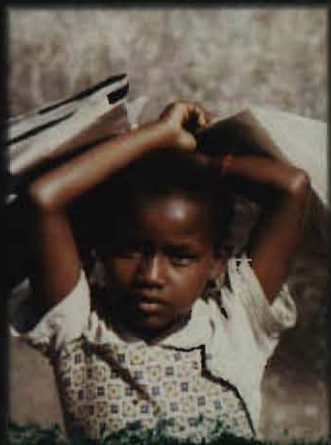


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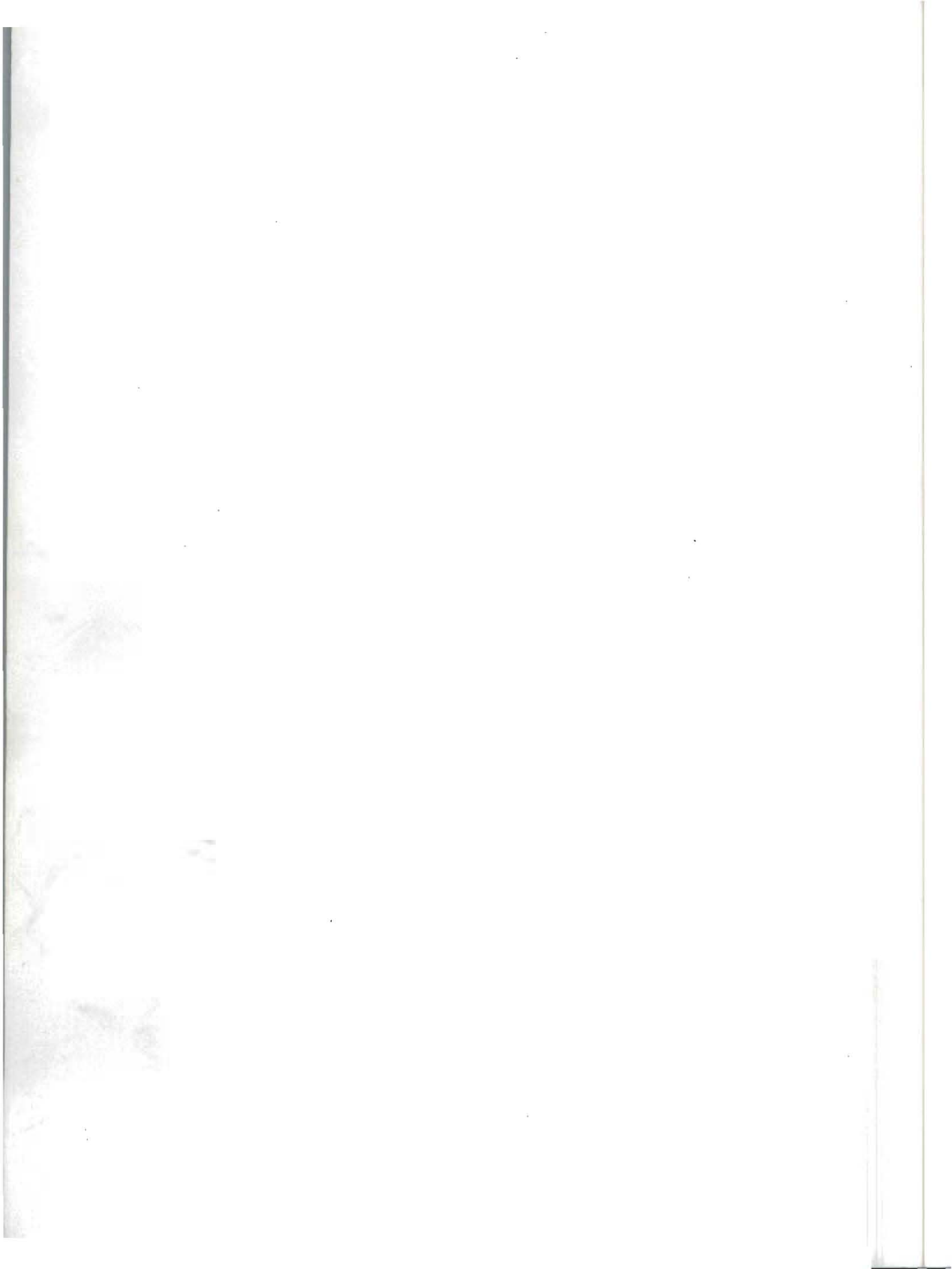
Accelerating a Continent's Development



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The ECA and Africa

Accelerating a Continent's Development

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCS	African Centre for Civil Society
ACMAD	African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development
ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific
ACW	African Centre for Women
ADB	African Development Bank
ADFTAC	African Development Forum/Technical Advisory Committee
AEC	African Economic Community
AGF	African Governance Forum (AGF I, II, III)
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
ARCEDEM	African Regional Center for Engineering Design and Manufacturing
ARSO	African Regional Standardization Organization
ATAC	African Technical Advisory Committee
CAFRAD	African Centre for Administrative Training and Research for Development
CA-SRDC	ECA's Subregional Development Centre for Central Africa
COMESA	Community of Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	civil society organization
CST	community support team
DISD	ECA's Development Information Services Division
DPESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DND	Dakar/Ngor Declaration
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EDI	Economic Development Institute of the World Bank
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMC	Electronic Media Centre
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
ESAMI	Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Africa
ESTNET	ECA's Science and Technology Network
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAWE	Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs
FDI	foreign direct investment
FSSDD	ECA's Food Security and Sustainable Development Division
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GDP	gross domestic product
GHAI	Greater Horn of Africa Initiative
GIIC	Global Information Infrastructure Commission
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
ICPD	1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development
ICPD-PA	ICPD Plan of Action
ICTs	information and communication technologies
IDA	International Development Association
IDEP	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
IDRC	International Research Centre of Canada
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPAs	investment-promotion agencies
ISP	internet service provider

ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MEMFI	Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
NESDA	Network for Environmental and Sustainable Development in Africa
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/DAC	OECD/Development Assistance Committee
PADIS	Pan-African Development Information System
PEDA	Population, Environment, Development, and Agriculture simulation model
PICTA	Partnership in Information and Communication for Africa
PTA	Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa
REC	Regional Economic Community
RECTAS	Regional Center for Training in Aerospace Survey
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEEA	System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting
SIA	United Nations system-wide Special Initiative on Africa
SMEs	small- and medium-scale enterprises
SRDC	Subregional Development Centre
STPA	Statistical Training Programme for Africa
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
TCA	Technology Centre for Africa
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development
UEMOA	Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCC	United Nations Conference Centre
UNCED	United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-NADAF	United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
UR	Uruguay Round of the WTO
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

ECA Committees referenced in Appendix 2

ATAC	African Technical Advisory Committee
CASD	Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development
CNRST	Committee on National Resources and Science and Technology
COWD	Committee on Women and Development
TEPCOW	Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

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K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa

Foreword

As we approach the new millennium, hopes are high that Africa can emerge from the stagnation and crises that have characterized much of its post-independence era. The emerging vision of a future Africa is of a continent that stands proudly alongside its global trading partners and sustains economic growth, a continent where access to health care is a given, where education is universal, where economic stability is a human right, and where poverty in all its manifestations is sharply reduced within the coming three decades.

This vision of an African renaissance is not a mirage. Tangible and encouraging progress has been made by many countries in reforming their economies, and in putting in place the right policies and structures to ensure equitable growth and reduce poverty. Many of the inter-state and internal conflicts that for so long undercut development are on the decline—although new disputes as well as the stubborn persistence of some long-standing hostilities serve to remind us that much more effort is needed in peace building.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) remains optimistic about the future prospects of the continent. As a member of the United Nations family, and at the same time an integral part of the African institutional landscape, ECA is well-placed to foster Africa's renaissance, both by enhancing the coherence and coordination of the UN's work in Africa and by delivering core services. Having reoriented itself to serve Africa better, ECA embarked upon a programmatic and ad-

ministrative reform process in 1996. In light of these reforms, and given the new optimism about the continent's development prospects, the time is right to alert the Commission's stakeholders as to its strategic role and its efforts to optimize that role.

This publication is one step in that direction. In it, we articulate the vision that the overarching objective of every development intervention in Africa is the reduction of poverty. The challenges to which ECA is geared to respond are not only driven by this objective. They are, in and of themselves, integrally interlinked. As such, the relevance of the Commission's work is firmly rooted in—and the programme components clearly emanate from—these challenges. At ECA, we are fully aware that no single development actor possesses the means or the comparative advantage to tackle the gamut of activities that need to be undertaken. This is why the approach we have developed in identifying these specific services, as well as the

associated modalities for partnership and implementation, are predicated on selectivity and leveraging of the Commission's comparative advantage.

It is against this background that the publication spells out ECA's role in Africa and how the Commission's new programmatic focus responds to the prevailing challenges. It highlights some of the work that the Commission is engaged in, as well as the important partnerships we have already forged while carrying out our mission. It also explains how ECA relates to other UN agencies and African governments and institutions. Finally, the publication reflects the United Nations Secretary-General's call (in his April 1998 report to the Security Council, *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*) for a more holistic approach to Africa's development, an approach supported by mutually reinforcing partnerships among

development cooperation agencies—partnerships in which African institutions and governments take the lead in defining priorities.

ECA's new approach is underpinned by the credo that effective, high-impact developmental work in Africa can only be achieved through concrete and sustained partnerships. With this in mind, we are keen to work with partners within the UN system as well as beyond it—in the private sector and civil society and with bilateral and multilateral donors—to advance Africa's development objectives.

We look forward to hearing from you and to working with you.

K.Y. Amoako
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations and
Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for
Africa

1

The African Development Challenge

“**T**he basic strategy for achieving sustainable development through economic growth is now well established. The core components of the strategy include macroeconomic stability and a stable investment environment; integration into the international economy; a reliance on the private sector as the driving force for economic growth; long-term foreign direct investment, especially in support of export-oriented activities; adequate investment in human development areas such as health and education; a fair and reliable legal framework; and the maintenance of basic physical infrastructures. . . . Long-term success can be achieved only if African Governments have the political will not just to enact sound economic policies but also to persevere in their implementation until a solid economic foundation has been established.” *Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, from “The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa—Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Security Council”, New York, USA, April 1998.*

After two decades of stagnation, from the mid-1990s, African economies started showing evidence of a turnaround. There is now convincing evidence of improved economic performance in a wide range of African countries, with recorded gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates in excess of 6 per cent in several of them. The progress has been largely due to improved policy performance,

particularly the adoption of less-distorted macroeconomic frameworks, and the improvement in governance in many countries. Although the political news is largely mixed, the emergence of more participatory government regimes has improved confidence and modestly increased investment in more subregions of the continent. Aid has been critical to sustaining public investment

in economic and social infrastructures. Promotion of the private sector has been a main element in the turnaround. The upsurge in economic activity has helped to sustain the improvement in human development indicators across most of the region, though clearly they lag behind those of other regions of the world. The progress is also undoubtedly still fragile, and the need to deepen, sustain, and spread its benefits to more countries is clear. The job ahead is monumental as key indicators below show.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), some 80 per cent of the Low Human Development Countries—countries with high population growth rates, low income, low literacy, and low life expectancy—are in Africa. Africans account for one out of every four poor persons in the world. Within the continent, four of every 10 Africans live in conditions of absolute poverty. Recent evidence also suggests that poverty in the continent is increasing. Indeed, Africa is singled out as the only region in the world where both the absolute number and the proportion of poor people are expected to increase in the next millennium. This factor is exacerbated by the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, which is reversing decades of gains in social indicators and throwing families—and children in particular—into sudden poverty.

The overriding development challenge and ultimate goal for every development intervention in Africa is therefore poverty reduction. The widespread and deep-seated poverty in Africa has macroeconomic, sectoral, and microeconomic dimensions. Studies have shown that to reduce poverty in Africa by half during 1999–2015, a scenario of balanced policies to enhance economic growth and reduce inequality and an average annual rate of growth of at least 7 per cent are minimum requirements. Policies and programmes that promote broad-based, labor-absorbing patterns of growth are critical to ensuring that the poor participate and benefit from income growth.



United Nations

Investments in education are crucial to successful people-centred development.

Poverty has a root in the interlinked population, environment, and development dimensions. Two basic pressures are known elements in the continued poor quality of life in Africa. The population growth rate by far exceeds that of per capita food production in most countries, even allowing for the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the rapid deterioration of the environment has undermined productivity in agriculture. Successive international forums have called on policy makers to address the synergistic forces of high population growth, environmental degradation, low agricultural productivity, poor economic growth, and poverty as an urgent matter of public policy. The broad challenge to policy makers is to mainstream and integrate population, environment, science and technology, and agricultural productivity concerns into their national development planning and poverty-alleviation frameworks and policies. This is a key step towards the population, environmental, and agricultural transitions necessary for sustainable development and food security.

Development and investment policies should also target social development and improvement of the quality of life. Investment in education, health, social, and employment programmes that target and reach the poor are crucial to a successful people-oriented development strategy. The present situation, where primary-school enrollment rates in 16 countries are below 60 per cent, and where there are more children between the ages of six and 11 out of school than was the case in 1990, is unacceptable. The health services, which

were recovering from decades of insufficient budgetary resources and poor management, are now under pressure from new epidemics, particularly AIDS, and old scourges, like malaria. In a region with the highest rates of fertility, maternal and childhood mortality, and malnutrition, two-thirds of the world's known AIDS cases, 90 per cent of the world's yearly malaria fatalities, and where half the female population is illiterate, the health challenges are monumental. Girls' education must be a plank of the basic education programmes. High unemployment must be addressed with labor-intensive, private-sector-led, employment-generating programmes, including support to informal sector activities, supplemented by well-targeted and efficient social safety nets for the poorest.

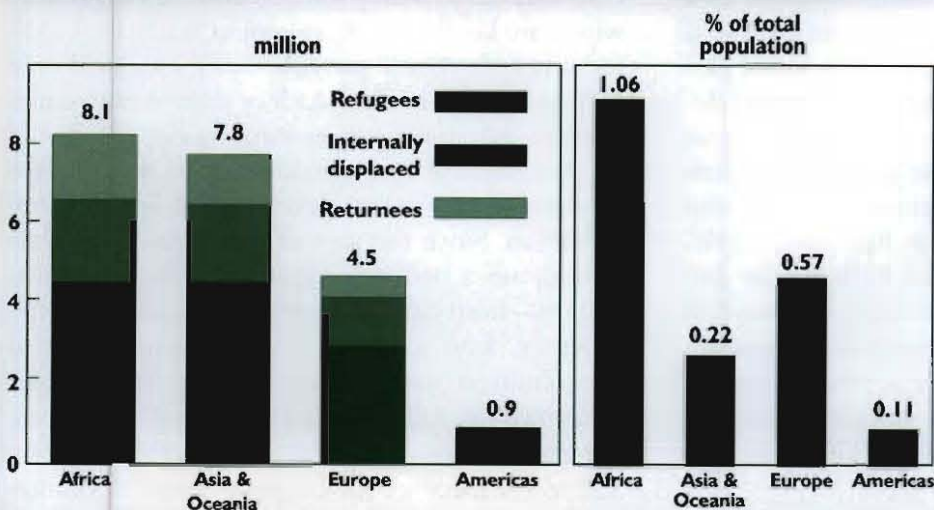
Poverty also has a gender dimension, which is a challenge that calls for calculated responses, including vigorous programmes to maintain the momentum of the global gender-awareness mechanisms, such as the Beijing Platform for Action. Although African women have made significant progress, in part because of successful awareness programmes, there is still a large gap between men's and women's opportunities and their participation in economic and social development.

There is also a gap between rhetoric and actions to maintain the momentum of this progress. Legal and social discrimination still prevents women from achieving their full potential. Because of this, poverty-alleviation policies and strategies need to empower women to participate meaningfully in national affairs, and to close the gender gap in access to basic social services, as key steps to addressing the poverty problem in Africa. Promoting gender equality must be an integral part of the African challenge as the 21st century approaches.

Information poverty is an important component of the poverty profile in Africa. Human development encompasses not just access to schools, jobs, and clinics, but also the awareness that access to information brings. Access is a factor in changing attitudes and learning to seize opportunities. Weak communication and social infrastructure not only block information flows but ultimately stifle social and economic development. Lack of access to information hinders transparency, stifles compliance with norms of accountability, and is a damper on democratic processes. Information and communication technologies (ICTs), which are driven by the convergence of computers, telecommunications, and traditional media, are crucial for the knowledge-based society of the future and the nucleus of the globalized economy. The challenge is to join the information revolution, which will require that Africa develop capacity to tap into the global system of information and knowledge, and adapt it to solve its development and poverty problems.

Africa is the most subdivided continent—with 165 borders demarcating the region into 51 countries, 22 of which have a population of 5 million or less, and 11 of which have a population of under 1 million. The limitations of size are very real from demand

Figure 1. Uprooted by Conflict: Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Returnees, 1997



Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees data

and supply points of view, and this makes regional cooperation a *sine qua non* for competitive entry by any individual African country into world markets. There is also a need to broaden the concept of regionalism and accordingly re-think Africa's regional integration strategy. Africa's economic recovery and development, as well as its ability to be effectively integrated in the world economy, are intrinsically linked to its capacity to become an active player in the world economy. Whether it be among developing or developed countries, intraregional integration arrangements and active participation in the international economy are interdependent and should be pursued in parallel.

Industrialization is the key to increasing Africa's participation in world commerce and finance, is crucial to the structural transformation of Africa's economy, and provides the platform for enhancing Africa's competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy. Yet the level of Africa's industrialization remains low, as illustrated by three key facts: first, there are only a handful of countries where manufacturing as a share of GDP exceeds 25 per cent—the benchmark for considering a country as having achieved the threshold of industrial take-off; second, the export composition of African countries continues to be dominated by primary rather than by processed or semi-finished products; third, the ratio of public expenditure and private investment in scientific research and development remains minuscule as a percentage of GDP in all African countries. Rapid and sustained industrialization is an essential element in achieving Africa's goals of accelerated development and poverty reduction. Some factors are critical to strengthening the process of industrialization, including policies and programmes that promote conducive and stable macroeconomic, legal, and regulatory frameworks; transparency and good governance; private-sector activities; financial-sector reforms and capital markets development; supportive economic and social infrastructures, particularly transport, communications, and human resources; and policies which attract foreign investment.

As Africa enters the next millennium, resource flows for development financing are one critical

challenge the continent faces. Of utmost importance are measures to attract more foreign private investment—building on the recent positive trend and to improve domestic resource mobilization, so as to increase local participation in the investment and ownership processes. Adequate debt relief and official development assistance—which are critical to public investment support for private-sector development and social programmes—are key ingredients of the resource flow mix. Trade-related measures are also necessary to increase the competitiveness and market access of Africa's exports. In addressing the resource flow issues, aid, debt, and trade should be viewed by Africa and the donor community in a holistic and integrated framework for financing the continent's development.

In particular, efforts should be stepped up towards solving the debt question. Africa's debt problem needs to be seen in the context of the continent's development financing needs, and the impact of debt relief should be linked to the objective of poverty reduction. The resolution of Africa's debt problem is less of a technical problem than it is a question of political will on the part of creditor nations and institutions to address the crisis in full partnership with African nations. The partnership should be based on equitable burden sharing among creditors in the overall financial contribution to the debtor's development programme. The debtor countries should make a commitment to policy reforms and export growth, which are key to aid effectiveness, while the creditor countries should provide either additional debt reduction—that is, debt stock or interest rate reduction—or additional concessional money.

Establishing and sustaining good governance systems are critical to development and poverty reduction. Since the start of the 1990s, Africa has undergone a major social and political transformation—from closed autocracy to more open democracy, from centrally planned economies to decentralized open markets, from single-party dictatorships to multi-party pluralism, and in increasing cases, from conflict and civil strife to peace and reconstruction. Although the level of commitment and the speed of change vary across countries, the focus in the continent on participatory

and democratic systems of government has become increasingly inevitable. In many African countries, previously cowed societies are now vibrant with organizations of civil society. This strengthening of the continent's social capital is fundamental to renewed confidence and economic recovery. The appropriate scope and role of the state are being re-examined, including the options to strengthen the state's capability to perform its legitimate functions, especially the preservation of peace.

All in all, serious challenges remain, and the long-term sustainability of economic and social progress of many African countries is at best fraught with uncertainty, as evidenced by ECA's *Economic Report on Africa, 1999*, to be published in June 1999. The Report looks at the issue of sustainability of policy and economic performance of several African national economies from three perspectives: the consistency of short-term performance with stated long-term goals; the capacity for continuous replicability of past good performance; and the foundations for accelerated take-off along a stable growth path. A sustainability index, which measures country potential to attain rapid and sustainable long-term development, was computed for 46 countries, featuring human capital development, structural diversification, aid dependency, transaction costs, and macroeconomic attributes. The Report concludes that nearly two-thirds of the countries have low sustainability ca-

capacity. It finds that on the basis of the aforementioned indicators—only five countries, which account for a mere 5.7 per cent of Africa's population and 27 per cent of GDP, possess the minimum conditions to sustain growth and development. This result would be even more dramatic if conflict, which was treated exogenously, were factored into the equation.

From the Report's analysis, it is clear that while macroeconomic policies are very important and necessary for growth, and have spurred the recent economic growth across an impressive array of African countries, they are by themselves inadequate to sustain it. Human capital, institutions, structural diversification, declining transaction costs and competitiveness, and stewardship of environmental and ecological resources are crucial elements in sub-Saharan economies' capacities to accelerate growth to 8 per cent per annum and sustain it at that level well into the second and third decades of the next millennium. Only an adequate response to these challenges will head off a situation whereby the majority of African countries—which are now on the verge of economic recovery, including the high performers—slip into relapse and stagnation. Thus, in spite of the recent good news, the challenges ahead for Africa to deepen economic and social progress and to sustain it over the next two decades are formidable, and no country can afford to be complacent.

2

The ECA Role

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is the regional arm of the United Nations, mandated to support the economic and social development of its 53 Member States, foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. Established in 1958 and based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ECA is one of five regional economic commissions under the administrative direction of UN Headquarters. It reports directly to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, and convenes a number of intergovernmental organs and committees.

As of October 1998, the Commission had a staff of some 850, comprising professionals with a wide range of expertise as well as general support and field service personnel. The UN General Assembly votes biennially for ECA's regular organization budget. Supplementary resources are negotiated by ECA with Africa's bilateral and multilateral partners, including UN agencies and programmes.

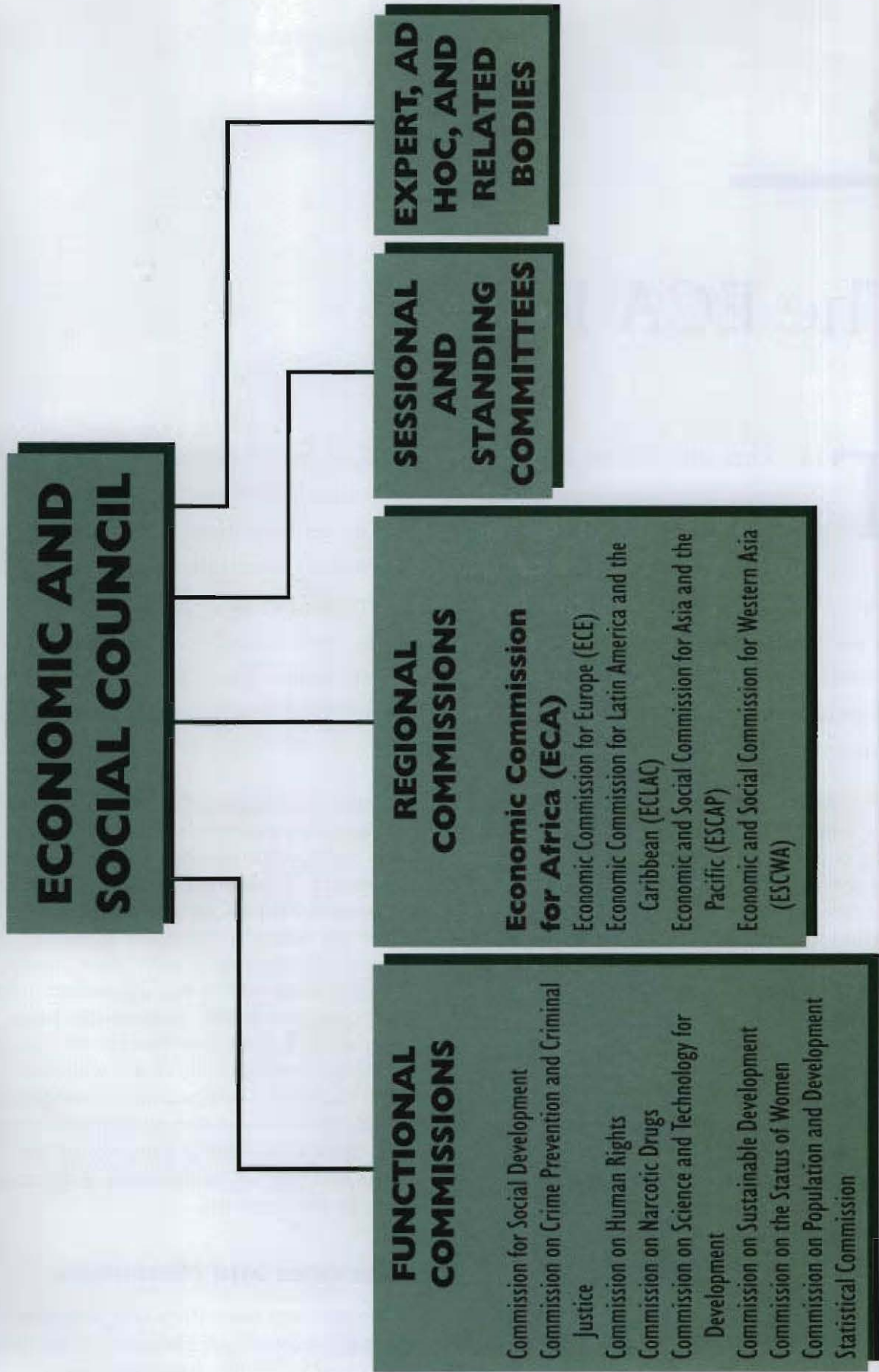
During its 40-year history, the Commission has made several significant contributions to African development. The Commission was instrumental in setting up the African Development Bank (ADB), which today is the continent's leading multilateral development financier. It facilitated the establishment of a number of subregional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), now the Community of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). It was instrumental in building some 30 technical institutions to buttress the socioeco-

omic development of Africa, encompassing such fields as technology, banking and finance, minerals and remote sensing, and planning and management. Notable among these is the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP). The Commission also played a key role in the articulation of landmark economic strategies, such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Cairo Agenda for Re-launching Africa's Development. ECA continues to provide Member States with technical assistance in many fields and to foster the development of civil society groups, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations, and intellectual networks.

Services and Modalities

The products offered by ECA, and some modalities for delivery of these services, can be broadly grouped within the following clusters:

Figure 2. United Nations Economic and Social Council



1. Advocacy and Policy Analysis. Analytical activities are central to the overall work of ECA, which serves as a policy advocate on critical development issues to encourage the policy initiatives and reforms necessary for economic and social advancement in Africa. Services in this cluster include research on, and analysis of, the economic and social situation in Africa. To deliver these services, ECA is increasingly drawing on the work of other sources of knowledge and expertise. National and regional African research institutions, African researchers, and development professionals are notable examples of this outreach.

