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## ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 2009 TO FEBRUARY 2010



(UN ECA SRO-WA Headquarters – Niamey, Niger)



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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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1. The report presents an account of the activities of the Sub-regional Office for Africa for the period from August 2009 to February 2010. The period straddles the tail end of the 2008 - 2009 cycle of activities and the take-off of the new 2010 - 2011 cycle. During this intermediary period, the Sub-regional Office prepared the groundwork for the implementation of its programmes in accordance with the Directives of the United Nations General Assembly, bearing in mind the spirit of the recommendations of the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts from the Member States, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 12 and 13 November 2010.
2. During the period covered by the report, the Sub-regional Office pursued its policy of cooperation with Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) with a view to strengthening the synergy of their interventions. In this regard, joint actions with ECOWAS were pursued, guided by the outcomes of the evaluation meeting on the cooperation programme of the two institutions held in Ouagadougou in November 2009.
3. Proceeding in this same spirit, a draft agreement between the intergovernmental organisations of the sub-region was prepared with a view to strengthening the synergy of their interventions under the auspices of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions.
4. The report is divided into two main parts: the first part contains a presentation of the special activities in the programme of the Sub-regional Office, and the implementation status of its cooperation programme with the ECOWAS Commission, while the second part covers activities carried out in collaboration with the other ECA Divisions.

## **2 ACTIVITIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 2009 TO FEBRUARY 2010**

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5. The activities carried during this period are presented under three headings:
- (i) Follow-up to the recommendations of ICE 12;
  - (ii) Preparation of the working documents for the thirteenth session of ICE;
  - (iii) Implementation of the other components of the 2008-2009 work programme.

### **2.1 Follow-up to the Recommendations of ICE 12**

6. The twelfth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts formulated recommendations to the attention of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and ECA. This part of the report covers the recommendations to the Sub-regional Office by the experts from the Member States and presents a status report on their implementation.

#### **2.1.1 Summary of Recommendations**

7. The recommendations made to the Sub-regional Office by the delegates can be encapsulated into six items. The ECA was requested:
- to take into account the importance of mining issues in the sub-region in order to include in its programme an activity which will prepare Member States for the conduct of mining negotiations with partners/investors with a view to ensuring a better level of contribution from mining resources to the development process;
  - to rapidly mobilise the resources needed to organise the forum on exchanges between land-locked and coastal countries in 2010, in view of the importance of this issue for sub-regional trade;
  - to mobilise the resources needed to respond to any specific concerns that member States might express during the course of the biennium;
  - to ensure convergence between the 2010-2011 work programme and the cooperation programme with ECOWAS in the interests of a greater synergy between the two institutions;

- to reflect further on providing skills training to the youth and advise the Member States on the support mechanisms to put in place for the integration of youth into the economic and social fabric of the society;
- to compile and make available to the Member States good practices for the reduction of tax evasion in order to assist them in improving their budget space with a view to making domestic resource mobilisation their development base.

### **2.1.2 Implementation Status of the Recommendations of ICE 12**

8. In the immediate follow-up to ICE 12, the Sub-regional Office took measures to secure financing for those activities recorded in the 2010-2011 programme as extra budgetary expenditure items. These include the organisation of training workshops on various topics (climate change, public/private partnerships, harmonisation of data collection and forecasting methodologies) targeting experts from the Member States; projects to strengthen cooperation between the ECA and the sub-regional economic communities; and the organisation of the forum on facilitation of exchanges between land-locked and coastal countries. Partnership arrangements with various sub-regional and international institutions for the joint organisation of these activities are at the finalisation stage. This policy of partnership is advantageous not only for resource mobilisation, but also and above all, for building increased synergy between the interventions of the different development stakeholders in West Africa.
9. The Sub-regional Office will pursue its efforts to mobilise resources for the organisation of the forum and the implementation of its resolutions.
10. The deliberations on the mining sector which were initiated at the Ouagadougou statutory meetings were followed by a validation workshop on mining regimes in Africa organised in Accra, Ghana, from 25 to 27 November 2010. The main objective of the workshop, which was organised in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the ECOWAS Commission and Third World Network (TWN), was to examine and validate the framework report on mining regimes in Africa prepared by the International Study Group (ISG). The workshop provided an opportunity for West African experts to examine the recommendations of the

report, and their relevance as tools for the formulation of development-oriented mining policies for the African continent. A similar workshop for southern and East African countries was organised in Kigali, Rwanda, in December 2009. The recommendations of the two workshops will be incorporated into the preparatory work ahead of Phase II of the ISG process which relates to the development of practical tools for the use of the Member States in the implementation of their mining policies. The recommendations will also serve as a point of reference for the ECOWAS Committee on the preparation of a West African mining code.

