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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Statutory issues

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

I. Introduction

1. The present progress report is being submitted to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development during the fifty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in accordance with current practices and in response to its request for regular updates on the work of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).¹ The report summarizes the work of the Institute for the period from April 2021 to March 2022. It highlights the Institute's key results achieved, in particular regarding the implementation of its training programmes, its knowledge-generation and knowledge-dissemination activities, the latest developments relating to its human and financial resources, and the partnerships it has undertaken. The report concludes with an outline of the prospects for 2022.

2. During the period under review, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to have a severe impact on the economic development of member States, contributing to debt distress, which was exacerbated by dampened trade, volatile commodity prices, macroeconomic uncertainty, job losses and, in certain cases, an increase in extreme poverty. To address these socioeconomic challenges and support countries in better building forward to accelerate delivery on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, in 2021 IDEP organized 41 online courses through which it strengthened the capacity of 3,033 officials (including 911 women) from 51 African countries in public-sector management and development planning. Of the total number of officials trained, 75 per cent attested with concrete evidence to having utilized the knowledge, skills and tools that they acquired through IDEP training to influence socioeconomic

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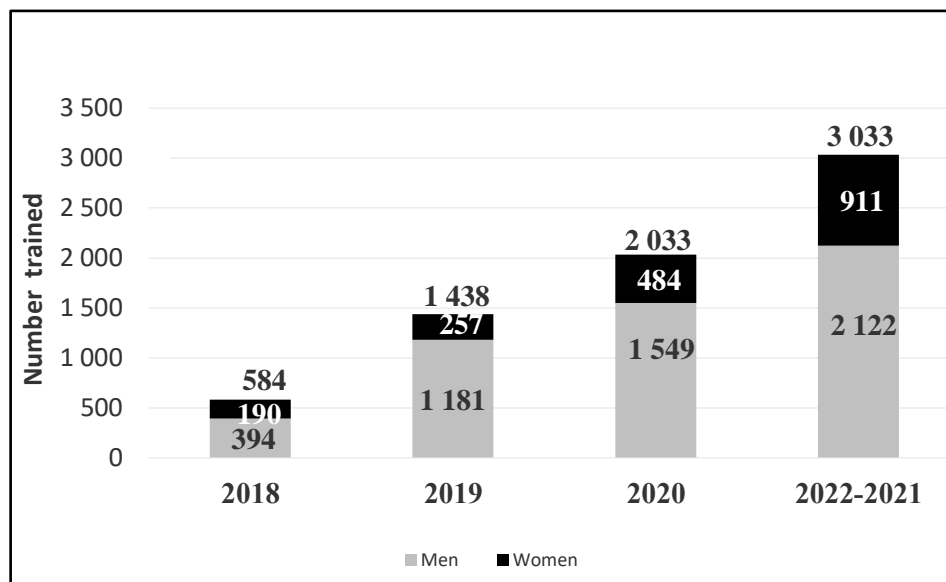
¹ The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning is a pan-African institution created by the General Assembly with the primary purpose of accompanying and supporting African countries in their quest to build human-resource capacity as a necessary prerequisite for sustaining independence and promoting socioeconomic development. Its main activities, derived from its mandate, are organized around a portfolio of capacity development and training programmes, along with a set of policy research and dialogue initiatives. It also offers on-demand advisory services to Governments and public institutions and serves as a forum for the exploration of alternative thinking on African development.



policy in their respective countries. In addition, under the Institute’s think-tank function, 479 experts participated in analytical-research activities to strengthen their capacity in public-policy formulation through 11 webinars, including 9 development seminars and 2 high-level policy dialogues.

Figure I

Evolution in the number of trainees, 2018–2021



3. The contributions of IDEP during the reporting period to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, ECA mandates and the development objectives of member States are described in detail in the subsequent sections of the report.

II. Contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through training and research

A. Training

4. Training continued with the aim of building a critical mass of skilled development actors to help countries build forward better by fostering resilient economies, in keeping with national, regional and international development agendas, including the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Trainees became familiar with effective techniques for formulating, planning, implementing and managing pro-development and pro-resilience policies; increasing the efficiency of all stakeholders involved; mobilizing adequate human, institutional and financial resources; and translating economic growth into sustainable and equitable social and environmental gains that benefit all citizens and leave no one behind.

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely undermined institutional and individual capacity development activities in Africa, as is the case in other parts of the world. Many African countries have been compelled to redesign in-person training courses so that they can be delivered using digital platforms. As a reflection of that reality, IDEP continued to deliver its courses online during the reporting period.

