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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Committee of Experts of the Conference of African  
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**  
Fortieth meeting

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*  
**Statutory issues**

## **Proposed programme plan for 2023 and programme performance for 2021: summary\*\***

### **A. Introduction**

1. The coming decades will require transformative change across Africa if the continent is to achieve the goals of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. The proposed programme plan for 2023 intends to facilitate this journey through the process of incorporating the report of the Secretary-General, “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982), aimed at boosting the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals, with a special focus on leaving no one behind, protecting our planet, placing women, girls and young people at the centre, improving digital inclusion and promoting sustainable financing. With a view to sustaining related efforts and interventions in addressing recurrent shocks and crisis in Africa in following years, the plan explores the five transformations set forth in the medium-term programme framework of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for 2022–2025, including increased investments in human potential, further integration of the continent, enhanced innovation and interconnections, the promotion of sustainable productive industries and economies, and the maintenance of stable and effective institutions.

### **B. Overall orientation**

#### **1. Mandates and background**

2. ECA is responsible for promoting the economic and social development of its member States, fostering intraregional integration and promoting international cooperation for the development of Africa. The mandate derives from the priorities established in relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions, and also in Economic and Social Council resolution 671 A (XXV). The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in Africa has revealed a series of dire challenges and critical issues that will need to be addressed in 2023 to

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\* E/ECA/COE/40/1.

\*\* The present document is a summary of the proposed programme plan for 2023 and programme performance for 2021 of the Economic Commission for Africa, the full text of which is under review by the Programme Planning and Budget Division.



strengthen the social and economic resilience of member States and ensure attainment of the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

3. ECA has a critical role to play in providing sets of innovative solutions, and also demand-driven and tailor-made policy and technical advice to member States and regional economic communities in pursuit of sustainable development and the rise of more prosperous, resilient and inclusive societies. ECA interventions include cutting-edge research and related integrated policy and capacity support focused on economic diversification and industrialization; investments in infrastructure, productive sectors and domestic resource mobilization; the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area; and the process of digital transformation.

## **2. Strategy and external factors for 2023**

4. The ECA programme strategy focuses on transformational changes to make a measurable contribution to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, following an integrated and coherent approach. In pursuing its mandate, ECA will continue to concentrate on five strategic directions:

(a) Deploying knowledge to support policymaking to drive the development agenda of Africa;

(b) Formulating policy options to accelerate economic diversification and job creation for the transformation of Africa;

(c) Designing and implementing innovative financing models and leveraging them for the development of human, physical and social infrastructure assets;

(d) Supporting ideas and actions to foster deeper regional integration and the development of regional public goods, with a focus on socioeconomic inclusion and taking into account synergies between the economic and social development programmes of Africa;

(e) Advocating a common position for Africa at the global level and developing regional responses as a contribution to global governance issues.

5. In pursuing these strategic directions, ECA will employ its convening function, through the provision of multilateral and multi-stakeholder platforms; its think-tank function, conducting interdisciplinary research and analysis of key challenges facing member States and Africa as a whole, while promoting peer learning and development; and its operational function, through the provision of direct technical policy advice and support to member States, including in cooperation with other United Nations system entities.

6. ECA will further mainstream policy guidance and recommendations, taking into account the relevant provisions of intergovernmental policy organs and platforms, and promote cooperation among the regional economic communities for a sound and expeditious implementation of regional agreements within the context of the various United Nations-African Union partnership frameworks. ECA will further build on its medium-term programme framework for 2022–2025, aimed at providing forward-looking planning guidance that brings together all streams of work of the divisions, subregional offices and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning along transformative areas of focus that provide entry points for subprogramme activities in 2023. ECA will also further catalyse joint planning and delivery among and between its subprogrammes.

