

ELECTRONIC BRIEF

Implementation of work programme and
technical assistance to ECOWAS and
member States

January to June 2012



1.0 Introduction

This electronic brief highlights major activities of the Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (ECA/SRO-WA) for the period between January and June 2012, as part of its work programme for 2012-2013. It also summarizes the technical assistance provided to member States, ECOWAS, UEMOA, MRU, and other West African Intergovernmental Organizations (WAIGOs), during the same period.

2.0 ECA/SRO-WA meetings

2.1 The fifteenth Intergovernmental Committee for Experts (ICE) of West Africa

The fifteenth Session of the ICE of West Africa, held on 15 and 16 March 2012, in Bamako, Mali, was officially opened by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Mr. Abdoulaye Touré, who was representing the Malian Minister of Economy and Finance. The meeting was organized a few days ahead of the fifth Joint AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held on 26 and 27 March 2012, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the intention to ensure that outcomes and recommendations of the fifteenth ICE of West Africa are taken into account in the Conference discussions.

Experts from member States and representatives of WAIGOs focused their attention on economic and social developments in the subregion, and shared experiences in addressing growth and development challenges. Participants deliberated on West Africa's need to exploit agricultural potential as a springboard for growth and development, in line with ECOWAS Vision 2020.

The ECA/SRO-WA presented the following statutory reports for discussion: (i) Status report on the implementation of work programme of the ECA/SRO-WA; (ii) Report on the economic and social conditions in West Africa; (iii) Report on the implementation of regional and international agendas – progress and prospects in the implementation of MDG 3 (promote gender equality and empower women) in West Africa. The substantive comments received are being incorporated into the documents before their publication by ECA.

Participating experts commended ECA/SRO-WA for the work accomplished between April 2011 and March 2012, and agreed that the Office should continue to assist with building capacity of member States, especially in data collection and the harmonization of data collection methodologies. Recommendations were made to strengthen collaborative links with research think-tanks in the subregion, and to ensure timely publication of research reports and dissemination of findings.



ECA/SRO-WA
Experts participating at the fifteenth ICE for West Africa



2.2 Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting (AEGM) on “Promoting a regional value chain approach to agricultural development in West Africa”

The objective of the AEGM, organized at the International Conference Centre of Bamako, Mali, on 13 and 14 March 2012, was to explore solutions aimed at accelerating growth in the agricultural sector through the implementation of the value chain approach for strategic products, which have a high potential for creating wealth in rural areas as well as in the rest of the economy. The meeting, officially opened by the Malian Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Agatham Ag Alhassane, was attended by experts from the Ministries of finance and economic development, planning, environment, industry, and agriculture from ECOWAS member States, as well as representatives of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, intergovernmental organizations, and other development partners from the subregion.

The ECA/SRO-WA presented a background report titled “Promoting the value chain approach to agricultural development in West Africa,” which provided the basis for experts’ discussions. The report, incorporating experts’ technical input, will be prepared for publication by ECA. Discussions highlighted that West Africa remains a net food importer, despite its vast agro-pastoral and forestry potential, and the existence of various policies and strategies in the sector.



ECA/SRO-WA
During a media interview, ECA/SRO-WA representative highlights the role that agricultural value chains can play in West Africa’s development

The meeting noted the importance of implementing the value chain approach in West African countries, as an accelerated agricultural development strategy. It also emphasized the need to boost investments in subregional value chains in agriculture, particularly through public-private partnerships, as a way to generate increased growth and reduce poverty. Participants analyzed various successful examples and experiences from ECOWAS countries and overseas settings, noting the role of the state and development partners in the creation of successful agricultural value chains.

The meeting recommended strategies towards addressing main weaknesses of agricultural value chains, both at national and subregional levels: access to inputs and production factors, stakeholder capacity building, infrastructure development, inter-State trade facilitation, and access to information and financing. The recommendations also emphasized the importance of strengthening good governance and internal resource mobilization mechanisms in the agricultural sector. The background report, incorporating experts’ technical input received during the AEGM, will be prepared for publication by ECA.

