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## **Report on the activities of the Office**

***From May 2019 to October 2020***

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ACMAD</b>	African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development
<b>ACBI</b>	AfCFTA Country Business Index
<b>ACS</b>	African Centre for Statistics
<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AFRISTAT</b>	Sub-Saharan Africa Economic and Statistical Observatory
<b>ALG</b>	Integrated Development Authority of the Liptako-Gourma States
<b>aSDMS</b>	Aggregate dynamic system model for the Sahel region
<b>ADB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>SRO-WA/ECA</b>	Sub-Regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
<b>ECA</b>	Economic Commission for Africa
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>REC</b>	Regional Economic Community
<b>ICE</b>	Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>CoM</b>	Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
<b>CREG</b>	Regional Centre of Excellence in Generational Economics
<b>RSC</b>	Regional Statistics Committee
<b>CRVS</b>	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
<b>DDD</b>	Demographic Dynamics for Development
<b>EGM</b>	Expert Group Meeting
<b>GDDI</b>	Gender and Demographic Dividend Index
<b>IDEP</b>	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
<b>NIS</b>	National Institute of Statistics
<b>IPTR</b>	Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre
<b>MGD</b>	ECA's Macroeconomic and Governance Division
<b>MI</b>	Millennium Institute (MI)
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>NTAs</b>	National Transfer Accounts
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>IGOs</b>	Intergovernmental Organizations
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>RGHP</b>	General Census of Population and Housing-GCPH
<b>SEEA-CFS</b>	Environmental and Economic Accounting System - Central Framework
<b>FISIM</b>	Indirectly Measured Financial Intermediation Services
<b>SPORD</b>	ECA Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results Division

<b>SRI</b>	Sub Regional Initiatives
<b>STEPS</b>	<i>Structural Transformation, Employment, Production and Society</i>
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>UEMOA</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNISS</b>	<i>United</i> Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>VNR</b>	National Voluntary Examination Report
<b>VSCE</b>	Vital Strategies and Centre of Excellence
<b>WAMZ</b>	West African Monetary Zone

## Introduction

1. As every year, this report covers the main activities carried out by the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) since the previous session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICE) in May 2019. In line with ECA's intergovernmental mechanisms, the SRO-WA intends to report to the ICE on the activities implemented under the strategic frameworks of the work programme for the period 2019 - 2020.
2. Those activities were carried out in a particular context, marked by the challenges of achieving sustainable development objectives, and further exacerbated by the occurrence of COVID-19 since December 2019. They were also guided by the continued operationalization of the specialized centre on Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD), which was set up in February 2019 within the Office. Finally, the activities continued to be carried out in accordance with the mandate assigned to the ECA sub-regional offices, which is geared towards strengthening sub-regional cooperation and integration, alignment with the priorities of the African Union (AU), linkages with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the objectives set out in the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the AU's 2063 agenda.
3. As with the reports presented at the two previous ICES, this document focuses on the outputs and changes initiated in relation to the expected results of the implementation of the SRO-WA's work programme. Following the introduction, the first four sections focus on the impact of the activities carried out in terms of: i)- influencing policies to support West Africa's transformation agenda; ii)- credibility and trust through the provision of high quality, evidence-based and responsive policy research and knowledge transfer services; iii)- strengthening accountability mechanisms and deepening the learning culture within the organization ; and iv)- enhancing its operational effectiveness to better support the timely delivery of its knowledge generation and capacity building services. A fifth section discusses v)-the main risks associated with the implementation of activities and the alternative solutions adopted to overcome the challenges. By way of conclusion, the last part of the report draws lessons from the implementation of activities during the period under review and suggests some perspectives.

### 1. Policy Influence

4. The main objective of the Office's work programme is to "strengthen the capacity of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) to formulate evidence-based and/or empirical programmes and policies to accelerate the achievement of structural transformation for sustainable and inclusive development in the West Africa sub-region. To achieve this objective, two main outcomes were expected: (a) strengthening the capacities of Member States in the West African sub-region to ensure that the challenges of population dynamics are properly integrated into the formulation of policies, programmes and all economic development planning processes; (b) strengthening the capacities of Member States in the West African sub-region, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) to accelerate the implementation of the sub-region's development priorities, while taking into account gender specificities and perspectives.

5. Member States, RECs and IGOs in West Africa have benefited from several activities carried out by SRO-WA that have contributed to the achievement of this objective. Those activities focused on the implementation of the objectives assigned to the new specialized Centre on Demographic Dynamics for Development whose strategic orientations were approved by the ICE in May 2019. In addition, continued attention and support were given to sub-regional initiatives, including support for the development of national strategies to enable member States of the sub-region to take full advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as assistance to countries in monitoring their progress towards the structural transformation of their economies and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of programmes 2030 and 2063. The Office's interventions in these areas focused on the issues of population dynamics for development, economic statistics and forecasting, development planning and regional integration.

