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Introduction

1. The present annual report of the Economic Commission for Africa covers the period from 31 March 2018 to April 2019, and has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 18 of the Commission's terms of reference. The report was adopted at the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which was held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 25 and 26 March 2019.

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

2. At its fifty-second session, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development adopted eight resolutions and a ministerial statement addressing various topics on the theme, "Fiscal policy, trade and the private sector in the digital era: a strategy for Africa". The Commission brings these resolutions to the attention of the Economic and Social Council in view of their significance to the work of the Commission and requests the Council's endorsement.

3. The resolutions are summarized in the following sections.

A. Resolution 962(LII) Data and statistics

4. In this resolution, the Conference urged development partners to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems in line with the growing demand for statistics and called upon member States to mainstream national strategies for the development of statistics into national development plans and budgeting processes and to review and amend, as appropriate, their respective regulatory frameworks relevant to statistics in the light of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics. The Conference requested member States to increase the availability of data relevant to the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals and integrated regional indicators and urged them to undertake the 2020 round of population and housing censuses to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. Furthermore, the Conference encouraged member States to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems and to support national statistics offices and related line ministries in adopting international statistical standards, fully to implement the 2008 System of National Accounts and to compile and update supply and use tables. It also invited member States to consider integrating the International Comparison Programme into regular price collection as best practice and use, in particular in the light of the African Continental Free Trade Area process. Lastly, the Conference requested the Commission to strengthen the capacity of member States to make use of the integrated tool developed by the Commission for monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

B. Resolution 963(LII) Midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024

5. In this resolution, the Conference encouraged African landlocked developing and transit developing countries to intensify their efforts to implement the Vienna Programme of Action and called upon development partners, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, the private sector and other stakeholders further to strengthen their efforts to accelerate the

implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. The Conference also called upon the Commission to continue to provide technical support to the region's landlocked developing countries in areas related to the Vienna Programme of Action, such as infrastructure investment, transport facilitation, productive capacity development, logistical integration and logistics cost studies; and requested the Commission, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the African Union, the African Development Bank and other relevant regional organizations further to assist African landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries in infrastructure development, development of bankable projects, production capacity development, trade facilitation and structural transformation through, in particular, enhanced investment and technical assistance, and to promote greater cooperation between African landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries and enhanced regional integration. Lastly, the Conference requested the Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to undertake the ten-year regional review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

C. Resolution 964(LII) 2020 programme plan and budget

6. In this resolution, the Conference noted with appreciation the vision of ECA to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered, inclusive and transformed Africa in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through its three core functions, namely, its function as a think tank, its convening function and its operational function. The resolution called upon the Commission to develop a medium-term programme framework covering three to five years, to facilitate the engagement of member States with the Commission; annual plans and budget would be derived from the framework and performance measured on its bases. The resolution also called upon the Commission to increase the level of ambition in its programme of work. The Conference adopted the 2020 programme plan and budget of ECA, taking into consideration the above calls.

D. Resolution 965(LII) Luxembourg Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock

7. In this resolution, the Conference recognized that railways constituted an efficient and environmentally sustainable way of moving people and goods within individual African States and across the continent, and acknowledged that African States were committed to modernizing and expanding the existing national and regional rail networks. The Conference recalled that States or State-owned or private rail operating companies would incur considerable costs as a consequence of renewing or extending the rail infrastructure and rolling stock and will therefore need to attract substantial private capital and foreign investment. It also recognized that the African rail system would need to be operated as cost-effectively as possible. Furthermore, the Conference noted that to date, 24 African States had become party to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and its Protocol on Matters specific to Aircraft Equipment,¹ both of which had been adopted in Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001, and that, as yet, very few African States were fully familiar with the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock. The Conference also called upon the Commission to continue, including through its subregional

¹ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2307, No. 41143.

offices, its awareness-raising and advocacy efforts for States across the African continent on the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters specific to Railway Rolling Stock at the earliest opportunity, with a view to elucidating its merits and potential contribution to the financing of rolling stock in rail projects. Lastly, the Conference called upon the Commission to inform interested parties from the public sector and the private sector across the continent on, and to educate them in, the way that private credit and leasing could assist with providing the financial resources necessary to revitalize and expand the African rail network, and the benefits of becoming party to the Luxembourg Rail Protocol.

E. Resolution 966(LII) Review of the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Africa pursuant to its resolution 943(XLIX) and resolution 957(LI)

8. In this resolution, the Conference took note of the review of the intergovernmental structure, its findings and recommendations and endorsed the following adjustments to the intergovernmental structure of ECA:

- (a) To organize the sectoral subsidiary organs as follows:
 - (i) Committee on Economic Governance;
 - (ii) Committee on Statistics and Data;
 - (iii) Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology;
 - (iv) Committee on Climate Change, Blue Economy, Agriculture and Natural Resource Management;
 - (v) Committee on Social Development, Poverty and Gender;
- (b) To change the name of the subregional intergovernmental committees of experts to the intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts, with a view to ensuring effective policy uptake and greater participation of senior government officials in the committees.

F. Resolution 967(LII) Progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

9. In this resolution, the Conference took note of the Commission's report on progress in the implementation of the priority areas of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action). It noted with concern that African least developed countries continued to have low productive capacity, in particular in the manufacturing sector, that their share in global exports had declined since the adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and that their receipts of official development assistance had been volatile and below the commitments set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action. The Conference welcomed the anticipated graduation from the least developed country category of Angola and Sao Tome and Principe, which would join those African countries that had previously graduated, namely Botswana, Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea, and affirmed that the continued support of the international community would play a key role in overcoming many of the barriers to sustainable development that were faced by the least developed countries. The Conference took note of General Assembly resolution 73/242 of 20 December 2018, in which the Assembly decided to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, to be held in 2021, and called upon African least developed

countries to continue their efforts to mobilize resources both domestically and internationally and to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action to accelerate economic and social development. Furthermore, the Conference encouraged the Commission and its development partners, including countries in Africa that were not in the least developed country category, to continue their support for implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Lastly, the Conference invited ECA, with the cooperation of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to organize a regional review meeting for Africa in 2020, prior to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

G. Resolution 968(LII) Fiscal policy, trade and the private sector in a digital era: a strategy for Africa

10. In this resolution, the Conference took note of the report of the Commission on the status of fiscal policy in Africa and the finding in the report that there is a financing gap that needs to be closed to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and noted the efforts made by the Commission, together with the African Union Commission, to launch the digital identity, digital trade and digital economy initiative for Africa. The Conference also noted decision EX.CL/Dec.2(XXXIV) of 8 February 2019 of the Executive Council of the African Union to mandate the African Union Commission, in collaboration with ECA and other relevant stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive African Union digital trade and digital economy development strategy. The Conference considered the challenges that the digital economy presented in tax policy, making it easy for businesses to shift profits from the use of digital assets, such as intellectual property, away from places where the income was generated to low-tax jurisdictions, thus resulting in erosion of the tax base, and resolved to leverage the use of digital technology to strengthen revenue collection and public finance management in Africa, review current taxation frameworks to accommodate the digital economy, taking due account of the changing nature of businesses caused by digitization to support the efforts being made in the context of the digital identity, digital trade and digital economy initiative for Africa. It called upon decision-makers in Governments, the private sector and civil society to foster and prioritize financing for building digital infrastructure, working to digitize payments in every sector, and putting in place regulations to ensure that digital financial services could be used by everyone and everywhere and were duly protected against cybercrime; and urged ECA to support member States and the African Tax Administration Forum in their efforts to develop frameworks that leveraged digitization to strengthen revenue mobilization and public financial management through automation, digital identity and the modernization of fiscal processes. The Conference also urged the Commission to support member States in building digital infrastructure that could be used to combat illicit financial flows; and requested the Commission, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other relevant partners, to develop a comprehensive African digital trade and digital economy development strategy, including principles for good digital identity and harmonized standards, and a regional regulatory framework for digital finance and financial technology.

H. Resolution 969(LII) Digitization and the digital economy initiative

11. In this resolution, the Conference recognized the substantial benefits and opportunities of digital technologies and the key role that digitization could play in achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and in

promoting the overall development of Africa. It noted the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its thirty-second ordinary session that called on ECA, the African Union Commission and other partners to develop a digital identity, digital trade and digital economy strategy for Africa to be submitted for consideration and endorsement by the Executive Council in February 2020 and commended the Commission for setting up the African digitization initiative. The Conference requested ECA to continue to work on policy research, regional dialogue and capacity development on digitization and the digital economy in member States, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, member States, the African Development Bank, the African Tax Administration Forum, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and other stakeholders. The Conference also requested ECA to fully operationalize a centre of excellence on digitization and the digital economy, with a view to tackling the critical issue of capacity shortfalls in the digital sector of member States, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, the African Development Bank, the African Tax Administration Forum, OECD, the World Bank, development partners and African institutions of higher learning. It urged ECA to ensure that the centre of excellence on digitization and the digital economy had tangible, time-bound and results-based deliverables to support member States; and invited member States to consider developing strong security systems to combat cybercrime and cyber-related threats emanating from the digitization of their economies.

12. The ministerial statement is set out in annex I and the resolutions in annex II.

II. Work of the Commission since its fifty-first session

A. Introduction

13. Following the endorsement of its reforms by the fifty-first session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in May 2018, ECA continued to pursue organizational renewal by building a stronger collective spirit, introducing new integrated approaches to planning, deepening relationships with partners, further strengthening accountability and transparency, and instituting a more gender-balanced team. As a result of the reforms, the programmes of the Commission were reoriented to implement more effectively its mandate of promoting the economic and social development of its member States; fostering their integration into a common economic, social and political space; and promoting international cooperation to create a more prosperous and inclusive continent where most citizens are free from want and deprivation. In pursuing its mandate, the work of ECA was guided by the five directions of its new strategic orientation:

- (a) Building a knowledge institution;
- (b) Formulating macroeconomic and structural policy options;
- (c) Designing innovative finance models;
- (d) Supporting regional and transboundary issues;
- (e) Advancing the position of Africa at global level.

