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**UNITED NATIONS
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SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
FOR WEST AFRICA (SRDC-WA)

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE SRDC-WA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE 1998-1999 WORK PROGRAMME AND
PLANNING FOR 2000-2001**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The objective of this report is to give member States an overview of the performance of the Subregional Development Centre (SRDC) for West Africa in the implementation of the work programme during the last biennium and the strategy for the implementation of the programme for the current biennium.

2. It will be recalled that the mandate of the SRDCs derive from the 1998-2001 Medium Term Plan adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning, and from the need to strengthen ECA's presence at the sub-regional level. Within this context, the SRDCs are to perform a wide range of functions to support regional cooperation and integration, including the following:

- act as operational arms of the ECA at the country level and catalysts to leverage the Commission's resources;
- serve as instruments for ensuring harmony between sub-regional and regional programme orientations and those defined by the strategic directions of the Commission;
- provide advisory services to member States, regional economic communities and sub-regional development operators;
- facilitate sub-regional economic cooperation, integration and development;
- promote gender issues;
- act as centres for policy dialogue;
- collect and disseminate information; and
- serve as facilitators of integration activities of organizations of the UN system operating within the sub-regions.

II. SCOPE AND ORIENTATION OF THE 1998-1999 WORK PROGRAMME

3. The programme of work and budget for the Centre was prepared within the framework of resolution 830(MFC.1) of 27 April 1998 adopted by the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of the Conference of Ministers. Consistent with the strategic directions of the Commission the resolution established two new subprogrammes, one of which was "Supporting subregional activities for development." The thrust of these activities would be on cooperation on key development issues with the subregional IGOs, particularly the economic communities, namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Mano River Union (MRU) as well as the leading IGO on environmental issues, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

4. Specifically, the Centre's activities were programmed to focus on :
- (a) Providing technical support to and cooperation with the regional economic communities;
 - (b) Facilitating networking and information exchange between governments, civil society and the private sector at SRDC level;
 - (c) Providing coordination services for operational programmes of the United Nations system and specialized agencies, in collaboration with UNDP and the United Nations Resident Coordinator system at the national level; and
 - (d) Strengthening ECA outreach in the West African SRDC subregion

III. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES DURING 1998-1999 BIENNIUM

3.1. Substantive servicing of legislative meetings

1998 ICE Meeting

5. The first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the Subregional Development Centre for West Africa (SRDC-WA) was held in Niamey, Niger from 25 to 29 May 1998. Eight Member States, nine intergovernmental organizations and representatives of the UNDP and UNFPA attended the meeting. Six reports were considered by the meeting.

6. The first, **Report of the Director** of the SRDC-WA on progress made in the implementation of the 1997 work programme, noted that the Centre undertook activities within the framework of the new strategic directions of ECA and the priority mandate of the Centre. These included four areas of focus, namely, the promotion of subregional integration, facilitating information exchange and networking between government, civil society organizations and the private sector, providing coordination services for operational activities for the United Nations System and the specialized agencies, and strengthening of the Commission's outreach in the subregion.

7. Among the issues discussed at some length was that of a mechanism for collaboration between IGOs and SRDC-WA. It was suggested that the Association of IGOs should be revitalized.

8. The **Report on the Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa in 1997** was the second paper considered by the meeting. Its main objective was to sensitize development partners on the principal economic and social problems of the West African subregion. The Report underlined the moderate gains achieved in economic growth- an increase of real GDP of 5 % per annum. The Report attributed this to the relatively high investment and export growth rates, and relatively low inflation. Adverse factors included high population growth rate, poor quality of essential services, worsening terms of trade, chronic balance of payments deficits, and the weight of the external debt.

9. During the debate, it was observed that the document was more descriptive than analytical, and that the data on key macro-economic and social indicators of some of the countries needed to be updated. The meeting recommended that future Reports should consist of two sections: a general situational analysis of the economic and social conditions in the subregion for the period under review; and a detailed analysis of selected areas of concentration.

10. **The Report on the Technological Policy Options for improving Food Security in West Africa** was the third report considered by the meeting. The paper identified disadvantages arising from the consumption of imported products and proposed alternatives to products made from imported wheat. A model pre-feasibility study for the formulation of a Composite Floor Project (CFP) and a checklist of actions were proposed. Among the advantages of a CFP the paper enumerated the following: the creation of new and stable market outlets to sustain food production and increases in food security at the local and national levels.

11. The meeting observed that the CFP was late in taking off in Africa and that constraints to its development were numerous, including the lack of political will, difficulties in producing additional maize, sorghum, millet, and cassava, problems of taste and the form of the composite bread to allow better acceptance.

12. **The Report on Progress made in Developing Data Bases for Sustainable Development Management in West Africa** was the fourth paper the meeting reviewed. The immediate objectives of the paper were to develop a common framework for data collection, analysis, storage and dissemination; to strengthen national, multinational and SRDC capacities and capabilities related to data management; and to create a West African intranet as a basis for an Internet Web site. The long-term objective was to establish mechanisms for reliable data generation, analysis, storage that would facilitate accessibility and networking.

13. The meeting recognized that the way forward lay in pooling resources together, with the major IGOs of the subregion working with the SRDC, UNDP, and other UN agencies and development partners to promote the use of the new information and communication technologies.

