



# Cross-Cutting Issues: Peace and Security, HIV/AIDS, Gender, and the Private Sector

Four cross-cutting issues appear to be vital for effective regional integration: fostering peace and security, combating HIV/AIDS, mainstreaming gender issues, and involving the private sector. This chapter assesses efforts made in these areas by Africa's regional economic communities.

The persistent absence of peace, security, and stability has serious consequences for Africa's development and integration. Conflicts and wars have slowed integration in some regional economic communities—and brought it to a standstill in others. Conflicts have also diverted resources from development efforts and prevented countries from participating fully in regional economic community activities. Moreover, unrest in one country can reduce foreign investment in neighbouring countries and throughout a subregion—particularly damaging since such investment is linked to much of the development of infrastructure and productive capacity in regional economic communities.

Instability and insecurity are exacerbated by Africa's devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS is not just a public health problem: It is an economic development problem with disastrous consequences. An estimated 10% of the people in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) subregion are infected with HIV/AIDS (UNDP 2001). In 10 countries that share is above 10%, in 5 above 15%, and in 2 above 20%. By 2005 six COMESA countries will have lost 10% of their productive workers to the disease, and by 2010 it will be eight countries—with enormous effects on economic growth (ILO 2000). Recent data suggest that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) subregion has the world's highest levels of HIV prevalence (UNAIDS 2002). Botswana, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe have HIV prevalence rates higher than 30%, and Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia have prevalence rates higher than 20%. In countries with high prevalence rates, HIV threatens to reduce the rate of economic growth by an estimated 25% over the next two decades.

Because HIV/AIDS transcends borders, its spread can be accelerated by the population mobility facilitated by regional integration. In particular, migrant workers—common in regional economic communities such as SADC—have contributed to the cross-border transmission of the disease. Conflict also plays a role. In 2002 Côte d'Ivoire had an HIV prevalence rate of 9.7%, substantially higher than rates in neighbouring countries (3% in

**“The commitment of every African government to these norms is a prerequisite for establishing lasting peace and stability in regional economic communities and in Africa”**

Ghana and 1.7% in Mali). The flow of refugees from the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire could spread HIV to these countries. But regional integration can also contribute to control of the disease through coordination of policies across countries, synchronization of interventions, and pooling and scaling up of resources. Regional mechanisms can also facilitate access to global resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS-related illness and death are undermining the capacity of institutions across the African continent. In a number of countries, teachers and health professionals are dying faster than they can be replaced, contributing to crises in education and health. Government agencies are experiencing similar losses, affecting many public services including important institutional capacities to promote and manage regional integration. Replacing experienced and qualified staff can be difficult and time consuming. Maintaining and expanding institutional capacities is an additional reason for taking a regional approach to HIV/AIDS.

There is widespread support for gender-sensitive policies that include women’s regional, subregional, and national concerns in Africa’s development and integration agenda. This is particularly important because women are engaged in many economic activities, including production and marketing (such as in food and agriculture), and they share major household responsibilities. And women’s involvement in maintaining peace and security and fighting HIV/AIDS can be an important contribution to development.

Governments today recognize the private sector as an important partner in development. For regional integration this includes involvement in the development of infrastructure and diffusion of banking and financial services, among others. The potentially large payoffs from private sector involvement are an incentive for all stakeholders to design and strengthen mechanisms that facilitate private sector participation in regional initiatives.

## Peace and security

Among the main principles of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community are the peaceful settlement of disputes among member states and the promotion of peace as a prerequisite for economic development. Most regional economic community treaties affirm those principles and add that peace and security are crucial for effective cooperation and integration.

Broad objectives and agreed principles for peace and security are the same at the sub-regional and regional levels. They include:

- Establishing and strengthening mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intrastate and interstate conflicts.
- Promoting peace, security, and stability among member states.

- Fostering peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness.
- Encouraging peaceful settlement of disputes.
- Advancing good governance, including principles of democracy, rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, and promotion and protection of human rights and equal opportunities.
- Adhering to the fundamental rights defined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1981 African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights.

The commitment of every African government to these norms is a prerequisite for establishing lasting peace and stability in regional economic communities and in Africa.

### Efforts by regional economic communities

Regional economic communities have begun to establish formal institutional frameworks and to develop peacekeeping mechanisms. The best-known and perhaps best-developed are those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and SADC, in addition to the overall regional mechanism under the Organization of African Unity—now the African Union. Peacekeeping mechanisms in other regional economic communities are relatively new or evolving, including the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism and the Economic Community of Central African States' (ECCAS) Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) is also developing a peacekeeping mechanism.

**ECOWAS.** ECOWAS established the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as a military force for conflict resolution and peacekeeping interventions within the community (box 10.1). ECOWAS has fielded operations in Liberia (1990–99), Sierra Leone (1997–2000), and Guinea-Bissau (1998–99).

**SADC.** The SADC subregion has had its share of conflicts, from those during the apartheid era to the long-standing war in Angola, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the 1998 coup d'état in Lesotho. The end of apartheid was perceived as a turning point for peace, stability, and security in the SADC subregion, but this was not to be. Thus in 1996 SADC established the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security to handle conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Through this mechanism SADC members have fielded operations in Lesotho (1998–99) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998–present). SADC members have also implemented capacity-building and other measures such as the Regional Peace-Keeping Training Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe, which coordinates peacekeeping training in the subregion under the aegis of the Zimbabwe Staff College, and the Southern Africa Police Chiefs' Cooperation Organization, which is the primary instrument for preventing and combating cross-border crime and small arms trafficking within SADC and the key regional link with Interpol. Several SADC

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members, such as Malawi and Namibia, also offer peacekeeping training to other countries in SADC.

