
Subregional Office for West Africa
Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials
and Experts for West Africa

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

Report on the activities of the Subregional Office
for West Africa (October 2025–September 2026)
and work programme for 2027**Activity report (October 2025–September 2026)**
and programme of work for 2027**I. Introduction**

1. The annual report of the Subregional Office for West Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is a summary of main achievements. It covers the period following the twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa, held in Niamey in a hybrid format in November 2025.

2. In 2026, the environment in which the programmes of the Subregional Office are being implemented is characterized by considerable uncertainty, owing to geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, market volatility and tighter international financial conditions. Despite those constraints, West Africa has demonstrated resilience, with economic growth estimated at 4.8 per cent in 2025, supported by agricultural production, the development of agro-industrial value chains, investment in infrastructure and stronger macroeconomic management.¹ Against that backdrop, the Subregional Office has continued the effective implementation of its programmes on economic transformation, regional integration and sustainable development. In 2027, priority will be given to accelerating implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, strengthening regional value chains, mobilizing innovative financing and harnessing the potential of young people, with a view to creating jobs, promoting economic transformation and strengthening resilience. Efforts will also be made to strengthen economic governance and support public finance reform in order to build more inclusive and sustainable economies.

* ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/29/1.

¹ African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2026* (Abidjan, 2026).



3. It is against that backdrop of evolving crises and opportunities that the Subregional Office for West Africa has implemented its work programme. The present activity report highlights the achievements from which the members of ECA have benefited. In addition, it includes a description of the challenges encountered by stakeholders, the measures taken in response to those challenges, and the outlook for the future.

II. Policy areas of the Subregional Office for West Africa

4. Pursuant to its mandate, the Subregional Office has the following two objectives:

- (a) Accelerating the harnessing of the demographic dividend;
- (b) Realizing regional integration.