14. During the reporting period, the contribution of ECA to supporting member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, was centred on its three core functions: its convening function, its function as a think tank and its operational function.

15. The present report is organized in six parts as follows:

(a) Key results achieved in supporting member States and regional economic communities in work towards the adoption of policies in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, with results that are clustered around eight broad thematic areas;

(b) Progress made in advancing the Commission's partnership agenda and efforts;

(c) Accountability, learning from the 2018 evaluation and audit recommendations and from quality assurance;

(d) Support by the Commission for the repositioning of the United Nations development system;

(e) Results achieved by the programme support divisions;

(f) Challenges faced by the Commission in its work during the period and the solutions devised in an endeavour to surmount those challenges.

B. Key results achieved in 2018

16. During the reporting period, ECA continued to influence policy decisions of member States and regional economic communities in areas such as development planning, implementation of the 2030 Agenda, economic integration, inclusive industrialization, economic diversification, migration and statistical systems.

17. Presented below are some of the notable achievements from 2018 that demonstrate the Commission's three core functions in action, including interventions in support of regional and subregional priorities; policy advisory services at the national, subregional and regional levels: United Nations support for the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and assistance provided upon the request of member States for technical and capacity development, including the results achieved in the four thematic areas of the regular programme of technical cooperation. Information is also included on the instrumental role of ECA platforms for policy dialogue and consensus-building in advancing the capacities of African public officials in policy formulation and implementation.

1. Progress in advancing the trade and regional economic integration agenda

(a) Road to the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area

18. The continent has embarked on important regional integration processes, which are complex, broad and ambitious, requiring the provision of greater support to regional institutions with the capacities to spearhead the advancement of the African regional integration agenda. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area is one of the critical phases of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty).

19. The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, launched at the tenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Kigali from 17 to 21 March 2018, represented a significant milestone in Africa's journey on the path to economic integration. ECA provided technical support and training to member States and the African Union Commission in the negotiations for the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area. ECA also provided the draft text that was used as the basis for the negotiations, which led to a successful conclusion by member States. The result was four principal legal instruments underpinning the African Continental Free Trade Area: Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area; Protocol on Trade in Goods; Protocol on Trade in Services; and Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes. As of the end of February 2019, a total of 52 countries had signed the

Agreement and 19 had ratified the protocols to the Agreement through their respective national constitutional processes. The Agreement will enter into force following the deposit of 22 instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Efforts are under way by ECA and the African Union Commission to provide support to facilitate the timely signing of the Protocols by the remaining countries.

(b) Knowledge products on regional integration, trade and investment issues

20. Through the knowledge generated on regional integration, trade and investment issues, ECA shared evidence-based recommendations in global forums on bilateral investment treaties and double taxation treaties. That evidence was provided to member States to enable them to position themselves to review, negotiate, renegotiate or terminate investment agreements with careful consideration of the legal, policy, economic and social implications, striking a balance between protecting investment and preserving sufficient policy space to achieve their development objectives. The sharing of those recommendations will also enable member States to explore the existing opportunities for expanding intra-African investment, in particular in the context of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

21. During the reporting period, ECA collaborated with the Confederation of Indian Industry and produced a joint report on deepening the Africa-India trade and investment partnership, which was launched at the thirteenth Conclave on the India-Africa Project Partnership, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Export-Import Bank of India. ECA also prepared a report on the African Growth and Opportunities Act for the meeting of Senior Trade Officials of the African Union Commission.

2. Advancing integrated development planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda

(a) Common position and peer learning to drive the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development

22. In 2018, ECA, in collaboration with regional organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, convened the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. ECA and the partner organizations prepared background papers and working documents to be reviewed by the Forum with a view to reaching consensus on the status and progress in implementation of activities aimed at the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 15 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda and the goals set out in Agenda 2063, the results of which would serve as input to the 2018 high-level political forum.

23. The Forum reached consensus on policy recommendations in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa.²

24. Among the key messages were the following:

(a) Resilient structural transformation in Africa, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, requires integrated national frameworks, including sectoral strategies and approaches that mainstream and prioritize inclusion, activities aimed at protection against climate change disaster risk reduction and the value of natural capital;

(b) Momentum to ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation should be increased alongside the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

² See www.uneca.org/arfsd2018.

(c) Countries in Africa need to invest more in providing potable water access points in urban and rural communities, improved sanitation facilities to reduce open defecation and ensure appropriate waste management;

(d) Safeguarding and implementation of responsible management of Africa's natural resources, on which most growth is predicated, should remain a priority;

(e) Funding, capacity development and technology support linked to achieving real outcomes need to be scaled up to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, land degradation neutrality targets, and national plans and programmes for sustainable forest management;

(f) A multi-stakeholder Africa forum on science and technology innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals should be held in the margins of the sessions of the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development to identify and address the science and technology innovation needs of Africa and to prepare for the annual global multi-stakeholder forum on the same topic.

25. Consensus was built around common messages that constituted Africa's regional input to the 2018 high-level political forum. The messages were intended to be used for policy dialogue, policymaking and implementation at the national, regional and global levels towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda and the aspirations in Agenda 2063, with emphasis on the five Goals listed above.

(b) Integrating the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national development plans

26. In 2018, African countries continued to work to align the aims of the two complementary and yet different development frameworks – the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 – with their national development frameworks and to report on them. The Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration underscored the need for African countries to take ownership of their continental development agendas, and requested ECA and the African Union Commission to support member States in designing a road map for the implementation of both agendas at the national level, as well as to develop tools, including a harmonized monitoring and evaluation framework for the two agendas. In 2017 and 2018, ECA initiated the design of the integrated planning and reporting toolkit to support member States in the integration of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into their national development plans.

27. The resulting Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit is a web-based software program designed to integrate the two agendas into national development plans to facilitate harmonized reporting on progress in their implementation. With the goals, targets and indicators of the two agendas already built into the software, users can assess the level and strength of alignment between the two agendas at the click of a button. The inbuilt dashboards make possible the visualization of summarized information on the alignment of the two agendas and also on country performance regarding alignment and progress in implementation of the national goals and targets. The toolkit has three modules:

(a) An alignment module, which brings together the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, on the one hand, and the national plan, on the other;

(b) A monitoring module, which captures the indicators, baselines, targets and current values of the national plan;

(c) A reporting module, which facilitates reporting on progress in the implementation of the two agendas.

28. ECA supported the application of the toolkit in five countries: Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Seychelles and Uganda. The roll-out involves a series of workshops to demonstrate the toolkit, build capacity for its application and improve awareness of the two agendas and the links between them, in line with the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was signed in January 2018.

29. The results are evidenced by positive feedback from the users. For example, during the demonstration in Uganda, it was noted that, while the country uses a number of models for planning and projections – including the social accounting matrix, the integrated macroeconomic model and the computable generalized equilibrium model – none captures the three dimensions of sustainable development. Accordingly, a tool that brings the two agendas together into one, accompanied by an analysis of the impacts of different policies and public investment profiles, is invaluable in informing strategic prioritization and guiding the design of countries' successive five-year and ten-year development plans. Based on responses to the post-workshop survey, over 80 per cent of participants in Uganda and over 60 per cent of those in Ghana and Seychelles rated the workshop as having contributed effectively to their capacity to integrate the two frameworks into national development plans. In addition, over 90 per cent of participants indicated that they would recommend the toolkit to other colleagues. Furthermore, the Gambia has since requested support, after hearing about the toolkit at various forums organized by ECA.

(c) Renewal of development planning to enhance the efficiency and transparency of public policies in Senegal

30. Following a request by the Government of Senegal for technical support for its efforts to comply with one of the key conditionalities of its economic programme (structural benchmark) supported by the Policy Support Instrument of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 2015–2017, the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa provided technical and advisory support aimed at establishing a platform, designated the Integrated Projects Bank. The platform includes a description of the life cycle of projects supported by IMF. The role of ECA included supporting the development and customization of a Threshold 21 model to help further the country's efforts in comprehensive and integrated planning. In addition, several workshops – involving the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning, other ministerial departments, private sector and research institutions, and capacity-building of government counterparts – were organized by ECA for better ownership and application of the platform.

31. These interventions enabled the Government to find solutions for the increased demand for education and health services and to achieve inclusive growth. In addition, a recent analysis by ECA, together with several IMF reviews of the Policy Support Instrument for 2015–2017, demonstrated that increased efficiency and transparency in public policies had been observed as a result of the strengthened capacity of government officials to design, implement and monitor the country strategies, plans, programmes and projects. Implementation in Senegal of the electronic project platform also enabled improved communication between line ministries and the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning. By including investment projects readily available for implementation and selected on the basis of feasibility studies, the electronic project platform contributed to improving the overall public project cycle and capital spending.

(d) Mozambique infrastructure development plan based on geographic information systems

32. The Government of Mozambique has defined infrastructure development as an important investment pillar underpinning its economic development. Given its situation as a major transit country in international trade, Mozambique intends not only to improve provincial interconnectivity but also

to reaffirm its position as a regional hub for neighbouring landlocked countries. A number of development partners are supporting the programme. The Ministry of Transport and Communications, as coordinator for the programme, identified the need for a visual tool that could be used to improve investment planning and objective identification of infrastructure investment priorities with the aim of boosting economic development. Geographic information systems (GIS) were recognized as the best aid for the geo-visualization and spatial statistical modelling necessary for the identification of potential areas for development, including infrastructure planning, monitoring and evaluation. GIS also assist in the optimization of resource allocations for development, which is vital to efforts to combat the arbitrary allocation of resources under the influence of political considerations.