### a. Demographic Dynamics for Development

6. In continuity with the actions initiated in 2019 under the new centre specialized in Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD), the SRO-WA assisted member States in the analysis of population dynamics and their socio-economic impact as well as in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS).
7. In its desire to define and strengthen demo-economic policies based on the knowledge production of the DDD Centre, the Office initiated in May 2019 a high-level dialogue at the 22nd ICE, during which four countries committed themselves to take into account the issue of the demographic dividend in their development plans (Cabo Verde, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal), while ECOWAS committed itself to developing a regional policy on DDD. SRO-WA also finalized a study on the demographic dividend and sustainable development, two STEPS profiles on Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire including an analysis on DDD, initiated a macroeconomic model building exercise for ECOWAS.
8. In collaboration with the Millennium Institute (MI) based in Washington DC, USA, SRO-WA also developed a prototype population model for the Sahel region at a workshop held in Niamey, Niger, from 16 to 20 December 2019. This practical workshop around the T21 population aggregated model using the system dynamic model benefited ECOWAS experts, as well as the member States of Niger and Senegal.
9. Prior to this, the SRO-WA took the opportunity of the workshop to review the 4th General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH) of Niger held from 17 to 21 June 2019 in Dosso, Niger, to highlight the relevance of extending the collection of social and demographic statistics to demo-economic data and improve the country's national capacity to assess progress towards the achievement of the SDG 2030 and the AU Agenda 2063.
10. In addition, from 15 to 16 July 2019, the Office delivered a paper on the theme "Mapping remittances and investments of the Diaspora in West Africa" at the third edition of the Ivorian's Diaspora Forum where issues of employment and project financing were discussed, and recommendations made on how to mobilize the Ivorian's Diaspora for the socio-economic development of Côte d'Ivoire.

11. From 15 to 17 July 2019, SRO-WA also participated in Cotonou, Benin, in the 4th assembly of the Steering Committee for the Harmonization and Modernization of Household Living Conditions Surveys in UEMOA (WAEMU) countries. This meeting was preceded by the session of the Regional Statistics Committee (RSC) of the UEMOA Commission. The opportunity was seized to revitalize the cooperation of the ECA Secretariat with national statistical institutes, AFRISTAT and UEMOA.
12. The Office participated from 2 to 6 September 2019, in the Expert Meeting for Capacity Building for the Improvement of the Framework of the Civil Registry and Vital Statistics System (CRVS) for the benefit of the following West African countries: Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Liberia. The meeting provided an opportunity for the ECA and its partners, the *Vital Strategies and Centre of Excellence* (VSCE), UNICEF and the National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics services, the National Statistical Institutes and the Ministries of Health, to review and improve the set of materials that are part of the comprehensive country-led assessment of the CRVS and the development of strategic plan.
13. With a view to strengthening the institutional capacities of regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and countries to capitalize on population dynamics for development in West Africa, the Office initiated a project to support West African States in formulating fiscal policies that are sensitive to the capture of the demographic dividend. Activities began with Mali at a workshop held in Dakar from 20 to 24 January 2020, in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence on Generational Economics (CREG).
14. In the same vein, the Office and the Ministry of Finance of Mali, in partnership with the CREG, University of Thiès, Senegal, jointly organized a workshop on integrating the demographic dividend into the national budget framework in February 2020 in Bamako, Mali. The workshop brought together the General Directorate of the Budget, members of parliament, staff from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and representatives of civil society. This helped strengthen the strategic partnership between the Office and the National Observatory of the Demographic Dividend, thereby enabling Mali to benefit from support in formulating a DD-sensitive budget.
15. A workshop to produce disaggregated data for the development of the Gender Demographic Dividend Index (GDDI) developed by CREG was organized with the support of the Office from 6 to 8 February 2020 in Bangoula, a locality near Niamey in Niger.
16. Finally, the 10 countries supported by the United Nations in the Sahel benefited from population dynamics modelling. NTA profiles for ECOWAS and ECOWAS subgroups (WAMZ, UEMOA, MRU ...) were developed and helped assess progress towards the achievement of the DD. Nine West African countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Niger and Senegal, benefited from capacity building, including DD policy dialogue involving 100 officials and experts at the First International Conference on NTAs held in Africa, Somone, Senegal, in October 2019.