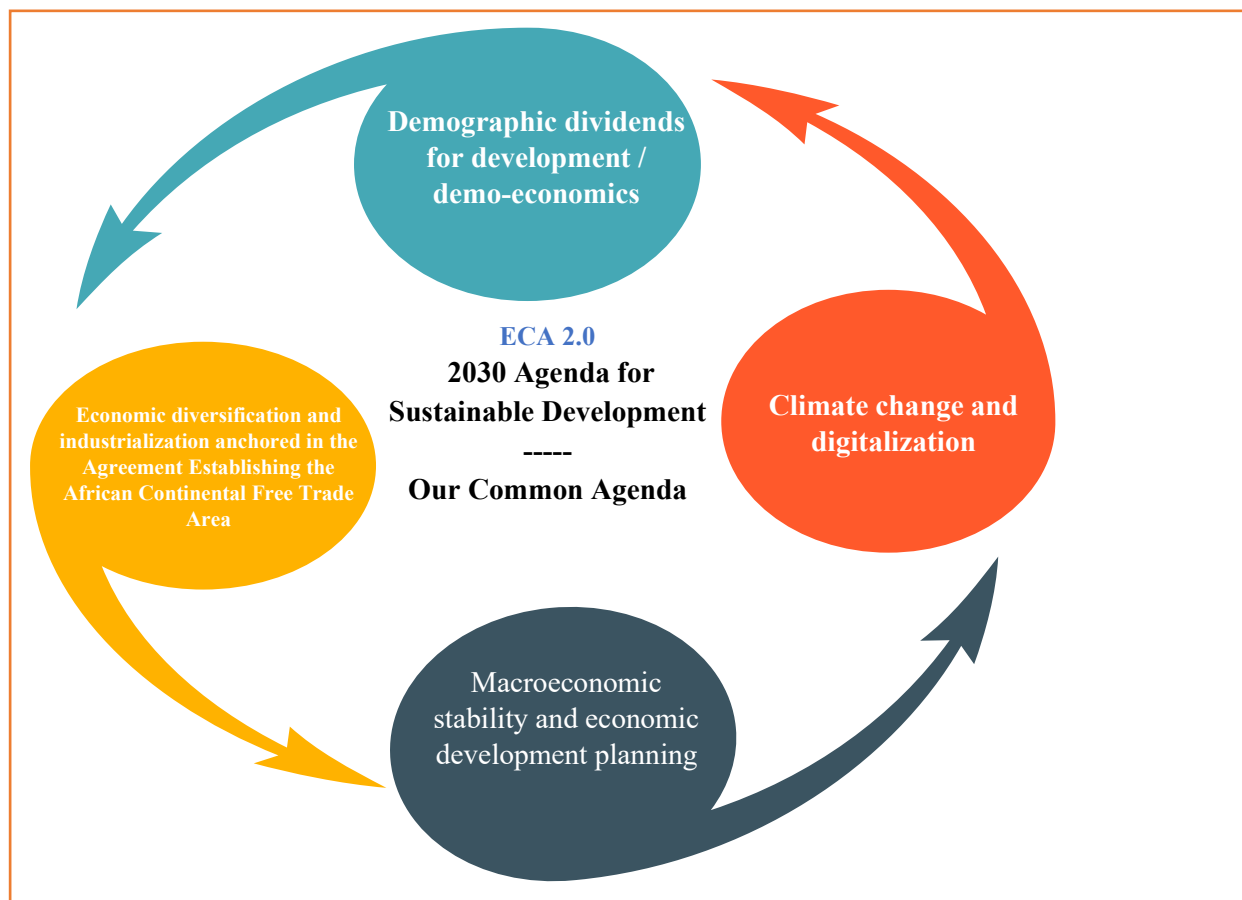
5. The Subregional Office has implemented its mandate through the adoption of an anticipatory and strategic approach, in which particular attention has been given to its vertical partnership with the divisions and other ECA subregional offices in order to improve the alignment of United Nations system support and strengthen country ownership of policies. At the same time, the Subregional Office has sought to establish horizontal partnerships, in particular with intergovernmental organizations, the Governments of States covered by the Subregional Office and private sector stakeholders, with a view to fostering regional cooperation and responding to emerging challenges. Those challenges include not only the liquidity crisis within the United Nations and implementation of the UN80 Initiative, but also growing insecurity, political instability and subregional dynamics marked, in particular, by the withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) by the States members of the Confederation of Sahel States, namely Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

6. The work of ECA is focused on three core functions:

- (a) The think tank function, which includes the preparation of studies, research reports and other knowledge products;
- (b) The convening function, which involves the organization of conferences and platforms for discussion and advocacy;
- (c) The operational function, which consists of providing its members with advice, support and other forms of technical assistance.

7. In line with its core functions, the Subregional Office has structured its work programme using four strategic focuses. They align with the reform programme known as ECA 2.0 and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Our Common Agenda (see figure I).

Figure I
The four strategic focuses



Source: Subregional Office for West Africa, 2025.

III. Major achievements of the Subregional Office

A. Harnessing the demographic dividend for sustainable development

8. The main achievements include the following:

(a) The formulation of two country strategy documents on demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting: one concerning the integration of a demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach into the citizens' budget of Burkina Faso, with the relevant document adopted in late 2025; and the other concerning the citizens' budget of Togo, which was disseminated in late March 2026;

(b) The training of more than 70 experts from 10 pilot countries² in the use of a regional digital platform for monitoring, reporting on and guiding implementation of the African Union road map on the demographic dividend;

(c) ECA worked closely with the Regional Consortium for Research in Generational Economics, research centres, universities and think tanks, while also engaging with

² The 10 pilot countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo.

policymakers. That work included a major contribution to the fourth National Transfer Accounts Africa Conference, which resulted in the adoption of the Saly Declaration in July 2026. In the Declaration, the roll-out of a demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting dashboard was recommended as a means of helping policymakers to allocate national budgetary resources towards improving the well-being of populations;

(d) At a technical meeting held in Abidjan in September 2026, eight West African pilot countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo – updated, tested and validated a regional digital platform for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the African Union road map on the demographic dividend, taking into account recommendations made in May 2026. The exercise marked an important step towards the establishment of a regional mechanism to enhance monitoring, evaluation and accountability, while also strengthening the technical capacity of national experts and facilitating the sharing of good practices;