33. Having identified that meaningful development policies cannot be implemented without adequate spatial information and knowledge, and lacking the requisite domestic capacity, the Ministry called upon African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) to develop its expertise on the use of GIS for spatial planning.

34. In 2018, as part of its tailor-made training based on its catalogue of courses, IDEP responded to the request from the Ministry to organize a training of trainers course on the use of GIS for spatial planning. The training benefited eight officials, including five women from five government departments. It contributed to the creation of a first multidisciplinary team of experts who have subsequently shared the knowledge and skills acquired with their colleagues on spatial planning using GIS. All the participants found the training course relevant and appreciated the strategic importance of GIS in their planning work, which was shown by the results of post-training evaluations as well as the contributions made by the respective departments into the integrated infrastructure business plan developed using spatially referenced data. Through the initiative, Mozambique expects an increase in revenue, improved road safety, better infrastructure management and job creation, among other significant benefits.

35. Based on the success of the training course, IDEP decided to proceed with scaling up the use of GIS across the continent in 2019 through awareness-raising efforts focusing on other African countries as to its benefits. IDEP will simultaneously offer tailored skills training, digital learning, and a joint master's degree programme to build capacity for its GIS usage in infrastructure spatial development planning, among others. In doing so, it will also build communities of practice for experts to promote information-sharing, peer learning and research.

3. Accelerating economic diversification and job creation on the continent

(a) Breaking the vicious cycle of overdependence on the export of commodities

36. Since 2014, the subregion of Central Africa has been suffering from severe macroeconomic instability due to the sharp drop in oil prices, which has led to worrying fiscal and current account deficits necessitating fiscal consolidation measures in certain countries, such as Chad. The crisis stems from structural economic vulnerability due to high dependency on oil exports. In response to that crisis, the ECA Subregional Office for Central Africa convened a wide range of stakeholders in the margins of the thirty-second session of its Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Central Africa, held in Douala, Cameroon, from 26 to 29 September 2017, with a view to reviewing the state of the economies in the subregion and articulating structural and durable responses to the crisis.

37. The meeting adopted the Douala Consensus, a groundbreaking agreement which stressed the imperative of economic diversification through resource-driven and trade-induced industrialization, as one of the most credible and durable pathways to building resilient and competitive economies in

Central Africa and to breaking the vicious cycle of overdependence on the export of commodities.

38. It was further to the adoption of the Douala Consensus that countries in the subregion sought the support of ECA for the implementation of the Douala Consensus. Over the period 2017–2018, of the seven Central African countries covered by the Subregional Office, four requested technical assistance from ECA to formulate economic diversification strategies to address the structural vulnerabilities of their economies, which remain highly dependent on oil exports.

39. With the technical assistance of ECA, the Government of Chad developed and approved an industrialization and economic diversification master plan that was launched on 17 September 2018 in N'Djamena. The success of the master plan required skill sets and capacities for the conception and formulation of projects. Other key conditions were improvements in the business environment, notably access to finance, productivity growth and sufficient fiscal space to pursue long-term investments to catalyse industrialization and economic diversification, while restoring macroeconomic stability through short-term measures. In order to operationalize the plan, the necessary growth diagnostic studies, value-chain analysis and other studies were undertaken, which helped to identify the key economic pillars and enablers for economic diversification in the country. These included agribusiness, livestock development with a focus on meat and leather exports, harnessing of renewable energy, establishment of clusters and the emergence of the knowledge economy. Green industrialization was chosen as the preferred route to expanding the share of manufactured products in total exports and to reducing greenhouse emissions.

40. That resulted in realistic sources of financing for the master plan and enhancing the role of the digital economy. The master plan generated significant interest and was included in the programme of work of the United Nations Country Team in Chad. In addition, extensive consultations were undertaken with development partners operating in the country, including the World Bank, IMF, the African Development Bank, the European Union, and Agence française de développement, to ensure the alignment of their interventions with the master plan as part of an integrated financing framework for development. Furthermore, the work to formulate the master plan has also enabled the Subregional Office for Central Africa to develop a body of knowledge and practice on economic diversification applicable to Central Africa and beyond. From the lessons learned and best practices on economic diversification derived from the formulation process of the master plan, relevant toolkits and guidelines will be developed to apply in other countries in Central Africa.

(b) Charting the course to industrialization in Southern Africa

41. The thirty-fourth ordinary summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in August 2014, reviewed progress towards regional integration and economic development in Southern Africa and noted that industrialization was a major gap in the development of the region. It was decided that there was an urgent need for the region to leverage its abundant and diverse resources, especially in agriculture and mining, to accelerate industrialization through beneficiation and value addition. In order to operationalize the regional integration agenda, the summit resolved to develop a long-term strategy and road map for industrialization in the SADC region. To implement that decision, the secretariat of SADC approached ECA for support in developing the long-term strategy and road map.

42. Over the period 2014–2017, ECA provided support to the secretariat of SADC through interventions focused on the formulation of the long-term industrialization strategy and road map. Those interventions took the form of developing the project concept, preparing the background papers, providing

technical backstopping, convening and servicing national and regional consultations, and resource mobilization. As a result of that support, the SADC industrialization strategy and road map for 2015–2063 was developed and subsequently adopted at the extraordinary summit of Heads of State in April 2015. With ECA support, an action plan for the implementation of phases I and II of the strategy, covering the period 2015–2030, was also developed and subsequently adopted at the summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Mbabane on 18 March 2017.

43. In 2018, at the request of the secretariat of SADC, ECA provided technical support on the elaboration and implementation of the industrialization strategy and road map and the action plan in the following critical areas: a mining sector skills audit; a minerals beneficiation profiling exercise for the identification of potential mineral value chains for development; development of a regional mining vision; a template for facilitating an increased role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the industrialization process; a regional intellectual property rights framework that could support innovation, technology and industrialization; and a regional stakeholder forum on the role of the private sector in support of the industrialization process. Those areas of intervention were examined through the development of concept notes, preparation of background papers, organization of workshops and expert meetings, and preparation of policy documents.

44. ECA interventions resulted in the formulation of the following:

- (a) Template for the development of the capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises for an enhanced role in the industrialization process;
- (b) Mining sector skills database;
- (c) SADC regional mining vision for identifying and developing value chain minerals in Southern Africa;
- (d) Institutionalization of the Southern Africa private sector stakeholder forum;
- (e) SADC intellectual property rights framework on industrialization.

45. As a result, in 2018, SADC adopted a template for the development of the capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises; a regional mining vision; an intellectual property rights framework on industrialization; and a plan to institutionalize the regional stakeholders forum on private sector development in Southern Africa.

(c) **Blue economy: paradigm shift towards transformational growth in Eastern Africa**

46. The subregion of Eastern Africa is registering rapid economic growth and transformation as a result of the pro-growth policies and public investments of Governments. To sustain such progress, member States are exploring new sources of growth, including from the blue economy, which promote the use of aquatic and marine ecosystems and associated resources for sustainable development. Interest in the blue economy was demonstrated at the nineteenth Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meeting, held in Antananarivo from 2 to 5 March 2015, which focused on the topic of harnessing the blue economy for Eastern Africa's development. At its nineteenth meeting, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for East Africa acknowledged the untapped potential of the blue economy and the existing policy gap among productive sectors, both traditional and emerging, such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, deepsea mining and energy. With a view to addressing that challenge, the meeting recommended the development of a policy handbook, aimed at providing a step-by-step methodology towards the formulation of multisectoral policy frameworks for the blue economy. A framework of that nature was officially launched at the thirty-fifth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa from 31 March to 2 April 2016. The

framework was later complemented by a detailed study focusing on the subregion of East Africa.

47. At the twenty-first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for East Africa, held in Moroni from 7 to 9 November 2017, member States, together with regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, reiterated the need to develop and better mainstream blue economy policies into their national development plans. The experts explored the topic of catalysts and constraints to transformational growth in Eastern Africa. Furthermore, the blue economy has emerged as an important facilitating factor in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area through the optimum use of multimodal transport and connectivity between inland waterways and seaports.

48. In 2018, in response to requests from the Comoros and Madagascar, the ECA Subregional Office for Eastern Africa provided technical support for the development and consolidation of strategic frameworks focusing on prioritization of sectors and related trade-offs alongside policy orientations and actions. In the case of the Comoros, energy was identified as a priority sector for intervention. Low energy-generation capacity, high inefficiency in energy transmission and distribution, and limited long-term energy planning capacity were identified as recurrent challenges, impacting on other sectors of the blue economy such as tourism.

49. ECA interventions resulted in the formulation of a strategic policy framework on the blue economy for the Comoros, accompanied by three thematic national studies focusing on institutional and regulatory features on how to institutionalize the blue economy; stocktaking of sectors of the blue economy; and regional dimensions, together with a study on energy balance statistics and an energy systems model. In the case of Madagascar, the support of the Subregional Office resulted in the development of a strategic document highlighting challenges and opportunities in the blue economy and providing policy orientations.

50. As a result, in 2018, the Comoros and Madagascar adopted respective policy frameworks, which will be put to further use to leverage their potential for the blue economy. In the Comoros, the strategic policy framework was mainstreamed in the national strategy for accelerated growth and sustainable development. Madagascar will pursue similar mainstreaming efforts following completion of the presidential election.

(d) Mainstreaming land issues in national agriculture investment plans of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

51. In 2003, Africa made a commitment to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, endorsing the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, which called on member States to allocate 10 per cent of their national budgets to the agricultural sector. Most member States were unable to achieve the 10 per cent target, and others failed to sustain the 6 per cent growth level stipulated in the Maputo Declaration.

52. In response, member States of the African Union considered the 2014 Malabo Declaration, which reaffirmed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, and the importance of accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. The Malabo Declaration was backed up by guidelines for implementation that underscored the importance of well-designed national agricultural investment plans that were aligned and consistent with the values and principles of the Programme and that facilitated private sector investments to complement public sector funding.