6. Digital delivery has enabled the Institute's capacity-building services to reach many more countries and a broader range of beneficiaries than it had previously through in-person training sessions. The number of women participating in online training was notably higher than in traditional in-person training. Interactive digital courses have proved to be not only an emergency substitute for traditional courses but also an excellent complementary means of delivering institutional and individual capacity-development programmes. The digital training sessions were conducted by pairing asynchronous modules with synchronous webinars. The digital training is being upgraded systematically to incorporate virtual-reality and game-inspired mobile learning features.

7. A total of 41 digital courses were delivered that focused on a variety of issues, including data analysis for sustainable development; macroeconomic modelling for sustainable-development planning; agricultural policy in Africa; digital transformation to accelerate youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector; policies to promote the nexus between peace and security and development; energy statistics and balances;² evaluating public policy; gender, trade and development; international trade policy and trade negotiations; territorializing of development;³ public-private partnerships; mineral law and governance; policy and legislation for the operation of road corridors; post-COVID-19 transition to low-carbon societies; climate information and services for long-term planning and decision-making; the blue economy and the African Continental Free Trade Area; free movement and regional integration; youth employability and entrepreneurship; the impact of COVID-19 on economies; young people as a lever for building the Africa we want; and macroeconomic and structural policy options to accelerate economic diversification and job creation. Also worth noting in this context was the selection of IDEP by an alumnus, Mod A.K. Secka, as the venue for launching his book, entitled *The Demise, Alternatives, and Rebirth of Planning: The Gambian Experience*, in the presence of high-level officials from the Gambia.

8. Macroeconomics for sustainable-development planning was one of the focus areas during the period under review. The Institute strengthened the capacity of 599 government officials and policymakers (including 147 women) on macroeconomy-related issues. This was achieved through 8 courses, 3 webinars and a community-of-practice session (with participants from 15 countries) which focused on how to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and stimulate economic growth in Africa. The training encompassed topics such as developing a macroeconomic framework for an inclusive and green economy, the impact of public policies, the fundamentals of development planning, fiscal policies and best practices in macro-planning in the context of sustainable development, and poverty eradication in the COVID-19 era.

9. The Institute continued to offer updated training related to the African Continental Free Trade Area. The courses on international trade policy and trade negotiations improved the capacity of participants in conducting trade negotiations while incorporating gender and climate considerations. The courses also increased their capacity to design, implement and evaluate trade policies that are aligned with national and regional needs and aspirations for development and integration.

10. Tailor-made training on trade-policy formulation, trade negotiations and trade facilitation for Zambian officials was organized in collaboration with the

² "Energy balances" refers to an exhaustive statistical accounting of energy products and their flows in the economy.

³ A territorial-development approach is designed to reach the poorest targets, allowing African States to better comply with the principle of leaving no one behind in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Subregional Office for Southern Africa and other ECA offices to improve the participation of Zambia in the multilateral trading system and in the regional economic communities in which it is a member (i.e. the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community). As a result, the course strengthened the capacity of 103 participants, including 44 women, from the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry and related institutions.

11. Upon the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya, a tailor-made workshop on the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area was delivered in Rabat with the support of the Subregional Office for North Africa. It strengthened the capacity of government officials from the Ministry to address the expected impact of the Agreement on Africa, with a special focus on the Libyan economy. It also provided participants with a better understanding of the Agreement ratification and implementation process. A total of 22 officials from the Ministry, including 2 women, attended the workshop.

12. A blue economy valuation toolkit was developed to address the poor mapping of both freshwater and groundwater resources on the continent. The toolkit was developed to guide data collection and analysis relating to the socio-economic value of blue resources, including the goods and services generated therefrom, which, in turn, is expected to provide an accurate snapshot of the potential of the blue economy and inform related decision-making.

13. A course on climate information and services for long-term planning and decision-making aimed to enhance the capacity of participants to integrate climate information and services in development planning and implementation. In most parts of the continent, the level of skills and awareness of climate information services remains inadequate to respond to the widespread effects of extreme weather events, such as droughts, hurricanes and heat waves.

14. A course on the role of the digital economy in fostering youth employability and entrepreneurship was designed to provide middle and senior-level officials and decision makers with the necessary skills, tools and mechanisms to enhance youth-development efforts and to formulate evidence-based youth policies that leave no young people behind, with the ultimate goal of unleashing the potential of young people to innovate and become entrepreneurs.

