



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

**Seventeenth quarterly briefing meeting with African ambassadors**

**Briefing note**

**9 March 2017**

**Addis Ababa**

## **Briefing by the acting Executive Secretary**

The acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is convening the seventeenth quarterly briefing meeting with African ambassadors accredited to Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa, to exchange views on the work of the Commission. This briefing note provides an overview of the substantive work carried out by the secretariat over the past four months, highlights the key events that will take place over the next three months, and discusses some of the secretariat's new partnerships.

The acting Executive Secretary would like to take this opportunity to inform the Ambassadors that the third session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the fiftieth session of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will be taking place in Dakar from 23 to 28 March 2017.

In addition, the acting Executive Secretary wishes to update the African ambassadors on two important events that took place in 2017.

First, the twenty-eighth African Union Summit was held in Addis Ababa under the theme “Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth”. Apart from participating in bilateral meetings with key stakeholders, the acting Executive Secretary delivered opening remarks to the Executive Council of the African Union and participated in the African Peer Review Mechanism and the NEPAD meetings. In his address to the Executive Council, the acting Executive Secretary focused on five key messages relating to (i) global megatrends and how they are affecting Africa; (ii) the imperative of promoting good governance, peace and security; (iii) the development policy framework needed for the continent to accelerate investment in its youth; (iv) promoting transformative and inclusive development; and (v) regional cooperation and policy coordination for the development of Africa in this rapidly changing world.

Second, the acting Executive Secretary had the privilege to welcome the new Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres to Addis Ababa. The Secretary-General delivered a statement to the African Union Summit and held a working breakfast with Heads of State and Government. In his interventions, the Secretary General reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to support the Governments of Africa in their efforts to successfully implement Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and promote peace and security and human rights on the continent. He also commended the efforts of the regional economic communities in Africa, particularly the Economic Community of West African States for successfully brokering a peaceful democratic resolution of the recent political impasse in the Gambia. In addition, during the visit, the Secretary General held his first town hall meeting with United Nations staff in Africa during which he emphasized that the success of the United Nations worldwide is linked to its success in Africa, especially in terms of the development and peace and security policies of the United Nations.

### **Activities from November 2016 to February 2017**

The present briefing note focuses on substantive areas of work, grouped under topics relating to the Commission’s programme of work: key events, knowledge generation and information-sharing; and capacity development, which includes extending technical support to member States and consensus-building.

## **A. Key events**

### **1. Twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22)**

Held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in November, the objective of the meeting was to discuss implementation of the decisions taken under the framework of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in such areas as adaptation, mitigation, financing, capacity-building and compensation for loss and damage. Adaptation and resilience to climate change were of particular importance in the discussions held at the Africa Pavilion, where more than 85 side events took place.

### **2. Twelfth Africa Symposium on Statistical Development**

The symposium, which took place in Tunis in November, marked the beginning of the economic statistics round of symposiums during the period 2016-2020. The focus of this round was to strengthen economic statistics to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

### **3. Africa Trade Week**

The inaugural session of the Africa Trade Week, a new pan-African platform for advancing dialogues on intra-African trade among different groups of stakeholders, was held from 28 November to 2 December in Addis Ababa. This event, which was organized jointly with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the African Export-Import Bank (Afrexim Bank), brought together ministers of trade, regional economic communities, the private sector, development banks, civil society, academia, international development agencies and the media to exchange views on how African economies can be transformed through intraregional trade and trade facilitation.

### **4. Fifth session of the Committee on Statistics<sup>1</sup>**

The Committee on Statistics, a subsidiary body of the Commission, held its fifth session together with the tenth session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices, from 28 November to 2 December in Côte d'Ivoire. The event was organized in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the host Government, and had 154 participants, which included representatives of African national statistics offices, statistical training centres, regional economic communities, national mapping offices, pan-African organizations, and key international statistical institutions and organizations partners.

### **5. The African Economic Conference (AEC) 2016**

In December, ECA, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Development Bank organized this annual economic conference in Abuja, under the theme "Feed Africa: towards agro-allied industrialization for inclusive growth". The secretariat organized a side event entitled "Targeting agro-allied industrialization – the continental free trade area (CFTA) initiative" to inform stakeholders about the potential opportunities in promoting regional agro-allied industrialization for inclusive growth and the structural transformation in Africa as result of the implementation of the initiative.

