



Partnership Strategy for the Economic Commission for Africa



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Partnership Strategy for the Economic Commission for Africa



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Table of Contents

List of acronyms and abbreviations	v
Foreword	vii
1. Background and context	1
2. Repositioning of the Economic Commission for Africa and strategic agenda	3
3. Rationale behind partnerships	5
4. Types, dimensions and modalities of partnerships	11
4.1 Strategic partnerships with pan-African institutions – African Union Commission, African Development Bank and the League of Arab States	11
4.2 Member States and Regional Economic Communities	13
4.3 United Nations Regional Commissions, agencies and programmes	14
4.4 Development partners	15
4.5 Non-State Actors	17
4.6 South-South and triangular cooperation	19
5. Partnership outcomes	21

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
AUC	African Union Commission	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa	RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
CoP	Community of Practice	REC	Regional Economic Community
CSO	civil society organization	UNCT	United Nations country team
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
EU	European Union	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IDEP	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNTFAD	United Nations Trust Fund for African Development
JFA	Joint Financing Arrangement	WTO	World Trade Organization
JSSO	Joint Secretariat Support Office		
LAS	League of Arab States		

Foreword

The recent refocusing exercise aimed, among other things, at making the Commission the “think tank” of reference on African development policy issues by building on the Commission’s comparative advantage and by placing particular emphasis on: i) the rigour and relevance of knowledge produced by the Commission; ii) generating knowledge underpinned by robust statistics; and iii) improving the packaging and communication of ECA knowledge products to core policy constituents. ECA delivers on its mandate under the umbrella of two overarching pillars, namely policy research and knowledge delivery. The delivery mechanism of the Commission’s normative work remains policy research to generate knowledge, advocacy and consensus-building, as well as advisory services and technical cooperation.

One key feature of the recent ECA repositioning and recalibration of its programmes is the greater specialization and focus in core areas of comparative advantage, where the Commission can make a real

difference to Africa’s transformative agenda. This can only be achieved, *inter alia*, by pooling resources to make meaningful impact in the Commission’s niche area of knowledge production, knowledge dissemination and policy advocacy; and by building synergies and strengthening its collaboration with critical actors both within and outside the continent.

To this end, the Commission developed a new Partnership Strategy with a view to enhancing complementarity and development impact and to responding better to the evolving needs of its member States within the context of new and emerging opportunities and challenges. The Strategy is framed on the premise that Africa’s development challenges and its transformative agenda are so huge that no single institution or organization, no matter how well-resourced, is capable of addressing them alone. The new approach to partnerships intends to forge more strategic and results-based collaborative alliances with its hallmark view of partnerships beyond mobilization of financial resource to include sharing of ideas

and knowledge, developing synergies, building on comparative advantages and avoiding duplication of efforts. The new Strategy will serve as a guide for ECA substantive Divisions and Sub-Regional Offices in their efforts to build and nurture partnerships for effective programme delivery.

All future partnerships should be aligned with the Commission's overall vision of supporting the agenda for structural transformation in Africa. Partnerships must not only focus on vertical relations but also ensure that horizontal relations are established, while at the same time strengthening links between knowledge generation and policymaking processes on the continent. ECA will create a balance between strategic, technical and financial partnerships, ensuring that these partnerships are underpinned by a common interest, which is a mark of effective development cooperation.

Overall, partnership arrangements at ECA will be driven by the need for: a) providing opportunities for innovation and deepening of its work, in its niche areas of policy research and knowledge delivery; b) value addition, mutual respect and mutual benefits; c) knowledge and experience-sharing; d) developing synergies and building on comparative advantage, and 5) promoting the

shift away from donor-recipient relationship patterns to include knowledge generation and sharing, and technical assistance.

Partnerships will contribute to the Commission's vision of becoming a more rigorous and responsive centre of excellence in support of Africa's transformative agenda, including by improving the relevance of ECA research and capacity building work. Well-designed partnership arrangements will also be used as platforms for disseminating ECA work.

Beyond increasing the volume and predictability of extra budgetary resources which is critical for the effective delivery of ECA's work plan, the Strategy stipulates that partnership arrangements should enhance programme complementarities and synergies. Therefore, it is expected to deepen ECA's impact on Africa's social and economic transformation. .



