



SUB REGIONAL OFFICE FOR WEST AFRICA

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**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
PERIOD JUNE 2007 – JUNE 2008**



Contents of the report

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JUNE 2007 TO JUNE 2008	3
2.1 Follow-up of recommendations of the tenth ICE	3
2.2 Preparation of working documents for submission to the Eleventh session of the ICE	4
2.3 Implementation of other components of the 2006-2007 work programme	5
2.4 Advisory activities	8
3. ORIENTATION AND MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE 2008-2009 PROGRAMME OF WORK	13
3.1 Strategic orientations of the 2008-2009 programme of activity	13
3.2 The 2008-2009 programme of activity	13
4. MAJOR ON-GOING INITIATIVES	15
4.1 Multiannual cooperation agreement with the ECOWAS Commission	15
4.2 Forum of West African regional integration organisations	15
4.3 African Wealth Retention Strategy	16
5. CONCLUSION	19

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Eleventh Intergovernmental Committee of Experts is taking place at a significant moment. This year the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. After half a century in the service of integration of African economies, and several years after the implementation of the Commission's new strategic orientation, the Sub-regional office has recently deployed efforts to translate this orientation into acts. Thus, since the tenth ICE meeting, which was held in June 2007 in Niamey, Niger, the SRO-WA has paid particular attention to making the new ECA strategy operational in order to ensure optimum use of regional resources to accelerate integration in West Africa.

2. In the light of the ECA's new orientation focusing on enhancing regional integration through optimum use of the resources of the African continent, the SRO-WA drafted a wealth creation and retention strategy that is based on harnessing sub-regional resources and institutions to meet Africa's development priorities. This strategy will serve as the reference framework for the proceedings. It was adopted by the High Level Forum on governance organised by the SRO-WA in Bamako, Mali in November 2007 and aims at providing Africa with a growing wealth creation and retention capacity, in order to bridge the gap between an Africa that is rich and Africans that are not.

3. The Bamako Forum concluded that in order to implement this strategy, there was a need to build capable, responsive and accountable states throughout West Africa; to ensure that regionalisation provides more opportunities for each country to develop thanks to the economic and fiscal base of the sub-region, and to ensure that globalisation provides Africans with growth accompanied by peace and prosperity. Within the framework of implementing this strategy, and on the basis of the principle of delivery as one, the SRO-WA has instated a platform of cooperation with its principal partners, that is, the Business Forum, the Civil Society Forum, and the Forum of regional integration organisations, who will all be acting in synergy to better develop the resources of the sub-region. This new strategy will now underpin all the activities of the SRO-WA.

4. This period also marked the end of the 2006-2007 biennium during which almost all the activities programmed for the 2006-2007 period were carried out, with a completion rate of 97%. It further marked the start of the 2008-2009 biennium and the launch of a new cycle of activities. Since the SRO-WA presented a detailed report on its programme implementation to the tenth ICE in Niamey in June 2007, this report covers the period from June 2007 to June 2008, which straddles two biennia.

5. This activity report will thus be a second part of the activity report for the 2006-2007 biennium, the first part of which was discussed in Niamey in June 2007 during the tenth session of the ICE. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to describe the state of progress on the 2008-2009 programme of activities that has just begun. The format and structure of this biennium's programme of work are in conformity with the logical framework of the results based programme-budget introduced by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2003. The context for the implementation of the different activities remains that of reforming the ECA on the basis of the sub-region's development priorities, within the overall context of the United Nations reform.

6. It must be recalled that the ECA reform led to the selection of two fundamental axes for its interventions, i.e. (1) enhancing regional integration in support of the vision and priorities of the African Union and member states, and (2) taking into account the special needs of Africa and the emerging challenges on the international scene. The reform has continued in the sub-regions with the strengthening of the ECA's sub-regional offices, which are now expected to serve as the main partners of the regional economic communities, United Nations System country teams, and other partners on the ground. As part of this, the SRO-WA signed a multiannual cooperation agreement with ECOWAS on August 17 2007 in

Abuja, Nigeria and organised the first Forum of Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on December 16 and 17 2007.

7. The first part of this report describes the activities of the SRO-WA between the end of the tenth session of the ICE and the beginning of the eleventh session. The second part describes the programme of activities for the current biennium and takes stock of the major initiatives taken by the SRO-WA as part of its mission: optimum use of regional resources to reinforce integration, which is the key to rapid development for West Africa.

2. ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JUNE 2007 TO JUNE 2008

8. Activities carried out during the period are described according to the following three axes:

- Follow-up of operational recommendations of the ICE
- Preparation of working documents for the eleventh session of the ICE
- Preparatory activities for the implementation of other components of the work programme approved for the 2008-2009 biennium.

2.1. Follow-up of recommendations of the tenth ICE

9. The tenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts addressed a number of recommendations to member states, the RECs, and the ECA. This section goes over the recommendations made to the ECA to report on their implementation. Overall, it can be noted that there has been an improvement in the SRO-WA's communication policy in countries, leading to improved transmission of the positions and recommendations of studies. Harmonisation of economic statistics has been accelerated, and economic reports were produced jointly with the RECs.

10. In response to these recommendations, the ECA Sub-regional office for West Africa undertook a number of joint activities including the following:

- Signing of a multiannual programme with ECOWAS (see point 4 below), whose implementation started with the joint organising of three major activities during the period. The first activity was the SRO-WA's participation in organising the West Africa Business Forum, which was held in Accra. The two institutions jointly organised the high level meeting on governance that took place in Bamako in November 2007 (see point 4 below), as well as the forum of sub-regional IGOs in December 2007 (see point 4 below).
- Drafting of the economic report in conjunction with ECOWAS, in line with the recommendations of the tenth ICE. That report, which is one of the working papers for this meeting, represents a precedent that is planned to be extended to other IGOs in the next editions. The joint drafting exercise contributed to improving the statistics and analyses used to carry out a diagnosis of the economic situation of member states and the sub-region and formulate the appropriate recommendations.