14. **The Report on Promoting Gender Perspectives in Sustainable Development Management in the West African Subregion** was the fifth report examined by the meeting. The paper noted that over the last few years there has been serious effort to translate international and regional action platforms and programmes on gender mainstreaming into operational activities. These activities related to the sensitization of gender policy makers and professionals on equal participation in the design of development policy, the identification of focal points at the national and subregional levels, and the promotion of gender activities that are of subregional dimensions.

The meeting noted that the way ahead would involve increased action by governments to formulate and implement policies that facilitate gender sensitive development programming. Participants also recommended that each country target gender-sensitive programmes in education, health, agriculture, food production, storage and marketing.

15. The Report on Assessment of the Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the SRDC-WA subregion was the sixth paper the meeting reviewed. The paper assessed progress member States were making in moderating their population profiles against the quantitative targets contained in the two regional and global frameworks. It showed that a review of selected demographic parameters such as infant mortality and population growth rates indicates that the quantitative targets would not be achieved in 2000 or even 2010 for most of the countries.

16. The meeting noted the following factors as responsible for the high fertility and mortality levels in the subregion: early age of first union or marriage, and traditional values and customs, which put high premium on having many children. With reference to mortality, the following factors were identified as determinants: poverty, poor medical technology and public health technologies. The meeting urged member States to formulate and implement policies to decrease mortality and fertility levels.

1999 ICE Meeting

17. The second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee was held in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, from 1 to 7 March 1999. The main purpose was to review the work programme for 1998 and make proposals for the implementation of the programme for 1999. Eleven Member States attended the meeting and thirteen reports were presented.

18. **The Report by the Director** on progress made in the implementation of the 1998 work programme noted that the programme was fully implemented. The Committee was also briefed on the new ECA strategy that provides a framework for programme design and implementation.

19. The meeting was also informed that a significant percentage of ECA's professional staff would be redeployed to the SRDCs so as to increase their capacity to develop and deliver operational activities in the subregion.

20. The Report on Economic and Social Conditions in the West Africa SRDC Subregion was next presented to the meeting. As in the past, the main objective of the publication was to inform on economic and social issues. It highlighted the strengths, weaknesses and potentials of West-African economies as a whole. With respect to the international context, it was noted that during 1998 and 1999 there were a series of uncertainties relating to: the impact of the financial crisis in South-East Asia on the world economy and, particularly, on West Africa; the effects of the coming into force of the Euro on the economy of the subregion and, particularly, on the FCFA countries; and the serious slump in world prices for the main exports of the subregion. The report also emphasized that African countries had been pursuing rigorous economic reforms in the contexts of structural adjustment programmes.

21. The report underlined the strengths and weaknesses of the economies of the subregion. The strengths included a relatively high real GDP growth rate of 4.9 %, on average, in 1998. This was based essentially on high levels of final consumption and gross capital formation; the contributions to the real GDP growth rate of these two components being +3.11 % and +1.88 %. The weaknesses included poor control of the external sector, the external balance rather pulling economic growth downward; unfavorable demographic growth rates, which, in 1998, reached an average of +2.68 %; and poor social development indicators.

22. During the debate During the debate the Committee recommended that the revised version of the report also discuss such issues as physical infrastructures; currency fluctuations, including high inflation rates; budgetary balance; co-operation and economic integration, including the establishment of a common external tariff.

23. The Committee requested that some of the proposed recommendations be reviewed, including that on better distribution of responsibilities in the management of water resources, between public authority private sector and civil society; in-depth analysis of the various causes of the refugee problem in the sub-region (including political causes); and effective management of population policies.

24. The Report on the Progress made in Promoting Gender Perspectives in Sustainable Development in the West African Subregion was presented to the Committee. This document considered the achievements and failures in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and reviewed the status of gender mainstreaming in different countries based on various indicators. The report pointed out that despite efforts by governments, women, youth and other vulnerable groups, which constitute about 70 to 80 percent of the population, were still at a disadvantage.

They bear a disproportionate burden due to the roles as workers, producers and consumers within the framework of the traditional sector. The report noted the gap between men and women in such areas as education, employment, political participation and access to land and credit facilities. In policy design there was also inadequate consideration of gender issues as factors in perpetuating poverty. Despite these gaps in gender mainstreaming there were some innovative activities that are being undertaken within the subregion.

25. In the discussion that followed the need of using up-to-date data was stressed. The meeting requested that proper means for obtaining relevant and up-to-date data is adopted both in the SRDC and in the member States. Developing skills for effective political participation by women was recognised as an area for urgent action.

26. The Committee accepted that data collection is a serious problem in the subregion and efforts should be made to improve the situation. It noted that gender mainstreaming called for the development of all human resources and for increasing possibilities to participate in and contribute to development.

27. Since women have shown their capabilities in managing micro finance loans and in improving productivity, there is need to graduate to macro enterprises which will help them contribute more to development.

28. The meeting pointed out that reliable policies on gender issues were essential for effective monitoring of the performance and impact of programmes aimed at improving the quality of life. In this regard, data on programme performance and on output indicators should be disaggregated and collected on a continuous basis.

29. A Report on the Techno-Economic Study of a Pilot Laboratory Prospect for the Production and Utilisation of Xanthan Gum in Bread-making of tropical flours was presented to the meeting. It described the implementation of a project for reinforcing food security in Africa though science and technology applications. The purpose of the project is to establish whether the production of Gum Xanthane is possible in Africa. The report also aims at sensitising member states on opportunities offered by xanthane gum for developing food industries so that planners may take the project into account when formulating agriculture and food policies.