Carlos Lopes

Executive Secretary

Economic Commission for Africa

1. Background and context

The global system has in the past two decades registered remarkable transformations, epitomized by factors such as accelerated global economic integration, historic reconfiguration of economic powers and increasing South-South cooperation. These transformations have been driven by mega trends such as the profound shift in demographic profiles; rapid urbanization; the growing prominence of global civil society movements; the emergence of a larger middle class in Southern countries leading to historic poverty reductions; and the acceptance of limits to current consumption patterns that are affecting the planet's renewal capacity. However, these positive trends have had to compete with a number of worrying deficits, including deepening inequality, the persistence of poverty, jobless growth and various constraints to human mobility.

Unlike in the past when Africa was relegated to the role of bearing the brunt of the negatives of globalization, the continent now seems to be reaping some benefits from the current

phase of global transformation. For over a decade now, Africa has registered significant economic growth, resulting in its emergence as one of the fastest growing regions in the world. The continent's recent success story has been brought about by a confluence of factors, including: its overall demographic advantage; a youthful population and the accompanying dividends associated with the youth bulge; a burgeoning middle class and related purchasing power; enormous natural resource wealth; general improvements in governance and the macroeconomic fundamentals of most countries; massive processes of urbanization; growing strength and dynamism of the local private sector; and increased ease of doing business on the continent.

These changes have heralded historic shifts in perceptions of Africa, away from the well-known image of a basket case and Afro-pessimism to a new age of promise and effusive Afro-enthusiasm. However, amidst these positive developments and the promising prospects that the future holds for Africa,

major challenges remain that must be dealt with effectively. They include: the quality and sustainability of growth; lingering problems of maladjustment; massive degradation of production structures; deficits in State and institutional capacity; vulnerable employment and the huge urban unoccupied youth. Aggregately, Africa's economic growth has not translated into desired levels of inclusive structural transformation, partly contributing to deep domestic inequality, persistent poverty, continuous informalization of economic activities and erosion of political legitimacy. There is a growing consensus that Africa needs to embark on an accelerated process of structural transformation that must respond to key priorities such as: leveraging the economic advantages offered by the continent's natural resource endowment and demographic boon;

significant and coordinated expansion of investments in infrastructure; speedy creation of large-scale productive employment; promotion of domestic entrepreneurship as part of a strategy of job and wealth creation; assuring basic food and nutritional security; and embarking on a major revival of social policy.

These global and regional developments clearly have implications for the ability of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to deliver on its mandate. Given these opportunities and challenges, there was a need for the Commission to reposition itself in line with the current needs and emerging priorities of the continent.

2. Repositioning of the Economic Commission for Africa and strategic agenda

The Commission is an extremely dynamic institution, which has remained alert to the constantly changing nature of its operational environment and has formulated a conscious policy of adjusting and repositioning itself in order to better respond to the continent's development needs. A first wave of reforms was undertaken in the 1980s to address issues of poor economic growth, worsening social indicators and prevalent political conflict. The repositioning exercise undertaken in 2006 secured the role of ECA in the changing regional institutional landscape and improved its service delivery.

To consolidate the achievements realized under previous reforms and keep up with the changing regional and global context, ECA embarked on a restructuring exercise in 2012 aimed at making it the “think tank” of reference on African development policy issues. In this regard, the Commission reconfigured its programmes and aligned its work to

the substantive priorities of the structural transformation of its member States in a renascent Africa.

The Commission's programmatic work was accordingly realigned to focus on overcoming gaps identified in planning, statistics, contract negotiations, as well as enhancing the modality of delivery of relevant knowledge to its member States and regional and subregional institutions. ECA will streamline the intergovernmental machinery and continue its support for Africa's regional integration agenda. Lastly, it will leverage its subregional presence to support data collection and processing to enhance the statistical capacity of its member States. The restructuring exercise builds on the Commission's convening power and places particular emphasis on:

- a) Strengthening the rigour and relevance of knowledge produced by the Commission;

- b) Making ECA the authoritative source of analytical insights into Africa's development;
- c) Generating knowledge underpinned by robust statistics;
- d) Improving the packaging and communication of ECA knowledge products to core policy constituents.

It consolidates existing subprogrammes to focus on priority areas that are key to the structural transformation of African countries. Thus, using nine subprogrammes to cluster its core work, ECA will deliver on its mandate under the umbrella of two overarching pillars, namely policy research and

knowledge delivery. The subprogrammes are: Macroeconomic Policy; Regional Integration and Trade; Innovations, Technologies and Management of Africa's Natural Resources; Statistics; Capacity Development; Gender and Women in Development; Subregional Activities for Development; Development Planning and Administration; and Social Development Policy.

The delivery mechanism of the Commission's normative work remains policy research to generate knowledge, advocacy and consensus-building, as well as advisory services and technical cooperation. In addition, ECA intends to improve coherence among United Nations agencies that support the African Union, foster South-South cooperation and leverage renewed partnerships.