11. The SRO-WA, in conjunction with ECOWAS, also participated in the review of the West African multilateral monitoring database (ECOMAC). This provided an opportunity to harmonise data collection, processing and management methods in the sub-region (see point 2.5 below).

12. As far as the SRO-WA's communication policy towards member states is concerned, the office is still seeking to identify the best means of communication. Currently, the SRO-WA is trying out an internet platform for sharing knowledge and exchanging information with its partners. This platform, which is an addition to the resources of the SRO-WA's website, provides resources and possibilities for online discussion among IGOs, experts from member states, the ECA and its various offices, as well as the whole of the United Nations System, on issues related to sub-regional development.

2.2 Preparation of working documents for submission to the Eleventh session of the ICE

13. In line with the programme of work approved for the 2008-2009 period, the SRO-WA undertook to prepare two major statutory reports to be examined at the eleventh session of the ICE. These are (i) the Report on economic and social conditions in West Africa in 2007 and prospects for 2008, with a study on bio-fuels for the thematic part. The Ad hoc Expert Group meeting that preceded the ICE meeting focused on the search for synergy among West African sub-regional IGOs.

Report on economic and social conditions in 2007 and prospects for 2008

14. The report on economic and social conditions in West Africa is a statutory publication that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Sub-regional Office for West Africa submits annually to the sub-regional Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for review. It analyses and assesses recent economic developments and the prospects for the sub-region and its countries. In particular, it provides basic data and information about recent development policies, with a view to generating broad debate among member countries, intergovernmental organisations and other development agents. It also includes recommendations that are discussed and supplemented by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts before being disseminated to member states and sub-regional organisations, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of development policies and programmes.

15. The specificity of this year's edition is that it draws inspiration from the guidelines of the United Nations General Assembly and the exercise to reposition the ECA, which both give priority to strengthening cooperation with regional integration institutions. It also falls within the framework of the multiannual cooperation agreement with ECOWAS, signed in August 2007 by the SRO-WA and the ECOWAS Commission, and which calls among others, for the joint drafting of the present report. The report is thus the result of the collaboration between the two institutions. The report includes a section on economic conditions and a thematic section entitled "Harnessing Africa's resources: What strategy for the development of the bio-fuel sector in West Africa?"

16. The first part of the report, which was drafted using data obtained from ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African Development Bank (ADB), and member states is divided into three chapters: (1) The chapter on the international climate examines the recent performance of the world economy and deduces its impact on sub-regional economies. (2) Recent developments in the economic situation of West Africa, and (3) prospects for 2008. It also includes an annexe on the economic situation in 2007 and prospects for 2008, broken down by country, in addition to statistical annexes.

Bio-fuels: what strategy for developing the sector in West Africa?

17. This is the thematic part of the report on economic and social conditions. The study attempts to identify sub-regional synergies that can serve as the required bedrock for the development of a solid bio-fuels agro-industry sector in West African countries. The objective is to reduce the volumes of fossil fuels as they seriously affect the cost of oil imports, while creating jobs and added value, thus improving the ability of populations to provide for their own needs and at the same time contributing to the worldwide effort of fighting against global warming.

18. Specifically, the study aims at: drawing the attention of West African countries to the sound existing and future economic prospects for bio-fuels in the world; to suggest to West African countries and economic operators that they adopt a strategic approach that establishes synergy within their comparative advantages for the development of the bio-fuels sector. It also seeks to generate a willingness on the part of private sector operators to set up partnerships for the establishment of one or

more West African multinational bio-fuel production and marketing companies. Such companies must be of a sufficient size to contribute to sub-regional growth without compromising food security.

2.3. Implementation of other components of the 2006-2007 work programme

The Bamako meeting: "Reshaping governance systems to 'Delivery as One': building capable, responsive and accountable States throughout West Africa".

19. The objective of the meeting of high level experts held in Bamako from November 27 to 29 2007 was to bring together various actors in governance, that is, representatives of political parties, civil society, traditional institutions, business circles, and experienced researchers in the area of governance. The aim was to carry out in-depth reflection about innovative and holistic strategies and action that could strengthen the capacity of West African countries to give impetus to a system of sound administrative, political, cultural, social, and economic governance. The idea is to ensure that each country in the West African sub-region demonstrates its effectiveness; to reposition West Africa, and to reshape globalisation in such a way as to provide African citizens with large scale economic growth that will make it possible to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

20. The Bamako meeting provided an opportunity for:

- reshaping governance systems to 'Delivery as One' in order to build capable, responsive and accountable States throughout West Africa; and
- suggesting avenues to be explored in order to respond to the concerns of Africa and Africans who continue to wonder whether "governments, political parties, the private sector and civil society in this African sub-region are willing and determined to Deliver as One to build capable, responsive and accountable States".

21. In response to this concern, the Bamako meeting formulated the following conclusions and recommendations that are geared towards:

- Strengthening the collective willingness and determination to instate a system of good governance in Africa.
- Building capable, responsive and accountable States in West Africa.
- Paving the way to improving governance systems in West Africa.

22. The major innovative act coming out of this meeting was the resolution drafted in favour of the emergence of African investors who can take control of major groups in Africa to create and retain wealth.

23. The main thrust of this resolution bears on the need to create a new breed of investors, so that West African resources can be exploited using globalised capital in which groups of African investors represent a significant part.