30. The manufacturing process of xanthane gum was reviewed. It was pointed out that there was potentially a great number of xanthane gums for specific applications, and that the properties of the xanthane gum are those usually required in most food industries.

With reference to the project under implementation, interest was on how to prepare quality xanthane gum specific to breadmaking of gluten-free tropical flours. It was noted that mastery of the manufacturing process of the xanthane gum in Africa would be a major technological breakthrough; a large number of varieties of maize, sorghum and millet for traditional food preparations such as tô, ké-n'-ké and akassa could be used. Using a specific quality xanthane gum, high yield varieties of cereals that are inappropriate for traditional food preparations would become usable.

31. The Committee recommended that:

1. the present report, the results and the final report of project implementation should be sent to national agriculture and food research centres for comments ;
2. an hoc expert group meeting be convened to validate the findings and to define new guidelines for future project activities;
3. a survey on the constraints hindering the development of composite flours in Africa should be carried out; to this end it is proposed that each country examines the subject at country level, and that the SRDC/WA prepares studies on two or three concrete cases and reports thereon to the next meeting of the Committee.

32. The Report on Progress made in Promoting Sustainable Data bases Networking in West Africa focused on progress made in developing databases for sustainable development management in West Africa. It revisited the recommendations of the First ICE meeting on databases and networking, in the light of the new communications technology. Specifically, the Committee had recommended that the Centre should strengthen its information networking by:

- increasingly involving its focal points in outreach activities;
- mobilising extrabudgetary resources to supplement regular budget resources for that purpose; and
- treating investment in the new information and communications technology to include the promotion of local capacity as a policy issue.

33. It was noted that over the last two years a number of missions had been undertaken to most of the member States and interactions made with professionals both in the public and private sectors. The missions also confirmed the existence of common problems in this field. These included: inadequate flow of information among member States and between them and the SRDC which hampered the development of effective programmes for sustainable development at the national level and for the promotion of subregional integration; uncoordinated approaches for enhancing the effectiveness of technical support and advisory services based on reliable information; and inadequate harmonisation and co-ordination with the national focal points and even with the United Nations Resident Coordination system.

34. The meeting noted that significant effort was being made in the countries of the subregion in keeping up with this momentum at both the public and private sector levels. Local expertise and institutions were responding to this momentum towards globalization. Many of the initiatives within the public sector were supported by the UNDP within the Capacity 21 programme of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992 as sustainable development network programmes (SNDPs). The intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and even non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also investing in building capacity in this area. These initiatives provided for a progressive setting up of national information exchange mechanisms as a basis for a national Intranet and its extension to the subregional level.

35. The meeting underscored the fact that to back up any actions on database information exchange and networking, priority lay in a harmonised and standardised data generation system at the national and subregional levels.

36. The Committee emphasised the need for inter-institutional collaboration, particularly among CILSS, ECOWAS, the SRDC and UEMOA, in the harmonisation of data generation, analysis and dissemination. It also endorsed the need for support by the ECA to national statistical activities and the improvement of national accounting procedures in support of data generation and the annual publication of statistical directory.

37. **The Report on the Experiences of River and Lake Basin Development Organisations in West Africa** examined the experiences of the Niger Basin Development Authority (NBA), the Gambia River Development Organisation (OMVG), and the Senegal River Development Organisation (OMVS). The objective of the report was to brief the Committee on recent developments within these organisations and to sensitise the experts on the successes and the difficulties confronting them. The document related the history of each organization before commenting on their programmes up to 1998.

38. In spite of positive results recorded during the early years in the preparation of action programmes and raising funds required for specific programmes almost all these organizations continued to face difficulties related to technology, finance, institutional arrangements and management.

39. The Committee took note of the report and requested the Secretariat to prepare a more analytical report next time to highlight the social and economic importance of the sound management of these shared water resource, as poor management had contributed to decelerated industrial growth in some countries due to fluctuations in energy supply. The Committee recommended the setting up of an intergovernmental organisation for the management of resources in the Volta River Basin, given the multi-country impact of the recent energy crises in the subregion due to low water levels in the Basin.

40. The Report on the Prevalence, Causes and Consequences of HIV/AIDS in West Africa was presented under agenda item 5.5. The meeting reviewed the background document with a view to enabling member States to constructively participate in action programmes to mobilise all segments of society to combat the spread of the pandemic in the subregion. The meeting noted that the fragmentary data on the occurrence of the disease indicated that although prevalence rates were relatively lower compared to, for example, the Eastern and Southern African subregions, they were high, especially in urban areas in Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

41. On the causes of the pandemic, the meeting took note of such factors as sexual behaviour involving multiple sexual partners and unprotected sexual contacts with high risk persons. Poverty and migration, seasonal population movements such as between the Sahelian and coastal countries, were also identified as among major causes.

42. It was observed that the disease resulted in deaths of significant number of persons in their most economically productive years. This would have serious consequences on income generation and family care. There would also be a decline in household resources as a result of increases in medical expenditures and loss of productive capacity of affected persons. The health sector would become overburdened in coping with HIV/AIDS related illnesses in addition to other sicknesses. With respect to demographic consequences, it was noted that the pandemic would result in slowing down the pace and magnitude of population increases, and reduce life expectancies.

43. The Committee recommended that member States should establish or strengthen programmes to seek changes in high-risk sexual behaviour, mobilise all segments of society to control the AIDS pandemic; and investigate socio-economic factors underlying the spread of HIV infection. The meeting also urged political decision-makers and community leaders to play a more active role in education and sensitisation programmes.