## b. Economic statistics and long-term forecasting

17. The actions carried out to support the development of statistics and strengthen prospective analysis have enabled the Office to create more favourable conditions for economic governance and decision-making at the national and sub-regional levels.
18. From a national accounts statistical perspective, SRO-WA participated from 17 to 21 June 2019 in a second phase of technical assistance to Ghana on energy accounts based on the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts - Central Framework (SEEA-CF) adopted by the UN StatCom in 2012 and aimed at better understanding the interactions between the economy and the environment.
19. The Office also took part on 7 August 2019 in Niamey in a workshop on the results of the rebasing of Niger's GDP. Discussions focused on the methodology, main findings, and comments on recent developments in the Nigerien economy. On this occasion, the Office stressed that ECA and UNCTAD have developed a quantitative and qualitative methodology to assess the contribution of services to regional and global value chains, which could be used in Niger to assess exports and imports of Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM) not yet taken into account in the calculation of GDP. Thus, through collaboration with the African Centre for Statistics (ACS), an ECA mission to analyse the revised national accounts supported the NSO of Niger from October 21 to 25, 2019. All the work on changing the base year resulted in an upward revision of GDP by 33.3%. This is the result of improved coverage of source data that contributed to this revaluation by 18.3 points and methodological changes by 15.0 points.
20. The Office also provided technical and operational support for the development of the UEMOA's integrated and centralized database. In particular, through a technical assistance workshop on the StatBase-UEMOA data platform, this took place from 3 to 5 February 2020 in Niamey, Niger. The effective implementation of this StatBase-UEMOA's database is seen as one of the successful initiatives that should serve as a benchmark for the definition of new actions in the new ECA-UEMOA cooperation framework for strengthening statistical development in general and the production of emerging statistics in particular.
21. Actions were also carried out in support of the services in charge of forecasts, prospective and macroeconomic modelling within the framework of the various seminars and workshops organized by the Office during the period under review.
22. With regard to macroeconomic forecasting, from 19 to 21 November 2019, the Office organized with AFRISTAT a seminar aimed at sharing experiences on recent economic developments and short-term macroeconomic forecasting methods, particularly with Portuguese and/or English-speaking ECOWAS member countries (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cabo Verde). In addition, from November 25 to 29, 2019, SRO-WA participated in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in the seminar jointly organized by the UEMOA Commission, AFRISTAT and West AFRITAC on economic conditions and economic forecasts for the second half of 2019 in UEMOA member States, Guinea and Mauritania. Those two occasions made it possible to revitalize cooperation between ECA and national statistical institutes, AFRISTAT and UEMOA.

23. In the area of economic modelling, the Office has carried out several major activities. From 26-27 August 2019, it participated in a scoping mission to review macroeconomic modelling in Sierra Leone. By bringing together key stakeholders including the Ministry and the Central Bank of Sierra Leone, fruitful discussions helped strengthen cooperation between development actors and government counterparts in the economic growth forecasting exercise and paved the way for better economic structural analysis. From 24 to 26 September 2019, the Office participated in a similar mission to review Senegal's macroeconomic modelling during which exchanges also took place on existing economic models. In December 2019, at a workshop held in Abuja, Nigeria, the Office, in collaboration with the ECA Macroeconomics and Governance Division (MGD), supported capacity building of seven ECOWAS and one UEMOA staff member in macroeconomic modelling. During this mission, the Office has also contributed to the ongoing development of a regional macroeconomic model for ECOWAS.
24. For the first half of 2020, support for capacity building of member States in statistics and the preparation of country profiles, consisted in the active participation of the Office, from 10 to 11 June 2020, in a virtual seminar on "short-term macroeconomic forecasts of the West African economy, that of the countries of the Monetary Union (WAEMU / UEMOA), Guinea and Mauritania". This virtual meeting organized by UEMOA, AFRISTAT and AFRITAC WEST had mobilized about 35 participants from NSIs and Ministries of Finance of the eight UEMOA Member States, Guinea, Mauritania and delegates from the UEMOA Commission, ECOWAS, AFRISTAT, AFRITAC WEST and WAMA among others. A presentation was made on "Africa's economic situation and short-term economic forecasts".

### c. Development planning

25. Some of the activities carried out by the Office between May 2019 and September 2020 have enabled Member States and ECOWAS to improve their capacity to formulate their development plans.
26. Thus, in response to Burkina Faso's official request for technical support in various development sectors (development planning, mining, energy, statistics, agriculture, environment), the Office began implementing three activities related to the development planning module in 2019: (i) development of a public policy evaluation strategy; (ii) development of a public policy analysis and evaluation manual; and; (iii) training of national experts on public policy analysis and evaluation. Regarding the training component, the capacities of Burkina Faso's experts were strengthened through the training of civil servants in the evaluation of public policies accompanied by a guidance document made available on the evaluation of the country's policies.
27. From July 16 to 20, 2019, in collaboration with Niger's Ministry of Planning, the Office participated in the training of the country's regional and municipal officials on the integration of Sustainable Development Objectives (SDGs) into regional and municipal development plans. The workshop held in Dosso, Niger, paved the way for the integration of SDG monitoring into development planning processes. In the same vein, SRO-WA supported the preparation of the Voluntary National Review Report (VNR) on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Côte d'Ivoire presented in 2019.