Advocacy is closely linked to the analytical functions and is focused on internal and external constituencies. Within Africa, it involves promotion of sound policies and dissemination of best practices in economic and social development. Externally, ECA's advocacy is geared towards promoting increased understanding of the complexity of Africa's development context. It is also aimed at informing and sensitizing Africa's external partners in development about the region's need for sustained inflows of external resources to complement the resources and efforts mobilized by Africans on their own. An important part of ECA's advocacy work is fostering regional cooperation and integration, by helping Member States strengthen intraregional linkages and helping establish and strengthen subregional organizations and institutions.

2. Convening Stakeholders and Building Consensus. Conferences, seminars, workshops, and ad

hoc meetings of groups of experts are the most widely employed means of disseminating ECA's analytical work: engaging in advocacy, and sharing norms, standards, and best practices. Convening stakeholders to define, articulate, and agree on common positions is also an important service offered by ECA. The Commission serves as a catalyst for African development activities by assisting the many organizations on the continent that have common goals to coalesce and coordinate efforts.

An important ECA modality of dissemination is ECA's new Communications Strategy, which aims to deliver the message about key African development challenges to various African and other stakeholders. A revitalized portfolio

of publications, regional and international conferences on specific themes, policy seminars and workshops, enhanced relations with the media, and targeted dissemination strategies are all manifestations of the priority ECA devotes to outreach. To ensure that the widest possible audience is reached, particularly within Africa but also in the rest of the world, modalities for dissemination

As the regional arm of the UN in Africa, ECA plays an important role in fostering Africa's development within the United Nations system. The Commission maintains overall regional and subregional perspectives within which activities of other UN organizations take place at the country level. The Commission's regional vantage facilitates coordination and synergies between UN programmes, mainly those of the funds, the programmes and the specialized agencies, in support of the continent's development.



Through ECA's advisory services, institutions are developing their capacities to design and implement programmes.

include media articles, CD-ROMs, Internet publishing, and other multimedia forms.

3. Technical Cooperation and Capacity-Building. ECA has a mandate to assist Member States and institutions in developing their capacities to design and implement development policies and programmes through technical cooperation activities. Such technical cooperation, which does not involve disbursement of financial resources, takes the form of on-demand regional advisory services to Member States and their intergovernmental organizations, training workshops, seminars and fellowships, institution building, and field projects.

Advisory services—ECA's main vehicle of delivering country-level support—are provided by a multidisciplinary team of regional advisers deployed in the various substantive divisions of the Commission. These services focus on clearly defined policy and technical challenges facing Member States, for which the countries lack specialized expertise. ECA annually organizes more than 40 group training workshops and seminars to enhance skilled human resource capacity in Member States.

4. Enhancing the UN's role in Africa. As the regional arm of the UN in Africa, ECA plays an important role in fostering Africa's development within the United Nations system. The Commission's regional vantage facilitates coordination and synergies between UN programmes, mainly those of the Funds, the Programmes and the Specialized Agencies, in support of the continent's development. Of particular importance is ECA's role in the implementation of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (SIA). SIA was launched in March 1996 to accelerate the execution of the UN's New Agenda for the Develop-

ment of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which was launched in 1991 (see Chapter 10).

ECA also has the mandate to ensure regional and subregional follow-up of global UN conferences, such as the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, and the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development. This role is facilitated by ECA's streamlined intergovernmental machinery, which involves a number of expert-level bodies (the Committee on Regional Integration, Committee on Development Information, Committee on Sustainable Development, Committee on Women and Development, Committee on Human Development and Civil Society, Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development, and Committee on Science and Technology and Sustainable Development). All of these mechanisms can be used by the UN agencies for greater advocacy and programme development. An example is the partnership that is developing between ECA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through the Committee on Sustainable Development, on issues relating to women's reproductive health (see box 7), as well as in the follow-up to the ICPD. The intergovernmental machinery provides for annual or biennial meetings of senior policy-makers and African ministers in the aforementioned sectors to deliberate on issues of importance to Africa's development. ECA puts this machinery to good use through careful selection of agenda issues, preparation of thematic discussion papers, selection of lead discussants and other key participants, design of discussion formats and special events, and dissemination of emerging consensus positions. The machinery acts as a node that attaches regional dimensions to strategies and programmes of African countries and their development partners.

Supporting Effective Poverty-Reduction Policies

The key features of Africa's poverty challenge include the poor record of economic growth, high inequality in income and asset ownership, and inadequate access to basic social services, which results in low levels of human resources development and low agricultural productivity. Average GDP per capita in Africa grew by only 1.5 per cent annually in the 1970s and showed negative growth of 1.0 per cent in the 1980s and early 1990s. Although the economic performance of many African countries has improved significantly since the mid-1990s and average GDP per capita growth for the continent as a whole has picked up, growth in Africa remains fragile and is inadequate to reverse the growing poverty in the continent. The problem is most pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where about 50 per cent of the population—compared to 20 per cent in North Africa—resides in absolute poverty.

Overview

The widening income gap between the rich and the poor is becoming an added difficulty in Africa's fight against poverty. Africa today ranks second only to Latin America in income inequality. The richest 20 per cent of the population accounts for 51 per cent of total income. In contrast, the poorest 20 per cent accounts for only 5 per cent of total income. In addition to inequality among income groups, gender inequality in access to and control of economically productive assets is a key factor constraining growth and poverty reduction in Africa. Evidence from recent studies illustrates that asset inequality based on gender places

women at a disadvantage, compared to men, in acquiring the basic assets and resources needed to contribute fully to the realization of Africa's growth potential. The evidence further shows that gender-based asset inequality also results in marked differences in labor productivity and hampers supply response to policies, particularly agricultural policies.

By and large, the continent's poverty remains a rural phenomenon, with 59 per cent of the rural population living in poverty. However, urban poverty is also becoming a major challenge, with African urban centres expanding and 43 per cent of the urban population now living in poverty. Inadequate provision of social and physical services,

coupled with declining agricultural productivity, growing unemployment, and increasing social dislocations associated with conflicts and governance problems have significantly contributed to the worsening poverty conditions in Africa.

Of the 37 low food-secure countries in the world, 21 are in Africa. This is largely due to the continent's decline in agricultural productivity as a result of the progressive deterioration in the carrying capacity of the ecosystem and the environment, poor range policies, and recurrent droughts. The poor macroeconomic and sector policy environment has led to the failure of the continent to diversify and enhance agricultural productivity.

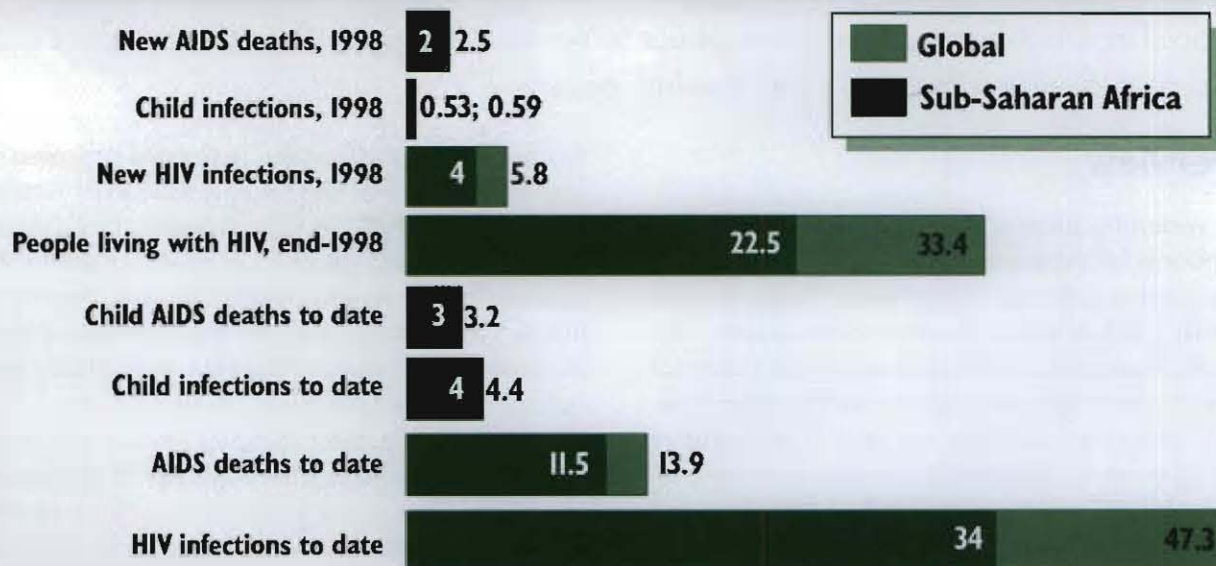
The Challenge

The disquieting social development record of many African countries compounds the poverty problem. Although improvements in social indicators have been sustained across the globe for much of the past quarter-century, the record of Africa has lagged behind those of other regions. Half of the population in Africa lacks access to health services, compared to a little more than 20 per cent

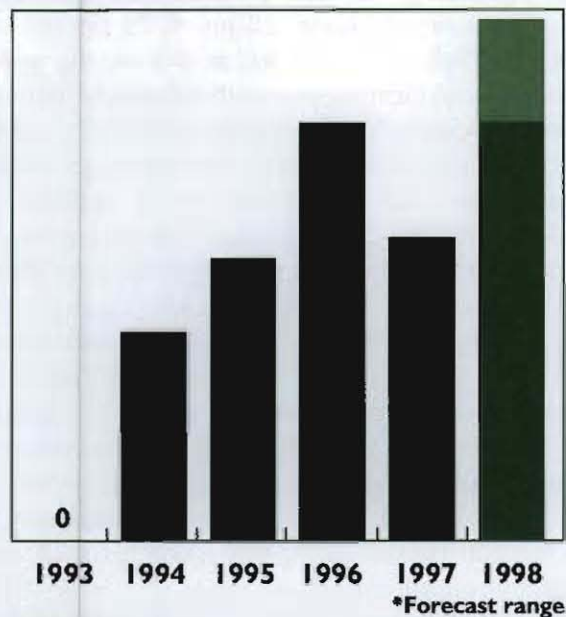
in South Asia. The average adult illiteracy rate, at 42 per cent, is more than three times higher than the rate in East Asia and the Pacific. Life expectancy, which had risen steadily over the last decades, is expected to fall by as many as 17 years because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in many countries. Indeed, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is perhaps the single most pressing development challenge currently confronting the continent. With only 10 per cent of the world's population, Africa has 63 per cent of global HIV/AIDS cases. Although AIDS is declining in the developed world, infection rates are on the rise in Africa. Out of a total of 33 million adults and children estimated to be living with the disease at the end of 1998, close to 23 million are in Africa. The poverty and gender dimensions of the epidemic are particularly staggering. Ninety-five per cent of Africans that are infected live in poverty, and African women make up about 82 per cent of the world's 12 million women with AIDS.

It is generally recognized that poverty can be reduced either by increasing per capita income (economic growth), or by reducing inequality in the distribution of income and wealth. A prudent

Figure 3. HIV Infections and AIDS Deaths (millions)



Source: UNAIDS, Aids epidemic update, December 1998.

Figure 4. Africa's GDP Growth (%)

Source: ECA data.

combination of policies to enhance economic growth with policies to reduce inequality constitutes the core of the challenge. For the continent to cut poverty in half by 2015, an average annual GDP growth of at least 7 per cent is required. The comparable figure for sub-Saharan Africa is 8 per cent. In addition to the level of growth, the pattern of growth is also essential. Policies and programmes that promote a broad-based pattern of growth and labour-absorbing growth are critical to ensuring that the poor participate in and contribute to rising incomes. Key in this regard are public investments in the one asset that the poor have in abundance—their labour. Relevant investments would aim to promote policies to protect vulnerable groups and reduce gender disparity, foster human capital development, and reorient public expenditures to the social sectors, particularly towards the delivery of basic social services to the poor.

On the allocation side, African governments increasingly recognize the need to give particular priority to social services, such as basic health services and education. They also show more

imagination in terms of participation of the private sector and civil society in providing and monitoring these services. In parallel, what is needed at the macro-level is a deepening of ongoing policy reforms to ensure poverty reduction through broad-based growth. Fundamental to this is sustained technical and advisory support to Member States, strengthening of government capacity for analysis of the welfare impact of various policy options available to decision makers, and support for systematic national poverty monitoring.

The ECA Response

The Poverty Profile in Africa. As poverty is a cross-cutting theme and reducing it is the ultimate objective of most ECA programmes, activities that focus on realizing that goal are carried out across the broad spectrum of the Commission's work. Understanding the features and profile of Africa's poverty is a precondition to designing policies to eradicate poverty in the shortest feasible time. It is an important reference point for development strategy in Africa and for engaging policy makers in a constructive and informed dialogue on how best to fashion such strategies for their countries. To this end, ECA has conducted a number of analytical studies. *Decline and Slow Economic Growth of African Countries* explores the main factors hindering economic growth. Two related studies, *Growth Strategies for Africa: Lessons from Asia and Latin America* and *Best Practices in Growth Strategies of African Countries*, are in progress. Research on poverty profiles produced *Efficiency of Anti-Poverty Policies and Programmes: Lessons and Experiences*, *The Gender Dimension of Poverty in North Africa*, *The Gender Characteristics of Poverty with Emphasis on the Rural Sector*, and *A Study on the Incidence of Selected Government Subsidy Programmes in Africa*. The relationship between educational and poverty reduction is examined in *Non-Formal and Distance Education in Ethiopia: Lessons and Experiences*. A similar study is underway of Cameroon.

ECA research in the coming years will focus on understanding the phenomenon of African poverty—in particular, the linkages between poverty, equity, and growth—and the construction of

appropriate indicators, including poverty lines and poverty maps. Central to this is data collection and dissemination of research findings, including those on best practices. Benchmarks for poverty monitoring will also be developed.

ECA Partnerships on Social Development. ECA is working closely with other UN agencies and regional organizations to advance Africa's social development agenda. Key in this regard is the work under the UN System-wide Special Initiative for Africa (SIA)—a collaborative effort by the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to expand and harmonize UN support to Africa. ECA

and UNDP co-chair the SIA institutional support arrangement, which is designed to identify and develop a set of concrete programmes in support of Africa's development efforts in 13 priority areas, of which education and health are the major two. In the education sector, the goal is to achieve basic education for all African children by 2005. In health, the objective is to strengthen, revitalize, and expand Africa's primary health facilities in order to provide essential basic care and outreach service to a majority of the population by 2005. ECA is working closely with the lead agencies under the SIA in these areas—the World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, the UNDP country offices—to facilitate donor coordination, promote country-level policy dialogue, and explore appropriate resource mobilization strategies for these sectors at the country level. The SIA focus in the education sector will be on 12 African countries with low primary-school enrollment rates.

In addition to the work under the SIA, ECA is working with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNICEF on the OAU-sponsored Decade for Africa, which has the same objective as the SIA—achieving basic education for all African children. ECA is participating in expert group meetings chaired by OAU and is having bilateral discussions with OAU and UNICEF to define the discrete ECA contributions to advancing the objectives of this OAU initiative.

Discussions are also underway between UNDP and ECA on a Women and Literacy Programme. Working with IDRC, UNESCO, and the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs (FAWE), UNDP and ECA plan to launch the Women and Literacy Programme in selected African countries, including Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal.

Under the auspices of and in collaboration with a leading African research network, the African Economic Research Consortium, ECA is participating in a research project on poverty, income distribution, and labor markets in sub-Saharan Africa.

A Forum on Cost-Sharing in the Social Sectors in Africa. The idea of cost-sharing has been advanced to address the inadequacy of public-sector resources and to ensure the efficiency, equity, and sustainability of national systems of



Curt Carnemark/World Bank

African governments increasingly recognize the need to invest in social services and human capital development.

social service delivery. In this regard, ECA organized the "Forum on Cost-Sharing in the Social Sectors of Sub-Saharan Africa" in June 1998 in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank. The Forum, which was attended by ministers and experts from 17 African countries and by development partners, was sponsored by the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Conference endorsed a set of principles under which cost sharing could make a significant contribution to the financing of universal coverage and to improving the quality of social services. The principles include free provision of basic social services where possible, formulating comprehensive cost-sharing strategies for the social sectors with the participation of all stakeholders, protecting disadvantaged groups through safety-net provisions, and applying user charges after a thorough examination of other options for financing social services.

Follow-up activities planned by ECA include policy analysis on African taxation systems, budgetary and aid allocations to basic social services, and an evaluation of the impact of existing cost-sharing arrangements in light of the aforementioned principles. The lessons from these analytical works will be disseminated to stimulate further policy dialogue on issues of social-sector financing, quality, and delivery.

Advocacy for Action on HIV/AIDS. Unchecked, the AIDS epidemic threatens to reverse the gains in social development attained over the past generation. In some African countries the epidemic has already lowered average life expectancy, the single best aggregate indicator of social welfare, by as much as 10 to 17 years. Given the prohibitive costs of antiviral drugs, proper policy emphasis on preventive measures is the only current policy option available to Africa. This approach

has already proved effective in reversing infection rates in Uganda, Senegal, and non-African countries such as Thailand.

The challenge for African governments and their partners therefore hinges on forging partnerships to raise awareness of risks and prevention, and to develop enabling policies. To help address this challenge, and working through the UN Special Initiative on Africa framework, ECA will convene group meetings and seminars of experts to sensitize policy makers to the development challenges posed by the AIDS pandemic. These will also serve to disseminate best practices and encourage appropriate policy responses at the national and regional level. In doing so, ECA will

"With diligence, within a generation, we can sharply, and I mean sharply, reduce the scourge of absolute poverty which now afflicts two out of five people on the continent. We must achieve an Africa where the basic needs of education and health services and decent shelter are being met, and where economic growth is powering the enhanced well-being of our peoples." K.Y. Amoako, from "A Coalition for Good: The UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa—Keynote Address before the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", London, England, 29 November 1996.

work closely with UNAIDS and SIA partners, including WHO, the World Bank, and UNDP. Drawing on the Commission's convening power and access to policy makers, ECA will advocate an

enhanced commitment at the highest political levels to a concerted response to this urgent development challenge. As a major step in this direction, the Commission included a briefing on the economic and developmental impact of AIDS as part of its presentation at the Joint Conference of African Ministers of Planning and Finance in May 1999.

Follow-up to the Social Summit. Poverty eradication and social development were two of the key themes of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, at which countries and their development partners were called upon to each allocate 20 per cent of their budgets and assistance resources, respectively, to support basic social services, including basic education and primary health care in poor countries.

In early 1999, ECA convened two African follow-up conferences to the Social Summit at the subregional level—for East and Southern Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya (15–17 March); and for North

Box 1. Joint ECA/EDI Training Workshop on Poverty and Public Expenditure Policy

The Economic Development Institute (EDI) of the World Bank, in partnership with ECA, has produced three poverty training modules on poverty measurement (Module I), public expenditure and the poor (Module II), and income transfers (Module III). In June 1997, 30 participants from 13 African countries attended the first training workshop focused on the first two modules. Each module included conceptual and practical sessions. The workshop was held at ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A second workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in February 1998. The number of participants doubled, to 59 from 10 countries.

The joint EDI/ECA poverty-training workshops were designed to strengthen the capacity of African countries to develop appropriate policies to alleviate poverty and to reduce their dependence on external assistance for policy advice. The workshops aimed to strengthen the skills of mid-level government officials, NGO staff, and academicians in poverty measurement and analysis, assessment of the role of public expenditure in poverty

reduction, incidence analysis and evaluation of government transfers, targeting for poverty reduction, and assessment of alternative mechanisms for income transfer. Participants were given a hard copy of the module and computer diskette, with the practical example and exercises. Based on the evaluation of the first workshop, the modules have now been revised and translated into French and Portuguese. With the support of the UNDP Bureau for Arab States, the modules will be translated into Arabic in 1999.

ECA plans to conduct a training workshop for selected countries, possibly by utilizing ECA's Sub-Regional Development Centres and/or the Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)—an ECA-sponsored institution. Future plans include a subregional training workshop prior to the Regional Follow-up Conference of the World Social Summit. This will be led by ECA in collaboration with EDI. Several country-training workshops, supported by ECA and EDI, are also planned, with the concerned countries taking the lead.

Africa in Marrakech, Morocco (23-25 March). A third subregional summit will be convened later in the year—for Western and Central Africa in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The conferences were designed to monitor progress in the implementation of policies and programmes in the areas of poverty reduction, employment creation, and social development. Special attention was given to assessing progress in public spending on social sectors, with a view to identifying good practices and highlighting implementation problems and constraints. In addition, the conferences took stock of the state of governance as it affects the sociopolitical environments for attaining the Social Summit developmental goals and objectives.

Training. ECA routinely organizes training workshops and provides advisory and technical support to enhance the analytical capabilities of participants from Member States, and to disseminate research findings and exchange experiences among African policy makers, donors, and researchers. Two training workshops, focusing on "Poverty and Public Policy in Africa" were held in 1997 and 1998 in collaboration with the Economic Development Institute (EDI) of the World Bank. (See box 1.) The first workshop, held in Addis Ababa on 18-20 June 1997, was attended by 30 participants from 13 African countries. Fifty-nine participants from 10 African countries attended the second, which was held in Johannesburg on 9-12 February 1998.

Expanding Trade and Investment Opportunities

Expanding Africa's trade and investment are key to sustaining economic recovery and growth in the continent. High rates of capital investment in the most productive sectors are necessary to generate the rapid economic growth needed to address poverty in Africa. Trade expansion has the potential to fuel growth of output and income, as has been amply illustrated by the strong growth performance of the continent over the past three years, which is attributable to buoyant export earnings.

Overview

Over the past decade, most African countries have undertaken macroeconomic stabilization measures and have embarked on far-reaching structural adjustment programs and institutional reforms. Although these efforts have improved the framework for expansion of trade and investment, the supply response has not been commensurate with the scope of the reforms. While export growth has exceeded that of GDP in Africa since the late 1980s, and is expected to rise to 4 per cent during the period 1995–2004, as compared to 2.8 per cent during 1985–94, it is not underpinned by growth in investment or improved productivity. Rather, it is largely due to greater utilization of existing capacities.

Despite the positive growth performance of the recent past, current rates of aggregate investments, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries, remain far short of what is required to sustain long-term growth at a level sufficient to re-

duce poverty. In fact, average investment as a share of GDP in these countries has been on a continuous decline—from 26 per cent in the 1970s to 20 per cent in the 1980s and to 16 per cent in the 1990s. The decline in investment/GDP ratios has undermined the ability of many countries to adjust their economies effectively. Furthermore, private investment in the modern sector, both foreign and domestic, has remained limited. The distribution of investment also remains heavily skewed towards public investment, which tends to be less efficient than private investment.

Less than 3 per cent of total direct foreign investment to developing countries reaches Africa. Among the reasons cited for this condition are (i) the risk of policy reversal; (ii) the high cost of doing business in Africa; (iii) weaknesses in legal, judicial, and financing systems; (iv) low labor productivity; and (v) inefficient and unresponsive physical and technological infrastructure, which are essential to long-term competitiveness of the economy.

Despite the recent growth of exports, Africa's share of global exports still remains small, declining from 3.2 per cent in 1985 to 2.3 per cent in 1990 and to 1.5 per cent in 1995 (the latest year for which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has published data). Moreover, the dominance of agricultural products (mainly primary commodities) as the major source of foreign exchange has rendered the continent's export-earning capacity highly sensitive to commodity price fluctuations.

For these reasons, Africa remains a marginal player in world trade and investment. With the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO)—post-Uruguay Round (UR)—trading framework, African countries face added challenges and opportunities in their bid to expand trade and investments. The post-UR period is expected to bring much more rapid integration of developing countries in world trade than has been the case to date. The WTO arrangements are estimated to result in a 1 per cent annual increase in world income over the next decade. But for Africa, because of erosions in preferences and its poor competitiveness record, the WTO agreement, once fully implemented in 2005, is projected to have a net negative impact on economic welfare—an annual loss in real income of one-tenth of 1 per cent.

The continent's regional integration is a key step in Africa's integration into the global economy. To date, integration has tended to focus on linking various countries within specific subregions, not continent-wide. While the share of intra-group trade to total trade of the main regional groupings has remained very small—2.7 per cent being the highest, under ECOWAS—future prospects in some regions look better, as shown by increasing collaboration in subregions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a regional economic community devoted to promoting sub-regional cooperation and integration in the 12 countries of southern Africa. Nevertheless, the generally poor outcome of past integration efforts reinforces the need to adopt more outward-oriented trade regimes that can ensure efficiency gains and larger markets.

The Challenge

The rapidly changing global and regional environments present African countries an opportunity to enhance exports and economic growth, and a challenge to attain efficiency gains to offset the losses due to the erosion of preferences under the UR. Africa should take a hard look at internal and external policies and programmes, and implement the changes needed for higher investment, output, and exports, so as to take full advantage of the opportunities created by the UR. The challenges are, first, to translate the current recovery into sustainable, long-term growth, through enhanced competitiveness of exports and trade policies; and second, to revive private investment and foreign trade in order to increase market size, global market share, and visibility as a potential buyer and supplier in the global market. A crucial step is to address the underlying domestic policy challenges, as follows:

- To build and strengthen regional groupings to promote industrialization and intraregional trade and to enhance external negotiating clout. The integration agenda should be redirected to place greater focus on global competitiveness so as to better align the continent with the rest of the world order and increase its global market share;
- To remove most trade restrictions, as these create inward-looking tendencies by local entrepreneurs who do not seek export opportunities, thus preventing the economy from achieving attainable growth. High tariffs and non-tariff barriers can also significantly raise prices for production inputs in manufacturing activity and greatly diminish potential exporters' ability to compete in foreign markets;
- To reform the transport sector, especially in land-locked countries, where inefficient state-run railways carry goods to and from the port;
- To improve operations at the major ports, which are notoriously inefficient and costly. This could generate savings that could more than offset projected financial losses from loss of preferences.

In the area of trade promotion, some potentially important Africa exports are still hampered by import restrictions and tariff escalations, particularly in agricultural and processed products. In light of the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework, the challenge is for Africa to deepen the policy dialogue with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Priority areas of concern include:

- Maintaining a system of preferences for African exports, including processed commodities which are consistent with WTO agreements;
- Accelerating the phase-in of textile tariff reduction and eliminating the high tariff on agricultural imports, following the removal of non-tariff barriers;
- Granting African exports market access;
- Recognizing the special problems of land-

locked countries in the valuation of their imports; and

- Restraining subsidized agricultural exports.

The ECA Response

Policy-Focused Analytical Work on Trade and Post-Uruguay-Round and WTO Issues. As background to the May 1997 ECA Conference of Ministers of Economic and Social Development and Planning (see box 2) on the theme Trade and Investment Promotion, the Commission prepared two major reports on trade and investment: *After the Uruguay Round: Global Challenges and Africa's Responses in Selected Areas* and *Promoting Trade and Investment to Accelerate Africa's Development*. These papers discussed the challenge of promoting trade and investment in Africa through policies that increase private foreign investment, public savings and investment, international competitiveness, and regional cooperation and integration.