44. The Committee also requested the Secretariat to systematically document: (a) the experiences of African countries, especially on successful programmes and projects for control of the spread of the disease, and (b) the utilisation of local drugs and their curative effects.

45. Under agenda 5.7 a Project Proposal on a Study of the Performance of Agricultural Development Projects in West Africa was presented. The Committee took note of the objectives: determination of elements of success and failure in project performance, analysis of the factors responsible for project success or failure, and provision of guidelines for ensuring better project design and execution.

It noted that while there were a few cases of success, the vast majority of agricultural development projects in West Africa have not been very successful. Investments in these projects have usually been for integrated rural development, agricultural research and extension, irrigation, rural education and health. The findings of the study will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee after which it would be published and distributed.

46. Under agenda the Committee examined item 5.8, a Report on the Implementation of a Coastal Shipping Project in West and Central Africa. It comprised two documents i.e. the Business Plan and the feasibility study, which were presented as briefing papers, as requested by the Ministerial Conference of West and Central Africa on Maritime Transport (CMAOC) at its tenth session in Brazzaville.

47. The Committee noted the integrating role of the project, which addressed:

- the need to create a sub-regional coastal shipping line in West and Central Africa as the more competitive and more suitable mode for promoting trade;
- the existence of increased trade and movement of people which made for commercial feasibility of sub-regional coastal shipping in West and Central Africa in spite of competition from road and air transport and long haul maritime navigation;
- the commitment of businessmen to establish such an operation by reason of its strong potential for physical integration of the sub-region.

48. Such commitment was demonstrated in the fact that commercial interests had set up a project follow-up committee that is chaired by the chairman of the Ministerial Conference of West and Central Africa on Maritime Transport (CMEAOC).

3.2. Substantive servicing of Ad-Hoc Expert Group meeting

Substantive servicing of Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting on Avenues for Expansion of Intra-regional and external Trade and Net Investment Transfers in West Africa 1999: Regional Strategic options and Policy Implications.

49. The meeting, which was held in 1999, reviewed the background document, which highlighted major problems related to balance of payments and proposed policies, strategies and actions for dealing with them. The meeting noted that most West African countries have chronic balance of payment difficulties arising from 'unproductive' imports weighing heavily in the trade balance.

50. Arising from this, the following policy actions were proposed:

- encourage profitable exports and investments from the external point of view;
- contain consumption which results in unproductive imports by limiting credits;
- mobilise long-term resources under conditions compatible with the financial capacities of the countries;
- revive integration of economies within the framework of the subregional organisation e.g., ECOWAS and UEMOA

3.3. Publications

51. Under non-recurrent publications the following were issued:

- A Compendium of Results of West African research centres in the field of improved seeds and modalities for dissemination of these results by national institutions (1998).
- The Directory of West African Intergovernmental Organisations, 1998 edition; and
- The Technical Handbook on Composite Flours, 1999.

52. Under recurrent publications four issues of the Development Bulletin were produced.

3.4 Operational Activities

53. The Centre carried out the following activities in cooperation with other United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, ITC, and WFP...) in the sub-region to provide the following services to its member States:

- (i) Review and Improvement of the Common Country Assessment of Niger. The study summarizes the current development status of the country, identifies the priority development areas and formulates the framework for United Nations development assistance. Within this framework, all UN agencies will be using the same indicators with the same meaning in their plans and programme.
- (ii) Preparation of a Round Table for poverty alleviation in Niger (Geneva, March 1998).
- (iii) Coordination, as Chairman, of the Inter-Agency Committee for follow-up on progress made in the implementation of UNSIA in Niger. The Centre also played a catalytic role the Inter-Agency sensitization seminar on UNSIA implementation in Niger.

- (iv) Collaboration with UNDP on skill development for banking and launching of traditional women's bank for rural women in Liberia in October 1998.
- (v) Collaboration with ITC Geneva on :
 - Organization of the first Africa Leather Industry Assembly held in Cape Town in November 1998. The SRDC-WA coordinated, chaired, and provided substantive servicing for the seminar that led to the creation of the African Federation of Leather and Allied Industries (AFLAI). The secretariat of the Federation is in Tunis.
 - Review and adoption of the statutes of AFLAI at a seminar held in Casablanca in October 1999.

54. Furthermore, the Centre provided assistance in the form of technical support and advisory services to IGOs and sub-regional groupings in selected areas with the view of strengthening sub-regional cooperation and integration as well as promoting sustainable development. These activities included :

- (i) Assistance to Liberia and Nigeria in planning activities for the implementation of the recommendations of the ECA 40th Anniversary Conference on "Women and Development, the Future Investment"; (October 1998).
- (ii) Participation in a sub-regional seminar for preparing the UEMOA industrial common policy. The seminar discussed procedures and possible contents of the policy. The SRDC-WA provided UEMOA with the draft industrial policy prepared by ECA/OAU for the African Economic Community to serve as a guide in the preparation of the UEMOA common industrial policy (March 1998).
- (iii) Participation in the Sixth General Assembly of the West African Women's Association; 1998.
- (iv) Participation in programme coordination meeting in the formulation of an ECOWAS policy on women; March 1999
- (v) Participation in West Africa Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management
- (vi) Participation in the partners forum for livestock development in Liptako Gourma region.
- (vii) Coordination and cooperation with the Mano River Union for a study on the revitalization of the Union; 1999
- (viii) Preparation of a feasibility study and a business plan for the establishment of a subregional costal shipping services in West and Central Africa ; 1999

- (ix) Preparations for the establishment of a subregional coastal shipping services in West and Central Africa; 1999.
- (x) Consultations with member Governments for consensus building on programme content and contribution to the review and finalization of the 3 year Plan of Action for investment 2000-2002 for the Niger Basin Authority. (July 1999).
- (xi) Participation in joint OAU-ECA mission on post-conflict needs assessment in Sierra Leone (March 1999).
- (xii) Follow-up on the implementation of the activities on Beijing platform
- (xvi) Participation in Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on growth strategies for Africa.