24. In order to reinforce and sustain the momentum initiated in the Bamako meeting, the SRO-WA-WA and the ECOWAS Commission were invited to carry out the following activities:

- A joint brief-back mission to the headquarters of ECOWAS (Abuja) and the ECA (Addis Ababa);
- Organise public fora in the ECOWAS space in order to improve awareness on the part of stakeholders and the population about the required change in attitudes. Each forum is to be facilitated by a working group made up of the Secretariat and three people selected from the list of participants in Bamako;

- After the round of public fora, a regional forum on investment in Africa will be organised with the underlying strategic objective of creating well informed investors in products that can be vectors of regional integration, such as gold and oil.

Prospectus on integration in West Africa

25. The SRO-WA has drafted a prospectus on integration in Africa. The document is intended to give an overview of the major achievements and challenges of integration in West Africa. In particular, the prospectus describes the institutional arrangements, significant achievements, and future prospects. It recalls that efforts to achieve integration began as far back as the colonial period in West Africa, with the creation of the French Colonies, and the establishment in 1912 of the West African Currency Board, an attempt by the British to give their colonies a separate identity. These efforts continued after independence with the setting up of a number of groupings, none of which lasted very long.

26. However, it was mainly in the 1970s that such efforts were accelerated, first with the setting up of the West African Economic Community in 1972, bringing together the francophone countries. This later became the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Subsequently, ECOWAS was created in 1975 and the Mano River Union in 1973. In addition to these major institutions, countries have also set up several specialised institutions in different sectors to organise and promote integration in West Africa.

27. After reviewing the major achievements in the areas of trade liberalisation, monetary integration, conflict prevention and management, and free circulation of goods and persons, the prospectus dwells on the significant challenges such as financing integration, institutional cooperation and coordination, mechanisms for monitoring community decisions, and private sector and popular participation.

Assessment of the ECOWAS medium-term strategic plan and the UEMOA Regional Economic Programme, in relation to the implications of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

28. The study first reviewed the ECOWAS 2007-2010 SP and UEMOA's 2006-2010 REP with a view to highlighting those points that require coordination in order to ensure enhanced effectiveness and results in their implementation. It then sought to assess the relevance of the strategic orientations of both plans in relation to the preconditions and accompanying measures recommended by those negotiating the EPA between West Africa and the European Union.

29. Two facts emerged at the end of this study. Although each regional community has its development plan (in the case of UEMOA, for its eight member countries and ECOWAS for the whole sub-region), the first fact to be noted was the broad similarity in the strategic orientations of both RECs. The second fact was that given their reference periods, neither of these plans would have been implemented before the entry into force of the EPA between West Africa and the European Union, which at the time was scheduled to be in January 2008. As a result, the preconditions raised by the EPA negotiators would not be achieved before that deadline and although the accompanying measures might have been defined, they will probably not have been implemented.

Political parties and governance in West Africa

30. This report took stock of the role played by political parties in countries in the sub-region in instating good governance. On the basis of studies carried out on a sample of political parties in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger, it attempted to evaluate their internal policies, organisational structures, the method of selecting leaders and candidates, their access to resources, and existing local and national tensions. The objective was to suggest concrete measures and a code of conduct that the different political players in the countries could adopt in order to bring the democratisation process more in line with the requirements of good governance.

Developing traditional governance institutions in West Africa

31. This study is part of the dynamic process of promoting a comprehensive system of good governance in Africa. It draws inspiration from the ECA's strategic orientation, which seeks to ensure optimum use of regional resources. The study attempted to explore the ways and means of reforming and integrating traditional governance institutions and modern institutions in such a way as to promote democratic governance in the sub-region.

32. The analyses were based on empirical case studies carried out in the Gambia and a desk review carried out in Burkina Faso and the sub-region. The primary and secondary data thus gathered made it possible to draw up a typology of traditional governance institutions in Burkina Faso and the Gambia, focusing on their relevance, and their strengths and limitations, in particular in relation to transparency, accountability, and gender issues. It was also possible to analyse the role played by traditional institutions in the social, economic, and political spheres, in particular in conflict prevention and resolution, dispute settlement, and resource management, as well as the links between traditional and modern institutions, for example government and ancillary institutions, political parties, etc.

33. A number of strategies have been suggested, to improve these links in order to draw the greatest advantage from the role that traditional institutions in the two countries of the study can play in improving macroeconomic and sectoral policies (health, education, land conservation and management, conflict prevention and resolution, promotion of women, gender equality, etc.) for the purpose of giving a new boost to sustainable development.

Evaluation of policy convergence in the regional economic communities (RECs) for successful regional integration.

34. This report attempted to trace the progress made in applying policy convergence criteria in West Africa. It also reviewed the prospects for creating a monetary zone in West Africa. More specifically, the report examined the connection between monetary integration and real market integration; assessed the bases for nominal convergence in the regional economic communities, and presented an overview of the level of compliance of West African countries with the nominal convergence, in relation to the plan of action.

35. The analyses, based on country data and aggregated data for the UEMOA zone, ECOWAS and WAMZ, highlighted the fact that the convergence criteria related to inflation are overly stringent in both ECOWAS and UEMOA, and that they are not favourable for growth, given the level of development of member states. The same may be said about the criteria on budget and public debt in both spaces.

36. Beyond the question of appropriate convergence criteria, there are major policy differences between WAMZ and UEMOA in the area of the exchange rate system. WAMZ countries have adopted a flexible exchange rate, which is in line with best practices on the international scene. Within UEMOA, however, the system adopted is one of a fixed exchange rate. The choice of an exchange rate regime is a critical issue that needs to be revisited if there is any hope of successfully implementing a single track approach.