28. In addition, during a practical workshop held from 9 to 13 December 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria, SRO-WA and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), in partnership with the ECA Division in charge of Macroeconomics and Governance (MGD) and Strategic Planning, held a workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, of Monitoring and Results (SPORD), responded to the concerns of ECOWAS Commission staff involved in project development and monitoring, by building the capacity of 31 staff, including 11 women, on aspects of monitoring and evaluation, covering results-based management and quality reporting.
29. In accordance with the cooperation agreement that was signed between the Office and ECOWAS in February 2020, the Office organized a virtual technical workshop from 27 to 30 July 2020 and from 3 to 11 August 2020 on the structural analysis of the ECOWAS region. The exercise is expected to promote a better structural analysis that takes into account the various socio-economic variables that characterize the ECOWAS region. Its conclusions will be coupled with the results of the retrospective analysis and the aspirations of the ECOWAS populations to inform the on-going formulation of the ECOWAS 2050 Vision. To date, the retrospective diagnostic report, the report on the aspirations of ECOWAS populations and the report on the structural analysis of the ECOWAS region have been finalized. Those preliminary results have been achieved under the joint leadership of the ECOWAS Commission and ECA, with the contribution of the United Nations Development System (UNDP and UNESCO), GIZ and ACMAD. The development of the new ECOWAS Vision 2050 is continuing with the support of key expertise identified in the region, and in close collaboration with Member States, the ultimate beneficiaries, despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### d. Regional integration

30. Special attention was also given by SRO-WA to supporting member States and RECs in their efforts to make progress towards regional integration, through a number of activities centred on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the single currency in West Africa and support to the Integrated Development Authority of the Liptako-Gourma States (ALG).
31. The Office took an active part in the implementation of the project on "Deepening Africa's Trade Integration through Effective Implementation of the AfCFTA in Support of Economic Integration". This project, which in its first phase covered the year 2019, was led by ECA in close collaboration with the RECs, the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), among others. The Office has been deeply involved in technical support activities to countries in the West African region for the ratification of the AfCFTA agreement and the development of national strategies to maximize its benefits. It is in this capacity that the SRO-WA participated not only in scoping missions, national sensitization forums, advocacy, dissemination and public awareness on the AfCFTA organized in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo from May to September 2019, but also contributed to the organization and facilitation of national validation workshops or technical meetings on national strategies on the AfCFTA that took place in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea during the last quarter of 2019 and then in Sierra Leone, Senegal, Gambia and Niger during the first half of 2020.

32. In summary, despite the difficult context of COVID-19, the Office continues to make efforts towards the operationalization of the AfCFTA by its Member States. To date, 10 out of 15 West African countries have ratified the agreement, four countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea and Togo have already completed their respective AfCFTA Country Strategy documents and three other countries: The Gambia, Niger and Sierra Leone have their documents under finalisation.
33. In addition to our support for the formulation of national AfCFTA strategies, the Office continues to support private sector ownership and implementation of this Agreement. In this perspective and under the high patronage of the Prime Minister of Niger, the Office co-organized with the government, on 1st October 2020, the 4th edition of the trade fair "100% Made in Niger and the launch *Consommons Nigérien* campaign, ". On the side-lines of this activity, the Office have also co-organized a round table on the theme "Boosting local production: Promoting the *Made-In-Niger* label in the context of the implementation of the AfCFTA" which took place on 15th October 2020.
34. The Office's participation in the 10th Forum of Ministers of Trade of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) organized in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, from 10 to 13 December 2019 on the theme: "AfCFTA: Opportunities and Challenges for Member States of the West African Monetary Zone", is to be included in the activities likely to influence policies to support the West African transformation agenda. On this occasion, the Office issued communications following which several recommendations were made. In particular, WAMZ member States were invited to : (i) provide trade-related infrastructure so that the private sector can exploit business opportunities in the zone; (ii) undertake appropriate structural reforms to diversify production and export structures, improve financial infrastructure and the business environment to sustain growth and strengthen economic resilience in the FTAA; and (iii) develop a clear strategy to offset the potential loss of revenue due to the implementation of the AfCFTA within member countries.
35. With regard to ECOWAS, thanks to the technical support provided by the SRO-WA through the studies, great strides have been made in the implementation of the roadmap for the adoption of the ECOWAS single currency by 2020. They include the adoption by ECOWAS Heads of State and Government of a single currency called "ECO", a flexible exchange rate regime, a monetary policy framework based on inflation targeting, and a federal system of a common Central Bank.
36. However, despite the improvement in the macroeconomic convergence situation observed in 2019, the 57th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, meeting in Niamey on 7 September 2020, also noted the negative impact of Covid-19 on the compliance of Member States with the macroeconomic convergence criteria in 2020. With a view to consolidating the achievements, it decided, inter alia, to: i)- Develop a new Roadmap for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme; ii)- Postpone the launch of the Single Currency to a later date and finally; iii)- Maintain the gradual approach for the launching of ECO.
37. With regard to the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority (ALG), as part of its efforts to improve its institutional capacity, this institution benefited from technical assistance from the SRO-WA to develop a self-financing mechanism with the production and validation of an institutional orientation document for the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority (ALG). In addition, from October 13 to 16, 2019, efforts were made to continue the