**6. Symposium on implementing agro-industrialization and regional value chains for agricultural transformation in Africa**

This symposium was held in Abidjan in December. Its main objective was to showcase research results on the trends, determinants, constraints, and opportunities associated with improving agribusiness, agro-industry and regional agricultural value chains in Africa within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. During the event, policy actions and converging approaches aimed at fostering agribusiness-led agricultural transformation and promoting intra-trade in agricultural products in Africa were identified.

**7. Land Policy Initiative Steering Committee meeting**

The East African Community (EAC) hosted the Steering Committee meeting of the Land Policy Initiative in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in December. The main objective of the meeting was to review progress made in implementing the previous decisions of the Steering Committee and review progress achieved in implementing the African Union Agenda on land.

**8. Public debate on the *African Governance Report IV* and the *Transformative Industrial Policy for Africa***

The secretariat convened a policy debate on these two flagship publications at the International Relations Institute of Cameroon in Yaoundé. The deliberations highlighted the findings of the report of the need for a more holistic approach for appraising and tackling corruption in Africa, especially by reviewing other factors in addition to perception indices and being mindful of the international dimension of the problem. Regarding industrial policy, the participants acknowledged that transformative industrial policy remains relevant for countries, and urged the Commission to continue to promote developmental states centred on industrial policy.

**9. Seventh Session of the subregional coordination mechanisms on the United Nations system-wide support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme of the African Union**

During the reporting period, the secretariat's subregional offices in Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and North Africa each held their annual sessions of the subregional coordination mechanism. The outcomes of the meetings included actions that need to be taken to strengthen the Commission's engagement with regional economic communities, member States and the African Union on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 to better respond to the requirements of the subregions.

**10. Presentation of Africa's Blue Economy: A policy handbook**

The secretariat presented the main findings of its latest publication at a regional workshop of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), held in December 2016. The meeting endorsed the findings in the publication and made recommendations that included strengthening cooperation between the Commission and IOC in disseminating the handbook and using the findings as a methodological tool towards the development of the IOC Regional Action Plan on the blue economy.

### **11. High-level launch of the 16 infrastructure projects for African integration report**

The secretariat organized the launch of the report in Dakar. Participants at the event reflected on the findings and recommendations of the report, including issues relating to the economic viability of infrastructure projects, strategic impact, technical specifications, coordination, international support, risks and mitigation, expected benefits and progress reports.

### **12. Second Annual Workshop on International Economic Negotiations**

This annual event was organized by the secretariat in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December. Senior African civil servants from thirty-six countries attended the annual training, which focused on four subtopics, namely trade, taxation, investment and natural resources. After a day-long plenary session of dealing with the four subtopics, the participants were divided into groups for two days of breakout sessions focusing on the subtopics and completing negotiation exercises. This year, there was also increased representation from the Maghreb countries and very senior officials from revenue authorities and other focus areas. The principal negotiator of double tax treaties for South Africa gave an in-depth presentation on the unique methods adopted by the country with regard to organizing town halls for taxpayers and extending trainings, mostly to member States of the Southern African Development Community, on how to renegotiate pre-colonial or outdated agreements.

### **13. Africa Ministerial Pre-Commission on the Status of Women 61st consultative meeting**

The secretariat, in collaboration with UN Women, co-organized this consultative meeting based on the theme “Women’s economic empowerment in the world of work” on 26 and 27 January in Addis Ababa. The aim of the meeting was to build a consensus on priorities of Africa with a view to influencing the global Commission of the Status of Women, scheduled to be held in March 2017 in New York. ECA produced a background paper on the theme, which included an analysis of the main gender and women's issues in the workplace in Africa and provided policy recommendations for member States to harness women's employment opportunities.

### **14. 2017 Mining Indaba**

The annual continent-wide event on the mining sector was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in February. The secretariat used this platform to host a ministerial symposium panel on governance and illicit financial flows in the mining sector, which featured participation of high-level delegates, including the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki.