(e) The Subregional Office continues to support the operation of the regional digital monitoring platform, which is designed to harmonize the monitoring of progress and strengthen evidence-based policymaking. The platform is expected to be fully operational in at least six target countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, the Niger, Senegal and Togo – by the end of 2026. Beyond the technical progress made, the growing institutional commitment of those countries demonstrates sustained ownership of the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach and the progressive integration of the demographic dividend into national planning, budgeting and public financial management;

B. Strengthening sustainable fiscal policies

9. The Subregional Office supported domestic revenue mobilization and sustainable public debt management through the following activities:

(a) In the Niger, the Subregional Office provided technical and financial support for the validation of the country’s tax reform strategy and a road map for priority reforms. Both are based on the findings of an assessment of the tax system and are aimed at increasing domestic resource mobilization;

(b) In the Gambia, a diagnostic report on the country’s debt profile was prepared to identify opportunities for debt swaps in support of climate and social development objectives;

(c) In Senegal, the Subregional Office strengthened the capacity of technical staff to work with debt data, analyse the structure of public debt and assess the policy trade-offs involved in undertaking debt swaps for climate action and social development;

C. Strengthening intra-African trade, market integration, peer learning and the African blue economy

10. As a result of technical support provided by the Subregional Office, the 2026 target for implementing national strategies for the African Continental Free Trade Area was exceeded. The number of States covered by the Subregional Office that implemented at least one priority component of their action plans increased from 10 in 2025 to 13 in 2026, exceeding the cumulative target of 12 States (see figure II). That progress was accompanied by sustained engagement by Benin, Ghana and Sierra Leone in regional peer learning. Examples of the support provided include the following:

(a) In Sierra Leone, a practical trade guide was finalized and made available, and a trade information portal was launched. Those initiatives strengthened the capacity of 60 national stakeholders, in particular from the private sector, to promote and facilitate intra-African trade;

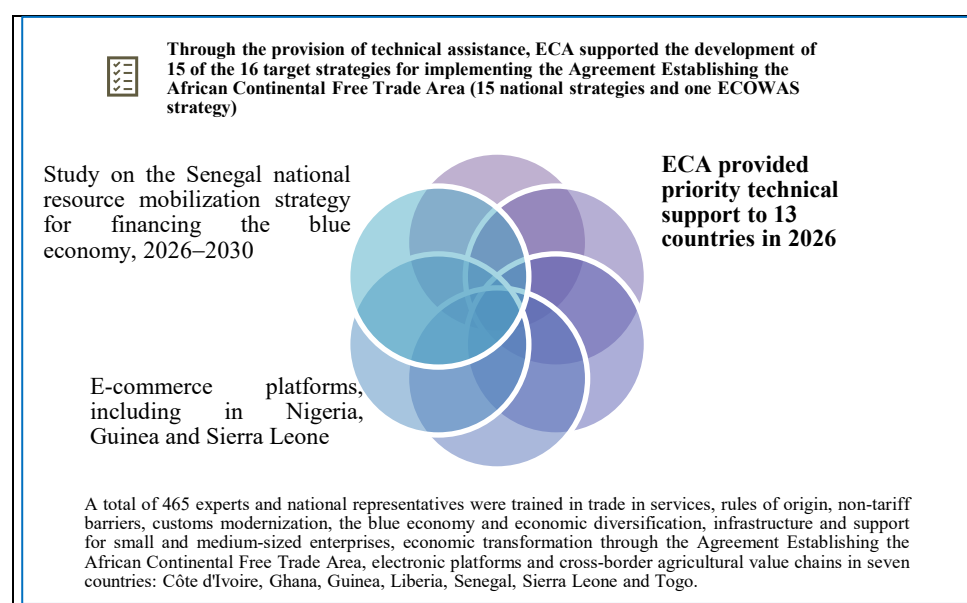
(b) Priority projects identified in national strategies for the African Continental Free Trade Area were implemented in 13 countries: Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo;

(c) In Togo, 31 national experts from 13 West African countries received training on the African Continental Free Trade Area and on ways to mitigate the impact of tensions in the Middle East;

(d) In Senegal, 41 stakeholders received training on the blue economy, economic diversification and innovative financing.