implementation of activities planned under the joint United Nations and LGA (UNECA, UNODC, UNDP, UNICEF, LGA, OCHA) cross-border programme within the framework of the INSUS and financed by Sweden for a period of two years (SIDA Technical Cooperation). Concerning the latter project officially launched in February 2020 with the first meeting of the steering committee in Ouagadougou, ECA's contribution is currently focused on strengthening the macroeconomic capacities of the ALG in order to produce an annual ALG analytical report on the socio-economic situation and prospects in the Liptako-Gourma region, covering interventions in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

38. As part of the Decade of Action, the Office also provided substantial support to Niger and The Gambia to produce their respective 2020 Voluntary National Review Reports (VNRs).

## **2. Credibility and trust**

39. The support provided under the previous activities has helped to strengthen the credibility of the Office and the confidence of partners in it. SRO-WA also continued to work to gain credibility and confidence among member States, IGOs and RECs, and even the public, by ensuring that the recommendations made at the previous ICE are implemented and by improving the dissemination of knowledge products.
40. SRO-WA has been working to implement most of the recommendations addressed to it at the 2019 ICE (see Appendix), with a particular focus on: (a) limiting the use of paper in the production and dissemination of working and information documents for ICE meetings; (b) better aligning the activity report with the ECA's strategic thrusts; (c) supporting member States on demand in strengthening vital statistics; (d) supporting countries in the resetting of GDP to make comparisons between countries more relevant; and (e) generating knowledge that will help support States in the formulation of fiscal policies that are sensitive to the capture of the demographic dividend.
41. In the area of communication, in order to strengthen its credibility and confidence, the Office continued to rely on its network of economic journalists for West Africa established on 27 September 2017 in Dakar, Senegal, as a vector of expected change and a carrier of key messages from the ECA through the print, audio-visual and online media. Members of this network have been regularly solicited for media coverage of major ECA meetings (Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development -CoM 2019, ICE 2019 for West Africa, sensitization workshops and validation of national strategies on the AfCFTA ...).
42. Efforts have been made to publish the Office's knowledge products in English and French. Thus, the following documents were produced in those two ECA working languages during the period under review: (i) the socio-economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic in West Africa, ii) the revised version of the STEPS profile of Liberia; (ii) the Sahelian vision, "Sahel 2043: Towards a Resilient, Inclusive and Prosperous Sahelian Region"; (iii) a brochure on the Centre of Excellence on Demographic Dynamics for Development and iv) "Demographic dynamics, structural transformation and sustainable development in West Africa".
43. As a further indication of its credibility, SRO-WA has contributed to the formulation of common

positions by member States on important issues through various forms of technical support and collaboration. They include support to the 15 Ministers of Finance for their participation in virtual conferences organized by the ECA to build consensus among African Ministers of Finance on their urgent collective responses to covid-19 and to collaborate in a transparent manner with the World Bank, OIF and regional financial institutions. For example, clarification was provided to member States on the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and its implications for private sector debt. Currently, 10 out of 15 ECOWAS countries have been approved to benefit from the DSSI. This allows 67% of ECOWAS countries to access new financial credit opportunities in response to the COVID-19, while providing them with the flexibility to reorient their national development plans to build back better their respective economies.