Other ECA technical publications have focused on issues of liberalization of world trade, globalization, and Africa's economic integration; regional economic integration in Africa and the multilateral trading system; and trade and competition policy in Africa in the framework of WTO. Four major studies are planned: (i) Mechanisms for Assisting African Countries to Benefit from the WTO Agreements and the Special Provisions for Least-Developed Countries; (ii) Export Diversification in Africa in the post-UR Environment; (iii) Cross-country Study on Required Changes in Domestic Policy Environment to Adjust to Globalization; and (iv) Connectivity, Electronic Communication, and Electronic Commerce. These studies are designed to raise awareness of the critical policy options available to Africa to improve its trading position in the global world, adapt its integration agenda to the challenges posed by the emerging multilateral trading system, and take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalization.

Assistance to Member States in Complying with WTO Provisions. The rule-based post-Uruguay Round, WTO trading environment has specific provisions, including reporting requirements



United Nations

Removing trade restrictions will aid local entrepreneurs in seeking export opportunities.

with which member countries have to comply. Intensive and widespread training of ECA Member States' officials is needed to ensure compliance, and this is best carried out at regional and subregional levels. Drawing on in-house and partners' technical expertise—including UNCTAD, the World Bank, and WTO, which set up a technical cooperation fund for such tasks—ECA is preparing a far-reaching training program for its Member States in WTO legal and operational requirements.

Application of the Global Trade Analysis Project Results. In 1997, ECA collaborated with Purdue University to develop a simulation model to evaluate the impact of the UR on aggregate output, trade, and welfare in Africa. The findings of this exercise were reported in the background

paper on the impact of UR on Africa, prepared for the May 1997 ECA Conference of African Ministers of Economic and Social Development and Planning (see box 2).

The study found that Africa was likely to be the only major region of the world to lose from the UR implementation. That said, it also found that UR-induced costs would be far outweighed by potential gains from catching up with other low-income countries in agricultural productivity and transport costs. Furthermore, because of the continent's high and rising comparative advantage in agriculture, exports for agricultural products are likely to offer significant gains for Africa. Taking account of these prospects in designing policy and guiding investment is critical for Africa to realize its long-term potential in an increasingly integrated world economy.

Box 2. Conference of African Ministers of Economic and Social Development and Planning

The ECA Conference of African Ministers of Economic and Social Development and Planning (May 1997, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) brought together ministers and other senior policy makers, private-sector actors, representatives of the UN, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and civil society organizations. The purpose was to conduct a high-level dialogue on promoting trade and investment to accelerate Africa's development. The Conference took stock of Africa's position within the emerging global economic system at the threshold of the 21st century, reviewed its investment performance, and recommended specific policy measures that African policy makers should undertake to meet the challenges and opportunities of a global and liberalized world economy. The Conference also included a special event, co-hosted by the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC), in the form of a high-level symposium on strengthening private- and public-sector partnership in building national information and communications technology to facilitate trade and investment in Africa.

The Conference assessed the post-Uruguay Round (UR) trade and welfare situation of Africa and highlighted two areas for improving Africa's international competitiveness in the post-UR period. First, stressing the continent's high transport costs, which hinder Africa's

exports (average nominal freight rates on sub-Saharan Africa's exports are about 20 per cent above those for other developing countries), the Conference underscored the need for transport-sector reforms to improve the efficiency with which goods are handled for international trade. Second, noting that all developing regions, except Africa, have been able to raise their grain yields dramatically over the past three decades, and that agriculture continues to be important for Africa's trade, the Conference called for concerted efforts to accelerate agricultural productivity growth to improve Africa's competitiveness.

The Conference concluded that in order to boost domestic savings and investment, attract substantial private foreign investments, and expand trade, African countries must (i) promote a positive image of Africa as a safe place for business and investment; (ii) maintain peace, security, political stability, and good governance; (iii) establish an adequate legal and regulatory framework and reduce the cost of doing business in Africa; (iv) strengthen institutional capacities of African countries; (v) improve information flow on economic development in Africa; (vi) modernize, expand, and diversify production; (vii) strengthen international competitiveness to better participate in the multilateral trading system; and (viii) strive for genuine regional economic integration.

Technical Assistance to Member States on Trade Negotiations.

Support to the negotiating positions of the African Group within the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group has been a regular component of ECA's technical assistance activities since the inception of the Lome process in 1975. ACP/EU Lome Conventions constitute cooperation agreements between EU and the African (48), Caribbean (15), and Pacific (8) Group of countries. These conventions provide ACP countries grant development aid through the European Development Fund (EDF), risk capital through the European Investment Bank (EIB), and free access to EU markets for most ACP exports. The current Lome IV Convention will end in the year 2000.

Lome V negotiations have started and are expected to be worked out against the backdrop of the UR agreements. In preparation for these negotiations, ECA provided technical backstopping to the 1997 Conference of African Ministers (in Lome), which examined modalities for the future relations between ACP states and the EU. A study was prepared on *ACP-EU Cooperation: Issues on the Agenda of the Negotiations for Successor Agreement to the Lome Convention*. Additionally, a Joint OAU/ADB/ECA Panel of African Experts is being established. This will provide advisory and technical support to African countries in developing their strategies and negotiating positions for Lome V, and will backstop the Joint OAU/ADB/ECA Secretariat in its function of periodic reporting to various policy organs and forums. ECA will also continue to provide assistance in this area to Member States by organizing policy discussion forums and by providing advisory services for the major trade negotiations now in the pipeline.

Promoting Intra-African Trade. The equitable distribution of costs and benefits among countries participating in an integration scheme is funda-

mental to promoting regional integration and intra-African trade. ECA has an ongoing, policy-relevant work program in this area, including development of an analytical framework for cost-benefit analysis of regional integration for application in two subregional case studies. The premise of the work is that the success of trade liberalization and economic integration schemes often depends on how effectively costs and benefits are distributed to all the parties concerned. The subregional case

studies will examine measures that could be considered within the framework of national and regional policies to minimize costs and maximize equitably distributed benefits. An ECA workshop on

"A policy framework to promote increased investment in Africa must address issues relating to the political climate, a conducive economic policy framework, increased public savings and investment, increased private savings, attracting foreign investment, and enhanced regional cooperation and integration." K.Y. Amoako, from "Opening Statement before the 32nd Session of the Commission/23rd Meeting of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning". Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 5 May 1997.

Economic Integration Cost Benefit Analysis was held on 28–30 October 1998, to familiarize participants with the techniques for analysing related issues and their policy implications.

Trade and Investment Promotion through Improved Physical Infrastructure.

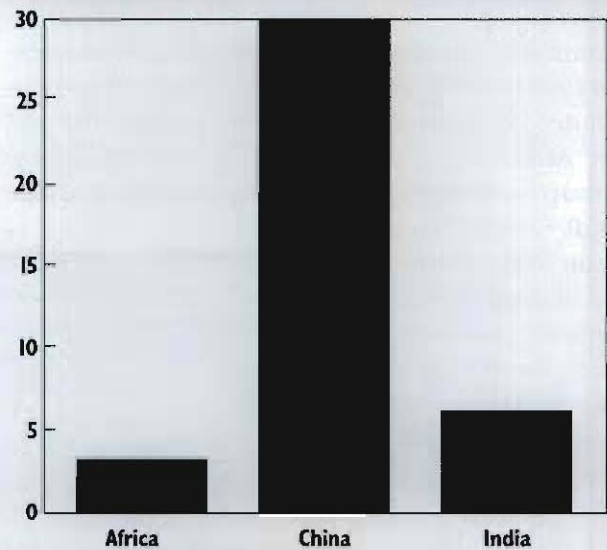
Building and efficiently operating national and regional transport and communications systems are key to promoting trade and investment in Africa, where prevailing high transport costs contribute to non-competitiveness. The 1997 ECA Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications—convened in Cairo and attended by sector ministers, senior government officials, and sector experts from around the world—reviewed the state of transport and communications in Africa and explored measures to accelerate implementation of the Second UN Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. The Conference also recommended measures to address the problem of inefficient, high-cost transport infrastructures and to promote regional transport planning and coordination. These measures included deepening ongoing reforms in the transport and communications sectors, modernizing the technological base for the development of efficient systems and

strengthening institutional and human capacities. Ongoing and future ECA work programs include studies on the impact of non-physical barriers on integration and improvement of transport services, promotion of the Trans-African Highway, and a regional seminar on transit corridors.

Promoting Private-Sector Development in Africa. ECA organized an international conference on "Reviving Private Investment in Africa" (Accra, Ghana, 24–27 June 1996). The aims of the conference were to promote networking among African business persons and foreign investors; to provide a platform for African governments to outline their policies for creating an investor-friendly climate; and to organize and create a forum for exploring investment opportunities in several sectors. The conference employed a path-breaking format that included thematic breakout sessions organized to facilitate high-level dialogue between African policy makers and private-sector actors, on the one hand, and foreign business partners, on the other hand (see box 3). Similar conferences have since been held—the Addis Ababa Forum; the Oxford Forum on Investing in Africa; the South Africa Trade and Investment Summit; and the Corporate Council on Africa—all emphasizing the importance of the role of the private sector in Africa's development. A major outcome of the Accra conference was the establishment of the African Capital Markets Forum, which serves as a clearinghouse for the exchange of views on the development of capital markets in Africa, provides related training, and promotes relevant research.

In collaboration with a World Bank affiliate, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), ECA has developed a program aimed at strengthening the operations of selected African Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) through work programs tailored to the need of each IPA. In addition, ECA collaborated with MIGA in sponsoring a symposium on "Investment and Business Opportunities in the African Mining Sector". The meeting took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, 15–18 November 1998. Representatives from 26 African countries, 40 mining companies, and 13 partner institutions attended the symposium. Issues dis-

Figure 5. Private Capital Flows Per Capita (\$US)



Source: ECA Secretariat.

cussed included the challenge of achieving regional cooperation in African mining; the social impact of mining activities and the effect of mine closures; environmentally sustainable mining; and financing mining development in Africa. Follow-up actions are underway to disseminate information on possible investors, build partnerships with agencies and consultancy firms, support Member States in negotiations, and review cooperating modalities with MIGA for future joint activities.

Major ECA analytical studies and other activities planned over the next two years centre on institutional and policy issues and strategies for improving Africa's private sector competitiveness. They include studies focused on strengthening enterprise formation, promoting privatization of state-owned enterprises, creating awareness of the role of micro-financing to private-sector development, and promoting the development of capital markets in Africa. Specific activities include organizing a high-level workshop on private financing of infrastructure; publishing a sourcebook on best practices in private-sector financing of infrastructure projects; and convening of a high-level

Box 3. International Conference on Reviving Private Partnerships For Growth and Development

The Conference, held in Accra, Ghana, from 24 to 27 June 1996, was attended by about 650 participants from African public and private sectors, as well as business executives from outside the region. Hosted by the Government of Ghana, the Conference was a collaborative effort among ECA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Coalition for Africa, the African Business Round Table, the World Bank Group, and bilateral donors such as the governments of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Overseas Development Administration (United Kingdom), and the International Development Research Centre (Canada).

The objectives of the Conference were threefold: to exchange experiences between African policy makers and business persons, on the one hand, and foreign business executives, especially investors interested in Africa, on the other; to provide a platform for African governments to outline their adopted or planned policies for creating an investor-friendly climate; and to organize a forum for exploring investment opportunities in several sectors in African countries.

Regarding the first objective, the Conference afforded an opportunity for African and foreign business executives as well as government officials to examine the potential but also the problems of attracting private investment to Africa. In particular, the Conference highlighted what African countries should do to stimulate private investment—foreign and domestic. In this regard, the Conference discussions emphasized a composite of measures, including strengthening partnerships between government and the private sector in Africa as a key prerequisite; fostering an investor-friendly environment; accelerating the pace of privatization, which will signal increased public policy commitment to and opportunities for private investment; creating and strengthening capital markets as vehicles for mobilizing savings for investment; fostering political stability buttressed by good governance; pursuing sound macroeconomic policies to sustain the confidence of current and would-be investors; and enhancing the commitment to regional integration as a means of overcoming the disincentive to significant inflows of foreign investment posed by the small size of the economies of many individual countries.

In exploring investment opportunities in Africa, the Conference discussions focused on four major sectors where the allure of investment and the emphasis of African countries have converged. These are infrastructure and energy, agribusiness, telecommunications, and

financial services. Although the opportunities for private investment vary from country to country, the Conference recognized that privatization has opened avenues for increased private investment in these sectors, adding to the opportunities that existed in the natural resources, mining, and minerals that have been the beacon for the first generation of foreign investment in Africa. The large number of foreign business executives that attended the conference was evidence of significant and continuing foreign investors' interest in Africa. The other evidence is the increasing number of foreign firms that have joined the U.S. Corporate Council on Africa and the African Business Round Table, two associations for corporate direct investors interested in or operating in Africa.

A key event at the Conference was a round-table summit meeting that brought together heads of state and government or senior political leaders from eight African countries and six business leaders from within and outside Africa. Through the summit, the government leaders and business executives offered their perspectives on issues of private-sector development and the role of private investment in Africa's development. Most significantly, government leaders emphasized their commitment to political and economic reforms, including eliminating many policy and institutional barriers to private investment.

An important initiative taken at the Conference was the launching of the African Capital Markets Forum, a multi-country advocacy group bringing together members of stock exchange, leasing companies, and financial institutions such as brokerage firms and investment funds. Another major initiative was the formation of the Corporate Council for Women in Africa, which will be composed of African women entrepreneurs whose enterprises have an annual turnover of \$1 million and higher. The aim of the Council is to provide financial services to and a network for women entrepreneurs in Africa. The Council will establish a fund to support its operations. The formation of the Council gave a practical expression to one of the major themes of the Conference—economic empowerment of women in Africa.

Overall, the Conference provided a platform for government leaders from various African countries and business executives from the private sector from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America to reaffirm a shared commitment to reinvigorate private investment as key to sustained growth and accelerated development in Africa.

roundtable discussion on building strategic alliances for linking selected African business management institutions to their North-South counterparts.

ECA is launching a major project to promote private-sector development in Africa through South-South cooperation to stimulate domestic and

foreign investment, facilitate networking among African, Asian, and Latin American enterprises, and enhance sharing of experiences through study tours. The Africa-Asia activities, which will be undertaken in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), will be the first phase of this program.

Raising Gender Awareness

African women have made tremendous progress over the past four decades. Awareness of the rights of women has been awakened by global mechanisms such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified by some 160 states worldwide. However, there is still a large gap between rhetoric and action to maintain the momentum of this progress in Africa. Economic and legal barriers, as well as social discrimination, continue to prevent women in Africa from improving their status and productivity and achieving their full potential. These barriers include low investment in women's education and health and poor access to services and assets, as well as legal and regulatory barriers that restrict women's options and impede their full participation in and contribution to the continent's development.

Overview

The gender dimensions of poverty best exemplify the impact of these barriers. Of the 1.3 billion people who live in poverty worldwide, 70 per cent are women. The gender impact of poverty is particularly acute in Africa, where women find themselves more vulnerable due to traditions that give them less decision-making power and less control over productive assets than men. Gender disparities in access to social services, especially education and health, are among the major determinants of the disadvantages faced by African women.

These disparities persist despite the significant high returns to society from investments in women's education and health:

- On average, 70 per cent of all African women over 25 are illiterate, compared to 40 per cent in East and South-East Asia and 20 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Some 45 per cent of African females are under the age of 15, and close to half marry by the age of 18, some as soon as they reach puberty;
- Africa accounts for 20 percent of the world's births but 40 percent of the world's maternal deaths. With records of as high as 1,500 deaths per 100,000 births in most sub-Saharan African countries, maternal mortality rates in the continent are the highest in the world;
- Africa's total fertility rate of 6.0 (1997) is also the highest in the world. Contraceptive prevalence rates in Africa are some of the lowest in the world; and

- The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa is increasing more rapidly among women than men. More than 80 per cent of the 12 million women with AIDS in the world are Africans. Ninety-five per cent of the global AIDS orphans are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Although women dominate informal- and service-sector activities in Africa and are making an entry into the industrial sector of the economy, especially in North Africa, they continue to face gender-specific barriers in accessing financial services, including lack of collateral (usually land). Such barriers prevent them from expanding their economic activities and contributing more fully to Africa's growth. Furthermore, their contribution to overall economic development goes largely unrecognized. This is largely due to the fact that many African countries do not collect labor statistics that are disaggregated by age or sex. Even in sectors like agriculture and trade, where women predominate, their work is seen as an extension of their domestic chores.

In addition to improved access to productive assets and basic social services, African women need adequate representation in the legislature, in the judiciary, and in the executive institutions of their governments in order to participate meaningfully in national affairs. Today, women in sub-

Saharan Africa represent only 6 per cent of national legislatures, 10 per cent of local legislatures, and 2 per cent of national cabinets. Half of the national cabinets in sub-Saharan Africa have no women at all. The exclusion of women's input to public policies and programmes reinforces gender inequalities and robs society of the significant social and economic gains to be made from women's full participation in development.

The Challenge

The challenge to improving the status and productivity of women in Africa requires complementary actions on several fronts. The first relates to removing the legal and economic barriers to women's access to productive assets and basic services in Africa. Key in this regard is the need to modify existing legal and regulatory frameworks that restrict women from participating and benefiting fully from development. This is essential to eliminate gender discrimination and to equalize opportunities for women and men. However, addressing this challenge requires action beyond legal reform—it requires systematic public awareness campaigns and advocacy for laws and customary practices that can help reduce gender inequalities, as well as firm public action to ensure the enforcement of gender-neutral laws at all administrative levels.

A related challenge is to promote policies that eliminate gender gaps in access to basic social services. While the private and non-government sectors have a role to play, the role of public policy is particularly critical. African governments therefore face a special challenge to redirect public expenditures to investments in the social sectors that offer the highest social returns and that ensure that both women and men benefit equally. A related challenge involves



Curt Carnemark/World Bank

Removing legal and economic barriers to women's access to productive assets and basic services will promote gender equality.

designing and implementing targeted public interventions in basic services most heavily used by women, for example, maternal and child health services, primary health care, rural water supply and sanitation, and the provision of credit to female entrepreneurs.

A second challenge, which is a prerequisite to addressing the first, is to build the institutional and technical capacity of African governments to design and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes. Africa's partners can play an important role in this area. As a first step, donors must ensure that their own programmes are gender-sensitive. Other actions required include promoting and supporting the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in Member States; promoting and advocating gender-sensitive policies; developing and providing gender-analysis training to policy makers; providing technical and policy support to African governments in formulating and implementing gender-sensitive policies and programmes; and building national capacity to implement and monitor these policies and programmes. Direct support and partnership with the offices in charge of integrating gender concerns in national planning is crucial to ensure that public policies are designed to reduce gender disparities, that programmes are effectively implemented, and that effective monitoring and evaluation systems are put in place.

A third aspect of the challenge has to do with reversing the historic marginalization of women in decision-making as well as in the democratization process, to match their citizenship rights to those of men, to increase their representation in political structures, and to make their voices heard in policy formulation. Educational and skills attainment is fundamental to facilitating the entry of women to decision-making positions and to giving them an opportunity to be heard. Women's leadership training and literacy programmes are crucial in this regard.

The ECA Response

In the 20 years since the First World Conference on Women in 1975, the African Centre for Women (ACW), one of the substantive arms of ECA, has

contributed to improving the knowledge base on African women's issues through training, research, raising awareness of policy, and the dissemination of information. In Member States, it has facilitated the creation of offices and branches of government that advance the role and status of women in Africa. Over the years ACW has worked closely with these offices to strengthen the efforts of Member States in implementing and monitoring the recommendations of international conferences on women. During the past two years, the Centre has undergone a process of reassessing its strategic focus to maximize its continent-wide impact, while implementing its new mandate of mainstreaming gender in the work of the Commission.

Promoting Economic and Legal Policies to Eliminate Gender Gaps. Through its advisory services to Member States and its convening power, the Centre will continue to promote the incorporation of gender concerns in national policies, disseminate cross-country lessons (see box 4), and advocate legal reforms to ensure gender equality. It will also provide technical and policy advisory support to Member States in formulating and implementing gender-sensitive programmes; develop training modules and provide training to policy makers on gender analysis; facilitate networking among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners working on African gender issues; and facilitate opportunities for women's participation in and contribution to the continent's development. In all these areas, the Centre attaches great importance to building strategic alliances with national stakeholders and change agents, as well as to networking with Africa's external partners.

Monitoring and Supporting Implementation of the Beijing Agenda. An outcome of the 1995 Beijing Conference was the commitment by developing countries to prepare national plans of action for improving the status and role of women in development as articulated in the Beijing Platform. In fulfillment of its mandate, ACW organized subregional meetings in West Africa, Central Africa, and North Africa in 1997 and 1998. A similar meeting for East and Southern Africa is scheduled

Box 4. Gender and Law—Eastern Africa Speaks

ECA collaborated with the World Bank to organize a conference for lawyers, academics, civil society leaders, and government representatives from five countries in Eastern Africa—Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The aim was to initiate dialogue and discourse on gender and law issues in Eastern Africa as well as the rest of the continent.

The Conference on Gender and Law: Eastern Africa Speaks, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 1997, also set out to identify issues viewed by participating countries as priorities. The concerns identified were land-related issues, family law, violence against women, employment and labour, and implementation in decentralized government frameworks. Country issues papers were prepared, discussed at national workshops, and finalized for presentation at the Regional Conference.

Policy makers from all the participating countries agreed at the outset that addressing gender issues in the legal framework was an important step towards sustainable development, and reported that strong constituencies and lobbies were being built at national level towards this end. Special administrative mechanisms had already been established in all the countries, and a number of legislative measures had been implemented.

Conference participants zeroed in on two common themes. The first was customary practices, which—whether or not they are enshrined in law—play a significant role in determining women's rights, whatever the sphere of activity. For example, customary laws and practices, most often applied in the division of household property, do not provide women adequate security. Land allocation is also, for the most part, based on customary practices that deny women control over land.

The second common theme was the need to find mechanisms for better implementation of equitable laws. In countries where the majority of women are illiterate and work in the informal sector, the challenge of implementation is daunting, particularly when laws are seeking to change behaviour and attitudes. What is more, the wide divergence between de jure laws and actual practice also mitigates against implementation of gender-friendly policies.

The conference concluded that greater sharing of experience and knowledge was an important first step towards addressing the issues raised. To this end, the conference proceedings were published and disseminated in book form.

for early 1999. These meetings provide an opportunity for ministers in charge of women's issues, women parliamentarians, senior technicians, national-level NGOs, subregional NGOs, and inter-governmental organizations to assess national efforts towards meeting the objectives of the Beijing Platform. The Centre's goal is to provide Member States with adequate tools and information to improve their capacity to implement and monitor national action plans created in the context of the Beijing Platform of Action. These include the development of guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the incorporation of gender concerns in national policies and programmes.

To help prepare African governments to participate fully in the mid-decade international review of the Beijing Conference in the year 2000, ACW is organizing the Sixth African Regional Women's Conference to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 1999. The Conference will

review the experiences of African countries in designing and formulating gender-sensitive policies and programmes in the priority areas identified in the Beijing Platform of Action. It will also assess the adequacy of the institutional capacity and identify the achievements and constraints in incorporating gender concerns in national plans. As a tool for this assessment, ACW is updating the country profiles with indicators on women's rights, health, and the situation of women in decision-making, education, and economic activity in each of the 53 member states. The profiles, first published in 1998, are designed as an advocacy tool for women's civil society organizations and policy makers to monitor the advancement of women on the continent.

Fostering Economic Empowerment of Women.

The development of data disaggregated by gender is deemed critical to assessing women's con-

tributions in all sectors of the economy. Although economic policies clearly have unequal effects on women and men, the lack of gender-disaggregated data makes it difficult to assess gender disparities and monitor the gender consequences of policies. To help address this problem, ACW will provide support to Member States in collecting and using gender-disaggregated data for policy design and national accounting and budgeting processes. A major meeting involving policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and partner agencies is planned to take stock of the state of affairs on the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data in Africa, to assess existing capacity, and to identify institutional and human capacity needs. A major study on this topic with recommendations for governments and Africa's partners will be prepared as background documentation for this meeting.

Facilitating the Creation of Opportunities for African Women Entrepreneurs. Promoting entrepreneurship is an important means towards the end of economic empowerment of African women. The focus of ACW's work in this area is to facilitate access by African women entrepreneurs to information, technology, and markets. To this end, in May 1998, ECA and UNDP organized a joint study tour, which took African women entrepreneurs, representatives from training and research institutions, and small-scale manufacturers to India and Sri Lanka to study technologies for food production, processing, and packaging and to explore market opportunities. Similar tours, including intra-Africa tours, are planned over the next three years. In addition, ACW is in the process of identifying subregional business centres that will provide training, information, and networking for African women entrepreneurs. Implementation of a three-year project is scheduled to begin in the first half of 1999. Many of the planned activities are designed in the context of ECA's effort to promote South-South cooperation.

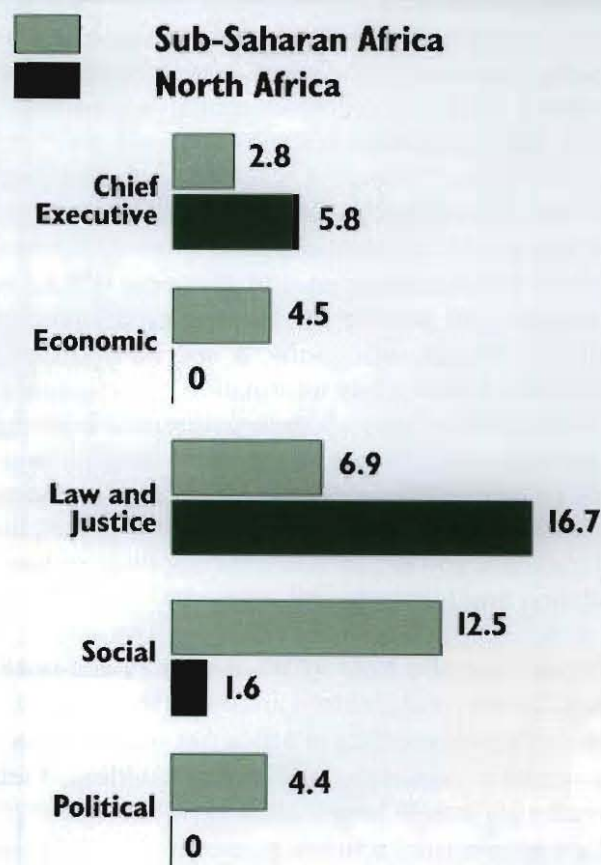
Access to resources also determines whether or not African women are empowered. In 1998, the ACW brought together experts to review an ECA study on limitations to women's access to and control over land and technology in six Afri-

can countries. The findings of the study were placed on the agenda of the East and Southern Africa subregional meeting in February 1999.

Building Capacity for Women's Leadership.

The rationale for mainstreaming gender in decision-making structures is to ensure development policies, programmes, and strategies are gender responsive. Without a critical mass of African women in parliament and in the public and private sectors, it may be difficult for action to catch up with rhetoric. Women need a transfer of skills to equip them for policy-making roles. While some organizations, particularly NGOs, already provide leadership training for women, there is need for a systematic effort to ensure that a critical mass of

Figure 6. Women in Governmental Decision-Making, 1994 (% of all positions)



Source: World Bank data.

trained women is available for leadership posts in Africa. Promoting women to decision-making positions has been identified as an important area requiring a leadership role for ECA at the regional level.