2.3 Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting (AEGM) on “Regional integration programmes and the West African Intergovernmental Organizations platform for regional cooperation”

The objective of the AEGM, organized in Lomé, Togo, on 4 and 5 June 2012, was to discuss regional integration issues in West Africa, and to develop strategies to strengthen the West African Intergovernmental Organizations (WAIGOs) collaboration and coordination for effective delivery of regional integration programmes. The meeting further sought to develop a way forward for the formal establishment of the WAIGOs’ cooperation agreement. The meeting was attended by representatives of



major WAIGOs, and was conducted in the form of presentations followed by discussions and recommendations.

The meeting was informed by ECA/SRO-WA presentation titled “Overview and challenges of regional integration in West Africa,” and IGOs’ presentations on recent regional integration programmes, monetary integration, financing of regional integration, and the need for strengthened collaboration in addressing challenges of development especially relating to water sources management, agriculture and food security, and climate change. Participating experts noted that, despite efforts, regional integration in West Africa has witnessed slow progress reflected in the subregion’s development status. To reverse this trend, experts emphasized, WAIGOs need to work closely to take advantage of synergies and comparative strengths in the implementation of regional programmes.

The meeting recommended that all WAIGOs sign the draft Protocol on Cooperation, which will provide a formal framework for consultation and coordination in the implementation of development and regional integration programmes. Experts underscored that collaboration among WAIGOs requires an innovative and sustainable funding mechanism, which encourages resource mobilization both from member States and the private sector. The involvement of the private sector was noted as equally important in the development of key economic sectors. For example, private sector’s support for the implementation of agricultural initiatives can address recurrent food security and nutritional problems in the subregion.

2.4 Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting (AEGM) on “Strengthening the capacity of West African States to harness renewable energy for electricity supply, poverty reduction, and climate change mitigation”

The ECA/SRO-WA organized an AEGM on 7 and 8 June 2012, in Lomé, Togo, to discuss ways to strengthen the West African States’ capacity to harness renewable energy for electricity supply, poverty reduction, and climate change mitigation. The objective of the AEGM was to review and share experiences and knowledge in the promotion of renewable energy in West Africa, in order to ascertain and promote the best practices in accessing and utilizing renewable energy sources and services.



ECA/SRO-WA
West African energy experts deliberating during the two-day AEGM

The meeting was officially opened by the Minister of Mines and Energy of the Republic of Togo, Mr. Dammipi Noupokou, and brought together experts from West African countries and representatives from subregional institutions. The experts’ presentations and deliberations highlighted the need for States to set binding targets for energy access, energy efficiency, and access to electricity, and to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Among the key recommendations that emerged during the AEGM is the need for West African States to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the energy sector, in order to ensure that renewable energy contributes to wealth creation, economic growth, and poverty reduction in the subregion. Experts also recommended the update of the ECOWAS/UEMOA White Paper to reflect developments in the renewable energy sector and climate change issues, and its translation into national energy policies, programmes, and projects. The outputs of the meeting and the national reports presented during the AEGM are used by ECA/SRO-WA as inputs into a technical publication on the promotion of renewable energy in West Africa.



3.0 Technical assistance to member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other IGOs

3.1 Support to the Government of Niger

Following the visit of the Executive Secretary of the ECA to Niger in August 2011, the SRO-WA provided financial and technical assistance to support the efforts of the Government of Niger in implementation of its vision “Niger 2035.” In this context, assistance has been provided to the High Commission for the State Modernization/ Office of Prime Minister, in recruiting a national consultant and an international consultant from June to July 2012. This led to the formulation and validation of a project document (ProDoc) that will enable the preparation of public institutions’ procedures manuals. Support is also given to the Planning Ministry in recruiting consultants to facilitate the planning process. Similarly, SRO-WA, in collaboration with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), will organize training sessions for Government officials involved in prospective studies and economic growth forecasting in the context of the long-term strategy plan of the country (SDDCI 2012-2035).