SADC is also implementing regional training in peacekeeping. In 1997 Zimbabwe, with the support of the United Kingdom, hosted some 1,500 troops from 10 SADC states for an exercise in the tactics and techniques of international peacekeeping called Blue Hungwe. Similarly, South Africa hosted a brigade-level exercise in 1999 called Blue Crane, also with U.K. support, that brought together 5,000 troops from

### **Box 10.1**

#### ***Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group: A model for other regional economic communities***

The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in August 1990. Its core functions are combat intervention, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping. Combat interventions involve the deployment of ECOMOG at the request of a legally constituted government to prevent an internal situation from degenerating into anarchy, as when rebel factions are trying to usurp power or resist the authority of the legal government. Such missions could aim at securing a cease-fire between belligerent parties, promoting a climate for negotiations, and protecting civilians. In its peace enforcement activities, ECOMOG sometimes uses sticks and carrots to get armed factions to the negotiating table, as in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Sometimes peace enforcement involves monitoring and enforcing a cease-fire, even applying force if necessary to get recalcitrant parties to adhere to the cease-fire. Peacekeeping activities include contributing to the smooth functioning of humanitarian operations for refugees and displaced persons and providing security and proper treatment for prisoners of war.

Because regional economic communities generally lack resources, additional external backing—whether through the African Union or the United Nations or other development partners—can reinforce the logistical, equipment, and other ancillary aspects of operations. Such support proved invaluable to ECOMOG's interventions in Sierra Leone.

Following a review of ECOMOG's experience with conflict resolution, ECOWAS leaders decided in 1998 to maintain ECOMOG as the basis for a future peacekeeping structure for the community. ECOMOG operates under directives from the heads of state of ECOWAS members. Day-to-day issues and political directives are handled by the ECOWAS Secretariat. Military operations are entrusted to the force commander. There are also two other supervisory political structures: the Defense Council and the Defense Commission. The Defense Council is composed of the ministers of defence and foreign affairs of member states and is headed by the chairperson of the community. The council examines the situation on the ground and decides on the strategy and means of intervention. The chiefs of defence staff of the armed forces of member states constitute the Defense Commission, which serves a purely technical advisory role on military operations.

**Source:** *Economic Commission for Africa, from official sources.*

13 SADC states. Lessons included disarming and separating combatants, patrolling areas, setting up checkpoints, providing humanitarian assistance, and dealing with the media. Also in 1999 Madagascar organized Exercise Tulipe with the support of France, allowing 1,700 troops from France and 10 SADC states to train together.

**IGAD.** Since 1997 the IGAD Secretariat has embarked on activities in conflict prevention, management, and resolution. The region is prone to intermittent intrastate and interstate conflicts, which have slowed the momentum for regional integration. IGAD is pursuing peace processes in Somalia and Southern Sudan, with a view to restoring lasting peace. In January 2002 the ninth summit of IGAD heads of state adopted a resolution reaffirming IGAD's commitment to peace and reconciliation in Somalia and creating a technical committee of members bordering Somalia (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya) to promote dialogue with and among the Somali people. The resolution extended a plea to the international community to join IGAD in establishing peace in Somalia.

In addition, several projects aiming at mitigation and conflict resolution are being implemented. These include Control of Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms in the IGAD and Great Lakes Region and development of a conflict early warning and response mechanism. The mechanism is intended to enhance regional capacity for advance warning on conflicts and early response using a variety of means to diffuse or resolve conflicts. A Protocol on the Conflict Early Warning and Response has been ratified by IGAD member states. IGAD is also developing a disaster risk management capability with the objective of establishing capabilities to mitigate the impact of disasters.

**COMESA.** COMESA only recently became involved in conflict prevention and resolution. A Committee on Peace and Security was established in 2000 to develop ways to complement other efforts in the subregion. The committee has engaged in a consultative process aimed at engaging civil society, nongovernmental organizations, other regional economic communities, the African Union, and the United Nations in developing a peace architecture for COMESA that will add value to ongoing initiatives in the region. Meanwhile, the COMESA Court of Justice was created to deal with disputes involving the COMESA treaty. COMESA has also produced studies on the roots of conflict in the region and has circulated them among stakeholders and civil society.

**East African Community.** The East African Community (EAC) has created the Interstate Security Committee and the Judicial Affairs Committee to focus on prevention. Among the issues being dealt with are surveillance of cross-border movements of terrorists, smuggling of arms and illicit substances, violations of immigration laws, and document forgery. The Interstate Security Committee is also charged with monitoring borders with third countries. Regional associations such as the East African Law Society and the East African Inter-University Council are invited to participate in the deliberations of both committees. EAC also made giant

“*The East African Community has created the Interstate Security Committee and the Judicial Affairs Committee to focus on prevention*”

strides in 2001 by establishing the East African Parliament and Court of Justice, which should help EAC to implement its peace and security agenda.

**Other regional economic communities.** The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) has established a Council of Common Defence. ECCAS members have been active in establishing peace and security structures and have expressed a desire for peacekeeping training.

*Though crucial, the Peace Fund suffers from excessive dependence on external financing*

Though limited such initiatives reinforce the potential for regional economic communities to serve as vectors for peace and stability in their communities. Such efforts deserve all the support that can be mustered to consolidate, expand, and strengthen them.

### **Continentwide initiatives**

The Organization for African Unity (OAU), now the African Union, established the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution in 1995. A Central Organ serves as its decisionmaking body and a source of financing for its activities through the Peace Fund. The Central Organ has the authority to launch peacekeeping operations. Its decisions are reached through consensus and are binding on member states. It meets annually with heads of state, twice a year with ministers of foreign affairs, and monthly with ambassadors accredited to the OAU.

