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**Economic Commission for Africa
Conference of African Ministers of Finance,
Planning and Economic Development**
Fifty-fourth session

Dakar (hybrid), 16 and 17 May 2022

Items 6 of the provisional agenda*

Consideration of recommendations and adoption of resolutions

Report on the meeting of the Committee of Experts

Introduction

1. The fortieth meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was held in Dakar in a hybrid format featuring both in-person and online participation, from 11 to 13 May 2022.

Part one

I. Opening of the meeting [agenda item 1]

A. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of ECA: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

3. The following regional economic community was represented: Economic Community of West African States.

4. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: Development Coordination Office, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office to the African Union, United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, World Tourism Organization.

* E/ECA/CM/54/1/Rev.1.



5. Observers from the following States Members of the United Nations were present: Netherlands, Russian Federation.
6. The following non-member observer State of the United Nations was represented: State of Palestine.
7. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and regional organizations were also present: African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, African Union Commission, secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, African Export-Import Bank, African Capacity-Building Foundation, Central Bank of West African States, West African Development Bank, West African Economic and Monetary Union.
8. Observers were present from the following organizations: Blue like An Orange Sustainable Capital, Development Initiatives, Development Reimagined, DI Africa, Global Front, Kejibaus Youth Development Initiative, Local Youth Corner Cameroon, Mission for Essential Drugs and Supplies, One Campaign, People of Good Heart Initiative, Puttru Technologies Limited, Teranga Multi-Services, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, University of Lagos, University of Rwanda, World Resources Institute.

B. Opening statements

9. The opening session was chaired by the Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea to the African Union and ECA, and Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Committee of Experts, Crisantos Obama Ondo.
10. Opening statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation of Senegal, Alioune Ndiaye.
11. In his opening remarks, Mr. Obama highlighted key achievements made since the fifty-third session of the Commission, including the provision of support to African countries to assist in mitigating their liquidity constraints; the securing of additional financial resources, in particular through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and a new issuance of special drawing rights, in the amount of \$40 billion; the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area; and efforts to bring about the continent's digital transformation. He also underscored the instrumental role of ECA in facilitating access to and initiating African production of vaccines against coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and applauded the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on the outcomes of its recently concluded eighth session.
12. In her welcoming address, Ms. Songwe thanked the Government of Senegal for hosting the fifty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Africa. Outlining the efforts made by ECA to boost the competitiveness of African economies and domestic resource mobilization, and in relation to the theme of the session, she underscored the issue of debt stress currently affecting 23 African countries and also noted the negative impacts of the current conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which were exacerbated by the upsurge of new COVID-19 cases around the world. She called for measures to ensure more financial integration through strengthened African financial markets and the use of African currencies; the combating of illicit financial flows; enhanced protection of lives and livelihoods, taking into consideration the dimensions of gender and youth; and the full and effective implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area to achieve inclusive growth that was conducive to job creation. African countries should harness the opportunity created by the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine to increase grain production.

13. In his statement, speaking also on behalf of the Minister for Finance and Budget and the Minister for the Economy, Planning and Cooperation, Mr. Ndiaye welcomed all participants to Senegal. He commended ECA on its leading role in advocating common positions in critical areas, in particular access to vaccines, the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the allocation of the new special drawing rights. He recalled that, under the leadership of the President of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union for 2022, Macky Sall, Senegal had launched a new joint risk investment fund along with new public-private partnership frameworks to mobilize additional funds. In closing, he urged African countries to continue to call for more allocations of the new special drawing rights, to reduce their risks in the context of multiple crises, as to date Africa had only received \$33 billion of the total allocation of \$650 billion.

II. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work [agenda item 2]

14. The following countries were unanimously elected by the Committee to form the new Bureau:

Chair:	Senegal
First Vice-Chair:	Madagascar
Second Vice-Chair:	Zimbabwe
Third Vice-Chair:	
Rapporteur:	Equatorial Guinea

15. Following an acceptance statement by the newly elected Chair, Mouhamadou Bamba Diop, the Committee adopted the following agenda, based on the provisional agenda that had been circulated:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa.
4. Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa.
5. Presentation on the theme of the fifty-fourth session of the Conference.
6. Statutory issues.
7. Date, venue and theme of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission.
8. Other matters.
9. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee of Experts; consideration of recommendations and draft resolutions.
10. Closing of the meeting.

Part two

Account of proceedings

III. Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa [agenda item 3]

A. Presentation

16. Under this agenda item, a representative of the secretariat presented a report on recent economic and social developments in Africa (E/ECA/COE/40/4), in which recent developments in the global economy and their implications for Africa were highlighted. While economic growth in Africa was projected to rebound in the short and medium term, the pandemic had reversed the gains achieved over the past two decades towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in relation to poverty, health, education and employment. The war in Ukraine had exacerbated the situation by inflating food prices and, potentially, increasing hunger and food insecurity. Such external shocks underlined the need for ECA member States to diversify, to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area and to use digital technologies to build resilience and accelerate the industrialization of the productive sectors of their economies.

B. Discussion

17. In the ensuing discussion, the experts noted that COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine had triggered a series of global shocks that called for a continental response and unified action, in particular by putting in place regional instruments and a new financial architecture to cope with such emerging shocks.

18. The experts noted with concern the impact of the shocks on liquidity, as they were felt not only in Africa, but globally. The recommended solutions, such as the reallocation of special drawing rights, had placed Africa in competition with other regions. However, ECA and its member States could leverage the forthcoming twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be hosted by Egypt, to ensure that the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility and the tools for green growth were scaled up to increase liquidity access, resilience and sustainability.

19. The experts further observed that instability in some African countries had exacerbated the impact of global shocks. They underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability to encourage investment and economic development.

C. Recommendations

20. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Develop strategies to promote domestic growth and diversify production, including the production of food and consumer products, in order to hedge against external shocks;
 - (ii) Strengthen peace and stability and reduce inequality in their countries to stabilize investment, improve the private sector environment and promote domestic resource mobilization and growth;
 - (iii) Improve tax administration and enforcement, reduce tax exemption and eliminate corrupt practices and illicit financial flows;
 - (iv) Expedite the full operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area in order to maximize its benefits and build resilience to external shocks;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Provide technical support to its member States in carrying out analytical research on the impact of shocks on their economies, including those caused by the war in Ukraine;
 - (ii) Assist its member States in formulating and assessing the effectiveness of measures implemented in response to the impact of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine;
 - (iii) Provide technical assistance to its member States to foster economic diversification and digitalization, expand import substitution, streamline trade policy, nurture e-commerce and boost domestic resource mobilization.