3. Rationale behind partnerships

The concept of partnership has gained much popularity in recent times and has been used broadly to characterize a wide variety of relationships, sometimes creating much definitional confusion.¹ One of the most cited definitions of partnerships, which the ECA partnership framework would want to align with, is provided by the United Nations Global Compact, which sees partnerships thus:

voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both State and non-State, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competences and benefits.”²

¹ See WTO Regional Office for Africa, Partnership Strategy 2010–2013, p. 2.

² See variously United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/60/215/2005, cited in UNEP, UNEP Policy on Partnerships and Guidelines for Implementation, August 2009; Ebenezer Obadare, “Partnering for Development? Analysing the Possibilities and Challenges for Civil Society Organizations and

Africa’s development challenges and its transformative agenda are so huge that no single institution or organization, no matter how well-resourced, is capable of addressing them alone. They can only be addressed effectively through collaborative efforts, including through various forms of partnerships. In recent years, partnerships have emerged as an increasingly important core practice throughout much of the United Nations system. As an integral part of the United Nations system, ECA has always been aware of the importance of partnerships and has, over the years, made partnerships a critical component in the delivery of its work. The Commission has had a strong tradition of partnering with stakeholders in Africa’s economic development, including member States, pan-African institutions, universities and research institutions, non-governmental organizations and development partners.

the Private Sector in West Africa,” OSIWA, WACSERIES Vol. 3 No. 1 January 2012, p. 6.

ECA partnership arrangements can be traced back to the early 1970s, when the Commission concluded bilateral cooperation agreements with Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, India and the Netherlands. The cohort of partners was later broadened to include multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as private foundations such as Carnegie and Ford. In the two decades that followed, donors and partners made financial contributions and provided secondment or loaned experts. These partnerships were mostly ad hoc, with a narrow focus on distinct projects; funding was often earmarked and fairly unpredictable.

Over the past two decades, ECA has made considerable progress in building new, effective and sustainable partnerships and in strengthening existing ones. These partnerships, characterized by mutual accountability and based on comparative advantages, remain central to the overall strategic orientation of the Commission. Raising sufficient and predictable extrabudgetary resources to support its operational activities through technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives is critical for ECA if it is to deliver results and maximize the impact of its work. The deployment of efforts and mobilization of influential actors in the development community is yielding positive results. The resource mix for carrying ECA work is evolving, with a diversified donor base and

increasing extrabudgetary contributions with less strict funding conditionalities and more harmonized approaches.

In pursuit of the Principles of the Paris Declaration, four funding partners – namely Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom – came together in 2006 and agreed to pool their funding, to the tune of US\$ 13.5 million, to support programme activities within the 2007–2009 Business Plan. This was done through a joint funding framework known as the Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA). The partners committed themselves to the principles of harmonization as set out in the Paris Declaration and strived for the highest degree of alignment with the budgetary and accountability systems and processes at ECA. Under the second round of support (JFA II), the partners provided flexible programmatic funding support of \$51.4 million to the 2010–2012 Business Plan; ECA is currently coordinating their support for the 2013–2015 Business Plan. Over the past 13 years, ECA has raised \$177.2 million for its programme activities and plans to mobilize \$105 million for the 2014–2015 biennium.

Despite the remarkable positive evolution in ECA partnership arrangements over the years, and notwithstanding the creation of the Partnership Office (formerly known as PATCO) to manage partnership arrangements, partnerships have continued to present challenges to the Commission. These include the ad-hoc and poorly structured nature of

some partnerships and a disproportionate focus on partnerships anchored on resource mobilization, as opposed to partnerships that foster collaborative work.

One of the major features of the ongoing restructuring at ECA is the move towards greater specialization and focus in core areas of comparative advantage, where the Commission believes it can make a real difference to Africa's transformative agenda. Greater specialization implies first, that ECA must identify key priority areas of focus and allow other development actors to contribute to thematic areas beyond its priorities; second, that ECA must acknowledge that it does not have the monopoly in its identified areas of comparative advantage and that it will have to contend with a range of other actors working on similar issue areas; and third, that for ECA to make a meaningful impact in its niche area of knowledge production, knowledge dissemination and policy advocacy, it will have to build synergies and significantly strengthen its collaboration with critical actors both within and outside the continent. The ongoing discussions between ECA and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other organizations point to the potential of this approach. Similarly, engagements with notable think tanks will help advance the Commission's agenda of becoming the leading think tank on African matters.