37. The report therefore recommends among other things that the convergence criteria in WAMZ and UEMOA be revised rapidly. This revision must be based on the conclusions of appropriate studies that will determine the precise range of criteria in line with the level of development of the member countries of each of the zones. It is also suggested that member countries set up national development plans and programmes that use the regional market or other regional considerations as their point of reference.

2.4. Advisory activities

Review of the West African multilateral monitoring database ECOMAC

38. The SRO-WA was invited by the ECOWAS Commission to participate in a technical meeting of regional institutions in charge of finalising the West African multilateral monitoring database (ECOMAC). This meeting was held from July 30 to August 3 2007 at the ECOWAS Community Computer Centre in Lome, Togo. This meeting was organised by ECOWAS in compliance with the recommendations of the regional workshop that was held in May 2007 in Lome, Togo, calling for the convening of a technical session of sub-regional institutions to finalise the database prior to the final launch of the ECOWAS monitoring system. The specific objectives of the meeting were to (1) finalise the technical framework and contents of the database; (2) review the statistics and IT protocol, and (3) finalise the guide for filling out the tables.

39. Where points (1) and (2) are concerned, the ECOWAS Commission drew up a draft regulation setting up the statistics and IT protocol on administration and management of the ECOWAS multilateral monitoring mechanism database, and submitted it to the meeting. The draft regulation covered three main areas, that is, (i) content of the database, (ii) updating (including validating) in members states and regional institutions, and (iii) implementation. It described the tasks of the different regional institutions, as well as those of member countries, in updating the database. It also specified the necessary arrangements for making it operational and for its possible revision. The meeting examined and amended the document and the statistical tables, and recommended that the ECOWAS Commission prepare an explanatory note about the database. Where the table filling guide is concerned, the meeting agreed that ECOWAS Commission needed to revise the guide, taking into account the amendments that had been made to the tables.

West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)

40. The Secretariat of the West African Civil Society Forum invited the SRO-WA to participate in the meeting of its Executive Committee between August 28 and 30 2007 in Cotonou, Benin. The objective of the meeting was to examine the operational situation of WACSOF and identify the ways and means of improving this situation. Specifically, the idea was to discuss and define the modalities for improving the functioning of this organisation, which was just emerging from an internal crisis; to activate its thematic working groups in order to extend the field of its programme activities; to start the process of drafting a strategic plan, and draft a plan of action for more active engagement of its members at country level.

41. It must be recalled that WACSOF was created in Accra, Ghana in 2003, under the impetus of ECOWAS, to give greater visibility to NGO activities in the area of sub-regional integration. A partnership was established between WACSOF and the ECA-SRO-WA following a working session between the two institutions during the visit by SRO-WA to Abuja in August 2007 as part of the preparation of the multiannual cooperation plan that now links the ECA and the ECOWAS Commission. It was agreed then that as an institution sponsored by ECOWAS, WACSOF should serve as the SRO-WA's point of entry for a partnership with the network of sub-regional NGOs. This has been the framework for the joint activities carried out by WACSOF and the ECA-SRO-WA since then.

42. WACSOF had invited the SRO-WA and other external partners and observers to the Cotonou meeting so that some neutral parties could shed light on the items on the agenda. The SRO-WA was therefore given an opportunity to make its contribution to identifying the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats for WACSOF. The meeting reviewed the manual on drafting a strategic plan for WACSOF, with the aim of identifying actors or members who work in the various thematic areas; listing the key issues in these areas; launching studies on the constraints to be removed in these areas; developing advocacy activities for problem solving, and enhancing the capacity of WACSOF to

implement these activities. It was agreed that pending the drafting of the strategic plan, the institution should continue its activities in its present sectors of intervention. The meeting therefore reviewed the activities and action plans in these areas, which are: agriculture and the environment, gender, democracy, human rights, governance and political affairs, peace and security, and regional integration.

Assistance to the Women's Network for Peace (REFEPA)

43. On the request of the Women's Network for Peace, a West African NGO, the SRO-WA sent a resource-person to serve as a facilitator at a capacity building workshop on conflict prevention and settlement in the Sahelo-Saharan region that took place in Niamey, Niger from September 17 to 21 2007. The workshop brought together women members of grassroots women's organisations involved in conflict management in the field. It was designed as a forum for establishing a consensus among these organisations in the face of the resurgence of conflicts in the northern parts of Niger and Mali in particular.

44. The presentation and comments made by the SRO-WA drew largely from the report of the United Nations Secretary General on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". The specific objectives of this exercise were to shed light on the causes and consequences of conflicts in general; to guide the participants' consideration of the case of the Sahelo-Saharan zone and Niger in particular, and to educate them on the harmful effects of conflict, based on the experience of other countries. In this case, this was done on the basis of work carried out by the SRO-WA in the Mano River Union and on the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. A subsequent objective was to strengthen their commitment to seek peace for development in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

45. At the end of the proceedings, the participants issued a number of recommendations addressed to the actors and protagonists in conflicts in general and those in the Sahelo-Saharan region in particular. They also adopted an action plan to guide their approach in the field and with the interested parties.

Participation in the Council of Ministers of the Liptako-Gourma authority

46. The authority for the integrated development of the Liptako-Gourma region (ALG) invited the SRO-WA to take part in the Council of Ministers of this institution that took place in Tillabéri, Niger on November 25 2007. This session was preceded by a preparatory Experts' meeting from November 12 to 23 2007. The Council of ministers adopted a number of documents submitted by the experts: the activity report of the Director General of the ALG, the Auditor's report, the programme of activities of the general management for 2008, and the 2008-2010 triennial investment programme. The Council of ministers specifically thanked the ECA Sub-regional office for West Africa for its technical and financial support that had made it possible to carry out a study on transforming the ALG into an integrated economic space.