Figure II

Implementation of national African Continental Free Trade Area strategies



Source: Subregional Office for West Africa, July 2026.

11. The adoption by Senegal in 2026 of a blue economy financing strategy for 2026–2030 is expected to boost sustainable exports and accelerate economic diversification. Furthermore, in September 2026, ECA supported Côte d'Ivoire in adapting a blue economy valuation toolkit to the national context. Through its support, ECA strengthened national capacity to assess aquatic ecosystems and facilitated the integration of the blue economy considerations into sustainable development policies.

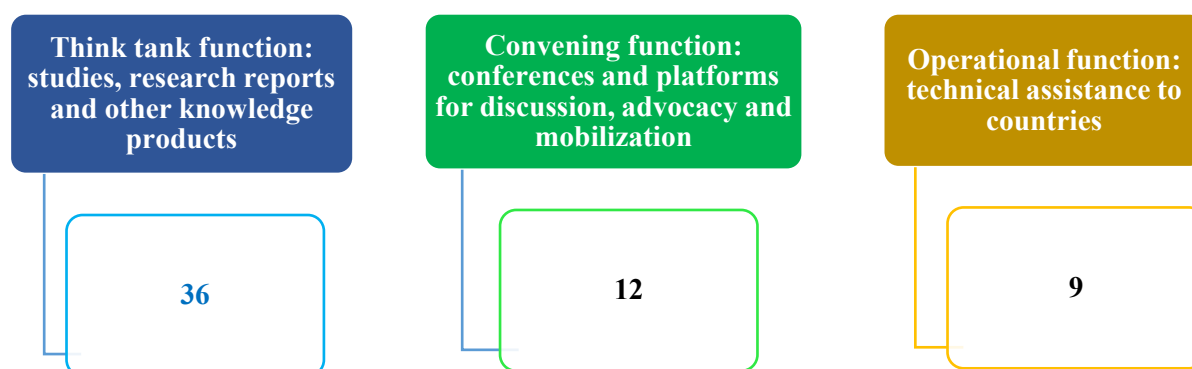
D. Summary of the main achievements under the three core functions of the Economic Commission for Africa

12. Between the twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa, held in November 2025, and October 2026, the

Subregional Office produced 36 knowledge products, 18 of which are still in preparation, held 12 high-level meetings and, in response to country requests, provided various forms of technical and financial support to States, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations in West Africa (see figure III).

Figure III

Summary of main achievements under the three core functions



IV. Other achievements under the core functions of the Economic Commission for Africa

A. Think tank function: studies, research reports and other knowledge products

13. The results achieved under the think tank function comprise 36 research reports, studies and policy briefs, including 15 technical materials such as newsletters and brochures, as described below.

1. Framework for mobilizing budgetary resources

14. The 2026 national tax reform strategy of the Niger (June 2026) establishes a consensual strategic framework for strengthening sustainable domestic resource mobilization. The related outputs are:

15. An assessment and diagnostic report: an in-depth analysis of the tax system and the national framework for domestic resource mobilization, providing an evidence base for informed decision-making;

16. A road map for priority reforms: a report containing strategic recommendations, together with an implementation plan and an implementation support plan, to ensure the operational viability of the reforms and accelerate domestic revenue mobilization.

17. A case study on the management of domestic debt in Sierra Leone: towards a long-term fiscal strategy (December 2025).

18. A final assessment report on the potential of diaspora financing for sustainable development in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, prepared by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the

Niger (December 2025). The study highlights the strategic importance of diaspora remittances for the three countries, noting that they frequently exceed foreign direct investment and help to strengthen national reserves.