Under its new orientation, ECA explicitly focuses on multidisciplinary knowledge generation, an invaluable resource for strengthening evidence-based policymaking in Africa. Deliberate efforts must therefore be made to ensure that all future partnerships are aligned with the Commission's overall vision of supporting the agenda for structural transformation in Africa. In so doing, partnerships must not only focus on vertical relations but also ensure that horizontal relations are established, while at the same time strengthening links between knowledge generation and its ability to shape and influence policymaking processes on the continent. ECA must also define and create a balance between strategic, technical and financial partnerships, ensuring that these partnerships are underpinned by a common interest, which is a mark of "Effective Development Cooperation"³. Similarly, any attempt to build partnerships will be on a clear and shared understanding of the collaboration, value addition and benefits in working jointly, using the respective comparative strengths of ECA. Such partnerships will deepen collaboration towards collectively and efficiently responding to the needs and demands of member States at the national, subregional and continental levels.

At continental level, ECA will focus on its partnerships with the African Union

³ United Nations High-level Panel Report: A New Global Partnership – Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development.

Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other key stakeholders, with a view to promoting synergies in policies and activities on major regional development issues and concerns for Africa. This is intended to foster African ownership and consensus on emerging policy issues and promote policy advocacy on Africa within the international community. At international level, there will be effective coordination of the role of the United Nations in Africa by maintaining regular consultations with its organizations working in Africa to promote concerted action, including the Regional Coordination Mechanism. Similarly, collaboration with the other regional commissions will be strengthened so as to share experiences, and coordinate and harmonize actions on issues of mutual and collective interest.

Cognizant of the changes in the international development cooperation landscape and the potential of horizontal partnerships, particularly South-South and triangular cooperation, ECA will explore and forge horizontal partnerships in the pursuit of its strategic agenda. These partnerships will be leveraged to facilitate knowledge and experience-sharing as well as effective collaboration, based on comparative advantage, to address development challenges. Such horizontal partnerships should be based on equity, trust and mutual benefit and should go beyond activities and projects and focus

on long-term and sustainable collaborative programmes.

All partnerships must be seen as an opportunity to innovate and deepen the prominence of the Commission's work. Evidence suggests that in past decades, there was a proliferation of development actors in Africa, making multiple demands on government and non-government entities and implementing multiple and uncoordinated programmes and projects, spanning the policy environment. *The extent of these demands on member States and other such entities has prompted calls for greater harmonization and coordination of development efforts, with a view to improving the quality and impact of development support.*

More recently, the measure of global austerity has become an encouraging factor requiring us to "work more with less".⁴ Leveraging on each other's specialty and comparative advantages will be critical for coordinating and harmonizing development support. The road to realizing Africa's potential will require significant investments and resources, both human and financial. We must deepen our collaboration and partnership so as to efficiently consolidate the prospects of an African socioeconomic agenda.

The foregoing analysis points to the fact that the ongoing restructuring at ECA, particularly the higher levels of specialization that the

4 Ban Ki-moon

Commission seeks to bring to its work, has significantly increased the importance of partnerships with other stakeholders, especially for purposes of complementarity and greater development impact. Against this background, it is imperative for the Commission to rethink its approach to partnerships with a view to making them more relevant to its mandate within the context of new and emerging opportunities and challenges. The partnership framework document articulates the key features of the Commission's new approach to partnerships, to make them more strategic and results-based. One of the major highlights of the partnerships is that they will no longer be primarily about resource mobilization but also about sharing knowledge and ideas, developing synergies, building on comparative advantages and avoiding duplication of efforts. Overall, ECA partnership arrangements will be driven by the following principles and considerations:

- a) Provide opportunities for innovation and deepening of the Commission's work, particularly in its niche areas of policy research and knowledge delivery;
- b) Have the potential to improve policy making and implementation in ECA member States;
- c) There must be convergence with the Commission's vision and programme priorities;
- d) There must be evidence of value addition and mutual benefits;
- e) They must be driven by mutual respect and collaboration, with a clear and shared understanding of the areas and modalities of collaboration;
- f) They must be focused on knowledge and experience-sharing; developing synergies and building on comparative advantage, as well as avoiding duplication and unnecessary competition;
- g) As much as possible, partners who provide ECA with financial resources should also be encouraged to take an interest in its work, thereby encouraging a shift away from donor-recipient relationship patterns.

4. Types, dimensions and modalities of partnerships

With its normative legitimacy and convening power that enables it to play a standard-setting role and its new emphasis on “Africa First” and empowering Africa to tell its own story, ECA is poised to broaden its approach to partnerships and develop a corporate strategy to leverage strategic alliances and collaboration. This is to ensure coherence and synergy in programme delivery, enhance its visibility and maximize the impact of its work.