The Peace Fund has provided an important source of financing—essential to any successful peacekeeping effort, as shown by the problems encountered by resource-starved OAU peace and security initiatives in Chad and Rwanda. The Peace Fund was designed to support Central Organ initiatives and to develop the Secretariat’s Conflict Management Centre. Most of the roughly \$40 million contributed to the fund has been used to underwrite OAU observer missions.

Though crucial, the Peace Fund suffers from excessive dependence on external financing. Almost two-thirds of its funding comes from sources outside Africa, mainly the United States. Contributions from the 53 OAU member states total \$2 million a year. U.S. support appears to be dwindling, and African responses to this initiative have fallen below expectations. A lack of adequate resources has impeded the OAU from undertaking robust, large-scale peacekeeping operations.

The OAU has embarked on a few modest peacekeeping missions. Following its initial failures in Chad in the early 1980s, the OAU has deployed missions in Rwanda (1990–93), Burundi (1993–96), Comoros (1997–99), the Democratic Republic of Congo (1999–2000), and Eritrea and Ethiopia (2000–present).

Still, the OAU framework, especially in the context of the new Peace and Security Council of the African Union, provides a basis on which a committed continent can marshal its forces and resources to resolve conflicts and promote peace. This is the hope and vision of all peace-loving Africans—and only Africans can make such a vision come true for the benefit of present and future generations.

## External support

African countries are working to promote peace and security on the continent and to develop their capabilities to mount peacekeeping missions. Nonetheless, such capabilities remain limited, and all the African initiatives depend on external support.

Five ECOWAS countries have received training from the U.S. African Crisis Response Initiative, and the United States recently began providing training on peace enforcement—under Operation Focus Relief—to three ECOWAS member states. Through its Strengthening of African Peacekeeping Capacities (Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix) initiative, France has supported several peacekeeping exercises, including in Guidimaka, Mauritania, in 1998 and Kozah, Togo, in 2001. Liberia and Sierra Leone are the only ECOWAS members that have not participated in French-sponsored exercises. The U.K. capacity-building program, consisting primarily of a small, regionally based British Military Advisory and Training Team, is a modest initiative focused on training trainers. Within the framework of SADC peacekeeping training, the first such exercise was held in Zimbabwe in 1997 with 1,500 troops from 10 SADC countries in Blue Hungwe.

The United Nations has sponsored some peacekeeping operations in Africa, but many observers believe that these operations are inadequate relative to similar missions elsewhere in the world. Still, some UN operations (such as in Sierra Leone) have had positive impacts. Without the UN presence and strong backing by U.K. forces, it would have been extremely difficult for Sierra Leone to rise from the chaos that had consumed it. The United Nations is playing a similar role in the Democratic Republic of Congo and was also instrumental in achieving peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

External support to promote peace and security is important—even crucial at times. But much depends on Africans themselves—in creating a continent that no longer requires external interventions to rescue it from human-caused conflicts and insecurity. To that end, Africa requires honest, altruistic, and committed leaders, enabling it to reserve the United Nations as an instrument for preventing the violation of principles of human dignity.

## The way forward

**Translating political will into action.** Political will and consensus are crucial for effective conflict resolution and peacemaking mechanisms in Africa. Political will needs to be manifested in the allocation of needed resources to peacemaking and peacekeeping and in the full payment of assessed contributions to the Peace Fund. And it will entail developing African capabilities to undertake robust peacekeeping operations without having to rely on outside help, which may be too little or too late.

**Ensuring full compliance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.** No conflict resolution mechanism in Africa can be effective without addressing attendant issues such as good governance, adherence to democratic principles, promotion of human security through efforts to combat poverty, and protection of civil and human rights. These

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issues must be addressed through continuous efforts by governments individually and collectively, as well as through full adherence to the principles of the African charter.

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**Enhancing preventive measures and diplomacy.** Effective prevention requires strengthening early warning systems to ensure timely interventions that prevent conflicts from getting out of control. Such mechanisms also ensure greater attention to human rights monitoring and education. The dilemma in conflict prevention is that political will to allocate the necessary resources is often lacking because decisionmakers are not convinced of the seriousness of a situation until it has progressed too far. In many cases, the political leadership in a country or subregion on the verge of conflict is unwilling or unable to read the early warning signs.

**Improving peacekeeping.** African peacekeeping efforts are complex. The various protocols and mechanisms must have adequate capabilities to deploy military, police, and civilian assets; to monitor and facilitate cease-fires; and to assist with implementation of comprehensive peace agreements. Such readiness also implies the continued development and financing of capacity-building measures to train and deploy the right people on short notice, and with much greater effect than in current arrangements. Equally important is the need to improve cooperation, preparation, planning, and resource allocation to these efforts.

The success of regional integration and sustained peace and sociopolitical stability are closely related. Conflicts significantly slow integration, while regional integration can promote peace in two important ways. First, by stimulating intraregional trade, integration creates economic interdependences that reduce the likelihood of conflicts. Second, cooperation at the level of regional economic community is a form of diplomacy among member states that helps to strengthen friendly relations between neighbours. Furthermore, conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms established by the regional economic communities are potentially important tools for addressing regional instability. Integration does not automatically generate peace and security. On the contrary, policy conflicts and the fear of unequal distribution of costs and benefits can seriously obstruct the route to peace. For this reason, in addition to sustained efforts in developing effective mechanisms for peacekeeping as well as for prevention and resolution of conflicts, regional economic communities should devote attention to the design of internal, supranational institutions (both economic and noneconomic), including compensation mechanisms.