15. The Institute provided specialized support to regional economic communities as follows:

(a) A tailor-made session on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of the regional economic communities was organized for officials from the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The training aimed to strengthen their capacity to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their economies in general and on their public finances in particular. The participants were exposed to various models for the management of public finances in times of crisis to build resilient economies and put in place effective post-pandemic recovery plans. A total of 44 participants including 10 women attended the session.

(b) Custom-made training on policy and legislation relating to the operation of road corridors was provided to officials from countries of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States. The aim was to work towards a harmonized framework for the management, operation and maintenance of the corridors, which are the building blocks of successful integration. The training also provided an opportunity to learn strategies relating to the development of climate-resilient infrastructure and to incorporate gender-related considerations in the exploitation of road corridors.

16. The monitoring and evaluation of IDEP training are guided by the IDEP strategic plan for the period 2019–2023. The immediate results of training are assessed through various surveys. At the end of each course, participants are systematically invited to evaluate the course. That is followed by an annual survey to assess how the skills and tools acquired have contributed to their ability to influence policy formulation and development planning in their daily activities. The results of surveys launched in 2021 show a high rate of satisfaction, with 90 per cent of participants attesting to the training having strengthened their development-planning capacity and having boosted their confidence in their ability to influence policies. In addition, 98 per cent said that the training increased their ability to manage socioeconomic policies and reinforced their confidence in being able to influence those policies. Furthermore, 75 per cent provided concrete evidence attesting to their having utilized the knowledge, skills and tools they acquired through IDEP training to influence socioeconomic policy in their respective countries.

17. The total number of individuals (i.e. 3,033 officials, including 911 women) trained during the reporting period in public-sector management and development planning is in line with the quantitative objectives of the IDEP strategic plan for the period 2019–2023.

B. Master’s degree programme

18. Collaboration continued with the University of Johannesburg on the 18-month Master of Philosophy programme in industrial policy. The degree programme provides structured training to mid-career and senior professionals and policymakers serving in Governments and intergovernmental organizations in relation to various aspects of economic-policy management, development planning and sectoral analysis, with a focus on industrial issues. The fifth cohort concluded its second semester in the programme in 2021. All 43 participants passed the final exams, and 4 of them did so with distinction.

C. Research

19. IDEP policy research complements the Institute’s training programme and addresses the needs of policymaking communities and other stakeholders. It is aligned with the Institute’s think-tank mission and its aim to guide policy change and decision-making at the highest levels in respect of the development challenges facing African countries. The research component provides strategic guidance in the design of the Institute’s courses, high-level policy dialogues, development seminars and fellowship programme, with their contents being updated and adapted in accordance with changes in the operating environment and the priorities of member States.

20. During the period under review, the Institute organized the following high-level policy dialogues and development seminars (which were attended by both African and non-African participants):

(a) In April 2021, a high-level policy dialogue was organized jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Health Organization on the role of consumer and social protection in the provision of health services, (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided an opportunity to present and discuss recommendations from an UNCTAD report on the role of consumer protection policies in the provision of health services. It was attended by 155 participants, including representatives of ministries of health and consumer protection agencies, who shared experiences and best practices that emerged during the pandemic.

(b) In July 2021, IDEP held a development seminar on the role of enterprises in green and inclusive trade, which provided a platform for sharing policies

and strategies to promote green and inclusive trade in Africa. The 32 participants exchanged lessons learned and best practices in promoting greener and more inclusive trade. They also discussed the impact of climate change, mitigation efforts and adaptation measures on the growth of African economies and the potential of public-private partnerships in respect of renewable energy, in support of the agribusiness sector in particular.

(c) In October 2021, the Institute hosted an expert group meeting on the use of macroeconomic measures to manage debt in the aftermath of the first COVID-19 outbreak. The meeting was aligned with an ongoing programme of research on debt, taxation and financing for development that is being supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa. The 66 participants conducted a thorough review of draft reports by Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Mali. They also engaged in comprehensive discussions of a road map for debt management and resource mobilization towards building forward better; the need to achieve sustainable and inclusive societies by building resilient economies; monetary policies, inflation and lending to bolster the economy; and the use of fiscal measures to restructure economies in line with social and economic goals. Comments from the expert group were taken into account in the finalization of the draft national reports.