### **15. Inaugural Session on the African Corridor Management Alliance**

This inaugural session of the alliance was held in February in Walvis Bay, Namibia. The objective of the alliance is to coordinate the sharing of best practices and other strategies in support of the development and management of economic corridors in Africa in order to promote economic transformation and boost intraregional trade.

## **16. Meeting on bottom-up accountability initiatives and large-scale land-based investment**

In partnership with various civil society organizations and the Food First Information and Action Network, the secretariat co-organized a meeting on bottom-up accountability initiatives and large-scale land-based investments in February in Abuja, Nigeria. The objective of the meeting was to provide a platform to explore ways of creating synergies to support more responsible governance of the African land and forest sectors in the context of large-scale land-based investments.

## **B. Knowledge generation and information-sharing**

The secretariat's knowledge-generating activities and products cover a wide range of topical economic issues. Some of the publications completed during the reporting period are the following:

- (a) Journal article entitled "Can the Sustainable Development Goals promote structural transformation in Africa? an empirical analysis";
- (b) Policy essay entitled "Cooperating for Africa: two challenges to meeting development goals";
- (c) Policy briefs entitled "Long-term development planning: a foundation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa" and "Greening Africa's industrialization";
- (d) Study entitled "Effective regulatory systems for service delivery and structural transformation in Africa: infrastructure development and the case of power pools";
- (e) Study entitled "Assessment of mineral regimes in the East African Community: aligning frameworks with the African Mining Vision";
- (f) Ageing in the Small Islands Developing States;
- (g) The operational guide on the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development;
- (h) Chapter entitled "Intervenciones estratégicas para el desarrollo sostenible: perspectivas desde África" in the book *New Approaches to Productive Development: State, Sustainability and Industrial Policy*, and chapters entitled, "Rethinking development assistance in line with dual transition of Africa's development agendas; Export diversification and intra-industry trade in Africa" and "Preferential trade agreements in Africa: lessons from the tripartite free trade agreements and an African continent-wide FTA";
- (i) The African Centre for Statistics launched a revamped ECASStats, which is an online statistical database for socioeconomic data on African countries and serves as a one-stop shop for validated data and metadata, which can be accessed free from anywhere;
- (j) Corporate brochure to assist member States in adopting and implementing the African Mining Vision as a tool to better harness mineral resources for developmental gains;
- (k) Study on territorialization of industrial policy and inclusive growth in North Africa.

(l) Publication on internal balances, competitiveness, and the structural transformation process in Morocco.

(m) Study on the implication of a common currency for Western African Countries.

(n) Study entitled “Building productive capacities for regional and global competitiveness: the case of East African Community”.

## **C. Capacity development**

The secretariat’s technical support to its member States over the past quarter primarily consisted of training, capacity development and technical advisory services in economic management and planning.

### **1. Training and capacity enhancement**

(a) The Commission’s training arm, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), has continued to offer training courses to officials from member States. In the period under review, 151 officials from 43 countries, with more than 33 per cent being women, benefited from training programmes in various thematic areas, including trade, gender, land policy, natural resource management and domestic resource mobilization. Overall, a satisfaction level of 86 per cent was registered by participants in response to a survey on the relevance of the modules, the quality of delivery and the quality of the course materials. Additionally, the monthly development seminar on governance, economic and financial security was held in collaboration with the African Centre for New Economy of SOPEL International. The seminar helped to build public awareness on the ownership of good governance principles and included discussions on the complex environment of tax havens and the need for better coordination at the international level to promote good governance.

(b) To strengthen statistical capacities, a sampling of the secretariat’s support includes the following initiatives: (i) two regional workshops in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the production of population projections and related demographic statistics, held on 28 November and 2 December. The main objective of the workshop was to strengthen the technical capacity of government officials involved in the production of population projections and related demographic indicators; (ii) implementation of the training component of the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics in partnership with the African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources, which provides a nine-month specialization programme in agricultural statistics to enable young statisticians to quickly specialize in the field of agricultural statistics; (iii) successful launch of a set of regional indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063; (iv) technical support extended to Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Tunisia and Zimbabwe through the implementation of the pilot phase of the Development Account Project to strengthen the capacity of African countries to use mobile technology to collect data for effective policy and decision-making; (v) provided technical and financial support in developing a monitoring and evaluation system on development projects for Senegal, including the application of the African Social Development Index and the model Threshold 21 (T21).