One of the Commission's responses is to work with partners in developing a major women's leadership training programme that will address the capacity needs of women parliamentarians, as well as women leaders of NGOs throughout the continent. Drawing on the work of others with experience in this area, and in partnership with them, ACW will design a prototype leadership training mod-

ule and field test, evaluate, and fine-tune similar modules tailored to the geographic, language, and cultural variations on the continent. All the modules will be available in English, French, and Arabic in the year 2000. ECA will work with its Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs) and key ECA-sponsored institutions such as the African Institute for Development and Planning (IDEP) to organize and provide the training programme in all five African subregions. A special effort will also be made to apply information and communication technologies to exploit distance learning opportunities. The emphasis of the overall training programme will be on providing practical training in key areas of leadership, including the parliamentary and democratic process, civic responsibility, and lobbying and advocacy.

Promoting the Role of Women in Peace-making. Women and children are by far the worst victims of armed conflicts in Africa. Yet when it comes to conflict resolution and peace building, their voices are barely heard. High-level mediation efforts remain the exclusive preserve of men. In the context of the apparent ineffectiveness of recent peace-making initiatives, and given the unique

position that women occupy in the conflict nexus, a consensus is growing that formal arrangements should be established to bring the input of African women to ongoing conflict-resolution and peace-building efforts.

In May 1998, this recognition led the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECA to form a 16-member Africa Women's Committee on Peace and Development (see box 5). The birth of the Committee marked the culmination of a five-year process of consensus building throughout Africa. The Committee was formally inaugurated in November 1998, as an autonomous entity with advisory sta-

"I speak of women willing to change. The good future of African women in development will not take place just because the rhetoric is sweet. The good future depends upon women who see a different future for themselves, with real opportunities, and with the odds shifting more in their favour. I speak of men willing to change—men who value gender partnership, who see that, when women meet their full potential, societies will be better off, communities will be a better place to live, families will be more prosperous, and children will have a far brighter future." K.Y. Amoako, from "Opening Plenary Address to the Conference on African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 April 1998.

tus to the highest bodies of ECA and OAU, with its secretariat housed at ECA. The role of the Committee, which includes NGO and government representatives, is to ensure a gender dimension in all conflict-resolution efforts in Africa, and to actively involve senior African women in conflict-resolution negotiations on the continent. For the first time, the board of this Committee attended as observers and made a presentation to the December 1998 Summit of Head of States and Governments of OAU on Conflict Resolution in Africa that took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Mainstreaming Gender in ECA Programmes.

One of the ACW's mandates is to ensure that gender, one of the cross-cutting issues that defines the renewed ECA, is fully integrated into all aspects of the Commission's work. Two strategies have been adopted to promote gender mainstreaming within the Commission. The first is to appoint gender focal points in each of the five substantive ECA divisions and a gender coordinator in each SRDC. Since 1996, four SRDC gender coordinators have been appointed, and a fifth is being recruited in North Africa.

Box 5. Celebrating 40 Years

In a clear demonstration of its commitment to gender equality, ECA celebrated its 40th anniversary in May 1998 with a four-day international conference on women. Organized by the ACW, the conference, entitled "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future", brought together 1,000 women and men representing African governments, civil society, non-governmental and private-sector organizations, and international agencies.

The Conference was a model of effective partnerships and collaboration between different actors. There were encouraging signs of growing support for the dynamism and creativity of African women from African men and ECA's partners. Most welcomed was the fruitful interaction of government officials from ministries not primarily responsible for gender issues, such as Finance, Planning, and Agriculture. A pre-conference electronic discussion list, facilitated by the World Bank, enabled ECA to broaden participation.

Four conference themes linked women to economic development, good governance, the information age, and youth opportunities. The meeting ended with an innovative Forum of Heads of State and Government from eight countries, presided over by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, during which a panel of African women presented the views of conference participants to the Heads of State.

The theme "Developing African Economies: The Role of Women" took centre stage, with working groups deliberating on eight sub-themes. Among these, the challenges and opportunities of globalization and regional integration generated serious debate on an issue that has become contentious for Africa. The Conference agreed that the key challenge for women was to find ways to ensure that African women benefit from the globalization process. Policies that create an enabling environment for global economic competitiveness, ensure women's access to education and training in entrepreneurship, facilitate women's access to information and finance, and promote partnerships were seen as critical to meeting this challenge.

Of equal interest was the discussion on the linkages among gender, growth, and poverty reduction in Africa. Deliberations concluded that understanding and acting on the interaction between the three factors represented perhaps the most promising, yet the most neglected, avenue for improving Africa's growth prospects. The lack of reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, and locality rendered difficult the assessment and analysis of gender

disparities, as well as the impact of economic and social policies to reduce gender inequality and poverty. In this regard, the Conference urged ECA to take measures to promote the inclusion of gender perspectives in national accounts and in budget processes, as well as to systematically collect and use gender-disaggregated data for policy and programme design and evaluation.

"Achieving Good Governance: The Essential Participation of Women", the second theme, was discussed in five working groups. Deliberations highlighted the absence of women from electoral systems and decision-making positions, and the detrimental exclusion of women from conflict prevention, management, and resolution. Actions recommended included the provision of leadership training and civic education, enhanced advocacy, and promoting gender-sensitive legal reforms.

The theme "African Women and the Information Age: A New Window of Opportunity" discussed the potential income-enhancing opportunities offered by information and communication technologies for African women. The establishment of community-based women's information centres for promoting women's access to information technology was the key recommendation of the Conference.

The theme "Creating Opportunities for Africa's New Generation" explored the issue of Africa's largest and yet most under-utilized resource—its youth, who held a one-day preparatory workshop on the eve of the meeting. During the session, the youth discussed the urgent need to inject life skills in the educational curricula and the disturbing discrepancy between education and employment. They called for partnerships with governments, financial institutions, media, civil society, and multilateral organizations. Among other strategic actions, the working group sessions proposed the development of gender-sensitive school curricula and materials to address survival needs, the enforcement of laws that are responsive to the needs of youth, and the creation of opportunities for their economic empowerment.

Since the African Women and Economic Development Conference, ACW has held follow-up internal consultations with ACW staff and ECA Gender Focal Points, as well as meetings with ECA's external partners, to brainstorm on concrete activities and partnership arrangements around the key Conference recommendations. The activities described in this chapter represent the thrust of some of these follow-up actions.

Secondly, the Centre is training all ECA professional staff members in the basic principles of a gendered analysis, while supporting them in developing indicators and tools that can be used in their daily work to monitor the incorporation of gender in their programmes. ACW has already held a number of in-house gender-sensitization

workshops for all senior managers, and gender focal points in the Commission. Work is currently underway to assess the specific gender training needs of each division and to develop customized gender-training modules for enhancing staff. This includes the development of manuals for gender analysis in each of ECA's thematic areas.

6

Addressing Population, Environmental, and Agricultural Linkages

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations, which depends on proper management of the linked population, environmental, and developmental factors. In the African context, the interrelationships among population growth rates, the state of the environment, and agricultural productivity are at the root of the sustainability issue.

Overview

Because of inadequate application of science and technology to lowering population growth rates, increasing and diversifying the balance among population growth, environmental and natural resources, and food security is delicate. In the long run, greater application of science and technology is critical to enhancing and diversifying the production of goods and services, overcoming environmental constraints, enhancing the sustainability of development, and improving the quality of life in Africa.

In the past three decades, the majority of African countries have had high population growth rates that have not been matched by adequate food availability in per capita terms. Africa's population is currently growing at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent. More than 50 per cent of the

total population is under 15 years old. The problem of a rapidly growing, young population has been compounded by swift depletion of forests, fuel supplies, and soil quality. The negative correlation that exists between high population growth rates on the one hand, and productive land and food per capita on the other, is vividly demonstrated by African data. The population growth rate, which far exceeds that of per capita food production in most countries, has led to rapid deterioration of the environment and undermined productivity. More than three-quarters of sub-Saharan African countries produce less food per capita than they did in the 1980s.

These issues were highlighted at a number of international forums: the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), 1992; the Third African Population Conference (Dakar/Ngor), 1992; the International Conference on Popu-

lation and Development (ICPD), 1994; the World Food Summit, 1995; and Habitat II, 1996. The central message from these forums is that public policy should come to grips with the mutually reinforcing forces of high population growth, environmental degradation, low agricultural productivity, poor economic growth, and poverty—the key elements in defining a sustainable development strategy. In the Dakar/Ngor Declaration (DND), African governments set quantitative demographic targets to be reached by the year 2000 and by the end of the first decade of the new millennium, including goals for reducing annual population growth and mortality rates and increasing life expectancy. These goals, which were reaffirmed by the ICPD in its programme of action (ICPD-PA), are monitored by ECA in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Challenge

Between 1986 and 1997, while Africa's population grew by more than 35 per cent, food production per capita declined by about 8 per cent, and agricultural land per capita decreased by about 25 per cent. Reversal of these trends constitutes a survival challenge. Sustaining development in Africa requires (i) harmonization of population growth with the level of food production; (ii) enduring increases in agricultural productivity; (iii) better stewardship of the environment; (iv) better and more equitable use of water; and (v) utilization of science and technology as the foundation for productivity increases diversification of employment and income opportunities; and (vi) enhancement of the competitiveness of the economy.

Attaining slower and stable rates of population growth largely depends on policy actions and programmes based on proper understanding of the factors underlying the transition from high to low population growth rates, from low productivity to high productivity agriculture, and from environmental degradation to better stewardship of the environment. African States need to understand better the elements of these transitions in order to mainstream and integrate population, environmental, and agricultural concerns into national development plans and poverty-alleviation



Curt Carnemark/World Bank

Sustainable development requires that population, environment, and food security concerns are seen as interdependent.

frameworks. Because of the complexity of the social, cultural, economic, technological, and political factors involved in the design and successful implementation of a sustainable development strategy, Africa's development partners have a key role in assisting countries to meet this challenge.

The ECA Response

The population, environment, agriculture, and food security nexus is a new dimension of ECA programmes, which was born from the restructuring of the Commission and the refocusing of its programmes in 1996. Through intensive consultations with development partners and eminent African policy makers and technical specialists, a programme was identified based on the Commission's regional comparative advantage, including its convening power, which is enshrined in the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission. The Intergovernmental Committee on Sustainable Development is part of that machinery. It serves as a forum of experts that provides advice to ECA and ensures the focus and relevance of the Commission's programme to Member States' needs in the interlinked areas of food security, population, and environment. The programme's

focus was recently fine-tuned and endorsed by a high-level expert advisory group meeting on agriculture and environment (see box 6). Broadly, ECA helps Member States to promote food security and sustainable development by a set of activities centred on three related sub-thematic tasks:

- Planning and implementing activities to raise policy makers' awareness of the urgency of food, population, and environmental concerns (the nexus issues) in development planning, while offering Member States feasible solutions drawn from best practices within Africa and around the world;
- Encouraging member countries to develop and take full advantage of their abilities to foster and utilize science and technology in addressing the nexus issues; and
- Providing policy analysis support and dissemination services through workshops, training seminars, information exchange, and technical advisory services to enhance understanding and management of the complex interactions between agricultural productivity, population, environment, technology, and food security.

ECA delivers its services through studies, advocacy, and advisory services. ECA has conducted a number of studies on food security and sustainable development issues, including the recently published *Report on the Coordination and Harmonization of Food and Agriculture Policies, Strategies and Production in North Africa*, presented at a meeting of the intergovernmental committee of experts of the North African Subregional Development Centre (SRDC) in April 1997. Other studies and activities are ongoing or are planned in five areas. Completed pieces and outlines of ongoing or planned activities will be presented to the session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Sustainable Development, which will take place in the first quarter of 1999. The five areas are as follows.

Promoting the Transition to Slower Population Growth. Understanding the factors that underlie transitions from high population growth to low growth rates, which may differ from society to society, and which may differ at different points in the transition process, enables governments to better target policies and programmes to reduce and stabilize population growth and to monitor progress towards that goal—in line with the

Box 6. High-Level Expert Advisory Group Meeting on Agriculture and Environment

An Expert Group Meeting attended by senior policy makers and experts in the fields of population, agriculture, and the environment was held November 30–December 2, 1998, to further assist ECA in defining priorities and modalities for addressing issues of poor agricultural performance, environmental degradation, and Africa's slow development. The meeting reviewed ECA's issues paper on the subject, the current work programme, and its plans for 2000–2001. It also discussed how the integration of the nexus issues in development planning can be made more politically attractive, and how ECA and its partners can better facilitate government work on these issues.

Among its recommendations, the meeting called on ECA to focus on two areas: policy analysis support, and dissemination of relevant information on nexus issues. With respect to policy analysis support, it was recommended that ECA focus on translating generic policies into Africa-specific and country-customized

policies so that ECA becomes the focal point on the key policy issues in the region. In this regard, ECA needs to undertake a critical analysis of the key interlinkages, and collect and collate Africa-specific information and data. To effectively play its analytical role, ECA needs to build capacity, partnerships, and networks, and develop appropriate tools for making policy choices.

The division's Population, Environment, Development, and Agriculture (PEDA) Model was accepted by the meeting as a good starting tool for better understanding the interrelationships between population, agriculture, and the environment. It is capable of adequately demonstrating the impact of different policy options in relation to the goal of ensuring food security through alleviating poverty in the region.

An Advisory Board to ECA on population, agriculture, and environment issues and programme activities was created from among the experts who attended the meeting.

stipulations of the DND and ICPD. ECA activities, in partnership with UNFPA, are particularly designed to monitor, evaluate, and report on the implementation of DND and ICPD-PA targets; to strengthen information, education, communication (IEC); and to support policy analysis and advocacy for more effective interventions (see box 7).

Previous birth-control interventions in Africa did not prove very effective in reducing population growth rates in many countries. This was largely because reproductive choices are made in a complex framework that involves other key factors. The new orientation of ECA's analytical work

in the arena of population is to focus on the relationships among women's responsibilities for producing wage goods or earning income for the household, women's reproductive health, and their exercise of reproductive rights and choices. Understanding these relationships is essential to moving from traditional population-focused family planning interventions to more comprehensive sets of instruments, in line with the broader range of factors that influence women's reproductive choices. The more holistic treatment of women's productive and reproductive choices is key to advancing the DND and ICPD objectives. ECA, in

Box 7. Partnership with UNFPA in the Follow-up to ICPD-PA and DND

ECA has an active partnership with UNFPA through which activities of common interest developed by ECA in project form are financed by UNFPA and executed by ECA. The partnership activities are particularly designed to monitor, evaluate, and report on the implementation of the DND and ICPD-PA; to strengthen information, education, communication (IEC); and to support policy analysis and advocacy.

The Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-PA), which took place in 1994, and the work of UNFPA and its partners in this field marked a turning point in population policy development as an integral part of overall national development planning by African countries. In a significant number of cases, awareness of the importance of the population and development nexus, especially among central policy makers, and recognition of the complex interrelationships among them, gender, and environment has grown considerably. In each country implementing ICPD-PA recommendations, attempts have been made to forge a national consensus on the policy actions and on the legal and institutional requirements needed to realize set goals. Follow-up is critical.

The Third Follow-up Committee (FUC3) on the Implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA was held at ECA headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23–25 September 1998. Representatives of 21 African countries and several regional, subregional, and international organizations attended the meeting. Its objective was to review and assess progress made by ECA Member States towards achieving the goals and targets of the aforementioned population frameworks and to identify

key steps in the way forward.

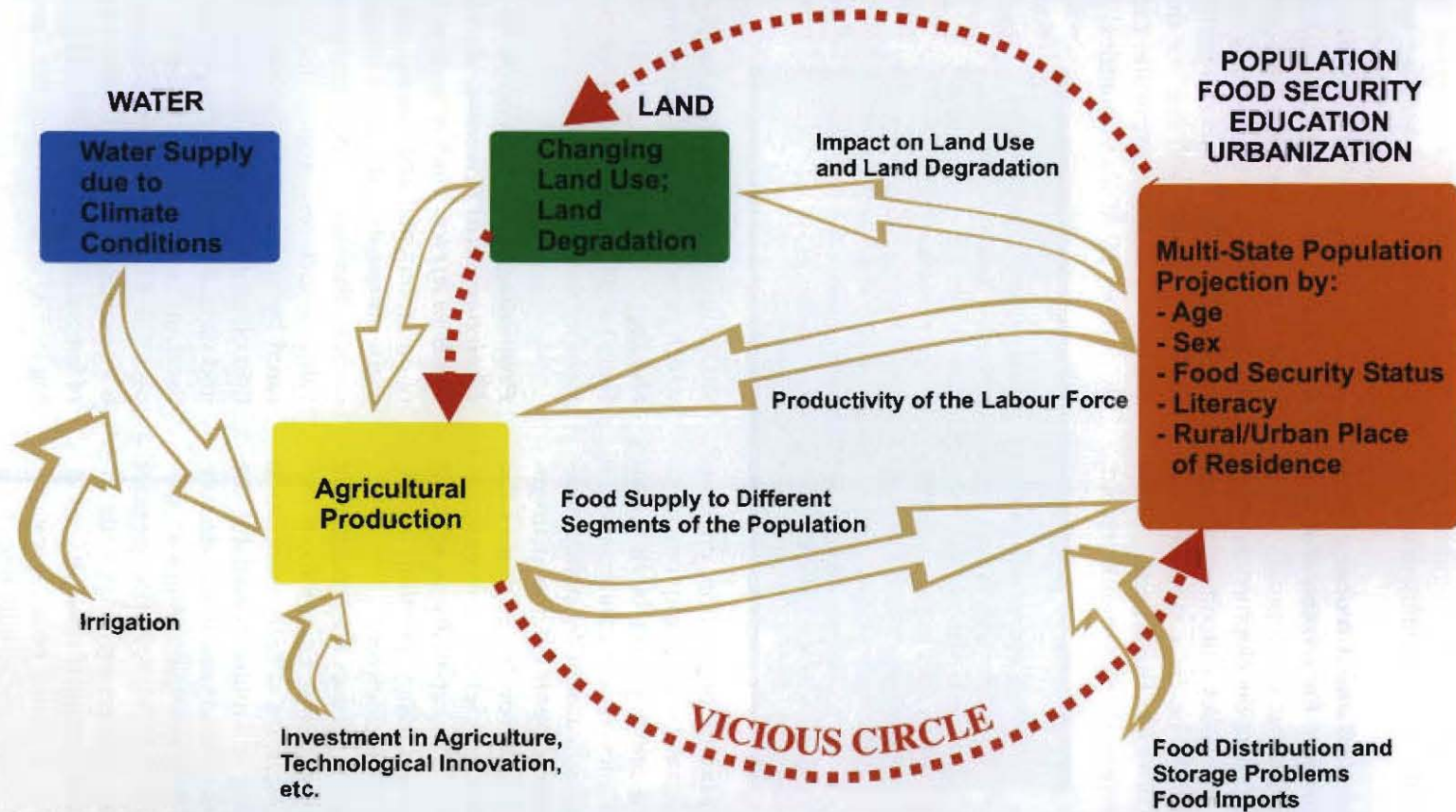
To this end, FUC3 considered the *Report on African Experience in the Implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA* prepared by ECA in the context of the five-yearly review and assessment of the implementation of the two frameworks. The report was based mainly on a DND and ICPD-PA-specific country questionnaire that was sent to all African countries, and on information gathered during two field missions in 12 African countries.

The Report outlined the main achievements and constraints as well as the best practices derived from country experiences in the course of implementing the ICPD-PA. It also assessed the extent to which Member States have taken into account the ICPD-PA recommendations in the formulation and implementation of their National Population Programmes (NPPs). The Report's findings revealed, among other things, that lack of infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, and a serious resource shortfall remain serious problems in most Member States, even though several have tried to mobilize internal resources.

Committee discussions focused on reproductive health and reproductive rights, family youths and adolescents, gender equality and equity, empowerment of women, male involvement, the role of NGOs and the private sector in programme implementation, population and development strategy, institutional mechanisms/subregional institutions, advocacy, and IEC strategy. For each area, achievements or best practices and constraints were presented and recommendations for the way forward were formulated.

Figure 7. The PEDa Model

Linking Population, Food Security, and the Environment



VICIOUS CIRCLE

High population growth of the rural food-insecure population will contribute to degradation of marginal lands. This decreases agricultural production, which in turn increases the number of food-insecure persons.

partnership with UNFPA, monitors and reports on the implementation in Africa of the regional and global population conference recommendations.

Strengthening Analytical and Advocacy Tools for Action in Population, Environmental, and Agricultural Development.

Conceptually, while the population-environment-development linkages may be clear, what the policy outcomes of various interventions might be in a simultaneous framework is not so obvious. The objective of the ECA programme is to provide easy-to-understand, operationally useful analytical tools to accompany a proactive advocacy programme that helps policy makers better appreciate the kinds of development problems Africa faces today and is likely to face in future, depending on the population, environmental, and agricultural policies implemented. Developing, adapting, and applying the right analytical and policy advocacy tools in country-specific settings, and facilitating learning by policy makers from best-policy interventions and management practices elsewhere constitutes part of the assistance ECA is providing. Seminars, workshops, and demonstrations of the capability of selected analytical tools to answer policy questions are the main modalities for service delivery.

The ECA programme focuses on development and application of a Population, Environment, Development, and Agriculture (PEDA) simulation model, a user-friendly computer model for the analysis of the nexus interactions. It will demonstrate the impact of key emerging issues in specific countries, such as HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming, trade, and poverty. Applying interdisciplinary scientific analysis and projection, the model can shed light on key policy questions, such as what would happen to fertility rates if the education of 17-year-old girls was raised by, for instance, 80 per cent; what would be the impact of the rise in mortality rates due to HIV/AIDS;

what would be the impact of increased rural education on farming of marginal lands; and what impact would raising fertilizer use by, say 3 per cent, have on agricultural production and food security. Requests from Member States to make the PEDA tools available for application are very encouraging. Uganda's request, which was one of the first, was answered with a demonstration in December 1998. The model prototype will be refined and customized first for three countries—Burkina Faso, Madagascar, and Zambia—followed by another 10 African countries. A user's manual will be prepared during this phase, including procedures for data collection and preparation of country-specific baseline data sets needed to run PEDA. Training of trainers (ECA staff—including

"Devising an artful response to high population growth rates, extensive agricultural systems and a fragile environment—issues that should be treated as elements of an integrated nexus—might well constitute the most critical management challenge facing our continent. Managers of Africa's development must act with a sense of urgency to address these interlinked issues." *K.Y. Amoako, from "Challenges for Managers of Africa's Development—26th Tom Mboya Annual Lecture before the Kenya Institute of Management", Nairobi, Kenya, 6 November 1996.*

SRDCs and UNFPA Country Support Teams (CSTs), which provide on-demand technical expertise to Member States—and officials of ECA Member States) and the dissemination of the Model to other Member States will follow.

Promoting the Application of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) Tools in Africa.

Understanding the proper value of environmental and natural resources is critical to the sustainable utilization of non-renewable resources through proper management, since the value of such resources is not appropriately captured by market and price signals. Proper valuation of, and accounting for use of, environmental and natural resources are essential to establishing fiscal and regulatory modalities for their sustainable use. The ECA programme focuses on the promotion, popularization, and application of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA) in African countries through activities to:

- Increase professional understanding of SEEA techniques by African policy makers through training and other capacity-building instruments;

- Generate awareness and political support for SEEA as an environmental and natural resources management tool in Africa;
- Increase application of SEEA in drawing up national policy and management programmes; and
- Provide advisory services to Member States.

The first seminar towards these objectives was held at ECA in October 1998, with the assistance of several partners. More activities, including those focused at the country-level, are planned (see box 8).

Strengthening Africa's Capacity in Science and Technology (S&T) for Development. Science and technology provide opportunities to address nexus and related development issues, such as raising agricultural productivity, improving competitiveness and opening up new opportunities for Africa in global markets, and combating droughts, malnutrition, and controllable

diseases. ECA's programme has been developed in consultation with multilateral, bilateral and African institutions and experts (see box 9). Its activities, part of whose funding is provided principally by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, focus on:

- Building awareness of the critical role of S&T in development and helping Member States consider their S&T development options, to develop the policy and institutional capacities needed to strengthen and use S&T resources for socio-economic development—particularly in agriculture;
- Expanding existing networks and building databases to ease access by network members to S&T information and resources, and to enhance management and the impact of science and technology in Member States;
- Developing and disseminating best-practice and success cases from which lessons can be learned for faster socioeconomic development;

Box 8. Environmental and Natural Resources Accounting Seminar

The overall objective of the seminar, held 26–28 October 1998, was to support the efforts of African governments to identify, capture, and use resource rents for economic development effectively. It introduced the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA) and its potential policy uses, and enabled the sharing of experiences of several countries that have experimented with natural resource accounting.

Thirty-four high-level participants representing 11 Member States, 4 UN organs (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and UNSD/DESA), 4 institutions (NESDA, OAU, SESRTC and WWF), and 4 ECA/SRDCs (Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Africa) attended the seminar.

The seminar gave an opportunity for new partnerships among ECA, WWF, ADANAC Pvt. Ltd. Zimbabwe, UNEP, and UNSD/DESA, which provided the seminar with speakers on the topics on the agenda. The Statistical, Economic, and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries funded participants from three African countries.

The seminar raised awareness among participants of the potential contributions that the SEEA as a planning tool can make to Africa's economic development, and called for support from African governments and the international community in promoting the application of the SEEA in Africa. It recommended the following activities as follow-up:

- Generate demand for and promote application of environmental and economic accounting;
- Build and strengthen capacity for implementing integrated environmental and economic accounting;
- Conduct focused, practical case studies based on the framework of the UN and SEEA;
- Develop and consolidate a database for implementing integrated environmental and economic accounting;
- Apply integrated environmental and economic accounting information to policy making; and
- Strengthen regional coordination.

Box 9. ECA Science and Technology Network (ESTNET)

At the first meeting of the ad hoc group of experts on science and technology for food security and sustainable development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9–12 February 1998, a network on science and technology (ESTNET) was launched with participants in the meeting as initial members. The objective of the network is to foster communication and information exchange related to science and technology policies and management in Africa. A steering committee was constituted with representatives from five African subregions and two major subregional organizations.

The network will be accessible from the ECA Web

site and will host databases of best research results, examples of success and best practices in science and technology, useful science and technology documents, reports of conferences and other meetings, bibliographies, policy briefs, and relevant resolutions and protocols. The S&T Web pages will also list potential consultants and potential donors, and current and upcoming events in science and technology in Africa.

The network will eventually be used for interactive meetings on topics of interest in science and technology, for providing information and answers on request on science and technology policies, and for providing advice and assistance to Member States.

- Strengthening human resources skills for science and technology in areas necessary for effective and urgent impact on socioeconomic development through training and knowledge sharing;
- Carrying out studies and other preparatory activities aimed at identifying niches of competitive advantage;
- Facilitating the extension of the science and technology function within ECA and increasing ECA's capacity to serve Member States in the areas described above; and
- Refocusing science and technology advisory services to African States to emphasize the cross-cutting nature of S&T and to mainstream the S&T function in all country policies and programmes.