(d) In November 2021, the Institute hosted a development seminar on building back better from COVID-19 through reinforcing the nexus of peace, security, development, humanitarian action and human rights in policy design and implementation in Africa. The seminar was in follow-up to training organized by IDEP and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa that focused on designing and implementing policies to promote the interlinkages among development, peace, security, humanitarian action and human rights to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals on the continent. The seminar offered a platform for the 82 participants to share best practices and experiences and to reinforce their skills and knowledge in order to apply the nexus approach to building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

(e) In December 2021, IDEP organized a multimedia seminar on the role of young people in building forward better through the promotion of arts, culture and heritage. The seminar was aligned with the declaration by the African Union of 2021 as the year of arts, culture and heritage and was organized with the participation of several renowned African artists.⁴ Through short films and presentations, it provided a platform for the 25 participants to discuss the role of arts, culture and heritage in promoting regional and local development in Africa and in informing economic, social and environmental policymaking.

(f) In February 2022, the Institute organized a side event during the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division and the Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results Division. The event, which was attended by 54 individuals, was part of phase 2 of an ECA short-story anthology initiative that involved renowned Portuguese-speaking writers. The aim was to build a comprehensive understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and their connection to the goals of Agenda 2063 through creative writing.

(g) In March 2022, in the context of the celebration of International Women's Day, IDEP organized a dialogue on the role of public policy in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. Of the 114 attendees, many were alumni of the gender related courses delivered by the Institute over the past two years, who shared experiences and lessons learned concerning their use of the skills and competencies acquired through IDEP courses to improve gender equality policies and strategies.

⁴ Kandy Guira (singer); Yoro Mbaye and Steve Kamdeu (film-makers and recipients of awards at the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou); and Mamy Tall (creator of "Dakar Lives" on Instagram).

D. Fellowships

21. The IDEP fellowship programme continued to contribute to the promotion and strengthening of intra-African knowledge-sharing and mutual learning among researchers and civil servants. Through the programme, IDEP consolidated its support for capacity-building through constructive analyses and discussions of development policies. Thanks to the programme, the Institute reinforced its partnerships with various ECA divisions, planning institutions and departments of line ministries, international organizations, universities and research centres.

22. In 2021, IDEP hosted one fellow who studied the determinants of female labour-force participation in the formal and informal sectors in Botswana, using data collected through a multi-topic household survey in 2015/16. In early 2022, two ECA fellows joined IDEP, with one undertaking research on climate change, coastal erosion and mitigation measures, while the other is studying the impact of COVID-19 on financing for development in the WAEMU subregion.

E. Gender mainstreaming

23. As has been the case for some years now, IDEP has prioritized gender equality as a key component of the design and delivery of all its training and research activities. Using an in-house platform, the online-learning programme has offered more opportunities to women to participate in the Institute's capacity-building initiatives, as evidenced by a substantial increase in women's participation during the reporting period. IDEP continued to actively advocate for the nomination and application of women candidates to participate in its training programmes through all available channels.

24. IDEP has systematically ensured that a gender dimension is embedded in relevant training curricula and in specific modules addressing gender issues. Specifically, the Institute delivered courses on the following themes: women and youth empowerment in agriculture; the role of young people in building forward better through the promotion of arts, culture and heritage; gender-responsive economic-policy management within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; empowering women through the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area; and delivering on a new decade of financial and economic inclusion for African women.

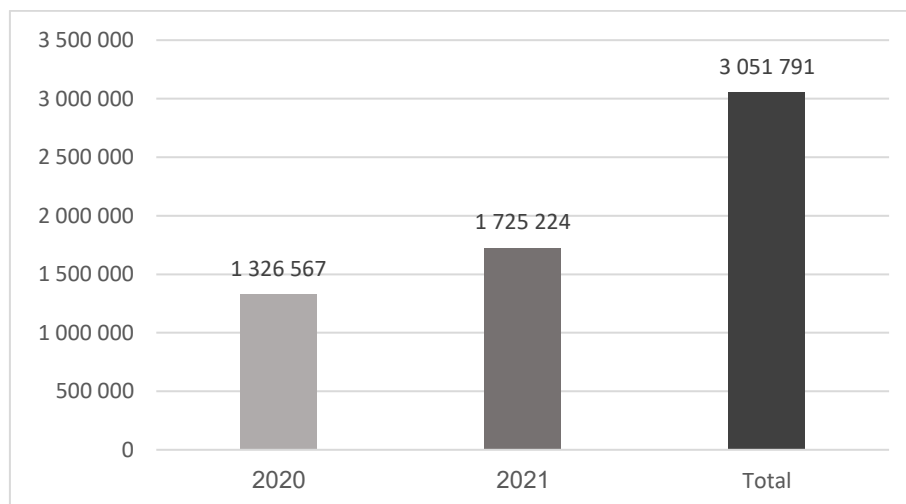
F. Knowledge-resource centre

25. The IDEP knowledge-resource centre continued to meet the needs of the Institute's training and research programmes by sharing information and providing documentation services to trainees, faculty members, conference participants, researchers, visiting scholars and Governments.

26. Owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns, the library was closed to physical access. However, users of library services, which consisted mostly of course participants and fellows, were served online and remotely. Among its services, the library provided users with annotated bibliographic materials in English and French.

27. The library knowledge-resource centre continued to catalogue and index documents and publications in digital format in the institutional repository. In 2021, despite the challenge posed by remote working, 514 titles were added, bringing the total collection to 23,277 records, of which 8,934 are freely available in full text. There was a total of 1,725,224 full-text document downloads in 2021, compared with 1,326,567 in 2020.

Figure II

Downloads of documents from the digital library

28. IDEP communities of practice provide an opportunity for interaction among practitioners, policy makers, non-State actors, IDEP alumni and resource persons⁵ to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired through IDEP training are used by beneficiaries to influence policy, planning and processes at the national and subregional levels. In this regard, from 15 September to 28 October 2021, IDEP facilitated a six-week community-of-practice session on macroeconomic modelling for sustainable development, during which the 35 participants from 15 African countries took stock of the progress made in advancing the development and application of macroeconomic models to meet Africa's development requirements, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Some takeaways from the session were as follows:

(a) Quasi-accounting models and computable general equilibrium models are the models that are most frequently used by member States;

(b) Computable general equilibrium models are used for policy impact-simulations through the social accounting matrix. Financial programming models are used for simulations and forecasts in the context of short- and medium-term macroeconomic and budgetary frameworks;

(c) There is a desire to harmonize practices regarding macroeconomic models by favoring those models that are shown upon evaluation to have a high rate of success. Achieving this harmonization could be done through the establishment of a network of African development planning modelers.

III. Finance, human resource development and partnership

A. Finance

29. This section is primarily focused on the mobilization of resources and associated strategies employed by the IDEP leadership team.

30. The Institute's activities are financed by four broad sources:

⁵ Resource persons are subject-matter experts who play an essential in performing tasks and/or providing information.

(a) A regular United Nations grant, which is a fixed annual subvention of \$1.4 million that is approved by the General Assembly. This grant underpins the approved annual programme budget;

(b) Contributions from African member States through annual payments of assessed financial contributions, based on a predetermined schedule that is approved and adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development;

(c) Extrabudgetary funds from sources such as multilateral and bilateral funding institutions, private foundations and other development partners;

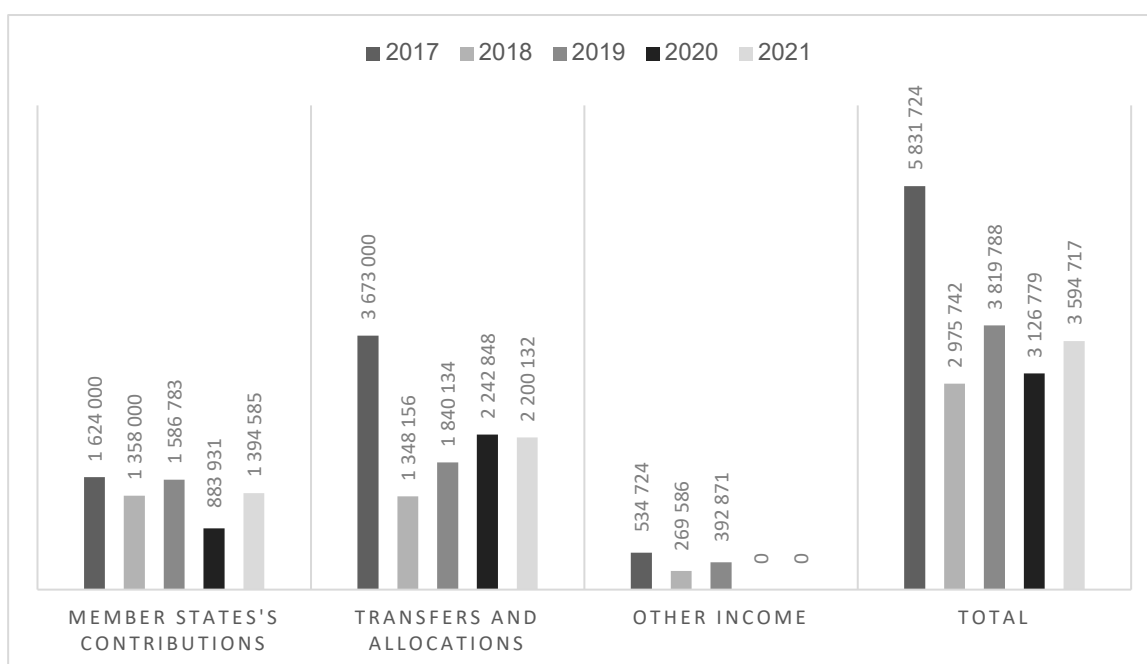
(d) Resources from ECA to support specific programmes and training activities.