3.5. Field / Operational Xanthan Gum Project.

55. This is a laboratory pilot project to test the production and utilization of xanthan gum. The project is an attempt to introduce in Africa the technology for production of a biotechnology product (xanthan gum) which is a strategic ingredient in the food industry around the world. Glutenfree flours have been selected to test the quality and suitability of the locally produced gum in bread making. The project end results, if acceptable, will open the way for the production of xanthan gum for other custom-specific production and uses. The beneficiaries of the project are food planners, food research centres and food processing enterprises.

56. The project is part of the strategy of the Commission for increasing food security. It also provides a means for facilitating the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Technical Handbook on Composite Flours. This book was printed last year and will be circulated in due course.

3.6 Workshop and Group Training

57. The Training of Trainers of Youth Entrepreneurs workshop was held at the YMCA Headquarters, Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 11 to 15 October 1999. Twenty-five participants (10 females and 15 males) attended the workshop. They were selected from government ministries (Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports; Social Welfare, Gender and Children; Works, Energy and Labour); NGOs and IGOs (Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone, Action AID Sierra Leone and World Vision) and the University. The workshop took place during a difficult period in the history of Sierra Leone- the transition from war to peace - which presented challenges, including, providing training or re-training for retrenched war workers, persons whose usual employment had been disrupted as a result of the war coupled with the existing sizeable pool of unemployed and underemployed youths.

58. Against this background, the objectives of the workshop were to expose participants to entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, techniques and desirable attitudes. Also, to identify viable micro-business opportunities, conduct feasibility studies and develop viable business plans, which the trainers were expected to pass on to aspiring young Sierra Leonean entrepreneurs.

IV. PLANNING FOR 2000-2001

The programme budget for the current biennium calls for:

- Organization of meetings, including the ICE meetings, the ad-hoc experts group meetings and training seminars on various development issues;
- Publication of recurrent and non recurrent technical materials;
- Cooperation with the UN system agencies and the main subregional IGOs in providing coordination and support services for operational projects and programmes.

59. The start of a new biennium and a new millennium, and the arrival of the new leadership, provided an opportunity for the staff of the Centre to undertake a critical self-evaluation. For this purpose a retreat was organized from 3-5 March 2000 at Tapoa Game Park in Niger with the participation of all the staff. The staff was able to assess the Centre's performance, its modus operandi and, in particular, its image both within the ECA and in the member States. Also, the present and future role and mandate, functions and mission of the Centre based on its history and evolution from the MULPOC days to date. It could be concluded that at the end of the retreat staff members came up with a greater sense of duty and dedication to serve Africa better and a renewed commitment to give their best to the Centre.

60. One of the major items on the agenda of the retreat, on programming matters, was the determination of priority areas and core activities for the year 2000. After long and intensive discussions four priority areas were agreed upon, as follows :

- (a) Promoting subregional economic cooperation and integration.
- (b) Post-conflict reconstruction at the subregional level.
- (c) Enhancing information exchange and networking in the subregion.
- (d) Combating drought and desertification.

61. All the activities programmed during the current biennium are classified under one or other of the priority areas

4.1. Operational Core Activities

62. Within the above context, two core activities falling under priority areas (a) and (b) have been identified, namely: Substantive Technical Support to Sub-Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, UEMOA, MRU) and CILSS; and Revitalization of Cooperation among Mano River Union Countries. These activities will attract the most attention of the Centre and their implementation will be directly monitored by the Executive Secretary of the ECA. The Business Plan prepared to guide the implementation of these activities is available as a Conference Room Paper. I wish to draw your attention to section 2 of Chapter A dealing with Quality Assurance and Peer Review Mechanisms. The members of the Advisory Board are only indicative and any other suggestions from you now or in the future will be welcomed. Membership of the Board will also be subject to periodic review.

4.2. Parliamentary documentation

63. During the biennium a number of parliamentary documentation 11) will be prepared and presented to the annual meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts. The objectives of these reports are to assist member states in:

- (i) reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the work programme and propose strategies for improving programme delivery;
- (ii) reviewing the content of the reports to ensure that relevant problems are being addressed;
- (iii) ensuring that all the areas of focus, namely, providing technical support to member States, economic communities and IGO; facilitating information exchange and networking; and providing coordination services for operational programmes of the United Nations system to member States are being adequately addressed; and
- (iv) making recommendations to the Follow-up Committee of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic Planning as well as directly to the Conference itself, accordingly.