44. It is also in close collaboration with the UN System Country Coordinating Offices that SRO-WA provided technical support to eight ECOWAS countries in the formulation and finalization of their Common Country Assessments or Analyses, Recovery, Resilience and/or Socio-Economic Response Plans to COVID-19 pandemic, namely: Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Togo.
45. Also, in agreement with ECOWAS and in partnership with the WFP, the office conducted a study in September 2020 on the sub-regional macroeconomic impact analysis of COVID-19. The results and conclusions of the latter study are in fact the combined effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the living conditions of more than four thousand (4,000) households that were interviewed through a large online survey operation. As for the collaboration with the Macroeconomics and Governance Division (MGD), as well as the African Centre for Statistics (ACS), it has enabled the development of a good governance and accountability strategy allowing a real tracing of COVID-19 funds for Guinea.
46. The Office also supported ECOWAS in facilitating national consultations on the 2020 Vision with a view to building consensus among the various stakeholders on their aspirations in order to best inform the formulation of ECOWAS 2050 Vision. Thus, in addition to the finalization of the independent evaluation of ECOWAS 2020 Vision, three other progress reports were produced to better inform the on-going development of the ECOWAS 2050 Vision: i). The regional retrospective analysis report, ii). The report on the aspirations of ECOWAS populations and, iii). The structural analysis report of the ECOWAS region.

### **3. Accountability and Learning**

47. By providing quality assurance for its programme and on-going training for its staff, IIS-OA is strengthening its accountability mechanisms and deepening the learning culture within the organization.
48. As part of the programme's quality assurance, reporting on the results achieved by the Office as well as the internal monitoring-evaluation of the programme's activities were carried out efficiently through "SharePoint", and the new platform that federates ECA's activities, which in particular proceeded with the digitization of annual work plans. In addition, the ambassadors of member States based in Addis Ababa were able to regularly monitor the activities carried out by the Office through the quarterly briefing note prepared for their attention and intended to report on the highlights of ECA's interventions across the African continent. Finally, the participants in

each meeting organized by the Bureau between May 2019 and October 2020 had the opportunity to express their views on the proceedings of those meetings, their aspirations and their opinions on the quality of services rendered to them.

49. It should be noted that in its desire to improve its management mode, the Office organized a retreat of its Administration and Finance section on December 13, 2019 in Niamey around the theme: "The Competencies of the section: Identification and Strengthening". The choice of this theme is the result of recommendations on the development of a grid of staff competencies at the section level and the formulation of a training plan for the section for the year 2019, which had been made at a similar retreat organized in 2018.
50. The participation of its staff in continuing training sessions has served the Office to strengthen its accountability mechanisms, but also to further entrench the learning culture within the Office. In particular, one staff member benefited from a training session from July 13 to 17, 2020 in Johannesburg, South Africa, on the ceremonial aspect of protocol procedures, the rules of courtesy in society and respect for precedence. Another staff has followed an advanced training from 20 to 24 January 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: (i) to identify the key elements of the roles of Office Administrator, Executive Assistant and/or Assistant; (ii) to practice administrative writing techniques; (iii) to manage time efficiently and (iv) to have a better relationship with peers and supervisors.
51. Similarly, thanks to the partnership established with the *Consortium Régional pour la Recherche en Economie Générationnelle* (CREG), the professional staff of the SRO-WA received virtual training on the NTA methodology during the periods of 5-7 August and 17-18 August 2020. The NTA training sessions were entirely facilitated by the CREG. The purpose of the Office is to strengthen the capacities of its experts to better take into account the population's issues in the support of Member States in the formulation of development policies.
52. It is also in the same perspective that 22 national experts from Liberia were identified and benefited from an online NTA training, which focused on the generational economy and the fundamentals of changing the social and economic structure of Liberia. The training took place from 06 to 08 October 2020 and equipped the Liberian national experts on how to generate data and knowledge to better harness the demographic dividend of the country.

#### **4. Operational efficiency**

53. The operational effectiveness of SRO-WA, both in areas related to Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD), monitoring of DDD implementation and sub-regional initiatives has been strengthened through the implementation of certain activities during the period under review.
54. In the area of DDD, the Office worked to strengthen its operational efficiency through : (i) the assessment of the DDD data ecosystem in West Africa, which was the subject of a policy dialogue in May 2019 that led to recommendations for improving the ecosystem; (ii) the creation of a network of DDD think tanks including the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) network, universities, the Millennium Institute and the *National Population Councils and Observatory*; (iii) the co-organization of the First African Combined National Transfer Account Conference in October

2019; and (iii) the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with ECOWAS, UEMOA and AFRISTAT, with collaboration envisaged in the area of DDDs.