19. A study entitled “Effective diaspora financing models: a benchmarking analysis”, prepared by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Niger (January 2026). Mechanisms are identified in the report for mobilizing migrant savings for economic development. Strategic recommendations are also provided, with emphasis placed on governance, transparency and patriotic engagement as means of transforming those resources into sustainable sources of financing for the countries of the Confederation of Sahel States.

20. A final report on the Niger national strategy on the mobilization and oversight of diaspora financing, prepared by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Niger (February 2026). A national strategic framework is set out in the report to facilitate the mobilization of the financial, human and social resources of the Nigerien diaspora in support of sustainable development in the Niger.

21. A case study on personal remittances and their contribution to sustainable financing for economic development in West Africa, prepared by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Niger (March 2026). Evidence is provided in the report on how digitalization and the harmonization of regulations governing diaspora remittances can transform those flows into a strategic source of financing for sustainable regional development.

22. A study to facilitate the updating of the technical parameters for agriculture and livestock farming in Togo is being prepared with technical and financial support from the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa, in collaboration with ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Togo (ongoing as of July 2026). The study is expected to provide analytical evidence for agricultural policymaking.

23. An assessment report on the potential for debt-for-nature swaps in the Gambia (June 2026), containing an analysis of the country’s debt situation to identify opportunities for debt swaps.

24. Publication of a document on the 2026 citizens’ budget of Burkina Faso, which adopts a demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach (December 2025).

25. Publication of a document on the 2026 citizens’ budget of Togo, which adopts a demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach (March 2026).

2. Accelerating implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area

26. A report containing a diagnostic assessment of compliance with trade facilitation measures in the context of implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in Senegal (May 2026).

27. A study on the national resource mobilization strategy of Senegal for financing the blue economy, 2026–2030 (April 2026). The strategy is expected to enable the mobilization of an additional \$5.2 billion in budgetary resources to stimulate growth, create jobs and diversify the economy of Senegal.

28. A study on inequality in access to infrastructure in WAEMU member States, including in the areas of transport, energy and information and communications technology, conducted by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the West African Development Bank (April 2026). The study identifies structural disparities that undermine competitiveness and impede poverty reduction.

29. A joint study by the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa and the United Nations Development Programme Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa on the repercussions of the war in Iran for countries in West Africa and the Sahel (May 2026). The findings of the study have provided a basis for discussions on national strategies to strengthen intra-African market integration and on the regional peer-learning platform, as part of efforts to accelerate implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

3. Preparation for the 2026 statutory meeting

30. Documents drafted in preparation for the twenty-ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa:

(a) Report on progress made by West African States towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the 2030 deadline, expected in August 2026 (in preparation);

(b) West Africa socioeconomic report 2026, expected in August 2026 (in preparation);

(c) Activity report of the Subregional Office for 2025–2026, providing an update on the main results achieved since the twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Committee, as set out in the present document.

4. Other technical support for the preparation of reports and strategic frameworks

31. Reports and strategic frameworks prepared by the Gambia on harnessing the demographic dividend:

(a) The Gambia demographic dividend road map, 2026–2030 (2025);

(b) National report on the measurement of population dynamics in the Gambia (November 2023);

(c) Report on monitoring the demographic dividend in the Gambia (November 2023).

32. Policy briefs prepared by the Gambia in 2025 on the following topics:

(a) National transfer accounts profile;

(b) Gender and the demographic dividend in the Gambia;

- (c) The demographic dividend window of opportunity in the Gambia;
- (d) Young people and the labour market in the Gambia;
- (e) Overview of the Demographic Dividend Monitoring Index for the Gambia;
- (f) Economic dependency coverage in the Gambia;
- (g) Quality of life in the Gambia;
- (h) Extended human development in the Gambia;
- (i) Poverty dynamics in the Gambia;
- (j) Networks and territories in the Gambia.