53. In order to ensure an evidence-based process that allows for sound national agricultural investment plans to meet the intended purpose, ECA conducted an assessment of the Programme plans in 30 countries. One of the main findings of that assessment was that most countries had not integrated

land tenure issues in a manner that would ensure tenure security and promote land-based agricultural investments. In order to address land tenure issues for the purposes of stimulating private sector investment in agriculture, since 2016 ECA has been providing support to Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, with the aim of mainstreaming land governance in the Programme plans.

54. In 2018, a capacity gap assessment conducted in those six countries informed a training programme on large-scale agricultural investments that benefited 25 policymakers and stakeholders in Malawi, 15 of whom were women. That training programme contributed to incorporating, at the national level, the guiding principles on large-scale land-based investment in Africa in the context of Malawi. The result is evidenced by the enhanced capacity of policymakers and stakeholders to negotiate contracts that are financially viable, equitable and environmentally sustainable.

55. Furthermore, during the reporting period, ECA continued promoting the 2017 decision of the African Union in which it urged member States to review policies and programmes to facilitate the achievement, by 2025, of the 30 per cent target for women's documented land rights, through awareness-raising on women's land tenure security issues, and advocated the gender-responsive implementation of the African Union Agenda on Land.

4. Narrowing the gender gap, harnessing the demographic dividend and leveraging rapid urban growth for shared prosperity

(a) African Gender and Development Index and effective policymaking in South Africa

56. The African Gender and Development Index was introduced by ECA in 2004 in response to requests by member States for a tool to assist them in reporting on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Because all African countries adopted these international treaties, they have an obligation to report periodically on progress. Moreover, member States needed to measure progress made over gender equality over social, economic and political dimensions and develop national policies, programmes and strategies to narrow gender gaps for inclusive and sustainable development.

57. In June 2018, at a national workshop organized by ECA in Pretoria, the Department of Social Development of South Africa presented its most recent report, which was reviewed by the Cabinet. The report was aimed at developing a national strategy for South Africa in order to ensure that necessary investments in education and health are made to tackle high youth unemployment and harness the demographic dividend. The report was returned by the Cabinet for revision, however, because of its insufficient attention to gender issues. In response, the Commission on Gender Equality, a strong partner of ECA in the implementation of the African Gender and Development Index, presented its latest research, conducted with support from ECA.

58. That contributed to a strong partnership between two national institutions, which led to the mainstreaming of gender dimensions into prospective national strategies, with a view to harnessing the demographic dividend. Specifically, the Department of Social Development of South Africa was influenced by the Commission on Gender Equality, with insights drawn from the African Gender and Development Index that provided a comprehensive gender dimension beyond the simple disaggregation of data by sex.

59. The result is evidenced by the inclusion of gender dimensions drawn from the national report of the African Gender and Development Index into the final report on the topic of trends, structure, causes and consequences in South African population dynamics, which is to be submitted to the Cabinet. That report is also expected to inform the national policy framework on harnessing demographic dividend.

(b) ECA corporate policy on gender mainstreaming

60. Gender mainstreaming continues to be part and parcel of ECA corporate policy and remains at the core of the Commission's programme planning and implementation processes.

61. The Commission continued to participate in a working group set up by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), entrusted with looking at the results framework and theory of change, in order to consolidate the contribution of the United Nations development system to efforts by member States to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, ECA continued to mainstream gender through its gender-responsive planning, budgeting and reporting tools. An ECA gender-parity strategy has been developed that defines incremental actions to be taken by the Commission to reach gender parity by 2023. In that regard, the Commission has made progress in addressing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2.0 performance indicators.

62. In 2018, gender concerns were systematically mainstreamed in the following: analytical knowledge products of the Commission; major reports such as the 2018 Africa Sustainable Development Report; the fifth edition of the Africa Governance Report; and the country and the country profiles following the framework of structural transformation with a focus on employment, production and society (STEPS), produced by the ECA subregional offices. In addition to using gender-disaggregated data as extensively as possible, the country and STEPS profiles included a gender scorecard. For example, the STEPS profile of Cameroon produced in 2018 clearly indicates that gender disparities are detrimental to social stability, higher productivity and the efforts of structural transformation.

63. Lastly, ECA mainstreamed gender in its programme to implement the African Union Agenda on Land, through the application of the gender strategy developed in 2014. In that regard, the following actions were taken:

(a) Secondment of a gender and land expert to ECA and the African Land Policy Centre;

(b) Application and tracking of the minimum gender target of 30 per cent, to ensure women's participation in all activities to promote knowledge, advocacy and capacity development;

(c) Review of African Land Policy Centre documents through a gender lens;

(d) Development of a gender programme as part of the African Land Policy Centre medium-term strategy (2019–2023);

(e) Incorporation of gender mainstreaming modules as part of all training programmes;

(f) Launch of a pilot project on the monitoring and evaluation of land governance in Africa covering 12 African countries, to track progress in the development and implementation of good land governance in the continent.

(c) Cities as driving forces of wealth creation in Uganda

64. Through its second national development plan, for the period 2015/16–2019/20, Uganda has set itself the target of becoming a middle-income country by strengthening its competitiveness for wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth. With a growth rate of 5.7 per cent, so far the highest urban growth rate in Africa in the period 2015–2020, and its cities contributing 70 per cent of gross domestic product, well-planned and managed urbanization is a necessary ingredient to achieve the country's target of prosperity and well-being, but is not strategically set as an objective in the national development plan, and capacities in that domain have been limited.

65. Based on the analytical work, technical guidelines and national capacity-building workshops of ECA, the National Planning Authority of Uganda, working with 50 policymakers from key ministries, developed a multisectoral national action plan to strengthen the integration of urbanization as a key driving force of growth and transformation. The technical guidelines provided a step-by-step process on policies to harness rapid urban growth for job creation and economic diversification, currently an area of weakness in urban policymaking in most African countries. The contribution of ECA has enabled Uganda to develop a new policy plan for job creation, poverty reduction and improved social outcomes through the better planning and management of cities. A high-level policy dialogue resulted in a commitment, at the ministerial level, to prioritize urbanization as a driving force of wealth creation in Uganda for its next phase of national development planning (starting in 2020).

66. ECA support contributed to the prioritization of regional and strategic cities as vehicles for achieving middle-income status in Uganda and to the initiation of guidelines for implementation. The result is evidenced by the decision of the National Planning Authority directly to apply the action plan developed with ECA to finalize implementation of its current national development plan (ending in 2020) and the design for the follow-up plan. Similar technical assistance was provided to Cameroon, Chad and Zambia, and is also supporting the development of national action plans to strengthen the urban component of national development planning as a means of harnessing the potential of urban growth for job creation and economic diversification. The ECA approach to strengthening of the urban component of national development planning in Africa is the first of its kind, providing exceptional value addition to the attainment in the region of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

67. These interventions were further complemented by the ECA regional framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda endorsed by ministers of housing and urban development under the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization.

(d) Advocacy of and support for the High-level Panel on Migration

68. The analytical work carried out by ECA on the trends, causes and impacts of African migration, together with the evidence-based regional report, which was highly commended by the African group of negotiators, contributed to the development of the common African position on migration, which formed the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations. ECA also provided technical support for the negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration through a series of subregional and regional consultations. The High-level Panel on Migration, established in response to Conference of Ministers resolution 940(XLIX) on international migration in Africa, with ECA support and chaired by the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, is working to change the narrative that has tended to distort the real picture of African migration, which presents considerable evidence that most Africans migrate within the continent and contribute immensely to their countries of destination. In support of the work of the High-level Panel on Migration, ECA, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the African Union Commission, produced an evidence-based tool, entitled "African migration: facing facts, embracing opportunities and mitigating challenges". That tool will continue to be used for advocacy and awareness-raising activities by member States and Governments, citizens and international development partners.

5. Statistics in support of evidence-based policymaking and strategy implementation

(a) African Poverty Clock: tool for evidence-based decision-making

69. One of the landmark events that marked the end of 2018 was the launch of the African Poverty Clock,³ which was developed in partnership with the World Data Lab. The Clock monitors progress towards achieving target 1 of Sustainable Development Goal 1, providing real-time data on poverty forecasts at the regional and national levels. It also contributes to raising awareness on poverty dynamics within countries and can be a useful tool for evidence-based policymaking and decision-making. While the focus of the current data is on income poverty, the plan is to extend that focus to include other dimensions of poverty such as gender, age, education and nutrition.

(b) Strengthening statistical systems

70. During the reporting period, ECA exerted significant influence on policy in the area of statistics and a total of 27 African countries undertook comprehensive assessments of their civil registration and vital statistics systems. Within the framework of the African Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, ECA provided technical assistance to member States on conducting comprehensive assessment and developing national improvement action plans for civil registration and vital statistics systems. In addition to the 27 African countries⁴ that assessed their systems and formulated improvement plans, at the time of writing, eight countries⁵ are undertaking the assessment process. Furthermore, ECA provided technical assistance to Benin, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Sudan in support of the reform and updating of their national statistical systems. Benin reported the update of its National Statistics Act and a revamping of the coordination mechanism at the national level, including the expanded involvement of key sectoral producers of data.

(c) Adoption of the system of national accounts

71. African countries face challenges in the production of economic statistics that are timely and of high quality, owing to limited human, financial and technical resources, along with weak institutional capacity and statistical infrastructure. To address those challenges, in January 2014, ECA launched a project on the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts. The overall objective of the project was to improve the quality and availability of national accounts and related economic statistics in support of good economic governance, regional integration and sustainable development in Africa. The project formed part of the continent-wide project for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts, which was developed by the African Group on National Accounts under the auspices of the Statistical Commission for Africa.