- 64.** The reports will include :
- (i) Two on the economic and social conditions in West Africa.
 - (ii) Two on food security and sustainable development (environment, population and agriculture). The objective of this output is to promote policies that address the problems of food security within the context of the nexus issues. Currently, nexus issues address the disequilibrium between population and environmental management policies that make the achievement of food security increasingly difficult. These are priority concerns in the sub-region.
 - (iii) A report on integrated-shared lake and river basin management. The objective of the report is to review and analyze current problems in the development of water resources in West Africa, advocate greater commitment to multinational and related issues and propose policy options for addressing them.
 - (iv) Two reports on mainstreaming gender concerns in development policies and programmes. The objective of this activity is to ascertain the place of gender mainstreaming in sustainable development in order to build a sub-regional policy framework incorporating gender and equity concerns in social and economic programmes.
 - (v) One report on transport and communications development within the context of physical integration in West Africa. The objective of the report is to review and analyze current problems in the integrated development of transport and communications in the sub-region and propose policy options for dealing with them. The focus will be on the implementation of the subregional components of the UN Transport and Communications Decade and the Trans-African Highway, with emphasis on transport facilitation, missing links and coastal shipping.
 - (vi) Two reports on progress in establishing a West African Web site on sustainable development. The objective of this project is to encourage member States to invest in the new information and communications technology as a sustainable development management tool, through capacity building and institution strengthening. The intended results include easier accessibility to all databases available in the sub-region and an effective network on data/information dissemination, exchange and use.

4.3. Technical publications

65. Not less than thirteen technical publications will be prepared during the biennium on various development issues, such as, information technology, gender, informal sector, transport, trade, population, food security, debt, water resources management, the nexus and natural resources accounting. Five of these papers will be presented to Ad-Hoc Experts group meetings before circulation to the member States and other end users. Five others will be used as background documentation for sub-regional workshops and seminars.

4.4. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

66. This activity requires cooperation with member States and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and other intergovernmental organizations on the implementation of subregional protocols and treaties for economic cooperation and integration in the context of the Abuja Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community. Also, on the harmonization of macro-economic policies and instruments among member States of the subregion and on the design and implementation of operational programmes and projects.

4.5. Technical cooperation

67. Advisory services on development issues including: modalities for facilitating networking and information exchange; management of the critical issues in the nexus of population, food security and environment; governance; peace-building, reconstruction and rehabilitation; integrated water resource management; and gender mainstreaming;

68. The objective of these activities is to cooperate with IGOs and assist member States in building capacity for multi-sectoral programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, within the context of the expressed needs in the sub-region.

ANNEX

BUSINESS PLAN

SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE FOR WEST AFRICA (SRDC-WA)

BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CORE ACTIVITIES IN THE YEAR 2000

A: OVERVIEW

1. Orientation and Objectives

The sub-programme aims at providing an effective outreach function for supporting sub-regional activities for development undertaken by the Commission through the leverage of human and financial resources available to the Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs). The SRDCs are responsible for its implementation. Their overall mandate is to:

- act as operational arms of the ECA at the country level and catalysts to leverage the Commission's resources;
- serve as instruments for ensuring harmony between subregional and regional programme orientations and those defined by the strategic directions of the Commission;
- provide advisory services to member States, regional economic communities and subregional development operators;
- facilitate subregional economic cooperation, integration and development;
- promote gender issues;
- act as centres for policy dialogue;
- collect and disseminate information; and
- serve as facilitators of integration activities of organizations of the UN system operating within the subregions.

At the Sub-Regional Development Centre for West Africa (SRDC-WA) a retreat for intensive brainstorming was organized for all staff in early March 2000, as an essential element in the process of identifying priority areas and core activities for implementation in Year 2000.

From the outset, it was agreed that the orientations and objectives of the Business Plan should be derived from the dominant macro-economic, social, and other development trends and crucial needs in the subregion. The subregion comprises a complex array of countries with diverse economies, linguistic groupings are more pronounced, it has the largest size of land-locked countries, and the United Nations classifies 11 out of 15 of the countries (almost 75%) as Least Developed Countries. Preoccupation with promoting economic cooperation and integration has been intense but it appears to have produced less visible results. It has the largest number of single and multi-purpose IGOs. Civil wars in the subregion have resulted in massive economic dislocations.

Against the background of these and related particularities of the sub-region, two priority areas for action by the SRDC-WA have been identified, with gender concerns cutting across them. These are:

- 1. Strengthening sub-regional cooperation and economic integration.***
- 2. Promoting Post-conflict reconstruction at the sub-regional level.***

In designing and implementing activities under these priority areas the SRDC-WA will focus on enhancing the capacity of the governments, working in close cooperation with the all-embracing economic community, namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The two other economic communities, i.e., the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Mano River Union (MRU) as well as the leading IGO on environmental issues, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), will be the other major partners.

Of particular interest is the promotion of a multi-national approach to policy development, analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and creating an enabling environment for reducing poverty. Technical assistance in the form of transference of knowledge and skills, and advisory services, will be provided to the sub-regional economic groupings and other IGOs. Much more than in the past, the Centre will concentrate on mobilizing extra-budgetary resources for operational activities. These are more likely to have a meaningful impact on development in the beneficiary countries. Indeed, *impact* remains the overarching point of reference in all of the Centre's operations in the sub-region.

Priority Area 1: Strengthening sub-regional economic cooperation and integration.

Promoting economic cooperation and integration in Africa in general, and in West Africa in particular, has for long been regarded by African leaders as the surest means for ensuring sustainable economic and social development. As regards the West African sub-region, the three economic communities and many of the IGOs are implementing programmes for promoting cooperation in such issue-areas as: (i) trade liberalization; (ii) transport, communications and tourism; (iii) money, finance and payments; (iv) food and agriculture; (v) education, training and culture; (vi) human resources development, population, health; (vii) women and development; (viii) employment and income generation, harmonization of labor and social security legislations ; (ix) industry, science, technology, energy, natural resources and environment etc.