7. Although it has posed serious threats to the sustainable development and growth of the continent, the COVID-19 pandemic has also opened up a number of new opportunities. ECA will continue to facilitate the identification and

proposal of innovative financing tools to boost domestic resource mobilization and address debt servicing, as a primary mitigating measure. The Commission will focus its interventions in 2023 on providing tailor-made policy and technical advice and convening policy dialogues on emerging sustainable development issues in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. These measures will result in targeted support for national development planning and the creation of an enabling business environment in relation to food systems, land, energy, and infrastructure. The sustained operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area will play a critical role in support to the deepening of value chains in Africa, in various productive areas including the pharmaceutical sector.

8. In addition, ECA support will be geared towards increasing investments in climate action for enhanced national resilience and the harnessing of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and blue economy. ECA will also pursue its pioneer role in spearheading the digital transformation on the continent. As part of the United Nations reform agenda, ECA will use the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and opportunity and issue-based coalitions, together with direct support for the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams, as the main delivery channels for its services.

9. For 2023, the planned deliverables of ECA will support member States' continuing management of, and recovery from, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Such planned deliverables and activities include: the capacity development of member States in debt management and revenue collection for resilient recovery; the enhanced capacity of member States to design and implement a climate-resilient green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and blue economy; inclusive digital transformation; the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises as an engine for sustainable development; economic diversification through the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area; and strengthening the capacity of member States to mainstream risk management into policy planning and development.

10. Reflecting the importance of continuous improvement and responding to the needs of member States, ECA has mainstreamed lessons learned and best practices related to adjustments to and the adaptation of its programme owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. This work has included addressing the challenges brought by the pandemic to national statistical systems and operations, in particular face-to-face data collection in the field through tailor-made services. The planned changes for 2023 cover the promotion and application of new technologies with a view to changing the way that price data are collected and the implementation by member States of the road map on transformation and modernization of their official statistics.

11. Technical assistance used to be provided to member States and regional economic communities in developing national strategies for their African Continental Free Trade Area activities and diversifying their blue economy activities through knowledge production, conducting market access studies and policy dialogues. This support proved insufficiently exhaustive, however, to create more economic opportunities. Hence, additional dedicated capacity-building activities will be conducted for both the private and the public sectors in 2023. The component will strengthen strategic collaboration and partnerships with United Nations country teams, external policy think tanks deploying hybrid modes of interaction, including in-person and online modes of engagement. Other mainstreamed lessons are related to e-learning, which has proved to be a very successful and useful platform during the pandemic. Training modalities to provide beneficiaries with access to good quality digital deliverables will

continue to be developed and strengthened, in order to enable the sharing of critical development planning and policymaking knowledge and skills.

12. With regard to the external factors, the overall plan for 2023 is based on the following planning assumptions:

(a) Identified sustainable and long-term pathways to recovery from COVID-19 are consolidated and followed;

(b) The operationalized Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa is used to channel ECA contributions and support for the implementation of United Nations-African Union cooperation frameworks;

(c) Member States and regional economic communities continue to cooperate among and between themselves for harmonized actions focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(d) Intergovernmental policy organs and forums provide continued policy advice on emerging priorities.

13. Where feasible, the programme plan for 2023 continues to incorporate novel approaches to the performance of mandates that were put in place in response to the changed operational conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the programme plan for 2023 assumes that those operational conditions have improved and allow for mandate implementation through formerly established approaches. Any modification to planned deliverables would be in pursuance of the objectives, strategies and mandates and would be reported as part of the programme performance information.

14. Where cooperation with other entities at the global, regional, national and local levels is concerned, ECA will continue to coordinate the work of the United Nations system to support the African Union Commission in seeking partnerships with and support from various development partners and donors, with a view to strengthening and sustaining its resource base. Specifically, ECA will build on its existing strategic partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, central banks, universities, think tanks, other research institutions and civil society and private sector organizations, and forge new partnerships in advancing attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. With regard to South-South and triangular cooperation, ECA will continue to leverage value-adding partnerships premised on the principle of enhancing complementarity and development impact.