3.2 West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) annual meetings

The ECA/SRO-WA participated in the annual statutory meetings of the WAMZ, organized between 16 and 20 January 2012 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The meetings had the overall objective to deliberate on the status of implementation of the WAMZ work programme. On the basis of reports’ analysis and ensuing discussions, participants recommended, among others, that the member States prioritize prudent macroeconomic policies to ensure sustenance of the primary convergence criteria. They also noted the need to redouble efforts to satisfy the secondary convergence criteria, and to ensure that government expenditure is channeled towards growth promoting activities and sectors. The WAMZ member States expressed an appreciation for ECA’s continued support, and the need to further collaboration.

3.3 Technical cooperation with the Gender Ministry of the Government of Liberia



UN Photo/Christopher Herwig

As part of the technical assistance provided by ECA to the Government of Liberia, the SRO-WA participated in a monitoring mission organized between 3 and 6 April 2012. The main objective of the mission was to review progress made towards the implementation of the National Gender Policy (NGP), and to discuss with the Gender Ministry areas of challenges and future collaboration. As a result of consultative discussions conducted with stakeholders, the mission recommended an even closer collaboration with the UN system and the gender focal person for UNMIL as the way forward for NGP implementation.

3.4 Review workshop on implementation of ECOWAS Mineral Resource Development Programme

The ECA/SRO-WA was invited to participate in the workshop organized in Lomé, Togo, from 26 to 30 March 2012. The workshop, opened by the Togolese Minister of Mines and Energy, evaluated progress in the implementation of ECOWAS Mineral Resource Development Programme, in preparation of the report of the President of ECOWAS Commission to the Council of Ministers. The sessions included presentations and experts’ deliberations. The ECA/SRO-WA made a presentation on the Africa Mining Vision and Regional Policy Harmonization, as part of popularizing the Vision in ECOWAS. Among the main outcomes



of the workshop were the adoption of the draft ECOWAS Regional Mineral Cadastre System, and the draft ECOWAS Regional Mineral Observatory. The mission recommended ECA's ongoing involvement in the dissemination of the Africa Mining Vision Action Plan in the subregion, working closely with the ECOWAS Mines Directorate.

3.5 Collaboration with RITD

As part of a study supervised by ECA's Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division (RITD) on the extent of African integration, SRO-WA administered a survey questionnaire on mainstreaming of regional integration into national development plans and strategies. The data was obtained from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Economy, Planning, Trade and Transport, during missions organized in the following ECOWAS member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Niger. It is expected that RITD will collate and analyze the national level information and evidence to come up with recommendations to accelerate African integration.

3.6 Second Cameroon Mining Sector Knowledge Sharing Forum

The SRO-WA represented ECA in the Forum, organized by the World Bank in collaboration with the Cameroonian Government in Yaoundé, between 29 and 31 May 2012. The Forum discussed opportunities for minerals development, regional integration, infrastructure development, and governance in the sector in Cameroon. The meeting also discussed transparency issues along the mineral value chain, and reviewed the sectoral challenges in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks and the operation of the private sector. For ECA/SRO-WA, the mission recommended the need for continued collaboration with the Cameroonian Government and other stakeholders in Central Africa on the domestication of the Africa Mining Vision.

3.7 Consultative meetings on mineral sector governance in Africa

The SRO-WA represented ECA in two meetings held in Maputo, Mozambique, on 9 to 12 June, and in Dakar, Senegal, on 12 to 15 June 2012, with the purpose to reinforce strategic, organizational, and technical capacities of civil society in Africa in the promotion of more transparent and accountable extractive sectors. The mission took part in discussions on mineral policy development at continental and subregional levels, and delivered a presentation on the Africa Mining Vision. The mission identified the need for the Office to continue the provision of technical assistance, and to support collaboration between civil society organizations and ECOWAS in the implementation of the ECOWAS Mineral Development Programme.