5. Technical materials

33. Other technical documents prepared by the Subregional Office include the following:

(a) Two issues of the Subregional Office newsletter, KAKAKI NEWS, aimed at keeping countries regularly informed of the work and achievements of the Subregional Office (December 2025 and March 2026);

(b) A demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting toolkit: a methodological and practical guide to demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting (December 2025);

(c) A practical guide to functional budget transformation, which takes into account the experience of Togo (February 2026). The guide provides a practical example of the application of the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach;

(d) A user guide for the regional digital platform for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the African Union road map on the demographic dividend (December 2025);

(e) A policy brief on the development of regional value chains as a means of accelerating implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in West Africa (December 2025).

B. Convening function: conferences and platforms for discussion, advocacy and mobilization

34. The Subregional Office convened the twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa in November 2025 on the theme “Leveraging digital technology to enhance domestic resource mobilization in West Africa”. Held in a hybrid format, the session brought together more than 100 participants and provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions with country delegates on ways to develop inclusive and secure digital taxation systems in order to strengthen domestic resource mobilization.

35. In December 2025, the Subregional Office co-organized a high-level national intergenerational dialogue in Niamey on the theme “Passing on the fundamental values of Nigerien identity to young people so that they can become drivers of the refoundation of the

Niger”. The dialogue brought together more than 2,000 participants. Consultations focused on the institutionalization of intergenerational dialogue and the promotion of Nigerien identity. Particular attention was given to strengthening the transmission of fundamental values with a view to fostering the sustained engagement of young people in efforts to promote peace, the refoundation of the State and sustainable development in the country.

36. From 11 to 13 February 2026, the Subregional Office organized a workshop in Freetown to validate the country’s step-by-step guide for trading goods under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the accompanying digital trade information portal. The workshop brought together 60 participants and fostered discussions with a view to reaching consensus on the two instruments and enhancing their accessibility, relevance and use.

37. From 4 to 5 March 2026, the Subregional Office organized a workshop in Dakar to validate the national resource mobilization strategy for financing the blue economy, 2026–2030. The workshop brought together 56 participants and provided an opportunity for the technical review and validation of the strategy, which is aimed at supporting regional integration and sustainable growth in Senegal.

38. On 12 March 2026, the Subregional Office organized a virtual pre-conference of African ministers on the theme “Growth through innovation: harnessing data and frontier technologies for the economic transformation of West Africa”. The event brought together 78 participants and contributed to the identification of regional priorities and the strategic actions needed to harness those drivers for the economic transformation of the subregion.

39. From 8 to 13 April 2026, the Subregional Office organized a technical workshop in Dosso, the Niger, on updating the Demographic Dividend Monitoring Index and integrating the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach into the 2027 budget cycle of the Niger. At the workshop, 14 participants updated and analysed the indicators of the Index with a view to strengthening their integration into the national budget process.

40. From 21 to 23 April 2026, the Subregional Office organized a technical workshop in Accra on integrating migration and diaspora contributions into national medium-term development policies and plans. The workshop brought together 86 participants and strengthened their capacity to use self-assessment tools and the development planning toolkit to integrate migration and diaspora contributions effectively into budget planning.

41. In April 2026, in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, the Subregional Office organized two high-level events in hybrid format: session II of the Private Sector Forum, entitled “Blended finance and emerging innovative instruments”, and a side event entitled “Coordinating sovereign finance in an era of global debt pressures”. The events brought together more than 100 participants for discussions on mechanisms for mobilizing investment at scale for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including blended finance, innovative debt instruments and the structuring of pipelines of bankable projects to attract private capital.

42. From 21 to 22 May 2026, the Subregional Office co-organized a high-level regional workshop in Lomé to assess progress in implementing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, share good practices and identify priority strategic measures that should be taken in response to external shocks. The workshop brought together 40 participants for substantive and constructive discussions on progress and priorities in implementing the

Agreement and its role in strengthening regional integration and resilience to external shocks.

43. On 3 June 2026, the Subregional Office organized a workshop to validate the 2026 national tax reform strategy of the Niger and a draft road map for priority reforms. The workshop brought together 45 participants and provided an opportunity to review the assessment of the country's tax administration system and tax strategy, with a view to adopting a road map for priority reforms to strengthen domestic resource mobilization.