11. Within the framework of the harmonisation of the work programmes of the Sub-regional Office and ECOWAS, bilateral consultations were held following the evaluation of the cooperation programme between the two institutions, and at the introductory meeting between the new management of the Sub-regional Office and the authorities of the ECOWAS Commission. New resolutions were taken for the two institutions to work on a specific platform in synergy with the other NGOs of the sub-region.
12. Finally, on the issue of the integration of the youth into the economic fabric of the society, the Sub-regional Office prepared a report on youth self-employment in ECOWAS. The report, which was submitted for consideration at the meeting of the experts' group preceding ICE 13, made proposals which, after amendment, will be used in the formulation of recommendations for dissemination in the Member States. The report presented to the expert, state that considerable efforts have been made over the last years to address youth unemployment in the West African regions, but the recent global economic and financial downturns will make it even more difficult to consolidate results achieved so far. After a diagnosis of the situation the report proposed the establishing of a regional funds dedicated to support youth-self employment

## **2.2 Preparation of the Statutory Documents for Consideration at the Thirteenth Session of ICE**

13. In accordance with the approved work programme for the period from 2010-2011, the Sub-regional Office embarked upon the preparation of the three major statutory documents which will be submitted for the consideration of the thirteenth session of

ICE. These are: (i) the Report on Economic and Social Conditions in West Africa in 2009 and Prospects for 2010; (ii) the Study on unemployment, underemployment and vulnerability of employment in West Africa: Critical review and strategic: Thematic Part of the Report; and (iii) the Report on the Implementation of Regional and International Agendas titled " Ensuring Environmental sustainability in West Africa"

### **2.2.1 Report on Economic and Social Conditions in 2009 and Prospects for 2010**

14. The report on the economic and social conditions in West Africa is a statutory annual publication submitted by the West Africa Office of the United Nations Commission for Africa for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts from the sub-region (ICE). The report presents an analytical assessment of recent economic trends and the future prospects of the sub-region and the countries. In particular it provides data and basic information on recent development policies with the aim of eliciting broad-based discussions between the Member States, intergovernmental organisations and other development stakeholders. It also formulates recommendations which, after consideration and improvement by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, are disseminated in the Member States and among sub-regional organisations with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of development policies and programmes.
15. The report for this year focuses on the process of identifying concrete options for optimisation of the results of the development efforts of the countries and the sub-region. It analyses and evaluates recent economic trends and the prospects of the sub-region and the countries for 2010. It concludes with recommendations which will be considered and improved on by the major partners, under the umbrella of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, the IGO Forum, the Business Forum and the Civil Society Forum, with a view to identifying investment opportunities and risks, and improvements to be made to the development policies and programmes of the countries and the sub-region.
16. The report is divided into two parts. Part I presents recent economic developments in West Africa and the prospects for 2010, while Part II addresses the issue of food security in West Africa. Part I is based on information obtained from the data bases

of ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the African Development Bank (ADB), and the Member States. It is subdivided into two chapters, namely: (i) the International Environment, which examines recent economic performances on a global scale, with a view to deducing their impacts on the economies of the sub-region; (ii) Recent Trends in the Economic Situation in West Africa and Prospects for 2010. This year, the trends include some of the developments in the area of social protection for workers and other sectors of the society in West African countries. The chapter includes proposals as to the channels through which social cover and protection should be extended.

17. Part II of the report, titled “Unemployment, underemployment and vulnerability of employment in West Africa: Critical review and strategic” examines the efforts of the Member States in the last few years to achieve a job-creating growth. It highlights not only the problem of youth unemployment but also that of growth-related underemployment, proposing measures for achieving growth which will generate decent job opportunities.