Improving the Quality and Availability of Information on Population, Environmental, and Agricultural Programmes. The ECA programme, which is a collaborative effort of the Commission's Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD) and the Development Information Services Division (DISD), focuses on supporting data and information needed for the integrated approach to policy analysis of nexus issues. This includes the promotion of innovative population and environmental data assembly and dissemination systems and the strengthening of

information infrastructures. Designing systems and technical assistance to generate environmental data and other information for implementing the tasks described in this chapter are part of the core programmes of DISD—in collaboration with the relevant divisions.

In support of the ICPD and DND tasks, the African Network of Population Information Processing and Disseminating Centers will be created. National, subregional, and regional centres of population information and services will be strengthened to discharge the additional functions necessitated by the ICPD/DND activities. The centres would ensure timely dissemination of population information and best practices throughout the region. The network will periodically produce and disseminate two main publications. The *Population and Development in Africa: DND/ICPD Follow-up News* will be the main vehicle through which ECA will monitor trends and policies in population and development issues in Africa—as required by DND and ICPD-PA. The *Network News* will serve as the main link between the national, subregional, and regional institutions participating in the African Network of Population Information Processing and Disseminating Centres.

A regional freestanding institutional centre and electronic database with full virtual capabilities will be developed with support from partners as a source of data and information on food security

and sustainable development activities and programmes in Africa. The ongoing Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHA) Inventory of Food Se-

curity Activities, which was started by USAID and transferred to ECA, will serve the nucleus and springboard for this longer-term task (see box 10).

Box 10. Inventory of Food Security Activities in the Greater Horn of Africa Region (GHA)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is supporting an activity in FSSDD designed to provide development institutions and interested individuals with access to information on existing projects, activities, and analyses related to food security in the countries of the Greater Horn of Africa.

The activity maintains an interactive electronic tool comprising:

- A database on food security projects and activities in the Greater Horn countries
- Published analyses on food security
- Country-specific indicators on food security
- Maps of each of the 10 GHA countries
- Help on how to use the tool

The inventory will serve as a useful tool for African institutions and development administrators, NGOs, and multilateral institutions for enhancing their awareness of food security activities in the GHA. This will help minimize wasteful duplication of work and encourage cooperation and collaboration.

The Division will update the information in the inventory by gathering and entering available new information on activities, indicators, and analyses pertaining to food security in the GHA and other African countries. The information will then be disseminated to interested individuals and institutions in the GHA and elsewhere either directly, on demand, or through the Internet. Support for this phase of the activity is also expected from USDA.

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Harnessing Information for Development

Information and communication technologies (ICTs), driven by the convergence of computers, telecommunications, and traditional media, are crucial for the knowledge-based economy of the future. Rapid advances in technology and the diminishing cost of acquiring new information and communication tools have opened windows of opportunity for accelerated economic and social development. The introduction of computers is revolutionizing the ability of print and broadcast media to amass and disseminate information. Powerful new technologies can also give African countries direct access to the world's knowledge base, expertise, markets, and financial resources.

Overview

Internet connectivity has increased in leaps and bounds in Africa, from just four countries connected in 1995 to 43 countries by late 1997, and an expected 49 by the end of 1998. Twelve countries are considered to have active and mature markets, including South Africa, which in terms of the number of Internet nodes ranks among the world's top 20 countries. Technologies are becoming more flexible, and technological sophistication is no longer a requirement for getting onto the global information superhighway.

In a globalized economy, technology can bring unprecedented competitive advantages. For example, ICTs have reduced the time it takes to identify and exploit opportunities for trade, investment, and finance, and have opened the way to small players.

To join the information revolution, however, Africa needs to develop capacity to tap into the global system of information and knowledge, and adapt it to solve its problems. This calls for public policies to address a range of serious impediments, including inadequate telecommunications systems, restrictive laws and regulations obstructing flows of information, and the shortage of trained professionals in computers, data management, science, engineering, and business.

Compared to the world average of roughly one user for every 40 people, Africa has one Internet user for every 500 people. Of the 700,000 to 1 million users estimated in Africa, the concentration is badly skewed, with some 600,000 living in South Africa. Most of the remaining users are concentrated in North Africa, where Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt show the strongest Internet

growth. Other countries with more than 3,000 users each are Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Underpinning these demographics are political, social, economic, and infrastructural realities that continue to limit participation in the information society for millions of people living in the world's most impoverished societies, a large number of which are in Africa. Content (development information) development is another area of concern, requiring capacity building to foster the development of an African information society that reflects cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge.

Information poverty is an important component of poverty in Africa as a whole. In addition to access to schools, jobs, and clinics, an important dimension of human development is access to information. Access is a factor in changing attitudes and learning to seize opportunities. Weak communication and social infrastructure not only block information flows, but ultimately stifle social and economic development.

Emerging technologies hold great promise for democratizing access to information. By facilitating access to groups of people marginalized by dint of illiteracy or rural remoteness, the technologies can help accelerate development. Through enhanced information "infrastructures", and improved data production and dissemination, information can be made a veritable agent for change, as well as a means towards prosperity in Africa.

Statistics is also a critical area for Africa's development. Timely and reliable statistical data are vital to successful planning and management of national and regional projects and programmes—be they public or private, social, economic, or environmental, and so on. To be most useful, data series should be collected and updated routinely and systematically. They should be geared to user needs and be easily accessible. But a shortage of statistical skills and a high turnover of staff in government statistical offices and training institutions have adversely affected statistics capability in Africa since the decade of independence. The Conference of African Statisticians in 1978 adopted a comprehensive programme—the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA)—to ensure that national statistical services had a permanent supply of qualified statistical personnel. The regional component of the STPA was located at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and was financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) up to 1993. Other bilateral and multilateral agencies assisted in the implementation of the programme, mainly at the national level.

The Challenge

Most African capitals with Internet access have more than one Internet Service Provider (ISP), where regulations permit. The profile of Internet users in Africa is still largely confined to companies, organizations, and relatively wealthy people in major cities. Few universities have full Internet connectivity. In most countries of the region, secondary cities have no local access to the Internet. Likewise, rural areas—where most Africans live—have little or no access. The obstacles to widespread usage of information technologies in Africa are daunting. Although African telecommunications are grossly inadequate, they are the most expensive in the world. South



Africa is developing the capacity to access the global system of information and knowledge sharing.

Africa aside, there are fewer telephone lines in Africa than in the city of New York. Investment in infrastructure requires heavy outlays and investors are unwilling to invest in new areas, particularly in rural areas, where 70 per cent of Africans live. While some argue that until adequate social services are available in Africa, widespread access to information technology will remain a luxury, the challenge is to harness information to fill some of the key development gaps.

In statistics, although the STPA became an excellent example of regional and donor cooperation, a number of problems continued to undermine the programme. The Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, which was adopted in May 1990 by ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development, and the establishment of the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD) in 1992 did not solve underlying problems. Although CASD remains active to this date, programme implementation and performance at the country level have fallen short of expectations, leading to further deterioration of many national statistical services. Strengthening national statistical capabilities is a key challenge and critical to the success of planned censuses and subsequent statistical activities in a large number of countries.

The ECA Response

An important part of ECA's mission is to raise awareness among African governments of the great potential that ICTs and efficient statistical systems hold for development. The underpinning credo is that information assumes a greater power the more it is shared and accessed. Conversely, information that is retained or hidden is confined to those who have control over it, and its value is therefore greatly diminished.

ECA has been working since the 1979 launch of the Pan African Development Information System (PADIS) to promote information management and exchange systems in Africa. PADIS played a substantial role in enhancing the capacity of African countries to collect, store, retrieve, and disseminate information.

In May 1995, the ECA Conference of Ministers mandated the Commission to work towards building Africa's "information highway". As part of the overall ECA restructuring, the Development Information Services Division (DISD) was created in 1997 to help focus attention on information and communication technologies as well as statistical development, under its Harnessing Information for Development work programme. In order to provide a framework for a development serving the African information highway, ECA developed the African Information Society Initiative (see box 11).

Policy Advocacy towards National Information Infrastructures. Developing National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans is central to the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), and appears prominently in the framework. As one of the first steps towards the building of an African information society, and to ensure that such a society is predicated upon and enables sustainable development, Member States need to put in place the necessary policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks at national level.

In cooperation with its partners, ECA has embarked upon NICI plans for development processes in a number of countries, including the Comoros, Eritrea, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Uganda. ECA has received and is studying requests for interventions in a number of other countries. In addition, ECA is assisting the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which govern regional integration in the African subregions, in human resource development and infrastructure building to better enable them to meet the needs of their Member States.

Developing Subregional Centres of Excellence. Capacity remains a major constraint. Through the identification of the socioeconomic priorities of a particular country, the NICI plans study the best way to use IT to meet those needs. ECA is currently implementing a project to develop training centres of excellence at national and subregional levels, using existing infrastructure such as universities and schools of technology and telecommunications.

In August 1998, ECA ran a 15-day training workshop in Zimbabwe's second city, Bulawayo, spawning Africa's first subregional centre of excellence. The workshop was hosted by the National University of Science and Technology, and

was attended by 15 technicians and MA computer science students from five Southern African countries. The project was financed by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and co-sponsored by ECA and United Nations Educational,

Box 11. The Africa Information Society Initiative

The Africa Information Society Initiative (AISI) was conceived as an action framework to leapfrog Africa into the information age (see subsection below). It was formulated in 1996 by a High-Level Working Group of African experts assembled by the Commission, and endorsed by ECA's Conference of Ministers, African Communications Ministers, the Organization of African Unity, and the Summit of the Eight in Denver in 1997. ECA's Development Information Services Division (DISD) is the focal point for coordinating and implementing AISI, in coordination with United Nations and other agency partners and institutions. Various African policy organs have endorsed AISI.

In this, AISI is a forerunner to the Harnessing Information Technology for Development priority cluster of the UN System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa, which aims to help build the necessary infrastructure for construction of the African information society. It is also in line with the regional integration goals of the Treaty establishing the Africa Economic Community, which foresaw the need for information networks and regional databases, information sources, and skills capacities. As the coordinating body for AISI, ECA is supporting ICT activities designed to accelerate socioeconomic development across the African region.

During 1997, ECA established the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) to the AISI, which provides Africa-wide visionary guidance to ECA's information and communication programmes. ATAC is made up of six experts representing the public sector, private sector, universities, research institutions, and NGOs, and includes one content adviser. The Commission has also established an informal group of development partners.

Partnership on ICTs in Africa (PICTA) is a forum for sharing information on the implementation of ICT projects on the continent, and for coordinating AISI activities. AISI partners include multilaterals, bilaterals,

NGOs, the private sector, and foundations. Members and lead agencies include Bellanet, IDRC, ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, the World Bank, WTO, the Global Information Infrastructure Commission, the WorldSpace Corporation, Mashav (Israel), the European Union, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the USAID Leland Initiative, the British Council and the European Union. PICTA members share information on ongoing projects, and develop and implement a joint work programme, producing synergy and adding value to move AISI implementation forward. The first PICTA meeting, which set the terms of reference, took place in Rabat, Morocco, in April 1997. The second, held in October 1997 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted a work programme for 1998 and 1999, and agreed on cooperation in policy, training and capacity building, telecentres, content development, and local knowledge. The third meeting, which took place in Tunis in October 1998, emphasized the number of successes PICTA had registered to date, including the burst of energy around telecentre development in Africa and the funding generated by it. The June 1998 Addis Ababa Global Connectivity for Africa Conference (see box 12) was also cited as a PICTA working group effort. It was emphasized that the nature of PICTA was the process rather than the organization.

AISI ACTION FRAMEWORK. To achieve its goal of a sustainable information society in Africa by 2010, the AISI framework calls on African countries to implement the following actions:

- Develop a national plan for building information and communication infrastructure;
- Eliminate or reduce import tariffs, taxes, and other legal barriers to the use of information and communication technologies;

(box continues on next page)

(box 11 continued)

- Establish an enabling environment to foster the free flow and development of information and communication in society;
- Implement a policy for using information and communication technologies in government services;
- Conduct needs analyses to determine requirements and set up information and communication services in key sectors of national priority;
- Identify and develop information technology applications in areas with highest impact on socioeconomic development at the national level;
- Take steps to facilitate the establishment of indigenous African information content and locally based, low-cost, and widely accessible Internet services;
- Prepare and adopt plans to develop human resources in information and communication technologies;
- Adopt policies and strategies to increase access to information and communication facilities with priorities in serving rural areas, grassroots society, and other disenfranchised groups, particularly women and youth; and
- Create and raise awareness of the potential benefits of the African information and communication infrastructure.

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Prior to that, similar workshops were held in Dakar, Senegal (for francophone West and Central African countries, November 1997) and Tunis, Tunisia (for North African countries, June 1997). A national training workshop was held in Ile-Ife, Nigeria in January 1999. Two others are scheduled in August 1999—in Antananarivo, Madagascar, for Indian Ocean countries, and in Nairobi, Kenya, for Eastern African countries.

Delivering Telemedicine to Remote Areas. Investment in ICTs for the health sector in Africa can help meet pressing health needs. Potential applications include health administration enhancement, health sector connectivity, and a decision-support system for curative and preventive health, improved distribution, and reduced cost of medical supplies. Basic applications of information and communication technologies to the health sector include electronic medical records, hospital information systems, the setup of intranets for sharing information among related participants in health institutions, the use of public networks such as the Internet to distribute information, decision-support expert systems, the provision of remote diagnostics via telemedicine, and community health information systems for local, national, and regional health planning.

In addition to promoting overall use of ICTs in the health sector through advisory services,

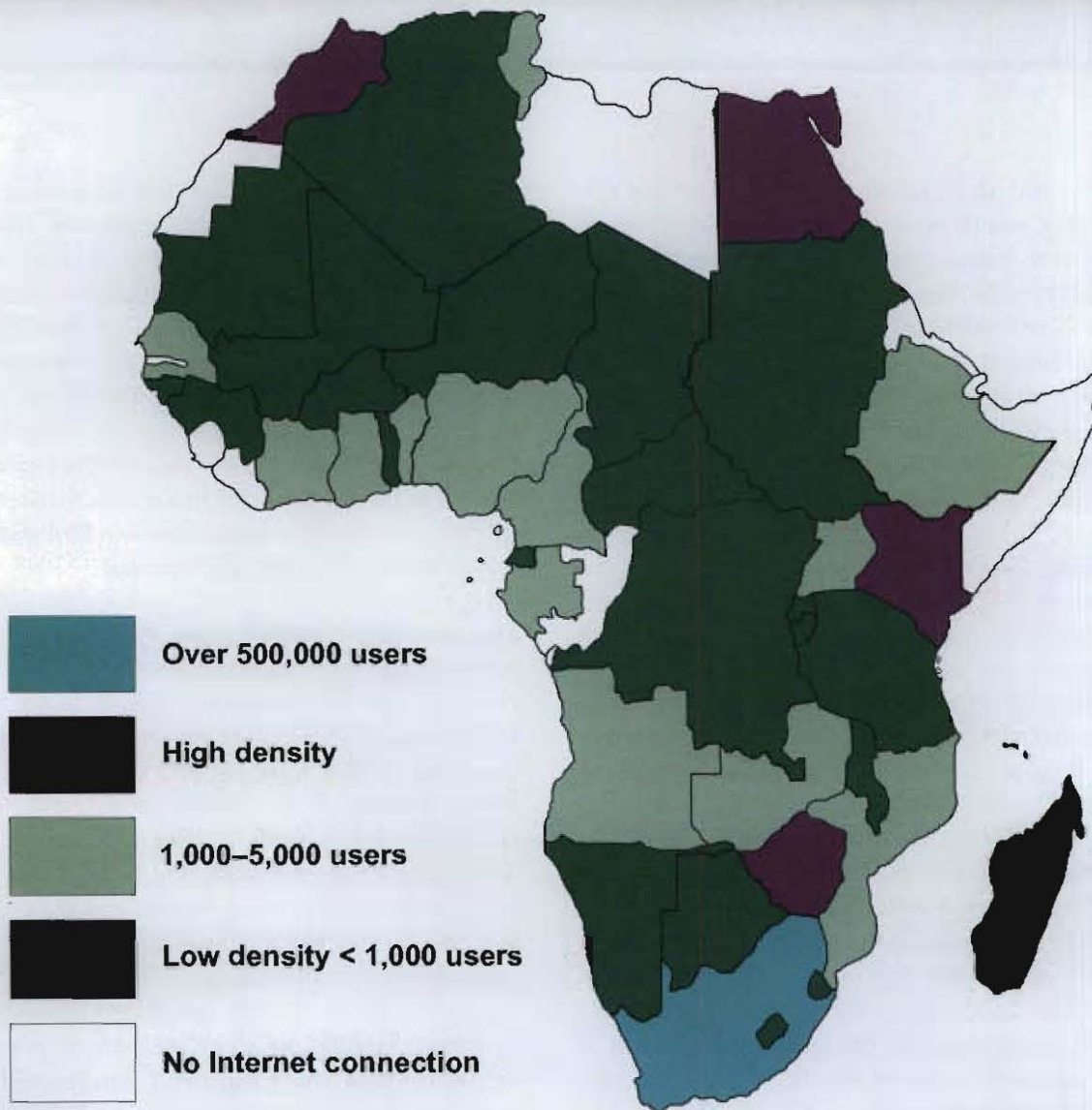
ECA's activities have included co-sponsoring a recent Telemedicine Conference for the Arab World, Africa, and Europe in Tunis in October 1998. The workshop focused on sharing experiences and disseminating the telemedicine concept widely. As a result of the Tunis conference, and in collaboration with the Africa Telehealth project, ECA held a regional workshop on telemedicine in Nairobi in February 1999. The workshop was intended to lay the foundation for the creation of five subregional telemedicine centres—in Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana, Tunisia, and Senegal.

Developing Content and Promoting Local Knowledge. Information about Africa (or African content), on the Internet is insignificant and of variable quality, lacks the required focus and standardization, and is too widely dispersed. Content flow is largely unidirectional—from the developed countries of the north to Africa. Making existing African content and local knowledge accessible via ICTs is an important means towards improving the availability of information and ideas intraregionally, as well as of enhancing Africa's contribution to global information resources, thereby presenting more holistic and authentic images of the continent. Increased business content can contribute to Africa's economic growth. Also, global content needs to be packaged so as to be user-friendly to different African communities.

ECA has been active in the development of content since the establishment of the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) in the 1980s. The evolution of development information systems from the traditional centralized model to a distribution-based model has prompted new approaches to content development in Africa.

ECA's advisory services have offered training in web site construction in Tanzania, in its five sub-regional offices, and to a number of subregional institutions such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Current and future ECA activities in content development

Figure 8. Internet Connectivity and Net Density in Africa



Based on: <http://www3.wn.apc.org/>, www.nsrc.org/, www.nw.com

within the framework of the AISI include training in content development, maintaining an inventory of Internet content to monitor its growth and to provide incentives, and creation of a clearing house for social and economic development content in Africa.

Electronic Commerce. The potential role of electronic commerce in reducing the distance between remote centres of production, lowering inventory and procurement costs, and attracting sales and stimulating real-time marketing is tremendous. This potential is, however, threatened by a dearth of public-private sector partnerships, uncompetitive pricing policies, and concerns about privacy. In addition to global concern about the security of financial transactions on the Internet, regulatory issues involving taxation, contract law, customs clearance procedures, and differing payment practices remain major barriers in Africa. Inadequate IT skills also mitigate against the growth of electronic commerce on the continent.

To address these problems, ECA is promoting new models of electronic commerce that are affordable for small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and governments. These models are being designed for their capacity to adapt to and influence regulatory frameworks, and for their ability to promote collaboration among industry, local enterprise, and governments. ECA is working with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and its Partnership in Communication Technologies for Africa (PICTA) partners to build electronic commerce sites in selected African countries, through local chambers of commerce and investment promotion centres. One example of this collaboration is an Arab regional workshop on Electronic Commerce, organised by UNCTAD with ECA participation, in Cairo in September 1998.

Such work involves establishing SME networks, Internet-accessible databases on business opportunities, electronic commerce workshops and training, needs assessment, and modalities and guidelines.

Strategies to Ensure Women's Access to IT.

Although women are a powerful force in development, they have by and large been excluded from the design, development, and use of ICTs, which remain male-dominated. Women entrepreneurs, who by their sheer effort sustain a large number of families in Africa, are still using traditional techniques to manage their businesses. What is more, the number of women involved in advanced education in computer and information sciences as well as engineering is woefully low, with some countries witnessing a contraction in the number of women computer science graduates.

To address these and other related issues, ECA's 40th anniversary conference on African women and economic development (see box 5) included among its core discussion points the theme of "African Women and the Information Age". To implement the recommendations from

"To move into the Information Society, Africa must be clear on what it wants and make its desires clear to others. If we are clear, if we have a compelling vision for ourselves, then it is likely that our choices will turn into our own reality. If we are not clear, then we will either be perpetual observers of the information highway or find ourselves on a road not fit for our needs." *K.Y. Amoako, from "Information and Communications for Development—Keynote Address before the Luncheon Forum, Conference on the Information Society and Development", Midrand, South Africa, 14 May 1996.*

this conference, and in line with its work programme in this area, the Commission is planning to promote women's participation in advanced computer studies, stage national workshops for women entrepreneurs, and foster the involvement of

women in running and managing community centres. Another outcome of the conference is the launch of a task force on gender dimensions in national accounts, led by DISD and involving other programme divisions of ECA. Among partnerships in the field of electronic networking for sustainable development, ECA is working with the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) to broaden access to and ownership of low-cost

Box 12. "Global Connectivity for Africa"

In what was the first regional follow-up to the June 1997 Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, Canada, "Global Connectivity for Africa" brought together more than 400 stakeholders, including some 30 African communications ministers, to discuss improved access to national networks, lower prices for international calls, and the broadening of access to information.

The conference, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2–4 June 1998, was hosted and sponsored by ECA, along with the World Bank Group, the Information for Development Programme of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of the Netherlands. The WorldSpace Corporation, Siemens, Teledesic, RASCOM, and Iridium co-sponsored from the private sector.

The three-day conference examined a wide range of cable and satellite projects, and, recognizing the increased choice of technology currently available, called for systematic reviews of sector policies and regulatory arrangements in order for the continent to take full advantage of the evolving situation.

The gathering underscored the need for cementing partnerships within the region, and in that context, ECA expressed its willingness to provide regular forums for

African communications ministers to meet and maintain the momentum on the positive dialogue to date, as well as to monitor progress in the development of the African Information Society Initiative.

Recommendations called on governments to regularly review sector policies and regulatory arrangements to optimize the benefits available from the increased choice of technology. In the light of the affordability barrier to ICT access, regulatory intervention was also deemed necessary to ensure consumers benefit from the reduced cost of international access. It was felt that connectivity projects should be undertaken primarily by the private sector, and that opportunities should be created to allow local financial participation, including micro-credit facilities in rural areas. Ministers were asked to introduce policies to address the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer malfunctioning problem, also known as the "Millennium Bug". As part of its follow-up to the conference, ECA produced a briefing paper on the Y2K problem for African policy makers. The briefing paper outlines the problem itself, details major aspects that will affect Africa, offers practical solutions, and includes best practices in dealing with the problem in Africa. In addition, it provides an extensive set of electronic and hard-copy information resources on the Y2K problem.

communication technologies for women and others most affected by poverty.

Building Coalitions with the Private Sector.

There is a consensus that the private sector has a critical role to play in developing national information infrastructure and related technological innovations in Africa. A key ECA partner in this regard is the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC), which serves a unique and very significant purpose in bringing business perspectives to the forefront wherever a global dialogue is needed between leaders of the public and private sectors to accelerate the development of the Information Society in Africa. A regional GIIC arm (GIIC-Africa) was established in May 1998 in Johannesburg, South Africa, to advocate policies in favor of the GII/GIS, champion pilot programmes to aid Africa's development, and fi-

nance the building of the information infrastructure and information society. It is expected that GIIC-Africa will leverage its strategic relationships with ECA to foster information infrastructure development and encourage investment in ICTs in Africa. In recognition of this partnership, the ECA Executive Secretary was recently named an Honorary Commissioner.

Another important private-sector partner is the WorldSpace Corporation, which emphasizes democratization of access to information, and is championing strategies to disseminate alternative voices and alternative perspectives through its non-profit arm, the WorldSpace Foundation. In December 1998, together with its manufacturing partners—Hitachi, JVC, Matsushita (Panasonic), and Sanyo—WorldSpace Corporation unveiled digital satellite radio receivers in Africa and the Middle East in early 1999. In response to the im-

pediments of large distances and physical barriers inside African countries that result in most African communities being isolated from the information revolution, WorldSpace is building an infrastructure that will bring information to local people using satellite radio from the AfriStar satellite, which was launched recently.

ECA is also establishing a Technology Centre for Africa (TCA) to raise the awareness of African policy and decision makers on the importance of the Information Society, as well as to provide both the policy and the technical tools necessary to develop the Information Society in their respective countries. The TCA, to be established in the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will provide opportunities for policy makers to see, understand, and educate themselves as to how technology can assist in meeting their development objectives. It will also provide focused training for both policy makers and implementers and thereby contribute to the application of technology in relevant areas, ensuring that the necessary knowledge is in place before new technologies are introduced. The TCA will consist of a standing Technology Exhibition demonstrating sector applications of relevance to African economies and societies, and a Training Centre offering courses in information and communication technologies. ECA is seeking the active participation of the private sector in financing and operating the TCA.

Developing Statistics and Geo-information.

African statistical development is in a poor state, representing a serious impediment to economic and social progress. Africa's capacity to access and contribute to global knowledge must be built on a system of timely, reliable, and easily accessible data at the national level. At the same time, the need for geo-information has increased rapidly over the years as an essential input for land management systems. Geo-information, the images created when digital maps are linked to databases, can be a helpful tool for a wide range of applications, such as remote sensing and environmental, agricultural, and infrastructural planning.

ECA acts as Secretariat to the inter-agency CASD, which was set up in 1992 on request from Member States to coordinate all activities to promote Africa's statistical development. ECA support to CASD falls into four categories: support for co-ordination meetings, assistance to CASD's four task forces, promoting the flow of information, and establishing a baseline statistical programme for Africa. ECA is the task leader of three CASD task forces—on connectivity for statistics, monitoring implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action, and strengthening Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) centres.

In collaboration with other partners, ECA has designed a three-year program for implementation with partners, starting in 1999, to help member countries to:

- Strengthen statistical training;
- Strengthen and refine the process for further implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts;
- Establish national and regional standardized micro-data libraries;
- Strengthen needs assessment, statistical operations, and data analysis and dissemination capabilities;
- Develop integrated household survey capabilities;
- Develop an environmental statistics capability;
- Strengthen statistical database capabilities; and
- Improve the coordination of statistical activities in Africa in the CASD framework.

ECA has also been promoting geographic information for more than three decades in its efforts to assist Member States to improve their management of natural resources and their stewardship of the environment. Recent activities include an ad hoc experts group meeting on "Integrated Geographic Information Systems, with Special Attention to Cadastre and Land Information Systems for African Decision-Makers", held in November 1998. The meeting emerged with recommendations on improving existing systems in African countries, and developing new ones.



Promoting Regional Cooperation and Integration

Regional cooperation and integration arrangements in Africa predate independence, and the desire to reap their benefits has occupied the better part of the forums of African heads of state and ministers at the regional and subregional levels. Advocating regionalism is not a novel idea, but experience has shown that identifying policy challenges, setting targets, and signing declarations and agendas are one thing; translating them into concrete programs on the ground is another.

