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**SUBREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA
(ECA/SRDC-SA)**

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**PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM
2000-2001 SUB-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA**

I. INTRODUCTION.

1. The work programme for the biennium 2000-2001 will represent the second half of implementation of the current medium-term plan period, 1998-2001. It will, consequently, be implemented within the framework of the First Revision of the Medium-Term Plan 1998-2001 (Document E/ECG/MC.1/3 of 21 April, 1998) as part of the ECA programme area on Supporting Sub-regional Activities for Development in Southern African countries. In this regard, the SRDC-SA will, in close collaboration with all the ECA divisions, endeavor to support the activities of the member States in the sub-region through the appropriate Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and directly with the countries.

2. The orientation of the programme will continue to be guided by the need to improve the relevance and effectiveness of ECA as a whole as outlined in the document, **Serving Africa Better: Strategic Directions for ECA (E/ECA/CM.22/2 of May 1996)**. The programme of work will cover priority areas identified by the sub-region and within the competency of ECA. The current programme areas of ECA are: facilitating economic and social policy analysis; ensuring food security and sustainable development; strengthening development management; harnessing information for development; promoting regional cooperation and integration; promoting the advancement of women and supporting sub-regional activities for development with gender and capacity supporting building as cross-cutting development issues.

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3. The programme will mark the start of the new approach recently adopted by ECA to ensure relevance of its activities in support to development efforts in Africa: the "bottom-up" approach to programming. That is, programme formulation and implementation will involve dialogue, consultations and interaction with member States, RECs and IGOs, institutions of excellence, as well as with UN and bilateral development agencies. The priority areas of activities will be identified by the countries themselves, either through the ICE or through the programmes of the RECs. This will be followed by consultations between the SRDC-SA and the RECs for harmonization of their respective work programmes.

4. The programme will also be flexible to accommodate deferences in programming cycles between ECA and the RECs. While ECA operates on a biennial programme budget, the RECs generally operate on an annual programme budget. Similarly, the ECA/SRDC programme review will be carried out on annual basis when the ICE meets, whereas COMESA and SADC Councils of Ministers meet on biennial basis to review the work programme. In order for the SRDC to be able to harmonize its work programme activities with the RECs, some built-in flexibility would be necessary. In this regard, the SRDC-SA plans to allocate about fifty percent of its programme resources to unprogrammed technical support/advisory services.

5. The process of establishing the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 has not yet been completed in ECA and, therefore, it is not possible at this time to draw up a definite programme for the SRDC. Nevertheless, the "bottom-up approach" requires that the process be initiated with the identification of priority areas in the Southern Africa sub-region that will, at the appropriate time, inform the upcoming formulation of the work

programme of ECA/SRDC. The ICE, therefore, has the unique opportunity to determine the priority area of work of ECA in the Southern Africa sub-region.

II. PRIORITY AREAS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

6. The areas of development priorities in Southern Africa are to be defined by the countries themselves. The meeting, therefore, is called upon to indicate the areas of priority for development in the sub-region so as to guide the formulation of the work programme of ECA/SRDC. The following questions may guide the deliberations in this regard:

- (a) What are the priorities of the sub-region and how are they determined? e.g. through programmes of RECs.
- (b) What should be the role of other partners?
- (c) What different activities should ECA undertake in the sub-regions?

7. Based on its own assessments of priority areas, the SRDC-SA proposes the following generic groups of activities for consideration by the meeting:

2.1. Monitoring Social and Economic Conditions.

8. The governments and countries regularly monitor progress in social and economic developments in the sub-region. For instance, SADC Secretariat prepares an annual report on major economic, political and social developments in SADC region. Similarly, ECA also produces reports on economic and social conditions in Southern Africa as part of its annual reports on Africa. There is,

obviously, need for coordination of the reports prepared by the two organizations on the same member States and possibility of sharing basic information for the two reports.

9. ECA, through its Economic and Social Policy Analysis Division (ESPD), Development Information Systems Division (DISD) and SRDC-SA would establish a data base for the sub-region to ensure consistency of information to member States. The reports on economic and social conditions in the sub-region would also form the basis for identifying further areas of programme action. Possibility for future joint reports between SADC and ECA should be explored.

2.2. Community Building.

10. The Regional Economic Communities in the sub-region are generally in advanced stages of the integration process. Both COMESA and SADC have developed protocols for the implementation of various aspects of their treaties and several of these have been signed, ratified and are already under implementation. Advances in some areas, however, are lagging due to different reasons.

11. The SRDC-SA can provide complementary capacities to speed up the implementation of these protocols by, among other things, undertaking studies of identified problem areas. This may be at the stage of preparation, ratification or implementation of the protocols. For example, ECA would, if requested, assist in undertaking studies to identify problems hindering speedy ratification of some SADC protocols. Similarly, ECA can assist COMESA in undertaking studies on non-tariff barriers to increased trade in the sub-region. It is the responsibility of the member States and organizations, however, to indicate these requirements to ECA.

2.3. Strengthening Development Management.

12. All countries in the sub-region have recognized the imperative need for a system of managing development whereby the public sector will be competent, responsive and responsible, civil society would be participative and the public sector will vibrant in development activities. The mechanisms for achieving this, however, vary significantly among the countries; but principles of democratization, good governance, decentralisation, ethics, and accountability are shared. The SADC Council established a committee to recommend a framework for cooperation among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and between NGOs and government mechanisms in the sub-region. This is a recognition of the need to strengthen partnership between government and NGOs.

13. ECA could work with Sub-regional organisations in promoting principles of efficiency, ethics, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of citizens as well as mechanisms for citizens complaints.