### **2.2.2 Report on the Implementation of Regional and International Agendas: Ensuring Environmental sustainability in West Africa**

18. In view of the fact that 3% of the world’s forests disappeared between 1990 and 2005 - which represents an average annual decrease of 0.2% - and further, that deforestation, due mainly to the conversion of forestland in the developing countries into farm land, is increasing at the alarming annual rate of approximately 13 million hectares a year, the focus of the report for this year is on MDG 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability. This goal should be addressed in tandem with climate change to demonstrate that conservation of the environment should not only aim at preserving biological diversity, but should also fit into the general framework of actions aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change.
19. This contribution comes at a most opportune time, as the sub-region prepares to implement its first climate change adaptation strategy, which is the outcome of cooperation between several sub-regional and international organisations, in response to a Sub-regional Office initiative, and under the supervision of the ECOWAS Commission.

## **2.3 Implementation of Other Components of the Work Programme**

### **2.3.1 Meeting of the Group of Experts on Energy Security in West Africa**

20. The objective of the experts' meeting on energy security in West Africa, jointly organised by the Sub-regional Office and the ECOWAS Commission, was to contribute to the search for an innovative solution to the energy crisis which is undermining the economic and social development of West Africa. In recognition of its importance, the meeting was attended by some seventy experts and other stakeholders in the energy sector from the fifteen ECOWAS Member States. The focus of the meeting was on identifying ways and means of covering the energy needs of the sub-region by maximising the exploitation of all the energy sources with which the sub-region is so richly endowed. These include renewable energy, oil, and hydro-electricity. The nuclear energy option was also explored as a long-term sustainable solution. Particular emphasis was placed on the urgent need for a greater involvement of the private sector in production by way of public-private partnership contracts.

21. The meeting adopted ten major recommendations which are contained in a document scheduled for consideration by the ECOWAS authorities at their next round of meetings. The experts' meeting also commenced preparations for the third ECOWAS Business Forum scheduled for September 2010.

### **2.3.2 Validation of the Protocol Agreement on Cooperation and Partnership between West African IGOs**

22. This activity was jointly driven by the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and the ECA Sub-regional Office for West Africa. The protocol was validated at a meeting of Heads of organisation and representatives of ECOWAS and UEMOA which took place in Accra, Ghana from 9 to 14 December 2009, following a meeting of experts from the Sub-regional Office and the West African intergovernmental organisations (IGOs).

23. Validation of this protocol was the culmination of a process initiated in Ouagadougou in December 2007 under the auspices of the ECA and aimed at creating a consultative forum for the region's IGOs. Subsequently, in order to overcome the difficulties in the way of collaboration between IGOs, thereby

mitigating their impact on the effectiveness of their interventions, the ECOWAS Commission raised this issue with the UEMOA Commission at a joint technical secretariat (JTS) meeting held from 18 to 19 October 2008, to discuss the creation of a consultative forum for the region's IGOs. The issue was endorsed by the meeting of Heads of Institution of the two Commissions on 20 October 2008.

24. The ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the UEMOA Commission, and with technical support from the ECA Sub-regional Office for West Africa, headed the initiative to draft a protocol agreement on cooperation and partnership between the West African intergovernmental organisations.
25. The draft protocol was adopted in Accra, Ghana on 14 December 2009 by the Heads of Institution, subject to amendment. The protocol enters into force between the parties upon its signature by their Heads. It was recommended that the draft of the protocol should be included in the agenda of the Summit of Heads of State and Government for the information of Their Excellencies, and with a view to obtaining their support. The protocol is scheduled to enter into force in 2010.

### **2.3.3 Gender Disaggregated Data Collection for Follow-up to the MDGs**

26. The MDG indicators and targets were reviewed in order to mainstream the gender factor. The report then analysed the gender-disaggregated data needed for the follow-up to the MDGs.
27. Two main methods were proposed, namely the quantitative and qualitative methods. However, it was found that a combination of both approaches would be the most useful for the production of gender-disaggregated data which would give a more detailed picture of the gender-specific aspects of the MDGs. A presentation of these methodologies and the improvements contributed by the ECA was made to the experts from the Member States.

### **2.3.4 Technical Document on Budget Policy and Financing of Economic and Social Development in West Africa**

28. The report examines innovative strategies for expanding the base of public resources, thereby enabling West African governments to intensify their fight against poverty in the sub-region. It reviews the characteristics of budgetary policy in the West African countries and examines progress achieved, and the challenges

and prospects for budget execution in West Africa. In conclusion, the report underscores the fact that while external aid remains necessary to development, there is a need for the governments of the ECOWAS Member States, and in particular those with a fiscal revenue/GDP ratio of less than 20%, to intensify their efforts to mobilise resources internally.