Overview

The blueprint for Africa's regional integration is the Abuja Treaty, which came into force in May 1994 and has a schedule of 34 years, extendible to 40 years, to create a full-fledged African Economic Community (AEC). The Treaty envisages six phases, starting with strengthening existing regional economic communities (RECs) and establishing others where they do not exist within the first five years. Planned follow-up phases include (within each REC): consolidation of policies, establishment of Free Trade Area and Customs Union among RECs, harmonization of policies, and establishment of an African common market and the African Economic Community. The efforts of AEC and the RECs are to be directed towards liberalization of trade and free factor mobility, development of regional infrastructures, and harmonization of macroeconomic and sector policies.

Through cooperation and integration, regional planning frameworks and trading blocks make more efficient use of the collective capital, labor, and natural resources of Member States that otherwise would have been prevented from being optimally utilized by individual states. The economies of scale in productive investments, particularly for large infrastructure and utilities projects, reduce the cost of private- and public-sector operations, including the cost to donors of aid administration. As national macroeconomic policy reforms are harmonized, efficient producers expand their market share and prices become more competitive on the world market. Investment in the region accelerates, attracted by the larger market and technological innovations. Additionally, regional frameworks reduce transaction costs on intraregional trade as a result of the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers. They create opportunities for a stronger bargaining position

vis-à-vis the rest of the world. They facilitate peace and political stability, as the environment is conducive to non-violent forms of conflict resolution.

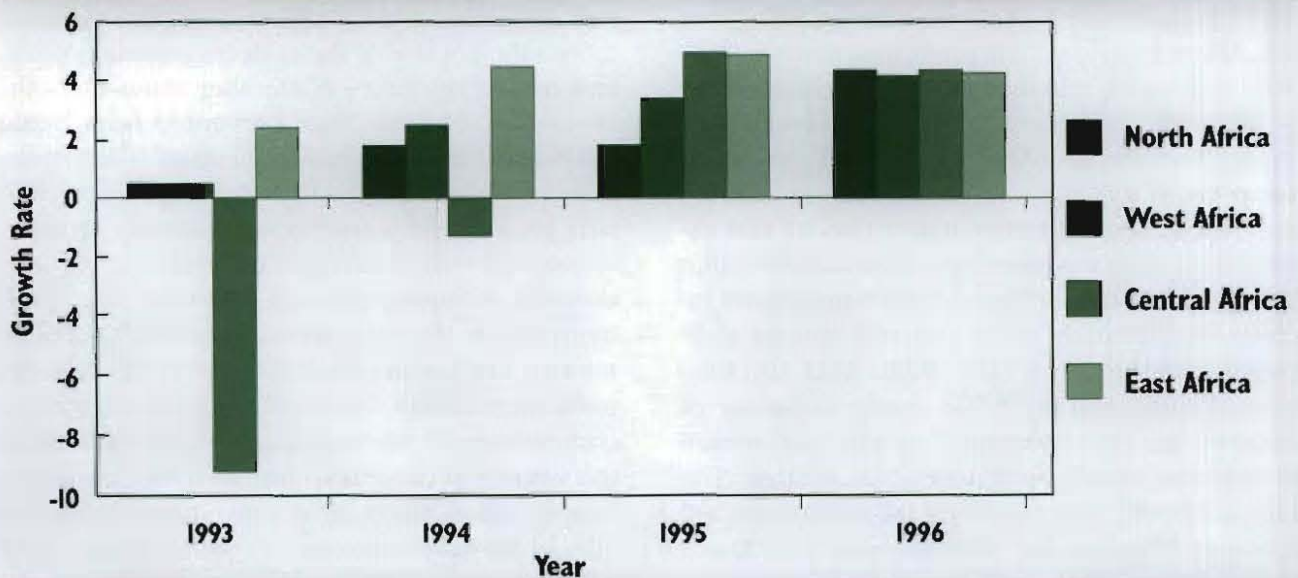
Africa is the most subdivided continent, with 165 borders demarcating the region into 51 countries—22 of which have a population of 5 million or less, and 11 of which have a population of under 1 million. With the continent's GDP equal to that of Belgium, the limitations of size are very real from the demand and supply points of view. With this in mind, regional cooperation is a *sine qua non* for competitive entry by any individual African country into world markets. Besides policy coordination, obvious areas for cooperation among African countries include regional transport, communication, and other infrastructure projects; power and other utilities projects; agriculture and food security; regional grain marketing and drought early-warning systems; and education and training institutions and programs.

The challenge of African development is compounded by the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, greater integration of financial and money markets, and a shift towards

the creation of large trading and economic blocs. These developments offer not only challenges and opportunities to Africa, but also point to the need to broaden the concept of regionalism and consequently to rethink Africa's regional integration strategy. Africa's economic recovery and development, as well as its ability to be effectively integrated in the world economy, are intrinsically linked to its capacity to become an active player in the world economy. This process of integrating Africa should be premised on three dimensions: extension and connection of Africa's physical space with its infrastructure; integrated development of production structures; and market integration, through trade liberalization, monetary harmonization, and promoting private-sector and business interests.

Whether it be among developing or developed countries, it is no longer a question of choice between intraregional integration arrangements and active participation in the international economy. It is also not a question of one complementing the other. The two imperatives are interdependent and should be pursued in parallel. The Latin American experience amply demonstrates the trade benefits from open regionalism, as it has come to

Figure 9. Subregional Growth Rates, 1993–97 (per cent per annum)



Source: ECA, Economic Report on Africa 1998.

be known. Growth of the region's exports to the rest of the world increased from 5.7 to 11.0 per cent between 1986–90 and 1991–95. Growth of intraregional exports rose from 11.3 to 16.0 per cent over the same period. Growth rate of imports into the region from the rest of the world almost doubled, from 9.5 to 18.0 per cent, as did that of imports from within the region, from 8.6 to 16.8 per cent, during the same period.

In short, the integration process within Africa is essential towards achieving international competitiveness for the continent. For Africa, regional integration will serve as a mechanism for diversifying risk and reducing the shocks of an uncertain global economy.

The Challenges

The subregional pillars for the African Common Market under the Abuja Treaty are now in place. They are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A sixth—the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)—has subsequently been recognized as one of the RECs. But others, inside or straddling two or more of the aforementioned RECs, exist, and some of them overlap. The East African Community overlaps with COMESA, as does SADC; UEMOA overlaps with ECOWAS, as does the Mano River Union. The proliferation of overlapping regional schemes has resulted in sometimes conflicting spheres of jurisdiction, where different organizations in the same region have the same mandate, or where a country belongs to two or more organizations that are pursuing different policies at a particular time.

Inadequate Political Commitment. This is one of the most serious constraints to integration. Because post-independence regional cooperation has its roots in political interests, rather than economic rationale, measures agreed in regional forums are rarely incorporated in national policies and plans. Their implementation at the country level is therefore not carried out forcefully. This is clearly seen with a number of regional protocols, which are not ratified for years in several Member States due to fear of the short-term political and economic problems, a shortage of resources, inadequate expertise, or lack of interest. Successful integration must be founded on the understanding of supra-nationality.

Serving the Common Will. In any cooperative arrangement, participating countries and their leaders must subscribe to the notion that individual interests at times have to be sacrificed for the good of the larger group. In the absence of a clear definition of supra-nationality, all decisions in the intergovernmental machinery are taken on the basis of unanimity, which invariably leads to delays and the scaling down of policy content to avoid controversy. The clear vision that national interests are reinforced by regional interests and the acceptance by leaders that strengthening regional authorities does not weaken, but rather strengthens national inter-

"Whether or not to integrate with the world economy is a false choice. . . . We must integrate, but we will reap far greater rewards from integration in the world economy if our own house is integrated first. Therefore, we should choose actions that accelerate African integration, with the political will and selectivity of actions required". K.Y. Amoako, from "Statement to the Council of Ministers, 67th Ordinary Session of the Organization of African Unity", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26 February 1998.

ests, are a critical challenge and an important milestone. This is fundamental to rethinking the cooperation frameworks in Africa, intellectually reinvigorating, rationalizing and redirecting them, including the strengthening of institutional, legal, regulatory, and enforcement mechanisms. As a necessary step, in critical areas supra-nationality needs to be built into the protocols to ensure decision-making by less than unanimity, and enforcement mechanisms for decisions need to be put in place. Otherwise, progress will remain painfully slow.



United Nations

Regional trading blocks make more efficient use of collective capital, labor, and natural resources.

Financial and Administrative Resources. Inadequate budgetary support and administrative and managerial weaknesses have adversely affected the effectiveness of RECs. They need strong, adequately trained, and independent management. And with few exceptions, the RECs have not made sufficient progress in establishing self-financing mechanisms. They rely on assessed contributions from their Member States, which are paid erratically, largely due to weak national budgetary positions. This tends to undermine the development of the human and institutional capacity of the RECs. Strong technical capabilities are needed to support the myriad tasks and complex processes that have to be carried out to realize the provisions of integration treaties, including continual review (and possibly rethinking) of the treaties in light of evolving global trends. The strengthening of human and institutional capabilities at the regional, sub-

regional and country levels should be an integral part of the agenda to promote regional integration and cooperation.

Involving the Private Sector and Civil Society. Regional integration issues and programmes are often discussed without the active participation of the constituencies most affected—the private sector and civil society. In particular, expansion of markets, along with its challenges and opportunities for cross-border formal and informal trade, is something in which the business community takes great interest. Similarly, the possibility of labor movements across national borders is something labor unions should help to shape. The growth of regional associations of business, professional, and NGOs and networks facilitates broader and more informed participation by private-sector and civil society interests in the integration debate. RECs and national governments should facilitate the active involvement of

these organizations. For example, the knowledge of the African Enterprise Network, which appears poised to spread beyond its home region, West Africa, to other parts of the continent, should be tapped when thinking through some of the business implications of pursuing open regionalism strategies.

The Role of Other Regional Institutions. Rationalizing and revitalizing the many regional institutions in Africa must be viewed within a comprehensive framework for strengthening the overall institutional foundation for Africa's economic cooperation. Besides the RECs, there is a range of organizations sponsored by ECA, in collaboration with Member States and such organizations as the OAU, to build capacity in strategic areas such as science and technology, remote sensing, engineering design and manufacturing, and economic

planning and management. The ADB is Africa's premier development financing institution and is best placed to support regional projects. Clarification of mandates of regional institutions is a new regionalism paradigm, and holding those institutions to their mandate is a challenge that emerges in the framework of reinvigorating regional integration.

The ECA Response

On 8 May 1997, taking into account the role of similar organs of African organizations that promote regional cooperation and integration, the ECA Conference of Ministers established the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration as a subsidiary organ of the Commission. As part of the new intergovernmental machinery of the Commission, the Committee assumed the technical tasks of the former Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration and Tourism. The reform answered the request of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Meeting at its 1994 Session in Tunis, the Assembly called for the harmonization of the institutional machinery of ECA with those of sister organizations, in particular the African Economic Community. The Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration aims to coordinate the relevant activities of the Commission with those of the other actors in the economic integration process in Africa.

The first session of the Committee, which took place from 27–29 April 1999, was combined with a forum on "The Challenges of Regional Economic Integration in Africa, with Particular Focus on Resource Mobilization to Support the Process". OAU, ADB, all RECs, UNDP, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the African Economic Research Consortium participated in the session. Among other things, the Committee/Forum reviewed progress made towards the African Economic Community (AEC), and the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in fostering the integration process.

ECA undertakes policy studies to support the process of economic integration as called for in

the Abuja Treaty. The studies identify and analyse factors affecting integration, including conditions that constrain or facilitate the process, so as to help Member States articulate strategies and implement policies to advance the process at the country, subregional, and regional levels. Some of the results of these studies were presented in the papers prepared for the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee/Forum on regional integration and cooperation referred to previously. The Committee forum facilitated the sharing of experiences and best practices by the RECs in specific areas, including those identified in the studies summarized below.

Gradual Harmonization and Rationalization of Regional Integration Institutions. The overlap of RECs operating within the same subregional spaces in Africa is one of the key problems undermining the cohesiveness and unity of purpose and action in the integration process. Experience has shown that merging one REC with another, or closing down one in favor of another, is politically sensitive and difficult to implement in the absence of political convergence on the issue. A pragmatic approach to the issue of multiplicity of RECs operating within the same subregional space might be the gradual harmonization of their market liberalization instruments. This would be achieved by removing contradictions and incompatibilities among them. That approach underlies the study, which is designed to identify and recommend measures to enhance cohesiveness and minimize fragmentation of market and economic space, and enhance the free circulation of people, goods, and services within the same subregion.

Convergence of Micro- and Macroeconomic Policies among Countries for Greater Harmonization. National structural adjustment programmes were designed to help a number of countries in Africa restore equilibrium in their economies. These tended to pay little or no attention to the regional dimension of national policies. The study demonstrated the negative consequences of policies of member countries within integration groupings that are neither coordinated

with one another, nor attuned to the agreed common objectives. It recommended promoting broad policy coordination and convergence, so as to ensure cohesiveness and unity of purpose of the African integration process.

Feasibility Studies on the Establishment of Self-Financing Mechanisms for the RECs.

Ensuring the African integration process entails costs. The EU would not have advanced at its pace without innovative, adequate, and sustained financing through various mechanisms, including selective taxes. African RECs today basically depend on inadequate and unreliable financial subscriptions from the over-stretched coffers of their constituent countries. The studies are designed to identify sources and mechanisms to ensure that future financing of Africa's integration process is reliable—predominantly tax-based and minimally inflationary. In addition to sustaining the secretariats of the RECs, the sources identified can contribute to funding existing and potential integration programs and projects. The study for COMESA has been completed, while that for SADC is ongoing. Eventually all RECs will be covered.

Compensation and Equalization Mechanisms for Furthering the Economic Integration Process.

As a result of the tariff reduction plans associated with economic liberalization, the revenue base of many of the countries, which is necessary for financing critical public expenditures, will be eroded. This in the past has contributed to the reluctance by some countries to implement trade liberalization programmes. The study addresses the problem of revenue losses and uneven gains stemming from the implementation of trade liberalization schemes by Member States. It develops options for compensation and mechanisms for revenue and loss equalization. The ultimate objective is to assess the feasibility of equalization funds for financing development projects, particularly infrastructure in the least developed countries of the RECs, in order to enhance their participation in these groupings. The study, which has been completed for COMESA, will be replicated for the rest of the RECs.

Analytical Framework for the Assessment of the Costs and Benefits of Regional Economic Integration.

A clear knowledge of the costs and benefits of belonging to a regional grouping is essential to strong commitment by member countries of various RECs. Transparency in the relative gains and losses of the members will facilitate rapid progress. Subregional case studies will examine measures that could be considered within the framework of national and regional policies to minimize costs and maximize equitably distributed benefits. An ECA workshop on Economic Integration Cost Benefit Analysis was held on 28–30 October 1998, to familiarize participants with the techniques for analysing related issues and their policy implications. A pilot study has commenced in the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), with Burkina Faso as the first country case. Other countries within UEMOA will be eventually covered in the first phase. Subsequent studies will cover countries in other RECs. The results of the studies will form the basis for the contemplated equalization/compensation programmes.

Liberalization of World Trade, Globalization, and Africa's Regional Integration Process.

Given that most African countries are members of the WTO, and all are expected to be members soon, Africa's integration process has to take account of the requirements of the global trading system, particularly as stipulated in Article (XXIV) of GATT 94 governing regional integration arrangements. The purpose of these studies is to prepare African countries for compliance with WTO provisions while continuing to pursue their regional integration objectives, and attuning the process to the WTO provisions. The studies also tie in with the assistance programs for ECA member countries, including training to better understand the WTO framework and its requirements (see chapter 4). Besides providing inputs into the training program, another output from the studies is policy briefs aimed at providing information on the world trading system that are of particular interest to Africa. Two issues of the policy briefs have been published so far: (i) *Africa's Regional Integration and the Multilateral Trading System*, and (ii)

Box 13. Implementing the Second UN Transport and Communications Decade

The 1997 ECA Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications, which convened in Cairo and was attended by sector ministers, senior government officials, and sector experts from around the world, reviewed the state of transport and communications in Africa. It explored measures to accelerate implementation of the Second UN Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. The Conference also recommended measures to address the problem of inefficient, high-cost transport infrastructures and to promote regional transport planning and coordination. These included deepening ongoing reforms in the transport and communications sectors, modernizing the technological base for the development of efficient systems, and strengthening institutional and human capacities.

Ongoing and Future Tasks. Tasks in transport focus on:

- Regional transport and linkages facilitation, to ascertain the efficiency of utilization of transport infrastructures;
- Implementation of transit agreements in 17 transit corridors through impact surveys;

- Organizing the African Road Safety Congress as a joint activity of ECA and OECD to promote road safety and the protection of the environment;
- Developing transport data systems to promote the establishment of information systems on market demand and performance of transport enterprises, and to improve the management of transport statistical services;
- Human resources and institutional development, through training in regional transport planning and management and networking of African experts in transport and communications;
- Seminars and workshops on regulatory frameworks and evaluation of options for private-sector participation; sharing information, including "best practices" between countries; and
- Organization of the African Transport Forum—with the Conference of African Ministers of Transport and Communications, the policy organ of UNCTADA—to facilitate review by policy makers, private-sector interests, representatives of financing institutions, and high-level international experts of emerging issues in Africa's transport.

Globalization and Liberalization of Markets: Prospects for African Products. Two others are forthcoming—on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and on the Telecommunication and Financial Services sector of GATS.

Expanding Intra-Africa Trade through Enhanced Trade Liberalization, Factor Mobility, and Convergence of Complementarities. Using eastern and southern Africa as a case, an empirical pilot study was carried out to establish the key factors determining the pace of effective implementation of trade liberalization within the subregion. On the basis of the subregion's natural resource endowments, measures were suggested to remove the obstacles to the greater interdependence of production and other economic activities. The ultimate objective is to improve the competitiveness of the productive sector and increase subregional trade.

The Impact of Physical, Tariff, and Non-Tariff Barriers on Intra-Africa Trade, Factor Mobility, and Regional Development Patterns. Building and efficiently operating national and regional transport and communications systems are key to promoting trade and investment in Africa through reductions in the prevailing high transport costs, so as to improve Africa's competitiveness. At the April 1999 meeting of the Committee/Forum on Regional Cooperation and Integration, a paper entitled *Transport and Communications Programmes of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Progress And Difficulties* were discussed. In it, ECOWAS, which has one of the more developed and integrated transport networks, shares its experience with other RECs. SADC shares its successful power-pooling experience (see box 13).

Box 14. Relaunching Regional Integration and the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS)

In February 1998, following a decision by the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) Conference of Heads of State and Government, ECA was requested to help relaunch regional integration in ECCAS, which has been dormant for most of its eight years of existence. ECA's Subregional Development Centre for Central Africa (CA-SRDC) was tasked with reviewing the ECCAS Charter, the question of arrears of Member States, and ECCAS's debt, as well as with developing a programme for relaunching and integrating the economies of the subregion.

The SRDC undertook extensive consultations on the best approach towards re-launching ECCAS as a means of energizing regional integration and subregional cooperation in Central Africa. Out of these consultations emerged a strategic plan of action, which articulated areas of common interest among countries in the subregion, detailed knowledge and experiences gained on integration and subregional cooperation, and specified the financial and organizational resources required.

The plan was circulated among a number of stakeholders, including the African Development Bank, and was proposed as a basis for discussing and addressing the regional integration issue at a June 1998 UNDP subregional cluster meeting, held in São Tomé et Príncipe.

The SRDC then led a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional consultation and preparatory mission to the 11 ECCAS countries. The mission was funded financially and materially by ECCAS, OAU, and the governments of Burundi, Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad. The mission's focus was to develop a common vision, promote the understanding of regional integration and cooperation, and sensitize principal actors and beneficiaries about their rightful roles in productive partnerships. In preparation for the mission, team members attended a preparatory two-day ad hoc experts group meeting in Yaoundé.

As a result of this mission, several reports have now been prepared towards the revitalization of ECCAS. They are: *Strategic Framework on Regional Integration and Subregional Cooperation*; *Rethinking Development in Central Africa in the 21st Century*; *Making Regional Integration the Engine for Sustained Growth*; *Sustainable Development at National Level*; and *Programme for Relaunching Regional Integration in the Central African Subregion and Renewing ECCAS—1999–2001*. The financial implications of the programme are detailed in the last of the four reports. The reports have been submitted to the ECCAS heads of state, who considered their recommendations at a meeting held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in April 1999.

Strengthening Regional Institutions through Technical and Advisory Support. ECA carries out analyses of the institutional strengths and weaknesses of the secretariats of subregional economic communities, and provides technical and policy advice enhancing the capacity of the economic groupings to anticipate and manage the challenges of integration. In the last two years, ECA has provided technical support to the secretariats of three key subregional economic communities: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); including the ECOWAS Fund; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). ECA, through the Central Africa Subregional Development Centre, is spearheading the effort to relaunch and re-

vitalize the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (see box 14).

COMESA: An ECA mission carried out a critical assessment of the Secretariat structure of COMESA, taking into account the immediate and long-term expectations of the Common Market's major stakeholders. At the end of the in-depth review of objectives, structure, and processes, the ECA mission proposed an organization structure capable of fulfilling a new strategic mission. The ECA's proposal was subsequently approved by the COMESA Council of Ministers at its meeting in November 1997.

ECOWAS: As in COMESA, an ECA mission responded to a request to carry out a critical and comprehensive review of the mandate, structure,

and functions of the ECOWAS Secretariat. Among the notable features of ECA's restructuring formula for the ECOWAS Secretariat and the Fund is the reconstitution of the sectoral and highly fragmented units into coherent multidisciplinary teams. The Commission also conducted job evaluation studies to generate the information needed in reclassifying professional level positions at the ECOWAS Secretariat and the ECOWAS Fund. The grading structure was rationalized and simplified. New performance

management strategies and innovative resource mobilization options were articulated.

SADC: ECA submitted a proposal to establish a policy analysis and coordination unit. This proposal was based on a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of SADC institutions' roles. The proposal defined the rationale and options for establishing a policy analysis unit within the secretariat, the structure and location

Box 15. Regional Potential and Issues for the Southern Africa Development Community

The original 12 SADC countries are Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This regional grouping accounts for only 1 per cent of world exports and 0.005 per cent of world GDP, but it accounts for 52 per cent of Africa's exports and 43 per cent of regional GDP. It is dominated by South Africa, which has one-third of the population, 80 per cent of GDP and 65 per cent of total exports. Except for South Africa, Mauritius, and Botswana, whose economies are quite diversified and advanced—making them middle income countries—the group is made up of basically small, poor, and largely landlocked countries, which depend on a few primary exports.

After decades of war and instability, regional cooperation has the potential to promote peace and stem flows of migration. Smaller countries cite larger markets and ability to share infrastructure—including development of transport links for landlocked countries—as key reasons for integration. Examples are the Southern Africa Power Pool and the payments clearing system among the central banks. These benefits translate into lower production and marketing costs. The regional grouping enhances visibility of the smaller countries to investors who, through prospects of economies of scale, can attract industries that will locate in the smaller countries. The arrangement enables the sharing of development experience on a range of development problems and better management of transboundary resources—such as water—for economic and security benefits.

While SADC is one of the most dynamic RECs in the continent, political strains exist, and it has not been

always possible for all countries to take a common position with respect to emerging issues within or outside the group. The recent Lesotho and Congo crises amply verify this point. Also, South Africa's history, its prior exclusion from the group, and its sheer economic dominance are delicate issues that have to be managed with sensitivity. This is particularly so in areas of macroeconomic and trade reforms, where the differences that exist in the pace of liberalization and the prospective deal between South Africa and the EU have the potential to create discomfort among the other members of the Community.

SADC's continuing success in the next millennium will depend largely on its crystallizing a vision for itself and charting a road map to get to shared objectives. So far, it has adopted the "variable geometry" approach to regional integration, which encourages bilateral as well as multilateral arrangements amongst members and promotes only a minimal bureaucratic structure. More major projects along the lines of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which provide good examples of the gains from regional projects, may be needed to strengthen the hitherto small and incremental efforts in the largely bottom-up approach that has to date characterized cooperation in the group. An important step towards a group vision of the future, which will facilitate the tackling of difficult issues and the implementation of larger, multi-country, win-win regional projects, is to build and strengthen constituencies with vested interests in cooperation within the "variable geometry" framework. Private-sector and civil society networks, for example, can have a catalytic effect towards that objective.

Box 16. African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)

Established in 1992, the objective of the African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development is to promote the developmental application of seasonal climatic projections from advanced meteorological data. Examples of the application of such information range from estimating the amount of hydroelectric supply for manufacturing plants, to application of the data for environmental and food security planning, to reducing economic losses from hazardous climatic changes through advance planning for agricultural activities.

Major achievements of ACMAD since its inception include the issuance of a continental medium-range forecast (three-to-five days), based on operational models developed by World Weather Prediction Centers; publication of daily continental forecast bulletins for the media; preparation of a monthly bulletin for the Sahel during the rainy season; continental climate watch (monthly and seasonal); on-the-job training for more than

400 African meteorologists; and scientific and technical studies and reports evaluating Africa-wide products and establishing the climatic monographs for some countries.

In its strategic plan for the year 2002, ACMAD intends to capitalize on the results already achieved and to develop a coordinated approach for resource mobilization from Member States and partners (scientific, technical, and financial). In the medium term the Center will focus on three main areas: (i) reinforcing the abilities of the Center in the fields of weather and climate watch; (ii) mastering meteorological application processes for various sectors, starting with needs assessment and ranging all the way to packaging of the technological tools for decision-making support; and (iii) to more aggressively participating in policy dialogue on environmental issues, climatic change, and socioeconomic choices compatible with sustainable development. ECA intends to work closely with ACMAD in all these areas.

of the unit, and its operational modalities (including modalities for constituting and making optimum use of teams), as well as the preconditions for the successful take-off of the unit (see box 15).

The ECA's plan for the next biennium includes following up the implementation of the restructuring and reorganization proposals, and collaborating with the secretariats of the economic communities on performance improvement and capacity-building projects. Resources will also be earmarked for completion of the job evaluation studies still outstanding at COMESA, ECOWAS Secretariat, and ECOWAS Fund.

Rationalizing ECA-Sponsored Institutions. At the 5–8 May 1997 session of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, ministers considered the report on *Rationalization of ECA-sponsored Institutions: Renewal for Improved Service*. The report included an assessment of the capacities of these institutions in the context of ECA's new strategic direction and their ability to enhance the Commission's impact in the selected areas of priority in which ECA has comparative advantage. Following the conference discussions and recom-

mendations, ECA is currently redefining its relationship with these institutions based on: (i) the functionality of the institutions; (ii) the relevance of their programs to ECA's new strategic orientations, and (iii) the support to these institutions from their Member States.

The ultimate objective of this exercise is to transform and strengthen the most effective institutions into regional centres of excellence. This category is likely to include the African Regional Center for Engineering Design and Manufacturing (ARCEDEM), the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the Regional Center for Training in Aerospace Survey (RECTAS), the African Regional Standardization Organization (ARSO), and the African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD). ECA works in close partnership with these centres in delivering policy and advisory services to Member States' highly technical areas. The work of ECA with ACMAD is illustrative of ECA's work in this regard (see box 16).

Strengthening ECA's Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs). SRDCs play a pivotal role in rendering services more effectively to RECs.