72. In response to a request from the Government of Mauritania for technical assistance to support the adoption of the 2008 System of National Accounts, the Subregional Office for North Africa – in partnership with the Government of Morocco, the World Bank, IMF and the Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT) – provided technical support and advisory services to the Government. That assistance helped to ensure the alignment of the national accounts and economic statistic concepts of Mauritania with the System of National Accounts, and to enhance methodologies, tools, and practices and standards for the collection and analysis of economic, social and environmental data.

³ See www.uneca.org/africa-poverty-clock-2018.

⁴ Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

⁵ Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

73. As a result, the Government of Mauritania decided to implement the 2008 System of National Accounts. The Government is now employing the system methodology to come up with an accurate estimate of the contribution to gross domestic product of the fisheries, cattle, public administration, finance and informal sectors.

(d) Building human capital for improved agricultural statistics

74. From 2013 to 2018, the ECA statistics programme implemented the training component of the Global Strategy for Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics, a programme for revamping the state of agricultural statistics in the continent. Agricultural data and statistics are poorly collected and utilized in many African countries. Many institutions in Africa responsible for the production and dissemination of agricultural statistics have reported that understaffing has had a deleterious effect on their operations. They also lack a human resource development strategy to guide the management, development and harnessing of their human resources, which has negatively affected the quality and availability of agricultural statistics in those member States.

75. In response, ECA designed a programme to remedy the lack of a critical mass of trained agricultural statisticians by strengthening the demand, supply and capacities in agricultural statistics training activities in 40 African countries. Emphasis was placed on strengthening and sustaining the capacity of statistical training centres to develop and deliver good-quality training in agricultural statistics. The programme was also aimed at improving the training curricula for short-term and on-the-job training courses, improving the infrastructure capacity of regional statistical training centres with modern training technologies, the provision of scholarships for specialization in agricultural statistics, and the training of trainers and lecturers on newly developed methods and technologies.

76. Those interventions contributed to increasing the number of skilled and trained agricultural statisticians in the respective national statistical offices and ministries of agriculture in the targeted 40 countries. Over 950 participants from agricultural statistics agencies have thus far taken part in short courses and 75 students have received scholarships to specialize in agricultural statistics.

77. Graduates from the specialization programme were placed in positions with responsibility for managing and supervising the processes of agricultural statistics production. The programme also trained 120 human resources managers and experts on a revised strategic planning and management of statistical human resources. Technical manuals and guidelines on newly developed methods were produced to support agricultural data collection and analysis.

78. Four regional statistical training centres located in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Dakar, Yaoundé and Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, are currently able to provide courses on newly developed methods and techniques in agricultural statistics. Regional training centres such as the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre in Dar es Salaam are also responding to requests from national offices for the mass training of staff in a number of the newly launched methodologies.

79. The result is evidenced by the outcome of the second round of country assessments of agricultural statistical systems in Africa, aimed at measuring the capacity of African countries to produce timely and reliable and sustainable agricultural statistics. The second round of assessments confirmed an improvement in the capacity of the respective agencies responsible for agricultural statistics in the target countries compared with the first round of assessments.

80. Data from the assessments were used to construct agricultural statistics capacity indicators for each country in order to assess each country's capacity to produce timely and reliable agricultural and rural statistics. The assessments

provided evidence on the current level of development of national agricultural and rural statistics systems and also illustrated the continued improvement in reporting in agricultural statistics as a result of improved capacities, including experts in newly developed methodologies.

6. Curbing illicit financial flows and corruption

81. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 all highlight the importance of tackling illicit financial flows. Indeed, stopping such flows from Africa is a key policy priority both for the African continent and for the world as a whole, given the challenges that they pose for financing the Sustainable Development Goals. These risks are also recognized in the 2030 Agenda, where the reduction of illicit financial flows is listed explicitly as a target (16.4) of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Over the past few years, ECA has been making continued efforts, including the establishment of a high-level panel on illicit financial flows, groundbreaking research work on illicit financial flows methodology and estimates, advocacy of the implementation of the recommendations in the panel's report on such flows and the provision of policy advice to member States, on such issues as tackling illicit financial flows, tax evasion and trade misinvoicing. Attention is drawn to the creation of the Consortium for the Eradication of Illicit Financial Flows, comprising key players and partners, which aims to support the implementation and follow-up of the recommendations of the high-level panel. In turn, it supported member States in their efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which includes specific measures to finance sustainable development, to align all financing flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities and to ensure that financing is stable and sustainable.

82. ECA promoted leveraging of the African Peer Review Mechanism as a more effective tool to address the challenges of financing Africa's development, in particular by improving the landscape of domestic resource mobilization and public financial management. ECA influenced policies on the mobilization of domestic and external resources for development. Thus, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tunisia have begun to implement policies on illicit financial flows that were recommended by the high-level panel in its report.

83. On the margins of the thirty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, ECA launched the Honest Service Campaign in support of the theme adopted by the Africa Union for 2018: "Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation". The theme presents an opportunity to engage citizens in a public service delivery campaign celebrating individuals and institutions that deliver services free of corruption. The overall objective of the campaign is to inspire a positive discussion at the individual and institutional levels through social media platforms celebrating public institutions and individual civil servants that deliver services free of corruption.

7. First joint workplan of the nine clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa adopted at the nineteenth session of the Mechanism

84. In 2018, member States recognized the importance of advancing the implementation of national, subregional, regional and global development goals and priorities in Africa, including through enhanced coordination, collaboration and cooperation among United Nations organizations and agencies working in Africa for coherent, efficient and effective support in partnership with the African Union institutions and organs. Instruments for realizing those aims include the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027, which the General Assembly welcomed in its resolution 71/254. Over the years, however, the Mechanism has struggled to achieve an optimal way of working in terms of joint planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

85. A key recommendation emanating from most of the annual sessions of the Mechanism is for the clusters of the Mechanism to prepare joint workplans informed by the priorities of the African Union, including those embodied in its strategic plan, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in the context of the Framework. In April 2018, at a retreat in Nairobi organized by the secretariat of the Mechanism, the nine clusters of the Mechanism developed joint workplans identifying specific areas for collaboration, which were consolidated into the Mechanism's overall workplan for the biennium 2018–2019.

86. The successful outcome of these endeavours is evidenced by the enhanced partnership between the United Nations system and the African Union. This is manifested in the joint workplans, which were adopted at the annual meeting of the Mechanism, held in May 2018, and it demonstrates progress made in 2018 towards the collective attainment of the objective.

8. Regular programme of technical cooperation

87. The ECA capacity development programme continued to support member States and regional economic communities in national and regional, respectively, policy development and implementation.

88. Under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and in synergy with the Development Account and the regular programme of work, ECA delivered targeted capacity development interventions to member States, the African Union and its organs. Thus, at the member State level, Senegal received advisory services in the development of its industrial development policy, in which ECA took the technical lead in assisting national authorities to establish a comprehensive action plan around key industrial initiatives under the country's national development plan. ECA is also engaging with Chad in technical areas of support for the diversification and industrialization of its economy. In addition, ECA is currently assisting the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) with a study designed to evaluate the impact of Tunisia joining that regional economic community. These technical engagements based on requests demonstrate that ECA is well positioned as a partner of choice at strategic policy design levels to influence policy decisions.

89. ECA also provided various platforms such as training courses, policy dialogues and development seminars to strengthen the policymaking, implementation, monitoring and evaluation skills of public officials. Thus, IDEP provided on-site courses on the African challenges and opportunities pertaining to the structural transformation agenda for more than 400 African public officials in 2018. This process provided those participants with the knowledge, skills and tools necessary for achieving improvements in development planning and economic management. The participants, who are involved in policy matters in their respective countries, gave a positive evaluation of these platforms, which they found to be highly useful. This is testimony to the influence that the ECA capacity development programmes are having on policy in African countries.

C. Progress made in advancing the Commission's partnership agenda and efforts

1. Collaboration and coordination for the implementation of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

90. Conclusion of the first year of implementation of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was marked in 2018. Entities of the United Nations and the African Union made progress in the joint implementation of the nine priority thematic areas. Some examples of progress towards improved collaboration and coordination include the following: ECA, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development

Programme and the African Union organized a side event during the 2018 high-level political forum, with a view to raising awareness of and undertaking advocacy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The event focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and the sharing of experiences and the way forward following sessions of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the voluntary national reviews.

91. The event resulted in recommendations on support for member States in enhancing national mechanisms for the coordination and integrated implementation of the two agendas.

92. Under the framework of United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, United Nations entities and the African Union continued to provide coordinated support to the Sahel countries. One such example is the second regional conference on impunity, access to justice and human rights in West Africa, which was organized by United Nations entities and the African Union and resulted in the establishment of a ministerial platform to monitor and report progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the conference.

2. Partnerships for the implementation of the ECA programme of work

93. During the reporting period, ECA collaborated with partners on a broad range of issues to implement its programme of work. Its partners included the Kenya Institute of Public Research, the African Economic Research Consortium, the London School of Economics, IMF, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the International Renewable Energy Agency and a range of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

94. The partnerships that ECA built with its academic and technical partners contributed to advancing its think-tank function and to improving the relevance of the Commission's policy work. ECA will continue to leverage value-adding partnerships premised on the principle of enhancing complementarity and development impact. That will also enable the Commission to respond better to the evolving needs of its member States within the context of new and emerging opportunities.

D. Accountability, learning from the 2018 evaluation and audit recommendations and quality assurance

1. Risk register and treatment and response plan

95. In promoting a culture of accountability and transparency across all streams of its work, ECA made efforts during the reporting period further to enhance its governance and management practices through the introduction of the first risk register and treatment and response plan. The plan is anchored in the Secretariat-wide enterprise risk management and internal control framework and its development was informed by a rigorous and participatory process that involved all staff across the Commission.

96. The principal objective of the plan was to enhance accountability and performance management within the unfolding United Nations reform processes and to contribute to the achievement of ECA mandates. The plan is also aimed at supporting the Commission in understanding the impact of its response and mitigation strategies, together with assessing the effectiveness of existing internal controls and measures of risk mitigation.