44. From 30 June to 2 July 2026, the Subregional Office facilitated an online regional capacity-building workshop for WAEMU member States on the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. The event brought together 40 participants for in-depth discussions on the instruments of the Agreement, negotiation-related issues, opportunities, challenges and implementation mechanisms.

45. On 15 and 16 July 2026, the Subregional Office organized a high-level technical workshop in Lomé to strengthen the capacity of officials from sectoral ministries involved in budget preparation and execution to integrate the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach into the budget process. The workshop brought together more than 105 officials from various sectors and helped to strengthen the integration of demographic dividend-sensitive expenditure into the 2027 budget of Togo, with a view to institutionalizing the approach in national planning, budgeting and evaluation processes.

C. Operational function: technical assistance to countries

1. Accelerating and monitoring progress in the implementation of the African Union road map on the demographic dividend

46. The Subregional Office encouraged the institutionalization of demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting through targeted technical assistance. During the first half of 2026, the Subregional Office provided training to 80 additional government officials, bringing the cumulative number of national officials who had received training to 669. The number of officials trained during the first half of the year was already well above the annual target of 35. The assistance included the following:

(a) Webinars and workshops: In May 2026, 43 experts from 10 countries were trained on the indicators used in the monitoring platform and 20 experts from Guinea were trained on the deployment of the platform;

(b) Country-level support: Ten government officials in the Niger and 50 in Togo were trained in April and July 2026, respectively. The training in Togo further strengthened the integration of the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting framework into the country's budget planning process;

(c) Monitoring mechanisms: The six pilot countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, the Niger, Senegal and Togo – adopted the indicators used in the regional platform and validated the functional requirements for monitoring implementation of the African Union road map.

2. Other technical assistance

47. The Subregional Office also provided technical assistance in the following areas:

(a) In January 2026, in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization, the African Union Commission and the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology, the Subregional Office supported the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development in analysing its operational challenges. The exercise resulted in a road map aimed at strengthening the Centre's role as a specialized technical body in the areas of agriculture, the blue economy and environmental sustainability;

(b) In February 2026, during a regional mission to Kenya aimed at removing information barriers to intra-African trade, the Subregional Office facilitated dialogue among small and medium-sized enterprises, other private sector stakeholders and civil society actors through a workshop on step-by-step guides for trading under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(c) In February 2026, in Freetown, the Subregional Office supported the Sierra Leone Ministry of Trade in organizing a workshop on the country's step-by-step guide for trading under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the associated digital trade information portal. The workshop provided training to relevant stakeholders to promote the uptake and use of the guide and portal by the private sector and national institutions;

(d) From December 2025 to April 2026, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations country team in the Niger, the Subregional Office supported the national intergenerational dialogue initiative, the aim of which was to promote the civic engagement of young people and their involvement in peacebuilding and economic recovery efforts, while also addressing the African Continental Free Trade Area and demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting;

(e) In April 2026, in collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana, the Subregional Office provided training to 86 Ghanaian planners (56 women and 30 men) on integrating migration and diaspora contributions into the national development framework for 2026–2029. Diaspora remittances amounted to \$7.8 billion in 2025;

(f) In May 2026, in collaboration with the West African Development Bank, the Subregional Office disseminated the findings of the study on inequality in access to infrastructure in WAEMU member States, helping to build consensus on inclusive, evidence-based policies to reduce disparities in access to transport, energy and information and communications technology.

3. Partner testimony

48. The initiatives undertaken and measures implemented by the Subregional Office have been well received by beneficiary stakeholders, as illustrated by the feedback provided below.

49. With support from the Subregional Office, Togo integrated the demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting approach into its budget planning process, thereby helping to align public investment with demographic trends and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Highlighting the important role of the approach in the socioeconomic transformation of the country, Sovi Koku, Director of Budget Studies and Analysis at the Ministry of the Economy and Strategic Monitoring, who spoke during a capacity-building session for national experts organized by the Subregional Office in Lomé in July 2026, noted that “Togo has a

predominantly young population, which represents considerable potential for growth”. He cautioned, however, that this “potential can be fully harnessed only through sustained investment in education, health, training and youth employment”. According to Mr. Koku, demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting “is an essential tool for improving the effectiveness of public policies and supporting the economic and social development of the country.”

