2.6	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.4
Gambia, The	0.7	2.7	8.7	3.9	4.0
Ghana	2.0	1.9	5.7	7.9	8.2
Guinea	0.7	1.3	0.5	0.0	17.6
Guinea-Bissau	1.4	0.7	1.6	0.2	2.0
Liberia	20.7	22.6	19.1	35.0	84.9
Mali	1.8	4.1	1.0	0.3	1.6
Niger	0.4	0.6	4.4	17.4	16.8
Nigeria	3.8	2.6	4.1	2.6	3.6
Senegal	1.8	1.0	2.8	2.1	2.0
Sierra Leone	0.2	2.6	4.0	9.4	24.0
Togo	1.8	3.3	2.8	3.9	1.5

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

In Ghana, for instance, more than 60 per cent of the FDI over the period from 1990 to 2000 was invested in the mining sector, more specifically in gold production. However, the contribution of mining to GDP has never exceeded 5 per cent (Twerefou et al., 2007). As noted by ECA (2012), such trends cannot lead to sustainable development and the transition to a green economy within the subregion.

External balance on goods and services

With regards to the external sector, the reforms pursued in the various countries under structural adjustment did not succeed in improving the balance of payment challenges that confronted the countries within the subregion. The average external balance on goods and services as a percentage of GDP for the subregion was in deficit of 12.7 per cent for the period from 1995 to 2009. This figure worsened to a deficit of about 16.6 per cent in 2010 and further deteriorated to 20.5 per cent in 2011. As shown in table 5, the deterioration in the trade balance for all the countries in the 2000s – except for Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau – can be attributed to the following factors: the structure of trade (excess of imports over exports); other external obligations of the countries concerned; and, in the later years, the global food, energy and financial crises.

Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau, major oil-producing countries within the subregion, recorded an improved trade balance (for Nigeria, an increase in trade surplus and, for Guinea-Bissau, a reduction in the deficit) as a result of the unprecedented global oil price increases that were recorded during the second half of the 2000s. Thus, even with rising global food prices and higher import bills, these two countries enjoyed substantial increases in export receipts, which ensured that their trade balances improved. Furthermore, most of the non-oil countries within the subregion continued to rely on the export of primary products with very little or no value addition. Given the low demand for such primary exports (due to the low income elasticity of demand and to the development of synthetic substitutes) and resultant declining prices, export receipts for these countries were not enough to cover the growing import bills.

Table 5: Trends in external balance on goods and services by country, 1995-2011

Country	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011
Benin	-5.7	-8.1	-8.4	-9.5	-12.0
Burkina Faso	-15.0	-14.1	-15.0		
Cape Verde	-36.9	-35.1	-31.3	-28.5	-30.3
Côte d'Ivoire	7.8	10.4	7.9	4.6	3.2
Gambia, The	-5.7	-6.9	-15.2	-18.6	-18.3
Ghana	-13.5	-17.5	-17.9	-11.8	-13.1
Guinea	-4.4	-1.8	-3.9	-8.2	-17.9
Guinea-Bissau	-20.6	-25.2	0.0		
Liberia	-39.6	3.2	-85.0	-63.0	-65.8
Mali	-12.7	-12.0	-9.7		
Niger	-7.3	-8.7	-9.2		
Nigeria	4.2	9.4	12.5	5.3	4.0
Senegal	-6.4	-10.8	-20.1	-18.2	-19.7
Sierra Leone	-7.5	-18.8	-11.3	-18.0	-37.9
Togo	-11.1	-15.1	-17.0	-17.0	-17.5

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Additionally, the dumping of goods by some countries, particularly those in Asia, has made local industries uncompetitive and contributed to a worsening in the balance of trade. For instance, in most non-oil exporting countries within the subregion, export crops accounted for a small proportion of GDP. For example, in 2008 cocoa accounted for about 14 per cent and 5.5 per cent of GDP in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana respectively while cotton contributed about 7 per cent of GDP in Mali and 6 per cent in Benin and Chad. Value addition to these primary products is a sure way to improve the terms of trade and to affect the trade balance positively. This would surely help to solve many poverty-related problems in the subregion since the addition of value would create jobs, increase shelf life and lead to an increase in commodity prices, which could benefit the poor.

External debt stocks

Countries within the subregion continue to rely on external borrowing to finance fiscal and trade deficits. In spite of the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiatives in most of these countries, external debt remains a major challenge that confronts countries in the West Africa subregion. Many of these countries still rely on substantial debt funding from external sources largely owing to their external trade deficit, fiscal indiscipline that has resulted in huge budget overruns, and the inability of many governments to mobilize the required revenue from internal sources.

Over the period from 1995 to 2009, the overall external debt stock as a ratio of GDP of countries in West Africa averaged about 133.7 per cent. The expectation that the implementation of the HIPC Initiatives will lead to a significant reduction in the debt of West African countries appears to be materializing. For the subregion, external debt as a ratio of GDP improved significantly from an average of about 143.3 per cent between 2000 and 2004 to 81.8 per cent between 2005 and 2009, standing at 41.4 per cent in 2010 and 32.4 per cent in 2011. Countries such as Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire accumulated huge foreign debt in excess of GDP, suggesting that economic activity in these countries was wholly owned by external agents. Using average external debt to GDP ratio as a yardstick over the period from 1995 to 2009, table 6 shows that Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire recorded average external debt to GDP ratios of 758.9 per cent, 301.9 per cent, 113.8 per cent and 101.6 per cent, respectively. The best performing countries over that period were Burkina Faso, Benin and Cape Verde, with an average external debt to GDP ratio of less than 60 per cent.

Table 6: External debt stocks as a percentage of GDP, by country, 1995-2011

Country	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	1995-2009	2010	2011
Benin	60.6	51.4	18.9	43.7	19.6	19.5
Burkina Faso	52.4	47.7	24.2	41.4	23.7	23.3
Cape Verde	45.8	57.5	45.1	49.5	53.8	53.9
Côte d'Ivoire	137.5	101.0	66.3	101.6	47.1	49.9
Gambia, The	54.6	97.0	79.8	77.1	53.8	51.9
Ghana	84.0	110.7	30.7	75.1	28.8	28.8
Guinea	91.4	99.0	89.6	93.3	66.2	61.6
Guinea-Bissau	386.1	362.4	157.3	301.9	135.2	29.3
Liberia	1092.3	691.1	493.2	758.9	32.4	29.0
Mali	122.1	90.8	32.2	81.7	26.2	27.5
Niger	83.2	81.8	29.7	64.9	23.4	23.4
Nigeria	93.5	56.1	8.5	52.7	4.5	5.4
Senegal	79.1	68.9	27.7	58.6	30.4	29.9
Sierra Leone	157.7	128.8	54.9	113.8	36.2	35.7
Togo	98.8	105.0	69.2	91.0	39.1	17.4

Source: Compiled with data from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Countries in the West African subregion saw a substantial reduction in the ratio of external debt stock to GDP for 2010 and 2011, compared to the preceding decade (2000-2009). With the exception of Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Nigeria, all the countries in the subregion recorded a decline in the external debt stock to GDP ratio in 2010, compared to the average in the period from 1995 to 2009. This figure was further improved in 2011, with Guinea recording the highest external debt to GDP ratio of about 62 per cent (table 6).

Structural transformation

Structural transformation is required by the subregion to improve the quality of life of its people. It is estimated that economic growth of about 7-8 per cent per annum has to be reached to allow countries in West Africa to meet the goal of reducing extreme poverty by 50 per cent by 2015. This will require increasing productivity in agriculture and transferring the labour force to higher earning segments in manufacturing and services. This strategy will create higher earnings, employment and demand for the value chain of other sectors' outputs. Thus, a reduction in the share of agriculture and an increase in the shares of manufacturing and services are expected. This has the potential to boost employment and income, and to significantly reduce poverty. Specifically, if value is added to the many minerals and raw materials that are produced in the subregion, it would create jobs, lead to an increase in income and ensure vertical and horizontal linkages of the sector with other sectors of the economy, which would ultimately lead to poverty reduction. Inadequate innovation and the use of obsolete technology have also made it difficult for the industrial sector – more specifically, the manufacturing sector – to enhance productivity through enhanced efficiency.

The pace of transformation in most countries is slowing progress towards sustainable development in the subregion. However, on average, the services sector dominates the agricultural and industrial sectors in terms of its contribution to GDP (43 per cent compared to 34 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively), suggesting that the subregion is moving in the right direction. The manufacturing subsector, which is an important component of this transformational process accounts for only a very small proportion of about 4 per cent of GDP. The shrinking of the agricultural sector accompanied by a decrease or, at best, a stagnation of the manufacturing sector suggests a pseudo-transformational process that needs to be well assessed in terms of its overall impact on growth and poverty. Youth and graduate unemployment

also poses a major challenge to most governments within the West African subregion, while productivity remains stagnant and the informal sector is horizontally expanding especially in the retail and wholesale of imported goods with no value addition.

2.2. Social sustainability

An important dimension of sustainable development is social development that addresses the issue of social well-being and the quality of life. Countries in the subregion lag far behind in terms of human development, in particular, education, health, access to drinking water and other basic infrastructure services. Even more challenging, the region has been plagued by a growing number of challenges such as infectious diseases (malaria, HIV/AIDS) and national conflicts especially in the last two decades. These persistent social challenges have seriously hampered the efforts of countries within the subregion to accelerate growth and reduce poverty as envisaged in national PRS and the MDGs. (ECOWAS, 2012).

Poverty

Poverty in all its forms remains a major challenge in West Africa. The incidence of poverty is among the highest in the world, and trends recorded over the last two decades show that the subregion is not faring well compared to other parts of the world. Over one-third of the countries in the West African subregion are ranked among the poorest in the world, as more than 25 per cent of its population lives on less than one dollar a day (East Asia and the Pacific: 15 per cent).

Table 7: Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 per day (PPP) (percentage of population)

Benin	47.33 (2003)				
Burkina Faso	71.17 (1994)	70.03 (1998)	56.54 (2003)	44.6 (2009)	
Cape Verde	21.02 (2002)				
Côte d'Ivoire	17.79 (1993)	21.09 (1995)	24.06 (1998)	23.34 (2002)	23.75 (2008)
Gambia, The	65.61 (1998)	33.63(2003)			
Ghana	51.07 (1992)	39.12 (1998)	28.59 (2006)		
Guinea	92.55 (1991)	63.81 (1994)	56.32(2003)	43.34 (2007)	
Guinea-Bissau	41.31 (1991)	52.11 (1993)	48.9 (2003)		
Liberia	83.76 (2007)				
Mali	86.08 (1994)	61.18 (2001)	51.43 (2006)	50.43 (2010)	
Niger	72.79 (1992)	78.17 (1994)	65.88 (2005)	43.62 (2008)	
Nigeria	61.9 (1992)	68.51 (1996)	63.07 (2004)	67.98(2010)	
Senegal	65.81 (1991)	53.64 (1994)	44.19 (2001)	33.5 (2005)	29.61 (2011)
Sierra Leone	62.79 (1990)	53.37 (2003)	51.71(2011)		
Togo	38.68 (2006)	28.22(2011)			

Source: Compiled with data from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Note: Figures in brackets are the years in which the headcount ratio was calculated

On the basis of a purchasing power parity of \$1.25 a day poverty line, the incidence of poverty in West African countries is generally declining except for countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria where the trend is generally rising. The available data also indicate that except for Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal and Togo which have maintained a poverty incidence of less than 40 percent since 2002, all the countries in the subregion have registered a level of above 40 percent. It would therefore be correct to state that generalized poverty exists in several West African countries. This evidence of

widespread poverty in the region is suggestive of a substantial proportion of the population being poor over extended periods of time.

An ECA report (2005) concluded that as regards achieving the MDGs in West Africa, Burkina Faso and Ghana, which have both prioritized rural development, are the only countries likely to meet the poverty reduction target. The Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicate that there is extreme poverty in Liberia, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone. Even though the Overseas Development Institute (2010) indicates that six West African countries - Benin (1), Mali (2), Gambia (4), Ghana (14) and Burkina Faso (15) are ranked among the top 20 achievers in terms of absolute progress in achieving the MDGs, while two - Benin (16) and the Gambia (16) are ranked among the top 20 achievers in terms of relative progress in achieving MDGs. Overall, the fight against poverty within the subregion remains modest, fragile and falls far short of what is required to meet the MDGs. Based on current trends, a large number of West African countries will certainly not achieve these goals by 2015. At the current annual rate of reduction in poverty, it would take countries in the subregion about 25 more years to meet the MDG of halving the number of people living below the poverty line.

Unemployment

There is a positive correlation between unemployment and poverty since increasing levels of unemployment and underemployment lead to falling incomes and, consequently, growing poverty. As indicated in table 8, available data on unemployment for a few countries in the subregion suggest that the unemployment situation has been mixed over the past two decades and varies among countries in terms of magnitude. Countries like Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Niger have experienced decreasing levels of unemployment while the reverse appears to be the case in Burkina Faso. In Ghana, unemployment increased in the 1990s, but fell in the 2000s. Furthermore, with the exception of Cape Verde, Mali, Senegal and Ghana, almost all the countries in the subregion have managed to maintain unemployment rate below 8 percent.

Table 8: Total unemployment and youth unemployment for selected countries

	Total						Youth		
Benin	1.5 (1992)	0.7 (2002)					1.7 (1992)	0.8 (2002)	
Burkina Faso	2.6 (1994)	2.4 (1998)	2.8 (2003)	2.7 (2005)	2.3 (2006)	3.3 (2007)	3.8 (2006)		
Cape Verde	23 (1990)						41.2 (1990)		
Côte d'Ivoire	6.7 (1992)	4.1 (1995)	4.1 (1998)						
Ghana	4.7 (1992)	10.1 (1999)	10.4 (2000)	3.6 (2006)			17.1 (1992)	15.9 (1999)	16.6 (2000)
Guinea	3.1 (1994)								
Liberia	5.6 (2007)	3.7 (2010)					4.7 (2007)	5.1 (2010)	
Mali	3.3 (1997)	8.8 (2004)							
Niger	5.1 (1995)	1.5 (2001)					3.2 (2001)		
Senegal	10 (2006)						14.8 (2006)		
Sierra Leone	3.4 (2004)						5.2 (2004)		

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Note: Figures in brackets are the years in which the unemployment rate was calculated

In many of these countries, youth and, more specifically, graduate unemployment exceed total unemployment. As indicated in Table 8, youth unemployment is higher than total unemployment for almost all the countries and for every year. Many reports published by the International Labour Organization have argued that one of the SSA's major assets is its human capacity. High youth unemployment in these countries suggests that many young men and women are not using their talents and the knowledge they have acquired optimally. This has serious negative implications for both economic growth and poverty reduction.

High unemployment largely caused by population growth that exceeds employment growth has serious negative implications for both poverty and the environment. A major issue confronting the subregion is urban unemployment. Many people who migrate to towns and cities in search of decent employment find on arrival that such jobs are non-existent. With very little resources to survive on, they tend to live in slums, which are a serious cause of environmental pollution/degradation especially when the state is unable to provide the necessary social infrastructure. Additionally, females are not only disproportionately worse off than men in most countries in terms of employment, but can mostly be found in the lower ranks at workplaces and in the informal sector, where conditions do not meet labour standards. Increased rural unemployment and poverty imply that rural farmers cannot afford improved agricultural technologies and therefore cultivate marginal lands, resulting in further land degradation and reduced fallow periods.

Population

Although average population growth in the subregion has been declining, it is still not at a sustainable level. Rapid population growth within the subregion thus poses a challenge to sustainable development. Total average annual population growth in the subregion declined from 2.7 per cent over the period from 1990 to 1995 to 2.6 per cent over the period from 2000 to 2010.

Table 9: Average annual rate of population change by major area, region and country, 1990-2010 (percentage)

Major area, region, country or area	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010
WORLD	1.523	1.301	1.223	1.198
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.690	2.614	2.609	2.658
AFRICA	2.574	2.411	2.404	2.465
Eastern Africa	2.535	2.874	2.736	2.782
Northern Africa	2.161	1.662	1.610	1.681
Southern Africa	2.386	1.636	1.408	1.276
Western Africa	2.678	2.588	2.607	2.715
Benin	3.593	2.986	3.267	3.007
Burkina Faso	2.711	2.803	2.904	2.931
Cape Verde	2.533	2.042	1.574	0.371
Côte d'Ivoire	3.199	2.526	1.507	1.742
Gambia	3.011	2.848	3.123	3.139
Ghana	2.721	2.323	2.549	2.526
Guinea	5.275	2.195	1.814	2.545
Guinea-Bissau	2.270	2.218	2.202	2.198
Liberia	-0.220	6.592	2.456	3.820
Mali	2.421	2.646	3.034	3.161
Niger	3.348	3.627	3.640	3.739
Nigeria	2.514	2.502	2.550	2.693
Senegal	2.957	2.480	2.671	2.778
Sierra Leone	-0.580	1.055	4.250	2.328
Togo	2.465	2.540	2.600	2.589

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013).

As indicated in table 9, the average population growth rate of West Africa has been higher than that of Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and Africa as a whole – despite being lower than that of SSA for the period from 1990 to 2010. The only exception is the period from 2005 to 2010 during which average population growth rate in West Africa was higher than in SSA. This situation is quite worrying, especially in a situation where employment growth is not moving at the same pace.