IV. Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa [agenda item 4]

A. Presentation

21. Under this agenda item, a representative of the secretariat presented a report on the progress made on regional integration in Africa (E/ECA/COE/40/5). In the report, it was highlighted that, in spite of challenges, significant progress had been made in advancing the integration agendas, including through the adoption of industrialization policies and strategies to boost intra-African trade and the promotion of macroeconomic integration by all of the regional economic communities, which had established primary macroeconomic convergence criteria. It was also noted that integration and socioeconomic development in Africa had been impeded by major infrastructure gaps and uneven and weak production integration, among other things.

B. Discussion

22. In the ensuing discussion, the experts observed that intra-African trade in manufactured goods might have relatively low added value, taking into account the value addition created on the continent, as most inputs were imported from the outside.
23. They noted that the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine demonstrated the need to act more cooperatively, emphasizing that Africa should better manage and mutualize its richly endowed resources so that the continent could become a price maker rather than being a price taker.
24. They also noted that more needed to be done on security issues to better protect populations. They proposed cooperative thinking, for example, by pooling resources to produce essential goods, such as vaccines.
25. With regard to the challenges related to ratifying the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, they underlined the outstanding issues concerning negotiations on rules of origin and their impact on the ratification and implementation of the Agreement.
26. They noted that monetary and financial integration, including the imperative for African central banks to develop digital currency and cryptocurrency from a continental perspective, was important to foster continental and regional integration.

C. Recommendations

27. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:
- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Develop regional value chains in such areas as production fertilizers and pharmaceuticals to improve the resilience of African countries in times of food and other crises;
 - (ii) Promote agriculture not only for export outside the continent but also to meet demand on the continent;
 - (iii) Build the infrastructure needed to enable the expected benefits from the Agreement to be obtained;
 - (iv) Promote investment in Africa by improving the enabling environment for investment;
 - (v) Harness the opportunities embedded in regional integration initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, to foster economic recovery and transformation following the pandemic and resulting from the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and other crises;
 - (vi) Reinforce synergies between countries in order to ensure greater efficiency in the supply of certain raw materials, such as fertilizers;
 - (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Undertake a study on the feasibility of Africa mutualizing its resources and commodities and better managing stocks to address price fluctuations;
 - (ii) Work to intensify dialogue among its member States in the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

- (iii) Endeavour to strengthen the capacity of its member States to utilize tools to calculate the Africa Regional Integration Index;
- (iv) Provide technical support to its member States in data collection and the construction of databases on trade in value added products in order to improve the analysis of intraregional trade;
- (v) Launch a dialogue on a common central bank digital currency for Africa;
- (vi) Identify the main barriers to accelerating African economic integration and support its member States in overcoming them;
- (vii) Consider supporting the creation of an African commodity exchange, given the rich resource endowment of the continent.

V. Presentation on the theme of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission [agenda item 5]

A. Presentation

28. Under this item, the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist of ECA, Hanan Morsy, presented a report on the theme of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, “Financing Africa’s recovery: breaking new ground” (E/ECA/COE/40/6). She highlighted the impact on African economies of the overlapping crises arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate change emergency and the war in Ukraine; the continent’s immense financing needs, which had been exacerbated by the above-mentioned issues, and the need to increase access to financing at affordable rates by scaling up domestic resource mobilization and leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area.

29. The responses by African Governments to the crises had consisted of short-term, medium-term and long-term interventions, including debt service relief and restructuring, and emergency financing from the World Bank through a resiliency trust fund and from the International Monetary Fund through the reallocation of special drawing rights.

30. A representative of the secretariat presented the findings of the series of dialogues held on the theme of the fifty-fourth session. The dialogues had been held in each of the five subregions and had been organized by the offices of ECA in the respective subregions.

B. Discussion

31. In the ensuing discussion, the experts focused on the various mechanisms and strategies that countries had put in place to finance efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. They noted that Africa needed to pursue internal and external solutions simultaneously. Efforts should be made to increase local agricultural productivity, including through peer learning, expanding access to cheaper fertilizers, pooling procurement, curbing inflation and reducing macroeconomic vulnerability. Emphasis also had to be placed on mobilizing new financial resources rather than recycling previously committed resources, so as to break new ground in financing the continent’s resilience in the face of the overlapping crises.

32. The experts noted that Africa needed to take measures to grow its private sector, to attract foreign investment by fostering a conducive business environment and to mobilize financing for sustainable development from the

private sector through public-private partnerships. To provide a solid foundation for economic growth, Africa also needed to improve the efficiency of public expenditure and project investment to achieve significant economic growth. The constraints linked to the export credit rules of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, especially the high level of insurance premiums, posed a particular obstacle to trade financing.

C. Recommendations

33. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Improve the management of their natural resources and public expenditure to stimulate growth and development;
 - (ii) Put in place measures to support the agricultural sector in order to reduce the impact of inflation, ensure food security and increase intraregional trade;
 - (iii) Leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area as an engine of growth that will build resilience against external shocks;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Provide technical support to its member States to scale up domestic resource mobilization, including by creating an enabling business environment for the private sector, deepening domestic capital markets, leveraging the continent's vast pension funds, curbing illicit financial flows, deepening the digitalization of tax administration and other services, and recapitalizing national and regional development banks;
 - (ii) Encourage its member States to consider recommending a revision of the rules of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development with a view to reducing export credit rates and facilitating trade development;
 - (iii) Assist its member States in gaining greater access to liquidity and affordable financing, including through the reallocation of special drawing rights, the operationalization of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility, innovative climate financing using the continent's natural capital, the leveraging of the procurement models employed by the African Medical Supplies Platform and the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust, improved national credit ratings, and support for the sixteenth replenishment of the African Development Fund;
 - (iv) Provide guidance to its member States on the use of and access to special drawing rights to address development challenges;
 - (v) Provide capacity-building services to its member States in order to assist them in addressing public debt issues;
 - (vi) Provide advisory services to its member States on how digital currencies can be used to finance development.