## HIV/AIDS

Regional economic communities engage in limited cooperation on health matters, mainly because their priorities involve economic issues—particularly trade liberalization. Because regional economic communities are not equipped to handle health issues, there is a tacit agreement to rely on specialized institutions such as the World Health

Organization as a resource centre for regional economic community initiatives on health matters.

### **Efforts by regional economic communities**

SADC appears to be the only regional economic community that has adopted a protocol on health. ECOWAS does not have a common program on health matters, but it has signed a protocol with Algeria and Chad on fighting epidemics. Cooperation on health matters is handled largely through the West African Health Organisation.

Within COMESA there is some cooperation among EAC members on controlling communicable and endemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. A medical research council was created to spearhead research on some of these diseases. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) does not have a protocol on health, but its ministers of health have approved a plan for future cooperation on health. The IGAD Secretariat, with the support of the World Health Organization regional office in Addis Ababa, plans to mainstream health issues with a transboundary dimension into its priority programmes and activities. A cooperation agreement between IGAD and the World Health Organization has already been established.

### **Continentwide initiatives**

In view of the far-reaching implications of HIV/AIDS across the African continent, collective strategies have been put in place at the continent level to galvanize efforts for addressing the pandemic.

Under the auspices of the World Health Organization's regional office in Africa, a strategic plan was developed for accelerating support to countries through the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa, taking into account the World Health Organization's regional programme on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. At a July 2000 summit in Lomé, Togo, African leaders adopted a declaration on policy guidance for accelerating the response to HIV/AIDS. Multicountry meetings were held on HIV/AIDS, surveillance and case management of sexually transmitted diseases, and laboratory requirements for providing safe antiretroviral therapy and integrated care of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. At an April 2001 summit, African heads of state developed the Abuja Framework outlining an action plan for the fight against HIV/AIDS and related opportunistic infections. The framework aims to:

- Develop policies and strategies for preventing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and related infectious diseases and for controlling their impact on Africa's socio-economic development.
- Establish sustainable mechanisms for national and external resource mobilization for prevention and treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Attend to the needs of vulnerable groups such as children, women, the disabled, workers, and mobile populations.

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The African Union Conference of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in Mauritius in April 2003 also adopted a resolution on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the labour force and social welfare. To protect peacekeepers from contracting the disease and prevent them from spreading it to the local population, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations have established guidelines for peacekeeping forces for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Additional efforts in this direction ought to be undertaken. Yet another continentwide endeavour is the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (box 10.2).

### **The way forward**

The Abuja Framework for the fight against HIV/AIDS and related opportunistic infections provides an important framework for developing strategies and mechanisms to

#### **Box 10.2**

##### ***The Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa***

In 2003 the Economic Commission for Africa launched the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa. It was convened by the United Nations Secretary General and chaired by the Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako in response to the threat to Africa's governance and development posed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Over its two-year lifetime, the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance aims to conduct research and develop policy tools for African governments and regional and subregional organizations to keep governance and development processes on track despite the human capacity losses caused by the epidemic. It also aims to find ways to overcome the capacity and governance constraints to scaling up health care, especially antiretroviral therapy.

The Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance builds on the Economic Commission for Africa's experience with HIV/AIDS, notably the African Development Forum's 2000 conference on "AIDS: Africa's Greatest Leadership Challenge". It aims to power up existing African initiatives in the field, including the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa and the AIDS Watch Africa group of heads of state formed at the 2001 Abuja Summit on AIDS, Malaria, and Other Infectious Diseases. This work will bring the agenda of overcoming HIV/AIDS and mitigating its economic and governance impacts into mainstream forums, such as the Joint Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development and the African Union's mechanisms for peace and security.

The Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance will work with specialized UN agencies including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the World Food Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the World Bank. It will also use regional and subregional forums, including the African Union and regional economic communities, to promote the agenda of HIV/AIDS and governance.

**Source:** *Economic Commission for Africa, from official sources.*

combat this dreadful pandemic. It must not be allowed to languish, like other protocols that have been signed and ratified but never fully implemented because of lack of commitment and resources. Regional economic communities could develop monitoring systems for tracking progress by member countries in implementation of the Abuja Framework. Regional economic communities could establish HIV/AIDS coordination units similar to SADC's health sector unit, ensuring that they receive adequate skilled staff and resources. These units could advance the fight against HIV/AIDS by working in close collaboration with the UN Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa, based in the Economic Commission for Africa.

**“A number of regional economic communities have established gender units to promote gender equality”**

## Gender

The objective of gender equality is enshrined in the treaties, protocols, and constitutions of regional economic communities and African states. The Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community calls on member states to establish and harmonize policies and mechanisms for the full participation of African woman in development by improving their economic, social, and cultural conditions. To that end, several regional women's associations have been established to promote gender development.

Other mechanisms promoting gender equality include the action plans issued at the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing, China, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. At a November 1999 conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, reviewing progress on the Beijing and Dakar action plans, African governments were urged to ratify the UN convention if they had not done so, to remove reservations by June 2000, and to accelerate its implementation. They were also urged to make the provisions of the convention part of their domestic laws so that women could claim and enforce their rights within national courts.

The 1995 Beijing conference urged government and civil society action in 12 areas of concern to women: poverty, education and training, health, violence, conflict situations, economic empowerment, power and decisionmaking, institutional mechanisms for advancement, human rights, the media, the environment, and girls. Governments were urged to create mechanisms at the highest levels for the advancement of women, to give this machinery a clear mandate and authority, and to provide adequate resources and ensure its ability to influence policy and formulate and review legislation. The third African Development Forum also emphasized the importance of mainstreaming gender concerns in Africa's integration process (box 10.3).