Based in Central, East, North, Southern, and West Africa, the five Centres are an important link between the Commission and various RECs at the subregional level. The SRDCs enable ECA to keep abreast of developments on the ground, enhancing the Commission's outreach. The SRDCs also work with partners to identify priority areas of relevance to the subregion and provide technical support. The Centres facilitate networking and information sharing, aid the dissemination of ECA policy recommenda-

tions and technical publications on regional cooperation and integration issues, and engage in advocacy and capacity building through policy forums, seminars, training workshops, and advisory missions to the RECs, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The reconstitution of ECA at subregional level since the reform of the Commission's structure and programs in 1996 has improved its capacity to support regional cooperation and integration efforts at the subregional level.



9

Promoting the Capable State

Since the start of the 1990s, Africa has undergone a major economic and political transformation—from closed autocracy to open democracy, from centrally planned economies to decentralized open markets, from single-party dictatorships to multi-party pluralism, and in many cases, from civil strife to peace and reconstruction (although some conflicts have stubbornly persisted). After two decades of almost continuous economic decline, Africa is today showing evidence of economic recovery. Its citizenry is demanding professionalism and efficiency from the state, and asserting that public policies be planned and managed in such a manner as to deliver sustained improvements in the economic and social conditions of the people, with their full participation. Although the degree of commitment and the speed of change have varied across countries, there is increasing focus in the continent on participatory and democratic systems of government.

Overview

There is also widespread recognition within Africa and the international community that peace and development are fundamentally intertwined, and that as long as recurrent conflicts in the continent continue to threaten stability, sustainable development will remain illusory. This latter theme has been lucidly articulated in the UN Secretary-General's report of April 1998 on *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*.

The appropriate scope and role of the state have been re-examined in Africa, including the

policy options for stimulating the private sector's contribution to development and the measures needed to foster civil society participation in the development process. For the state to discharge its legitimate functions, for civil society to flourish, and for the private sector to function properly, a system of good governance is required that allows stakeholders in these sectors to play their respective roles to their full potential. Good governance is also required to ensure that the country's social and economic priorities are based on the needs of society as a whole, and that broad-based stakeholders' participation is facilitated in the economic and political affairs of the country.

Good governance calls for the ability of a state to anticipate changes to its well-being, provide core services to its people and then augment these services, act as catalyst of change for the good, and guide the various forces in society towards harmony. The very capable states in the world, especially in contrast to the very incapable states, demonstrate how the promise of good governance is realized when all these tasks are artfully carried out. For this reason, the focus should be on ensuring that the state is endowed with the requisite capacity to cement its capability.

In this connection, the emergence of strong and active organizations of civil society in Africa has been significant to developing norms of good governance and to establishing the necessary mechanisms for holding people in positions of trust accountable. The renewed interest among African governments in developing effective governance institutions—incorporating effective pub-

lic, private, and non-governmental organizations—has also added impetus to the focus on capacity building in these areas. It is increasingly evident that in a rapidly changing global environment, where efficiency and competitiveness are the hallmarks of success, African governments need effective institutions that will enable them to participate in, and benefit from, the increasing global economy. In this light, Africa's systems of governance hold the key to the continent's integration into world markets.

The Challenge

Although remarkable strides have been made towards good governance, wide gaps continue to exist between governance concepts and their implementation as many countries are still grappling with issues of civil strife, political instability, and continued poverty. Weak institutional capac-

Figure 10. Ranking the Obstacles to Good Governance in Africa

OBSTACLES	
1.	Corruption
2.	Tax regulation and/or high taxes
3.	Inadequate supply of infrastructure
4.	Inflation
5.	Financing
6.	Crime and theft
7.	General uncertainty on costs of regulations
8.	Regulations on foreign trade (export, import)
9.	Policy instability
10.	Labour relations
11.	Foreign currency relations
12.	Safety or environmental regulations
13.	Regulations for starting businesses
14.	Price controls
15.	Terrorism

Source: ECA, Economic Report on Africa 1998

ity, fragile economic and political systems, and wavering leadership commitment also pose real risks of reversal both on the political and economic fronts. A well-functioning capable state is essential to safeguard against these risks. However, Africa still faces major challenges that are yet to be tackled to foster the capable state. Key among these are strengthening the components of democracy, facilitating the role of civil society organizations in development, rebuilding the capacities of failed states, and strengthening economic governance through enhanced institutional and human capacity for sound and efficient public management. One related challenge is to ensure the necessary technical and advisory support for sustained civil service reform in the medium term.

"It is Africans who bear the responsibility for taking action, including the tailoring of approaches to improving governance that have been adapted from elsewhere. Africa has its own experiences, its own best cases, and its own storehouse of culture and governance to draw on." *K.Y. Amoako, from "Improving Governance and Citizen Participation in Development—Address to the International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity", United Nations, New York, USA, 28 July 1997.*

The ECA Response

Technical Assistance and Analytical Studies on Public-Sector Reform. In the past, ECA has contributed to efforts at reforming and revitalizing public-sector institutions in Africa at both the national and regional levels. It has also developed and strengthened working relations with Member States and other stakeholders. ECA's national-level activities are geared towards enhancing the capacity of central and local government institutions to respond to the demands of civil society. In recognition of the impact of governance on economic growth and sustainable development, the ECA Secretariat has collaborated with external partners to organize high-level policy seminars on issues ranging from ethics and accountability, through the rule of law and law enforcement, to public service performance and efficient service delivery.

Technical assistance to Member States on civil service reform and strategies for enhancing public-sector management has been a key part of ECA's

work in this area (see box 17). Over the next two years, ECA will expand its country-level work through demand-driven, country-focused technical assistance and training. Past activities include a workshop on "Ethics, Accountability, and Improved Service Delivery", for senior civil servants in Ethiopia; workshops in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Namibia, and Zambia on evaluating and monitoring the performance of public enterprises; and a workshop on "Motivation, Efficiency, and Productivity", for senior civil servants in Namibia. Planned analytical

papers in this area include analysis of the experiences of selected non-African developing countries that have successfully reformed their civil service; comparative studies of civil-service reform modalities, drawing lessons for Africa; and guidelines on best practices for effective service-delivery systems in the public service in Africa. An expert group meeting on civil-service reforms, with focus on ethics and accountability, is planned for 1999.

Past ECA Activities to Strengthen Civil Society Participation in Governance and Development in Africa. Since 1990, ECA has an established track record in promoting the participation and contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs) in governance and development. At an ECA-organized international conference on "Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development of Africa", held in Arusha in 1990, African governments, civil society, and Africa's international partners gave full recognition to the pivotal role of popular participation in Africa's development, and endorsed the "African Charter for Popular Participation in Development". The Charter is now adopted by nearly all African states, by the heads of state and government of the Organization of African unity, and by the United Nations General Assembly.

Box 17. ECA Work in Public-Sector Reforms

Between 1997 and 1998, ECA collaborated with Member States (among them, Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, Eritrea, and Zambia) to organize workshops that exposed participants to best practices in productivity and performance management, and suggested new directions in the development of service standards and the inculcation of customer-friendly attitudes in service-delivery agents.

ECA has also responded through provision of technical advisory services to requests for assistance in restructuring the Member States' public service agencies and training institutions. In 1997, ECA submitted a comprehensive plan aimed at ensuring the relevance of CAFRAD's training programmes to its Member States' needs, and at turning the Centre's finances around.

Following a critical review of The Gambia's public service capacity to respond to the challenges of Vision 2020—the strategic vision articulated by the Government in 1996—an ECA mission submitted a proposal in October 1998 to strengthen the institutional and human capacity of the civil service and to reposition the Management Development Institute so as to implement the new strategy.

In November 1998, ECA, at the request of the Government of Swaziland, undertook a review of the achievements recorded and the problems encountered in implementing an inward-oriented strategy of civil-service reform, the Public Service Management Programme. Based on the data made available to the ECA mission and a comparative survey of experiences in other parts of the continent, the Secretariat submitted a report outlining measures to consolidate PSMP gains and surmount obstacles to progress. The report further identified areas in which ECA could be of assistance in carrying forward the objectives of the reform programme.

ECA has also provided technical assistance in this area to North African countries. This includes a study on *Public Sector Reforms and Retrenchment Trends and Creation of Alternative Employment Opportunities*, drawing on the

experiences of Egypt and Sudan; a best practices study on *Trends in Management of Public Administration in Africa: Case Studies of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia*; and a study on *Reconciling Informal and Formal Microfinancing Systems and Practices in Africa: Case Studies of Egypt and Morocco*.

Apart from public service agencies, the other beneficiaries of ECA interventions in public-sector management are the National Training Institutes. ECA has responded to requests for assistance in reviewing the programmes implemented by the Centre for Public Service Training at the University of Namibia, the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, and as noted earlier, The Gambia's Management Development Institute.

To complement the Commission's advocacy role, a number of technical publications have been produced, focusing on critical issues in governance and public-sector management reform. Some of the publications—particularly those combining new analytic insights with empirical assessment of governance reforms—were subsequently developed into full-length journal articles, thus affording ECA an opportunity to reach a wider audience. A few other studies were undertaken with the intention of contributing to an understanding of a particularly complex governance situation. A case in point is a publication entitled *The Role of Governance and Civil Society in Africa's Development: A Critical Review*, which the UN considered useful in understanding a major governance crisis facing a country where the democratization process had just aborted.

Over the next two years, ECA plans to register impact in a new growth area—that of public service performance management. Based on consultations with its stakeholders, the Secretariat intends to launch a major public-sector productivity and service-delivery initiative in Member States. This will entail, among other things, working with Member States on the development of productivity indicators and the identification of benchmarks for monitoring service-delivery trends in a variety of public-sector organizations.

Following the adoption of the Charter, ECA launched the "Popular Participation in Development Project" to promote civil society contribution to development. In connection with this project, and in collaboration with leading CSOs,

ECA has organized and conducted global, regional, and national seminars and workshops to enhance NGO networks with key African development actors. It has developed a database on NGOs in Africa, carried out several research studies, and

published many technical manuals, newsletters, and other publications—all designed to reinforce the role of CSOs in development and governance. Increasingly, ECA's CSO partners are looking to the Commission as a lead partner in promoting participatory development and facilitating CSO contribution to meeting the development challenge of Africa.

The African Centre for Civil Society. Building on its past work and experience with CSOs and in partnership with African governments, civil society organizations, and donor agencies, ECA has established the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS) to strengthen civil society participation in Africa's economic and political transformation. Seed capital from the Government of Germany has been acquired for this purpose, and consultations are underway with member states, other donor agencies, and key regional and national NGO actors with a view to making the Centre fully operational. Designed under the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (SIA), the ACCS is intended to strengthen the contribution of African civil society to development and to facilitate its interface with the UN system in Africa.

In early 1999, a consultative meeting with major African CSO actors will be convened to discuss and define modalities towards the Centre, fostering enhanced CSO participation in African development policy making. Preliminary areas under consideration include investigation of the civil society concept under the wide range of national conditions; enhancement of CSO capacity in accountability and good governance, conflict resolution, and democratic development; and effective participation in national, subregional, and continental development. Instruments for capacity building so far identified include training and networking workshops, technical assistance and advisory support to CSOs, mainstreaming CSO-related work in ECA's work programme, and facilitating the sharing of experience among CSOs in Africa through subregional and regional forums.

Promoting Norms of Good Governance. ECA is preparing a major project on "Setting Goals and Monitoring Progress Towards Good Governance". The project will elaborate monitorable indicators of good governance in the administrative, political, and economic management fields, promote the adoption by countries of good governance targets, and monitor regularly once every two years the status of implementation. Based on this and the work of partner agencies in this field, ECA will publish a report on "The State of Governance in Africa", focusing on specific aspects of governance. ECA will also synthesize, compile, and disseminate "best practices" in a selected aspect of governance. In addition under the SIA umbrellas, ECA together with UNDP has launched the African Governance Forum process—an annual series of consultations on governance issues in Africa (see box 18).

Assistance in Post-Conflict Peace Building. Post-conflict peace building is an important phase in the continuum from humanitarian emergency assistance to long-term development. In the past,



There is increased focus in Africa on participatory and democratic systems of government.

the Commission has provided assistance to a number of countries emerging from conflict in rebuilding their public sector capacity. These include Rwanda, Eritrea, Mozambique, and Burundi. In light of the increasing recognition that peace and

sustainable development are intertwined, however, there is a clear need for a more holistic approach that draws on the expertise and comparative advantages of all partners under a comprehensive framework. ECA's comparative advantage lies in

Box 18. African Governance Forum

The African Governance Forum (AGF) was launched in 1997 by UNDP and ECA under the United Nations System-wide Special Programme for Africa (SIA) umbrella, in which these two agencies have a joint responsibility for the SIA component on governance. The Forum, an annual series of consultations on governance in Africa, has the following four major objectives:

- Provide a platform for African governments, civil society organizations, and the continent's external partners to sustain a dialogue on the state of governance in Africa;
- Promote partnership among participants and encourage the exchange of information, experiences, and good governance practice;
- Assist African governments to develop nationally defined governance programmes and strengthen coordination mechanisms to permit long-term resource mobilization in support of these programmes; and
- Discuss best practices in various areas of good governance through consultations among African governments, international partners, and civil society organizations.

The first African Governance Forum (AGF I), funded by the Government of Norway and the European Union, took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 11–12 July 1998. The Government of Ethiopia hosted the Forum. Fourteen African countries—Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, and Uganda—presented papers on their governance programmes. Based on these presentations, AGF I reviewed the experience of African countries with decentralization, electoral and parliamentary reforms, constitutional and judicial reforms and human rights, and socio-economic management and public administration. AGF I was preceded by an NGO Consultation on

Governance—an approach that has been adopted as a permanent feature of the AGF process to ensure the active participation and contribution of NGOs in the dialogue on governance issues in Africa.

AGF I concluded that enhanced effectiveness in governance was essential to achieving sustainable growth and development. Among the areas identified as crucial to good governance in Africa were incorporation of indigenous traditions into African governance programmes, the need for institutional safeguards of human rights and civil liberties, power-sharing between local and central authorities, independent and transparent electoral mechanisms, gender equity, and the efficacy of the opposition. Participants emphasized that the AGF process could make significant contributions to supporting the positive trends in many countries in promoting good governance and endorsed the idea that the AGF be an annual event.

AGF II, held in June 1998 in Accra, Ghana, focused on the issues of accountability and transparency. Ten African countries presented papers on their governance programmes in these areas—Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Broad consensus was reached on a number of key issues. The Forum concluded that transparency and accountability were crucial elements for promoting development and should not be seen as the sole concern of governments. Civil society at large has an important role to play in this regard. The case studies demonstrated that all the countries were striving to put in place institutions for improving accountability and transparency. The Forum stressed that the challenge ahead was to transform these institutions into effective and sustainable mechanisms. The Forum was hosted by the Government of Ghana and funded by Norway, Switzerland, and the European Union.

Preparatory work is underway for AGF III, scheduled to take place in mid-1999 in Mali. AGF III will focus on post-conflict peace building and development.

its ability to bring to bear the regional and subregional dimension to post-conflict reconstruction.

With this in mind, ECA has prepared a programme to support African countries with selected aspects of their peace-building, reconstruction, and reconciliation efforts. The planned activities are designed to accommodate the participation of other stakeholders. They draw on the lessons learned from past ECA interventions as well as on the operational and research experience of other donors and agencies—including those of the War-Torn Societies Project of the UN Research Institute for Social Development

(UNRISD). The activities focus on rehabilitating and strengthening national economic policy-making capacity, including orientation of new government and public officers in their tasks of development management, through training, technical, and advisory support. The programme will promote the sharing of experiences in post-conflict peace building; develop a database of national and subregional African expertise, which could be drawn upon for post-conflict activities in specific countries; and will also support activities that address subregional dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and development.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring the integrity of the financial statements and for providing a clear audit trail.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures that should be followed when recording transactions. This includes details on how to handle receipts, invoices, and other supporting documents, as well as the proper use of accounting software.

3. The third part of the document addresses the issue of reconciling accounts. It explains the importance of performing regular reconciliations to identify and correct any discrepancies between the company's records and the bank statements.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining proper documentation for all transactions. This includes keeping copies of all receipts, invoices, and other supporting documents for a period of time that meets the requirements of the relevant tax laws.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the document and offers some final thoughts on the importance of maintaining accurate records and proper documentation.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring the integrity of the financial statements and for providing a clear audit trail.

7. The seventh part of the document outlines the specific procedures that should be followed when recording transactions. This includes details on how to handle receipts, invoices, and other supporting documents, as well as the proper use of accounting software.

8. The eighth part of the document addresses the issue of reconciling accounts. It explains the importance of performing regular reconciliations to identify and correct any discrepancies between the company's records and the bank statements.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining proper documentation for all transactions. This includes keeping copies of all receipts, invoices, and other supporting documents for a period of time that meets the requirements of the relevant tax laws.

10. The tenth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the document and offers some final thoughts on the importance of maintaining accurate records and proper documentation.

Forging Partnerships for Africa's Development

“**S**ince taking office, I have sought to mobilize the entire international community behind the cause of African development. To guard against the threat of Africa's marginalization within a world of globalized trade and investment, I have also tried to enlist the vast resources of the private sector in support of Africa's development. I have called on donor nations to reverse the disturbing trend of declining official development assistance. And I have said that my programme of reform, my 'quiet revolution' of change and transformation at the United Nations, should be judged in part on how well it enables the Organization to respond to the needs of the poorest people in Africa and elsewhere.” *Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, from “Publication on the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa for the Implementation of UN-NADAF”, New York, USA, March 1998.*

Overview

As indicated in the foreword, this publication was conceived for several reasons: in addition to providing an overview and context to the key development challenges facing Africa, it spells out ECA's role in Africa and how the Commission is working with Member States to address these challenges. It highlights ECA's recent, ongoing, and planned work in some detail, and it shows how ECA relates to other UN agencies and African governments and institutions.

The publication identifies poverty reduction and eradication as the overriding development challenge for Africa. Towards this goal, and bear-

ing in mind the macroeconomic, sectoral, and microeconomic dimensions of poverty, the publication highlights a number of key dimensions of the African development challenge:

- To reduce poverty in Africa by half during 1999–2015, the minimum requirement is balanced policies to enhance economic growth, reduce inequality, and achieve an average annual rate of growth of at least 7 per cent;
- Population, environment, science and technology, and agricultural productivity concerns need to be integrated into national development planning and poverty-alleviation frameworks and policies, as a key step towards the

transitions necessary for sustainable development and food security;

- Investments in the social sector that target and reach the poor—including education, health, and employment programmes—are crucial towards social development and improving the quality of life of Africa's people;
- Concerted action is needed to address the gender dimension of poverty in Africa, and to ensure that gender equality forms an integral part of the African response to the development challenge in the 21st century;
- Africa rapidly needs to develop the capacity to tap into the global system of information and knowledge, and harness it to leapfrog some key development challenges;
- Given that the integration process within Africa is essential towards achieving international competitiveness for the continent, Africa must pursue the parallel tracks of intraregional integration arrangements and active participation in the international economy;
- Aid, debt, and trade should be viewed by Africa and the donor community in a holistic and integrated framework for financing the continent's development, towards addressing the question of resource flows;
- Particular attention must be paid to solving Africa's debt problem, which is less of a technical problem than it is a question of political will on the part of creditor nations and institutions to address the crisis in full partnership with African nations;
- Good governance systems, the continent's social capital, should be established and strengthened as a fundamental step towards renewed confidence and economic recovery. Civil society's role in ensuring good governance is also key; and
- Conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction are critical preconditions to normative development, and should be stepped up.

The focus of this final chapter is partnerships, which ECA considers to be critical to improving the effectiveness and impact of development in Africa. Within this partnership framework, the emphasis is on two key areas—Resource Flows

and Advocacy and Consensus-Building. The chapter also discusses some of the strategic alliances ECA is forging with bilateral and multilateral partners to register impact on the key African development challenges. In particular, it focuses on the special relationship between ECA and its sister regional institutions, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Development Bank (ADB).

Resource Flows

Key Issues. Africa has manifested a high dependence on foreign aid, which has helped to bridge the resource gap and hastened the developmental process in a number of countries. In recent years, for reasons of aid fatigue and donor budget cuts, Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) flows have declined both in real terms and in relation to the region's GDP. Official finance now only accounts for a quarter of all finance available to developing countries. This trend is likely to continue, despite the improving overall policy and programme environment in Africa. Indeed, the evidence shows that under the right policy environment, aid can be effective. Conversely, in countries where the environment has been unfavourable, aid has not worked (see box 19).

To attain the necessary growth to reduce poverty, Africa needs external as well as internal financial resources. An overall investment rate of 25–30 per cent GDP is needed to maintain the rapid growth required. An increase of around 9 percentage points of GDP in African investment rates cannot be achieved in such a short time through increased domestic savings, which are currently low. At present rates of low investment, African countries are not likely to sustain the current growth rates for much more than a decade—and several of Africa's reformers are already well into their first decade of improved policies. Private rather than public transfers will eventually be decisive in sustaining growth. Nevertheless, public investment in infrastructure and the social sectors needs to increase rapidly in Africa over the next few years, to reduce operating costs of private enterprises so as to sustain growth with new private investment. Failure to effect such in-

Box 19. Aid Effectiveness

Aid works effectively only if it is targeted to countries with "sound" policies and institutions, according to a major report published by the World Bank in November 1998. The report, *Assessing Aid—What Works, What Doesn't, and Why*, argues that poverty reduction would be more successful if donors directed their assistance to the right countries. Aid, it asserts, is "wasted" when it is disbursed to countries with "unsound" policies and institutions.

According to the report—whose findings come at a time when overseas development assistance has fallen to an all-time low amidst donor fatigue and a debate about aid effectiveness—"an across-the-board, \$10 billion increase in aid would lift 7 million people out of poverty, while a targeted increase could lift 25 million out of poverty".

Among other things, the report argues that there is little or no relationship between aid and per capita growth in developing countries, and that there is "surprisingly little" or no relationship between the amount of aid that countries receive and the quality of their policies.

That said, the authors conclude that:

- Aid can be an important stimulus to economic growth and lead to a faster decline in poverty in those countries with "sound economic management". This is defined as free-market policies that aim for low inflation, low budget deficit, and openness to trade—complemented by strong institutions that discour-

age corruption and protect property rights;

- In countries with "unsound economic management"—where production incentives are weak and where institutions undermined by corruption provide inadequate protection of property rights—the report cites findings showing that "whatever the amount of aid . . . growth was minuscule, or even negative";
- Aid flows to countries pursuing "sound" economic policies can boost private-sector confidence, thereby encouraging further inflows of private capital. The report contends that aid finance equivalent to 1 per cent of GDP attracts an additional 1.9 per cent of GDP in private investment. In countries pursuing unsound policies, aid has a "crowding out" effect on private investment; and
- The authors identify four sub-categories to better assess the relationship between aid and poverty reduction. Aid has a high impact in 32 "good policy, high poverty" countries, with poverty rates greater than 50 per cent; aid is less effective when disbursed to countries in the "poor policy, high poverty" and "good policy, low poverty" sub-categories. In the latter case, aid works, but the returns are not as high as they would be under the "good policy, high poverty" scenario because "there is less work for [aid] to do". The report concludes that aid is least effective when it is given to countries in the "poor policy, low poverty" sub-category.

vestment could lead to deceleration in economic expansion as present installed capacity is fully utilized.

In the short to medium term, domestic resources are inadequate to finance the continent's development. Attracting more foreign flows is therefore a key challenge. To do so, African economies need to implement policies that promote competitiveness, including improved macroeconomic, financial, and trade policies, and they need to strengthen their legal, judicial, regulatory, and financial systems, enhance aid effectiveness, and lower the costs of doing business. A deliberate policy of open regionalism, which broadens economic spaces beyond the economically small nation states and facilitates efficiency gains for larger infrastructure and business investments, should be

embraced as an important part of the overall competitiveness strategy.

Not all components of private capital—foreign direct investment (FDI), private loans, and portfolio equity flows—are as active as is desirable. FDI has been the most dynamic, rising from \$2.2 billion to \$2.6 billion between 1995 and 1996. Portfolio and equity are important only in a few countries where capital and financial markets are more developed, and in any event there has been only a modest increase in portfolio flows. Private loans continue to be of minimal importance to most countries because of poor creditworthiness due to the debt overhang. Given this scenario, the challenge is to attract more flows in all categories, which requires actions not only by African countries, but also by the donor community.

The debt overhang is a critical factor in the prospects for financing Africa's development. The problem is largely that of debt to official creditors, with commercial debt constituting only a small share of the total debt of African countries. Despite several initiatives, Africa's indebtedness continues to grow, and the debt crisis for several countries is far from over.

One problem is that debt initiatives tend to look at the problem mainly as a sustainability issue, but clearly, Africa's debt problem needs to be seen in the context of the continent's development-financing needs, and the linkage needs to be made between the impact of debt relief and the objective of poverty reduction. Debt-service payments divert resources from critically needed development services. The overhang acts as a disincentive to domestic as well as foreign investment, particularly through private lending, and exacerbates capital flight. Resolving Africa's debt problem is less of a technical problem than it is a question of political will and moral courage on the part of creditor nations and institutions. In the way forward with the debt crisis, full partnership with African nations will be needed and credible third-party mediation might be necessary at the technical and negotiating levels to arrive at a fair ar-

angement, including debt moratorium options, on terms designed to enable African economies to grow.

Hand in hand with effective debt relief should be a coherent programme to facilitate proper debt management in Africa. Many countries do not have the information, administrative capacity, or political structure to manage and control public resources. Partnership with and technical support from UNCTAD, the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute (MEFMI) is important in building the debt management capacity of African countries.

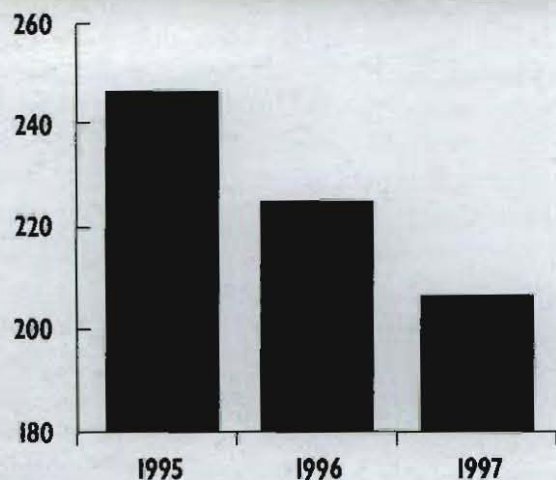
Aid, debt, and trade should thus be treated in a comprehensive framework for financing development. The challenge is to find the right mix of aid, debt, and trade measures that is efficient in attaining agreed objectives in the diverse African environment—a package of finance, policies, and programmes that promote sustainable anti-poverty development.

The ECA Response

The Commission is not a financing institution. Its mandate is to support the economic and social development of its 53 Member States, foster regional integration, and promote international co-operation for Africa's development. As such, its response to the challenge of enhancing resource flows to Africa does not reside in financing. ECA uses its convening power and its regional position as an African institution in the United Nations system to play a catalytic role in helping to understand and address the aforementioned challenges, and those that were broadly outlined in earlier chapters of this report. The Commission maintains overall regional and subregional perspectives within which activities of other UN organizations take place at the country level, and its regional vantage facilitates coordination and synergies among UN funds, programmes, and specialized agencies in support of the continent's development.