The section below presents six types of partners deemed key to advancing the work of the Commission, along with identified modalities for engaging with each category of partner.

4.1 Strategic partnerships with pan-African institutions – African Union Commission, African Development Bank and the League of Arab States

The Commission’s long-standing strategic partnership with AUC and AfDB is based on the recognition of one another’s complementary and ancillary strengths as well as the long-term benefits of working jointly to support the social and economic development of African countries. The partnership is principally leveraged to facilitate high-level policy dialogue and technical support, development of key initiatives, joint planning and organization of major activities. Some aspects of the existing partnership between ECA, AUC and AfDB will be further strengthened and the working arrangements of the partnership will be institutionalized with a focus on joint planning, partnership norms, results-orientation, including regular review and oversight.

In this regard, the role of the Joint Secretariat Support Office (JSSO) should be reviewed and strengthened to enable it to effectively support and facilitate the development of common African policy positions and development initiatives. The pan-African institutions also need to review and take stock of the work of JSSO in incubating joint initiatives and developing effective mechanisms for consultation and monitoring of joint projects.

The modalities for engaging AUC and AfDB include:

- a) Annual high-level retreat of the heads of AUC, AfDB and ECA. This platform provides an opportunity for the Executive Heads, Directors and Commissioners of the three institutions to discuss strategic priorities and policy matters on a broad range of key sectors and issues relevant to the social and economic development of member States, focusing on the regional integration agenda and transforming Africa into an economic community. The agenda will include supporting and facilitating the development of common African policy positions on issues of strategic relevance. The retreat, which can be organized before, after or at the margins of the African Union (AU) Summit, will also review the partnership objectives and working arrangements between the three institutions.
- b) JSSO, in collaboration with the AUC, AfDB and ECA departments responsible for managing partnerships, will play a leading role in coordinating and servicing the meetings, following-up on outcomes and reporting on progress;
- c) Biennial joint programming meeting with AUC, and other key stakeholders. Whilst overall strategic direction and guidance is provided by the heads of AUC and ECA, the meeting will be steered by a cross-functional team from the two organizations and coordinated by JSSO. The meeting will: (i) identify thematic areas for collaboration; (ii) formulate joint programme activities and resource requirements; (iii) define deliverables; and (iv) develop implementation modalities and resource mobilization strategies. This could also include participation in one another's planning processes.

ECA will also actively continue engaging with the League of Arab States (LAS) to address and respond to the development priorities and needs of the African members of the League. In this regard, areas of collaboration with LAS include investment and trade, statistics, industrialization and environmental sustainability, including climate, water, land and biodiversity.

4.2 Member States and Regional Economic Communities

The economic and social development of African member States is the *raison d'être* of ECA. In this regard, ensuring the active participation of member States as stakeholders in Africa's development requires moving beyond engaging in legislative and policymaking processes to joint advocacy activities.

- a) There will be focused but differentiated engagement with member States, as they have development priorities and needs;
- b) In its engagement with member States, ECA will particularly focus on the following four areas that are critical to the transformative agenda of African countries, which will be supported by rigorous policy research, coherent and tailored capacity development programmes, and robust and high-quality statistics:
 - i) Macroeconomic policy;
 - ii) Regional integration and trade;
 - iii) Social development policy;
 - iv) Management of natural resources;
- c) Engaging RECs through multi-year programmes in support of joint

formulation and implementation of subregional initiatives. The engagement should be programme-driven, formalized and pursued in line with the newly reconfigured role of the ECA subregional offices;

- d) Relaunching the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) Pledging Conference in Addis Ababa. ECA relaunched the UNTFAD Pledging Conference in May 2004 in Addis Ababa. It was later taken back to New York. Voluntary contributions from African countries had been channelled directly to ECA through UNTFAD to support sustainable economic and social development in Africa. Efforts will be made to bring the UNTFAD Pledging Conference back to Addis Ababa and coordinated efforts will be mounted for increased ownership and support by African member States to the work of the Commission. Member States and RECs should play a more active role in mobilizing support in their respective constituencies for UNTFAD.;
- e) Strengthening the quarterly briefing meeting with African Ambassadors based in Addis Ababa to serve as a forum for strategic dialogue and feedback;
- f) Formalizing partnerships with permanent representatives of African countries to the United Nations, the European Union (EU),

WTO and other organizations for dialogue and outreach;