### **2.3.5 Preparations Ahead of the Organisation of the ECOWAS Business Forum**

29. In 2007, the ECOWAS Commission, as part of efforts to mobilise the private sector and obtain its contribution to regional competitiveness and development, inaugurated the ECOWAS business forum in Accra, Ghana. The objective of the initiative was to boost the contribution of private capital to the regional integration process. In 2008, by a Decision of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, the business forum was institutionalised as an annual event. The 2008 forum was held in Ouagadougou around the theme “Making the best use of agricultural potential through regional partnership”. The third ECOWAS business forum and the sixth ECOWAS trade fair will both be held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in 2010 from 27 September to 1 October and from 1 to 10 October respectively.
30. The third forum will address the issue of making the best use of energy resources in order to boost the competitiveness of the West African economy. Preparatory meetings were held in Abidjan in July 2009 and in Abuja in December 2009, to ensure the success of the forum. Modalities for effective communications coverage of the event were examined, as well as necessary measures for the organisation of an award ceremony for good students and the most successful actors in the business community. For information purposes, the organisation of the third ECOWAS business forum and the sixth ECOWAS trade fair in Abidjan was approved by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government at their 36<sup>th</sup> ordinary summit in Abuja on 22 June 2009. The Office is co-organizer of the forum and as such participates in the activities of the Scientific Committee and the steering Committee.

### **2.3.6 Preparation of a Strategic Framework for the Programming of Activities in the 2012-2013 Biennium**

31. The strategic guidelines for the two-year period from 2012 to 2013 are informed by the repositioning of the ECA in response to the outcomes of the World Summit on

the attainment of the millennium development goals and the Directives issued by the thirty-eighth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers.

32. The strategic objective for the period under review is to strengthen the capacity of the Member States and IGOs to formulate and implement economic and social policies. The interventions of the Sub-regional Office will continue to be guided by the special needs of the countries within the general framework of NEPAD, the African Union, the ECOWAS Vision 2020 which focuses on improving the welfare of the West African peoples, and international development agendas, including the MDGs.
33. In the light of previous outcomes, and mindful of the current situation in the sub-region the expected results are: i) strengthening of the capacity of the Member States to formulate and harmonise macroeconomic and sectoral development policies at the national and sub-regional levels; ii) strengthening of the human resource and institutional capacity of sub-regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Mano River Union (MRU) and other intergovernmental and civil society organisations.
34. The interventions of the Sub-regional Office for this period will cover areas as diverse as macroeconomic policy, trade, infrastructure, human capacity development, gender equality, governance, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, agriculture, food security and the environment.
35. Implementation strategy will centre on the following key areas:
  - encouraging dialogue on development policies in the West African sub-region;
  - setting up platforms and forums for political dialogue at the sub-regional level;
  - networking teams of countries within the United Nations system and other partners for the purposes of sharing information and knowledge, and circulating the outcomes.

### **3. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ECA DIVISIONS**

#### **3.1. The Contribution to the ERA**

36. The Sub-regional Office collaborated with the Economic Development and NEPAD Division at Headquarters, on the publication of the 2010 Economic Report on Africa. This year's report focuses on the issue of promoting virile and sustained

growth for the reduction of underemployment and unemployment in Africa. The major conclusions will be presented at the African Union Council of Ministers for Economic Affairs.

37. The report adopts the starting point that none of the available studies on employment and growth proposes any solutions which will enable Africa to use the crisis as an opportunity to redirect its long-term growth objectives and reduce its unemployment levels and vulnerability to external shocks. ERA 2010 endeavours to refocus the general opinion on economic policy in Africa away from its emphasis on orthodox stabilisation, advocating instead a pragmatic approach to growth within a job-creating policy framework. This framework should encourage the implementation of expansionist budgetary and monetary policies by the African countries to enable them to approach closer to their growth and employment potential without upsetting macroeconomic stability and/or the sustainability of their internal and external equilibrium. Discussion on these issues should enable the continent to adopt a common position on its growth and employment strategies which will in turn inform the substance of negotiations with donors and international financial institutions.
38. In addition to its general contribution to the preparation of the report, the Sub-regional Office also prepared a case study on Ghana.