Growth rates among countries in the subregion vary. As shown in table 9, countries with population growth rates above 3 per cent annually include Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Liberia, Mali and Niger (1990-1995); Liberia and Niger (1995-2000); Benin, The Gambia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Niger (2000-2005); and Benin, The Gambia, Liberia, Mali and Niger (2005-2010). Cape Verde and Côte d'Ivoire are the only countries with an average growth rate of less than two percent over the period from 2000 to 2010. The negative growth rate of Liberia and Sierra Leone can be attributed to the civil war in those countries in the 1990s.

With the exception of Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone Mali and Togo, all the other countries in the subregion have generally recorded an overall decrease in the average population growth rate during the period 2005 to 2010, compared to the period, 1990 to 1995. High population growth is putting a considerable burden on families and governments in their quest to invest in the social, economic and health needs of their people and, consequently, in their efforts to achieve the MDGs.

An increasing proportion of people in West African countries reside in urban areas. Without exception, all the 15 countries of the subregion have a higher proportion of their population living in urban areas, with Cape Verde recording the highest proportion of about two-thirds, and Niger the lowest of about 18 per cent over the period 2010 to 2012 (table 10). The growing population in urban areas in all the countries in the subregion poses an additional challenge to sustainable development due to the inability of governments and the private sector to provide the required infrastructure and employment in urban areas.

The problem of rapid urbanization taking place in West Africa can be attributed to rural urban migration rather than to population growth. Compared to population growth in table 9, the urban population growth rates recorded in table 10 clearly show the rate of urban population growth to be higher than population growth rates, indicating a net migration from rural to urban areas in all countries in the subregion. Countries that recorded average urban population growth rates of more than 4 per cent over the periods -1995 to 1999, 2000 to 2004, 2005 to 2009, and 2010 to 2012 include Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Niger and Liberia.

Table 10: Urban population (percentage of total population and growth) by country, 1995-2012

Country	Urban population (% of total population)				Urban population growth (%)			
	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-12	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-12
Benin	37.4	39.4	42.3	44.9	4.0	4.5	4.6	4.3
Burkina Faso	16.2	19.3	23.2	26.5	5.8	6.6	6.5	6.1
Cape Verde	50.6	55.1	59.3	62.6	4.0	3.3	1.9	1.8
Côte d'Ivoire	42.1	44.9	48.3	51.3	3.8	3.0	3.1	3.6
Gambia, The	45.8	50.5	54.5	57.2	5.1	4.9	4.5	4.2
Ghana	41.7	45.5	49.1	51.9	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.6
Guinea	30.1	31.8	33.7	35.5	3.7	2.9	3.7	3.9
Guinea-Bissau	33.7	37.3	41.0	43.9	4.4	4.2	4.0	3.9
Liberia	43.3	45.0	46.8	48.2	6.9	3.8	4.4	3.8
Mali	26.5	29.3	32.4	34.9	4.5	5.0	5.1	4.9
Niger	15.9	16.4	17.1	17.9	4.1	4.3	4.7	5.1
Nigeria	40.2	43.7	47.1	49.6	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.0
Senegal	39.9	40.7	41.6	42.6	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.5
Sierra Leone	35.0	36.4	37.9	39.3	1.2	4.8	3.5	2.9
Togo	31.6	33.8	36.1	38.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Fertility rates

One of the main causes of rapid population growth in the subregion is the relatively high fertility rate in relation to women's social situation and high infant mortality levels. Although there has been some reduction in total fertility rates from the early 2000s in almost all West African countries, the number of births per woman is high. As shown in table 11, with the exception of Cape Verde and Ghana, all the other West African countries had total fertility rates of more than five children per woman over the period 1995 to 1999. As a result of population control measures, all the countries in the subregion have recorded decreases in the fertility rates. However, only Togo was able to reduce the rate below 5 births per woman in the 2000s. By 2011, seven countries – compared to three countries – had managed to reduce their fertility rates to below 5 children per woman over the period from 2005 to 2009. Niger recorded persistent fertility rates of above 7 per woman, and this factor explains the country's relatively higher population growth over the period 1990 to 2010 (table 9). Overall, efforts at controlling population in the subregion appear to be minimal compared to other subregions in Africa, suggesting that more needs to be done in this area in order to achieve the MDGs.

Table 11: Trends in total fertility rate (births per woman), 1995-2011

Country	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2011
Benin	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.2
Burkina Faso	6.4	6.2	6.0	5.9	5.8
Cape Verde	4.2	3.4	2.7	2.4	2.3
Cote d'Ivoire	5.4	5.1	4.7	4.4	4.3
Gambia, The	5.8	5.5	5.1	4.9	4.8
Ghana	4.9	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.1
Guinea	6.2	5.8	5.5	5.2	5.2
Guinea-Bissau	6.1	5.7	5.3	5.1	5.0
Liberia	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.2	5.2
Mali	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.2
Niger	7.6	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.0
Nigeria	6.0	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.5
Senegal	5.8	5.4	5.0	4.8	4.7
Sierra Leone	5.8	5.6	5.2	5.0	4.9
Togo	5.4	4.9	4.4	4.1	4.0

Source: Compiled with data from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Life expectancy and infant mortality rate (IMR)

West African countries experienced improvements in life expectancy, as it generally increased over the period from 1995 to 2011 for all the countries without exception. Average life expectancy in Cape Verde and Ghana exceeded 60 years and was lowest in Sierra Leone, which recorded a life expectancy of about 45 years (Table 12). Over the same period, life expectancy in Guinea-Bissau never exceeded 50 years. The observed life expectancy of the subregion could be attributable to poor social and economic conditions and the grave impact of malaria, HIV/AIDS and other related diseases. In all situations, females enjoyed higher life expectancy regardless of their level of survival.

Table 12: Trends in life expectancy and IMR by countries

Country	Life expectancy (at birth, years)					IMR (000 live births)				
	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011
Benin	51.6	53.1	54.5	55.6	56.0	92.6	82.9	74.3	69.5	67.9
Burkina Faso	49.4	51.0	53.5	54.9	55.4	98.6	92.1	85.9	82.4	81.6
Cape Verde	68.1	70.5	72.9	73.8	73.9	36.0	28.7	22.2	19.1	18.2
Côte d'Ivoire	50.6	50.5	52.8	54.7	55.4	97.9	92.4	85.9	82.1	81.2
Gambia, The	54.3	55.8	57.2	58.2	58.5	70.1	65.1	60.8	58.3	57.6
Ghana	58.0	59.3	62.3	63.8	64.2	67.5	61.5	55.8	53.0	51.8
Guinea	46.5	49.3	52.2	53.6	54.1	113.8	99.9	87.6	81.2	78.9
Guinea-Bissau	44.1	45.4	46.7	47.7	48.1	115.6	108.7	102.5	98.6	98.0
Liberia	43.4	48.4	53.8	56.1	56.7	132.8	100.0	74.0	61.2	58.2
Mali	46.3	47.9	49.7	51.0	51.4	118.9	110.8	103.6	99.6	98.2
Niger	46.0	49.7	52.8	54.3	54.7	108.1	90.2	75.7	68.5	66.4
Nigeria	45.4	47.4	50.0	51.4	51.9	120.7	105.5	89.4	80.8	78.0
Senegal	54.9	56.4	58.0	59.0	59.3	70.4	62.9	52.8	48.0	46.7
Sierra Leone	37.9	41.5	45.7	47.4	47.8	149.7	140.6	128.3	120.9	119.2
Togo	54.4	55.0	55.7	56.6	57.0	80.5	77.6	74.9	73.4	72.9

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank

The trend in infant mortality within the subregion reflects what is observed in life expectancy in table 12. Countries with the highest life expectancy (Cape Verde and Ghana) had the lowest infant mortality rates, while Sierra Leone (the lowest life expectancy) had the highest infant mortality rate over the period 1995 to 2011. Infant mortality rates appear to be generally improving, especially for countries with better social and economic conditions, free of conflict and drought conditions, and relatively free from the scourges of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis (TB), though the rates are high for some countries. Over the period 1995 to 1999, there were eight countries with relatively low infant mortality rates of less than 100 per 1000 live births. This increased to 10 countries over the period 2000 to 2004 and, furthermore, to 12 countries over the period 2005 to 2009. In 2010 and 2011, however, only Sierra Leone had high infant mortality rates of over 100 per 1000 live births largely as a result of poor social and economic conditions. As at 2009, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone continued to exhibit the worst mortality conditions in the subregion (table 12). With regards to under-five mortality rates, the Overseas Development Institute (2010) indicated that, in terms of both relative and absolute progress³ in achieving the MDGs, all countries in West Africa had improved on their under-five mortality rates from 1990 to 2007, with the best performers being Niger, Guinea, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria.

Education

Literacy rates recorded for countries in West Africa show relatively higher levels and an improving situation (compared to other subregions in Africa). As at 1990, West Africa had the highest proportion of African countries with illiteracy rates of 60 per cent and above. Over the period 1995 to 2011, the situation improved, reflecting the concerted effort on the part of West African countries to eliminate illiteracy. The overall good performers were Cape Verde and Togo (for primary school enrolment) and Cape Verde and Ghana (for secondary school enrolment). Net primary enrolment ratio improved for all countries except Liberia over the period, implying that generally children of primary school-going age are getting more access to primary education. Almost all countries with the exception of Burkina Faso and Niger consistently maintained net primary enrolment ratios above 40 per cent, with Cape Verde maintaining net primary enrolment ratio above 90 per cent over the entire period from 1995 to 2011 (table 13). According to the Overseas Development Institute (2010), from an initial rate of 45 per cent in 1991, West African countries recorded an average annual absolute progress rate of 1.6 per cent and an average annual relative progress rate of 2 per cent in enrolment, with the top performing country being Benin in terms of both absolute and relative progress. Data from the report also indicated an improvement in the ratio of boys to girls in primary enrolment in the period from 1991 to 2006.

³ In terms of relative progress, top performers are countries with the fastest rates of progress relative to their starting positions – this highlights the degree to which they have closed the gap with the MDG target. In terms of absolute progress, top performers are countries that have seen the biggest positive change on indicators regardless of their initial conditions.

Table 13: Primary and secondary school enrolment, by country, 1995-2011

Country	School enrolment, primary (percentage net)					School enrolment, secondary (percentage gross)				
	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010	2011
Benin	62.3	85.4	88.3			22.2	26.8	37.1		51.4
Burkina Faso	47.9	35.9	51.9	58.1	63.2	9.1	10.7	15.9	20.7	22.6
Cape Verde	98.8	98.3	94.3	93.2	93.5			83.1	87.5	89.7
Côte d'Ivoire	54.6	58.9	61.5			23.0	25.2			
Gambia, The	62.1	68.2	70.0	65.5	67.5	20.9		54.6	54.1	
Ghana	60.7	61.6	71.9		84.0	37.8	41.3	53.1		58.1
Guinea	41.8	56.7	71.9	77.0	81.4	13.7	22.2	35.5		41.7
Guinea-Bissau	50.4	51.0		73.9			18.5	34.9		
Liberia	46.0		40.1		40.8	31.1	34.8			44.8
Mali	41.9	49.6	57.2	62.0	62.9	12.0	20.0	29.5	37.7	39.5
Niger	25.4	34.2	46.6	57.2	62.5	6.8	7.4	10.9	13.5	14.4
Nigeria	61.3	43.7	63.3	57.6		23.3	28.6	34.8	44.0	
Senegal	55.7	64.3	74.3	75.5	75.7	15.3	18.2	26.7	37.4	42.1
Sierra Leone							27.6			
Togo	82.1	88.2	90.8			26.3	39.6	47.0		56.5
Average	56.5	61.2	67.9	68.9	70.2	20.1	24.7	38.6	42.1	46.1

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Gross secondary school enrolment ratios also show a marked increase in enrolment ratios for the subregion. The average for the subregion more than doubled from 20.1 per cent over the period 1995 to 1999 to 46.1 per cent in 2011 (table 13). Secondary enrolment varies widely across the countries under review. For instance, while countries such as Cape Verde, Ghana, Togo and Benin recorded gross secondary school enrolment of over 50 per cent in 2011, Niger registered less than 15 per cent. The huge difference observed between primary and secondary enrolment implies that a large number of children drop out of school before they reach secondary level.

Water and sanitation

With regards to sanitation, table 14 indicates that Cape Verde, The Gambia and Senegal are the only countries with more than 40 per cent of their population having access to improved sanitation facilities as at 2010. Access to improved sanitation did not witness any significant improvement as at 2010 though the percentage of the population with access to sanitation has improved in many countries under review. Nigeria is the only country within the subregion that recorded deterioration in sanitation while Togo registered stagnation over the period. Table 14 also shows that access to an improved water source increased only marginally over the decade and half to 2010. The Gambia, Cape Verde and Ghana provided more than 80 per cent of their population with water in 2010, accounting for the most progress made in the subregion. Access to an improved water situation in Niger is quite precarious, with only 49 per cent of the population having access to an improved water source – the lowest level in the subregion. The Overseas Development Institute (2010) asserted that, in terms of progress in achieving the MDGs, West Africa has seen annual average absolute and relative progress rates of 0.8 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively, starting from an initial position of 56 per cent in 1995 and rising to 66 per cent in 2008. Top performing countries – in terms of both absolute and relative progress – are The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Ghana.

Table 14: Improved sanitation and water sources by country, 1995-2010

Country	Access to improved sanitation facilities (percentage popn)				Access to improved water source (per centpopn)					
	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2010	2011
Ghana	9.2	11.0	12.6	14.0	65.6	74.0	81.2	86.0		51.4
Benin	7.8	10.0	12.0	13.0	63.8	67.6	72.0	75.0	20.7	22.6
Burkina Faso	9.8	12.4	15.4	17.0	54.2	64.0	73.2	79.0	87.5	89.7
Cape Verde	39.2	47.8	56.4	61.0	81.2	83.8	86.2	88.0		
Côte d'Ivoire	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	77.0	78.0	79.0	80.0	54.1	
Guinea	13.0	15.2	17.2	18.0	60.0	65.6	71.2	74.0		58.1
Guinea-Bissau	13.0	15.0	18.2	20.0	46.2	53.2	60.2	64.0		41.7
Gambia, The	61.4	64.0	67.2	68.0	80.8	84.8	88.2	89.0		
Liberia	10.8	12.6	15.8	18.0	58.4	63.0	69.6	73.0		44.8
Niger	6.0	7.4	9.0	9.0	40.0	43.6	47.6	49.0	37.7	39.5
Nigeria	35.0	33.6	31.8	31.0	51.6	54.6	57.2	58.0	13.5	14.4
Senegal	42.6	46.4	49.8	52.0	64.2	67.0	69.6	72.0	44.0	
Sierra Leone	11.0	11.4	12.0	13.0	43.8	48.0	52.2	55.0	37.4	42.1
Togo	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	53.2	56.2	59.2	61.0		
Mali	17.4	18.8	20.6	22.0	40.4	49.2	58.8	64.0		56.5

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

2.3. Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability, one of the key components of sustainable development, looks at maintaining the integrity of different environmental media and systems to ensure that their functions and beneficial uses are conserved for present and future generations. This section examines the performance of West African countries in terms of environmental sustainability, using environmental performance indicators such as carbon dioxide emissions and forest cover.

Table 15: Trends in CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita) by country, 1995-2009

Country	1995	2000	2005	2009	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009
Benin	1327.45	1617.15	2398.22	4855.11	1317.19	2048.39	4024.17
Burkina Faso	627.06	1041.43	1125.77	1668.49	786.94	1045.10	1500.54
Cape Verde	113.68	187.02	293.36	315.36	144.48	231.75	307.29
Côte d'Ivoire	7132.32	6791.28	7825.38	6596.93	7372.87	6985.64	6992.24
Gambia, The	216.35	275.03	322.70	436.37	228.09	302.16	380.63
Ghana	5427.16	6288.91	6956.30	7444.01	6106.29	7099.31	8359.29
Guinea	1250.45	1279.78	1180.77	1228.45	1263.65	1317.19	1202.78
Guinea-Bissau	282.36	198.02	264.02	293.36	267.69	222.22	280.16
Liberia	333.70	436.37	740.73	524.38	365.97	519.98	655.66
Mali	469.38	542.72	568.39	612.39	507.51	549.32	584.52
Niger	920.42	795.74	828.74	1158.77	1016.49	842.68	910.88
Nigeria	34917.17	79181.53	104043.79	70234.05	40100.11	90168.60	90189.13
Senegal	3494.65	3938.36	5859.87	4576.42	3525.45	4621.89	5174.14
Sierra Leone	286.03	425.37	755.40	1415.46	306.56	6218.50	2962.94
Togo	953.42	1356.79	1338.46	1485.14	1140.44	1322.32	1363.39

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

In recent years, climatic variability and change has become increasingly pervasive in Africa, mainly as a result of increased human activity and natural phenomena. Many SSA countries are experiencing climatic variability and extreme events such as floods or droughts (United Nations Environment Programme, 2002), and frequent high maximum temperature. Increased human activities regarding the persistent use of energy from fossil fuels in industrial processes, transportation and in homes; agricultural production and deforestation have been noted as the main causes of the climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2005). Even though the subregion is among the least industrialized, and contributes a negligible amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it is among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This vulnerability is attributed to widespread poverty and limited adaptive capabilities in the subregion.

