

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: August 2004 to June 2005

ECA's activities to support the economic and social development of its 53 member States include analytical studies, advisory services, policy advocacy, capacity-building programmes and operational activities. The Commission's convening power also allows it to mobilize stakeholders to discuss, make decisions and implement actions in relation to Africa's development agenda.

Policy analysis and advocacy

Monitoring and Analysis of Macro-Economic Policy for Poverty Reduction

ECA's Economic and Social Policy Division (ESPD) engages in analysis of domestic resource mobilization and private capital flows, as well as ways of making official development assistance (ODA) more effective. The issues of debt relief and the problems of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) feature prominently in ESPD's work. In addition, ECA and OECD are jointly working on the 'Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in the context of NEPAD'.

Trade and Regional Integration

ECA's Trade and Regional Integration Division (TRID) is implementing various programmes to enhance member States' capacity for effective participation in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations. For example, ECA is providing technical assistance to the RECs on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) negotiations between the European Union (EU) and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. TRID presented a study on the impact of the EPAs on the member countries of CEMAC/Central Africa sub-region in December 2004.

ECA has set up the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), the main objectives of which are to develop trade research, training and information dissemination, assist member States to mainstream trade issues in development policies and programmes, promote intra-African trade, and provide trade-related advisory services and technical support. In addition, the Inter-Regional Advisory Service was established in Geneva to help the Africa WTO Geneva Group in their day-to-day negotiations within the WTO, as well as to provide advice on the potential implications of developments in international trade negotiations in Geneva and Brussels for Africa.

Training workshops and seminars aimed at preparing member States for multilateral trade negotiations include an Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on International Market Access and a High-Level Brainstorming Meeting for African Trade Negotiators held in November 2004 in order to discuss results of recent research on trade issues under the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), especially as they relate to Africa, and assist countries in the region to develop strategies for further negotiations under the DDA.

Transport and communications

ECA is actively supporting the realization of the Yamoussoukro Decision for Air Transport Liberalization by African countries. It has been instrumental in the preparation and adoption of competition rules for air transport liberalization in COMESA, SADC, and EAC, and supported RECs in organizing workshops towards implementing the Decision by their member States. In

addition, the Commission is working with the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP) to encourage countries to adopt sound transport policies and strategies, as well as institutional and financial reforms. ECA and the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme (SSATP) in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia organized the Annual General meetings of SSATP in September 2004, which highlighted the improvement in the level of collaboration between the RECs and SSATP, increased participation of countries and partners in the programme, and the inclusion of road safety in SSATP action plan.

ECA continued its activities as part of the Great Lakes Initiative by launching a sub-regional Standing Group of Experts on Infrastructure Development with membership extending to all Great Lakes countries. The Commission prepared analytical documents and a compendium of programme activities for transport and communications, energy and water infrastructure which will be part of the working documents for the forthcoming UN/AU sponsored International Conference on the Great Lakes (phase II, Nov. 2004 - May 2005).

Sustainable Development

Through its Sustainable Development Division (SDD), ECA is playing an active role in areas such as agriculture, water and environment, energy, science and technology. ECA is currently undertaking a major analytical policy study on structural economic transformation in agriculture, broad-based growth, employment and poverty reduction in Africa. It has also undertaken conceptual work on the Green Revolution in Africa initiative, and major research work on the impact of land tenure on food security and sustainable development, highlighting best practices for land policy reforms in Africa.

Having successfully organized the Pan African Implementation and Partnership Conference (PANAFCON), ECA is actively monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the African Water Vision 2025. The UN-Water/Africa conducted three regional training workshops on Geo-Water Information development and management, with the aim of supporting the development of an African Regional Water Clearinghouse that will bring together educational, governmental, non-profit and commercial entities interested in water research, conservation, and management. UN-Water/Africa and ECA also conducted workshops on Integrated Water Resources Management and Gender and Water Resources Management issues.

The second United Nations Energy Africa (UNEA) meeting held in November 2004 adopted the work programme of UNEA for 2004-2006. As part of the programme, ECA and UNEP are jointly implementing a project on "Making African Power Sector Sustainable", which aims to facilitate integration of socio-economic and environmental concerns into the power sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the months ahead UNEA has scheduled training activities in Integrated Power Resource Planning (IRP) to raise the awareness of African energy planners on the need to introduce IRP as a means for the least-cost development of their power sector.