15. With regard to inter-agency coordination and liaison, ECA will continue to promote collaborative delivery through cross-sectoral initiatives that cut across goals and targets and ensure effective linkages between regional, subregional and national platforms and approaches. This will include working through the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and enhanced collaboration with regional United Nations entities, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, resident coordinators and country teams through opportunity and issue-based coalitions to ensure more coordinated responses and a cogent collective contribution to fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

16. The Commission integrates a gender perspective in its operational activities, deliverables and results, as appropriate. For example, the objective of subprogramme 6 on gender equality and women's empowerment is to accelerate the implementation by member States of their global and regional commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their reporting on that work. The subprogramme will continue to provide technical

support to the Commission's other subprogrammes to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in their programme of work. The subprogramme will also strengthen the capacity of member States, through the provision of tailored technical support, advisory services and hands-on training, in gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, inclusiveness and economic diversification, women's entrepreneurship, and the integration of a gender perspective into national policies and programmes.

17. In line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, ECA will pursue measures to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including actions related to programme design, implementation and evaluation; policies on operational aspects; the reasonable accommodation of related requests; and consultations with persons with disabilities. At ECA, specialized assistive equipment will continue to be provided at the headquarters compound in Addis Ababa and at subregional offices to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities. The programme will also endeavour to contribute to the development and implementation of specific joint projects with other United Nations entities.

### **3. Programme performance in 2021**

#### **(a) Impact of the pandemic**

18. The continuation of the pandemic into 2021 impeded the performance of mandates, in particular relating to the need to enhance the capacity of member States to analyse the macroeconomic impact of COVID-19 for tailor-made recovery responses, including national African Continental Free Trade Area strategies geared to the enhancement of intraregional trading, and also support for the promotion of vaccine manufacturing and equitable distribution. In addition, in order to support member States in tackling issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, within the overall scope of the objectives, ECA provided technical advice on the elaboration of national development plans focusing on policy reforms, enhanced domestic resource mobilization and capacity development. These plans included an undertaking to strengthen the resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises to COVID-19 impacts in Southern Africa through the deployment of a digital platform on technology and innovation. ECA also provided training targeted at government officials and policymakers on macroeconomic issues in the context of COVID-19 (a survey furnished evidence that 75 per cent of the trainees made use of the knowledge and skills acquired to exert a positive influence on national policymaking). In addition, ECA analysed vulnerabilities revealed by COVID-19 and developed analytical and diagnostic policy tools for social policy responses by member States to recover and build improved resilience.

#### **(b) Evaluation activities**

19. The following evaluations completed in 2021 have guided the proposed programme plan for 2023:

(a) Evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Macroeconomics and Governance Division;

(b) Capacity-building programme on the compilation and application of environmentally extended supply and use tables in Africa, a project of the United Nations Development Account;

(c) Support for boosting intra-African trade, under the third programme cycle of the African Trade Policy Centre;

(d) Phase 1 review of United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries, by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2021/2);

(e) Project of the Joint Inspection Unit on business continuity policies and practices in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2021/6).

20. The results and lessons of the evaluations referenced above have been taken into account for the proposed programme plan for 2023. In its evaluation, the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed the need for ECA to strengthen subprogramme-wide performance monitoring, to remedy a perceived gap in recording results achieved. Similarly, an internal evaluation of the support provided for the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade identified the need to put in place robust institutionalized results-based management and monitoring and reporting systems. In response to these findings and recommendations, both subprogrammes have been endeavouring to strengthen their monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes, through targeted training measures in results-based management specifically conceived and delivered by the Commission, as well as cross-division quarterly accountability and programme performance review meetings.

21. The following evaluations are planned for 2023:

- (a) Migration statistics and skills recognition in Africa for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;
- (b) Regional and national natural resource-based industrialization policies for inclusive and sustainable development in Southern Africa;
- (c) Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of ECA subprogramme-level monitoring and reporting regimes;
- (d) Joint Inspection Unit reviews and evaluation;
- (e) Evaluation of the ECA partnership strategy and its outcome.