The situation within West Africa is not so different from SSA. Apart from Sierra Leone, almost every country in West Africa has shown an average upward trend in per capita CO₂ emission from 2000-2004 to 2005-2009 (table 15). Nigeria accounts for the highest emissions of CO₂ per capita, followed by Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. As regards percentage changes in per capita CO₂ emissions, Sierra Leone's emissions increased at a relatively faster rate of more than 300 percent between 1995 and 2009, compared to other countries in the subregion. This situation is attributable to the low levels of industrialization in the subregion, as there is a positive correlation between per capita CO₂ emissions and industrialization.

Most African economies rely heavily on the production of primary commodities especially oil, agricultural crops and minerals. Concentration on primary commodities for export, coupled with weak enforcement of environmental regulations, poor value addition, poverty, and weak bargaining power give rise to natural resource degradation and environmental pollution and, to some extent, confirm the pollution haven hypothesis:

"Income differences between countries generate differences in the tightness of environmental regulations with higher income countries having stricter regulations than lower income countries and consequently higher production costs, and low income countries becoming more pollution-intensive as a result of international trade

(Ghana Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, 2012)."

Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide, suspended particles of less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) and lead (Pb) are the main pollutants causing air pollution. Women and young children are particularly exposed to high levels of indoor air pollution for several hours each day, increasing the risk of acute respiratory infections, which is one of the leading causes of infant and child mortality on the African continent (APINA/SEI, 2004). In addition, air pollution also results in adverse environmental impact such as acid rain deposits, which destroy vegetation, soils, water and infrastructure. In order to curtail this problem, some countries including Ghana and Nigeria are gradually adapting to the situation by using unleaded fuel. Measures such as import taxes are in place to limit the importation of used vehicles in many countries (including Ghana and Nigeria) as well as the production and use of environmentally efficient cook stoves.

Since the 1960s, many countries in the subregion have been experiencing serious soil degradation. This has manifested severally, including damage to the soil structure, depletion of nutrients and increase in the susceptibility to erosion. This has been attributed to the increasing application of chemicals and the use of inappropriate equipment and technologies, commercial mono-specific plantations and inefficient irrigation systems. In Ghana, for example, the annual cost of soil degradation from agriculture was estimated to be about 1.57 per cent of GDP in 2005 (World Bank et. al, 2006). Intensifying desertification has been the consequence of prolonged land degradation in West Africa's drylands. However, desertification is also strongly correlated with poverty, migration and food insecurity. The most important cause of land degradation is poverty and increasing population, inequitable land access, land tenure insecurity and the lack of alternative income-generating opportunities.

Land tenure insecurity has made it difficult for many people to undertake sustainable investment in land while communal ownership has facilitated land degradation. For many countries in the subregion, land degradation is a major issue that has intensified desertification and drought. Drought in these countries has led to serious water stress, which has had some impact on agriculture, the main economic and livelihood sustenance activity in the subregion. In addition, coastal erosion linked to the rise in sea levels has led to the submergence and disappearance of significant areas of island States in the subregion.

Another challenge facing the subregion is the dumping of toxic chemical waste in some countries. The dumping of chemical waste takes several forms, including donations of expired pesticides, the illegal disposal of containers of chemical waste (raw sewage, sludge, incinerated ashes, contaminated oils, chemical substances, acids, poisonous solvents ejected by chemical, pharmaceutical and fertilizer-producing plants), as well as the dumping of e-waste or used and broken-down electronics in member countries. A typical example is the dumping scandal in 2006 when a Dutch company left chemical waste in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, which killed about 17 people. Additionally, almost every country in the subregion is receiving donations of used electronics, many of which are already beyond repair and are either disposed of by burning or landfilling in these countries.

These wastes usually come from the developed world, which seeks to reduce the costs of waste disposal by using developing countries as a dumping ground owing to the latter's 'poor economic situation. The dumping of toxic waste materials poses a serious health and environmental threat to people such as the inhalation of fumes from burning heavy metals and plastics, many of whom are not aware of the dangers and are not equipped to handle the consequences. Even though there are global and regional conventions that regulate the movement and trade in toxic wastes and chemicals such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, as well as the African Union's Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, these have not made much difference due to poor enforcement.

About 70 percent of the earth's terrestrial biodiversity is forest, which constitutes one of the world's richest and most diverse ecosystems. Relatively large parts of West Africa, especially those lying along the equatorial zone used to be under forest cover. Unsustainable exploitation of forest resources has persistently threatened the survival of the terrestrial habitat in the subregion. Table 16 provides information on forest areas as a percentage of land area for West African countries. The table indicates that as at 2011, Guinea-Bissau has the highest forest to land area in West Africa, and Niger the least. Generally, forest area as a percentage of total land area has been decreasing consistently for most countries except in The Gambia where increases have been recorded, with Côte d'Ivoire and Cape Verde maintaining their forest area from 2010 to 2011 at 32.7 and 21.0 percent, respectively.

Table 16: Trends in forest area as a percentage of total land area by country

Country	2000	2005	2010	2011
Benin	44.9	42.7	40.4	40.0
Burkina Faso	22.8	21.7	20.6	20.4
Cape Verde	20.4	20.7	21.0	21.0
Côte d'Ivoire	32.5	32.7	32.7	32.7
Gambia, The	45.6	46.5	47.4	47.6
Ghana	26.8	24.2	21.7	21.2
Guinea	28.1	27.4	26.6	26.5
Guinea-Bissau	75.4	73.7	71.9	71.6
Liberia	48.1	46.5	44.9	44.6
Niger	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
Nigeria	14.4	12.2	9.9	9.5
Senegal	46.2	45.0	44.0	43.8
Sierra Leone	40.8	39.4	38.1	37.8
Togo	8.9	7.1	5.3	4.9

Source: World Development Indicators of the World Bank, 2013

Continuous reduction in forest to land area makes it more challenging to achieve the MDG target of increasing the proportion of land area covered by forests. Poverty has pushed countries to use their forests for agriculture and grazing and to exploit forest products at an unsustainable level.

Although the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) enjoins countries to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010, most countries in the subregion are yet to meet the target. The continuous degradation of Africa's biodiversity has resulted in loss of species and subspecies, and the spread of invasive alien species. Species loss is mainly the result of the loss of natural habitats, illegal hunting for food, medicinal or commercial use and national and international trade (UNEP, 2002a). The coast of West Africa supports a diversity of habitats and resources: rocky shores, sandy beaches, deltas, estuaries and coastal wetlands, coral reefs and lagoons. These aquatic environments contribute significantly to the livelihoods of coastal communities and have other intrinsic values. Most coastal areas in West Africa are experiencing rapid population growth, which is exacerbating marine pollution and overfishing.

2.4. Governance

The term 'good governance' is a very broad concept that needs to be understood and satisfied if the subregion is to develop sustainably. Good governance is ensured when there are efficient and effective institutions, policies, customs, relational networks, as well as laws and structures governing and regulating a country. It also entails ensuring the rule of law, effective participation in development, transparency and accountability in decision-making and resource allocation, respect for citizens and their rights, state legitimacy, access to knowledge, information and education and political empowerment of the people. Good economic, political, democratic and corporate governance is key to ensuring sustainable development. This is why New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) argues that "development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance" (ECA, 2011a).

Ensuring good governance, adherence to the rule of law, peace and security has been a key challenge in the subregion, albeit to some extent less so over the years. The 2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) reveals that the overall governance index for West Africa (ECOWAS) in 2011 was 51.9 (51.5), representing an improvement of 2.9 (3.0) points over its performance in 2006. This figure is lower than

the figures for the Southern Africa bloc (59) and for North Africa (53.7) but higher than the overall average for Africa (51.2) and SSA (50.9). At country level, the highest ranked countries in the subregion in 2011 are Cape Verde (in second place), followed by Ghana (in seventh place). These two countries are the only countries in the subregion in the IIAG top 10.

As shown in table 17, countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Niger have seen their ranking improve the most since 2006, while the worst performers are Benin, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia and Senegal. Similar trends can be observed in the Safety and Rule of Law Index (table 17). The return of Liberia and Sierra Leone to democratic rule after decades of civil war explains the significant improvement in their respective indices.

Table 17: 2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)

Country	Overall Governance Index			Safety and Rule of Law Index		
	2011	2006	Change	2006	2011	Change
Liberia	46.6	34.6	12.0	33.0	50.2	17.1
Sierra Leone	48.1	39.2	8.9	40.5	57.1	16.6
Niger	49.5	42.8	6.7	53.4	56.4	3.0
Togo	44.4	38.0	6.4	51.3	55.8	4.5
Cape Verde	78.4	74.3	4.1	91.3	82.4	-8.9
Guinea	42.5	38.9	3.6	48.3	43.2	-5.1
Côte d'Ivoire	38.8	35.5	3.4	31.3	36.2	4.9
Ghana	66.3	64.2	2.0	73.0	72.0	-0.9
Burkina Faso	55.1	53.1	2.0	67.5	58.7	-8.9
Mali	55.0	53.1	1.9	62.2	62.6	0.4
Nigeria	42.0	41.8	0.2	43.1	40.6	-2.5
Benin	57.8	58.9	-1.1	71.2	64.8	-6.4
Guinea-Bissau	39.8	41.0	-1.2	44.4	42.3	-2.1
Gambia, The	51.6	53.1	-1.5	58.9	51.0	-7.9
Senegal	56.2	59.2	-3.0	62.1	56.1	-6.0

Source: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org>

In terms of corruption, the performance of countries in the subregion has been unimpressive, as they still rank among countries with high corruption prevalence rates. The 2012 Corruption Perception Index reveals that the top three least corrupt countries in the subregion are Cape Verde, Ghana and Liberia with scores⁴ (rank) of 6.0 (39th), 4.5 (64th) and 4.1 (75th) respectively. Conversely, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea are the most corrupt in the subregion with scores (rank) of 2.7(139th), 2.5(150th), 2.4(154th). Generally, the trend has been almost the same for the past decade.

With regards to peace and security, the political situation in the subregion can be described as a little volatile over the past decade with recurrent ethnic and religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria, civil unrest in Côte d'Ivoire, a coup d'état in Mali and Guinea Bissau, as well as other internal conflicts in member countries, which pose some serious challenges. The causes of conflicts in the subregion include electoral disputes, religious and ethnic extremism, poor governance, suboptimal management of natural resource rents and in recent years, as well as the proliferation of arms and ammunition.

According to the 2011 Ibrahim Index on National Security (table 18), Cape Verde, Benin and Burkina Faso are the highest ranked countries in the subregion for peace and security, while Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger are the lowest ranked. Liberia and Sierra Leone have made significant gains since 2006. The overall score for West Africa (ECOWAS) in 2011 was 81.6 (81.0), or an improvement on the overall average for Africa (SSA) of 78.2 (78.8). Additionally, the subregion under performed Southern Africa (90.2) but out performed North Africa (73.1), East Africa (68.3) and Central Africa (69.7).

4 0-10 scale

Table 18: IIAG Index on National Security

Rank /52	Countries	Score / 100	Change in score from 2006
4	Cape Verde	100.0	0.0
10	Benin	95.0	0.0
14	Burkina Faso	90.0	0.0
17	Ghana	89.6	-5.2
18	Sierra Leone	88.7	28.5
19	Togo	88.4	6.1
24	Gambia, The	84.2	-0.3
31	Guinea-Bissau	79.3	0.0
32	Liberia	79.1	31.6
33	Guinea	78.5	-0.3
36	Nigeria	72.7	-11.7
38	Senegal	71.8	-10.1
39	Mali	70.6	-4.4
42	Côte d'Ivoire	64.3	16.9
43	Niger	63.5	7.3
	West Africa	81.6	3.3
	ECOWAS	81.0	3.9

Source: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/>

3. Prioritization of sustainable development issues

This section discusses priority sustainable development issues in the subregion. In doing so, priority sustainable issues identified by countries were treated distinct from those identified by subregional bodies. Additionally, the frequency of occurrence of a specific sustainable development issue was factored into the analysis.

3.1. National level priority sustainable development issues

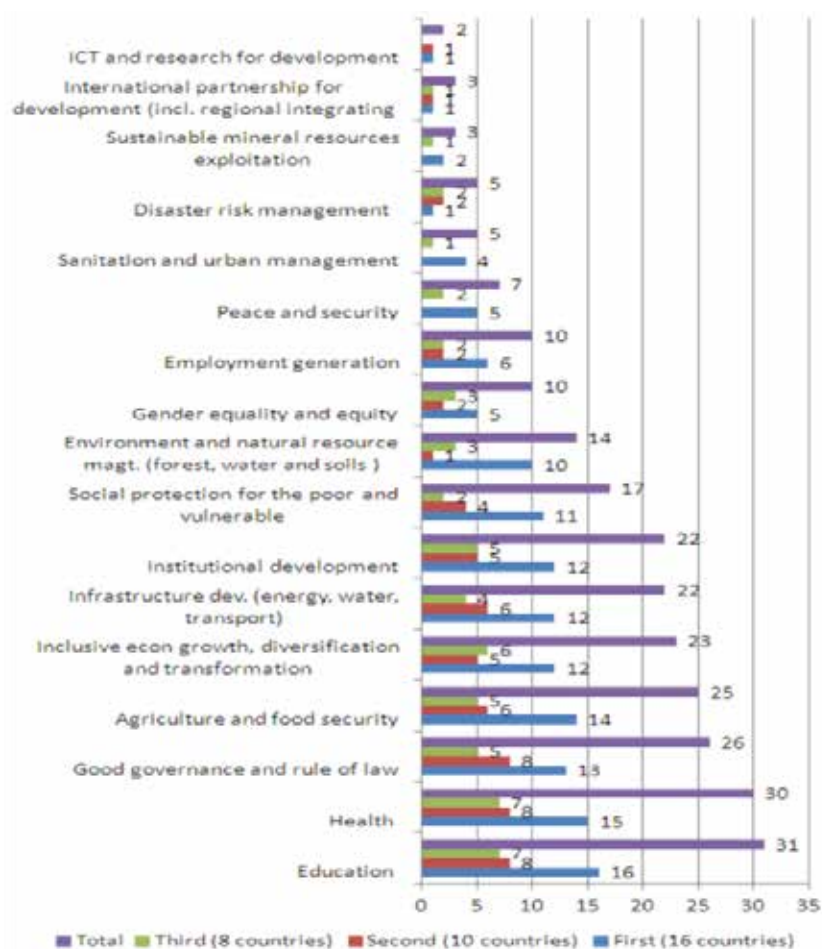
The Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 urged countries to develop National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) to guide them in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. In 2002, the JPOI of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recommended that countries should formulate NSSDs as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) that integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

To effectively identify the sustainable development issues of the subregion, it is important to review the priority issues that the countries' policies, strategies and programmes have addressed over the past years. In other words, priority sustainable development issues in these countries can be deduced from the development framework countries have pursued over the previous years. Since 1999, most West African countries have been formulating and implementing PRSs. About two rounds of PRSs have already been formulated and implemented, and many countries are currently implementing a third round of PRSs. Many PRSs are medium-term strategies, which range between three and five years and were approved by the highest authorities in the countries. Of the 15 ECOWAS countries, only five – Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Nigeria and Senegal – have long-term development strategies, from which short to medium-term strategies were developed.

Poverty is multifaceted and therefore requires multi-dimensional policies in an attempt to reduce it. A cursory look at the first, second and third-generation PRSs formulated by every ECOWAS country suggests that they all reflect the title of the framework by putting in place comprehensive policies to address the various dimensions of poverty. Many of these policies, especially those formulated after the first-generation PRSs, covered the three dimensions of sustainable development and, to some extent, mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as environment, gender and technology.

The report on Progress Towards Sustainable Development in West Africa prepared by the ECOWAS Commission with the support of ECA for the Rio + 20 conference highlights the priorities in the various countries of the subregion as expressed in their first and second-generation PRSs. Key sustainable development issues faced by the countries were extracted from the core issues of the first, second and third-generation PRSs based on the frequency of their occurrence in the PRS. In all, 16 first-generation, 10 second-generation and eight third-generation PRSs in the subregion were analysed. Figure 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of sustainable development issues addressed by first, second and third-generation PRSs of the countries in the subregion.

Figure 1: Frequency of sustainable development issues addressed by first, second and third-generation PRSs



Source: Extracted from countries' PRSs and ECOWAS, 2012

From figure 1, it is evident that the 13 key sustainable development issues that were mentioned in the PRSs in order of decreasing importance are:

- ✦ Education
- ✦ Health
- ✦ Good governance and rule of law
- ✦ Agriculture and food security
- ✦ Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation
- ✦ Sustainable infrastructure development (energy, water, transport)
- ✦ Institutional development
- ✦ Social protection for the poor and vulnerable
- ✦ Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)
- ✦ Gender equality and equity

- + Employment generation
- + Peace and security
- + Sanitation and urban management

A notable observation is that the PRSs were formulated as MDGs-based PRSs. Since the MDGs were dominated by social issues, the priorities of the PRSs may have been skewed towards social issues. It therefore becomes imperative to compare priorities arising from the PRSs with those emerging from the subregional SDG survey.