2.4. Private Sector Development.

14. Effective participation by the private sector in African economies requires, among other things, the establishment of "conducive" conditions in the countries. These include supportive physical infrastructures (transport, communications, water, energy, etc.), transparent legal and regulatory framework, etc. Above all, a competent public sector is necessary for the growth of the private sector and for striking the right balance between private initiatives and public interests.

2.5. Competitiveness in the Global Economy.

quality

15. This would include building capacity for international negotiations (WTO, Post-Lome IV, etc).

2.6. Minerals and Energy

16. The major factors which are critical to cooperation in the exploitation of mineral and energy resources are well known in the subregion. They include inadequacies in national capacities in vital factor inputs such as project financing, the policy and legal framework, technical and managerial skills and the inherent technology. Subregional cooperation may therefore create a conducive environment to develop the national capacities stated above and other factors which contribute to the efficient exploitation and use of mineral and energy resources.

17. The ECA through the SRDC-SA can provide assistance to SADC and COMESA in organizing Investment Fora, revising existing and developing new policies and the legal framework which will form a basis for the enhancement of the sectors.

2.7. Transport and Trade Facilitation

18. The implementation of transport and trade facilitation as a requisite to the achievement of sustainable development for the Southern African Subregion requires policy reforms to establish, inter-alia, common practices, rules and procedures, technical standards and effective coordination. It would appear that efforts undertaken in the past to implement measures drawn by the RECs and agreed upon by member States have been frustrated by the fact that political commitment has not often been translated into programmes.

The reason for this may be that "inward looking" national transport and trade policies and procedures bequeathed to post independence governments have not changed sufficiently to provide an enabling environment.

19. More specifically, lack of institutional restructuring and policy reforms has tended to provide an ideal sanctuary for archaic legislation, cumbersome documentation and diverse technical standards to hamper the smooth flow of trade, transit traffic operations and information across the borders. Thus there still remains barriers in the form of unharmonized tariffs, inadequate infrastructure with very low serviceability, and cumbersome administrative procedures (customs and immigration).

20. The SRDC, in collaboration with the RECs, would assist member States in addressing the problems identified above through studies, seminars, and meetings involving all stakeholders.

2.8. Gender

21. Major gaps and differences exist between men's and women's access and opportunity to exert power over social, economic and political structure of their societies. Reviews made on the gender programme identify the lack of women's access to productive resources as one of the major setbacks and obstacles to gender equity, social and economic empowerment of women and existing discriminatory practices continue to discourage women from seeking leading positions.

22. Gender inequalities create inefficiencies that hamper growth. There is also strong evidence that investing in women will generate important benefits for society, while lack of access to financial services, to land, and to information technology compounds the unequal treatment to women.

23. Furthermore, their participation in economic transformation is stifled by inadequate access to information, lack of access to productive resources, technology, education and training and their limitation of understanding of law as a tool for social change and justice.

24. In a continued effort to redress the situation, the SRDC will, in collaboration with RECs, work on gender equity and equality programmes mainly focusing on devising dynamic mechanisms to adequately and equitably involve women in higher positions of decision-making at all level of the power structures; increasing awareness among women about the mechanisms of distribution and control of national productive resources; enhancing women's entrepreneurial capacity; increasing women's awareness of international and national human rights instruments in order to enable them to defend their fundamental rights in particular in the framework of the family, violence against women and their economic rights; and capacity building of national mechanisms and machineries in charge of implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in the priority areas identified by the Platforms for Action.

25. The programme of activities will be based on identified national priorities and experiences. An attempt will be made to target women in the rural areas in specific areas of focus by working closely with NGOs and professional associations involved in gender and women-related issues.

2.9. Nexus issues of population, food security and environment

26. The subregional programme on the nexus issues will undertake a follow-up on the Policy Framework on nexus issues of population, food security and environment with regard to the recommendations that would come up from ICE. Consideration will be given to the developmental impact of migration in the sub-region as well as HIV/AIDS.

*Conflict
management*

27. The SRDCSA will work closely with the RECs Coordinating units on Land and Resource Management of the Environment and Food Security. The centre will also collaborate in data base development programmes to ensure that population, inter-alia, issues are reflected in the structures of the RECs.

2.10. Capacity Building for International Negotiations:

28. The ECA will assist member states in capacity building for international negotiations with special reference to the following:

WTO

Post-Lome IV

Women Entrepreneurs

2.11. Harnessing Information for Development

29. Work in this area will be carried out in the framework of the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII) and the UN System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa priority area on Harnessing Information Technology for Development (HITD). This programme will be implemented with the partners in Information and Technology for Africa (PICTA).

30. In its policy work sub-programme on ICT, ECA, in cooperation with SRDC and RECs will organize major conferences and policy workshops and undertake/continue development of national ICT strategies . Such activities are already underway in Malawi, Bamibia and Lesotho and may be expanded to others upon request. ECA will be involved in the planning and organization of the forthcoming SADC Conference on ICT and the new Millenium.

31. In its Tranining and Capacity Building and Content development work sub-programmes, ECA will continue with its partners to undertake training of trainers' courses on new ICT activities and training of system operators on Internet networking technolgy. Facilitation of the process of knowledge acquisition and management and content development will be pursued for benefit of RECs and member States.

III. Modalities for Implementation of Work Programme.

32. Regarding implementation strategy, it was noted that close collaboration with ECA divisions and UN agencies on one hand, and regular consultation with the RECs and member States on the other hand, should be the modus operandi for the SRDC-SA.