22. These evaluations will be undertaken in coordination with the substantive offices, while involving key stakeholders in both planning and implementation phases. Evaluations will be conducted in accordance with the norms and standards prescribed by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

## **C. Programme of work**

### **1. Subprogramme 1: Macroeconomic policy and governance**

23. To achieve structural transformation and inclusive growth in Africa through strengthened and effective development planning, macroeconomic policy analysis and enhanced public sector finance management and governance, the subprogramme will essentially:

- (a) Publish policy-relevant knowledge products underpinned by cutting-edge research;
- (b) Support member States in honouring their national and international development commitments by tracking progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (c) Provide tailor-made support to expedite the graduation of African countries from the least developed country classification;
- (d) Build the capacity of member States to design and implement policy frameworks that promote transparency and accountability in public financial management and optimize resource mobilization and allocation;
- (e) Convene platforms for policy dialogue on issues related to macroeconomic policy, economic governance and development planning;
- (f) Continually innovate ECA macro-modelling tools to support evidence-based policymaking and strengthen the capacity of policymakers to

predict and assess the macro impacts of economic shocks, including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2. Subprogramme 2: Regional integration and trade**

24. To strengthen regional cooperation and integration among member States through increased trade flows, improved industrialization and increased investments, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Continue to work with the African Union and, in particular, such bodies as the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and the African Union Development Agency, the United Nations regional coordinator offices and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as development partners, to assist member States in securing market access and business opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) Develop and disseminate policy tools and help member States to identify opportunities for diversification, value addition and the development of manufacturing and industrial clusters in support of the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa;

(c) Provide training, with a particular focus on landlocked developing countries and regional economic communities, related to the implementation of existing regional cooperation frameworks and provide technical assistance for the implementation of the African digital transformation strategy;

(d) Provide advisory services and technical assistance to member States and regional economic communities on regional integration, national, regional and continental competition policies, intellectual property policies, and measures for investment facilitation;

(e) Provide advisory services and training for negotiators on the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in the light of the second phase of Agreement issues;

(f) Disseminate evidence-based analysis with recommendations for responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on trade.

## **3. Subprogramme 3: Private sector development and finance**

25. To enhance the business environment to leverage the role of the private sector and its investments in the economic growth and transformation of Africa, to improve land-tenure security, in particular for women, and to enhance innovative private sector financing and investment for infrastructure, energy and services, and agriculture, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Produce knowledge products with policy recommendations and convene member States in areas of particular importance, to consider means of accelerating agricultural development and the transformation of food systems;

(b) Support member States in implementing the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa and other associated commitments;

(c) Work with the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, the African Development Bank and regional economic communities in operationalizing the second priority plan of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and assist in promoting the African air transport market and the improvement of road safety;

(d) Support the development of home-grown solutions for Africa in developing best practices in public-private partnership models and in advocating capital support for existing and new rail projects in Africa;

(e) Support member States and market participants in exploring investment and co-investment opportunities in infrastructure, real estate and other sectors in close cooperation with pension funds, asset management firms, private equity and financial institutions;

(f) Provide technical assistance and disseminate best practices to member States to identify priority growth sectors and develop and implement policies, strategies and programmes to improve their competitiveness, attract investment and stimulate entrepreneurship;

(g) Support member States in developing and deepening their domestic debt markets with a view to mobilizing additional resources for development financing needs;

(h) Promote women's economic and financial empowerment by supporting African women entrepreneurs and fund managers in developing an innovative financing platform.