3.2. Subregional level priority sustainable development issues

Priority sustainable development issues were also discussed in the subregion. Specifically, the report on Progress towards Sustainable Development in West Africa documents some key priority sustainable development issues and emerging challenges.

These include:

- + Energy
- + Forestry
- + Fisheries
- + Transport
- + Food security
- + Agricultural land use and management
- + Water scarcity
- + Urban management
- + Climate change and desertification
- + Globalization
- + Unemployment
- + Lack of transparency in the management of resources
- + Relevance of education to developmental needs

The country-level survey also provides some information on key sustainable development issues in the subregion. Countries were asked to provide and rank in order of importance (1- less important, 10 –very important) a limited number (preferably between six and ten) of important priority sustainable development issues/areas to be addressed through the SDGs in the subregion. In all, eight of the 16 countries contacted in the subregion provided responses to this question.

Two approaches were used to analyse the responses. The first approach (absolute) involves attaching equal weight to every sustainable development issue raised by a country and running the frequencies. The

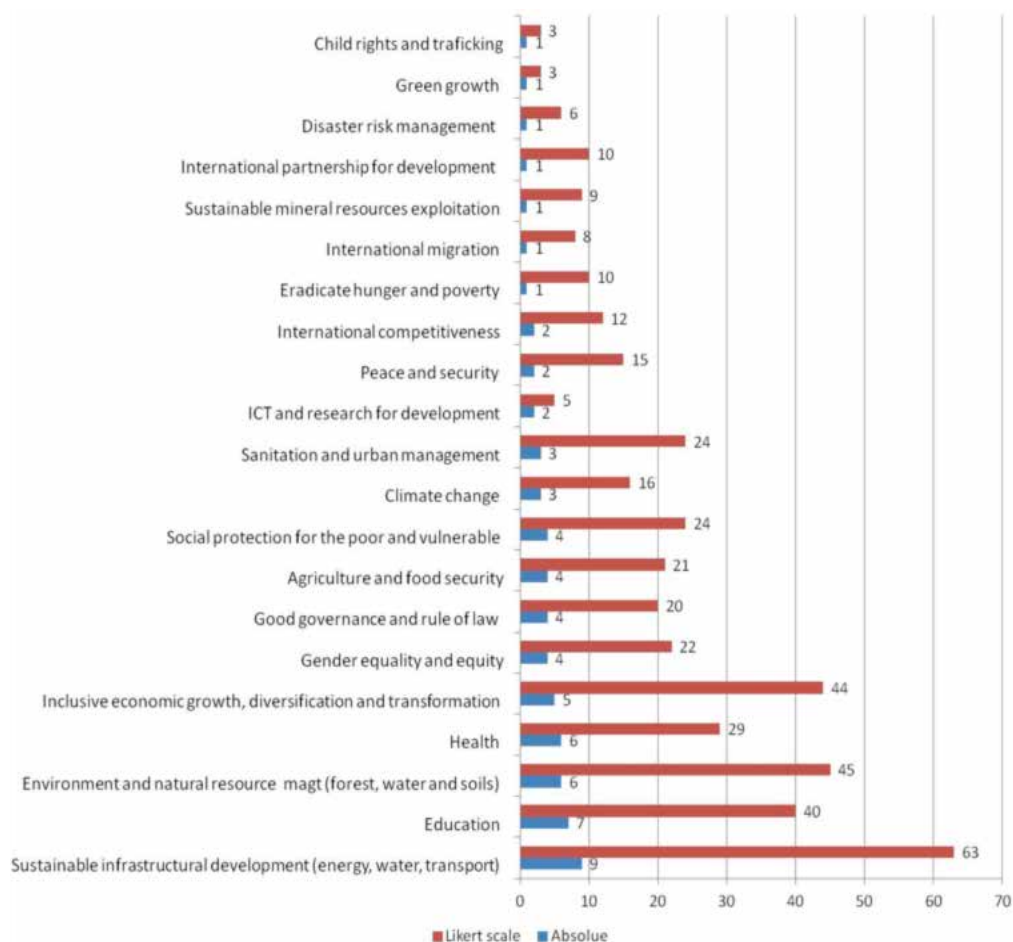
second involved using a Likert scale of 10 for very important sustainable development issues and 1 for less important sustainable development issues. Once this step was carried out, the frequency of specific issues in a specific rank was multiplied by the scale value and aggregated over all the issues. For example, assuming three countries responded that inclusive economic growth is a key sustainable development issue and ranked it as very important (10) and two countries responded that education is a key sustainable development issue but ranked it as moderately important (7), then the value for the inclusive economic growth is 30 (3x10) and that of education is 14 (2x7). In the case of inclusive economic growth, the value is 30 because 3 is the frequency (number of countries which ranked it as very important) and 10 is the value attached to very important sustainable development issues. Additionally, in the case of education, the value is 14 because 2 is the frequency (number of countries which ranked it as moderately important, for example) and 7 is the value attached to moderately important sustainable development issues. This ranking was done for all the sustainable development issues raised by the countries and aggregated over all the sustainable development issues. The idea of using the two methodologies was to ascertain the robustness of results although there was a positive correlation in terms of the outcomes of the two methodologies.

Figure 2 provides the frequency distribution of the priority sustainable development issues based on the two methodologies. From the figure, it is evident that the 13 most important sustainable development issues in order of decreasing importance are:

- ✦ Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)
- ✦ Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)
- ✦ Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation
- ✦ Education
- ✦ Health
- ✦ Sanitation and urban management
- ✦ Social protection for the poor and vulnerable
- ✦ Gender equality and equity
- ✦ Agriculture and food security
- ✦ Good governance and rule of law
- ✦ Climate change
- ✦ Peace and security
- ✦ International competitiveness

There are a lot of similarities between sustainable development issues raised by subregional bodies, those proposed by the countries for the subregion via the SDG survey and those elaborated by Member States in their PRSs.

Figure 2: Frequency distribution of priority sustainable development issues



Source: West Africa SDGs Questionnaire Survey, 2013

Table 19 summarizes the key sustainable development issues raised by both subregional bodies and member countries. These were grouped correspondingly to facilitate a comparison of the issues.

Table 19: Summary of subregional and national sustainable development issues

Subregional issues	National issues
<p>Progress in SD implementation in WA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy, transport • Forestry, fisheries climate change and desertification • Food security, agricultural land use and management • Relevance of education to developmental needs • Lack of transparency in management of resources; • Water scarcity, urban management • Unemployment • Globalization 	<p>PRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure dev. (energy, water, transport); • Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils) • Agriculture and food security • Education; • Good governance and rule of law • Inclusive econ growth, diversification and transformation; • Social protection for the poor and vulnerable; • Health • Gender equality • Employment generation • Institutional development;
<p>SDG survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructural development • Environment and natural resource management • Agriculture and food security • Education; • Good governance and the rule of law, • Sanitation and urban management; • Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation; • Social protection for the poor and vulnerable; • Health; • Gender equality and equity; 	

Source: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org>

Issues such as infrastructural development, environment and natural resource management, agriculture and food security, education and good governance, and the rule of law to some extent cut across all the three methods, which provided some elaboration of priority sustainable development issues in the subregion. The latter indicates the considerable importance of these issues to the subregion. Additionally, issues like inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation, social protection for the poor and vulnerable, health, gender equality and equity were visible in the SDG survey and PRSs but not in the report on sustainable development progress in West Africa. Other issues such as sanitation, urban management and unemployment were mentioned by the SDG survey and the aforementioned document while gender equality and equity were mentioned by the SDG survey and the PRSs. Institutional development and globalization were considered by the PRSs and the aforementioned document, respectively.

Evidently, all these issues are very important priority sustainable development issues for the subregion. A cursory look at section 3, which provides an overview of the progress in implementing the sustainable development agenda in the subregion, suggests that countries in the subregion are generally making some progress in addressing these economic, social and environmental issues, although the progress made is marginal and, to some extent, unstable. For many of these countries, sustaining the gains made may require considerable resources or may come at a significant cost to the citizenry unless innovative ways are found to cushion the poor and vulnerable.

Another observation gleaned from the table is that key issues that were addressed by the MDGs still pose a challenge to many Member States and the subregion as a whole. Specifically, issues such as education, health, agriculture and food security, among other matters that were addressed by the MDGs remain key challenges facing the subregion. This situation suggests that the enhancement of the MDGs to include other issues in the formulation of SDGs is quite important. Indeed the latter was confirmed in the subregional SDGs survey. Countries were given options⁵ and asked to indicate how the SDGs should strive to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Six out of the eight countries that responded to this question preferred the integration of the MDGs – suitably modified/updated for post-2015 – into a larger SDG framework.

3.3. *Prioritization of sustainable development issues for the subregion*

An objective method was used to prioritize sustainable development issues for the subregion. Specifically, the objective measure uses the frequencies of the key sustainable development issues suggested by the countries in the subregional SDG survey and the key issues addressed by the countries in the PRSs. Even though several other subregional and regional bodies have elaborated key sustainable development issues, the similarities between sustainable development issues raised by regional and subregional bodies and those proposed by the countries for the subregion through the SDG survey ensure that such a method can be used without missing out on key issues.

Table 20 summarizes the 13 most important issues mentioned in both the subregional SDG survey and the PRS documents in order of importance as elaborated in figures 1 and 2.

5 a. Reflect the social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG, possibly through the associated targets;
b. Integrate the MDGs – suitably modified/updated for post-2015 – into a larger sustainable development framework;
Expand MDG 7 into a number of goals with a natural/environmental resource dimension. Other (please describe).

Table 20: Prioritized sustainable development

SDG survey	Frequency (Likert scale)	Rank	PRS documents	Frequency	Rank	Average rank
Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)	63	1	Education	31	1	3.5
Education	40	2	Health	30	2	2.5
Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)	45	3	Good governance and the rule of law	26	3	6
Health	29	4	Agriculture and food security	25	4	3
Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation	44	5	Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation	23	5	5
Gender equality and equity	22	6	Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)	22	6	8
Good governance and the rule of law	20	7	Institutional development	22	7	5
Agriculture and food security	21	8	Social protection for the poor and vulnerable	17	8	6
Social protection for the poor and vulnerable	24	9	Environment and natural resource management. (forest, water and soils)	14	9	8.5
Climate change	16	10	Gender equality and equity	10	10	
Sanitation and urban management	24	11	Employment generation	10	11	12
Peace and security	15	12	Peace and security	7	12	12
International competitiveness	12	13	Sanitation and urban management	5	13	

To be able to prioritize the sustainable development issues, the latter were ranked in order of decreasing importance based on the frequencies as presented in the third and sixth columns, and the simple average of the ranks was taken for each sustainable development issue. This result is presented in the seventh column. Based on the simple averages, priority sustainable development issues have been presented in order of decreasing importance in table 21.

Table 21: Priority sustainable development issues in order of decreasing importance

Priority sustainable development issues	Average rank
Education	2.5
Health	3
Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)	3.5
Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation	5
Good governance and the rule of law	5
Agriculture and food security	6
Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)	6
Social protection for the poor and vulnerable	8.5
Sanitation and urban management	12
Peace and security	12
Sanitation and urban management	24
Peace and security	15
International competitiveness	12

Issues such as employment generation, climate change, international competitiveness, and gender and institutional development have been omitted in the prioritization because they are to some extent cross-cutting issues. In addition, they are not issues raised in either national or subregional sustainable development issues.

Sustainable development issues elaborated for the subregion have some bearings on regional documents/meetings that have to some extent discussed sustainable development issues on the African continent. These included the Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20, the Outcome Document of the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Emerging Consensus from Africa.

The Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20 elaborated new and emerging issues facing the continent such as:

- ✦ Adverse impacts of climate change
- ✦ Increasing water scarcity
- ✦ Biodiversity and ecosystem loss
- ✦ Desertification
- ✦ Hazardous and electronic waste
- ✦ Low resilience to natural disasters
- ✦ Energy crisis
- ✦ Food crisis
- ✦ Rapid and unplanned urbanization resulting from rural-urban migration
- ✦ Piracy, human trafficking, migration and the global financial and economic crises

It is important to note that the key focus of the document was on new and emerging issues facing the continent and therefore excludes current priority sustainable development issues confronting the continent.

The Outcome Document of the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Emerging Consensus from Africa identifies three broad development outcomes as priorities for the post-2015 development agenda. These include:

- Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth
- Innovation and technology transfer
- Human development

Obviously, the issues considered here are limited in scope. Specifically, one of the major dimensions of sustainable development – environmental sustainability – is directly missing. The emphasis, instead, is more on economic and social development.

The Outcome Document of the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting comprehensively elaborated on the key issues to be addressed by the SDGs. These include:

- Spearheading poverty eradication
- Combating hunger, ensuring food security and nutrition
- Ensuring access to safe water supply and adequate sanitation facilities;
- Ensuring access to quality education and health services
- Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women
- Ensuring equitable and universal access to social services and social protection
- Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, including the impacts of climate change
- Creating decent employment opportunities
- Enhancing infrastructure development
- Ensuring access to affordable and sustainable energy
- Combating land degradation and desertification, drought and deforestation
- Addressing climate change challenges, including through adaptation and mitigation
- Promoting sustainable water resource management
- Ensuring favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and
- Fostering peace and security

Table 22 compares sustainable development issues raised by the region as discussed in the Outcome Document of the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting and those prioritized by the subregion, which is presented in table 21. Again, the key sustainable development issues were correspondingly grouped to facilitate comparison.

Table 22: Comparison of sustainable development issues raised by regional bodies and subregional bodies/member states

Prioritized subregionalsustainable development issues	Regional sustainable developmentissues
	Spearheading poverty eradication;
Education	Ensuring access to quality education and health services;
Health	
Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)	Enhancing infrastructure development;ensuring access to affordable and sustainable energy;
Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation	Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
Good governance and the rule of law	
Agriculture and food security	Combating hunger; ensuring food security and nutrition;
Environment and natural resourcemanagement (forest, water and soils)	Combating land degradation and desertification, drought and deforestation; addressing climate change challenges, including through adaptation and mitigation; promoting sustainable water resource management; ensuring favourable access to, and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including for climate change adaptation and mitigation
Social protection for the poor and vulnerable	Equitable and universal access to social services and social protection; reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience;creating decent employment opportunities including the impacts of climate change; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women;
Sanitation and urban management	Access to safe water supply and adequate sanitation facilities;
Peace and security	Fostering peace and security

From table 22, it can be seen that the priority sustainable development issues raised by the subregion are generally comparable to those elaborated by the regional forum. The only difference is that issues raised by the region were more comprehensive than those of the subregion. Additionally, the issues raised by the regional forum explicitly mentioned poverty eradication while those of the subregion implied but were not explicit about addressing poverty. Furthermore, the subregion was explicit on good governance and the rule of law as being one of the main sustainable development issues whereas the region was not explicit on that. In the next section, we provide an overview and justification of the prioritized issues in the subregion even though some of them were discussed earlier.

4. Overview and justification of prioritized sustainable development issues

4.1. Education

Education is one of the most important policy instruments that have a multi-dimensional impact on poverty. This is due to the fact that, in addition to earning a higher income, a better educated person can access information on many issues, for example on health, which can help improve health outcomes and, consequently, reduce health poverty. One of the necessary but not sufficient conditions for poverty reduction is increasing incomes. Many studies (see Schultz (1999) and Psacharopoulos (2002)) in different countries and time periods have confirmed that better educated individuals earn higher wages, experience less unemployment and work in more prestigious occupations than their less educated counterparts. A more educated person is also in a better position to earn income and gain knowledge, which can have an impact on poverty reduction through increased productivity. This factor has partly justified the subregion's prominent policy focus on educational development. However, several challenges confront the subregion in education, relating mainly to quality, quantity and gender disparities. Even though access is gradually improving and the gender gap has marginally narrowed – though not at the rate required to effectively influence poverty reduction – quality remains a major problem.

Weaknesses in institutional capacity sometimes makes it difficult to implement educational policies effectively, while the shortage of qualified teachers, especially in deprived regions has led to a heavy reliance on National Volunteer Programme and unqualified personnel to fill the capacity gaps of trained teachers. In addition, certain governments' long-term focus on basic education – at the expense of higher education – coupled with inadequate infrastructure, especially in remote regions, has made it difficult to achieve educational policy objectives. As earlier discussed, countries such as Cape Verde, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and The Gambia (table 13) are performing well in terms of improving enrolment ratios. However, sustaining and improving the current ratio and quality will require substantial investment and remains a major challenge.