4.3 United Nations Regional Commissions, agencies and programmes

Systematic and enhanced collaboration with other United Nations actors in the implementation of programme activities as well as technical cooperation allows for maximizing the impact of ECA work and more efficient use of resources. The following modalities of engaging with United Nations actors will be pursued:

- a) Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM): To make the RCM more effective and productive as a continent-wide platform, ECA will boost the role of the mechanism in promoting coherence among United Nations agencies supporting the work of AU and its NEPAD Coordinating Agency and link its work to other processes on the continent. Accordingly, ECA will align with the strategic priorities of AU by developing a regional development assistance framework to work closely with United Nations agencies⁵ leading

⁵ Through the RCM, clusters and sub-clusters, ECA and the United Nations system-wide engagement in capacity-building initiatives has contributed significantly to AU and its regional and subregional organizations. Conveners of the 9 clusters of the RCM include UNDP (Governance); UNFPA (Environment, Population and Urbanization); UNESCO (Science and Technology); FAO (Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development); ECA (Infrastructure Development); OSAA (Advocacy and Communications); WHO (Social and Human Development); UN Office to AU (Peace and Security); and UNIDO (Industry, Trade and Market Access).

the various clusters of the RCM. In addition, the timing of the RCM-Africa annual meetings will be adjusted to be held back-to-back with the annual AU-ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. These changes will improve alignment of the work of United Nations agencies supporting the AU to a common agreed results framework and give prominence to the monitoring of progress of United Nations frameworks;

- b) In addition, the Commission's role will further strengthen the Subregional Coordination Mechanism as a platform for engaging with RECs and intergovernmental organizations in support of their programmes and priorities in a bid to reduce fragmentation, increase coherence and maximize impact;
- c) Leveraging Development Account as a partnership platform. As a capacity development programme of the Secretariat, the Development Account is designed to enhance capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda. It also provides a rare opportunity to pilot approaches that test new ideas and eventually scale them up through supplementary funding. The programme – coordinated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is open to the five Regional

Commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNEP, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – provides a bridge between in-country capacity development actors and United Nations Secretariat entities;

- d) As a funding window and collaboration platform that supports the implementation of internationally agreed development goals and the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits, the Development Account presents a tremendous opportunity for ECA to foster dialogue and collaboration with other regional commissions as well as United Nations entities covered by the programme. ECA will put in place institutional mechanisms and processes that support, facilitate and monitor the Commission's partnership with other United Nations entities and resource mobilization endeavours in various thematic clusters in the context of the Development Account;
- e) Tapping United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Fully cognizant of its regional mandate, the Commission will strategically use UNCT and UNDAF as a vehicle for promoting ECA work and disseminating its policy messages, thereby expanding its policy influence. These organizations

may also be tapped for sharing knowledge and mobilizing resources for country-level operational projects conceived through technical cooperation and led by other United Nations entities.

ECA will leverage the comparative advantage of collaborating United Nations agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP, UNCTAD and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in youth employment, governance, extractive industries, trade and agriculture and food security. ECA will also explore and seize opportunities of working with the United Nations Office for Partnerships, which serves as a gateway for partnership opportunities within the United Nations family as well as the Regional and Subregional Coordination Mechanisms as potential platforms for nurturing and developing alliances and partnerships.

4.4 Development partners

The need for ECA to shift its relationship with development partners is now more important than ever before. For ECA to be relevant to the transformative agenda of the continent and put “Africa First” in its work, it has to, among other things, broaden its engagement with development partners beyond the current relationship as a recipient of funds for project and programme implementation. Development partners can be categorized into two types: multilateral and bilateral partners.

4.4.1 Multilateral development partners

The Commission's relationship with multilateral development partners has mainly been based on: (a) publication of joint reports such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa, and the African Economic Outlook; and (b) donor-recipient arrangements such as the EU Delegation's support for the African Climate Policy Centre and the Land Policy Initiative, and its participation in joint meetings.

There are various forums and spaces in which ECA and multilateral partners can engage meaningfully. On the Commission's side, these include:

The Strategic Partnership Dialogue and the African Development Forum, which are biennial meetings organized jointly by AUC, AfDB and ECA.