A number of regional economic communities have established gender units to promote gender equality and ensure implementation of various conventions on gender equality. But the main gender concern of most regional economic communities is enterprise development for women.

In 1997 SADC heads of state established a policy and institutional framework for mainstreaming gender in the community. The leaders committed their countries to:

- Achieving a target of at least 30% women in political and decisionmaking structures by 2005.
- Promoting women's control over productive resources, to reduce poverty.
- Repealing and reforming laws, amending constitutions, and changing social practices that discriminate against women.
- Taking urgent steps to prevent and deal with increasing violence against women and children (SAM/SADC 2001).

Various activities have been developed around these commitments in individual SADC countries. In 1998 SADC established a gender unit to advise all SADC structures on

### **Box 10.3**

#### ***Gender and regional integration***

Gender mainstreaming is essential to the success of Africa's regional integration. Although regional economic community treaties are often silent on this issue (with the possible exceptions of SADC, COMESA, EAC, and ECOWAS), there has been a general awakening across the continent on the need to place gender firmly on the development and integration agenda.

The consensus statement adopted at the third African Development Forum on Priorities for Regional Integration—sponsored by the Economic Commission for Africa and held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 2002—calls for women to be involved in all aspects of regional integration, to ensure that organizational cultures, structures, and processes do not conflict with goals for women's empowerment. The statement notes that women account for a majority of African microentrepreneurs—and have the potential to expand their involvement in all types of business activities. Measures proposed to promote women's participation in the private sector include enhancing their participation in decisionmaking structures, providing training adapted to their needs, and eliminating discriminatory laws and cultural practices. In addition, the statement calls for mechanisms to protect women from sexual harassment at border crossings.

The statement also cites the need for gender-sensitive policies that reflect women's concerns at the regional, subregional, and national levels, including special attention to the gender impacts of macroeconomic policies. Gender-based analysis of budgets and monitoring of the gender-differentiated impacts of macroeconomic policies could be especially useful. In addition, special consideration should be given to women's needs for efficient infrastructure to reduce their time burden, particularly as it relates to informal cross-border trade.

Finally, the statement emphasizes the importance of gender equity and women's empowerment and representation in all aspects of the process establishing the African Union, in its representative institutions, and in its programmes.

**Source:** *Economic Commission for Africa, from official sources.*

gender issues and to ensure that a gender perspective in the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative.

Table 10.1 summarizes the state of women's participation in political life in SADC in 1999. That year nearly 30% of parliamentarians in Mozambique and South Africa were women, and South Africa had eight female cabinet ministers and eight female deputy ministers. In Botswana 18% of parliamentarians were women, as were two of the four deputy ministers. Botswana's Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs has a Women's Affairs Department, and new laws have been enacted to protect the rights of women—especially married women.

In addition, several SADC countries are putting in place laws, policies, and programmes to empower women. Notable examples are the strict enforcement of affirmative action in Namibia; legalization of women's rights to own land in Tanzania; and introduction of a development programme, child support grant for unemployed mothers with children under five, and implementation of an entrepreneurial development programme for women in Mauritius. In addition, governments and nongovernmental organizations in the region are helping women access funding for micro-projects at low or no interest.

“Several SADC countries are putting in place laws, policies, and programmes to empower women”

**Table 10.1**  
*Women in parliaments and cabinets in the Southern African Development Community, 1999 (%)*

Country	Share of women in parliament	Share of female cabinet ministers	Share of female deputy ministers
Angola	15.1	12.9	13.6
Botswana	18.0	14.5	50.0
Lesotho	10.3	8.3	0.0
Malawi	8.3	9.0	12.9
Mauritius	7.6	8.0	
Mozambique	28.4	14.2	12.1
Namibia	19.0	14.2	22.7
Seychelles	21.0	25.0	<sup>a</sup>
South Africa	29.8	29.6	61.5
Swaziland	7.3	13.3	
Tanzania	16.3	13.0	13.0
Zambia	10.1	8.3	7.1
Zimbabwe	14.0	14.2	18.7

*na is not applicable.*

*a. No such positions.*

**Source:** SADC 2000.

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*Growth and economic  
development call for  
specific attention to  
gender issues*  
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ECOWAS is also putting increasing emphasis on gender issues. Its revised treaty requires member states to establish and harmonize policies and mechanisms for enhancing women's economic, social, and cultural conditions. The West African Women's Association is responsible for helping the community develop instruments to promote gender equity and development. UEMOA is also preparing community policies on women and young people. A policy recommendation adopted in 1999 will eventually lead to a regional policy on women.

The treaties establishing COMESA, EAC, and IGAD provide for cooperation on gender matters. COMESA adopted a gender policy at its summit in May 2002, and a technical committee is to be established to facilitate implementation of the policy and mainstream gender into all integration programmes and activities. Efforts have also been made to promote the interests of female entrepreneurs, including through trade promotion activities such as trade fairs and relaxation of the COMESA rules of origin for small-scale informal border trade. EAC is also working on a detailed programme to address the issue. In IGAD, a gender desk was established at the Secretariat in 1999, with financial support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Gender considerations are mainstreamed into IGAD priority programmes, policies, and strategies. The Secretariat has established close working relationship with UNIFEM and African Union gender directorates. IGAD is also developing a gender policy and strategy with the active participation of all member states and other stakeholders in the region.

ECCAS does not have a specific gender policy in its treaty, but certain provisions indicate that promotion of gender issues is an important concern of member states. In the field of social development there is a commitment to developing policies for improving the social, economic, and cultural well-being of women in both rural and urban areas. Women are also considered a formidable force that needs to be fully harnessed in the development activities of member states.