Furthermore, within the framework of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS), a technical assistance mission was undertaken in Chad in December 2016. The outcome of the mission was a commitment to launch

a CRVS comprehensive assessment by March 2017 in partnership with the Government of Chad and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Also, an expert group meeting on the African Charter on Statistics and the data revolution in West Africa was organized in November in Dakar to validate a report on the status of implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and the data revolution in the subregion and to share practical experiences of countries and subregional organizations in the development of statistics. Another expert group meeting on harmonizing data for better economic governance in Southern Africa took place in Lusaka in December. During the meeting, participants reviewed a draft study report prepared by the subregional office for Southern Africa and discussed the role of member States, regional organizations, the pan-African institutions and development partners in data harmonization efforts in Southern Africa.

## **2. Technical and advisory services**

Over the reporting period, technical support and advisory services were provided in a number of areas. Some highlights and examples of this are the following:

### **(a) Natural resources, environmental issues and sustainable development in Africa**

- In the mining sector, capacity support was provided by the secretariat to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Malawi through a series of workshops on contract negotiations. Training was given to member States with the objective to build capacities for contract negotiation in order to leverage opportunities for developing viable regional value chains in mining, and prioritize ownership in African countries. Other capacity development workshops included one on mineral sector development, which was organized in collaboration with the Governments of Australia and Ethiopia in Addis Ababa in November, and the Good Governance Africa Workshop on extractive industry governance. Additionally, technical and advisory support continues to be provided to Kenya to develop the extractive industry section of the African Peer Review Mechanism process.
- An ad hoc expert group meeting on the African Mining Vision reviewed a study on the status and prospects of the implementation of the African Mining Vision in Central Africa. The extensive work on the mining economy in the Central Africa subregion shows that with regard to their national regimes, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) member countries are not yet fully aligned with the African Mining Vision, which aims, over the long term, to establish mechanisms that allow for the following: (i) a transparent mining industry; and (ii) optimum, equitable and rational exploitation of mineral resources so as to support steady, inclusive and sustainable growth. Contract negotiation workshops are planned for Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the Niger.



## **(b) Trade-related issues, industry and infrastructure**

- With regard to trade-related issues, the secretariat continued to help build the capacity of member States through several training programmes. These included a workshop on the trade, gender and development nexus in Dakar in November, capacity-building support to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on its gender mainstreaming exercise, a continental workshop on promoting gender inclusivity in CFTA policies, negotiations and agreements; and training on trade policy with a focus on gravity and computable general equilibrium.
- In addition, the secretariat partnered with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to develop electronic investment guides (iGuides) which are intended to serve as the premier reference instrument for each country on investments. Support will be extended to Guinea, Malawi and Nigeria in developing national iGuides and one-stop shops to provide relevant, up-to-date and centralized investment information to potential and existing investors.
- The secretariat formally joined the “e-Trade for All” initiative. This initiative brings together key public and private stakeholders to contribute more effectively to the efforts of developing countries to harness e-commerce as a vehicle for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Analytical work is being undertaken on the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the transformation agenda for Africa. The main purpose of the study is to examine what countries are doing to foster an enabling environment for SME development and promote adequate funding and capitalization of SMEs from a variety of sources, including governments, microfinancing institutions, banks and private equity investors. The study will include an exhaustive analysis on experiences in developing SMEs and evidence-based policy recommendations.
- In the area of intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities, technical assistance continued to be provided to member States on the promotion and development of regional agricultural value chains. A training workshop was organized within the implementation framework of the Development Account Project aimed at strengthening capacities for the development of regional agricultural value chains in Africa. The main objective of the workshop was to conduct a training for policymakers, stakeholders and practitioners on design and implementation of regional value chains projects for policymakers in 10 member States. The workshop, which was held in Addis Ababa in December, had 30 participants from national institutions, regional economic communities and the private sector and other stakeholders.
- The secretariat also participated in a workshop convened by the Islamic Development Bank on the Post-Nairobi WTO Agenda. The event included a presentation to promote regional value chains and regional integration in North Africa.
- The tenth International Colloquium of Rabat, under the theme “Trade, investment and sustainable development”, was organized in partnership with the WTO Chair of the Mohammed VI University of Rabat and the University of Toulon Laboratory for Applied Economic Research in Development in Rabat from 27 to 29 October. Among the topics under discussion at the event was understanding the stakes of multilateral trade negotiations in relation to climate change and sustainable development.