ECA continued to provide support to member States in promoting an integrated approach to national policymaking that includes issues related to mineral resources development. For example, Tanzania received assistance in integrating mining development into its second generation of PRSP through a project jointly implemented by ECA, UN-DESA, UNCTAD, and UNDP. Assistance was also given to several regional organizations such as the Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre (SEAMIC), and the Africa Mining Partnership (AMP) in the elaboration of their programmes on mineral resources. In addition, the secretariat rendered assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in the formulation of a national energy policy.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

In December 2004, ECA completed a study on harmonizing telecommunications regulatory frameworks at the regional and sub-regional levels. The regional framework would assist RECs in developing their specific sub-regional policies. In the framework of e-strategies, ECA is currently working with a number of countries to develop their National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plan: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Swaziland and Tanzania. Sectoral e-Government strategies are being developed in Ghana and Rwanda, while a needs assessment mission was carried out in Uganda for an e Government project. In the meantime, an e-health strategy was developed for Uganda and is expected to be tested out in the country in the coming months.

ECA organized several activities in the framework of WSIS since July 2004. The African Regional Preparatory Conference held in Accra confirmed ECA's role as the secretariat to the African Regional Bureau. As the secretariat of the African Group, ECA is currently facilitating various negotiations in Geneva among the African Group and between the Group and other continents on WSIS issues. As the secretariat of the African Ministerial Committee on Information and Communication Technologies, ECA organized two of its meetings during the Accra conference. It was agreed that ECA would continue hosting the secretariat and provide technical support for its meetings. The Committee adopted the African common position for Tunis 2005, known as the "Accra Commitments" together with several resolutions. ECA continued to provide capacity-building support to member States to promote awareness of the importance of ICTs for socio-economic development. To date, a significant number of countries have benefited from training provided by ECA's Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA). In 2004, 80 members of the Ethiopian parliament received training from ITCA, and a training workshop held in Tanzania in May 2005 brought together more than 100 parliamentarians from several African countries. In the area of information and knowledge development, the ECA library launched the African Virtual Library Information Network (AVLIN) portal in January 2005 as a platform for sharing development information and knowledge in Africa. Other AVLIN outputs include CD-ROMs, email alert services and other materials on economic development.

Gender Mainstreaming

ECA has developed the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) designed to measure the performance of member States in addressing gender equality, equity and women's empowerment and advancement. The results of the 12 country trials of the index to be published in June will provide crucial information that can be used by the APRM to validate a country's performance on gender balance and mainstreaming.

Continent-wide initiatives contributing towards the NEPAD agenda

ECA has striven to mobilize the international community behind African development through the Big Table Initiative. Since 2000, Big Table's annual meetings have focused on Africa's efforts towards sustained growth and poverty reduction, the critical importance of African leadership and mutually reinforcing partnerships between the continent and its development partners. The Big Table held in Addis Ababa in October 2004 focused on stimulating private investment in Africa.

The ground-breaking African Development Forum provides a platform for all stakeholders, member States, the private sector, civil society and development partners, to build consensus on major challenges facing the continent. In October 2004, ECA held its fourth ADF (ADF IV) under the theme "Governance for a Progressing Africa". ECA presented the synopsis of its

forthcoming African Governance Report, which will be a major new source of data for the APRM process.

The Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (CHGA), launched in 2003, is actively engaged in research and development of policy tools on ways to overcome the capacity and governance constraints to scaling up health care, especially antiretroviral therapy. CHGA is working with specialized UN agencies including UNAIDS, UNICEF, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the World Food Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the World Bank. It is also using regional and subregional forums, including the African Union and RECs, to promote the agenda of HIV/AIDS and governance.

The African Learning Group on PRSPs was established by ECA at the request of member States, as a forum to discuss PRSP design and implementation challenges, and to foster the mutual accountability principle under NEPAD. ECA has undertaken 24 country studies on the PRSP process. Within the framework of its consensus-building portfolio, ECA continued to play a critical role in addressing key African development challenges and in articulating common African perspectives and positions. In this regard the Commission submitted a report to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Abuja in May 2005, on Progress and Challenges of Achieving the MDGs in Africa. The report highlighted key policy and operational challenges and how these can be addressed.

Collaboration with other agencies in support of NEPAD

Since the last Regional Consultations of UN agencies working in Africa, ECA has established an e-discussion facility in order to facilitate intra- and inter-cluster discussions. In October 2004, ECA convened a meeting of the Advocacy and Communication cluster, with a view to reviewing the draft Advocacy and Communication Strategy, to develop a short-term Action Plan, and to consider creation of linkages between the Advocacy and Communication Cluster and the substantive clusters. ECA has commissioned a JIU study on enhancing collaboration and coordination among UN agencies working at the regional level.

Institutional support to NEPAD

ECA has responded to specific requests by NEPAD, whether through the NEPAD secretariat, the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), the African Union or associated organs and structures. For example, ECA is currently participating in the APRM support missions to a number of countries. As a member of the Steering Committee on the NEPAD/G8 Regional Implementation Planning for CAADP, ECA provides regional advisory services and technical support to Eastern and Central African sub-regions and SADC in relation to implementing the CAADP agenda. The Commission also assisted in establishing the NEPAD Science and Technology Plan of Action, and helped in launching the UN S&T Cluster for the support of NEPAD.