### **3.2. Framework Report on Mining Regimes in Africa: Regional Consultative Workshops**

39. The overall objective of the work being undertaken by ECA through its various Divisions and Subregional Offices in collaboration with the African Union Commission is to develop a framework to assist member States to craft mining regimes which ensure that the exploitation of minerals contributes to sustainable development. A Draft Framework produced by of a multidisciplinary team put together by the ECA Big Table of 2007 was subjected to review through two Consultative Workshops (Accra, November 25 to 27, 2009) and Kigali (December 2 to 4, 2009) to enhance its content so as to improve its usefulness and relevance as an input into developing future generations of development-oriented mineral regimes in Africa.

40. The participants at these workshops included member States and other stakeholders. In Accra, the Workshop was attended by delegates from 10 ECOWAS member States (Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone). ECOWAS supported the participation of the member States. In Kigali, member States of the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community (Burundi, Djibouti, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) attended the workshop.
41. In addition to other more detailed recommendations on content and structural issues provided by participants, the workshops recommended the following; (i) The Report should provide detail on the quantum of mineral resources (prospectivity information) which the continent has, a map showing distribution and tabulate resources and reserves of minerals; (ii) the report should provide focussed policy recommendations to guide member States, these recommendations should be preceded by a discussion of respective policy challenges and then provide options; (iii) the discussion on the Artisanal and Small Scale Mining include all the challenges, emphasis should be placed on transforming the sector into a sustainable form of livelihood; (iv) the report should capture regional policy harmonisation programmes in greater detail; (iv) the report should link the promotion of linkages in the sector through value addition with development corridors/spatial development initiatives and (vi) the report should provide best practices on Revenue collection and Management; address capacity issues at national level; discuss natural resources and conflict issues, highlight the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility.
42. The report needs to be revised before it goes through the Validation scheduled for May 2010 in Addis Ababa. As a member of the ISG, ECA-WA will continue to provide technical input towards the completion of the Framework Report until its endorsement by AU Ministers Responsible for Minerals Development in October 2010 and adoption by the Heads of States and Government Summit in February 2011.
43. The report needs to be revised before it goes through the Validation scheduled for May 2010 in Addis Ababa. As a member of the ISG, ECA-WA will continue to provide technical input towards the completion of the Framework Report until its

endorsement by AU Ministers Responsible for Minerals Development in October 2010 and adoption by the Heads of States and Government Summit in February 2011.

44. Once the Framework Report is finalised and has been successfully taken through the AUC processes, templates, guidelines and toolkits will be developed and ECA-WA will then provide technical assistance to ECOWAS and member States to incorporate the recommendations of the framework into the Mining Directive and into mining regimes of member States. The primary concern, during the present cycle of activities, should be that of fostering the growing collaboration with partners within the United Nations system as well as external partners. This will not only facilitate mobilisation of extra budgetary resources for the implementation of that part of the ECA-WA programme which depends on such resources, but also and above all, boost the synergy of the interventions of the institutions serving the sub-region.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

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45. During the just concluded period, the Sub-regional Office pursued the implementation of its cooperation agreements with ECOWAS, and its joint programmes with the West African sub-region's IGOs. The move to synergise the interventions of the IGOs which was initiated in 2007, has been pursued, culminating in the sponsorship by ECOWAS and UEMOA of a protocol agreement between sub-regional IGOs relating to the synergising of their actions for sub-regional development.
46. Progress has been achieved in the implementation of the long-term cooperation programme with ECOWAS. This was the observation made during an initial evaluation of the cooperation programme. However, the experts responsible for the conduct of this evaluation exercise also observed many shortcomings. Immediately after the conclusion of ICE 12 in Ouagadougou, the partners set to work to correct the shortcomings. This effort will be pursued during the course of meetings at both the managerial and experts' levels, and it is expected that the final evaluation which is scheduled to take place during the 2010-2011 biennium, will adjudge the end result to be completely satisfactory.
47. The Sub-regional Office also contributed to the execution of United Nations system projects in Niger through the active participation of its staff in monitoring implementation of the framework cooperation agreement between the UN system and Niger.
48. The Sub-regional Office embarked upon its new cycle of activities at the beginning of 2010 in full compliance with the ECA strategic guideline: To make the best use of regional resources for the economic development of West Africa.