VI. Statutory issues [agenda item 6]

- A. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa (covering the period April 2021–March 2022)**
- B. Report on the follow-up to the resolutions of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**
- C. Report of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on its seventh session**

1. Presentation

34. Under sub-items 6 (a), (b) and (c), representatives of the secretariat presented the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa covering the period April 2021–March 2022 (E/ECA/COE/40/7), the report on the follow-up to the resolutions of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (E/ECA/COE/40/8) and the report on the seventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ECA/RFSD/2021/15).

2. Discussion

35. In the ensuing discussion, the experts commended the secretariat on the range and quality of the work done during the reporting period, despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee noted and appreciated the release of \$33 billion of new special drawing rights, resulting in additional liquidity for African countries, following advocacy by the secretariat, and noted the work done to address climate change risks, in particular the provision of support to the Congo Basin Climate Commission to operationalize the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin.

36. The experts recognized the importance of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust in improving access to development finance. In that connection, they underscored that the Debt Service Suspension Initiative should also include middle-income countries and that the Resilience and Sustainability Trust should be adequately funded. It was also highlighted that special drawing rights should be rechannelled to countries that had less access to development finance, that domestic resource mobilization, including tax collection, should be increased and that illicit financial flows should be eliminated. The experts underscored the need for standardized protocols to guide African institutions in the development of regional carbon markets. The Committee emphasized the need to engage more effectively with countries that were not fully benefiting from ECA initiatives, especially landlocked countries, and encouraged the use of artificial intelligence to collect proxy indicators to monitor the progress made on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Recommendations

37. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should mobilize domestic resources to finance development by taking steps to increase tax collection and decrease leakage resulting from illicit financial flows;

- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Enhance advocacy for an increase in development finance to African countries, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, African ministers of finance and central bank governors, including through the expansion of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative to include middle-income countries, the provision of adequate funding to the Resilience and Sustainability Trust and the reallocation of special drawing rights to the countries most in need of resources and to African multilateral banks to ensure that African countries have greater access to finance, given their low International Monetary Fund quotas;
 - (ii) Continue to support the Congo Basin Climate Commission in mobilizing financing to operationalize the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin;
 - (iii) Provide technical support for the establishment of standardized regional carbon markets, based on the principles set out in the Paris Agreement on climate change of 2015;
 - (iv) Strengthen initiatives that support its member States in their efforts to increase domestic resource mobilization by increasing revenue collection and curtailing illicit financial flows;
 - (v) Assist its member States in developing the capacity to use artificial intelligence to collect proxy indicators to monitor the progress made towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (vi) Develop targeted initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing the needs of landlocked countries.

D. Medium-term programme framework (2022–2025), proposed programme plan for 2023 and update on the strategic framework of the Economic Commission for Africa

E. Proposed programme budget for 2023

F. Progress report on the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa

1. Presentation

38. Under sub-items 6 (d), (e) and (f), representatives of the secretariat presented the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) (E/ECA/COE/40/16); the proposed programme plan for 2023 (E/ECA/COE/40/9); the update on the ECA strategic framework (E/ECA/COE/40/17); the proposed programme budget for 2023 (E/ECA/COE/40/10); and the progress report on the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa (E/ECA/COE/40/12).

2. Discussion

39. In the ensuing discussion, the experts welcomed the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) and recognized that the proposed five areas of transformation were aligned with the strategic directions to be followed by ECA in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982). They noted the programme plan for 2023 with appreciation and encouraged ECA to maintain its focus on deepening economic

diversification, developing innovative development models, promoting regional integration and supporting an African response to global challenges.

40. They commended ECA on the technical support it had provided and emphasized the need to strengthen modalities for harnessing its advisory and technical expertise, including through the use of macroeconomic modelling, planning and poverty and inequality analysis tools.

41. On the zero growth of the proposed 2023 budget as compared with the 2022 budget, the representative of the secretariat clarified that regular internal budget review processes contributed to efficiency gains, enabling ECA to deliver more with fewer resources. The proposed budget level for 2023 would be subject to recosting, to allow the final appropriation to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation. Increases in cost were therefore offset by the efficiencies gained from opportunities to reduce requirements for supplies and materials.

42. The experts commended ECA on its assistance to African countries, including in the conduct of digital censuses. They noted improvements in the collection of data related to gross domestic product and emphasized the need to address the periodicity of data collection and transform national statistical systems through digitalization, with a view to enhancing the timeliness, accuracy and quality of data, thereby strengthening resilience to crises.

3. Recommendations

43. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Explore options for generating tax revenue from the digital economy;
 - (ii) Raise the awareness of parliamentarians and policymakers of the importance of using data in policy development;
 - (iii) Develop and implement comprehensive data collection programmes in line with development agenda needs, including for national development plans, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;
 - (iv) Extend the use of digitalization in data collection;
 - (v) Invest in data and statistics, data science and technology, including geospatial technology;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Strengthen the support it provides to its member States in designing their national development plans and enabling them to take up and apply policy recommendations resulting from analytical work carried out by ECA;
 - (ii) Allocate its budget to key priorities falling within its mandate so as to avoid redundancy and duplication of actions undertaken by other agencies;
 - (iii) Assist its member States in gathering economic data on a quarterly basis and in using regional and local-level data and statistics;
 - (iv) Assist its member States in strengthening their technical capacity to apply innovative and alternative data collection methods;

(v) Strengthen the capacity of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) to maintain and increase the support that it provides to member States of ECA;

(vi) Support its member States in migrating to the new 2008 System of National Accounts and harmonizing national accounting methods with it.

G. Reports on the sessions of the subregional intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts

H. Progress report on the work of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

1. Presentation

44. Under sub-items 6 (g) and (h), representatives of the secretariat presented the reports on the meetings of the subregional intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts (ECA/EA/ICSOE/25, E/ECA-SA/ICSOE/XXVII/2021/8.1, ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/36/5/Rev.1, ECA/CA/ICSOE/37 and ECA/WA/ICE/24/01d) and the progress report on the work of IDEP (E/ECA/COE/40/11). The subregional offices had provided technical assistance, advisory services, training, policy dialogues and analytical tools for the benefit of ECA member States and regional economic groupings. For its part, IDEP had benefited from increased contributions from African countries for the conduct of training programmes and continued knowledge generation and dissemination activities. Additional resources were needed, however, to achieve the strategic vision of IDEP.