97. The corporate-level risk registers and treatment and response plans are being monitored and updated on a biannual basis, taking into account emerging opportunities, lessons learned and the reality on the ground.

2. Evaluations and audits

98. As part of the accountability and learning framework of ECA and with a view to strengthening the usefulness of evaluations and audits, findings were

discussed with and validated by programme managers through a formal management response process. Results and lessons have also been shared within and beyond ECA. The lessons have informed strategic decision-making processes, programme design, planning and implementation. The outcomes have also informed continuing efforts to make incremental improvements in such areas as results-based management and reporting frameworks, gender mainstreaming and partnership modalities. Overall, the Commission's progress and efforts towards becoming a learning and more accountable institution has been acknowledged by member States (including permanent representatives in Addis Ababa), the Fifth Committee and development partners.

3. Quality assurance

99. The ECA quality assurance policy and plan for 2018–2021 was completed. The policy and plan provides a set of standards and associated guidelines on programmatic and policy-related recommendations of the Commission in the areas of sustainable development solutions, poverty, inequality and environmental impacts, gender mainstreaming, crisis prevention, coherence across the United Nations development system, data and statistics, innovative financing, transboundary issues, and global frameworks with an impact on Africa. A reference note on the quality assurance of the *2019 Economic Report on Africa* was developed, and a standard quality assurance procedure is now being followed for all major ECA publications. The required quality assurance procedures are systematically incorporated, for example, in the draft concept note for the sixth edition of the African Governance Report.

E. Support for the repositioning of the United Nations development system

100. During the period under review, the Commission effectively coordinated its support for the United Nations development system reforms at the regional and country levels. ECA actively participated in the work of the development system to include its results groups, the work of the United Nations reform transition team and in interregional coordination among the five regional commissions.

101. ECA worked closely with other regional economic commissions under the coordination of the Regional Commissions New York Office in developing a joint position paper in July 2018 that served as a basis for consultation with other regional entities of the development system. The position paper contributed to shaping the final regional optimization plan for phase I of the development system reforms at the regional level. The plan, which is being implemented, is aimed at ensuring the optimization of functions and enhancing collaboration among United Nations regional entities, with a view to harnessing United Nations assets for effective collective support of country priorities.

102. Considering the unique institutional and policy landscape in Africa, ECA also prepared a white paper in August 2018 on its positioning in the United Nations regional architecture in Africa. The white paper contributed to the discussion and consultation with other development system entities operating at the regional level, including in the context of the joint meeting held on 10 December 2018 between ECA and the African regional teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The white paper further support for the formulation of phase II of the United Nations reforms that focus on the longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of United Nations regional assets.

F. Results achieved by the support divisions

1. Publications, Conference and Knowledge Management Division

103. To support its policymaking organs with documentation, knowledge and information and communications technology services, the Commission's Knowledge Repository was upgraded to the new version of Dspace (6.0) and 16,000 new records were uploaded with new collections, including publications series, best practices, and other areas;⁶ a high-performance intelligent communication system, comprising the Internet, intranet, virtual private networks and remote access, was set up; and the migration of email and collaboration services to the Microsoft 365 hybrid cloud platform was completed. The email migration aims to facilitate mobility and web access, with additional collaboration tools such as Skype for business and the Microsoft SharePoint platform. The Commission also took measures to improve security to protect enterprise resources and critical assets, by reducing the probability of data breaches and security threats. With regard to integrating the system for the automation of manual business processes and functions, the Commission established the IT Project Management Office to upgrade the project management practice and completed the development and roll-out of corporate applications. This includes digitization of the ECA annual business plan, in particular its planning and reporting workflow, including roll-out, training and support for all ECA divisions and sections.

104. Other achievements include the preparation of an enhanced dissemination strategy for key policy documents in order to make ECA knowledge products available to wider audiences and to targeted segments outside Africa for increased visibility. ECA promoted the electronic distribution of its reports and publications with the aim of reducing physical distribution costs and ensuring that ISO standards are maintained through strategic partnerships and applying the United Nations proximity rules. With regard to reduction of the carbon footprint left by printing and publishing, the Commission ensured legal and statutory compliance with ISO environmental requirements against associated risks and hazards and, in September 2018, ECA was certified to a quality standard of ISO14001-2015.

105. With regard to improvements in the management of the Commission's parliamentary and statutory meetings in terms of the venue and logistical, hospitality, protocol, translation, editorial and interpretation services, the Commission achieved 94 per cent adherence to the approved calendar of meetings for 2018, while increasing the occupancy rate of the Centre by 82 per cent by October 2018 and boosting related revenue by 23 per cent in 2018. This result was achieved through the renting of conference rooms, exhibition space, business centre services and the sale of United Nations branded memorabilia and conference-related services, with the development of realistic charge rates, drawn from the United Nations conference centre utilization policy.

2. Division of Administration

106. With regard to the management of human resources in an efficient and effective manner to achieve programmatic objectives, the Commission went through a restructuring process, which started in August 2017 and was fully implemented in February 2019. During this process, a recruitment freeze was put in place, which resulted in putting on hold and even cancelling job openings, revising the terms of reference of posts, redeploying posts, and other measures, and these processes had an adverse impact on the staffing timeline.

107. With regard to progress towards gender parity at each Professional level (from P-2 to D-1) within available positions, the gender proportion was 41 per cent in 2018, made up as follows: women in senior level positions (D-2 to P-5), 21.4 per cent; women in non-senior level positions (P-4 to P-2), 29.7 per

⁶ See <http://repository.uneca.org>.

cent; and General Service and related categories, 49.6 per cent. In line with the global Gender Parity Strategy, the Executive Secretary of ECA continued to ensure that the most qualified female candidates were selected against job openings.

108. Where efforts to ensure responsible management of financial resources are concerned, the ECA financial reports for 2018 have been audited by the Board of Auditors and the final report will be posted in the near future on the Board of Auditor's website. It is already apparent from the interim draft report, however, that ECA is reasonably compliant with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and the Board has made a few recommendations on steps to enhance the Commission's already sound internal control systems. ECA adhered to the instructions to ensure the prudent use of resources for the 2018 financial year. In this regard, a budget utilization rate of 96 per cent was achieved. As this was the first year of the 2018–2019 biennium, the remaining 4 per cent was carried forward to 2019 and was fully utilized in the first quarter of 2019.

109. To support business transformation through budget formulation processes, ECA successfully deployed the Umoja Extension 2 Budget Formulation module in January 2019, along with Secretariat offices, and successfully submitted the 2020 budget through this medium; ECA is working with the Umoja project team to ensure that all eventual releases are deployed on time; the launch of the Umoja Extension 2 strategic and programme planning management module is scheduled for May 2019 and online training is under way. In order to ensure the smooth deployment of Umoja Extension 2 conference and events management, ECA has taken a leading role in both meeting participants management and meeting management activities under the module. The Commission was among the three early adopters of the meeting participants management process that undertook the proof of concept exercise conducted by means of the Indico tool in 2018. This was successfully accomplished in November 2018 with the support of the Indico team in Geneva. ECA is planning to undertake a second test in the near future. The project roll-out is scheduled for 2020, as part of a cluster approach. Following a request from the Umoja Extension 2 conference and management teams in New York and Geneva, ECA worked in partnership with the United Nations Office at Nairobi to formulate 334 business process requirements in respect of external and ad hoc events. ECA is also in partnership with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Office at Nairobi to formulate business process requirements for a cost recovery module pertaining to similar business models for the three entities. As for the Umoja Extension 2 projects covering implementing partner management and fundraising and donor relationship management, implementation of these two projects is being carried out in clusters. Videoconferences with United Nations Headquarters are being organized by the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Section at ECA.

G. Challenges faced by the Commission in its work

110. One of the principle challenges faced by the Commission is the shortage of resources: high demands are placed by member States on ECA for its technical support for the adoption of new policy recommendations and measures in advancing the development agenda and the Commission's human and financial resources are not commensurate with these demands. Following the recent ECA reforms, the Commission's resource mobilization responsibility is now vested in the Office of the Executive Secretary and efforts to explore alternative sources of soft earmarked funding have started. Although this may not guarantee adequate resources to address all requests received, it is expected to increase extrabudgetary resources to complement the diminishing regular budget.

111. Another serious challenge is posed by the unavailability of accurate and timely data: adequate and comprehensive reporting on the realization of inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa is constrained by a paucity of the necessary data. For example, regional value chains have become very critical in industrial and trade development in Africa, but a robust analysis of this sector is impeded by significant gaps in trade value added and input-output data on most African economies. Continued investment in data at national and subnational levels is needed to generate timely and well disaggregated data. Increased use of country case studies will help to enrich the quality of research and reports, as these case studies provide the opportunity for deeper analysis of and insights into the development opportunities and challenges faced by Africa.

H. Conclusion

112. In conclusion, ECA continues to leverage its three core functions by:

(a) Providing subregional and regional platforms for the promotion of regional cooperation and consensus-building in the implementation of international and regional commitments;

(b) Offering cutting-edge intellectual knowledge products and policy recommendations that influence policy decisions at the national, subregional and regional levels;

(c) Providing capacity development and technical and advisory services to member States, regional economic communities and the African Union Commission, with the aim of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

III. Reports of the Conference of Ministers and of meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, including intergovernmental committees of experts of the subregional offices

113. The Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held its fifty-second session in Marrakech, Morocco, on 25 and 26 March 2019. The report of that session may be found in document E/ECA/CM/52/2.

114. The ministerial statement of the Conference of Ministers, as set out in annex I to the report of the Conference of Ministers, may be found in annex I to the present document, and the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Ministers, as set out in annex II to that report, may be found in annex II to the present document.