Table 23: Primary and secondary pupil-teacher ratio

Country	Primary				Secondary			
	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2011	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2011
Benin	54.6	45.0	46.4	44.2	22.8	0.0		
Burkina Faso	47.0	47.7	52.4	52.7	31.4	28.4	30.3	26.5
Cape Verde	28.1	24.9	23.6	23.3	23.7	21.0	17.5	17.2
Côte d'Ivoire	44.3	42.8		48.8	0.0	0.0		
Gambia, The	38.4	36.2		37.6	0.0	0.0		
Ghana	32.5	33.1		31.0	18.7	18.4		18.7
Guinea	45.5	44.5	42.2	44.1	31.6	34.7		33.1
Liberia	38.3	26.5		26.8	26.4	0.0		
Mali	58.9	52.1	50.4	48.5	29.0	23.6		24.7
Niger	41.9	40.6	38.6	39.0	26.7	28.4	30.8	34.7
Nigeria	39.5	41.1	36.0		33.9	30.7	33.1	
Senegal	48.0	37.1	33.7	32.9	26.5	26.4		27.4
Sierra Leone	37.3	0.0		31.3	26.6	0.0		
Togo	36.3	39.0	40.6	40.9	33.1	35.0		26.2
Guinea-Bissau	44.1	62.2	51.9		15.0	37.3		

At the primary and secondary level, pupil-teacher ratio has been relatively high compared to other regions, making it difficult not only for teachers to understand the individual needs of each pupil but also to improve the quality of education. Available data provided in table 23 indicate that the primary pupil-teacher ratio has improved overall for many countries with the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Guinea-Bissau. Similar trends were visible in the secondary pupil-teacher ratio, with Guinea, Niger, Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau being exceptions. Countries like Cape Verde and Ghana managed to maintain a relatively lower pupil-teacher ratio, compared to the other countries.

The quality of education is associated with the type of the training provided. In many countries of the subregion, formal educational institutions basically provide general academic training to equip students with the minimum skills to enter the labour market, express themselves and understand the dynamics of society. As such, many students who pass through the formal educational system are technically incompetent due to the general type of the training received and to poor linkages with enterprises. Additionally, the current formal training system sometimes determines the overproduction of skills, for which demand on the labour market is insignificant. Apparently, the excess of tertiary educational output over the ability of the economy to absorb this output and the lack of required skills and competence of recent "tertiary educated" persons owing to poor educational systems and infrastructure have recently led to a rising unemployment rate among university and polytechnic graduates. Vocational and technical training has not been given the necessary priority in the education system of countries while the lack of linkages between vocational schools and the job market has been identified as the reason for the large mismatch in labour demand and supply (ECOWAS, 2012).

Furthermore, the imbalance between teacher demand and supply, inadequate teacher training and qualifications, inadequate continuing professional development as well as inadequate teacher deployment and conditions of service are all issues that need to be addressed. This situation will impact significantly on enrolment rates within the subregion, which has improved overtime as shown in table 13. For countries within the subregion, correcting the imbalances in teacher demand and supply will help improve the quality of education and net enrolment rates, which have been relatively higher for countries such as Cape Verde, Togo and Ghana and have significantly improved for countries such as Guinea, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. However, sustaining and improving the current ratio and quality will require substantial investment, and remains a major challenge.

Table 24: Total public spending on education (percentage of GDP)

Country name	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010	2011
Benin	3.4	4.0	5.3	
Burkina Faso	0.0	4.5	3.8	3.4
Cape Verde	7.6	6.2	5.6	
Côte d'Ivoire	4.2	4.4		
Gambia, The	1.6	3.3	4.2	3.9
Ghana	6.4	5.9	5.5	8.2
Guinea	2.4	2.5	3.7	3.1
Liberia	0.0	3.3		
Mali	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.7
Niger	2.9	3.9	3.9	4.5
Senegal	3.4	5.1	5.6	
Sierra Leone	3.7	2.7	2.6	2.7
Togo	4.1	3.7	4.4	4.6

A notable reason for the observed educational outcome is inadequate government expenditure on education. Across the subregion, only Ghana and Cape Verde managed to maintain the ratio of total public spending on education to GDP of more than 5 per cent throughout the period from 2000 to 2011 even though the educational expenditure to GDP ratio is generally increasing (table 24) – something Benin achieved in 2010 and Senegal for the period from 2005 to 2010.

Sustainable development goals in the education sector should therefore aim generally at improving the quantity and quality of education, leading to a balance in demand and supply of labour and creating decent jobs for citizens – especially, the youth. Addressing the problem will require ensuring universal access to quality education at all levels. This will include ensuring a higher completion rate at pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels; improving non-formal education and technical and vocational training, life skills and civic education; improved quality of teaching and quality assurance at all levels of education; improving teacher education by enhancing their training and providing teaching resources and materials.

4.2. Health

A major component of human capital development, which is very important for poverty reduction, is health improvement. Health, a multi-faceted concept explained by the WHO (1972) as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, which provides the individual with the opportunity to conduct a socially and economically productive life and not only to enjoy the absence of infirmity or disease, has a significantly positive correlation with poverty largely as a result of its social and economic importance. Higher health status implies greater potential for increased productivity, which can spur economic growth and, when sustained, give rise to economic development. Better health outcomes in the form of improved treatment, education, nutrition and sanitation are crucial for ameliorating economic welfare at both the micro and macro levels. Good health as an investment good has the capacity to contribute immensely to developing the human resource base, which is widely embraced as the engine of growth and development (Lucas, 1988). It is for this reason that health care issues feature prominently in three out of the eight MDGs. The three health-related MDGs include reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

In pursuance of the agenda of improving health care, the Abuja Declaration adopted at the African Health Ministers Summit in Abuja, Nigeria in April 2001 sought to encourage African governments to commit 15 per cent of their national budget on health. However, many countries in the subregion are yet to achieve this target. At national level, policies designed to improve health outcomes have formed an integral component of the development strategies of almost all West African States.

Health indicators for the subregion suggest that a lot more has to be done to improve the health status of the populace. According to World Health Statistics data, Africa has the worst health indicators in terms of the maternal mortality ratio, infant mortality ratio, life expectancy, health expenditure, health service coverage, health workforce, among others. West Africa cannot be excluded from this worrying performance. For instance although life expectancy in West Africa has improved marginally as discussed in the situational analysis in section 2 (table 11), the mean life expectancy for the subregion remains low, averaging between 50 and 56 years over the period from 1995 to 2011. A similar trend was observed for the infant mortality rate, which improved from an average of about 98 deaths per 1000 live births to around 72 deaths per 1000 live births.

The relatively poor health status of the subregion is largely attributed to preventable infectious ailments and nutritional deficiencies. Widespread poverty coupled with low income and education levels especially among women; inadequate access to clean water and sanitation facilities; limited access to health services due to high user fees; inadequate health facilities and resources; road traffic accidents; inefficiencies in resource use; limited public financing to the health sector as a whole; poor management and planning; lack of integrated health systems; inadequate number of health professionals with a high doctor-population ratio above 1: 10,000 in many countries has contributed to the burden of ill-health in the subregion.

Priorities for Africa in the area of health as highlighted in the Outcome Document of the Regional Consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, among others should involve improving maternal, newborn and child health; ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning; prioritizing health care for adolescents, the elderly and the disabled and handicapped; improving HIV/AIDS care with a special focus on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission and ensuring access to anti-retroviral therapy; focusing on non-communicable diseases such as malaria and communicable diseases such as tuberculosis; paying more attention to equity in health service delivery; strengthening health systems; increasing health financing and undertaking preventive care through paying more attention to the social and environmental determinants of health such as water and sanitation.

4.3. Sustainable infrastructural development (energy, water, transport)

Classical theories of economic growth specify that growth is driven by two main factors: capital accumulation and the productivity of factors of production. Based on this premise, infrastructural investment can be considered as a growth-enhancing venture, directly via capital accumulation and indirectly through total factor productivity gains. Investment in basic infrastructure generates the accumulation of capital, which consequently facilitates private investments by lowering production costs, opening new markets and reducing transaction costs. It is well known that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been identified as a key driver of socio-economic development in the subregion, in that it promotes technology transfer and enhances structural transformation. Many studies have established that, in order to stimulate FDI, countries in the subregion must improve the fundamentals of investment such as capacity-building, good governance and economic infrastructure (electricity, communications, transport, etc.).

Investing in infrastructure does not only promote economic growth and factor productivity but also helps to open the economy through rural development, which consequently has an impact on poverty. Infrastructural investment affects rural development through channels such as improved agricultural productivity and rural non-farm employment as well as reducing rural-urban migration (Fan et al, 2002). Where the infrastructural project is pro-poor, the impact on poverty becomes more intense. Opening up rural areas by providing basic infrastructure such as roads and electricity may not only reduce the cost of transporting farm inputs but also lower the cost of transporting output from rural areas to markets as well as make it easy for rural people to access social services such as health and education.

The lack of well formulated policies and the slow implementation of subregional and regional agreements remain major obstacles to the development of sustainable infrastructure. Many policies do not promote private sector participation in infrastructural development and operation. The liberalization and privatization of infrastructure are still in their infant stage while efforts to harmonize policies and regulations pertaining to common regional provision of infrastructure have not achieved the required results. In many countries, the pricing of infrastructural service is characterized by administered prices that are below what is required to operate, maintain and rehabilitate facilities. All these factors have made it problematic for West African countries to attract investment.

Energy

West Africa is rich not only in non-renewable energy resources such as oil and gas, but also in renewable energy resources such as biomass, wind, hydropower and solar energy. It has been established that a positive correlation exists between economic development, which is necessary for poverty reduction, and energy consumption. However, the subregion has huge energy infrastructural and supply deficits, which make it difficult for it to satisfy its development aspirations. Renewable energy resources such as wind, hydropower and solar energy abound in the subregion and offer a significant opportunity to bridge its energy supply gap. The share of renewable energy as a percentage of the world's primary

energy demand is about 15 per cent and continues to grow. However, that of West Africa is below 5 per cent. Many countries in the subregion have endeavoured to provide access to sustainable and efficient energy through renewable resource assessment and mapping as well as via pilot projects to demonstrate the efficacy of renewable energy alternatives, by providing support for research and development of environmentally-friendly technologies and using public-private partnerships to bridge the energy infrastructure gap.

As regards improving energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources, the key challenges facing countries in subregion include: devising how to upscale the supply of and access to such technologies and materials; formulating clear policies that allow the private sector to participate in the delivery of such technologies; developing infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy; investing in financing schemes to help lower the high initial fixed costs of renewable energy technologies; providing finance and support for renewable energy service companies; expanding the assessment and mapping of renewable resources; developing the renewable energy markets via fiscal support and insurance; providing funding for research and development of renewable energy technologies; modernizing old and inefficient transmission and distribution systems often resulting in substantial losses of generated energy; investing in skills and capacity development as well as ensuring the right mix of renewable and non-renewable energies to guarantee that industries in the subregion do not become less competitive than the rest of the world.

Water

As earlier discussed, many people in the subregion do not have access to potable water, especially in the rural areas. Underground water, which has the potential to solve the water scarcity problem, has not been fully explored due to inadequate technology. According to FAO (2007), water scarcity affects all social and economic sectors and threatens the sustainability of the natural resource base. In Ghana, for example, diarrhoea largely attributed to poor sanitation resulting from the lack of potable water accounts for about 12 per cent of childhood deaths and is the third largest cause of death for children under the age of 5 after malaria and pneumonia (WHO, 2006). Furthermore, United Nations (2002) confirmed that, with adequate supplies of potable drinking water, the incidence of certain illnesses and, by extension, mortality could drop by as much as 75 per cent.

There are substantial challenges in ensuring access to fresh water, groundwater and water for agricultural purposes. These challenges include managing water quality, water quantity, flooding and drought; the transboundary nature of river basins poses a challenge to cooperative management; inequality in gaining access to drinking water; limited water storage capacity; limited exploitation of groundwater due primarily to poor knowledge of groundwater resources and high development costs; low tariffs which are below cost recovery and encourage inefficient use of water, among others. Access to improved water sources within the subregion remains low on average though it has improved from the ratio obtained in the 1990s (see table 14. The situational analysis in section 2 of this report shows an average improvement from 58.7 per cent (1995-1999) to 63.5 per cent (2000-2004) and 68.4 per cent (2005-2009), reaching about 71 per cent in 2010. This indicates that close to a third of West Africans still do not have access to an improved water source.

The AU, ECOWAS and other bodies have spearheaded several regional and subregional activities to improve water management in West Africa. The latter include (a) the establishment of the Africa Ministerial Council on Water and the Africa Water Task Force; (b) the development of the African Water Vision 2025 and the Framework for Action; (c) the implementation of the Water Partnership Program and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative; (d) the establishment of the African Water Facility; (e) the development of the Senegal River Basin Water and Environmental Management Project, among others. At the national level, many countries have collaborated with development partners such as the AfDB to undertake water sector reform programmes and develop new policies, strategies and laws for water resource development and management based on the principles of integrated water resources management. However, the challenge of inadequate water availability still persists.

Priority sustainable development goals for the subregion should therefore revolve around developing instruments for water resource use and management that focus on (a) removing harmful subsidies;(b) ensuring an economic pricing of water; (c)protecting the poor; (d)promoting water harvesting, the re-use of water and technologies that increase the efficiency of water use, as well as (f) developing policies designed to exploit groundwater efficiently.

Transport

With regard to transport, it is well known that an efficient transport system is an important intermediary input to the production process in diverse ways such as the direct provision of transport service to almost all other sectors – agricultural, health, and education. According to the AfDB (1994), road transport in Africa, which is inefficient in terms of time and energy consumption compared to other modes of transport such as rail, water and air transport, handles about 97 per cent and 94 per cent of road passenger transport and freight transport, respectively. Akoena and Twerefou (2002) revealed that in Ghana light vehicles and buses covered 59,654 million passenger–kilometres but consumed 356 thousand tons of oil equivalent, while taxis and private cars covered 13, 786 million passenger–kilometres but consumed about 537 tons of oil equivalent in 2002. This picture indicates that cars are more energy inefficient in terms of passenger- kilometres covered than buses and light vehicles.

Despite efforts made in the past decades to develop the sector in the subregion, transport service delivery remains inadequate, ineffective, costly and inefficient in terms of energy consumption. The challenges in the provision of efficient transport systems are quite enormous. Rail and water transport, which are very efficient, are virtually unavailable while bus systems, which are efficient as modes of road transport, are not well organized in many towns and cities in the subregion. A major priority sustainable development issue for the subregion therefore is how to shift from the use of private vehicles to the use of public road, rail and water transport, all of which have the capacity to move a large amount of freight and passengers at a cheaper cost through reduced energy use and energy efficiency gains. The benefits associated with these means of transport are quite considerable, including a cleaner environment resulting from the reduction in congestion and air pollution, the reduction in poverty through increased affordability of transport, as well as improved accessibility to markets and other essential facilities.

Developing these means of transport will require substantial financial and technological resources that may not be in the reach of many countries. Addressing the challenges in the transport sector requires (a) substantial transport infrastructural development; (b)the introduction of innovative policies on differential taxation and duties on vehicle, area licensing, packing fees; (c)the use of efficient engine technologies and cars with smaller engine capacities; (d) improved standards and regulations, driver and vehicle maintenance habits, traffic management, among others.

In general, achieving sustainable development will be greatly accelerated if intermediary inputs to the production and consumption process and, consequently, the development process such as sustainable energy, water and transport are adequately provided in an efficient and effective manner.

4.4. *Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation*

The inability of West Africa and Africa as a whole to generate jobs, diversify and transform their economies has some historical antecedents that need to be understood if real solutions are to be found. The development focus of Africa's former colonial masters was to make the continent a primary raw material producer to feed industries in Europe and elsewhere. After independence (in the 1960s), many African countries focused more on industrialization by providing subsidies to and protection for industries while penalising and plundering agriculture through unfavourable macroeconomic, trade, tax and pricing policies as well as through the poor infrastructural development of agriculture despite the

latter's tremendous potential not only to stimulate growth but to directly speed up the transformation process. Structural adjustment programmes adopted in the early 1980s with the help of the World Bank and the IMF also failed to address the core issues of value addition since their aim was similar to that of Africa's former colonial masters—to increase the exports of raw materials, minerals and agricultural products through liberalized policies.

Early development theories viewed economic development as a growth process requiring the systematic reallocation of factors of production from a primary sector – agriculture characterized by low productivity, traditional technology and decreasing returns to a modern industrial sector with higher productivity and increasing returns (Adelman, 2001), but considered agricultural growth necessary for countries' development and transformation. The justification for this view of agriculture was that it produces goods that directly satisfy basic human needs and also combines human effort with natural resources, such as land that was assumed to be freely available. What this means is that agriculture could grow independently of other economic activities although, in reality, the dependence of agriculture on a fixed supply of land could constrain its expansion. In addition, many developing economies consist of two economies – agricultural and non-agricultural. Labour productivity is lower in the agricultural sector than in the industrial sector and, thus, a movement of labour from the agricultural to the non-agricultural should occur in the development process. It is evident that the non-agricultural sector can develop independently somehow through innovation and technology. However, both labour and savings must be released from the agricultural sector in order to satisfy the labour and financial demands of the non-agricultural sector.

Empirical studies by Gollin and others (2002) and Irzand and others (2001) show that agricultural development is imperative for economic transformation and that countries experiencing increases in agricultural productivity are able to release labour from agriculture into other sectors of the economy. Many Asian and Latin American countries have used agriculture-led growth strategies to reduce poverty and transform their economies. However, the strategy has not yet achieved any remarkable results in West Africa and Africa in general. A major reason for this occurrence is that, except for a few countries, many of those in West Africa and SSA in general have not sufficiently endeavoured to successfully revolutionize agricultural activities – unlike the Asian Green revolution, which focused on modernising agriculture and ensured the gradual transformation of Asian economies.