Thus, the range of issues that can be covered under this priority area is quite extensive. Underlying this vast field of action is the objective of promoting increased levels of harmonization and coordination of macroeconomic and sectoral policies among the member States.

Within the above context, *Substantive Technical Support to Sub-Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, UEMOA, MRU) and CILSS* is the first of two core activities that has been selected for implementation during the year 2000.

Priority Area 2: Promoting post-conflict reconstruction at the sub-regional level.

The transition from war to peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone offers a challenge and opportunity for the SRDC-WA to assist with post-conflict peace building in these two countries and neighboring Guinea, which was highly affected by the adverse consequences of the war. An effective coordinated and comprehensive approach to post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction, social integration and consolidation of peace, which will address the interrelated issues of poverty, security and economic prospects in the three countries, requires a sub-regional approach. To this end, the second core activity for implementation in 2000 is *Revitalization of Cooperation among Mano River Union Countries*.

2. Quality Assurance and Peer Review Mechanisms

The quality of the inputs and outputs, and the delivery mechanisms, will be reviewed at two levels. First, internally, by group members as well as other professional staff who are not members of the group responsible for implementing the activity and the Director. Second, by members of an Advisory Board to be established by the Centre, made up of experts from within the subregion and, where necessary, from outside the subregion. Their main responsibility will be to ascertain that the technical work of the Centre is of high quality, that it is in line with the concerns of the clients, and that it will have the impact desired.

The Board will be composed of twelve experts. For each activity a panel of two/three reviewers drawn from the Board will be constituted; thus, panelists will vary depending on the subject matter covered in the activity.

A tentative list from which the Board will be composed is as follows:

Prof. Hakim Ben Hammouda, Deputy Executive Secretary, CODESRIA

Prof. Bade Onimode, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Prof. Bola Tomori, Univ. of Lagos, Nigeria

Prof. Biram Bouna Niang, IDEP/University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar

Prof. Dramane Karim Laye, National University of Benin, Cotonou

Prof. John O. Igue, currently Minister of Industry / Small and Medium scale Enterprises, Cotonou, Benin

Prof. John Nabila, University of Ghana, Accra

Mr. Emmanuel Amoussou, former Director of State Planning, Cotonou, Benin

Dr. Aisha Imam, c/o Ford Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria

Prof. Diery Seck, SISERA, IDRC, Dakar, Senegal

Dr. Femi Soetan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Prof. Alassane Salif Ndiaye, former Minister of Scientific Research, Cote-d'Ivoire

Prof. Adedoyin Soyil, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Prof. Taladidia Thiombiano, University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Dr. Malam Kandine Adam, University of Niamey, Niger

Dr. Joachim Lama, University of Niamey, Niger

Prof. Mohamad Bourenane, African Development Bank, Abidjan

Dr. Dunstan Spencer, Private Consultant, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mr. Maurice Bankole, Director, INSAE, Cotonou
Mr. Codja Souaou, former Director of State Planning, Cotonou, Benin
Mr. Peter Adegbayo, Director, Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa, Abuja, Nigeria.
Prof Mathurin Nago, National University of Benin, Cotonou.

3. Evaluation process

Questionnaires about the quality of the output and relevance of the recommendations made in any activity, and other techniques, will be used in the evaluation process which will be particularly focused on assessing impact and on ascertaining from end users the usefulness and timeliness of the output. The focal points of the Centre in member States, the IGOs, the United Nations Coordination system at the national level, and other partners will be involved in the process.

4. Dissemination strategy

The SRDC-West Africa specialized mailing list will be updated. For this purpose, inputs will be obtained from those of the economic communities, CODESRIA, IDEP, ECA-sponsored institutions, and SISERA (Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa). The expanded mailing list will be computerized. National media houses and the Pan African News Agency will also be used for dissemination purposes. The ECA master mailing list and other facilities available at Headquarters will be fully exploited to ensure maximum dissemination of the outputs.

B: TASK BRIEFS

CORE ACTIVITY 1: SUBSTANTIVE TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO SUB-REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (ECOWAS, UEMOA, MRU) AND CILSS

1. Scope and objectives of the activity

This core activity will deal with the issues of capacity building for subregional cooperation and integration.

The objectives will be:

- (i) To assist ECOWAS in the implementation of its monetary integration programme through consensus building among member states.
- (ii) To assist in the creation of a sub-regional database on sustainable development and provide technical support for the establishment of a West African Web site.

2. Issues to be analyzed

The issues to be analyzed will include:

- (i) Constraints to the harmonization of the existing monetary systems and steps to be taken in the creation of a single sub-regional currency.
- (ii) Harmonization of approaches to data generation, access to and retrieval of information from various sources for the construction of a sub-regional database and Web site.

3. Methodology

The methodology for collecting information will be through desk and field research. Material will also be obtained from sources such as mission reports, the United Nations system, ECA Headquarters, SRDCs and collaborating IGOs. Issue papers will be prepared for discussion in-house and with the IGOs.

4. Partnership arrangements

Active collaboration will be required between SRDC-WA, the economic groupings, and organizations and institutions such as UNDP, WORLD BANK, ADB and IDEP. The information infrastructure of these collaborating organizations will serve as complementary databases to that of the SRDC.