2. Discussion

45. In the ensuing discussion, the experts noted the critical importance of training and the dissemination and application of tools developed by ECA, such as the integrated planning and reporting toolkit, for informing decision-making by African countries and for tracking progress towards sustainable development, including through voluntary national reviews. They also observed that the African Continental Free Trade Area could serve as an “African Marshall Plan”, enhancing the continent’s resilience and responding to the need to align national development strategies with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

46. They acknowledged that delays in the payment of contributions to IDEP hampered the Institute’s capacity to deliver its capacity development programmes and to fulfil its overall mandate. They highlighted the need to make ECA member States more aware of the benefits of IDEP programmes, thereby furnishing the relevant ministries and departments with strong arguments to justify the mobilization of statutory contributions.

3. Recommendations

47. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Member States of ECA should:

(i) Mobilize more resources and pay their contributions in a timely manner to enable the proactive and consistent implementation of IDEP programmes;

(ii) Identify national priority areas to guide ECA support for development planning;

- (iii) Update ECA on changes of focal persons to ensure that new incumbents are sufficiently informed and can facilitate national interactions with the Institute, including the dissemination of information on IDEP processes and programmes;
 - (iv) Strengthen data systems to contribute to informed policymaking, including monitoring and evaluating progress towards economic transformation and industrialization;
 - (v) Design development policies under the thematic pillars of each subregional office;
- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Widely disseminate to its member States its policy on assessed contributions, including to IDEP, and engage its member States individually to encourage them to contribute;
 - (ii) Improve the dissemination of such tools as the integrated planning and reporting toolkit among its member States to enhance evidence-based policy formulation and implementation;
 - (iii) Provide technical support to its member States and subregions to assist them in their efforts to harmonize industrial policies and diversification strategies at the regional level;
 - (iv) Encourage its member States to engage in peer learning, through IDEP, with a view to mainstreaming findings from analytical reviews into their national development instruments.

I. Report of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender on its fourth session

J. Report of the Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology on its second session

1. Presentation

48. Under sub-items 6 (i) and (j), representatives of the secretariat presented the report of the fourth session of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender (E/ECA/CSPPG/4/13) and the report on the second session of the Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology (E/ECA/CPRTIIT/2/9).

2. Discussion

49. In the ensuing discussion, the experts pointed out and called for remedial measures to address the emerging low levels of enrolment in and the high rate of dropout from school among boys in some countries. They noted that the promotion of comprehensive social protection programmes by member States of ECA should be accompanied by effective interventions to spur economic growth in order to sustain enhanced social protection systems. In addition, social protection should be linked with sustainable employment and productivity.

50. The experts noted that member States of ECA were developing strategies to ensure that they maximized the benefits resulting from negotiations under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. They underscored the importance of enhancing the negotiating capacity of stakeholders, given the existing disparities among African countries.

3. Recommendations

51. In the light of the discussions, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Deliberately ensure that gender equality is at the core of COVID-19 recovery strategies to address the unequal adverse impacts of the pandemic on women and the poor;
 - (ii) Promote financial inclusion and digital literacy for women's economic empowerment to strengthen their economic profile and their ability to exploit opportunities;
 - (iii) Link economic growth and the creation of jobs with social protection for sustainability;
 - (iv) Expand the coverage and scope of social protection to cushion poor and vulnerable persons and upgrade health protection for them;
 - (v) Prioritize inclusive and sustainable employment for young people by boosting job creation in sectors with high productivity;
 - (vi) Place urbanization at the centre of national development planning and strengthen local economic development planning;
 - (vii) Accelerate efforts to develop and implement national strategies for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, including harmonizing them with other national strategies;
- (b) ECA should:
 - (i) Provide technical support to its member States in developing comprehensive social protection policies and strategies;
 - (ii) Undertake comprehensive studies in African countries to identify pockets of inequality and vulnerability with a view to developing targeted policy interventions;
 - (iii) Provide technical support to its member States in mobilizing resources for infrastructure development, including for renewable energy;
 - (iv) Provide technical support for the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa to increase the links needed to facilitate trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area;
 - (v) Assist its member States in strengthening their capacity to engage in negotiations under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, especially in phases 2 and 3, covering issues of intellectual property rights and e-commerce;
 - (vi) Provide technical support to its member States in designing and implementing digital strategies, legal and regulatory regimes, tools and applications in line with relevant continental strategies.

K. Report on United Nations support for the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme

L. Report on the midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024: focus on Africa

1. Presentation

52. Under sub-items 6 (k) and (l), representatives of the secretariat presented, respectively, the report on United Nations support for the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme (E/ECA/COE/40/13) and the report on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 (E/ECA/COE/40/14).

2. Discussion

53. In the ensuing discussion, the experts noted that United Nations coordination offices faced challenges because of the large number of United Nations partner agencies present in African countries. The representative of the secretariat clarified that the United Nations regional collaborative architecture pulled together all United Nations entities across the continent to provide agile and well-focused support to States Members of the United Nations and regional partners. Furthermore, the United Nations system had three levels of interventions (continental, subregional and national), thus justifying a closer examination of the coordination between the levels and harmonization among partners.

54. With regard to the Vienna Programme of Action, the experts requested an update on implementation after eight years and asked whether adjustments to the programme itself were required or, alternatively, if there was a need to redouble efforts for its implementation, in particular given the experience and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. They also drew attention to the connectivity challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and the associated trade and other costs that they had incurred during the pandemic, which had been compounded by the impacts of the conflict in Ukraine. They underscored the importance of providing support in that regard, in particular for women who were engaged in cross-border trade, and stressed the need for simplified trade regimes to support such women. They also underscored the need to study and prioritize railway connectivity to facilitate trade and the use of dry ports.

3. Recommendations

55. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (a) Member States of ECA should:
 - (i) Continue to vet the United Nations national plans for engagement and United Nations country team operations, based on the needs and priorities of countries;
 - (ii) Examine the upgrading of infrastructure and the need to adopt proactive policies on the removal of trade barriers both among landlocked developing countries and between them and neighbouring countries with coastal access;

- (b) ECA should:
- (i) Continue to support efforts to enhance development coordination across agencies to minimize challenges to national coordination and resource mobilization;
 - (ii) Continue to employ issues-based coalitions with a view to responding to cross-cutting challenges;
 - (iii) Quantitatively assess the extent to which the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 have been achieved and identify adjustments that are required to improve implementation;
 - (iv) Continue to support landlocked developing countries in the implementation of African Continental Free Trade Area strategies developed at the national and regional levels;
 - (v) Provide targeted training measures and technical assistance related to trade, transport and infrastructure issues that would also address the impact of COVID-19 and connectivity challenges in landlocked developing countries;
 - (vi) Provide technical support for the identification of cross-border programmes to facilitate trade and for the implementation of such programmes.