The structural transformation of an economy is predicated on a situation where agriculture contributes significantly to incomes, where industry contributes significantly to incomes and, furthermore, where the services sector contributes significantly to incomes. Liberalization policies implemented in the 1980s and poverty reduction policies adopted since the mid-1990s have triggered a turn around of the economies in most countries of the subregion through the increased production of raw materials, the core issues of value addition to these raw materials and subsequent economic diversification that can provide decent jobs and, in turn, lead to the transformation of these economies. Owing to these liberalization policies, FDI in the subregion has focused on the exploitation of natural resources with scant attention paid to adding value to the resources, resulting in the provision of meagre employment and incomes for most citizens.

Most of the benefits from the exploitation of these raw materials accrue to the capital providers – who are mainly foreigners – to the detriment of the locals. Poor value addition has led to little employment in the industrial sector – more specifically, the manufacturing and mining sectors – and to correspondingly large unemployment and low incomes. In many countries of the subregion, the reduction in the agricultural and industrial sectors' contribution to GDP and the expansion of a services sector with no base in the industrial sector present a situation of a child who does not want to walk before running but rather moves from the crawling stage to the running stage directly. This situation needs to be well assessed in terms of its overall impact on growth and poverty. Poor value addition especially in the mining sector has resulted in minimal diversification while the smaller focus on agriculture and the emphasis on liberalization have reduced inclusiveness in economic growth. Focusing on the mining sector by ensuring that both value is added to the minerals produced and the sector has vertical and horizontal linkages with the rest of the economy with increased value addition will spur growth.

Sustainable development goals in this direction should therefore be people-centred growth and focus on (a) reducing inequality; (b) supporting sectors and activities that occupy people; (c) integrating productive sectors of the poor, as well as marginalized and vulnerable people; (d) providing fiscally sustainable social protection; (e) promoting decent employment, particularly for young people, women and specific vulnerable groups and (f) promoting local content policies. The SDGs should also focus on promoting industrialization and value addition through private sector development, transforming the informal sector and improving distribution and reinvestment of wealth from extractive industries into other activities. Furthermore, establishing closer links between primary and secondary sectors via agro-industrialization, creating value addition through industry and developing value chains across sectors will also be imperative.

4.5. Good governance, the rule of law, peace and security

The challenges to ensuring good governance and the rule of law are the weak State institutions for properly enforcing laws and statutes, combating corruption, closing loopholes in the constitution and updating out-dated anti-graft laws, among other tasks, which do not create the necessary incentives for either people or leaders to be law-abiding. While the proliferation of firearms and ammunition, increasing religious and ethnic extremism, growing use of the subregion as a transit point for narcotics, bad governance, rising youth unemployment and the mismanagement of resources from natural resources pose a threat to peace and security, poor governance, non-adherence to the rule of law and inadequate peace and security have the potential to deepen poverty, increase inefficiency and productivity losses, as well as accelerate environmental degradation and social deprivation. Unfortunately, the main victims so far have been the most vulnerable— primarily, women and children.

SDGs should focus on how to make governments understand that they hold resources on behalf of the people and therefore take decisions in the interest of the people and are accountable to the people. This orientation should also involve (a) developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance; (b) supporting anti-graft and other state agencies with laws that can make them autonomous and more efficient in the execution of their duties; (c) strengthening civil society organizations to enable them have proper oversight responsibility, among other tasks. With regards to security, laws on peace and security should be strengthened and security agencies equipped with modern equipment and the necessary training to enable them fight the current complex crimes in the subregion. Seeking political solutions to the present conflicts in Nigeria will eliminate the potential for such unrest in other parts of the subregion.

4.6. Agriculture and food security

The agricultural sector is the main sector that has propelled growth and development in many West African countries. Estimates by the World Bank indicate that agriculture accounts for about 70 per cent of employment, contributes significantly to both GDP and foreign exchange in many West African countries and is a significant provider of industrial raw materials. However, agricultural practices in the subregion are mainly subsistence, employing primitive tools such as the hoe and cutlass with low productivity, which makes it difficult for many rural communities to be self-sufficient in food. Additionally, poor farming practices such as 'slash and burn' has led to land degradation, soil quality depletion and biodiversity loss. Sustainable irrigation fulfils the dual role of enhancing productivity and helping to adapt to climate change. However, land under irrigation in West African countries falls far short of what is required.

Risk in the agricultural sector has been unreasonably high partly as a result of land tenure insecurity and has deterred investment. Insect pests are important constraints to the development of agriculture in

the subregion while the use of pesticides and herbicides has not been extensive enough due to its cost, non-availability in certain cases and their negative effect on the environment. Marketing for agricultural products as well as storage facilities remains a major problem for many countries. With the exception of a few countries where marketing has been provided for cash crops like cocoa and coffee, which are foreign-exchange earners, many countries have not endeavoured to look for markets for local producers. This situation has made it extremely difficult for local producers to participate in international markets.

Trade liberalization and poor value addition to agricultural products are making it problematic for small farmers to compete in markets that are much more demanding in terms of quality. In recent years, the rise in supermarkets, the growing importance of quality standards threaten the ability of smallholder farmers to compete with large-scale commercial farmers from other developed countries. Many countries such as Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali and Benin face land-grabbing arising from foreign companies' use of land for growing cash crops which could reduce food production by locals (Grain, 2012). Furthermore, both inadequate research and the poor linkage between research and development have resulted in seeds performing poorly because very few improved high-yielding varieties are used, leaving the great potential of plant breeding untapped. Similar situations can be found in the animal husbandry and fisheries subsectors of agriculture.

There are several bodies of water – lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands in the subregion, in addition to the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) belt, which is shared by six countries in the subregion. These bodies of water are very rich in fishery resources and provide both direct and indirect livelihood for many people in the subregion. Overfishing through the use of unsustainable methods such as pair trawling, the use of dynamite and small fishing nets is leading to the exploitation of the resource beyond the maximum sustainable yield. Capacity to develop aquaculture is quite low while incentive packages to discourage overfishing are not effective. With respect to livestock, desertification and climate change is reducing the grassland available for farm animals.

SDGs in this sector should not only aim at helping the subregion to practice sustainable agriculture, which is an efficient strategy for improving food security and reducing poverty in that it promotes the production of ample food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting the environment, but should also focus on the provision of agricultural infrastructure and mechanisation, provision of research, extension services and marketing; provision of access to inputs and credit as well as reforming land tenure systems to encourage investments. Specifically, this will involve intensifying rural development by investing in agricultural activities, especially agricultural modernisation and the agro-industry, and by improving food availability, accessibility and quality. The goals should also aim at improving food and nutrition security via strategies that consider climate change, environmental protection, desertification, the role of women in agriculture, the increased value of natural resources as well as inclusive green growth initiatives.

4.7. *Environment and natural resource management (forest, water and soils)*

Forests

Many West Africans depend on the forest for their livelihood, and therefore the maintenance of this resource is very important if sustainable development is to be ensured. Forests contain 70 per cent of the earth's terrestrial biodiversity and as such are among the world's richest and most diverse ecosystems. They also provide a wide range of ecological, social and cultural services and are central to food security. A relatively large portion of land along the equatorial zone used to be under forest cover. Unfortunately, forests are being degraded at a rapid rate because of overharvesting and pressure from other land uses, including agriculture. The status of forest areas within the subregion as discussed in the situational analysis in section 2 shows a continuous decline in forest areas as a percentage of total land area (table 16). On average, forest areas as a percentage of total land area declined from about 32 per cent in 2000 to about 30

per cent in 2011, indicating that about 2 per cent of forest areas had been lost on average between 2000 and 2011. At this high rate of deforestation, the MDG target of increasing the proportion of land area covered by forests will not be met. Desertification resulting partly from deforestation and climate change, for which many countries have low adaptive capacity, is closely linked to poverty, food security, natural resource exploitation, water, biodiversity, energy, migration patterns and to the environment as a whole and needs to be taken more seriously if sustainable development is to be achieved.

Water

The West Africa subregion also has abundant freshwater resources such as rivers, lakes and groundwater. What is more, many countries in the subregion share the Guinea coast, which supports a diversity of habitats and resources, encompassing mangroves, delta, estuaries, coastal wetlands and lagoons. These ecosystems significantly contribute to the livelihoods of coastal communities through economic activities such as fishing, agricultural activities, tourism, oil drilling and mining as well as providing other intrinsic values such as shoreline stability, beach enrichment, nutrient generation, recycling and the moderation of pollution. However, these bodies of water are being polluted due to poor waste management, agricultural and industrial discharge and mining – especially, small-scale mining. In addition, overfishing is resulting in the depletion of aquatic resources – especially, fish stock – while farming along the banks of rivers and deforestation is drying up rivers, lagoons and lakes.

The World Bank estimates that the coastal zone from Accra to the Niger Delta could be an unbroken chain of cities by 2025, with a total population of 50 million along 5,000 km of coastline. High population growth along the coast will increase the rate of pollution and the depletion of aquatic resources. A worrying fact is that climate change and desertification may increase water stress, which may have an adverse impact on all economic activities. Even though efforts such as the Climate for Development in Africa Programme, a joint initiative of the AUC, ECA and AfDB, have been undertaken to overcome the lack of information, analysis and options that are required by policymakers and decision makers at all levels, most countries in the subregion have formulated action plans to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, and almost all the countries in the subregion are signatories to the UNCCD and are making progress in meeting their obligations in implementing the convention, the challenge of fully addressing these issues still persists.

Priority SDGs should focus on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), ensuring (a) the promotion of sustainable water use and water resource protection through ecosystem protection policies such as the removal of harmful environmental subsidies; (b) the differentiated economic pricing of water which protects the poor; (c) the promotion of water harvesting; (d) the development of minidams; (e) the re-use of water and the promotion of technologies that increase the efficiency of water use.

Soils

With regards to soils, many soils in the subregion have been degraded. Poor farming practices such as the 'slash and burn' method of farming has led to the destruction of microorganisms that enrich the soil while, in many agricultural production systems, nutrients are reconstituted solely through shifting cultivation, which results in the degradation of biodiversity. Additionally, many parts of Africa are disadvantaged by unfavourable natural and geographic conditions. Soils are acidic, with low absorptive capacity and poor in nutrients. Furthermore, soils of the Sahelian and sub-humid zones are sandy (20 per cent) and subject to intense erosion. Other soils are in desert areas or are difficult to use. Even though rainfall is generally adequate, the risk of drought is high. Consequently, risk in the agricultural sector has been unreasonably high and, as such, deters investment. Land tenure insecurity has made it difficult for many people to make sustainable investment in land while communal ownership has facilitated the overuse of land. The improper use of pesticides and herbicides has also had some negative impact on land resources and the environment in general.

Biodiversity

Overall, the rich and varied biological resources of the subregion, on which its social and economic systems are based, appear to be under threat from natural habitat loss and the loss of species or subspecies. In 2010, for example, 118 and 16 (higher) plant and mammal species were considered as threatened in Ghana, respectively. In general, the causes of habitat loss include (a) human population growth and the resulting demand for space, food and other resources; (b) widespread poverty; (c) dependence on natural resources and (d) economic pressures to increase exports, particularly agricultural produce, timber and mineral products. Species loss is mainly the result of natural habitat loss, illegal hunting for food, medicinal or commercial use, as well as national and international trade (UNEP, 2002).

SDGs should therefore ensure the restoration of biodiversity, on which the livelihoods of most of the subregion's inhabitants depend. This action will involve others that will intensify the implementation of current programmes, assess the value of the services provided by natural resources to inform the economic pricing of forest resources, set incentives for the development of woodlots as well as increase public-private partnerships and investment to restore, maintain and enhance the stock of forestry and water resources.

4.8. *Social protection for the poor and vulnerable*

In general, the approach of many West African States towards social protection is based on the assumption that economic growth will take care of the social security needs of the vulnerable and marginalized groups such as the aged, women, children and the physically challenged (Twerefou and others, 2007). As such, not much emphasis was placed on the specific needs and requirements of these vulnerable people.

Data from the International Social Security Association (2013) indicate that some level of partial protection provided by social security exists in almost all Member States even though it does not fully cover the main branches of social security (health insurance, pensions, unemployment protection and tax-based social benefits) and that only a minority of the population have access to such schemes. Almost every country in the subregion has some form of healthcare social security including certain public healthcare services accessible at a given reduced fee or financed through health insurance for certain population groups. This provision helps facilitate access to some healthcare services.

Most countries in the subregion have schemes designed to provide contributory old-age pensions although, in many countries, coverage is limited to only a small formal economy and the benefits are minimal. The World Social Security Report (ILO, 2010) provides some information on social security indicators for SSA, in which all West African countries are found. The report indicates that, worldwide, nearly 40 per cent of the population of working age is legally covered by contributory old-age pension schemes. In SSA, however, only 5 per cent of the working-age population is effectively covered by contributory schemes. In addition, the share of the population above the legal retirement age in receipt of a pension in SSA is about 15.6 per cent compared to a global average of 40.2 per cent and 28.4 per cent for North Africa.

The meagre pension and gratuity received by pensioners, the inability to prepare sufficiently for retirement, the high cost of social services, such as health as well as the erosion of the purchasing power of pension allowances resulting from inflation have rendered many pensioners vulnerable and destitute. Many of them are therefore forced to return to work in the formal and informal sectors either as consultants or on a contract basis or as private entrepreneurs. Apt and Amankrah (2004) report that more than 50 per cent of pensioners are worried about their financial position in old age and anticipate government interventions to ensure income security.

Additionally, the legal unemployment benefit coverage in SSA as a percentage of the working age population is about 1.1 per cent, compared to a global average of 18.4 per cent and 9.9 per cent for North Africa. Furthermore, legal employment injury coverage in SSA as a percentage of the working age population is about 19.1 per cent, compared to a global average of 30.3 per cent and 34.4 per cent for North Africa. The inadequate social security provision is also reflected in government expenditure on

social security as a share of GDP. Data from the World Social Security Report (ILO, 2010) indicate that total social security expenditure as a percentage of GDP in SSA is about 4.8 per cent, far lower than the global average of 10.9 per cent

Although the informal sector has a handful of social security schemes, none of the countries developed comprehensive policies and programmes designed to consistently address the welfare of this segment of the society. Most employees working in the informal sector as unpaid family workers, self-employed, micro-entrepreneurs, farmers, craft employees, artisans, traders, etc. will not have any social protection against insecurity when they retire from active work unless they have personal pension plans. In fact, social security provision for employees in the informal economy where over 70 per cent of the population earn their livelihoods is essentially a private concern for families and communities. Many have argued that the most important social safety net in West Africa is the traditional, community and family-based welfare system that involves extended families, local organizations, etc. Such a system incorporates traditional and cultural norms and has demonstrated its ability to uphold and consolidate social cohesion and practices. Apt and Amankrah (2004) confirm this situation by arguing that employees do not fall on the government or on institutions for assistance in times of need, but rather rely on family and friends.

Civil society organizations and, in particular, independent democratic representative member-based organizations in the informal economy largely contribute to the strengthening of income security in many countries owing to virtually unavailable state support. Such institutions include self-help groups, savings societies, faith-based associations, cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and NGOs. The work of these organizations is beneficial to all spheres of social and employment security and seriously complements the bare minimum provided by the State.

Sustainable development goals relating to social security for the vulnerable should focus on developing a comprehensive social security system, which ensures the provision of basic income security and affordable access to essential health care and other services. Specifically, such policies should focus on (a) improving and reforming statutory social insurance schemes; (b) promoting community and area-based social insurance schemes; (c) enhancing cost-effective tax-financed social assistance programmes such as cash transfers and in-kind transfers such as school feeding and targeted food assistance; (d) providing opportunities for the poor through promoting better health, nutrition, education and skills development; (e) providing appropriate knowledge about social security, among other actions.

4.9. Sanitation and urban management

Like the rest of Africa, the West African subregion is urbanizing at a very fast rate. The major challenge is that, unlike Asia and Europe, urbanization is taking place in the absence of significant industrial expansion (ECOWAS, 2012). What is currently being observed in West African countries and in Africa as a whole is the outward expansion and conversion of prime agricultural lands into residential and industrial uses with little inward expansion of built up areas. Unplanned urban management has resulted in many environmental and social problems - poor sanitation resulting from poor waste management, increasing disease burden, increased distance to school and clustering in schools, increased crime, violence, traffic congestion, slums, polluted air and bodies of water, youth unemployment and underemployment, social inequality and exclusion, food insecurity, inadequate supply of clean drinking water, among other problems. Rapid urbanization in West Africa has triggered an increase in waste, which if not well managed will have an intergenerational impact on the quality of water and public health. The good thing is that this waste can be a resource, which can generate employment and other ecological advantages, if well managed.