#### **4. Subprogramme 4: Data and statistics**

26. To strengthen the production, dissemination and use of credible data, statistics and geospatial information at national, regional and global levels for evidence-based policy and decision-making, the subprogramme will:

(a) Support African national statistical systems in transforming their data governance and management methods by digitizing the data collection, compilation and dissemination process for statistical areas, including censuses and civil registration systems;

(b) Provide training and make platforms available for the exchange of best practices among member States and their respective statistical agencies;

(c) Enhance communication about and advocacy of the use of statistics and geospatial information and provide technical assistance to support national efforts to fast-track the development of a continental strategy for a geospatial response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

(d) Integrate policy advice and capacity-building activities on data and statistics to support member States in their efforts to monitor and report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

#### **5. Subprogramme 5: Climate change, environment and natural resources management**

27. To advance inclusive and sustainable development, through the strengthened capacity of member States to harness new technologies and innovation, natural resources and the green and blue economy, and to enhance climate resilience, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Conduct policy research and provide technical assistance to member States on new technologies, innovation, digital transformation methodologies;

(b) Conduct policy research and provide technical support and advisory services to member States in the design and implementation of mineral policies, strategies and plans that are aligned with the principles of the Africa Mining Vision;

(c) Conduct training for policymakers, experts and practitioners, convene regional platforms, in particular the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and increase country-level technical assistance on sustainable development and poverty eradication, including the conduct of voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews;

(d) Provide technical advice to the African Union Commission, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations related to sustainable planning, policy formulation and governance of the blue economy in line with the Africa Blue Economy Strategy of the African Union;

(e) Conduct policy research and analysis and convene regional dialogues on the climate resilience and disaster vulnerability of African economies, societies and ecosystems;

(f) Strengthen the capacity of Africa for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic and raise awareness on the links between climate change, the economy and health issues.

## **6. Subprogramme 6: Gender equality and women's empowerment**

28. To achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, through accelerating the pace of implementation by member States of, and their reporting on, their global and regional commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Undertake policy research and technical advisory services, and increase knowledge, develop capacity and stimulate discussion on topical issues relating to gender equality and women's empowerment;

(b) Work on women's economic empowerment, harnessing demographic dividends for women's employment and quality education for women and girls, placing particular emphasis on digital transformation;

(c) Provide technical support to member States in mainstreaming a gender perspective into their sectoral development policies and programmes and also provide support across the ECA subprogrammes;

(d) Provide technical support to member States to measure progress and report on the status of implementation of their national programmes and policies related to their global and regional commitments, building on the results of the regional review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the African Gender and Development Index and the African Gender Index;

(e) Roll out the African Gender and Development Index and the African Gender Index, in collaboration with partners, in the remaining countries that have not yet implemented these.

## **7. Subprogramme 7: Subregional activities for development**

### **(a) Component 1: Subregional activities in North Africa**

29. To enhance the employment creation environment in North Africa through strengthened economic diversification and regional integration and a better recognition of migrant workers' qualifications and skills, the component will essentially:

(a) Develop evidence-based macroeconomic policies, strategies, and structural reforms to support economic transformation for more diversified and resilient economies in North Africa;

(b) Conduct research and workshops on employment creation through small and medium-sized enterprises in North Africa, with a focus on sustainable aspects, gender equality and post-pandemic recovery, in collaboration with think tanks and universities in and outside Africa;

(c) Provide analytical support and advisory services and hold subregional consultations on the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(d) Provide technical assistance and training for member States on the collection, analysis and dissemination of migration-related data, and capacity-building to enhance the skills and qualifications of African workers;

(e) Conduct research on demographic trends, the digital skills gap and productive employment creation in Africa in collaboration with the United Nations and external partners.