31. Figure III shows the total amount of income generated between 2017 and 2021, broken down into three categories. The “transfers and allocations” category includes the United Nations grant, extrabudgetary support from ECA and funding from other donors.

32. Extrabudgetary resources mobilized annually between 2018 and 2021 were significantly lower than in 2017, reflecting the current funding environment in which many donors are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. IDEP has made vigorous efforts to steadily increase its extrabudgetary income.

Figure III
Categories of income, 2017–2021

(United States dollars)



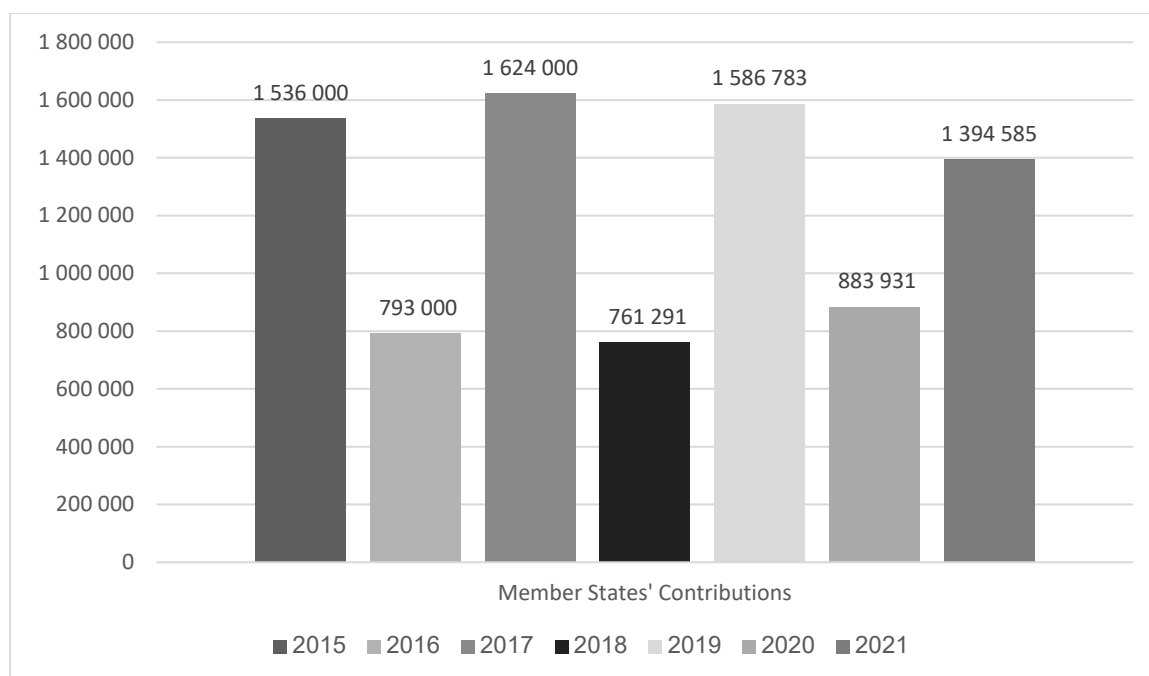
Note: The average annual budget of IDEP is \$3.7 million.

33. Figure III illustrates that a number of member States have heard the Institute’s call for more regular payment of assessed annual contributions and the settlement of arrears. In 2021, member State contributions totalled \$1.358 million (table 1). IDEP expresses its profound gratitude to member States for the support that they provided in 2020 and 2021 despite the adverse circumstances created by the pandemic.

34. Notwithstanding the above, IDEP still has a significant balance of arrears to collect, and payments remain few and irregular. There seems to be a trend in which member States that reach their target for contributions in one year then

significantly miss their target in the following year. That dynamic makes it difficult to plan and budget since income from member States is uneven (figure IV). Unpaid assessed contributions stood at a high of \$18 million as at 31 December 2021 and weigh heavily on the resource mobilization plans of the Institute.