Assistance to ECOWAS and UEMOA within the ambit of negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements in West Africa.

47. Upon an invitation by the ECOWAS Commission, the SRO-WA led two ECA delegations, one to a technical meeting of the ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions in Abuja, Nigeria from February 7 to 8 2008, and the other to an experts' meeting and the extraordinary council of the Ministerial Monitoring Committee (MMC) on economic partnership agreement negotiations between West Africa and the European Union, which took place in Nouakchott, Mauritania from February 18 to 21 2008. During the meeting in Abuja, the SRO-WA contributed to the revision and amendment of the technical documents that served as the basis for the discussions in Nouakchott. In Nouakchott, the role of the SRO-WA was mainly to monitor the discussions and gather the points of view and priorities of member countries, in order to improve the coordination of the ECA's assistance to ECOWAS. In the sidelines of the Nouakchott meeting, the ECA delegation had talks with the ECOWAS Commission and confirmed it

readiness to continue to provide assistance, in particular in the area of the study on an external tariff and the creation of a fifth tariff band.

48. It must be recalled that this initiative of the ECA and the SRO-WA follows a meeting that took place in the margin of the African Union summit in January 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between the Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, and Dr. Chambas, president of the ECOWAS Commission, during which Mr. Janneh promised to support ECOWAS in its efforts to establish a common external tariff, as well as in the negotiation of the economic partnership agreement with the European Union.

Organisation of the first ECOWAS Business forum in conjunction with the ECOWAS Commission

49. The first ECOWAS Business Forum was organised by the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Sub-regional office for West Africa (ECA/SRO-WA) and other partners such as WHO and ECOBANK.

50. The forum was a long-awaited opportunity for private sector to bring together high level economic operators to discuss issues of common interest and suggest what they consider as appropriate solutions.

51. Four main results emerged from the Forum: (i) Adoption of a plan of action for the implementation of ECOWAS strategies relating to a common market, the business environment, a common currency, and the mechanism for funding integration. (ii) Support of the private sector to ECOWAS in its recently adopted option of postponing the signing of the EPA with the European Union to a later date in order to adapt it better to the region's development requirements. (iii) Renewed launch of the activities of professional associations to promote the exchange of experience and know-how. (iv) Highlight on the need for the sub-region and member countries to realise that they will not develop sustainably unless they mobilise effectively, their own resources (human, natural, financial), in particular by developing their capacity to retain a larger part of the wealth that is produced using their human resources as well as their natural and underground resources, rather than relying on aid.

Assistance to the ECOWAS Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU/ECOWAS)

52. As a member of the Working Group that was set up by ECOWAS to conceive and establish a regional infrastructure Project Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU), the SRO-WA attended the fourth meeting of the group in Abuja, Nigeria on March 2 and 3 2008. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the ADB, the World Bank, UEMOA, and ECOWAS, as well as Nigeria and Senegal. Three other meetings had previously been held, and various comments had been made about the different stages of the study on this unit, since it was launched in April 2007. The objective of the fourth meeting was to adopt the final report of the study, which will be submitted to the next ECOWAS Council of Ministers.

53. The PPDU will have the task of helping countries to improve their preparation and coordination of infrastructure projects, especially NEPAD projects in West Africa. To this end, it will assist in preparing briefs to seek financing, and will encourage private sector participation in project implementation. Setting up the PPDU was a recommendation of the 53rd ECOWAS Council of Ministers held in January 2005. The aim was to accelerate the implementation of priority projects selected under the NEPAD plan of action.

Developing a framework and guidelines for land tenure policies and reforms in Africa

54. The African Union, the ECA, and the ADB have started developing a framework and guidelines for land tenure policies and reforms in Africa. The process of developing the framework and guidelines is being carried out in close collaboration with member countries, the RECs, and other stakeholders. The framework and guidelines will supplement regional and national processes of drafting and implementing land tenure policies. The framework and directives, as well as the modalities for implementation, will be adopted by the heads of state and government through the various decision-making bodies of the African Union.

55. The process of developing and adopting a framework and guidelines for land tenure policies and reforms in Africa covers several stages: A regional consultative workshop, which was organised in Addis Ababa from March 27 to 29 2008, and made it possible to come to agreement on the components and topics to be covered by the framework and guidelines for land tenure policies and reforms in Africa. Consultations for the sub-regional evaluations, which will produce a sub-regional evaluation report that defines the draft sub-regional framework and guidelines for land tenure policies and reforms, as well as a sub-regional reference document describing the key components and processes that are required in the medium and long term, to facilitate the implementation of the framework.

56. As far as the West African sub-region is concerned, the sub-regional evaluation report was reviewed in Niamey from March 15 to 17, during a meeting facilitated by the ECA Sub-regional office for West Africa. The review was carried out on the basis of comments made on the document drafted by the ADB, FAO, and the ECA. The regional consultative workshop on the topic was held in Ouagadougou from April 15 to 18 2008. It made it possible to arrive at a consensus on the priority land tenure issues in the sub-region and define the recommendations that are expected to be introduced into the framework for action and orientation of the West African land tenure policy. The next stage is for the documents to be submitted to the ministers and then to the heads of state.