**(b) Component 2: Subregional activities in West Africa**

30. To advance inclusive development in West Africa through strengthening the countries' capacity to integrate demographic dynamics challenges in policies and planning processes and achieve regional integration, the component will essentially:

(a) Respond to requests from member States and regional entities pertaining to accelerated efforts to reap the demographic dividend and promote the use in at least six West African countries of a budgeting approach that is sensitive to the demographic dividend and strengthen regional integration through the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) Respond to capacity-building requests aimed at harnessing the opportunities unleashed by demographic dividends;

(c) Provide knowledge, tools and policies on the acceleration of demographic transition and related implications for sustainable development, including family dynamics, migration and migrants, health and mortality, ageing and living conditions, historical demography, civil registration, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, youth empowerment, durable peace and sustainable development in Africa;

(d) Pursue a strategic partnership with the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States to finalize the Community's first five-year strategic plan for the implementation of Vision 2050 and to continue to advocate mainstreaming of the Vision's strategic pillars into the national development plans of member States.

**(c) Component 3: Subregional activities in Central Africa**

31. To expand the manufacturing and high-value service sectors and increase the share of tradable and manufactured goods in total exports, deepen regional value chains and improve the competitiveness and productivity of local economies in order to accelerate economic diversification and structural transformation in Central Africa, the component will essentially:

(a) Support the operationalization and implementation of economic diversification strategies, visions and master plans, formulated in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo and Equatorial Guinea, and support the formulation of similar policies in other Central African countries, advocating a conducive business climate in Central Africa;

(b) Train United Nations country teams and member States in Central Africa in the use of the ECA integrated planning and reporting toolkit;

(c) Collect and collate market access information and provide technical assistance to member States towards translating their national African Continental Free Trade Area strategies into specific and bankable projects, programmes and reforms;

(d) Build on the consensus blueprint for transport in Central Africa and support the subregion in the transformation of transport corridors into

development corridors through the geographic information system-enabled spatial planning and hot spot analysis tool;

(e) Support member States in collaboration with the ECA African Centre of Excellence on Digital Identity, Trade and Economy, in their work on technology innovation centres, the development of e-commerce and the implementation of digital identity systems;

(f) Provide technical assistance to member States in Central Africa to ensure a focus on fiscal space for economic diversification and support the harmonization of trade instruments in the Economic Community of Central African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, to inform the preparation of a consolidated industrial development and economic diversification master plan for Central Africa;

(g) Strengthen collaboration with private sector bodies and develop a reform agenda to reach productivity and competitiveness targets;

(h) Propose policy measures aimed at strengthening the resilience of local economies to external shocks, including those caused by COVID-19.

**(d) Component 4: Subregional activities in East Africa**

32. To achieve deeper regional integration in East Africa, by advancing the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, increasing intraregional investments, harnessing the blue economy and enhancing regional tourism, the component will essentially:

(a) Intensify support to countries and regional economic communities for the effective implementation of their national and regional African Continental Free Trade Area strategies, providing knowledge, capacity-building and facilitating regional policy dialogue for the private and the public sector, intergovernmental bodies and regional economic communities, on investment promotion, innovative sources of finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and cost-effective trade logistics;

(b) Conduct African Continental Free Trade Area-related impact assessments and surveys, including the country business index of the Free Trade Area, to measure progress achieved and identify bottlenecks and opportunities;

(c) Conduct knowledge production and policy dialogue, and support member States and regional economic communities in enhancing their readiness for the negotiations around outstanding protocols and instruments of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(d) Promote the development of regional value chains by undertaking studies and providing technical assistance for the creation and operationalization of commodity exchanges and markets and special economic zones;

(e) Contribute to the strengthening of analytical tools to assess the socioeconomic and environmental potential of blue economy resources of member States and convene a subregional forum to raise awareness on various aspects of the blue economy;

(f) Support capacity-building of young people in the development of bankable and effective projects in the area of the blue economy;

(g) Support the implementation of guidelines for urban tourism, in line with the recommendations set out in the African Tourism Strategy, in partnership with the World Tourism Organization and the World Bank;

(h) Develop tourism satellite accounts in two more countries in 2023 and hold validation meetings with relevant tourism bodies and regional

economic communities, on building resilience of the tourism sector to external shocks such as COVID-19.