Figure IV
Member State contributions, 2015–2021
(United States dollars)



35. IDEP will continue to engage with member States in respect of their contributions and is in discussions with the relevant authorities of countries that have significant outstanding arrears.

Table 1
Contributions by country, as at 31 December 2021
(United States dollars)

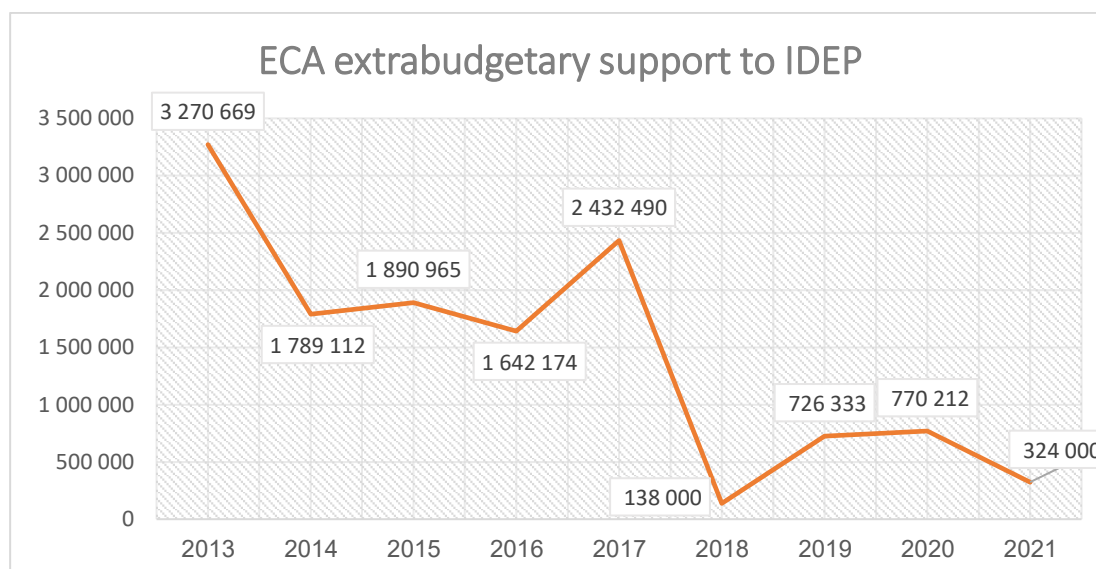
<i>Index</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Annual assessed contribution</i>	<i>Annual contribution paid</i>	<i>Arrears paid</i>	<i>Total amount paid in 2021</i>
1	Angola	32 000	32 000	64 000	96 000
2	Benin	15 000	14 878	0	14 878
3	Cameroon	24 000	24 000	22 257	46 257
4	Côte d'Ivoire	32 000	32 000	2 850	34 850
5	Mali	15 000	15 000	17 081	32 081
6	Morocco	32 000	32 000	106 291	138 291
7	Namibia	24 000	24 000	0	24 000
8	Niger	15 000	15 000	0	15 000
9	Sierra Leone	20 000	0	20 000	20 000
10	South Africa	80 000	80 000	0	80 000
11	Togo	15 000	15 000	0	15 000
12	United Republic of Tanzania	24 000	24 000	69 154	93 154
13	Zimbabwe	40 000	40 000	745 075	785 075
	Total	368 000	347 878	1 046 708	1 394 586

36. Financial support from ECA remained low compared with previous years, with \$324,000 received in 2021 compared with \$770,212 and \$726,333 received in 2020 and 2019, respectively (figure V). The Institute continued to engage with ECA leadership on the matter. It hoped that the level of support will revert to levels seen prior to 2018, which would increase the predictability of the Institute's finances and the consistency of its programme planning and delivery.

Figure V

Extrabudgetary contributions from the Economic Commission for Africa, 2013–2021

(United States dollars)



37. As part of its strategic plan for the period 2019–2023, IDEP continued its campaign to expand its funding base through increased and targeted external resource-mobilization initiatives, with a view to fully financing and meeting its strategic objectives. Despite the persistently stringent donor-funding environment, IDEP received a grant award of \$557,432 from the Government of Italy to provide the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area and participating countries with high-level specialized training relating to taxation, customs, trade and legislative issues, with the objective of supporting local companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises, in improving their international trade relations, especially with the European Union and Italy.

B. Human-resource development

38. The Institute was understaffed in 2021, with vacancies in two key positions: Head of the Research and Training Division (P-5 level) and Head of Administration (P-4 level). The latter was filled in February 2022 while the recruitment for the former is ongoing and expected to be finalized shortly. A United Nations volunteer was also recruited in October 2021 to strengthen the Institute's capacity in monitoring and evaluation.