On the multilateral partners' side:

a) OECD has formal structures such as the Development Finance Network (DeFiNe), a global network of think tanks coordinated by the OECD Development Centre and open to non-OECD members. DeFiNe could be an outlet of ECA research products and flagships (the African Economic Outlook is already published on the Network) and a space for ECA to interact with think tanks such as research centres and academic institutions

from developing, emerging and OECD countries;

- b) EU: The Commission's new partnership configuration with EU will focus on:
 - (i) ensuring that the EU-led Economic Partnership Agreements between EU and African member States through their RECs will not have adverse effects on the AU/ECA-led continental free trade areas;
 - (ii) ECA playing a proactive role in the formulation of AU-EU strategy,
 - (iii) substantive contribution to EU-Africa summits;
- c) WTO and ECA have signed a cooperation agreement to jointly manage a Trade-related Technical Assistance programme. The signed cooperation agreement defines modalities of partnership between the two organizations;
- d) Bretton Woods institutions: Given the importance of these institutions in influencing macroeconomic and social policies in Africa, it is strategic for ECA to begin discussions with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on potential areas and modalities of cooperation beyond the current ad hoc project-based collaboration;
- e) G8 and G20: ECA has been providing technical support for Africa's preparation and engagement in G8 and G20 processes.

4.4.2 Bilateral development partners

The Commission's partnership with bilateral development partners dates back to the early 1970s. Recognizing the value addition of the pool funding mechanism, ECA and four bilateral partners – Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the UK – recently signed a cooperation agreement under a JFA in support of the first and second ECA Business Plans. Canada and Australia are currently supporting the implementation of the African Mining Vision with the establishment of the African Minerals Development Centre. ECA partnership with bilateral development partners has solely been based on a donor-recipient relationship through bilateral or joint financial arrangements. The new partnership will be broadened to include knowledge-sharing and technical assistance, which will involve non-financial assistance provided by either party through experts and specialists to maximize the quality of project-programme implementation and impact. Areas for technical assistance will be defined jointly between ECA and the bilateral partners based on particular needs and priorities.

4.5 Non-State Actors

Strategic non-State actors will include academia, research institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and private foundations.

4.5.1 Academia and research institutions

ECA partnership with academia and research institutions has been by individual divisions and not at the corporate level. The relationship is narrowed to small and isolated projects or programmes.

The new ECA partnership with academia and research institutions will aim at generating knowledge and strengthening the rigour and pertinence of knowledge produced jointly by ECA, academia and research institutions. The knowledge will include policy analysis on economic and social dimensions of contemporary development issues such as regional integration, macroeconomic policies, investment and growth, youth and employment, urbanization, universal access to health, development planning and natural resource management.

Possible partnership modalities will include (a) long-term research and training through the ECA African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and substantive divisions; (b) short-term advisory services on specialized areas (three to six months); (c) establishment of a Community of Practices (CoP) with selected academic and research institutions. ECA as the facilitator of CoP will provide enablers to ensure that it remains “alive”.

4.5.2 Civil society

Under the auspices of the then Governance and Public Administration Division, ECA initiated the African CSO Network Portal in response to the renewed interest of popular participation and the need to build the capacities of civil society by sharing knowledge and information to effectively and efficiently drive the promotion of principles of good governance and the democratization process in Africa. The portal is a collaborative and shared effort of the ECA and African non-governmental organizations.

The network portal is designed to facilitate data and knowledge-sharing among African CSOs, research institutions, policy makers, think tanks, academics, practitioners, partners and other stakeholders. ECA will use the portal as one of its major platforms for disseminating its research work and also for dialoguing with CSOs through the establishment of CoPs.

ECA will model the African CSO Network Portal to establish other portals along its priority areas.

Through the portals, CSOs will be invited to participate actively in ECA-led strategic forums such as the African Development Forum and the Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

4.5.3 Media

The Commission's relationship with the media has been sporadic and event driven,

with ECA using the media as one of the main outlets for its publications, media coverage and press releases. Our new partnership with the media will be widened to include the media as an outlet for ECA products and statements; establishment of a community of practices with the media for selected thematic areas; establishment of strategic partnerships with selected media in and out of Africa and working with them to create joint products and programmes. As an example, *The East African Weekly* is an authority within the East African subregion and ECA can work with the newspaper to define strategic thematic areas and subprogrammes to partner and use the media for results-based messaging.

The partnership should aim at improving the packaging and communication of ECA and media knowledge products to targeted policy constituencies and people, such as decision makers in member States and RECs, women, young people and the private sector.

4.5.4 Private sector

Recently, ECA started negotiating partnerships with the private sector as part of the implementation of the African Mining Vision. The Commission will now broaden the partnership by following the United Nations Global Compact to establish the United Nations Africa Compact.

ECA and selected private corporations will facilitate the establishment of the

United Nations Africa Compact and define a partnership framework which will align business operations and strategies with the “Africa First” agenda. The framework will include areas of partnership such as natural resource management, trade and industry, mobile technology and disclosure of environmental, social and governance policies and practices; sharing emerging issues and practices to advance practical solutions; strategies to combat common challenges; and exchange of technical assistance.