**(e) Component 5: Subregional activities in Southern Africa**

33. To deepen regional integration and strengthen capacities to achieve inclusive industrialization for the reduction of poverty and inequality in Southern Africa, the component will essentially:

(a) Provide technical support and expert advisory services to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), member States and their private sectors to strengthen their capacities to advance inclusive industrialization and regional integration through implementation of the SADC industrialization strategy and road map (2015–2063), the COMESA industrial policy (2015–2030) and their alignment with national industrialization policies, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations regional coordinator offices, the African Development Bank and private sector associations, universities and research institutions;

(b) Develop and disseminate policy tools and guidelines to promote industrialization, including value addition, manufacturing and value chain development at national and subregional levels;

(c) Support SADC in the implementation of the new strategic vision for Southern Africa – Vision 2050 – and its 10-year strategic plan, the SADC regional indicative strategic development plan, 2020–2030;

(d) Collaborate with subregional entities and partners such as the business councils of both SADC and COMESA in engaging the private sector, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, through leveraging digitalization and science, technology and innovation to facilitate business development and enhance productivity and competitiveness;

(e) Contribute to the creation of institutional and learning support structures and tools to assist micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to harness innovative approaches to promote their competitiveness and ensure the growth of private sector in the subregion;

(f) Provide continued technical support to regional economic communities and member States on the African Continental Free Trade Area in facilitating national consultations and awareness-raising on the free trade area process, ratification of the Agreement establishing the Area and developing and implementing African Continental Free Trade Area national and subregional strategies;

(g) Capacity-building of member States and the private sector to address the impact of COVID-19 through initiatives aimed at supporting the resurgence of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and strengthening their resilience to future shocks.

**8. Subprogramme 8: Economic development and planning**

34. To strengthen African countries' development planning and to improve their capacity to formulate and manage effective public sector policies for structural transformation and sustainable development, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Continue delivering face-to-face and online training on sectoral, national, and regional development; medium to long-term planning to deal with

the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and updated content on economic and social policy formulation and management;

(b) Continue to promote peer learning and collaboration among African development planners through a community of practice, digitized knowledge repository, policy briefs and research papers;

(c) Foster knowledge generation, cross-fertilization, and knowledge-sharing through research products and fellowship programmes, development seminars and high-level policy dialogues;

(d) Continue to emphasize mainstreaming of gender and youth-related issues in public policies through relevant courses focusing on sustainable development and poverty eradication, innovation and digital transformation.

## **9. Subprogramme 9: Poverty, inequality and social policy**

35. To eradicate extreme poverty and reduce inequality through member States' improved policies and strategies for social investments and productive urban job creation, the subprogramme will essentially:

(a) Develop analytical knowledge and provide technical assistance to improve the capabilities of member States in designing national policies and strategies for the eradication of extreme poverty, protection of the economically vulnerable, reduction of inequalities and overall inclusion and equitable development in Africa;

(b) Develop analytical knowledge and provide technical assistance to member States in the implementation and appraisal of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa beyond 2014 and the New Urban Agenda;

(c) Facilitate regional policy learning and dialogue on urban job creation and support the monitoring of urbanization dynamics in partnership with the African Union Commission, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the African Development Bank and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa.

## **D. Conclusion**

36. ECA will continue in 2023 to harness its relative strength and comparative advantage as a technical knowledge policy institution in transforming ideas into action for an empowered, peaceful and developed Africa. The five strategic priority areas will constitute the guiding force of its activities and programmes within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. Efforts will be channelled towards the realization of the key areas of the report of the Secretary-General "Our Common Agenda" in the work of the Commission and its medium-term programme framework for 2022–2025. The work programme of the Commission will focus on the priority areas, which include financing the recovery of Africa from the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting its accelerated development; macroeconomic policy and development planning; data and statistics; trade and regional integration, especially on the African Continental Free Trade Area; the empowerment of youth and women; climate change; technology and innovation; industrialization; economic diversification and job creation, in particular through small and medium-sized enterprises; and poverty, inequality and human vulnerability.