UN Photo/B Wolff

3.8 Consultative meeting on the Africa Mining Vision (AMV)

The SRO-WA represented ECA in the meeting organized in Accra, Ghana, on 26 to 29 June 2012, which reunited pan-African networks of civil society organizations working on mining and development. The meeting sought to discuss the African Mining Vision and the role of citizens' organizations in its realization, and to deliberate on the way forward in the establishment of the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC). The mission noted that the meeting was a key avenue towards increasing the knowledge



of the Vision, and recommended that the ECA ensure that civil society organizations platform is aligned with developments in the implementation of the Vision.

4.0 Upcoming publications

The following reports are currently under review for publication:

- i. Report in collaboration with ECOWAS on key economic and social developments and prospects for regional integration in West Africa
- ii. Progress report on the MDGs and other regional and international agendas and special initiatives in the subregion – MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- iii. Report on regional value chain approach to agricultural development in West Africa: agro-based industries and public-private partnerships
- iv. Report on strengthening capacity of West African States on harnessing renewable energies for electricity supply, poverty reduction, and climate change mitigation



5.0 Technical assistance to UN Country Team (UNCT)

5.1 UNCT

As a member of UNCT in Niger, the SRO-WA designated a staff member to join the technical committee charged with addressing topics included in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and in the 2012 action plan.

5.2 Participation in UN Gender Thematic Group/ Human Rights (UNGTG/HR)

In line with its mandate, the SRO-WA participates in a number of activities listed in the UNGTG/HR Action Plan for 2012. These activities include capacity building programmes, knowledge generation, and advocacy initiatives to promote gender equality and human rights in Niger. The SRO-WA is currently analyzing the UNGTG/HR concept note related to the proposed implementation in Niger of the global UN Adolescent Girls Initiative. Niger would thus become the fourth “champion country” in West Africa (after Mali, Burkina Faso, and Liberia) to be engaged in this initiative, with a national focus on early marriages. The Office will identify possible levels of participation in this new initiative, considering its strong component related to national policy reforms, and advocacy aimed at decision makers on issues pertaining to girl adolescents in Niger.

6.0 Capacity building

6.1 Training on archiving and library management

The ECA/SRO-WA organized the training of one staff member in archiving and library management, in view of the reopening of the documentation center of the UN system in Niamey, Niger. The training was



facilitated by experts from IDEP and took place in Dakar, Senegal, between 18 January and 3 February 2012.

6.2 Training on results-based management (RBM)

The SRO-WA was represented by one staff member in the RBM training organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 21 to 24 February 2012. The objective of the training, conducted in a participatory manner, was to provide participants with the fundamentals of RBM and a set of skills and tools for project/programme design and management.

6.3 Project management training

The ECA/SRO-WA participated in a project management training organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between 26 and 30 March 2012. The objective of the training was to familiarize project focal points from SROs and ECA Divisions with RBM principles and approaches. The skills acquired will allow for improved designing and reporting of projects that require extra-budgetary resources.

6.4 Knowledge management training

Two staff members represented ECA/SRO-WA in the training organized in Dakar, Senegal, from 8 to 12 May 2012. The objective of the training was to provide an understanding of the concepts of Knowledge Management (KM) and their application in ECA, as well as to develop practical online facilitation and communities' management skills, and to network with peer KM professionals.

6.5 Training on competency-based interviewing and selection

The training was organized in Rabat, Morocco, on 11 and 12 June 2012 with the intention of providing staff engaged in interviewing candidates, or likely to do so in the future, with the skills to conduct interviews, participate in an interview panel, and provide objective assessments. ECA/SRO-WA was represented by two staff members.

6.6 Training on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM)

The training, organized by FSSD/ECA from 25 to 29 June 2012, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was attended by one staff member from ECA/SRO-WA. The training stressed the necessity to establish a knowledge network on disaster risk reduction and recovery, and to contribute to the adoption of DRR/DRM policies by ECOWAS members States.