4.5.5 Philanthropic organizations and private foundations

In the 1970s and 1980s, ECA had productive relations with private foundations such as the Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation, but mainly as a recipient of funding contributions. In recent times, ECA has been effectively partnering with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and is currently negotiating potential areas of cooperation with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. ECA will scale up current efforts beyond donor-recipient relations to include strategic and value added partnerships in the areas of strategic dialogue, fellowships and joint launches of key reports and initiatives that have strategic relevance to the continent. In addition, ECA will encourage mutual invitations to their respective strategic forums.

ECA will also strategically target African philanthropic organizations such as the

Dangote Foundation, Chandaria Foundation, Higher Life Foundation, Mergon Foundation, T.Y Danjuma Foundation, the Donald Gordon Foundation and the Shuttleworth Foundation to dialogue on and garner support from within for the transformative agenda of the continent. ECA will explore how best to leverage the opportunities availed by the recently established African Philanthropy Forum to advance Africa’s transformative agenda.

4.6 South-South and triangular cooperation

4.6.1 South-South cooperation

The emergence of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) cooperation initiative provides new and unique opportunities for profitable South-South partnerships between African countries and the BRICS. Africa needs to capitalize on its cooperation with the BRICS to develop sectors that have large multiplier effects. Policy makers must identify policies and strategies to facilitate the diversification of exports, strengthen inter-sectoral linkages, adopt labour-intensive techniques and improve terms of trade. Even more importantly, there is a need to deepen Africa-to-Africa forms of South-South cooperation. In this regard, African countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa that currently provide significant resources to support regional integration efforts should be encouraged to invest more in these activities. Increased volumes of inter and intra-African investment and trade would

fundamentally alter the terms of the continent's engagement with other parts of the world, as well as increase its competitiveness globally. Accordingly, ECA recalibrated its programmes to meaningfully accompany its member States in their effort to maximize investments and trade with one another, as well as the benefits of their engagement with the BRICS, while minimizing the risks that come with such engagement.

4.6.2 Triangular cooperation

Triangular cooperation is a fairly new mode of development cooperation that is receiving increasing international attention because of the peculiar advantages it is said to provide, particularly with regard to principles of aid effectiveness. It is a three-track cooperation arrangement that usually involves a traditional donor from the ranks of the OECD Development Assistance Committee; an emerging donor country from the South and a beneficiary country in the South. Triangular cooperation focuses largely on technical cooperation aimed at capacity-building and is often based on previous cooperation experiences between traditional and emerging donors, which is considered successful and

worth replicating in third countries. Beneficiary countries of triangular cooperation are typically less developed countries of the South, which have long been involved in South-South Cooperation. In some sense therefore, triangular cooperation is seen as a platform for deepening South-South cooperation, in that it provides opportunities for experience-sharing between countries of the South that have graduated to the status of emerging economies and those that are still developing. However, despite the numerous opportunities that triangular cooperation offers to developing countries of the South, it also presents them with a number of risks such as lowering quality standards, raising transaction costs because of the involvement of three different actors and increasing the fragmentation of aid.

Against this backdrop, it would be useful for ECA to partner with other stakeholders to deepen its policy research work on the various dimensions of triangular and South-South cooperation, with a view to providing concrete policy recommendations to its member States that will help them better engage in triangular cooperation and therefore maximize the advantages that this mode of cooperation offers, while limiting the risks involved.

5. Partnership outcomes

Partnerships will contribute to the Commission's vision of becoming a more rigorous and responsive centre of excellence in support of Africa's transformative agenda, including by improving the relevance of ECA research and capacity-building work. In more specific terms, ECA will expect partnership arrangements to facilitate:

- a) Meaningful division of labour and significant reduction in duplication of efforts and resources among different actors involved in development work on the African continent;
- b) Leveraging of technical capacity and human resources, which is indispensable for the delivery of the Commission's programme of work, particularly in cases where such capacity does not exist in-house;
- c) Greater access to financial resources, critical for actualization of the ECA work plan;
- d) Completion of the critical linkages between knowledge generation through research, policy formulation and enhancement of policy implementation by member States;
- e) Opening up of advocacy channels to bring about added legitimacy and credibility, as well as strengthen stakeholder ownership of Africa's transformative agenda through consensus building;
- f) Mobilization of complementarities and synergies among various stakeholders for shared results and greater development impact on the continent as well as acting as multipliers for ECA work and activities.