VII. Date, venue and theme of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission [agenda item 7]

1. Presentation

56. A representative of the secretariat introduced a note on the date, venue and theme of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission (E/ECA/COE/40/15/Rev.1). It was proposed that the fifty-fifth session be held in March or April 2023 in Addis Ababa under the theme “Fostering recovery and transformation in Africa to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities”.

2. Discussion

57. In the ensuing discussion, the experts generally accepted the proposed date and venue and were in general agreement on the proposed theme. They stressed the need to specify the type of transformation that would be focused on during the session.

58. They suggested that the deliberations at the fifty-fifth session would offer an opportunity to reflect on the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) and the completion of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 (2014–2023). They also suggested that a theme related to the African Continental Free Trade Area be considered.

59. They noted the rationale of the theme as clarified by the secretariat.

3. Recommendations

60. In the light of the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) ECA should refine the theme, taking into account the Committee’s suggestions;

(b) The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development may wish to accept the proposed dates and venue for the fifty-fifth session of the Commission.

VIII. Other matters [agenda item 8]

61. No other matters were raised.

IX. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee of Experts and consideration of recommendations and draft resolutions [agenda item 9]

62. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered the draft report of its meeting together with the draft resolutions to be submitted for consideration and adoption by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the Economic Commission for Africa. Several experts made comments and proposed amendments to the report and to the draft resolutions. After extensive discussion, the Committee unanimously adopted the report. The resolutions, as amended by the Committee, are attached in the annex to the present report for consideration and possible adoption by the Conference of Ministers.

X. Closing of the meeting [agenda item 10]

63. Closing remarks were made by Ms. Morsy and Mr. Diop.

64. Ms. Morsy expressed appreciation to the Government of Senegal for hosting the session and thanked the Bureau and the Committee for the smooth conduct of the meeting and the quality of the deliberations leading to the adoption of concrete recommendations on, among other things, current economic and social development trends, progress on regional integration and financing Africa's recovery. She reaffirmed the commitment of ECA to provide technical support to its member States in their efforts not only to address immediate financial needs but also to develop more resilient responses and policies.

65. Mr. Diop expressed the renewed commitment of the Government of Senegal to the work of ECA. He expressed gratitude to the experts, the secretariat, the media and other service providers for a successful meeting of the Committee of Experts. He commended the leadership of ECA in advocating for more liquidity for the continent. He invited member States of ECA to consider implementing the recommendations made during the deliberations.

66. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.17 p.m. on Friday, 13 May 2022.

Annex

Draft resolutions for consideration by the Conference of Ministers

Draft resolutions, the text of which was approved by the Committee of Experts, are set out below for consideration and possible adoption by the Conference of Ministers.

A. Financing the recovery of Africa and beyond

The Conference of Ministers,

Noting with grave concern that, despite current national and global efforts, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and extreme weather events are widening the development financing gap in Africa and augmenting the continent's debt vulnerabilities,

Concerned that the asymmetric responses to the pandemic by developed and developing countries in terms of fiscal stimulus and vaccination are leading to a slower recovery in developing regions, in particular the African continent,

Recalling that global initiatives such as the Group of 20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative have not directly addressed the financing needs of middle-income countries,

Noting the slow progress in implementation of the Common Framework and concerned that the three countries of the Common Framework are yet to experience debt relief as envisaged by the Debt Service Suspension Initiative,

Concerned that the call on private creditors to participate on comparable terms in the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework has not generated a favourable response,

Noting that the perception of risk posed by the continent contributes to high credit costs, which penalize the competitiveness of African economies,

Concerned that the continent's debt vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the high borrowing costs from capital markets that do not justifiably reflect countries' economic fundamentals,

Acknowledging the important role of private capital markets in the development financing landscape of Africa, including in supplementing scarce concessional financing,

Recognizing the conducive role of functional repurchase agreement markets in enhancing the liquidity of sovereign bonds, thus reducing the liquidity premiums and eventually lowering the borrowing costs for bond issuers,

Recalling the acknowledged role played by the Economic Commission for Africa in designing the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility to reduce the cost of private credit for African countries,

Convinced that the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility can contribute to reducing interest rates by compressing liquidity premiums, alleviating the debt vulnerabilities of African countries and expanding the fiscal space for investment in critical infrastructure for digitalization, trade development, just energy transition and health facilities with a view to achieving a green and sustainable recovery in the post-pandemic era,

Cognizant of the important role of special drawing rights as a source of concessionary financing and the important role that the new issuance of special drawing rights can play in expediting the recovery of Africa from the current crises, while the allocation of special drawing rights has disproportionately benefited developed countries despite their strong fiscal positions and low utilization of such rights,

1. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Africa, African ministers of finance and the International Monetary Fund for facilitating the establishment of the high-level working group on a new global financial architecture that works for Africa;

2. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to provide thought leadership and technical support in the deliberations of the high-level working group and to serve as its secretariat;

3. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to support the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative for two more years and the rescheduling of the Initiative at the end of those two years for an additional period of five years for interested countries;

4. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Africa on launching the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility;

5. *Calls upon* countries, development partners and international, regional, and subregional organizations to welcome and extend support in financing and advocacy to the newly founded Liquidity and Sustainability Facility;

6. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to facilitate the operationalization of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility, notably by mobilizing financial resources from supportive countries, development partners and international, regional and subregional organizations, and also by exploring the opportunity for support through the new issuance of special drawing rights by the International Monetary Fund;

7. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue its advocacy for the reform of the international financial architecture to allow African countries, including upper-middle-income countries, to gain access to resources more easily and at a lower cost from multilateral and regional financial institutions;

8. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to provide substantive technical assistance and capacity-building services to countries that are willing and eligible to participate in the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility initiative;

9. *Also requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to assist countries and facilitate their issuance of green, blue and Sustainable Development Goal-linked bonds to stimulate investment in climate adaptation actions and natural resource conservation, by leveraging the functional Liquidity and Sustainability Facility;

10. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to advocate and mobilize support for the reallocation of special drawing rights to countries that are most in need, with a view to addressing social, economic and environmental challenges, including the on-lending of special drawing rights to regional development banks to support the development financing priorities of Africa, so as to build forward better and achieve green and sustainable development as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;

11. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to create an African credit rating agency in collaboration with the African Union Commission.