Priority SDG for the subregions should focus on (a) the provision of decent and affordable housing in both urban and rural areas; (b) the provision of modern sanitation facilities; (c) the provision of potable water; (d) the designing of cities with opportunities for greening through the proximity of urban functions, modal shifts in transportation and increased efficiency in provision of infrastructure, utilities and energy;

(e) the provision of adequate resources and the management of urban waste, encouragement of reuse, recovery and recycling of waste; (f) the promotion of energy efficiency in buildings (ECOWAS, 2012)

Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

This section proposes sustainable development goals (SDGs), targets and indicators on the basis of information gathered from all the documents reviewed and the outcome of the survey. Poverty is multi-dimensional, and reducing poverty – the key goal of all West African States – is the greatest challenge facing the subregion and remains an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Achieving poverty reduction requires multi-dimensional policies, involving all the prioritized issues and taking into consideration the linkages between the different dimensions of policy impact. For example, advancement in education may allow a person not only to read and write but also to obtain information on health, which may help to improve his/her health status and productivity. It is for this reason that the SDGs should aim at policies that provide win-wins. In formulating these goals, targets and indicators, cross-cutting issues such as innovation and technology transfer, gender, employment and financing have been mainstreamed through the targets and therefore may not be seen starkly as stand-alone issues.

In the SDGs survey, six of the eight countries in the subregion preferred the MDGs – suitably modified/updated for post-2015 – to be integrated into a larger sustainable development framework, compared to other alternatives. Reasons for this preference could be that the challenges addressed by the MDGs still persist to some extent and remain very important for sustainable development. Additionally, the countries have been developing frameworks for the implementation of these goals and are making some progress in this respect. It will therefore be more efficient to build on what they have undertaken already than to introduce a completely new framework. Thus, in developing these goals, this concern has been taken into consideration by attempting to integrate the MDGs – suitably modified/updated for post-2015 – into a broader sustainable development framework.

The MDG framework has several strengths. Simplicity, numerical targeting and consensus are the key strengths of the MDGs as a mobilizing tool (Fukuda-Parr, 2013; Vos, 2012). They create the power to communicate the objectives well and enable support to be mobilized for the global priorities contained in the MDGs. According to Gold (2005), the MDGs are concrete output targets in that the goals offer clear, agreed and quantifiable targets to galvanize efforts in rich and poor countries and to hold their leaders accountable. These specific objectives, targets and indicators also highlight the need to strengthen national statistical systems and the use of timely and reliable statistics for planning, monitoring and evaluating policies that have so far been a major challenge (Smit, 2012). In addition, the MDGs cover nearly all the relevant dimensions of poverty and not just income poverty, which was the case for a long time (Gold, 2005). According to the Institute of Development Studies (2010), the strengths of the MDGs include: (a) acting as a ‘rallying call’ for development; (b) serving as a common or shared understanding of what development seeks to achieve (placing poverty reduction at the centre of development rather than GDP growth alone); (c) stipulating targets and indicators useful in guiding and motivating development policy decisions, and developing clear standards of accountability since the targets and indicators allow performances to be measured; (d) exerting positive pressure for more data on poverty and winning the backing of the UN. The MDGs entail an inherent global solidarity and propel the international community towards joint development.

Despite these strengths, Fukuda-Parr (2013) criticizes the MDGs as being simple, resulting in charges of a certain reductionism in that they are too narrow and excluded many important contemporary issues such as employment and decent work, sustainability and climate change, inequality and discrimination. For example, MDG2 – achieving universal primary school enrolment – may not signify much for countries in the subregion that have already met this goal and need to focus on expanding secondary and tertiary education or by improving quality and equity. Linked to the simplicity of the MDGs is their weakness relating to social justice underpinnings. The MDGs also paid very little attention to rights issues such as inequalities, marginalization, vulnerability and exclusion (Institute of Development Studies, 2010). In addition, the use of national averages to monitor indicators makes it difficult to take into consideration inequalities, consequently making it impossible to ascertain whether progress had been achieved

by improving the situation of the poor or by additionally improving the situation of the wealthy and privileged (Rippin, 2013).

According to Rippin (2013), the MDGs have been perceived as a mere donor agenda and a lack of ownership and commitment owing to the poor participation of national governments has undermined the acceptance of and commitment to the goals in many countries of the developing world. The top-down approach to the formulation of the MDGs appears to go against the universality principle as defined under the 2012 Rio Declaration. For example, the universality principle appears to be compromised by formulating a few vague targets for developed countries and a whole catalogue of clearly specified targets for developing countries. Furthermore, the sectoral approach of the MDGs has also been criticized since it encourages intense lobbying around specific sectors and priorities in an effort to secure future funding to the detriment of other sectors and disregards the interlinkages that exist between the different goals. A solution to this problem is the use of multisectoral approaches and coordination among various implementing agencies. The poor definition of indicators such as decent work and significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers also made it difficult to monitor these indicators. At best, they were poorly monitored and, in some cases, even neglected (Rippin, 2013).

Nayyar (2011) has also argued that the MDGs specify an outcome but do not set out the process or methodology that would make it possible to realize the objectives. Additionally, the goals were stipulated without any reference to national initial conditions, capabilities, differences and priorities. Consequently, targets may be set too high for some countries and too low for others.

One important objective of the SDGs should be to take into consideration intergenerational equity. Intergenerational equity deals with ensuring fairness between current and future generations. This implies giving equal consideration not only to the current and future needs of this generation but also to the future generation as well. The term 'equity' is also used in connection with the idea that all peoples throughout the world have the same basic needs to be taken into consideration. This concept is often referred to as intragenerational equity, meaning justice among the current population. Overall, the theory of intergenerational equity argues that human beings hold the natural environment of our planet in common with all members of our species: past generations, the present generation, and future generations. As members of the present generation, we hold the Earth in trust for future generations while remaining beneficiaries entitled to use and benefit from it (Weiss, 1992).

A question prompted by monitoring the intergenerational equity theory is the measurement of the wealth of nations to ascertain if wealth is being depleted or managed efficiently to ensure intergenerational equity. Wealth mentioned here refers to all types of capital including financial, physical, natural, human, institutional, social, cultural, and so forth. However, the measurement of wealth today in many countries focuses only on financial and physical wealth – GDP growth without taking into consideration the effect of such growth on natural resources and the environment, which has implications for the ability of future generations to take care of themselves.

Finding an appropriate balance between economic growth and the preservation of financial, physical, natural, human, institutional, social and cultural wealth lies at the heart of sustainable development. Such a balance in sustainable development could be achieved if an indicator such as the Adjusted Net Saving (ANS) (informally known as Genuine saving) of the World Bank is used to measure the wealth of nations. ANS is a sustainability indicator built on the concepts of green national accounting used to measure the true rate of savings in an economy after taking into consideration investment in human capital, depletion of various natural resources and damage caused by pollution. In addition to serving as an indicator of sustainability, ANS presents resource and environmental issues within a framework finance and development planning ministries can understand; reinforces the need to boost domestic savings and hence the need for sound macroeconomic policies; highlights the fiscal aspects of environment and resource management since collecting resource royalties and charging pollution taxes are both basic ways to raise development finance. This approach will also ensure the efficient use of the environment and make the growth-environment trade-off quite explicit since countries planning to grow today and protect the environment tomorrow will be noted for their depressed rates of adjusted net saving (World Bank, 2012).

One of the most difficult components in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda is the issue of ensuring integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environment. Proper integration should be at all levels – policy, programmes and projects – and should involve teasing out and addressing interrelationships between sectors at those levels, building efficient synergies among projects and across sectors and ensuring a vertical and horizontally well-integrated strategy process. Many African countries have been putting in place procedures to ensure that integration is ensured in the implementation of sustainable development strategies.

A Sixteen-Country Assessment of National Strategies for Sustainable Development in Africa by ECA (2011) indicated that most countries are progressively applying the principles of multi-stakeholder participation and ownership, sound leadership and good governance. In addition, strategies adopted by countries to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development vary in comprehensiveness from poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and national long-term plans. However, many of them covered the economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainable development. The report also comments that while some countries are improving/restructuring the decision-making process to fully integrate social and environmental issues and a broader range of public participation, others took a complimentary approach, whereby a separate strategy document was prepared and then existing planning frameworks were updated to incorporate sustainability principles. Based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) guidelines on the NSSD process, West African countries such as Ghana and The Gambia adopted NSSD approaches that entailed improving or restructuring the decision-making process to fully integrate economic, social and environmental issues and a broader range of public participation rather than developing a new strategy document.

Targets set in the present report are based on current achievements in the MDGs of West African countries and may have to be revised as new information on achievements becomes available in 2015. It is also assumed that the period of implementation will span from 2016 to 2040. The sustainable development issues, goals, targets and indicators are presented as table 5.1 based on the prioritization made in section 3 and the justification made in section 4.

Table 25: Proposed Sustainable Development Themes, Goals, Targets and Indicators

Goals and targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Theme 1: Overall poverty reduction	
Goal 1: Reduce extreme poverty and Hunger	
Target 1: Reduce by three quarters, between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 (PPP) per day	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day (PPP) (per cent of population) Poverty gap ratio Share of poorest quintile in national consumption GINI index
Target 2: Reduce by three quarters between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption Nutritional status (per capita caloric intake)
Target 3: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially the vulnerable (women and the youth)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment rate Share of women in wage employment in non-agriculture sector Share of industry in overall output and employment Youth employment Structure of employment (per cent)
Theme 2: Human Development	
Goal 2: Achieve gender equality, universal equitable primary and secondary education	
Target 4: Ensure by 2030 that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of quality primary schooling.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Net enrolment ratio in primary education Primary school completion rate for boys and girls Expenditure per pupil , primary (% of GDP per capita) Pupil-teacher ratio, primary Public spending on primary education, total (% of government expenditure)
Target 5: Ensure by 2030 that 60 per cent of boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of quality secondary education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Net enrolment ratio in secondary education Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds Literacy rate Expenditure per student, secondary (% of GDP per capita) Pupil-teacher ratio, secondary Public spending on secondary education, total (% of government expenditure)
Target 6: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2025, and at all levels of education by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of female to male primary enrolment (per cent) Ratio of female to male secondary enrolment (percent) Ratio of female to male tertiary enrolment (per cent) Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old
Target 7: Ensure that practical Science Technology and Innovation (STI) training especially ICT training is an integral part of secondary and tertiary education by 2025 and at all levels by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students (Secondary and tertiary) in STI related vocational and science training. Fixed telephone lines per 100 population Mobile cellular subscribers per 100 population Internet users per 100 population Research and development expenditure (per cent of GDP) ICT expenditure (per cent of GDP) Contribution of STI to GDP

Goals and targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Goal 3: Ensure Universal Access to Quality Health Care Delivery	
Target 8: Reduce by three quarters the under-five mortality rate by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Under-five mortality rate Infant mortality rate Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized/vaccinated against the five major infant killer diseases
Target 9: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maternal mortality rate Share of maternal and infant health in public health expenditures
Target 10: Achieve, by 2025, universal access to reproductive Health and overall health care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel Percentage of the population with access to primary formal health care service
Target 11: Reduce annual new infections of HIV/AIDS by three quarters in 2025 and ensured universal treatment for HIV/AIDS patients by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-49 years Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate Condom use at last high-risk sex Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS Contraceptive prevalence rate Antiretroviral therapy coverage (per cent of people with advanced HIV infection) Condom use, population ages 15-24, female (per cent of females ages 15-24) Condom use, population ages 15-24, male (per cent of males ages 15-24)
Target 12: By 2025, stabilize the incidence of malaria and other major diseases at 2015 levels and ensure that deaths caused by these diseases are reduced by two thirds in 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria Prevalence and deaths associated with other major diseases. Notified cases of malaria (per 100,000 people) Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course DOTS (Internationally recommended TB control strategy) Life Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 people)
Target 13: By 2030, to have achieved a universal access to health care delivery, especially in the rural areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Life expectancy at birth Disability adjusted life expectancy at birth Number of beds to population ratio Doctor to population ratio Nurse to population ratio Health personnel to population ratio
Target 14: Reduce by three quarters the number of people living in slums by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of urban population living in slums

Goals and targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Theme 3: Infrastructure Development	
Goal 4: Increase and improve infrastructure and urban management	
Target 15 : Increase by half access to sustainable energy 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of population with access to electricity (urban and rural) 2. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) 3. Share of biomass energy in total energy consumption / production 4. Percentage of population dependent on biomass energy as their main source of energy
Target 16: Increase the share of renewable energy in total energy by 25 per cent by 2030 and improve energy efficiency in production and consumption.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of modern renewable energy production in total energy production 2. Electricity production from renewable sources, excluding hydroelectric (per cent of total) 3. Percentage of household using improved stoves 4. Share of households using LPG for cooking 5. Per cent of households using CFLs
Target 17: Increase by 50 per cent , between 2016 and 2030, waste collection, disposal and management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste collected and well disposed as a per cent of total waste generated. 2. Per cent of total energy generated from waste. 3. Proportion of waste recycled.
Target 18: Increase by a fifth between 2016 and 2030 sustainable transport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fuel consumption by the transport sector per capita 2. Road sector energy consumption per capita (kg of oil equivalent) 3. Railways, passengers carried (million passenger-km) 4. Railways, goods transported (million ton-km) 5. Water, passengers carried (million passenger-km). 6. Water , goods transported (million ton-km). 7. Share of buses in road passenger transport
Target 19 : Increase by a quarter the length of motorable roads and by a third rail and water transport between 2016 and 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roads, total network (km)(part of highways) 2. Rural roads network (km) 3. Road density (km of road per 100 sq. km of land area) 4. Length of functional railways 5. Length of functional water routes
Target 20 : Reduce by a third the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2030;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water use intensity by economic activity 2. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural 3. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural

Goals and targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Theme 4: Inclusive economic growth and structural transformation	
Goal 5: Improve Inclusive economic Growth	
Target 21: Increase and maintain between 2016 and 2030, GDP and GDP per capita growth to 10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gross Domestic Product growth 2. Gross Domestic Product per capita growth 3. Adjusted net savings 4. Labour force productivity 5. CPIA macroeconomic management rating (1=low to 6=high)
Target 22 : increase by a third overall investments and the share of investments in public expenditure by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of public Investment in public expenditure 2. Percentage of investment coming from innovative financing 3. Foreign direct investment, net inflows (per cent of GDP) 4. GNI per capita (constant 2005 US\$) 5. Gross domestic savings (per cent of GDP) 6. Gross capital formation (per cent of GDP)
Target 23 : Reduce foreign aid dependency by a third by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government Revenue as a per cent of GDP 2. Exports of goods and services (per cent of GDP) 3. Net ODA received (per cent of central government expense) 4. External debt stocks (per cent of exports of goods, services and primary income) 5. CPIA efficiency of revenue mobilization rating (1=low to 6=high) 6. CPIA debt policy rating (1=low to 6=high)
Target 24: Ensure inclusive economic growth by 2025 and begin the transition to green economy by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of projects that are considered green 2. Fund size of projects that are considered green 3. Adjusted net savings
Goal 6: Achieve structural economic Transformation	
Target 25 : increase by a third the share of manufacturing in GDP by 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of imports of plants and machinery in total imports 2. Manufacturing, value added (per cent of GDP) 3. Share of manufactured goods in total exports
Target 26: Increase by a third , between 2016 and 2030 the share of local content in FDI and the contribution of natural resource to GDP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number and value of partnerships 2. Share of the number and values of stocks owned by nationals 3. Share of produced capital and natural capital in total wealth

Goals and targets	Indicators for monitoring progress
Theme 5: Good governance, rule of law, peace and security	
Goal 7: Ensure good governance, peace and security	
Target 27: Reduce public perception of corruption by a third between 2016 to 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget allocation to anti-graft agencies 2. Degree of transparency (corruption perception survey) 3. Percentage of people perceived to have paid bribes (corruption perception survey) 4. Transparency International Corruption Perception Index
Target 28 : Reduce by a third the average time needed to access justice from 2016 to 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of land related court cases 2. Access to justice (time people spend in courts)
Target 29 : Ensure rule of law, peace and security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Police personnel to population ratio 2. Number and fatalities from border tensions and conflicts 3. Number and fatalities from Armed rebellions 4. Number and fatalities from Civil conflicts 5. The number of arms seized or recovered. 6. CPIA property rights and rule-based governance rating (1=low to 6=high) 7. Ibrahim Safety and Rule of Law Index 8. Ibrahim index on National Security
Theme 6: Ensure sustainable use and management of natural resources (forest, water and soils)	
Goal 8: Reduce Environmental Degradation and Pollution	
Target 30 : By 2030, keep CO ₂ emissions and other air pollutions at 2015 levels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita 2. Consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) 3. Indoor air pollution from burning traditional biomass fuel 4. PM₁₀, country level (micrograms per cubic meter)
Target 31: Ensure that sustainable development principles are integrated into countries' policies and programmes and well implemented to reverse the loss of environmental resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number and fund size of Inclusive Green Growth projects 2. Adjusted net savings 3. CPIA policy and institutions for environmental sustainability rating (1=low to 6=high) 4. Share of budget allocated to the management of natural disasters 5. Disaster risk reduction progress score (1-5 scale; 5=best) 6. Human and economic loss due to disasters
Target 32: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2030, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of land area protected, total and by ecological region 2. National parks and protected areas under effective management 3. Fragmentation of habitats 4. Land concessions granted in protected areas 5. Species (abundance, distribution, and threats)
Target 33 : Increase recycling, recovery and re-use by 10 per cent between 2016 and 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of recycling, reuse and recovery projects 2. Value of recycling, reuse and recovery projects
Target 34: Reduce deforestation and forest degradation by a half between 2016 and 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest area (per cent of land area) 2. Forest area under sustainable management 3. Visible areas of land recovered from desertification 4. Agricultural land (per cent of land area)