115. In addition, during the period under review, the secretariat prepared and serviced meetings of various subsidiary bodies of the Commission. The meetings included the thirty-eighth meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the report of which is set out in document E/ECA/COE/38/17*; the sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, the report of which is set out in document E/ECA/STATCOM VI/11; the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development pursuant to resolution 961(LI), the summary and key messages of which are set out in document ECA/RFSD/2019/9; and the meetings of the intergovernmental committees of experts for the various subregions, the reports of which are set out, for Central Africa, in document ECA/CA/ICE/XXXIV/18; for East Africa, in document ECA/EA/ICE/22; for North Africa, in document ECA/NA/ICE/33/5; for Southern Africa, in document ECA/SA/ICE/XXIV/2018/8; and for West Africa, in document ECA/WA/ICE/21/01D. In addition, a progress report was prepared on the work

of IDEP, pursuant to resolution 956(L1), set out in document E/ECA/COE/38/8/Rev.1.

116. The reports provide a summary of the major issues discussed, the outcomes of the meetings and the matters that were brought to the attention of the Commission for action or information. For further consultation, the reports, whose symbols are cited above, are available on the ECA website, at www.uneca.org.

Annex I

Ministerial statement of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

We, African ministers of finance, planning, economic development and integration,

Meeting in Marrakech, Morocco, on 25 and 26 March 2019, for the fifty-second session of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development,

Having deliberated on the theme “Fiscal policy, trade and the private sector in a digital era: a strategy for Africa”,

Do hereby:

1. *Note* that the gross domestic product of Africa grew at a rate of 3.2 per cent in 2018, down from 3.4 per cent in 2017, and that economic growth is expected to recover to 3.4 per cent in 2019 owing, primarily, to strengthened global demand for African products, rising commodity prices, robust private consumption and sustained investments in infrastructure;

2. *Recognize* that the continent has made progress towards achieving desired economic and social outcomes, with poverty and inequality rates declining in the various subregions, albeit at a slow pace and that a number of challenges remain, including the need to substantially increase the current economic growth rate in order to create jobs and improve living standards through the diversification of African economies, in particular for vulnerable segments of the population such as women and young people;

3. *Acknowledge* that the broadening and diversifying of sources of government revenue are a prerequisite for increased public investment in economic and social sectors, and that there is considerable scope for leveraging private-sector sources of finance to complement government financing to attain the Sustainable Development Goals;

4. *Also acknowledge* that African economies face major financing gaps and challenges in the mobilization of domestic resources, despite the implementation of several fiscal and budgetary reforms;

5. *Recognize* that digitization may enhance fiscal policy performance and development finance by increasing domestic revenue generation and allocation and reducing the cost of revenue collection, and by facilitating trade and private sector investment and development that foster growth and job creation and reduce gender inequality;

6. *Call upon* African countries to improve their telecommunications infrastructure by doubling broadband connectivity by 2022, and to extend the coverage to remote areas on the continent;

7. *Note* that smartphone penetration rose from 37 per cent in 2017 to 44 per cent in 2018 and is projected to increase to 51 per cent in 2019, which will facilitate the engagement of the private sector in local manufacturing, retail applications and service development;

8. *Acknowledge* that, while digitization provides numerous new opportunities for streamlining and improving relations with taxpayers and harnessing efficiency gains, it has also given rise to a number of emerging threats and challenges; that limited Internet access in Africa continues to impede the development of digitization in economic and social sectors, including e-commerce, e-health and e-government, which are constrained by high transaction costs, the spatial distribution of information exchanges, and

limited access to international markets; and that these constraints demonstrate the need for countries to assess the challenges of digitization with a view to undertaking appropriate remedial actions;

9. *Note* that Governments need to design and improve innovative digital mechanisms that facilitate revenue collection and increase the efficiency of tax administration by promoting the use of online platforms for self-reporting by taxpayers and the use of digital mechanisms to record relevant data on transactions and the identity of taxpayers and that digitization, in that regard, could be an important tool for the promotion of good governance and combating corruption and illicit financial flows;

10. *Acknowledge* the need to increase significantly the availability of high-quality and timely data with a view to supporting fiscal policy, trade and private sector development in the digital era and strengthening the implementation of national development plans, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;

11. *Also acknowledge* the corresponding need for a stronger commitment by member States to allocate adequate financial, technical and human resources in support of the production, dissemination and use of statistics;

12. *Recognize* that censuses are indispensable tools for promoting development in Africa and providing robust data to support the implementation and monitoring of national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and, in this respect, urge all member States to undertake the 2020 round of population and housing censuses in Africa;

13. *Note* that civil registration provides individuals with legal documents required to secure their identity, nationality, civil rights and access to social services and, in this respect, recognize the need to develop and strengthen civil registration and vital statistics information systems and infrastructure as a foundation for a legal identity, including effective digital identity systems;

14. *Recognize* that harmonized and interoperable civil registration and digital identity form foundational legal identification systems that provide proof of legal identity necessary for multiple functional purposes;

15. *Note* that progress has been made in regional integration and commit ourselves to taking measures and steps to enhance the incorporation into domestic law and implementation of regional integration agreements and treaties, including the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and call upon member States to address the impediments to economic integration such as restrictions on visas and residence permits;

16. *Take note* that, in terms of its infrastructure development, Africa continues to lag behind other regions, acknowledge the need to strengthen resource mobilization in order to close the infrastructure gap and also to build the technical capacity necessary for the preparation of bankable cross-border infrastructure projects and, in this respect, commit ourselves to strengthening cooperation, in particular among landlocked developing countries and transit countries, in the development and management of cross-border infrastructure;

17. *Recall* the commitment made by Member States pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/242 of 20 December 2018, to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, in 2021, and the commitment of the Commission, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to organize an African regional review meeting in 2020 prior to that conference;

18. *Acknowledge* the support provided by the United Nations system to the organs of the African Union at regional and subregional levels within the framework of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, and request the General Assembly to strengthen the mechanism and its secretariat through the provision of adequate human and financial resources;

19. *Recognize* that State-owned and private rail operating companies incur considerable costs when renewing or extending their rail infrastructure and in financing rolling stock, making it essential to attract private capital and foreign investment, and that the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock, which extends the application of the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment to all railway equipment, is an important financing facilitating instrument that enables member States to conclude agreements with public and private lenders and lessors of railway rolling stock;

20. *Acknowledge* and appreciate the commendable capacity development activities that are being undertaken by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, reiterate our commitment to ensuring the sustainability of the Institute through the payment of annual assessed contributions and the settlement of outstanding contribution arrears and call upon the United Nations and, in particular, the Commission and its partners to increase their support to the Institute in the interests of structural transformation in Africa;

21. *Note* the 2020 programme priorities of the Commission, reaffirm our commitment to support the proposed budget and call upon the United Nations to approve the Commission's 2020 plan and budget as presented to this Conference;

22. *Also note* the review of the intergovernmental structure, its findings and recommendations and endorse the proposed adjustments to the intergovernmental structure of the Commission, including the new sectoral subsidiary organs and the change of name of the subregional intergovernmental committees of experts to "intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts".

Vote of thanks

23. We thank, in particular, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Moroccan people for having hosted the Conference, for the excellent facilities made available to us and for their warm hospitality.

24. Lastly, we wish to extend our gratitude to the Economic Commission for Africa for successfully convening the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Annex II

Resolutions and decision adopted by the Conference of Ministers at its fifty-second session

A. Resolutions

962(LII) Data and statistics

The Conference of Ministers,

Acknowledging the role of the national statistical system as the backbone of the transformative agenda for Africa, in supporting economic diversification and industrialization policies and promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,

1. *Endorses* the report and resolutions of the sixth meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa, held in Addis Ababa on 3 and 4 October 2018, on the theme: “Enhancing national statistical system capacity to support policies for Africa’s economic diversification and industrialization”;

2. *Takes note* of decision EX.CL/Dec.987(XXXII) of the Executive Council of the African Union to request its member States to allocate 0.15 per cent of national budgets to support the production, dissemination and use of statistics for the implementation of national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

3. *Urges* development partners to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems in line with the growing demand for statistics;

4. *Encourages* member States to mainstream geospatial and non-geospatial information technologies as a basic framework for supporting statistical production and the dissemination of statistical data;

5. *Calls upon* member States to mainstream national strategies for the development of statistics into national development plans and budgeting processes;

6. *Also calls upon* member States to review and amend, as appropriate, their respective regulatory frameworks relevant to statistics in the light of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics;

7. *Requests* member States to increase the availability of data relevant to the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals and integrated regional indicators;

8. *Urges* member States to undertake the 2020 round of population and housing censuses to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

9. *Encourages* member States to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems;

10. *Urges* member States to support national statistics offices and related line ministries in adopting international statistical standards, to fully implement the 2008 System of National Accounts and to compile and update supply and use tables;

11. *Invites* member States to consider integrating the International Comparison Programme into regular price collection as best practice and use, in particular in the light of the African Continental Free Trade Area process;

12. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to strengthen the capacity of member States to make use of the integrated tool developed by the Commission for monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

963(LII) Midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

The Conference of Ministers,

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; its resolution 934 (XLVIII), in which African landlocked and transit developing countries, regional and subregional organizations and all other stakeholders were invited to implement the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/232 in which the Assembly decided to convene a comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, to be held in December 2019, and decided also that the high-level midterm review should be preceded by regional preparatory meetings, as appropriate and within existing resources,

Noting that African landlocked developing countries have made mixed progress towards the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and continue to lack adequate infrastructure, in particular, transport, energy and information communications technology infrastructure, and also continue to concentrate their export markets on a very limited number of products and to be confronted with complex development challenges,

1. *Takes note* of African Regional Midterm Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action, held on 18 and 19 March 2019 in Marrakech, and endorses its outcome;

2. *Encourages* African landlocked developing and transit developing countries to intensify their efforts to implement the Vienna Programme of Action;

3. *Calls upon* development partners, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, the private sector and other stakeholders to further strengthen their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action;

4. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to provide technical support to the region's landlocked developing countries in areas related to the Vienna Programme of Action, such as infrastructure investment, transport facilitation, productive capacity development, logistical integration and logistics cost studies;

5. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the African Union, the African Development Bank and other relevant regional organizations further to assist African landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries in infrastructure development, development of bankable projects, production capacity development, trade facilitation and structural transformation through, in particular, enhanced investment and technical assistance, and to promote greater cooperation between African landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries and enhanced regional integration;

6. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least

Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to undertake the ten-year regional review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

964(LII) 2020 programme plan and budget

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operation activities for development of the United Nations system in which the Assembly reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system, and underlined the need to continue to make them fit for purpose in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and to revamp the regional structures, recognizing the specificities of each region and bearing in mind that no one size fits all,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,

Recognizing the continuing efforts of the Economic Commission for Africa to reposition itself and to enhance its programmatic orientation to be able to effectively support the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union,

Noting with appreciation the vision of the Economic Commission for Africa to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered, inclusive and transformed Africa in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through its three core functions, namely, its function as a think tank, its convening function and its operational function,

Having examined the 2020 programme plan and budget,¹

1. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to develop a medium-term programme framework covering three to five years, to facilitate the engagement of member States with the Commission; annual plans and budget will be derived from the framework and performance measured on its bases;

2. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to increase the level of ambition in its programme of work;

3. *Adopts* the 2020 programme plan and budget of the Economic Commission for Africa, taking into consideration the above calls.