Process of implementing the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), drafted by the Gender Division of ECA

57. The SRO-WA carried out some technical support missions to Cape Verde and Senegal in 2007, in collaboration with the team from the headquarters Gender Division. During these missions, the teams facilitated training workshops to educate national officials on AGDI; provided methodologies and tools for AGDI data collection, analysis and interpretation, and explained how to use AGDI as a socio-economic and policy planning tool, as well as for implementing gender-sensitive policies. The missions also contributed to training the selected research team in each country on how to collect, analyse, and interpret AGDI data and note the score on the women's progress scoreboard.

Contribution to the activities of the African Peer Review Mechanism

58. The SRO-WA participated actively in the review process in Benin and Burkina Faso as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism. As a member of the evaluation team, throughout 2007, the SRO-WA participated in the critical review of the self-evaluation reports and the preliminary programme of action. In 2008, it participated actively in conducting the various interviews with different socio-professional groups and authorities, and in the drafting of the evaluation mission's final report.

Contribution to activities of the country teams

59. The SRO-WA intensified its contribution to the work of the United Nations System (UNS) in Niger, in particular under the framework of the United Nations System reform process. The main activities were in the following areas: formulating the UNDAF; drafting the strategic orientation paper on "Reducing inequalities and enhancing the social protection of vulnerable groups", and defining the

position of the UNS in relation to the priority axis of "Reducing inequalities and enhancing the social protection of vulnerable groups", on the basis of a review of Niger's PRDS paper.

60. The SRO-WA also provided support to the Ministry for the promotion of women in drafting a national gender policy for Niger, and participated in the review of this document. The gender policy is to serve as the reference framework for promoting gender equity and equality in Niger. Also, within the context of the UNS gender thematic group, the SRO-WA provided technical support to the process of drafting a national gender policy for Niger, through the monitoring committee that was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Women's affairs and Child Protection. The aim of this monitoring committee was to support the process of drafting the gender policy by providing guidance to the consultancy firm through its comments on the document. The SRO-WA also participated in the drafting of a national policy on regional integration for the Republic of Niger.

61. In December 2007, the SRO-WA was in Praia, Cape Verde to take part in the fourth high level meeting organised by the group supporting the transition of the government of Cape Verde from the category of LDCs to that of a middle-income country.

62. The SRO-WA also participated in the roundtable meeting of donors for the Gambia, which was held in London, England in February 2008, and in the meeting of the board of ACMAD, which was held in Casablanca at the same period.

3. ORIENTATION AND MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE 2008-2009 PROGRAMME OF WORK

3.1. Strategic orientations of the 2008-2009 programme of activity

63. The strategic orientation of the 2008-2009 biennium is based on the extended mission of the ECA, as defined after the outcome of the World Summit on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the directives issued by the thirty-eight session of the Conference of Ministers.

64. The long-term objective is to promote harmonisation of national policies in the different sectors, to support integration efforts and thus consolidate the regional economic communities (RECs), within the general context of the African Union. Another objective is to promote the realisation of the goals set by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In the light of previous results and the current situation in the sub-region, the expected outcomes are as follows: i) Enhancement of member countries' capacity to draft and harmonise macro-economic development policies and sector policies at both country and sub-regional level. ii) Strengthening of the human and institutional capacities of RECs and other IGOs to enable them coordinate and monitor the regional priority programmes/priorities under NEPAD. iii) Consolidation of the partnership with United Nations institutions, civil society, and above all, the private sector.

3.2. The 2008-2009 programme of activity

65. The objective of the programme of activity for this biennium is to strengthen the capacity of member countries for regional integration, by carrying out targeted, specific and priority activities for sub-regional development, within the general context of NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals.

66. More specifically, the intention is to assist member States, ECOWAS, UEMOA, the Mano River Union, and other intergovernmental organisations, as well as civil society organisations in drafting and implementing policies and programmes in areas relating to food security, the environment and sustainable development, private sector development, investment promotion, employment, poverty reduction, and post-conflict reconstruction. At the same time, the regional partnership and partnership with member states will be enhanced.

67. The organic structure of the programme includes analytical work that is aimed at supporting policy advocacy and drafting documents for the ICE, the deliberation body, in order to foster policy dialogue in its meetings. The analytical work will be supplemented and reinforced with operational activities aimed at consolidating the technical cooperation with member States and regional economic communities and at strengthening national capacities by organising group training sessions, workshops, expert group meetings and special events focusing on critical topical issues. Among the specific activities included in the programme are the drafting of four parliamentary documents, three non-recurring publications, one recurring publication, two training workshops, about ten advisory services, and two field projects. Two statutory meetings will be held, as well as four expert group meetings, two in each year.

68. A report on the state of progress in the implementation of international and regional integration agendas, including NEPAD, the MDGs, and other sub-regional initiatives will be published in 2008.

69. Four ad hoc expert group meetings will be organised during this biennium. The first, to be organised in 2008, will focus on an emerging development problem facing the sub-region; the initial reflection appears to be moving towards the issue of the food crisis. The second meeting in 2008 is a consultative meeting of experts from the RECs, IGOs, and the United Nations System. The third ad hoc

expert group meeting will be devoted to an evaluation of the multiannual ECOWAS-ECA programme, while the fourth will carry out an analysis of a report on the best use of research and development to support agricultural transformation and the development of agro-industry in West Africa. The latter two meetings are scheduled to be held in 2009.

70. In addition to these activities, it is planned to take stock of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro decision, emphasising in particular air transport security in West Africa. A forum on West African development, with particular emphasis on the important issue of youth employment will also be organised.

71. In the area of training, two workshops have been scheduled. The first will aimed at ten (10) experts from member countries and will be centred on improving effective public-private partnerships for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the second will focus on sharing experience in developing and implementing poverty reduction strategies in West Africa.