Goals and targets	Goals and targets
Target 35: Reduce by a third pollution of surface water resources and ensure sustainable land management by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Level of use of pesticides and non-organic fertilizer 2. Percentage of the population with access to land and capital 3. Land use change 4. Number and area covered by bushfires 5. Quality of surface water. 6. Annual freshwater withdrawals, total (billion cubic meters) 7. Water availability per capita 8. Percentage of population living in coastal areas 9. Area of treated sites for coastal erosion
Target 36: Reduce post-harvest losses by a half by 2030.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture value added per worker (constant prices) 2. Agriculture, value added (per cent of GDP) 3. Rural roads per capita 4. Density of rural roads 5. Volume of agriculture storage facilities

Theme 7: External Financing and Partnerships	
Goal 9: Enhanceregional and globalpublic-private partnerships for development	
Target 37 : Through foreign-local and public-private partnerships ensure science, technology and innovation transfer,adaptation and diffusion for development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High-technology imports (per cent of total imports) 2. High-technology exports (per cent of total exports) 3. Number and value of public-privatepartnerships 4. Number and value of foreign-localpartnerships
Target 38 : Ensure an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory regional and global trading and financial system by supporting the increasing intra-regional trade, finance and the share of subregional trade in global trade by a third in 2030	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of intra subregional trade and finance in total subregional trade and finance 2. Share of subregional trade and finance in global trade and finance
Target 39 : In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis
Target 40 : Assist developing countries to meet the SDGs by providing additional, predictable and appropriate funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress made in fulfilling multilateral conventions and agreements 2. Bilateral grants provided for sustainable development activities 3. Multilateral grants provided for sustainable development activities 4. Concessionality of loans provided for sustainable development activities 5. Share of GDP committed to developing countries
Target 41 : Ensure debt sustainability and trade facilitation for developing countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services 2. External Debt to GDP Ratio 3. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted free of duty 4. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries 5. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product 6. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity

Goals and targets	Goals and targets
Target 42: Respond to particular needs of landlocked developing countries and island states.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="711 219 1345 302">1. Net amount of total Public Aid Development (PAD) in favour of land locked countries as a percentage of GDP revenue from CDA/OECD countries<li data-bbox="711 309 1345 389">2. Net amount of total Public Aid Development (PAD) in favour of island states as a percentage of GDP revenue from CDA/OECD countries

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The development and implementation of SDGs is crucial for countries in the West Africa subregion. In doing so, it should be ensured that the goals are based on the Rio Principles, are action-oriented, universal in nature but flexible enough to cater to different national circumstances, build on and complement the MDGs and are accompanied by an adequate means of implementation, in particular, financing, technology transfer and capacity-building.

With the exception of a few countries, the subregion has over the past decade experienced political stability. This phenomenon has contributed to the achievement of appreciable economic growth in almost all the countries of the subregion. Specifically, political stability in these countries has led to some improvement in their macroeconomic situation, albeit marginally. Real economic transformation of the countries in the subregion has not been observed even though the service sector is expanding significantly. The manufacturing sector, which is critical to the transformation process through value addition, is rather stagnant. On the social development front, access to education and health has improved but more needs to be done in terms of quality. With regards to environmental sustainability, the general observation is that, despite efforts being made, environmental degradation and pollution still remain a major challenge.

In summary, countries in the subregion have made some achievements in relation to the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. However, a lot more needs to be done if sustainable development is to be addressed in a holistic and integrated manner. This calls for among other measures, good governance and enhanced efforts in addressing institutional, financial, technological and capacity constraints.

An analysis of PRS and other documents as well as the results of a survey conducted to ascertain priority sustainable development issues in the subregion suggests that there are many topics that need attention. Issues that SDGs should address include education, health, sustainable infrastructural development, inclusive economic growth diversification and transformation, good governance and the rule of law, agriculture and food security, the environment and natural resource management, social protection for the poor and vulnerable, sanitation and urban management, as well as peace and security. In this connection, nine SDGs have been advanced, complemented by 42 targets and 178 indicators.

5.2. Recommendations

Member States, regional and subregional bodies, and the international community will all have to commit and make significant efforts towards operationalizing the SDGs. The following recommendations are proffered.

Member States, regional and subregional bodies and the international community will all have to commit and make significant efforts towards operationalizing the SDGs.

5.3. Member countries

Good governance

In order to effectively implement the SDGs, commitment is required on the part of the subregion's leadership at the highest level. This engagement will involve enhancing transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

Education and awareness creation

Achieving the SDGs should start by implementation at grassroots level. In this respect, public participation not only at the implementation stage but also at the design stage is very critical for successful implementation. Strengthening decentralized government administration, sensitization and the creation of awareness at a local level will increase the knowledge base of communities and promote practices that are compatible with achieving the SDGs. The SDGs will also be achieved by stepping up the degree of involvement and by widening the diversity of stakeholders in the implementation of the goals through workshops, seminars, forums, campaigns and projects at local, regional and national levels. Integrating sustainable development concepts into national education programmes and curricula at all levels, including developing specialized advanced courses and establishing sustainable development desks or appointing focal persons to all ministries, departments and agencies, will be imperative.

Long-term strategy

Realistic long-term development strategies to guide the implementation and achievement of the SDGs should be developed and implemented. The preoccupation with medium-term PRSs pays very little attention, or none at all, to intergenerational equity considerations. Since sustainable development is clearly intended to set the direction for decades to come, countries should plan over the long-term horizon to ensure consistency. Medium-term and short-term programmes – such as annual budgets – should be tied to long term-strategies to ensure the effective operationalization and implementation of the SDGs. Unlike many strategies in the past, which failed to assess the financial resources required and were therefore not fully implemented due to financial constraints, such long-term and medium-term strategies should make a good assessment of the financial resources required for countries to meet the SDGs. In developing these long-term and medium-term plans, attention should be paid equally to all three dimensions of sustainable development, and greater effort should be made to improve synergies at a sectoral level during strategy development to ensure a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Involvement of the private sector and CSOs

More effort should be made at the operational level to involve the private sector and civil society organizations in policy formulation and implementation so as to gain their acceptance and effectively partner with them. The private sector has human, technological and financial resources to partner with and complement government's efforts, but they need to be convinced of the optimal returns on their investment. Private sector involvement could be incentivized through fiscal incentives such as tax breaks and reduced tariffs based on the positive social externalities to be generated.

Linkages/coordination

Integrating the various dimensions of sustainable development, as well as ensuring vertical and horizontal linkages of programmes and projects, are the most difficult objectives to achieve but remain crucial for effectively operationalizing and implementation of the SDGs. Further requirements are decentralizing implementation to subnational levels, building capacity and adequately resourcing local-level implementing agencies and sectors. It will also be imperative to enhance the coordination mechanisms of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in order to reduce the duplication of efforts and to create beneficial linkages. Ensuring the proper harmonization of policies is also crucial to ensuring that all the development policies and plans in every department and sector at the national and subnational level are in tandem with the overall national strategy.

Strengthening institutions

Several reports and documents attest to the fact that weak institutions have been one of the major problems that has beset the implementation of sustainable development in the subregion. The

institutional structures established to implement sustainable development are not very clear in many countries of the subregion. In Ghana, for example, the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) together with its agencies is supposed to be the main agency coordinating sustainable development activities. However, the National Development and Planning Commission (NDPC) carries out the actual planning and monitoring of sustainable development issues while the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) supports the practical implementation of these plans through funding. Planning ministries should be given broader mandates and be adequately resourced and capacitated to forge greater convergence and coordination. Furthermore, most institutions operate at the national level, lacking opportunities to coordinate at the local level. There is also a need to establish or strengthen the presence of national institutions at the local level so as to enhance the coordination of implementation activities.

Funding

Operationalizing SDGs at the national level will require substantial financial resources. To this end, countries in the subregion, as well as development partners and regional/subregional financial institutions like the AfDB, should support the development of innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms such as the establishment of trusts, fiscal instruments, tourist fees, trust funds, bio prospecting, biodiversity enterprise funds, and debt-for-nature-swaps. In addition, mechanisms to increase the efficiency of resource mobilization and expenditure – both domestic and external – will need to be instituted. There will also be the need to better mobilize and efficiently manage remittances as well as to improve the management of insurance and pension funds for sustainable development.

In recent years, many countries have been emphasizing the use of market-based instruments for the purposes of environmental policy management – an approach that could also be applied at the subregional level. West African countries should therefore consider enhancing the implementation of market-based policies such as fiscal instruments in the form of progressive taxes or tariffs on energy, water and other natural resources, as well as contemplate introducing other ecological taxes which can facilitate a gradual shift in taxes away from labour to the environmental “bads” and encourage the polluter pays principle. Environmentally harmful subsidies should also be removed, thereby generating substantial resources for the implementation of the sustainable development agenda while minimizing environmental pollution.

Capacity development

Human capacities at both local and national level need to be developed for the implementation of sustainable development. This action will involve establishing centres of excellence for training and for research on sustainable development. Promoting the organization of forums for sharing experiences, exchanging information and networking at both regional and district level will also improve the capacity of policymakers to implement the sustainable development agenda. Capacity-building should also focus on monitoring and evaluation with a view to learning lessons for future implementation.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Although indicators are used by various stakeholders in the subregion on a daily basis, in several Member States, there are serious challenges in relation to collecting and collating data. In some countries of the subregion, this situation has led to the duplication of efforts, to conflicting statistics and a blurring of the monitoring of development targets. The monitoring processes in some Member States are also flawed by implementation challenges such as technical capacity and the difficulty of properly institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation processes at the subnational level, where the implementation of sustainable development is vital. In addition, there is very little investment in the collection of certain data. For example, data on unemployment, which is a key macro economic indicator, is never collected on an annual basis in any of the countries of the subregion, despite its importance.

A proper assessment of the achievements made in operationalizing the implementation of the SDGs, which will facilitate lessonlearning, will require:

- Developing a comprehensive framework to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SDGs that will cover data collection, compilation, evaluation, timing and end verification;
- Undertaking baseline studies on the state of sustainable development, using the recommended indicators including the national and regional validation of these indicators;
- Strengthening data collection, especially at the district level;
- Improving mechanisms for the verification of information provided via the identification of focal persons in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and other entities (private, research institutions, public and civil society) by capacitating them to be able to monitor and provide regular feedback;
- Having a separate and adequate budget for monitoring sustainable development implementation; and
- Developing mechanisms for facilitating the measurement of efforts or the pace of progress and not only the shortfall from the target.

5.4. *Subregional and regional bodies*

Sustainable development governance in the subregionneeds to be improved. This action will involve assessing the work of sub regional bodies by taking good stock of what is being done and by whom in terms of sustainable development. This approach will help identify overlaps and conflicting mandates, as well as complementarities. Such an exercise will help rationalize the work of subregional bodies by ensuring cooperation and coordination with all the stakeholders; ensuring both vertical and horizontal integration of their programmes; creating synergies and strengthening institutions; ensuring coherent policies at the national, regional and global levels. In addition, it would help reduce the duplication of efforts and ease the excessive pressure on the limited institutional capacities of many countries in the subregion.

The role played by regional and subregional bodies such as the ECOWAS, WAEMU and AU in sustainable development governance should also be enhanced. This action will include reviewing the mandates of these bodies to incorporate sustainable development principles and establishing mechanisms to enhance synergies. Proper governance will, for example, ensure the operationalization of the goals through ECOWAS Commission directives.

To properly and effectively monitor the operationalization and implementation of sustainable development in the subregion, a subregional sustainability index could be developed to concisely monitor the implementation of sustainable development. A subregional investment code and a subregional technological fund to support innovation systems within the context of sustainable development should also be developed and established.

Extensive regional consultations involvingtheECOWAS and WAEMU should also be undertakento comprehensively discuss modalities for implementation. At the national level, ministries in charge of economic planning, environment, health, education, agriculture and social welfare should be involved in this process.

ECA should consolidate experience and knowledge-sharing platforms so as to enhance networking in the implementation of the SDGs. Such platforms could also be used to build the capacities of relevant national agencies to enhance implementation, as well as to promote partnerships that respond to the collective needs of specific countries.

Even though many countries in the subregion have statistical agencies, data on some key sustainable development issues are usually under the purview of specific agencies and ministries. In some cases, such data are not collected and compiled properly. As a result, problems related to the lack of reliable data and to the absence of a system of efficient evaluation and follow-up should be resolved. Subregional and regional bodies should support countries in collecting information on relevant indicators. This action will involve strengthening statistical agencies in the collection and analysis of data. It will also be imperative to harmonize and standardize all the statistical agencies so as to facilitate comparison and make these agencies a one-stopshop for data on sustainable development. In addition, reliable mechanisms for regular reporting on progress towards sustainable development should be put in place.

5.5. *International community*

The international community has been supporting the implementation of the MDGs since 2000. It is therefore necessary to properly assess the implementation of MDGs with a view to informing the SDG process.

The effective operationalization of SDGs will require the availability of adequate resources and, thus, the need for meaningful support from the international community. These actions call for a genuine commitment to both aid and development effectiveness. The international community should promote, facilitate and finance not only appropriate environmentally- sound technologies and their diffusion but also capacity-building, institutional strengthening and global partnerships for development.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire

The Rio outcome document states that the SDGs should be limited in number and focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development.

Institution completing questionnaire and country:.....

1. With the help of the table below and in order of importance (1- very important, 10 - less important), please provide a limited number (preferably between six and ten) of the key priority sustainable development issues/areas to be addressed through the SDGs in the subregion. Please provide reason(s) for assigning the rank you select for the particular issue/area. An example is provided in the first rows in red.
2. For every priority sustainable development issue/area (or group of priority sustainable development issues/areas) for the subregion provided in question 1, formulate goals (preferable between two and three), targets for the goal (preferable between two and four) and indicators (preferable one and three) to monitor the target in the subregion, using the table below. In formulating the target, please consider a time frame of 25 years (2015-2040). An example has been provided in the first rows in red.

Issue /area	Goal (s)	Target(s)	Indicator(s)
Issue/Area: Inclusive economic growth and structural transformation	Goal 1: Improve macroeconomic environment	Target 1: Increase GDP and GDP per capita growth to 8 per cent and 3 per cent respectively and maintain these levels between 2015 and 2040	Indicator 1: Real GDP growth Indicator 2: Real GDP per capita growth
		Target 2: Increase the share of investment in public expenditure by a third by 2040	Government investment expenditure as a share of total expenditure
		Target 3: Reduce foreign aid dependency by 50 per cent by 2040	
	Goal 2: Achieve structural economic transformation	Target 1: Double the share of manufacturing in GDP by 2040	
		Target 2: Double the percentage of local content in FDI between 2015 and 2040	

Issue /area	Goal (s)	Target(s)	Indicator(s)
PLEASE START FROM HERE			
Issue/Area 1: Up to 10			

YOU MAY ADD MORE ROWS

3. How might the SDGs strive to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development? (Please highlight your choice)
 - a. Reflect on the social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG, possibly through the associated targets
 - b. Integrate the MDGs – suitably modified/updated for post-2015 – into a larger sustainable development framework
 - c. Expand MDG7 (‘environmental sustainability’) into a number of goals with a natural/environmental resource dimension (water, food, energy, etc.)
 - d. Other (please describe)
4. What specific steps should be taken to domesticate and operationalize SDGs in the subregion?
5. How should assessments of progress toward the achievement of the SDGs be carried out and made more participatory by involving relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system at the subregional level?
6. How should a new Global Partnership for Development be constructed within or around the SDGs?
7. Please provide any other observations, ideas or inputs that you think could help us flesh out a good SDG for the subregion.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Annex 2: List of respondents

More than 100 officials from the ECOWAS Commission and economic, social and environmental MDAs of all Member States of the Commission were contacted for the purposes of this report. The list of respondents is provided in the following table.

Country	Contacts
Burkina Faso	<p>Secrétariat Permanent du Conseil National pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (SP/CONEDD) du Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable. Burkina Faso</p> <p>RasmanéOuedraogo Directeur des Politiques Environnementales - SP/CONEDD 01 BP 6486 Ouagadougou 01 Burkina Faso Tel: +226 76524442/ (226)50313166/ +226 70959544 (cell) Fax: +226 50316491 Email: rasowat@yahoo.fr</p>
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Gambia, The	<p>Ms. Amie Khan Principal Economist Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, The Quadrangle, Banjul, Tel:+220-7041233 Email: khammie5@gmail.comamikhann25@yahoo.com,</p>
Liberia	<p>Jonah J. Boykai Director, Psychosocial and Community Support Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Monrovia Tel: +231-886736305</p>
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Country	Contacts
Guinea	Conseil National de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Secrétaire exécutive du Conseil National de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Tel; +224 64640670 Email: camara.idiatou@yahoo.fr
Togo	Bagdougoua. Bamoudna, Ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières BP 4825, Lome, Togo Tel: 228 918 58 26/ 228 221 30 78/ (226)32 40 74 Fax: 228 221 03 33 Email: felibamod@yahoo.fr/www.merf.tg
Niger	Ministry of Population, Advancement of Women and Child Protection