At the continent level, the African Plan of Action was adopted during the 6th African Regional Conference on Women in Addis Ababa in November 1999 as a framework for accelerated implementation of the Dakar and Beijing conference action plans. At the 1999 conference reviewing progress on the plans, it was noted that African governments lacked functional institutional mechanisms, realistic resource allocations, clear policy frameworks, and effective tools for audits and monitoring—all essential to implementing strategic actions. The weaknesses of many African countries in addressing the 12 areas of concern mentioned earlier gave rise to the African Plan of Action. The plan contains guidelines for monitoring and evaluating activities and calls for the use of indicators to measure progress in concrete, numerical terms.

In 1999 a report of a study commissioned by the Economic Commission for Africa on gender development recommended the establishment of subregional enterprise development centres to assist female entrepreneurs by:

- To serve as centres for the creation, collection, processing, storage, and dissemination of technological, scientific, trade, and other business information on food processing and textiles.
- To strengthen women's entrepreneurial capacity in technology, information, communications, business development, and management.
- To assist in formulating gender-sensitive policies for women in business and to help translate policies into action.
- To serve as focal points for establishing and strengthening networks among female entrepreneurs working in food processing and textiles at the subregional, regional, and international levels within and outside Africa.
- To strengthen cooperation among African and non-African developing countries in food processing and textiles.

*African governments are seeing the private sector as a partner in the development process*

### The way forward

In the fight against poverty, the quality of growth and economic development are also important. This calls for specific attention to gender issues. Income is often unequally distributed between men and women, thus creating an unequal distribution of opportunities for human development, both within and across countries. But gender inequalities go beyond income and wealth to embrace legislative protection of rights and participation in political, social, and economic life. There are also cross-cutting issues that relate health and gender inequalities, such as the gender dimension of HIV/AIDS. Regional economic communities should multiply their efforts to mainstream gender issues in their initiatives. This in turn requires support from international institutions. Dissemination and sharing of information on gender issues in the form of indicators is an avenue of future action that should be explored.

### Private sector

Regional integration in Africa has been almost exclusively driven by governments and nongovernmental institutions. But the realization is growing that the private sector can be a vehicle for strengthening the process. After decades of state-dominated economic activities, African governments are increasingly seeing the private sector as a partner in the development process and relying on it to foster economic growth. Its role in regional integration is also gaining momentum.

The private sector can play its role along two dimensions. One relates to its contribution to political decisionmaking at national and regional levels. A well organized private sector can participate in policy formation, providing advice to governments and lobbying for continued implementation of reforms, along with many different stakeholders in civil society. The second dimension relates to the private sector's practical contribution to regional initiatives. The private sector is a potentially critical provider of human and financial resources for implementation of regional projects such as the development of infrastructure. Economic benefits from the expansion of the regional

activities of private companies also include job creation, increased market size, savings mobilization, and externalities such as the diffusion of management knowledge, expertise, and technological spillovers. This section surveys some of these issues, with specific focus on current practices and examples of private sector involvement in regional integration.

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*Few regional economic communities have specific protocols on the private sector*  
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## **Current practices of interface between regional integration and private sector**

Few regional economic communities have specific protocols on the private sector. EAC is a notable exception. Despite the lack of formal provisions, however, there are specific examples of private sector involvement in regional integration. An important and innovative case is the Africa Cross-Border Initiative for facilitation of trade and investment. Its actions are driven by the needs of the private sector rather than by public sector plans. The EAC experience, the key features of the Cross-Border Initiative, and some other specific examples of private sector contributions to regional integration are surveyed below.

**The EAC experience.** The private sector has been instrumental in reviving EAC in recent years. In EAC, cooperation in private sector development is seen as a vital instrument for generating economic growth and development in the region (box 10.4).

### **Box 10.4**

#### ***Private sector involvement in the East African Community***

A conducive environment for the effective participation of the private sector is a major priority of the East African Community (EAC). The EAC treaty emphasizes the major role that the private sector should have in the construction of EAC, especially in chapter 12 “Cooperation in investment and industrial development” and chapter 25 “The private sector and the civil society”. The EAC treaty calls for the formulation of:

- An East African industrial development strategy to create an enabling business environment for the establishment of an internationally competitive single market and investment area. The strategy is expected to promote self-sustaining and balanced industrial growth, improve the competitiveness of the industrial sector, and encourage the development of indigenous entrepreneurs. The strategy was formulated against the background of obvious disparities in levels of industrial development in the member states.
- A Private Sector Development Strategy to enhance the harmonization needed for private sector-driven development of the region.

The overall goal of these two strategies is sustainable economic and social development in East Africa. The strategies aim to create an enabling business environment for the establishment of a single market and investment area that would be internationally competitive and operate in conformity with World Trade Organization rules and regulations.

**Source:** *Economic Commission for Africa, from official sources.*

EAC is creating several instruments to promote the participation of the private sector in regional integration:

- A common competition policy and law to protect and promote free competition and permit harmonization of trade and investment laws and regulations throughout the region.
- The East African Business Council, a regional body of all apex national private sector organizations in the three member states, to promote cross-border trade and investment and to influence policies at the national level, to ensure that they are business friendly.
- The East African Development Bank, which is being restructured to strengthen its role as a resource mobilization organization, especially for investment projects, by allowing broader purchasing of shares within East Africa and enhancing its capacity to issue international bonds.

### **The Cross-Border Initiative**

The Cross-Border Initiative is a framework of harmonized policies to facilitate a market-driven concept of regional integration in Eastern and Southern African and Indian Ocean countries. Fourteen countries are participants—Burundi, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The African Development Bank, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank are cosponsors.