### **(c) Land policy, food security and agriculture**

- The secretariat organized a sensitization seminar on large-scale land investments for African traditional chiefs and community leaders. The participants discussed the challenges of making large-scale land investments on the continent and received capacity-building training on effective participation in negotiations to secure beneficial outcomes for their communities and national economies. Also during the seminar, the participants adopted a declaration committing themselves to contribute to the implementation of the African Union agenda on land and Agenda 2063.
- Based on its experience in implementing the Land Policy Initiative, the secretariat contributed to the meeting of the Africa regional network of the International Federation of Surveyors on the challenges and opportunities of improving land governance within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. The secretariat also took advantage of the opportunity to sensitize African surveyors and get their buy-in to enhance the implementation of the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa at the country level.
- The secretariat, in collaboration with the African Union, United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and other regional and national organizations organized a national workshop on land, ethnicity and conflict in Darfur, Sudan.
- Technical and advisory assistance has continued to influence policy in the area of food security and agriculture. In that regard, the secretariat organized a training workshop on strengthening capacities for the development of regional agricultural value chains in Africa through the provision technical expertise. Policymakers from 10 member States attended the workshop, which was held in Addis Ababa in November. All told, some 30 participants from national institutions, regional economic communities, the private sector and other stakeholders participated in the workshop. The main focus of the workshop was to give training on design and implementation of regional value chains projects, which contributed to efforts aimed at strengthening institutional capacity at national and regional levels.
- The secretariat provided technical assistance to senior officials of the Governments of Guinea and Senegal in the areas of industrialization, agriculture and value creation. The support included assistance in developing industrial policy, a strategy to support private sector development and the National Charter for Small and Medium Enterprises.

### **(d) Social policy**

- The secretariat organized a partners' briefing on the African Social Development Index in Nairobi on 23 January to present the key findings of the index from three African subregions, share lessons learned and discuss the impact of the index since inception. The briefing also intended to strengthen support to African countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The secretariat collaborated with the Society for International Development to organize a regional policy forum on tackling regional inequalities for researchers, experts and policymakers in Africa and beyond in Addis Ababa in November 2016.
- Additionally, the secretariat completed an operational guide on the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development. The guide and a monitoring and evaluation

framework for the Declaration will be presented for adoption at the session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Health Population and Drug Control, to be held in March 2017.

- In the area of urbanization, the secretariat has supported five countries, namely Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Morocco, Uganda and Zambia, in developing action plans to promote inclusivity and sustainability in African cities and to strengthen the mainstreaming of urbanization in national development plans. Prior to receiving the support, these countries were already in the process of developing urban policies and mid-term reviews of their national development plans.
- Additionally, following the adoption of the new global Urban Agenda, the secretariat participated in the second ordinary session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization in November. During the meeting, a consensus was reached on a harmonized approach for the implementation of the common African position towards regional and global commitments pertaining to urban planning and development.
- The secretariat participated in the ninth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which was held in Dhaka in December. The discussions at the forum were centred on the production of a global compact on migration by 2018. ECA was requested to take the lead in Africa to ensure that the African perspective is well articulated in the global compact.

#### **(e) National accounts**

- Technical and advisory support was extended to a number of countries, upon their request, to improve their national accounts and national statistical systems. Technical missions have been sent to Cabo Verde, Egypt and Gabon to elaborate on the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The expected outcome of those missions is enhanced capacities in the production and dissemination of national accounts, which are expected to focus on priority areas of basic economic statistics.