Of particular importance is ECA's role in the implementation of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (SIA). SIA was launched in March 1996 to accelerate the execution of the UN's

Figure 11. External Debt as a Percentage of Exports



Source: ECA Secretariat

New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), launched in 1991. UN-NADAF represented the emergence of a pragmatic consensus among African policy makers that sound economic policies were fundamental to reversing the downward economic trend, and achieving equitable and sustainable growth.

ECA's capacity to ensure better understanding of African perspectives among donors has been enhanced by its recent accession to full membership of the Special Programme of Assistance to Africa (SPA), initiated in 1987 to provide quick-disbursing support to low-income, debt-stressed, sub-Saharan African countries undergoing structural adjustment. Initially, 21 countries were covered under SPA. This has now increased to 31. Other SPA partners are the World Bank, IMF, ADB, European Commission, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), UNDP, and all the major bilateral donors. To date, some US\$28 billion has been disbursed under the SPA partnership framework. ECA is drawing on the outcomes of high-level policy dialogue at major thematic ECA conferences and meetings as well as from its analytical work to provide briefings on the key development challenges facing Africa at the biannual SPA plenary meetings.

Drawing on its convening power, ECA has over the years organized high-level conferences to promote dialogue among senior African policy makers, researchers, development practitioners, and Africa's development partners on addressing the development financing needs of the continent. At a critical point in the debate, the Commission convened a major conference on resource mobilization and utilization and alleviation of the debt burden—the Sixth Session of the Conference of Ministers of Finance—which convened from 31 March to 2 April 1997 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme “Financial-Sector Reforms and Debt Manage-

ment in Africa”. This Conference provided African Ministers and Central Bank Governors an opportunity to review, with their development partners and leading experts, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The Conference urged the World Bank, IMF, ADB, and other multilateral institutions to exercise more flexibility in the eligibility criteria under the HIPC initiative in order to allow as many reforming African countries as possible to benefit from this facility. The key questions raised have led to general recognition of the issues in various subsequent forums. A major review of the HIPC initiative is now underway by the World Bank and IMF (see box 20). ECA will continue to contribute to the debate on the modalities to deal with the African debt problem, propose strategies for the reduction of the debt burden, and play its advocacy role for cancellation of the African debt.

The debt problem will be revisited during ECA's forthcoming Joint Conference of Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development and Planning, which will be convened in April 1999 under the theme “The Challenges of Financing Development in Africa”.



Successful partnerships involve cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral institutions, and the private sector.

Box 20. An Update on the HIPC Initiative

The HIPC initiative remains the only major avenue for reduction of the debt burden of the highly indebted poorest countries. However, its achievements since its initiation in 1996 have been limited. The only African country to benefit so far is Uganda, whose debt stock was reduced by 20 per cent in 1998.

African countries consider the HIPC initiative important as a means of providing them with sorely needed relief from the debt burden that has constrained their performance. However, they want the initiative to be made more flexible and expanded, and articulated this view during the 1997 Conference of African Finance Ministers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since then, there have been calls to revise the conditions for eligibility and to liberalize the terms under which relief is obtained.

The following have been identified as the major issues to be addressed if the initiative is to be more responsive to the needs of the highly indebted poorest countries:

- The eligibility criteria of the current net present value (NPV) -based debt-to-export ratio of 200–250 per cent and debt service-to-export rates of 20–25 per cent—which are considered too high—need to be liberalized;
- Conditions that lead to successful completion of policy track records are currently based on IMF reform programmes, and should be revised. Instead, debt relief should be related to the country's efforts to reduce poverty;
- The time frame needs to be adjusted from the current six years—which includes three years before the "decision point" and another three years to arrive at the "completion point" at which the debt is reduced; and
- The amount by which debt is itself reduced needs to be reduced. This will require a substantial increase in the current HIPC fund, to be filled with contributions from donors.

The Conference will also discuss the effects of the Asian crisis on Africa. There are important lessons for Africa that can be learnt as the continent embraces globalization. The Conference will identify the critical lessons of the East Asian crisis, debate how best Africa can prepare to forestall a similar crisis on the continent, and discuss how best to respond to such a crisis if it occurs. Flowing out of this discussion will be a look at the weaknesses of the international financial system that have been exposed by the Asian crisis, and the reforms needed to prevent recurrences.

ECA's effort in rallying African policy makers around the key issues on the possible reform of the international financial architecture is part of a United Nations system-wide endeavour. In January 1999, for example, the Task Force of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs—whose membership includes ECA, the other four regional commissions, UNCTAD, and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs—prepared a paper that will constitute the UN position on the Asian crisis. The key questions raised include possible reforms of the oversight mechanisms and institutions, adequacy of international liquidity in times of crisis, preservation or restoration of au-

tonomy of developing and transition economies with regard to capital-account issues, the incorporation of internationally sanctioned standstill provisions into international lending, and the design of possible networks of regional and subregional organizations to support management of monetary and financial issues. Some of the issues raised in this paper, as they relate to financing development in Africa, will be discussed at the forthcoming Finance Ministers conference in April 1999, where the policy makers will come up with a Common African Position. The Conference will, among other things, discuss the issues of the aid dependency syndrome in Africa, improving domestic resource mobilization, and expenditure patterns and aid effectiveness. Additionally, it will discuss future prospects of aid to Africa in the evolving global economy, particularly in light of the recent financial crisis in Asia.

Consensus-Building and Advocacy

Key Issues. The policy and development experiences of Africa and her development partners have led to one emerging consensus—that successful implementation of strategies, policies,

programmes, and projects for maximum development impact requires a clear partnership between African governments, their intergovernmental organs, foreign bilateral and multilateral institutions, and private-sector interests. In a successful partnership, representative governments set objectives and priorities calling for and receiving the necessary assistance in this process. The resources of the bilateral and multilateral agencies would be used to support what are essentially home-grown policies and programmes. A consensus by key stakeholders would be built around critical programmes.

An effective process for coalescing common approaches will strengthen partnerships for Africa's development, as weaknesses of present forums for consensus-building have led, and continue to lead, to a proliferation of new individual agency initiatives towards this same objective. Experience has further shown that donor-driven forums on Africa tend to address multiple issues and set manifold goals, which become overwhelming and difficult to commit to and to follow through. Priorities are often not clear, making implementation beyond token reactions difficult. By merely reacting to external initiatives, rather than driving the process, Africa may be unwittingly negating the intended impact of aid. Consensus-building processes are likely to be more effective when driven by regional initiatives.

With this in mind, a key question arises as to how ECA and its partners can help foster a more holistic approach to development in Africa, to maximize the synergies and ensure effective outputs, with a view to Africans taking charge of their own development. Mechanisms at the regional level that facilitate consensus-building and the sharing of best practices on the key issues and challenges facing Africa are lacking. Such a process should be defined, directed, and driven by Africans, and should provide the most participatory forum possible for sustained productive dialogue.

Africa's development is hampered by a serious image problem that stymies its prospects of partnership towards sustainable development. This image problem needs to be redressed through a balanced appraisal of Africa's socioeconomic and political environment and prospects. Such an ap-

praisal can be achieved through effective communication and dissemination of news on Africa's development, and the broadening of avenues for exchange of ideas. In order to highlight Africa's achievements and outstanding challenges and to refocus development assistance, targeted and high-impact information and outreach strategies and programmes need to be put in place. Such programmes should provide avenues for multi-channel, multidirectional, interactive exchanges of ideas and should facilitate the adoption and implementation of best practices by countries and their development partners, including private-sector operators.

An informed, pluralistic, and active media industry is a requirement for all economically and politically progressive societies. Africa's media industry is poised for a take-off as a major societal force for good governance and sustainable development. Yet it remains fragile. Improved capacities in information technology, stronger grounding in key issues, and enhanced production and dissemination of media products on development issues, are all requirements for the media to fulfil their potential as a solid development partner. As a development investment, there is a significant potential return in investing in improving the media's focus on and capacity for development issues.

The ECA Response

The Secretary-General has called for a more holistic approach to Africa's development, supported by mutually reinforcing partnerships among development cooperation agencies—partnerships where African institutions and governments take the lead in defining priorities. The joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat provides an important mechanism to respond to the Secretary-General's call. The three regional institutions are constituted under the Abuja Treaty as the Joint Secretariat of the African Economic Community (AEC). In the past, the three have been jointly responsible for important initiatives, such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Cairo Agenda, which triggered special actions by the UN in support of Africa's development.

The Chief Executives of the Joint Secretariat meet once a year to review development issues

Box 21. Joint Statement of the Chief Executives of the Joint Secretariat of the African Economic Community

On 23 January 1998, the Chief Executives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (ADB)—the Joint Secretariat of the African Economic Community—met in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire for their 8th Consultative Meeting. At the end of the meeting they issued a joint statement expressing their views on recent developments in the region, which indicated the measures they believed African countries should consider to assure economic and social development in peace and stability. The main conclusions are as follows:

- While applauding recent political, social, and economic progress in the region and noting the strong commitment to political stability, pluralism, and democracy by an increasing number of countries, the Chief Executives expressed concern at "the continued instability and conflict in some of our countries and their cost—in human and material terms, as well as their adverse impact on economic and social progress." They underscored the need to "take measures to avoid the recurrence of conflicts, provide humanitarian assistance, and mobilize resources for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation", and stressed the importance of adequate support by the international donor community to help the Great Lakes region and other regions emerging from periods of severe strife and conflict;
- The importance of promoting good governance towards sustaining progress was stressed, and African countries were urged to "continue to promote good governance, uphold the rule of law, and fight the scourge of corruption as an integral part of their efforts to promote socioeconomic progress in the continent";
- While noting that—in comparison to the first half of this decade—the economic performance of a large number of African countries has been quite encouraging, the Chief executives urged African countries to deepen and sustain their reforms, however difficult, while at the same time pursuing policies to accelerate economic growth as essential steps towards improving the social conditions of the large number of Africans who live in absolute poverty;
- On the debt question, the Chief Executives welcomed the HIPC initiative, but urged the international community to adopt a more flexible stance, to consider additional initiatives, and to ensure that adequate resources are made available to resolve the debt problem;
- Much needs to be done to make regional cooperation and integration a reality. Accordingly, the Chief Executives renewed their commitment to jointly working together to assist African countries in the rationalization of the activities of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the harmonization of policies at the regional level, the mobilization of resources for regional integration, and the promotion of a greater role for the private sector. They agreed to establish a joint working group to coordinate the activities of the three institutions in this area; and
- On aid, the continuing important role of external concessional resources was stressed, with the Chief Executives urging the international donor community to continue to provide adequate replenishment to such funds as the African Development Fund (ADF), the International Development Association (IDA), and the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). Recognizing the need to ensure that African countries have adequate access to existing resources, such as the European Development Fund (EDF) under the Lomé Convention and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), they also agreed that the three institutions would cooperate to provide the requisite technical assistance, as well as to initiate capacity-building measures, to enhance the negotiating capability of African countries.

facing the continent and bring them to the attention of key stakeholders. Through this annual consultative meeting, the heads of the organizations can advocate and provide leadership on key regional issues, and speak with one voice. The 8th Consultative Meeting took place on 23 January 1998 in

Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire, and ended with a joint statement by the three chief executives (see box 21).

The 9th Consultative Meeting of the Chief Executives of OAU, ECA, and ADB took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 5 February 1999. The meeting focused on conflict management,

post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, ownership, and governance. The full text of the Joint Statement is available from the ECA Secretariat, or on the ECA Web page at <http://www.un.org/depts/eca>.

One key mechanism for the three institutions to speak with one voice, advocate common African positions, and build regional consensus is the African Development Forum (ADF) process (see box 22), which ECA is establishing with the support of the OAU and the ADB. This forum of Africa's development stakeholders aims to facilitate the exchange of ideas, build consensus, and provide broad policy guidance to African policy makers through effective networking and knowledge sharing with researchers and practitioners from Africa and elsewhere. It is designed to facilitate African ownership of development policies and programmes, and to bring more cohesion in donor support for Africa's development. In addition, the ADF process will serve to moderate the proliferation of meetings and initiatives on Africa.

Each forum will focus on a theme to be chosen by ECA in consultation with African development stakeholders. The first forum will take place in October 1999 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and will focus on the theme: "The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age". Among other things, the forum will showcase the partnership that has developed over the last few years among public- and private-sector interests, UN agencies, and the World Bank for the promotion of information and communication technologies in Africa under the coordination of ECA.

An example of the kind of partnership that can be pursued among African institutions and other key development actors is a major report being prepared by ECA, the OAU, ADB, the World Bank, and the African Economic Research Consortium. The rationale of the report, entitled *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?*, is to strengthen consensus on Africa's development priorities, both within African countries and among donors.

The report, to be published in late 1999, will detail the determinants of Africa's economic performance and links with poverty reduction, outline ways of building social capital and enhancing the effectiveness of the state, discuss how pro-

ductive sectors and Africa's ability to participate in the global economy can be strengthened, and propose a new development strategy for the 21st century. It is expected that the report—which will be disseminated widely once it is published—will be the subject of the Second African Development Forum in the year 2000.

Towards the goal of presenting a more balanced image of Africa that will inform the development process, ECA is embarking on a major outreach and advocacy partnership programme, to be implemented in collaboration with sister UN agencies, the World Bank, and ADB. Private-sector partners, such as the WorldSpace Foundation and a wide spectrum of African and African-related media, have indicated support for the programme. ECA's outreach strategy is designed to make information on the research and policy work done by key development analysts available. It will ensure the timely delivery and availability of high-quality information on Africa's economic and social development. It will develop and implement effective advocacy for Africa, with particular focus on sustaining international political support for Africa and redressing the negative image of the continent, with accurate and targeted information set in its full context. It will carry out a sustained campaign to highlight partners' activities on the continent and broaden the range and impact of partners' communication services through electronic broadcast, audiovisual, and other relevant media.

Specific activities include issues-based seminars; workshops for public officials, media persons, NGOs, and private-sector representatives; and the establishment of an Electronic Media Centre (EMC), to be housed in the Commission's new United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC). The programme will also address information technology issues and will provide content-packaging training workshops for journalists, as well as focusing on radio and video production, networking and information dissemination, and the development of a database on African development.

Partnerships

Partnerships have been generally and widely accepted as a means towards more decisive

Box 22. The African Development Forum Process

The overall objective of the African Development Forum (ADF), which has been created by ECA, with the support of the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is to facilitate the exchange of ideas, build consensus, and provide broad policy guidance to African policy-makers through effective networking and knowledge-sharing with researchers and practitioners from Africa and beyond. It is designed to facilitate African ownership of development policies and programmes, and bring more cohesion in donor support for Africa's development. Some 200 to 300 key stakeholders of African development—the African governments, civil society, researchers and academics, intergovernmental organizations, and donors—are expected to participate at each forum, which will be a clearing house of ideas. The forum will result in sharply defined, time-bound actionable programmes that can be implemented within the capacity of African countries.

Another objective of the forum is to create a mechanism and process for linking African policy-decision-makers with the best possible policy advice that is rooted in state-of-the-art analytical work and relevant experiences of other decision-makers in Africa and overseas. The forum will feedback loops to facilitate demand-driven inquiry within African research networks in response to policy-makers' needs as articulated in the forum. It will identify key areas of study that are likely to contribute most to addressing urgent development policy issues. It will also facilitate the participation of expatriate African expertise in the Diaspora in shaping the African development agenda.

The forum will operate at two associated levels—regional and country—for maximum guidance to policy-makers at the two levels of decision-making. The regional forum will be organized first, and will focus on one selected theme, to be chosen through a consultative process built into the forum process. The regional forum will draw up time-bound action plans to implement its recommendations, and a work programme for the following year, which includes implementation and monitoring arrangements. A post-forum meeting of heads of state of focus countries will be organized to mobilize the highest political support for the forum's recommendations. African regional sponsoring institutions and co-sponsors for a particular theme will be invited to participate in the Heads-of-State meeting.

Organization of the country forums, on a pilot basis initially in selected countries, will follow. The Heads-of-State forum and the country forums will follow up on the implementation of the regional forum's programme, as well as aspects of national programmes that may be separate from those in the regional agenda. The relationship between the regional forum and the country forums will ensure exchange of information relevant to the country and regional agendas, as well as implementation at the country level of regionally agreed programmes. The country forums will ensure implementation and follow-up at the national level of regional action plans. As the operations of the regional forum take hold, and its interface with the country-level forums is established from the pilot trials, it is expected that a number of other countries will replicate the national forum idea.

The underlying preparatory work will be undertaken or guided by the forum's Technical Advisory Committee (ADFTAC)—comprising seasoned policy researchers, policy practitioners, and three eminent visiting scholars dedicated to these activities under the ECA multi-year Visiting Scholars' Programme.

The sharing of information and best practices with non-forum participants will be accomplished through the dissemination of conference proceedings and policy papers in the Journal of the Africa Development Forum, to be launched at the first forum.

The first ADF, whose theme will be "The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age", will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the United Nations Conference Centre, in November 1999. The ADFTAC was constituted on February 14, 1999. Sub-themes were identified, noting those that are of interest to particular countries. Intensive analytical research in the general theme and sub-themes will follow over the next five months, culminating in policy position papers, which will be reviewed, discussed, and finalized at a workshop in August 1999 of the ADFTAC and invited researchers. The workshop will also finalize the October 1999 forum work plan.

Each forum will be followed by a post-Forum Summit Dialogue of selected African Heads of State and Government, about six weeks after the ADF itself, to ensure their full support for the country action plans and Forum recommendations as well as to underscore their endorsement of the importance of the issues considered.

development in Africa. This acceptance is borne out by recent bilateral initiatives, such as the Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD) process, which have helped to reaffirm support for a comprehensive approach to Africa's development. So too has the OECD/DAC, which has articulated social development and poverty reduction targets that are of particular relevance to Africa. The decade of UN global conferences—from Rio to Cairo to Copenhagen to Beijing—has also fostered and advanced consensus on this holistic approach. All these processes and initiatives have placed the emphasis squarely on collaborative partnership within the overall context of eradicating Africa's poverty.

As outlined in the foreword of this publication, the issue of partnerships has been an underlying theme in all its pro-

grammatic work since 1996, when ECA embarked on a reform and restructuring programme with the conviction that development assistance to Africa requires concerted effort and new forms of partnerships and collaboration among the stakeholders in the continent's development. ECA is uniquely qualified to serve Africa. With its multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral character, the Commission serves as a vital bridge between African countries and their development partners. Because of its regional role as a member of the United Nations family, ECA is able to gain political support, financial support, and credibility from African countries and for African countries.

What does ECA's partnership approach entail? It involves forging synergies with African inter-governmental organizations, UN bodies and spe-

cialized agencies, donor countries, African universities, research centres, and civil society groups. The partnerships vary, depending on organizational resources and areas of comparative advantage. Most of the collaborations involve research, advisory services, sponsorship of seminars and workshops, information sharing, advocacy, and assistance in capacity-building through fellowships, internships, and lectureships in support of agreed-upon research.

This approach to programme planning and

implementation underlies the framework for partnership articulated in the document *Forging Partnerships for Africa's Future—A Prospectus for a Renewed ECA*, published in March 1997, and widely shared with potential partners. In the report, several project ideas were outlined as building blocks for a possible programme for partnership between ECA and Africa's other devel-

"What do we in Africa expect from our partners to improve the prospects for our development? We seek five kinds of international solidarity: We ask partners to support conflict prevention and peace processes, to foster ethical behaviour by public and private actors, and to seek the high moral ground in international discussions. Second, we invite partnerships to reinforce home-grown policies and Africa-led initiatives and to facilitate a process of consensus-building around shared goals and priorities. Third, partnership should also share reasonable risks. New leaderships are coming to the fore in Africa, and while it is easy and important to back acknowledged winners, it is even more insightful to support emerging winners. Fourth, in our bid to reduce poverty and encourage growth, Africa can learn much from partner countries where social development has been well practiced. Fifth, in mobilizing resources for Africa's development, we must exercise the most insightful and highest-quality modalities of cooperation with a continent that cannot afford mistakes." K.Y. Amoako, from "Address at the U.S.-Africa Ministerial", the White House, Washington, D.C., USA, 16 March 1999.

opment partners. Subsequently, ECA has developed these ideas into priority projects, emphasizing ECA's core mandate of capacity-building, around which partnerships can be developed to advance African development. They will be presented and discussed with partners that ECA has collaborated with in the past, as well as new ones, at the next round of consultations to be held in the second half of 1999. The Commission will then be able to establish the interest of partners in specific aspects of the proposals and modalities, for possible support and participation in the programme.

The proposals are in part a response to ECA's mandate from African governments to identify programme elements that can be implemented at national, regional, and subregional levels, and possible areas of support by Africa's development

partners to complement the efforts of Member States in capacity-building. This mandate is central to the whole partnerships strategy, and it is

now widely acknowledged that building sustainable institutional capacity is key to Africa's accelerated development.

Appendix 1: Publications

Forthcoming Publications

Flagships

Title: *Economic Report on Africa 1999*
Published by: Economic and Social Policy Division
Due Date: June 1999

Summary: The *Economic Report on Africa 1999* focuses on the reassertion of the centrality of long-term development and transformation: transformation of production structure; transformation of social mores, values and attitudes, and transformation of institutions. The Report is predicated on the premise that the ultimate developmental goal is the eradication of poverty, and explores the implications in terms of growth, investment, and financial requirements to attain this objective. One major indicator used to evaluate Africa's development performance is the "well-being" of Africans, and countries are ranked on this basis. Current performance is underpinned by a sustainability index constructed from a number of indicators.

Title: *Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1997-1998*
Published By: Economic and Social Policy Division
Due Date: June 1999

Summary: The *Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1997-1998* shows that African countries as a whole have significantly improved their economic growth performance over the past few years and have achieved growth momentum.

Despite this momentum in many countries, however, Africa's standard of living declined in the 1997-1998 period under review. The challenge is whether African nations and their development partners can prevent a further slide in hard-earned economic and social progress in the short run, while keeping their focus on long-term development fundamentals. In this context, the Survey raises and discusses the issues of development aid, debt, foreign investment, and trade marginalization; accelerating education development (particularly for girls and women) and improving health (including responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic); and enhanced governance as the bedrock of reducing poverty in the continent. The Survey analyses three major development themes: (i) infrastructure as a major constraint to Africa's development; (ii) gender issues: investing in African women for economic development; and (iii) the challenge of poverty reduction in Africa.

Title: *The African Women's Report 1998—Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Gender Perspective*
Published by: African Centre for Women
Due Date: July 1999

Summary: The *African Women's Report* is an annual flagship publication that examines the status of women in Africa with respect to selected thematic areas of study. The 1998 Report focuses on the gender dimension of post-conflict reconstruction. Periods of crises and their aftermath create both daunting challenges and exciting opportunities to bring about fundamental change, argues the Report. It stresses that the post-conflict period

can offer a timely moment to initiate far-reaching, gender-friendly policies and programmes. Issues covered by the report include the socio-economic and gender dimensions of conflict, and gender, governance, and the law. The report annexes selected statistical references that can be considered measurable indicators of the status of women in African countries.

Others

Alternative Approaches to Financing Energy and Power Development: Case Studies from Africa and Other Developing Countries

Non-recurrent

Regional Cooperation and Integration Division

February 1999

Analytical Framework for the Assessment of Costs and Benefits of Regional Economic Integration, with a View to Minimizing the Costs and Maximizing Equitable Distribution of Benefits: National and Policy Implications

Working Paper

Regional Cooperation and Integration Division

February 1999

A Comparative Analysis of the Commitments under the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community and the Agreements from the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: Proposal for Harmonization

Conference Proceedings

Regional Cooperation and Integration Division

February 1999

Implementation of the Dakar Ngor and the Programme of Action of the ICPD: An Assessment of the African Experience

Non-recurrent

Food Security and Sustainable Development Division

February 1999

African Statistical Yearbook

Recurrent

Development Information Services Division

March 1999

African Women and Economic Empowerment: Investing in Our Future

Conference Proceedings

African Centre for Women

March 1999

Effective Systems of Ethics and Accountability in Africa's Public Service

Working Paper

Development Management Division

March 1999

The Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD): An Assessment of the African Experience

Non-recurrent

Food Security and Sustainable Development Division

March 1999

The Status of Women in Africa

Non-recurrent

African Centre for Women

April 1999

Synthesis of Progress Made in the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

Non-recurrent

African Centre for Women

June 1999

Recent Publications

Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1995-1996

Flagship Publication

Economic and Social Policy Division

March 1998

Economic Report on Africa 1998

Flagship Publication

Economic and Social Policy Division

June 1998

Africa and the Emerging Global Trade Issues

Working Paper

Economic and Social Policy Division

December 1998

- Africa in the Global Trading System*
Working Paper
Economic and Social Policy Division
December 1998
- Compendium of Inter-African and Related Foreign Trade Statistics*
Recurrent
Development Information Services Division
December 1998
- The Dynamic Impact of External Debt Accumulation on Private Investment and Growth in Africa*
Working Paper
Economic and Social Policy Division
December 1998
- Enhancing the Effectiveness of African Civil Society Organizations and NGOs*
Working Paper
Development Management Division
December 1998
- Export Diversification in the Context of the Post-Uruguay Round*
Working Paper
Economic and Social Policy Division
December 1998
- Globalization and Liberalization of Markets: Prospects for African Exports*
Briefing Paper
Regional Cooperation and Integration Division
December 1998
- Promoting Cross-Border Initiatives: Lessons, Perspectives and Challenges*
Working Paper
Economic and Social Policy Division
December 1998
- Science and Technology for Sustainable Development*
Briefing Paper
Food Security and Sustainable Development Division
December 1998

Some Citations

- African Charter for Popular Participation in Development.* 1990, ECA.
- After the Uruguay Round: Global Challenges and Africa's Responses in Selected Areas.* 1997, ECA.
- Best Practices in Growth Strategies of African Countries.* 1997, ECA.
- Decline and Slow Economic Growth of African Countries.* 1997, ECA.
- Efficiency of Anti-Poverty Policies and Programmes: Lessons and Experiences.* 1997, ECA.
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Appendix 2: Major ECA Meetings and Conferences in 1999

- Subregional Follow-up Conference for Western and Central Africa to the World Summit on Social Development—Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 9–11 March 1999.
- Subregional Follow-up Conference for Eastern and Southern Africa to the World Summit on Social Development—Nairobi, Kenya, 15–17 March 1999.
- Subregional Follow-up Conference for North Africa to the World Summit on Social Development—Marrakech, Morocco, 23–25 March 1999.
- Joint Meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts of the Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6–9 April 1999.
- Twentieth Session of the Commission (African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development Planning) and Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12–14 April 1999.
- Meeting of the Committee on Women and Development (COWD), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 20–23 April 1999.
- Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, Libreville, Gabon, 26 April–6 May 1999.
- The Third African Governance Forum (AGF III), Bamako, Mali, 28–30 June 1999.
- Ninth Meeting of the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development (CASD), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 June–2 July 1999.
- Meeting of the Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology (CNRST), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 18–22 October 1999.
- Meeting of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC), 18–20 October 1999.
- Meeting of Partners in Information and Communication Technology for Africa (PICTA), 20–22 October 1999.
- The First African Development Forum: The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25–28 October 1999.
- The Sixth Regional Conference on Gender, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22–27 November 1999.

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