4. MAJOR ON-GOING INITIATIVES

72. Three major initiatives may be mentioned under this heading: The ECOWAS-ECA cooperation agreement, dissemination of the African Wealth Creation and Retention Strategy, and the Forum of West African IGOs.

4.1 Multiannual cooperation agreement with the ECOWAS Commission

73. Following a series of consultations between Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, president of the ECOWAS Commission and Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the ECA Sub-regional office for West Africa and the ECOWAS Commission finalised and signed a multiannual programme of cooperation at the end of an ECA mission to the ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, between August 13 and 17 2008. This initiative falls within the framework of the ECA repositioning exercise and the new orientation of its sub-regional offices as contained in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/61/471 of September 27 2006) and the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/61/234 of January 31 2007). Through these provisions, the regional offices have been given the mandate to work in close collaboration with sub-regional institutions, which are their principal partners.

74. Drawing inspiration from the on-going reforms in the ECOWAS Commission and that institution's strategic plan, the multiannual programme sets the framework for the cooperation between the ECA-SRO-WA and the Commission, centred on two main objectives: (1) Support the capacity building efforts of the ECOWAS Commission in line with its vision and strategic plan. (2) Enhance joint regional integration activities. The programme then goes on to indicate the areas to be covered. These include institutional consolidation of the Commission; support for policy design and advocacy in the sub-region; monitoring regional integration and the state of the economic situation of West Africa (in particular through drafting joint reports); support for implementation of NEPAD, and assistance on issues of trade, gender, promotion of good governance, and climate change.

75. It was agreed that the multiannual programme would be revised and supplemented on the basis of the results of the on-going reforms, and of the implementation of the ECOWAS Commission's strategic plan. Professor Lambert N Bamba, Commissioner for macro-economic policy from the ECOWAS Commission, and Mr. Abdoulaye Niang, Director of the Sub-regional office for West Africa from ECA, were appointed to serve as their institutions' focal points for all matters relating to the multiannual programme. Since then, several activities carried out during the period under review were carried out jointly with the ECOWAS Commission.

4.2 Forum of West African regional integration organisations

76. Under the framework of the partnership agreement signed in August 2007 between the ECA's Sub-regional office for West Africa (SRO-WA-WA) and the ECOWAS Commission, the two institutions jointly organised a meeting of the High Level Group of Experts on the theme "Harnessing West African regional integration resources and institutions to respond to the development priorities of Africa" from December 16 to 17 2007 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The meeting was attended by 23 experts and officials from various intergovernmental organisations.

77. The principal objective of the meeting, which was part of the move to accelerate sub-regional integration, was to bring together regional integration institutions in a neutral environment to enable them to brainstorm in a strategic, constructive and consensual manner on a number of issues: (i) the justification for setting up a Forum of West African regional integration institutions; (ii) the institutional modalities for setting up the forum, such as areas of cooperation, governance mechanisms, and

monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; and (iii) the stages and practical measures required for the effective functioning of the Forum.

78. The IGOs present at the meeting unanimously accepted the idea of instituting the forum and set up a committee that was entrusted with the task of drawing up a draft text. The IGO Forum was established by unanimous approval with the principal objective of promoting dialogue among IGOs, and unity in their action. The meeting also defined the institutional mechanisms that would allow the Forum to function: a secretariat and other ancillary bodies. The secretariat is the most appropriate body for the functioning of the Forum. Its responsibility is to coordinate activities and facilitate the implementation of decisions adopted by the Forum.

79. The Forum is expected to be supported by the following mechanisms:

- A committee of experts made up of experts from the IGOs, which will be in charge of carrying out the technical work required for the smooth functioning of the Forum.
- A higher council on regional integration, made up of heads of IGOs, will be established to play the role of validating the technical work of the committee of experts.
- The reports of the Forum will be submitted to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and the Summit of Heads of State and government.

4.3. African Wealth Retention Strategy

80. The starting point of this initiative is the following: Africa is rich but Africans are poor; the world needs the natural resources of the continent, which are indispensable for producing industrial and consumer goods. The world needs Africa's wealth creation capacities to develop regional markets, investment opportunities, and human and natural resources.

81. While recognising that the road map for attaining those goals has been drafted but is awaiting the drafting of some missing pieces, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Sub-regional office for West Africa (SRO-WA), in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and within the framework of the Forum of West African regional integration institutions, has drafted a Governance System for the African Wealth Creation and Retention strategy (GSAWCRS). The GSAWCRS was approved on November 29 2007 in Bamako (Mali) by leaders of political parties, business circles, and civil society organisations in the sub-region, with the assistance of African experts involved in development.

82. The GSAWCRS will contribute to fulfilling Africa's potential as an economic powerhouse with a voice that counts on the international scene. It will help restore the grandeur of African society and the dignity of African citizens. It is supposed to help Africa transform itself so that it is no longer a continent faced with difficulties, but rather a continent full of initiatives, where development aid and humanitarian assistance have become a thing of the past. It is designed to bring leaders of political parties, businesses and civil society to "deliver as one" in order to build capable, responsive and accountable states throughout (West) Africa, and reshape regionalisation and globalisation so that they offer more opportunities than risks to those who create national, regional or global wealth.

83. In practice, this new strategy offers new rules for the management of the sub-region's mining resources and the exploitation of investment opportunities. The rules apply to groups of African investors as well as groups from abroad which are well-known for their technical and managerial expertise.

84. The changes linked to the African Wealth Creation and Retention Strategy (AWCRS) are destined to improve corporate and economic governance, regional and global governance, as well as social and cultural governance, to ensure optimum management of the globalised capital mobilised for the

development of African investment opportunities. This globalised capital includes the participation of both African and non-African groups of investors, according to transparent and predictable rules for equitable management and ordered access to the wealth creation capacities in Africa.