5. Interdivisional collaboration including the SRDCs

Collaboration will be sought with ESPD, DISD, DMD, the SRDCs particularly SRDC-CA.

6. Performance indicators

Qualitative and quantitative indicators will be needed to assess the extent to which the objectives of each output have been achieved. Among these are the extent to which proposals and recommendation made for each activity are incorporated into plans and programmes of the four IGOs and actually implemented.

7. Expected outcome and impact

- (a) Adoption of a common approach to decision-making on the creation of a single currency in the subregion.
- (b) Harmonized approaches to information generation, standardization and sharing among the IGOs. As a result there will be increased interaction between the various subregional database custodians and the SRDC-West Africa.

8. Timetable for accomplishment of the main tasks.

Sub-activity 1.1: Consultations with IGOs and preparatory activities

Main Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1. Issues paper (conceptualization of the studies, TOR of consultants)					--							
2. In-house review of issues paper						--						
3. Consultation with IGOs on issues paper, identification of consultants)						--						
4. Finalization of Issues paper							--					
5. Submission of Issues paper								--				

Budget for Sub-Activity 1.1:

RB.....W/M2

The consultations with the IGOs will require travel for two staff members at a cost of **US\$8,000.00**.

Focal point : Mr. Kaba Camara

Group members : All staff

Sub-activity 1.2: Implementation of the ECOWAS monetary integration programme

Main Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1. Recruitment of consultant						--						
2. Field mission of consultant and draft report							--	--	--			
3. In-house review of draft report										--		
4. Peer reviews of draft report by IGOs										--		
5. Peer Review of draft report by the Advisory Board											--	
6. Finalization and reproduction of report											--	
7. Submission of Report to OPRM and dissemination												--

Budget for Sub-activity 1.2 :

RB..... W/m:.....3

Consultant: Two work-month consultancy at a cost of **\$30,000.00** (including travel, DSA and honorarium)

Focal point: **Mr. Kaba Camara**

Group members: **All staff**

Sub-activity 1.3: Technical support for the construction of a sub-regional database on sustainable development and the West African Web site

Main Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1. Recruitment of consultant							--	--				
2. Field mission of consultant and draft report							--	--				
3. In-house review of draft report										--		
4. Peer reviews of draft report by IGOs									--			
5. Peer review of draft report by the Advisory Board										--		
6. Finalization and reproduction of report										--		
7. Submission of Report to OPRM and dissemination to donors												--

Budget for sub-activity 1.3:

RB W/m:.....3

Consultancy: 2 w/m....at a cost of **US\$30,000.00** (including travel, DSA and honorarium) will be required.

Focal point: Mr. Tandap / Vlavonou

Group members: All staff

CORE ACTIVITY 2: REVITALIZATION OF COOPERATION AMONG MANO RIVER UNION COUNTRIES.

1. Scope and Objectives of the activities

This core activity will complement the on-going UN Inter-Agency project on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in the Mano River Union Basin countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. These countries need substantial international support to consolidate peace and stability in the sub-region. To this end, the objective of the core activity is to formulate and implement projects to address the sub-regional dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction in the three countries through the formulation and implementation of specific projects. During the year 2000, the following project will be implemented: *Strengthening institutional arrangements for cooperation among the MRU countries.*

2. Issues to be analyzed and discussed

In the present situation where the countries are emerging from war to peace it is important to strengthen economic ties in order to consolidate peace and security in the subregion. For this purpose adequate institutional capacities must exist basically to manage cooperation among the three countries in all its dimensions. Accordingly, the main issue will be *the effectiveness of institutional arrangements for cooperation between the Mano River Union Basin countries and reforms required for greater efficiency in performance.*

3. Methodology

Desk research and field missions to assess capacity of existing structures for cooperation between the three countries and propose and monitor implementation of required reforms.

4. Partnership arrangements

Cooperation will be sought from ECOWAS, the West African Management Development Network (Nigeria), and private management consultants.

5. Inter-Divisional collaboration including the SRDCs

The project will involve collaboration with the Development Management Division which will assist with knowledgeable and experienced experts on organizational development and reform to complement expertise available in the SRDC-WA.

6. Performance indicators

The institutional arrangements are adopted by the policy organs of the Mano River Union countries and implemented.

7. Expected outcome and impact

Proposed institutional reforms are implemented and capacity for organizing and managing cooperation between the three countries increased.

8. Timetable for accomplishment of the main tasks.

Institutional arrangements for cooperation

Main Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1. Consultations with MRU					—							
2. Field mission and preparation of report						—						
3. Review of report and recommendations							—					
4. Submission to MRU policy organs							—					
5. Monitor implementation								---	—	—	—	—

9. Budget:

RB: W/m.... 3

Explanation of Resource Requirements

- (a) **Staff Travel:** Staff members will travel to hold consultations with the three governments and the MRU secretariat on institutional arrangements to enhance cooperation among the three countries \$8,000.00.
- (b) **Consultancy:** Two w/m of consultancy (\$30,000) will be required to prepare the report and monitor implementation.

Total Cost: \$38,000

Focal Point: Mr. Makannah
Task Group: Vlavonou, Iwuji

GLOBAL COST

Core Activity 1:..... US\$ 68,000.00
Core Activity 2:..... US\$ 38,000.00
GRAND TOTAL... US\$ 106,000.00

TOTAL W/M.....11