B. Importance of digital transformation for breaking new ground

The Conference of Ministers,

Considering the continued socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the African continent, which has plunged close to 26 million Africans into extreme poverty, and the need to devise innovative and strategic engagement in order to facilitate the speedy economic recovery of Africa,

Noting that African countries are heavily dependent on imported technologies and information systems and that the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine could cause the degradation of information and communications technology services all over the world and in particular in Africa, thereby aggravating the cybersecurity threats posed to the African continent,

Considering that Africa requires 100 billion United States dollars to achieve universal, affordable and quality Internet access by 2030,

Considering also that digitalization plays a critical role in boosting intra-African trade by improving digital payment systems and strengthening instant inclusive payment systems,

Recognizing that gender inequality affects the uptake of digital technologies for economic development,

Recalling the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its thirty-third ordinary session,

Commending the current efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and key development partners to support member States in developing and implementing their respective national digital transformation strategies,

Noting with appreciation the current efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Export-Import Bank and the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area to support African countries in developing and implementing the African Trade Exchange, a business-to-business platform which serves as a virtual marketplace for buyers and suppliers, based on rules of the African Continental Free Trade Area,

Noting with satisfaction the adoption of the Lomé Declaration on cybersecurity and the fight against cybercrime at the first African summit meeting on cybersecurity, held in Lomé in March 2022,

1. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to further support the development of digital identity capacity across the African continent as a means of promoting inclusive sustainable development, moving beyond the informality of African economies, improving domestic resource mobilization, accelerating the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area and ensuring that no one is left behind;

2. *Also requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue its pursuit of initiatives that enhance the participation of women and girls in digital transformation strategies;

3. *Urges* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to support the implementation of the Lomé Declaration on cybersecurity and the fight against cybercrime;

4. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to strengthen its work on leveraging digital technologies and innovation to enable its member States to explore new areas of the data economy for increased trade and development opportunities and to harness the benefits of digitalization for the recovery and stabilization of their respective economies;

5. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to support member States of the Economic Commission for Africa in devising additional innovative mechanisms for the financing and implementation of digital transformation strategies;

6. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to expedite efforts to support the development of digital trade on the African continent to accelerate the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

C. Role of Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing in improving African health outcomes

The Conference of Ministers,

Acknowledging the indispensable contribution of health to the future prosperity of Africa and to the achievement of the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

Conscious of the need for more inclusive, responsive and resilient health systems that serve as key drivers of economic growth, job creation, development financing and private sector participation in Africa,

Recalling the launch of Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing by the African Union Commission and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention at the high-level online summit held on 12 and 13 April 2021 under the theme “Expanding Africa’s vaccine manufacturing for health security: building back better, bolder and bigger”,

Welcoming Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing as an African initiative, taking into account the continent’s priorities and means to harness the power of collective action to address health challenges during and beyond the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

Taking note of the continuing efforts made by the Economic Commission for Africa to improve health outcomes on the continent, including its role as chair of the market design and demand intelligence pillar of Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing and as a member of the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team,

Mindful of the call by the Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology at its second session for the Economic Commission for Africa to continue and scale up the roll-out of the three dimensions of the African Continental Free Trade Area-anchored pharmaceutical initiative (pooled procurement, local manufacturing, and standards and quality assurance), including by forging and strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders,

Recognizing the critical importance of consolidating gains and securing innovations introduced during the pandemic and of leveraging them in the service of long-term health security in Africa,

1. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa, other pan-African organizations, key global health entities, development partners, regional and international financial institutions and the private sector to mobilize financing to achieve the target of Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing of ensuring uninterrupted access to affordable, high-quality vaccines in Africa by fulfilling 60 per cent of the continent's vaccine demand through local production by 2040;

2. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to work in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team to develop an African Union model law on pooled procurement, for possible adoption, so as to enhance coherence on mechanisms to pool resources and to create demand certainty for vaccines produced in Africa;

3. *Urges* the Economic Commission for Africa to support its member States in identifying, securing and developing the workforce, intellectual properties, industrial know-how, technology and financing required for a commercially viable and financially sustainable vaccine manufacturing sector in Africa.

D. Updated strategic directions, the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) and the 2023 programme plan and budget

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations regional commissions and the United Nations development system to fully implement the statement of collaboration between the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations regional commissions on support to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system, and underlined the need to continue to make them fit for purpose in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

Recalling further its resolution 959 (LI) of 15 May 2018 on the revised strategic framework and biennial programme plan of the Economic Commission for Africa for the biennium 2018–2019, in which the Conference of Ministers adopted the revised strategic framework,¹ having considered the note by the secretariat entitled “New strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa: putting ideas into action for an empowered and transformed Africa”,² with a view to delivering ideas and actions for an empowered, inclusive and transformed Africa within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

¹ E/ECA/COE/37/4/Rev.1.

² E/ECA/COE/37/14.

Noting that, in 2021, the Secretary-General issued the report entitled “Our Common Agenda”,³ in which he set out an agenda for action on the basis of his vision for the future of global cooperation through inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism, and recognizing the need to reflect such an agenda in the strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa, in accordance with its mandate, to ensure the effective implementation of its programme plan, in collaboration with all entities of the United Nations system and other partners,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/266 of 24 December 2017 on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations, in which the Assembly approved the proposed change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis, beginning with the programme budget for 2020, and emphasized that reform initiatives should be integrated, coherent and mutually reinforcing,

Recognizing the strategic importance of annual programme plans and budgets in contextualizing and operationalizing the implementation of the programme of work of the Economic Commission for Africa in accordance with its strategic directions and core functions, across its nine subprogrammes and pursuant to guidance from the Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming its resolution 964 (LII) of 26 March 2019 on the 2020 programme plan and budget, in which it called upon the Economic Commission for Africa to increase the level of ambition in its programme of work and to develop a medium-term programme framework, covering a period of three to five years, to facilitate the engagement of its member States, with annual plans and budgets to be derived from the framework,

Recalling its resolution 981 (LIII) of 23 March 2021 on the 2022 programme plan and budget, in which it noted that the formulation of the medium-term programme framework had been affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation and would require further consultations with constituencies and stakeholders,

Noting that the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) is in line with the development priorities and aspirations of Africa, with a focus on the main transformations that are necessary to accelerate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals that are contained in the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of Agenda 2063,

Acknowledging that the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) provides a robust orientation for the 2023 programme plan and budget, which, in turn, highlights the objectives and the most important expected results and deliverables for all subprogrammes of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Recognizing that the 2023 programme plan and budget reflects the continued efforts of the Economic Commission for Africa to enhance the implementation of its strategic programmatic orientations, so that it can effectively support the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and mobilize resources towards financing the continent’s recovery from the COVID-19 crisis,

Noting the alignment of the strategic directions with those contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda”,

Commending the Economic Commission for Africa for implementing its work programme for 2021 amid adverse circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic,

³ A/75/982.