Launched in Kampala, Uganda, in August 1993, the initiative has two key objectives: to dismantle barriers that create high cross-border transaction costs by reforming and eliminating intraregional tariffs, liberalizing exchange and payments systems, and deregulating investment, and to promote a new integration approach based on competition and efficiency in regional markets with low external tariffs. In May 2000, the participating countries transformed the initiative into the Regional Integration Facilitation Forum, with the aim of sustaining its achievements and building on its strengths.

The impacts of the Cross-Border Initiative are:

- *Trade openness.* The trade openness ratings (based on the IMF methodology, with zero most open and 10 least open) of participating countries has improved from an average of 8.3 in 1993–95 to 5.9 in 1998 (compared with an average of 6.2 for all nonparticipating countries undergoing economic reform in Sub-Saharan Africa and 4.4 for the rest of the world, excluding Africa). A few countries (Uganda, Zambia) have made substantial progress, with openness ratings of 2, which are in line with some global good practice countries (Chile, Colombia, Singapore).
- *Private investment and exports.* High performing participatory countries have achieved growth rates in private investment and exports that are in line with the experience of nonparticipatory high performing countries.

“*The Cross-Border Initiative is a framework of harmonized policies to facilitate a market-driven concept of regional integration in Eastern and Southern African and Indian Ocean countries*”

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Ecobank Transnational Incorporated is an important example of private sector participation in regional financial integration”

- *Demonstration effects.* Some of the front-runners (Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia) have demonstrated to their less active partners the viability and benefits of fast-paced reform.
- *Open regionalism.* The initiative has been successful in moving participatory countries away from past regional integration efforts based on import substitution with high protection to integration based on low effective rates of protection. This success has also increased the credibility of open regional schemes among partner organizations. For example, in the World Bank open regionalism was a subject of intense debate in the early 1990s, whereas its 2000 report, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* supports open regionalism.
- *Knowledge sharing and learning.* The Cross-Border Initiative has fostered a forum for the active participation of the private and public sectors in debating critical issues of policy in an informal and transparent manner and sharing lessons of experience to increase cross-country learning.

### Other examples of private sector participation in regional integration

Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI) is an important example of private sector participation in regional financial integration. The bank has a presence in 12 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. ETI was established in 1985 as a bank holding company with the approval of ECOWAS member states and the support of the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the ECOWAS Fund for Cooperation. At the time, there were virtually no commercial banks owned and controlled by the private sector in West Africa. ETI offers financial intermediation services for the mobilization of savings and the allocation of resources on a regional scale. Efforts are under way to implement an efficient payment system, which will help to overcome one of the key limitations constraining the development of intraregional trade. ETI is also becoming a gateway for facilitating the inflow of capital from international investors.

Another important example is Telecel International, an African multinational group based in South Africa and Geneva and focused on the establishment of cellular networks in Africa. For all of its operations, Telecel associates national private investors in the shareholdings of its companies. It is the first private operator of mobile telephony on the continent, and to date it holds cellular licenses in 13 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Niger, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It is also a major supporter of liberalization of the telecommunications sector in the countries in which it operates. Allowing additional market entrants will help to boost growth, as countries with more than one licensed operator have demonstrated.

The contribution of the private sector to regional integration is particularly important in regional infrastructure development. One example is the Maputo Corridor N4 Toll Road connecting Mozambique and South Africa. The South African Minister of

Transport awarded Trans African Concessions a 30-year contract to design, construct, and operate the N4 Toll Road on May 1997. This 440 kilometre road links Witbank in South Africa to the port of Maputo in Mozambique. It is part of the larger and more ambitious Maputo Development Corridor, which aims to link Gauteng in South Africa to Maputo. The concession contract involved the rehabilitation of existing road sections and the construction of a new 36 kilometre section in Mozambique.

Another example of infrastructure development driven by the private sector is the Maputo Rail Network. A concession has been awarded to South African rail utility Spoornet, which runs the line from the South African border with Mozambique to Gauteng. This is a landmark decision because a single operator now runs the whole line from Gauteng to Maputo. Spoornet will pay the Mozambique Rail Authority about \$67 million over the initial 15-year period of concession. Spoornet and its partner, New Limpopo Bridge Project Investment, which is partly owned by South Africa financial institutions, plan to invest 100 million rand to upgrade the section between the border and Maputo.

### **Private sector as a beneficiary of regional integration**

Regional integration will help to remove some of the key constraints to increasing the size and efficiency of the private sector in Africa. In this sense, the private sector will be a primary beneficiary of further regional integration.

One set of constraints relates to the instability of the macroeconomic environment, the small scale of markets and businesses, and the lack of appropriate finance for investment projects. Most regional economic communities are engaged in a process of macroeconomic policy harmonization. By adhering to the convergence criteria incorporated in these harmonization frameworks, member states commit to low inflation, fiscal stability, and exchange rate stability. This will reduce economic uncertainty and risk, stimulating private sector activity.

The regional integration process also facilitates the formation of larger markets through trade liberalization. This increase in the potential scale of business is essential to enlarge profit opportunities and thus to attract entrepreneurs. The associated increased competition will stimulate productive efficiency, benefiting final consumers.