39. In line with the ongoing effort to reinforce the Institute's position as the training arm of ECA and to increase collaboration with other divisions, two training sessions were organized with the Division of Administration on climate change and on the application of the ECA-developed integrated planning and reporting toolkit. The latter aimed to enhance understanding among ECA staff members of the integrated planning and reporting toolkit and the potential for using it in their daily work, while the former was a 2-week immersive virtual-learning journey during which staff developed capacity in relation to climate-risk

management. The two courses enhanced the capacity of the 62 ECA staff members, including 4 IDEP employees.

C. Partnerships

40. The Institute continued its strategy of partnering with various stakeholders in the delivery of training and other initiatives. Such partnerships varied in form and included activity cost-sharing agreements, agreements on the sharing of knowledge and technical expertise, as well as ordinary funding partnerships. Of particular note in 2021 were activities with the following partners: the African Union Commission; the National Institute for Public Administration – Malaysia; the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; the Association of Portuguese-speaking Universities; the Brazil-Africa Institute; the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries; the Open Society Initiative for West Africa; the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU); the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States; the Governments of the Gambia and Italy; and over 70 universities.

Table 2

Partner categories

<i>Type of partners</i>	<i>Number of partners</i>
United Nations entities	5
Member States and regional economic communities	6
International organizations	1
Academic and research institutions	75
Total	87

41. Collaboration on activities resulting from these and other partnerships included research with UNCTAD on the role of consumer and social protection in the provision of health services (including e-health) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic; training on the digital transformation of technical and vocational education, in cooperation with ECA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the African Union Development Agency and its New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Development Bank and the Institute for Education and Training of la Francophonie; training organized with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa on designing and implementing policies to promote the nexus among development, peace, security, humanitarian action and human rights to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals on the continent; training on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of WAEMU member States; and training tailored to members of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States on policy and legislation for the operation of road corridors.

42. Training on fast-tracking the national integration and operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area in African lusophone countries was provided with the objective of reinforcing an integrated approach to the Area in the context of the national development plans of the five Portuguese-speaking African countries. Delivered in Portuguese, the training provided an opportunity for the participating countries to appreciate their comparative and competitive advantages in the implementation of the Area. The training was the first step in cooperation framework with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the Association of Portuguese-speaking Universities.

43. As part of its role to be a bridge between Governments and academia, IDEP facilitated the launch of the ECA Young Economist Network, with a view to mobilizing young African economists to contribute more tangibly to solving the continent's economic challenges. During the reporting period, 759 young economists participated in the activities of the Network through partnerships with 75 universities in 28 countries.

IV. Prospects for 2022

44. As previously observed, the need to accelerate the continent's structural transformation to build forward better and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals has considerably increased the demand for IDEP services. This conveys a positive message regarding the relevance of the Institute's offerings and its impact. To continue to satisfactorily meet the expectations of its member States, the regional economic communities and other development actors on the continent, IDEP will have to ensure that its activities are aligned with the fast-changing and ever more sophisticated demand. It is also working to ensure that there are corresponding increases in its financial and human resources.

45. Despite the increase in the number of women who have benefitted from the transfer of the Institute's training programmes to online platforms during the pandemic, more efforts will be required to increase the number of women that it trains. IDEP will continue to do so through more affirmative action, tailor-made courses and training of trainers. In addition, IDEP will continue to appeal to member States to nominate more women candidates during calls for applications.

46. Communication with member States will be further strengthened to better appreciate their specific needs and expectations. In this regard, more focus will be put on creating custom-made courses that can address the specificity of the challenges that a given country is facing.

47. The global emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerability and dependence on external factors of African economies, leading to weakness in the design and management of development plans and policies. Responses by countries across the world to the emergency have led to drastic changes in local and global development trajectories within a very short period of time. In this context, it is essential that development planning and programme delivery integrate risk analysis that takes into account the effects of uncertainty and contributes to sound decision-making. In the light of the above, IDEP has decided to mainstream risk analysis and mitigation in its capacity-building and research activities in 2022.

48. The Institute will continue to manage and increase its partnership programmes with academia, international development organizations, government departments and ministries, research bodies and think tanks, regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. It will actively seek opportunities for cost-sharing collaboration to complement its resource-mobilization strategy. The creation of the ECA Young Economists Network and the building of its capacity to address emerging development issues will feature prominently in IDEP partnerships.