Having examined the update on the strategic framework, the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) and the 2023 programme plan and budget,

1. *Approves* the medium-term programme framework (2022–2025);
2. *Adopts* the 2023 programme plan and budget of the Economic Commission for Africa.

E. Data and statistics

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the importance of transforming and modernizing national statistical systems to support the development process adequately and to respond to the need for official statistics and data for planning and decision-making and for monitoring progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, and national development plans,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 71/313, in which the Assembly welcomed the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, which provides the framework for discussion, planning, implementation and evaluation of statistical capacity-building pertaining to the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on the modernization of national statistical systems,

Taking note of the progress made on the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems in Africa and appreciating the outputs and deliverables produced to date,

Noting that several countries are undertaking digital censuses in the current 2020 round of the population and housing census, which runs from 2015 to 2024, with support from the Economic Commission for Africa and partners,

Acknowledging the need to use new data sources, disaggregated data and alternative methods of data collection, leveraging technological progress, to respond to the need for data in monitoring progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and subregional and national development plans,

1. *Calls upon* member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to support work on the transformation and modernization of official statistics by the African group created by the Statistical Commission for Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa and comprising heads of national statistical offices in Africa, and to adopt and implement a national statistical system transformation and modernization road map;
2. *Calls upon* pan-African organizations and partners to steer and coordinate their support towards modernizing national statistical systems;
3. *Urges* member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to devote adequate financial resources to building modern statistical systems that adequately respond to the need for official statistics and data for planning and decision-making;
4. *Encourages* member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to produce disaggregated statistics in conformity with United Nations methodology and guidelines, including the System of National Accounts;
5. *Calls upon* Governments, entities of the United Nations system and development partners to provide financial, material and technical support to member States of the Economic Commission for Africa that have not undertaken a census in the 2020 round to undertake censuses before the end of

the 2020 round in 2024 and to support the implementation of the fully technologically driven censuses in Africa during the 2030 round (2025–2034);

6. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, working with other key regional partners, including the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, to continue to support its member States in strengthening the capacity of their statistical and data systems.

F. Support by the Economic Commission for Africa for least developed countries in the context of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing that least developed countries in Africa offer enormous human and natural resource potential for global economic growth, welfare, prosperity and food and energy security, and acknowledging the considerable efforts that they have made in implementing the commitments of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

Concerned that half of the least developed countries in Africa did not meet the graduation criteria set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Taking note of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031, adopted at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries on 17 March 2022 and endorsed by the General Assembly on 1 April 2022, wherein commitments between the least developed countries and their development partners, including the private sector, civil society and governments at all levels, were renewed and strengthened,

Concerned that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine may undermine efforts to expedite implementation of the Doha Programme of Action,

Cognizant of the opportunities available to deepen support for African least developed countries in the context of the Doha Programme of Action,

1. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to report on the progress made by African least developed countries in their implementation of the Doha Programme of Action;

2. *Also requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to deploy all appropriate tools and resources to support evidence-based planning, macroeconomic policymaking and debt management in African least developed countries;

3. *Further requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, working with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to continue to support the least developed countries in the implementation and monitoring of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through coordination with various United Nations entities, raising global awareness, mobilizing international support and resources in favour of the least developed countries, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and reaching out to all stakeholders, including by establishing partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to enhance support for those countries.

G. Scaling up investment in transport to optimize the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the important role of the African Continental Free Trade Area in the socioeconomic development and transformation of Africa and the role of transport infrastructure in expanding trade and economic connectivity and promoting the economies of scale for African businesses necessary to maximize the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area on the continent,

Noting that the transport sector contributes directly to the economies of African countries through value addition, job creation and market expansion,

Mindful that the African continent has a continuing shortfall in investment in transportation infrastructure,

Recalling its resolution 965 (LII) of 26 March 2019 on the Luxembourg Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters specific to Railway Rolling Stock, in which it called upon the Economic Commission for Africa to inform interested parties on the way that private credit and leasing can assist with providing the financial resources necessary to revitalize and expand the African rail network, and the benefits of becoming party to the Protocol,

Acknowledging the contribution of key regional initiatives, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the Single African Air Transport Market, to modernizing and expanding existing national and regional transport networks, and acknowledging the commitment of member States of the Economic Commission for Africa to those initiatives,

Noting that, to date, 35 African countries have signed the solemn commitment to the Single African Air Transport Market,

Mindful that effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area requires adequate cross-border transport infrastructure and services,

Mindful also that the African Continental Free Trade Area provides extensive opportunities for investment in transport infrastructure and services,

1. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Africa for undertaking a study on the implications of the African Continental Free Trade Area for the demand for transport infrastructure and services;

2. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to widely disseminate the findings of the study and to undertake further studies, if necessary, in that regard;

3. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to support its member States in implementing the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the Single African Air Transport Market;

4. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with key partners, including the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, to support its member States in mobilizing financial resources for the upgrading of transport links that are critical to the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and for investment in the transport equipment required to accommodate increased trade volumes resulting from the African Continental Free Trade Area.