55. With respect to SDG monitoring, from August 27-29, 2019, the Office participated in a practical workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia focusing on the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT), which is a toolkit whose ownership is expected to strengthen the Office's capacity to carry out combined monitoring of country progress towards Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. In addition, during a workshop organized in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire by ECA in collaboration with the Millennium Institute (MI) from August 5-9, 2019, SRO-WA professional staff were introduced to the prospective analysis tool called the "Aggregate Dynamic System Model for the Sahel Region (aSDMS)" and acquired skills for monitoring SDOs by aligning targets and objectives with the strategic framework of SAHEL 2043.
56. With regard to sub-regional initiatives, the Office has initiated or taken an active part in the implementation of activities that have helped to consolidate its capacity to support member States and RECs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of trade policies. It is in this regard that the Office participated from 4 to 5 July 2019 in Lagos, Nigeria, in a workshop organized by ECA and UNCTAD on "Measuring the Contribution of Financial Services to Regional Value Chains" which enabled to strengthen the capacities of its staff on existing tools and their role in measuring financial services value chains. From 2-3 September 2019, the Office participated in an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the ACBI Index, which is a tool designed to measure and monitor the experience of enterprises in implementing the AfCFTA at the national level. The SRO-WA also participated in two training of trainers workshops organized in Niamey by the International Trade Centre (ITC), respectively from 02 to 05 December 2019 and from 10 to 14 February 2020. These meetings provided in-depth knowledge on Non-Tariff Trade Measures.
57. The operational effectiveness of SRO-WA was further demonstrated by the continued partnership with the Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey/FSEG of Niamey and the strategic engagement initiated with the Resident Coordinators of the United Nations System in the following countries: Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Senegal, Liberia, Niger and Togo.
58. Optimal use of the resources mobilized during the year also contributed to the operational efficiency of SRO-AO. Indeed, the rate of consumption of regular resources was around 99% at the end of 2019, almost in line with the execution of programmed activities (100%). Similarly, the utilization rate of extra-budgetary resources, which can be mobilised during the year and which are managed in accordance with the requirements of partners and/or donors, is estimated at 99.65%.

## **5. Main risks**

59. In implementing its work programme, the Office continues to be confronted with the socio-economic, institutional and international security environment of the subregion and at international level. Socio-political instability, persistent conflicts, particularly in the Sahel region, insecurity and extreme violence fuelled by the new geopolitical dynamics in the Sahel are indeed among the main factors that could jeopardize the full achievement of the effects of changes

expected from ECA interventions in the sub-region as well the on-going efforts for the structural transformation of the economies of the sub region.

60. The weakness of national statistical systems and the insufficient capacity of Member States to collect reliable statistical data also constitute obstacles to the proper execution of analytical and research work, particularly the production of publications planned under the new Centre on Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD).

## Conclusion and prospects in 2020 /2021

61. The 22 outputs expected in the 2019 budget programme plan were achieved at the end of the year, representing 100% physical completion rate of the programmed activities. Regarding the year 2020, out of the 16 products (output results) expected under the programme plan budget 2020, 14 are already achieved for this year 2020, an annual rate of achievement of 88%. It emerges from the period under review that BSR-AO has succeeded in: (a) gain policy influence to support West Africa's transformation agenda; (b) gain credibility and trust among its key clients and partners; (c) consolidate its accountability mechanisms and further entrench the learning culture within the organization; and (d) strengthen its operational effectiveness to better support timely delivery of its knowledge generation and capacity building services.
62. The activities of the Office will continue to focus in the short term on consolidating the achievements of the specialized centre on Demographic Dynamics for Development, in particular the evaluation of the DDD ecosystem by countries, strengthening the capacities of Member States in population dynamics and public policies in partnership with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and CREG.
63. On the other hand, support for the development of national strategies will continue in order to enable member States of the sub-region to take full advantage of the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), given that the effective implementation of the agreement will start in January 2021, the monitoring-evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 agendas, as well as assistance to countries in accelerating their progress towards the structural transformation of their economies.
64. The following publications and activities are planned between now and the next ICE:
  - NTA Profile of Liberia and STEPS Profile of Côte d'Ivoire;
  - Population Dynamics for Sustainable Development in West Africa: Challenges and Policy Measures;
  - Online courses on population dynamics and public policy in partnership with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP);
  - ECOWAS 2050 Vision and related strategic plans, and monitoring and evaluation tools;
  - Dissemination of The Gambia's post-HLPF 2020 VNR, sensitization and community communication;
  - Socio-economic profile of Liptako-Gourma;
  - AfCFTA national strategies of Burkina Faso, Benin and Guinea Bissau.
65. The following measures already taken or envisaged by the Office to improve the implementation

of its activities remain relevant: (a) mobilizing both financial and human resources to respond effectively to the continuing training needs of managers in statistical data collection and analysis methods; (b) developing partnerships, identify structures, institutions and research centres working in the new area of interest of SRO-WA in order to exploit opportunities to work in synergy; (c) actively participating in the evaluation of public policies and facilitate the availability of reliable, regular and gender-disaggregated data and statistics; (d) put in place a rigorous resource mobilization strategy; (e) strengthening collaboration with headquarters divisions and have a matrix of joint interventions in support of countries.