¹ E/ECA/COE/38/12.

965(LII) Luxembourg Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock

The Conference of Ministers,

Mindful that the African continent has a continuing shortfall in investment in transportation infrastructure,

Recognizing that railways constitute an efficient and environmentally sustainable way of moving people and goods within individual African States and across the continent,

Acknowledging that African States are committed to modernizing and expanding the existing national and regional rail networks,

Mindful that, under relevant African Union guidelines, new African rail networks should ideally be constructed using the standard rail gauge, measuring 1,435 mm, which will require States or State-owned enterprises to make major new investments in railway rolling stock,

Recalling that States or State-owned or private rail operating companies will incur considerable costs as a consequence of renewing or extending the rail infrastructure and rolling stock and will therefore need to attract substantial private capital and foreign investment,

Recognizing that the African rail system will need to be operated as cost-effectively as possible,

Noting that, to date, 24 African States have become party to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and its Protocol on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment,¹ both of which were adopted at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001,

Mindful that, as yet, very few African States are fully familiar with the Luxembourg Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock,

1. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue, including through its subregional offices, its awareness-raising and advocacy efforts for States across the African continent on the Luxembourg Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Railway Rolling Stock (Luxembourg Rail Protocol) at the earliest opportunity, with a view to elucidating its merits and potential contribution to the financing of rolling stock in rail projects;

2. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to inform interested parties from the public sector and the private sector across the continent on, and educate them in, the way that private credit and leasing can assist with providing the financial resources necessary to revitalize and expand the African rail network, and the benefits of becoming party to the Luxembourg Rail Protocol.

¹ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2307, No. 41143.

966(LII) Review of the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Africa pursuant to its resolution 943(XLIX) and resolution 957(LI)

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 908(XLVI) of 26 March 2013, in which the Commission mandated the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to realign the programmes and priorities of the Commission to the new strategic orientation, with a view to supporting the transformative development agenda of the African Union,

Recalling also its resolution 943(XLIX) of 5 April 2016, in which it requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to undertake an independent, comprehensive and thorough review of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission, including its Intergovernmental Committee of Experts,

Recalling further its resolution 957(LI) of 15 May 2018, in which it decided to grant additional time to the Commission to conduct further review and analysis of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission, and requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Conference at its next session on restructuring the conference structure and subsidiary bodies of the Commission, including the intergovernmental committees of experts,

Noting General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system, and emphasized the need to address gaps and overlaps at the regional level, and endorsed a phased approach to revamping the United Nations development system at the regional level,

Noting also the new strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa for an empowered and transformed Africa and the structural reform of the secretariat of the Commission to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered, inclusive and transformed Africa in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, through its three core functions, namely, its function as a think tank, its convening function and its operational function,

1. *Takes note* of the review of the intergovernmental structure, its findings and recommendations;

2. *Endorses* the following adjustments to the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Africa:

- (a) To organize the sectoral subsidiary organs as follows:
 - (i) Committee on Economic Governance;
 - (ii) Committee on Statistics and Data;
 - (iii) Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology;
 - (iv) Committee on Climate Change, Blue Economy, Agriculture and Natural Resource Management;
 - (v) Committee on Social Development, Poverty and Gender;

(b) To change the name of the subregional intergovernmental committees of experts to the intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts, with a view to ensuring effective policy uptake and greater participation of senior government officials in the committees.

967(LII) Progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The Conference of Ministers,

Taking note of the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on progress in the implementation of the priority areas of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action),

Recognizing that more than half of the population of Africa resides in least developed countries and that those countries have particular structural impediments to their sustainable development and transformation,

Noting with concern that African least developed countries continue to have low productive capacity, in particular in the manufacturing sector, that their share in global exports has declined since the adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and that their receipts of official development assistance have been volatile and below the commitments set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Welcoming the anticipated graduation from the least developed country category of Angola and Sao Tome and Principe, which will join those African countries that previously graduated, namely Botswana, Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea,

Affirming that the continued support of the international community will play a key role in overcoming many of the barriers to sustainable development that are faced by the least developed countries,

Recalling the Ministerial Statement adopted at the Second Joint Annual Meeting of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, in which Ministers called upon the Commission to organize a regional review meeting for Africa prior to the convening of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Recalling also paragraph 157 of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in which the General Assembly was invited to consider holding a Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in order to make a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and decide on subsequent action,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 73/242 of 20 December 2018, in which the Assembly decided to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, to be held in 2021,

1. *Calls upon* African least developed countries to continue their efforts to mobilize resources both domestically and internationally and implement the Istanbul Programme of Action to accelerate economic and social development;

2. *Encourages* the Economic Commission for Africa and its development partners, including countries in Africa that are not in the least developed country category, to continue their support for implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

3. *Invites* the Economic Commission for Africa, with the cooperation of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to

organize a regional review meeting for Africa in 2020, prior to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

968(LII) Fiscal policy, trade and the private sector in a digital era: a strategy for Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Taking note of the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on the status of fiscal policy in Africa and the finding in the report that there is a financing gap that needs to be closed to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,

Considering that the rapid digitization in today's world presents unique opportunities for fostering sustainable development, in particular, through enhanced public revenue mobilization and management, trade and private sector investment and finance,

Noting the efforts made by the Economic Commission for Africa, together with the African Union Commission, to launch the digital identity, digital trade and digital economy initiative for Africa,

Noting also decision EX.CL/Dec.2(XXXIV) of 8 February 2019 of the Executive Council of the African Union to mandate the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and other relevant stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive African Union digital trade and digital economy development strategy,

Considering the challenges that the digital economy presents in tax policy, making it easy for businesses to shift profits from the use of digital assets, such as intellectual property, away from places where the income is generated to low-tax jurisdictions, thus resulting in erosion of the tax base,

Resolved to leverage the use of digital technology to strengthen revenue collection and public finance management in Africa, review current taxation frameworks to accommodate the digital economy, taking due account of the changing nature of businesses caused by digitization to support the efforts being made in the context of the digital identity, digital trade and digital economy initiative for Africa,

1. *Calls upon* decision-makers in Governments, the private sector and civil society to foster and prioritize financing for building digital infrastructure, working to digitize payments in every sector, and putting in place regulations to ensure that digital financial services may be used by everyone and everywhere and are duly protected against cybercrime;

2. *Urges* the Economic Commission for Africa to support member States and the African Tax Administration Forum in their efforts to develop frameworks that leverage digitization to strengthen revenue mobilization and public financial management through automation, digital identity and the modernization of fiscal processes;

3. *Also urges* the Economic Commission for Africa to support member States in building digital infrastructure that could be used to combat illicit financial flows;

4. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other relevant partners, to develop a comprehensive African digital trade and digital economy development strategy, including principles for good digital identity and harmonized standards, and a regional regulatory framework for digital finance and financial technology.

969(LII) Digitization and the digital economy initiative

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the substantial benefits and opportunities of digital technologies and the key role that digitization can play in achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union: The Africa We Want, and in promoting the overall development of Africa,

Recalling its resolution 941(XLIX) of 5 April 2016 on the organization of an annual African regional review of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, in which it reaffirmed the potential of information and communications technology to foster socioeconomic development,

Noting the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its thirty-second ordinary session, calling on the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and other partners to develop a digital identity, digital trade and digital economy strategy for Africa to be submitted for consideration and endorsement by the Executive Council in February 2020,

1. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Africa for setting up the African digitization initiative;

2. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to work on policy research, regional dialogue and capacity development on digitization and the digital economy in member States, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, member States, the African Development Bank, the African Tax Administration Forum, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank and other stakeholders;

3. *Also requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to fully operationalize a centre of excellence on digitization and the digital economy, with a view to tackling the critical issue of capacity shortfalls in the digital sector of member States, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, the African Development Bank, the African Tax Administration Forum, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, development partners and African institutions of higher learning;

4. *Urges* the Economic Commission for Africa to ensure that the centre of excellence on digitization and the digital economy has tangible, time-bound and results-based deliverables to support member States;

5. *Invites* member States to consider developing strong security systems to combat cybercrime and cyber-related threats emanating from the digitization of their economies.

B. Decision

A(LII) Date, venue and theme for the fifty-third session

At its 4th plenary meeting on 26 March 2019, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development decided that its fifty-third session would be held in Addis Ababa in 2020 on a date in the month of March or April and that the theme of the fifty-third session would be: “The future of Africa: industrialization in the digital era”.

4th meeting of the plenary, 26 March 2019