H. Carbon certification

The Conference of Ministers,

Noting with concern, as reported in the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that Africa remains the most vulnerable region to climate shocks while being the least responsible for the inexorable increase of global temperatures,

Underlining the critical importance of the continent's natural heritage and its incalculable contribution towards the sequestration of harmful greenhouse gases, and in particular such regions as the Congo basin, which play an essential role in regulating the Earth's climate,

Noting the absence of efficient accounting and carbon certification processes in the African region to incentivize efforts to sustain such carbon sinks and regulate the Earth's climate, while addressing its own development imperative, by pricing such emissions in manners that match the related social costs,

Recognizing the vast potential of carbon markets for generating new streams of financial revenue for public and private organizations and for allowing Governments to meet their low carbon emissions targets while achieving green and climate-resilient development, as outlined in their national development plans, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the numerous goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

Recognizing the needs expressed by African Governments and other parties at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, specifically with regard to the negotiations held on article 6, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement, in which Governments are encouraged to establish environmental integrity and carbon market integrity by, among other things, ensuring that all carbon use is transparent and verifiable, and applying comparable accounting systems and supporting development plans,

Recalling its resolutions 884 (XLIV) on climate change and sustainable development in Africa and 919 (XLVII) on the green economy and structural transformation, which can be substantially promoted by carbon market integrity carefully designed for the best interests of Africa,

Noting the importance of accurate data on carbon stocks and carbon stock changes in terrestrial and other carbon pools in the process of managing carbon assets and addressing sustainable development needs, including moderating climate risks to societies and economies,

Recalling the request made recently by member States of the Economic Commission for Africa in the Kigali Declaration on building forward better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis and accelerating delivery of sustainable development in Africa, adopted in 2022, for the operationalization of carbon market programmes and for building the capacity of the countries of the Congo basin to deliver funding for sustainable development through the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin to support the implementation of nationally determined contributions, to estimate their capacity for carbon sequestration and to develop livelihoods that are linked to the subregion's unique natural capital,

1. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to provide technical and advisory support to its member States that are interested in implementing carbon certification and accreditation processes in terms of accessing carbon credit markets and regional climate commissions, such as the Congo Basin Climate Commission;

2. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to provide capacity-building support to its member States that express an interest and to regional climate commissions, such as the Congo Basin Climate Commission, in the accounting and reporting of greenhouse gas emission reduction processes;

3. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to provide technical and advisory support to its member States that express an interest in assessing the carbon sequestration potential of their natural assets;

4. *Also calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to partner with regional development banks to develop a strategy for mobilizing financial resources, building on the opportunity presented by the issuance of carbon credits.

I. Curbing illicit financial flows and recovery of lost assets

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the importance of cooperation at the national, regional and international levels in combating illicit financial flows,

Noting the enduring fiscal constraints facing African countries, which have been further tightened during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, inhibiting response strategies,

Noting with grave concern that the growing fiscal burden imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic has been exacerbated by the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine,

Recalling resolution 886 (XLIV) on illicit financial flows, in which the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa was established, and the mandate given in the Assembly Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows,⁴ adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in 2015, to the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to carry out more research on illicit financial flows and the recovery of lost assets,

Recalling also the appeal to States Members of the United Nations in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to track and curb illicit financial flows through Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.1,

Noting with concern that the ongoing constraints have made it more difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

1. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Africa, together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which are the two custodians of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.1 on illicit financial flows and its conceptual framework, on piloting the agreed United Nations methodologies for the measurement of illicit financial flows in 12 member States of the Economic Commission for Africa;

2. *Calls upon* the international community to undertake appropriate actions at the national, regional and global levels to ensure that illicit financial flows are treated as a system-wide challenge at the global level and that the

⁴ Assembly/AU/Decl.5.(XXIV).

international community adopts a mechanism for global coordination to systematically monitor illicit financial flows;

3. *Requests* the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa to work with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the African Capacity-Building Foundation, the African Tax Administration Forum and other development partners to build the capacity of States members of the Economic Commission for Africa and institutions, especially in tax policy and administration, international tax cooperation, the countering of money laundering, corruption prevention and related enforcement measures, asset recovery and return, and natural resource governance;

4. *Calls upon* the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners to build the capacity of African countries to tackle the gaps in institutional architecture, with a view to developing their ability to track, measure and report on the evolution of illicit financial flows under Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.1, and to devise measures to curb illicit financial flows;

5. *Calls upon* the United Nations to begin negotiations under its auspices on an international convention on tax matters, with the participation of all States members and relevant stakeholders, aimed at eliminating base erosion, profit shifting, tax evasion, including of capital gains tax, and other tax abuses.

J. Culture and heritage management programme

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the development potential of arts, culture and heritage as accelerators for achieving the Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

Taking note of the declaration of the African Union theme for 2021 as “Arts, culture and heritage: levers for building the Africa We Want”,

Acknowledging that culture is necessary for growth and has the potential to transform Africa, which resonates with the fifth aspiration of Agenda 2063, “an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics”,

Recognizing the socioeconomic importance of arts and culture as a potential powerhouse in creating employment for millions of people, promoting social cohesion and strengthening national and regional identities, as underscored by the Secretary-General at the Africa Dialogue Series, held in May 2021 under the theme “Cultural identity and ownership: reshaping mindsets”, which builds on the African Union theme for 2021,

Recalling the relevant instruments, including the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance (2006), the statute of the African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission (2019), the revised African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa (2021) and the African Union Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage (2018), all of which provide strong direction for African countries to further promote and develop this important sector,

Cognizant of the fact that the safeguarding and promotion of culture contribute directly to many of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing that cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, and creativity are resources that need to be protected and carefully managed, and that they can serve both as drivers for achieving the Sustainable Development

Goals and as enablers, since approaches that promote culture will help to ensure the success of interventions to achieve the Goals,

Recognizing also the potential for culture to contribute to the process of economic recovery and to addressing the challenges of the post-pandemic environment,

Acknowledging the role of the Economic Commission for Africa in promoting cultural heritage as a tool of economic development by forming partnerships with several stakeholders, including the African Union Commission, the Heritage Management Organization and the Atlantic Council to implement a heritage management programme, aimed at contributing to the cultural and creative industries and to the African Union theme for 2021,

Recognizing that the objective of the programme is to build on the continental initiatives to empower local communities through capacity-building and other areas of intervention in the cultural, creative and heritage management sector, thus maximizing the powerful strategic advantage provided by the continent's heritage, and, in turn, strengthening the arts, culture and heritage sector, with a view to fostering economic development in African countries,

1. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to support the heritage management programme with the aim of contributing to the continental initiatives that promote the cultural and creative industries as a lever for sustainable development and to urge its member States to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the programme;

2. *Urges* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to encourage its member States to accelerate efforts to recognize and acknowledge the economic potential of their heritage resources and provide a significant portion of their budget for their protection, management and development;

3. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa to continue to engage key institutions on the African continent and the international organizations involved in the management, development and financing of the arts, culture and heritage sector, in collaborating on the implementation of the programme with a view to enhancing the economic contribution of the sector.