85. Wealth creation capacities are defined as follows:

- A trans-African corporation created by merger or acquisition, or newly created, to mobilise regionalised capital and the investments of African private and public investors, to exploit African investment opportunities alone, or in a joint venture.
- An internationally reputed transnational foreign company that is well known for its results, which must be targeted to become the strategic partner for a trans-African company. This company must be given the incentive of a substantial share in the globalised capital of the joint venture.
- A pool of internationally reputed foreign transnational companies that must be invited to join the trans-African corporation and its strategic partner, the foreign multinational company, to form a joint venture and together mobilise the capital required to exploit the potential African investment opportunities.

86. The wealth retention rules (WRR) that govern the management of wealth creation and retention capacities and the formation of globalised capital mobilised to exploit African investment opportunities are defined as follows:

- The 40+/30-/30- wealth creation capacity distribution key and wealth retention rules will apply to joint ventures to exploit investment opportunities in the area of mining production. For the mining joint venture, the African transnational corporation will hold at least 40 per cent of the shares; the multinational strategic partner will hold a maximum of 30 per cent, and the pool of multinational companies will hold a maximum of 30 per cent;
- The 60+/30-/10+ wealth creation capacity distribution key and wealth retention rules will apply to joint ventures to exploit investment opportunities in manufacturing industrial products or consumer goods. For the industrial or consumer product manufacturing joint venture, the African transnational corporation will hold at least 60 per cent of the shares; the multinational strategic partner will hold a maximum of 30 per cent, and the pool of multinational companies will hold a maximum of 10 per cent;
- The 60+/30-/10+ wealth creation capacity distribution key and wealth retention rules will apply to joint ventures to exploit investment opportunities in mass distribution of goods for industrial or general consumption. For the joint venture established for the mass distribution of industrial or consumer products, the African transnational company will hold at least 60 per cent of the shares; the multinational strategic partner will hold a maximum of 30 per cent, and the pool of multinational companies will hold a maximum of 10 per cent;
- The 60+/30-/10+ wealth creation capacity distribution key and wealth retention rules will apply to joint ventures to exploit investment opportunities related to regional markets (catering, travel agencies, clinics, automobile workshops, banks, and other services, etc.). For joint ventures that are set up to take advantage of regional markets, the African transnational corporation will hold at least 60 per cent of the shares; the multinational strategic partner will hold a maximum of 30 per cent, and the pool of multinational companies will hold a maximum of 10 per cent.

87. Reactions gathered so far have shown an interest in the strategy. Thanks to national, regional, and international media coverage, the GSAWCRS was mentioned in statements made by leaders of three groups of development actors in Africa. Since its approval, the GSAWCRS has been examined by a certain number of heads of State: the presidents of Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. It has also been presented to Prime Ministers, ministers, ambassadors and personalities from other regions, in particular Europe.

88. The consultations with the heads of State were real working sessions and all gave rise to a lot of lessons and advice. The discussions between the SRO-WA and the public in fora organised by civil society in Niger and by the Niger *Chambre des Jeunes*; with communication experts from Africable in Mali, and with the public and private media in Niger, made it possible to refine the contents of the strategic communication programme.

89. Several local, national, regional, and international media showed interest in the results of the SRO-WA's research and the "new ideas" that underpin the GSAWCRS. The SRO-WA participated in a series of debates, including three 'African debates' that were broadcast by *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) and *Africable*. It was also the guest of the *Africable* news bulletin that was broadcast several times in two months.

90. The acceptance of the approach and the encouragement encountered at all levels have boosted the enthusiasm of the SRO-WA team. The management of the ECA acknowledged the work accomplished by the Sub-Regional office for West Africa by granting it the (P&P HRR) Award for its passion and perseverance in translating the strategic orientation of "optimum use of regional resources to attain African priorities" into concrete results.

91. The next step is to continue to disseminate this idea through a large scale communication campaign for behaviour change that will take place in each of the fifteen countries of the West African sub-region. In the meantime, the eleventh ICE meeting is another opportunity to go over the details in the public conference scheduled for the purpose.

5. CONCLUSION

92. During the period that is just ending, the SRO-WA resolutely took up the task of creating institutional synergies and platforms to enable it carry out its mission effectively as part of the framework of a new vision of the ECA. This calls for strengthening regional integration through the optimum use of Africa's resources, in order to face up to the various challenges to developing the continent. It thus established partnership and carried out activities with the ECOWAS Commission, the Forum of IGOs, the Businessmen's Forum, and the Forum of civil society institutions. This approach will be resolutely continued in the years ahead.

93. In particular, the attempt to establish greater synergy in the interventions of West African intergovernmental organisations will be consolidated through the actual establishment of the various organs of the Forum of West African IGOs. The institutional arrangements for programming activities of the SRO-WA and partner IGOs, as well as the joint implementation of activities of common interest will also be improved. .

94. Joint activities will be carried out in such a way that, delivering as one, organisations in charge of integration in the sub-region will be able to find definitive and structural solutions to West Africa's development problems.

95. Another no less important initiative of the SRO-WA is currently under study: this is to establish a VSAT link between the ECOWAS headquarters and the ECA, both at headquarters and at the Sub-regional office for West Africa. This would facilitate communication between the two institutions, both for the exchange of information and for managing relations with IGOs.

96. Finally, the SRO-WA is continuing its collaboration with ECOWAS, CILSS, and ACMAD, as recommended by the International Conference on Climate Change, which took place in Ouagadougou in January 2007. At the present time, this important initiative is preparing a programme of action for adapting to climate change in West Africa.