#### **(f) Governance**

The secretariat provided technical and advisory support in governance to several countries, upon their request, as follows:

- Technical support to the new Government of Benin: Following the first mission held in May 2016, a second technical mission was undertaken to kick start the implementation of support extended by ECA to Benin. It was agreed that the country would draw up a national development plan to operationalize Benin Vision 2025. The development of the ECA country profile for Benin will also serve as a policymaking tool to promote structural transformation. The expectations of the Government of Benin in terms of capacity-building of its planning and statistics teams were reaffirmed. The institutional framework for the implementation of the new vision and the evaluation of the former vision was defined. The need for high-level participation of the Ministry of Planning and other institutional bodies at the national level has been stressed to ensure ownership and efficient and effective implementation, taking into account the time constraint. A detailed report, including a budget, deadlines and deliverables, will be produced to mobilize resources related to the interventions.

- The secretariat continued to provide support to Guinea as part of the country’s post-crisis reconstruction effort, including assistance in developing the country’s long-term development vision. In that regard, “Guinea Vision 2040”, was presented to the Government. The secretariat also conducted a training on results-based management for mid- to high-level technical staff of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to support work pertaining to the vision. Also of note, a statistics expert from the secretariat conducted a mission to Conakry to provide technical assistance to the Government in its GDP rebasing exercise.
- A scoping mission conducted in Burkina Faso identified priority areas requiring technical and advisory support from the secretariat going forward. They are as follows: (i) development planning and statistics; (ii) incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals; (iii) management and drafting of the macroeconomic framework; and (iv) negotiation and implementation of mining contracts.
- The Government of the Gambia sent a formal request to ECA to provide capacity-building support in developing the country’s planning framework.
- The secretariat extended support to the Government of the Gambia in preparing its development planning framework and terms of reference. The Personnel Management Office, in coordination with the Directorate of Development Planning under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, has been working to strengthen the framework through the recruitment and posting of skilled planners to various ministries. The Government has requested further assistance from ECA in preparing the country’s Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) strategy. Following a fact-finding mission in July, the secretariat submitted an action plan with clearly identified priority areas, projects, timelines and responsibilities, which was approved by the Government.
- Technical support was provided to the Government of Cameroon on its national development planning process, including in the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals; developing planning and policy modelling tools; strengthening the national statistics system; and improving the accountability framework in national planning. This is being carried out in the context of national and regional challenges related to the decline in oil and commodities prices and its effect on the economy.
- The secretariat provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda with regard to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and in conducting research.
- The secretariat has continued to organize macroeconomic policy dialogues for senior government officials of countries throughout Africa, including the Gambia and IGAD member States. The objective of the dialogues is to improve national capacity to design, formulate and implement sound macroeconomic policies.

**(g) Technical and advisory support to the regional economic communities**

- The secretariat extended technical support to the African Union Southern Africa Office in facilitating the “AU-SADC-COMESA Coordination Meeting on Ratification, Domestication and Implementation of Legal Instruments Strategy”, which was held in Midrand, South Africa, in November 2016. The meeting noted that to achieve the objectives of the African Union and the regional economic communities, especially

Agenda 2063, gaps in the ratification, integration and implementation of countries' legal instruments must be dealt with. As such, the meeting agreed that there is urgent need to formulate a coordinated strategy that can track progress in realizing these objectives.

- The secretariat undertook a technical mission to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to identify priority areas for extending support in the short and medium term. Two areas identified during the mission were regional and continental trade policy initiatives and CFTA negotiations.
- At the request of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the United Nations Development Programme, undertook a joint scoping mission to assess and define the modalities for the provision of coordinated assistance to the Commission on security and development around Lake Chad. Within that context, the Commission committed to identify capacity enhancement programmes and strategies for meaningful technical support to LCBC and its member countries.
- In December, the secretariat organized a validation workshop for a capacity development strategy prepared by ECA for IGAD, in Nairobi. The strategy includes a review of the current working methods of the IGAD secretariat and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of the institution. It also contains a plan for mobilizing resources to support the activities of the institution.