## Appendix

### Implementation of ICE 2019 recommendations by ECA

Following each ICE meeting, the final communiqué makes recommendations to the various stakeholders, namely ECA, member States and RECs. The table below presents, by topic, the 11 recommendations made to ECA by country delegates and experts at the 22nd ICE held in Robertsfield, Liberia from 8 to 10 May 2019, as well as the actions taken or planned for their implementation.

Recommendations	Actions taken by the ECA
<b><i>Report on the implementation of SRO-WA's 2018 work programme and outlook for 2019</i></b>	
Limit the use of paper in the production and distribution of working and information documents for ICE meetings.	Taken into account in the preparation of the 23rd ICE which is being held as a virtual meeting due to the context of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). A reminder of the action taken has been introduced in the invitation letters as well as in the information note.
Better align the activity report with the ECA's strategic axes	This report presents the activities implemented in strict compliance with the broad outlines of the strategic frameworks of the work programmes for the periods 2018-2019, 2020 and 2021.
Support Member States, upon request, in strengthening vital statistics.	The Office participated from September 2 to 6, 2019 in the expert meeting that contributed to the capacity building of country delegates to improve the framework of the CRVS system for the benefit of Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Liberia. From 9 to 13 March 2020, SRO-WA and the African Centre for Statistics successfully deployed the United Nations Legal Identity Initiative in Niger. This resulted in an action plan agreed upon by the government and partners to integrate legal identification into the Civil Registry and Vital Statistics System (CRVS).
Better take into account the issues of poverty and disability of people in the analysis and research work conducted by the Office, in the spirit of the UN Agenda 2030 to leave no one behind.	As part of the Decade of Action, the Office provided technical assistance to Niger and The Gambia in the production of their 2020 VNR reports. Support was also provided for the reprioritization of the Gambia's SDG roadmap in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Liberia is also committed to undertake its 2020 VNR.
<b><i>Report on the implementation of sustainable development objectives and Agenda 2063</i></b>	
Support countries in GDP rebasing to make comparisons between countries more relevant.	In October 2019, the Office in partnership with ACS provided technical support to the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) in the context of the rebasing of Niger's GDP, thus enabling comparisons of economic growth between countries.
Support member states in the appropriation of Agenda 2063 in collaboration with the African Union Commission.	It is also in collaboration with the African Union Commission and ECA divisions, namely the Macroeconomic and Governance Division (MGD) and the Publications, Conferences and Knowledge Management Division (PCKMD), that SRO-WA envisages genuine ownership of AU Agenda 2030 and Agenda

	2063. In support of Benin, as a Francophone pilot country for an ownership of the IPRT/ECA toolkit, a capacity building workshop is scheduled to take place in November 2020.
<b>Round Table: "Population Dynamics for Sustainable Development in West Africa: Challenges and Policy Measures".</b>	
Within the framework of the activities of the DDD Centre, generate knowledge that will support the States in the formulation of fiscal policies sensitive to the capture of the demographic dividend.	The Office has initiated a project in this direction and activities began with Mali during a workshop organized in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence on Generational Economics (CREG). The Office then worked with Mali during the first quarter of 2020 to produce a public budgeting framework sensitive to the demographic dividend, which was approved by the country to inform its deliberations on the 2021 national budget.
<b>Report on ECA's Continental Initiatives</b>	
Develop in collaboration with sub-regional partners such as UEMOA and ECOWAS, under the coordination of IDEP, a medium-term customized vocational training programme based on an assessment of the sub-region's priority training needs.	In particular, the Office is developing online courses on National Transfer Account (NTA) methodology. This should help increase the number of national officials trained in population dynamics and working to influence public policy formulation processes.
Plan and facilitate a roundtable of development partners for the mobilization of adequate financial resources for the implementation of the regional vocational training plan.	SRO-WA is working with IDEP to plan and facilitate a roundtable of development partners to mobilize adequate financial resources for the implementation of the regional vocational training plan.
<b>Liberia STEPS Profile Launched</b>	
Make reference to the main determinants of high fertility in the analysis of social conditions.	The printable version of Liberia's STEPS Profile, 2020 edition, refers to the major determinants of high fertility in its analysis of social conditions.
Take into account the context of African countries where informal employment dominates when assessing the labour market situation.	The final STEPS Liberia publication examines the context of African countries where informal employment dominates, particularly in its assessment of the labour market situation.