The lack of finance is the result of underdeveloped financial systems. Inefficient banking and weak capital markets distort the allocation of already limited resources. Long-term finance is practically unavailable. That means that many potentially profitable projects are not undertaken and that existing businesses cannot expand. The result is that private entrepreneurs are often condemned to operate on a small, inefficient scale, barely above subsistence level. Inefficient payment services and insufficient provision of risk management services further impede the private sector. Since the financial system is very sensitive to macroeconomic conditions, the efforts being made to enhance macroeconomic stability should facilitate resource mobilization and

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**“The private sector in Africa can generate the wealth needed to stimulate growth and participate in the financing of regional projects”**

allocation. Financial integration is proceeding along with macroeconomic integration, and regional capital markets should be able to generate finance to an extent that small and undercapitalized national markets cannot. The banking sector is expected to benefit from increased competition, knowledge sharing, and integrated supervision. Among the regional economic communities, COMESA is reasonably advanced in regional initiatives to strengthen the financial sector. A framework for harmonizing bank supervision and regulation is under discussion, studies have been conducted on the design of a regional payment and settlement system, the Eastern and Southern Africa Trade Development Bank provides business capital and trade finance to the private sector, and reinsurance is made possible through the COMESA reinsurance company.

A second set of constraints that can be eased through greater regional integration relates to the political and institutional environment. Sociopolitical instability, lack of rule of law, and cumbersome and inefficient legislation all increase investment uncertainty and limit the extent of private initiative. These political and institutional inefficiencies are also often the major force driving economic instability and policy mismanagement. Recognizing that peace and security are indispensable for building a united community of nations, regional economic communities and their member states have made these issues a top priority. Efforts include the establishment of regional peacekeeping forces and conflict prevention and resolution frameworks. Regional integration also extends to harmonization and rationalization of legislation, which are expected to lift some of the constraints on private sector development, as well as create a more rational system of rules and procedures that will improve the efficiency of public administration.

Finally, regional integration will contribute to the removal of constraints that arise from poor infrastructure development. In fact, private activities and entrepreneurship cannot be expected to advance regional integration in a context of inadequate infrastructure. Production and trade require physical and telecommunication connections and a regular supply of energy. Deficient infrastructure raises the cost of doing business. Regional cooperation can be an effective instrument for modernizing and expanding infrastructure. The private sector can both benefit from this regional approach to infrastructure development and reinforce the outcome by contributing its resources and skills.

### **The way forward**

With the right conditions and support the private sector in Africa can generate the wealth needed to stimulate growth and participate in the financing of regional projects. Integration in Africa has long been a matter of government-to-government decisionmaking, with the private sector left out of the process. The same has been true in the financing of regional projects, which is fundamental to accelerated growth and integration in the region.

As African governments continue to disengage from nonstrategic economic activities, there will be a crucial need to tap private sector resources to finance some projects, especially those whose investment needs exceed the financial capacity of a single country.

There are many areas in which private sector participation can have a large impact. One is municipal utilities. As privatization progresses, the private sector is expected to become involved in the financing of regional projects and service provision such as electric power. Activities related to the processing of primary products for domestic and regional markets constitute another avenue for growth and diversification in which the private sector can play a major role.

Another potential area of private sector involvement is the provision of infrastructure. The telecommunications sector is especially open to private sector participation, ownership, and management. Banking and finance for savings mobilization and for financing development can also be profitably tapped by the private sector. And new and interesting possibilities are emerging in information technology, including accounting, data entry, and back-office operations—contractual services that can easily be provided over the Internet.

The government and the private sector can also work together in some areas, such as skills development. Many businesses consider lack of skills as the number one obstacle to growth. Governments need to be more flexible in allowing necessary skills to be imported, and the private sector must contribute by ensuring that these skills are transferred to local citizens, creating knowledge spillovers and generating technological progress. With an estimated 40% of professionally trained Africans based outside the continent, there is a huge pool of talent to be drawn on from the diaspora.

For the private sector to participate effectively in regional integration requires that several conditions be met.

- The private sector must take a proactive role in its own development and adopt a long-term investment perspective. This highlights the need for well developed financial systems that can provide long-term business finance.
- Product quality and competitiveness must be increased. The private sector needs to become more multifaceted, catering to domestic, regional, and international markets.
- Good practices for corporate governance must be undertaken, and companies must refrain from involvement in or contributing to corrupt practices.
- The private sector needs to be organized. Regional associations of entrepreneurs such as the West African Entrepreneurs Network, Southern African Entrepreneurs Network, and Eastern African Entrepreneurs Network should be revitalized. This would include building solid dialogue on policy between the government and private sector.

Regional and subregional institutions should develop additional mechanisms to facilitate private sector participation, such as private-public partnerships. These partnerships bring the public and private sectors into joint ventures to raise capital. In SADC, build, operate, transfer (BOT), and finance, rehabilitate, operate, and maintain (FROM) systems

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Regional economic communities should make provisions in their treaties for involving the private sector  
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rely on private finance to design, construct, and maintain roads. Once the roads are built, private operators charge tolls to recover costs and realize a reasonable return on investments before transferring ownership to the state. In other parts of Africa, road funds overseen by public-private boards have been established. Run independently, they include road users on their boards and are subject to external audits. Money is raised from vehicle licenses and user fees and jobs are contracted out to private developers. Public-private partnerships are emerging in health, the environment, and transport and are spreading through new initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The spirit of such partnerships should be clearly demonstrated in infrastructure development, since neither the public nor the private sector alone can provide the needed financing for the huge task of infrastructure development and rehabilitation that lies ahead for Africa's integration process.

Also important, regional economic communities should make provisions in their treaties for involving the private sector in the conceptualization, adoption, and implementation of trade policies and other regional agreements dealing with issues of interest to private sector development. The same logic applies to the African Union. There is a need to give effect to the statutory provisions in the Constitutive Act of the Union on the status of the private sector as a major component of economic integration and to ensure its participation in specialized technical commissions. To make the most of private sector potential, clear codes of conduct need to be issued, to prevent the distortions caused by illegal behaviour.

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