#### **D. Consensus-building**

The secretariat has continued to assist its member States in articulating common positions on important issues through various forms of technical support and collaboration. Examples of this are as follows:

- Supporting member States in the formulation of the African action plan on Geospatial Information Management. The action plan takes into account the following issues: policy and governance; a common framework and tools; capacity-building and knowledge transfer; and international coordination and cooperation in meeting global needs. One of the main outcomes of this consensus-building activity is increased awareness on the advantages of spatial data infrastructure covering the spatial information needs for sustainable development and integrated economic and social planning. Several countries are now using national spatial data infrastructure as the appropriate framework for the production of geographic information and management in a multi-stakeholder environment;
- Facilitating the adaptation of model cross-border laws on cyber security in Central Africa. This followed a joint ECA, ECCAS and International Telecommunications Union project to draft laws and regulations pertaining to (i) electronic transactions; (ii) protection of personal data; and (iii) cyber security. In line with the objective of this project to serve as a catalyst for attracting investors and capital in countries of the subregion, ECA and its partners have been further requested to help with developing a consensual frame of reference for telephone network roaming, and monitoring and evaluating levels of adaptation of legislative and regulatory frameworks across countries;

- The secretariat participated in the Africa Power Summit 2016 on energy. During the summit, it elaborated on energy security policy and its implications for Africa. This platform was used to stress the importance of sustainable deployment of renewable energy technology as African countries make headway in terms of renewable energy capacity expansion, particularly in line with the Sustainable Energy for All agenda.

## **E. Key upcoming events**

### **1. Tenth Conference of Ministers**

The Tenth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa's Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will be held in Dakar in March 2017. The theme of the conference is growth, unemployment and inequality.

### **2. Launch of the joint report on Deepening Africa-India Trade and Investment**

The secretariat will present and launch the joint African Trade Policy Centre-Conference of Indian Industry report on deepening Africa-India trade and investment relationships and organize a session on CFTA at the 12th CII EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership, to be held in New Delhi on 9 and 10 March.

### **3. Annual review meetings with funding partners**

At the end of first quarter of 2017, the secretariat will hold its annual review meetings with funding partners. The purpose of the meetings is to share information on progress, key achievements, and challenges and lessons learned related to the implementation of the Commission's programme of work.

### **4. Expert group meeting on strengthening the democratic transition in post-conflict countries in Central Africa**

This expert group meeting will be held in April. Following the meeting, the secretariat will present the country profile of the Central African Republic to policymakers.

### **5. Launch of the new base year in Mauritania**

The secretariat will undertake a technical assistance mission to Mauritania in March, which will focus on the country's informal sector and national accounts. The mission will culminate with the launch of the new statistical base year in accordance with the 2008 System of National Accounts.

### **6. International Conference on the Emergence of Africa**

The secretariat plans to participate in this conference, which will be held in Abidjan from 28 to 30 March 2017. Proposed topics of discussion during the event are (i) the implementation of development plans in Africa, including the vision of the emergence of Africa; (ii) governance of public institutions; (iii) structural inclusive and sustainable transformation; (iv) infrastructure planning and financing; and (v) industrialization of African economies.

## F. Partnerships

Some of the Commission's new partnerships are indicated below:

- Partnership with the Government of Norway to support work on the High Level Panel on Migration;
- Partnership with the South African Institute of International Affairs to work on the role of the African Peer Review Mechanism in dealing with emerging economic governance, peace and security issues;
- Partnership with the Government of Chile to strengthen South-South co-operation programmes between Chile and African countries in such areas as mineral supply chain development and natural resource governance;
- Collaboration with the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Trade Organization to compile supply and use tables (SUTs), with the resulting data to be used to help integrate African countries into the global Trade in Value-Added (TiVA) Database. A subproject will support countries in using administrative data and in incorporating the informal sector into national accounts, in order to produce SUTs;
- Partnership with ECA and Prescriptor, a consulting firm on financial engineering based in Yaoundé, is being negotiated to strengthen knowledge-sharing on the role of project management technologies in programmes;
- Collaboration with the University of Johannesburg is being negotiated to establish a Master's degree programme in mining and minerals policy and strategy;
- A formal partnership with the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI) is being negotiated.

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<sup>i</sup> The Committee on Statistics was formerly referred to as the Statistical Commission for Africa.