50. Cabo Verde also benefited from support provided by the Subregional Office. According to Ludmilde Fernandes Semedo, Vice-President of the National Trade Facilitation Committee and representative of the Directorate of Trade Services at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Energy of Cabo Verde, who spoke on 25 September 2025 in connection with the “Shared Lives, Shared Future” exhibition marking the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, “the support from ECA helps Cabo Verde to implement the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area by promoting regional integration, sustainable development, capacity-building for small and medium-sized enterprises and more efficient integration into the African continental market.”

V. Partnerships for action and impact

51. Developing and strengthening strategic partnerships with a range of international and regional organizations has helped the Subregional Office to achieve results for ECA members. In particular, the Subregional Office has strengthened its cooperation with the following entities:

- (a) Resident coordinator offices;
- (b) Regional Consortium for Research in Generational Economics;
- (c) ECOWAS;
- (d) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
- (e) Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat;
- (f) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women;
- (g) African Solidarity Fund;
- (h) UNFPA;
- (i) Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa;
- (j) National demographic dividend observatories;
- (k) World Trade Organization;
- (l) Compass Limited, the strategic partner for the operationalization of the West Africa Business Linkages Platform;
- (m) United Nations Development Programme;

- (n) International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation;
- (o) WAEMU;
- (p) International Development Research Centre;
- (q) Women's business networks;
- (r) Youth associations and other networks;
- (s) Private sector leaders;
- (t) Sector champions supporting women and youth entrepreneurs.

VI. Main challenges and risks and measures taken

52. Despite the risks and constraints encountered in implementing its annual workplan, the Subregional Office took targeted corrective measures to ensure the achievement of its intended results.

53. The main challenges and risks include:

- (a) Sociopolitical instability, characterized by many complex, multifaceted crises and by insecurity in the Sahel;
- (b) High operational costs owing to charges associated with the United Nations common premises, poor Internet connectivity, frequent power outages and complex air links, which result in lengthy journeys and additional expenses in West Africa;
- (c) The combined impact of insufficient financial resources, sovereign debt crises in States covered by the Subregional Office, budget reductions resulting from the UN80 reform process, the liquidity crisis within the United Nations and a recruitment freeze across the Organization;
- (d) Inadequate staff mobility mechanisms;
- (e) Difficulty filling vacancies, given that staff members are unable to bring their families with them to the Niger.

54. The main mitigation measures and responses include:

- (a) Sustained recruitment efforts, which have helped to strengthen the human resources of the Subregional Office. A United Nations volunteer is supporting the administrative services of the Office;
- (b) Increased focus by the Subregional Office on the humanitarian-development-peace and security nexus in the Sahel;
- (c) The establishment of strategic partnerships and a coalition of ECA partners for action and impact, with a view to providing the best possible response to requests from its members;

(d) The prioritization, co-creation and financing of regional programmes with a significant impact in the subregion, including through partnerships between ECA and WAEMU, the West African Development Bank, the World Food Programme and UNFPA.

VII. Conclusion and outlook for 2027

55. Building on its recent work, including on the repercussions of the conflict in Iran and on access to infrastructure in WAEMU member States, and recognizing the important role of value chains in strengthening resilience and promoting structural transformation, the Subregional Office will structure its future interventions around a set of priority projects.

56. Three main areas have been identified as priorities for 2027:

(a) Developing inclusive value chains, including for cocoa and rice: strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises and facilitating their access to markets by helping them to meet quality standards;

(b) Strengthening strategic partnerships: bringing together small and medium-sized enterprises, chambers of commerce and financial institutions with a view to boosting productivity and strengthening food security;

(c) Accelerating economic diversification: optimizing the use of productive resources in the region in the context of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.
