



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
10 May 2022

Original: English

---

**2022 session**

23 July 2021–22 July 2022

Agenda item 15

**Regional cooperation**

## Summary of the work of the Economic Commission for Africa, 2021–2022

### *Summary*

In the period from April 2021 to March 2022, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continued to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the Sustainable Development Goals) and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, as the overarching frameworks for delivering ideas into actions for an empowered and transformed Africa. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to impose serious challenges for the realization of the two agendas and even set back some of the modest gains made. During the reporting period, the focus of ECA was essentially on building forward better from the pandemic through sound economic recovery and inclusive growth that includes young people and women and other marginalized segments of society, as well as social safety nets for most of the people. In that regard, some of the work of ECA centred on, inter alia, ensuring financial liquidity to power recovery; the procurement, distribution and manufacture of vaccines against COVID-19; digitization and technological adaptation, including the use of artificial intelligence, to support trade and small-scale enterprises; the operation of the African Continental Free Trade Area in creating an expanded regional market and greater investment; strengthening data and statistical capacity in Africa, including on e-census; and tackling the challenges of climate change and industrialization through value addition. The Commission has leveraged its work in collaboration with the United Nations development system through the African Regional Collaborative Platform and the re-invigorated resident coordinator system. It further built value-adding partnerships with regional-, subregional- and national-level institutions. The present report summarizes key milestones from the period under review.



## I. Introduction

1. In the face of constraints and limitations imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the many other challenges facing Africa, in 2021 the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continued to achieve significant milestones in helping member States to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. ECA continues to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered, inclusive and transformed Africa in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union.

2. The Commission, guided by its strategic directions on knowledge-building, formulation of policy options and innovative finance models, supporting regional and transboundary issues, and advancing the position of Africa at the global level, delivered its programme of work around its convening, think tank and operational functions. Thus, ECA played a key role in providing dedicated regional platforms, undertaking cutting-edge policy research and policy advice and responsive capacity support at the country level. ECA support was also aimed at developing the capacity of Governments to formulate and implement policies for sustainable development.

3. The Commission worked in collaboration with the resident coordinator system and through the Regional Collaborative Platform towards linking its policy recommendations with the work of United Nations country teams to ensure more coordinated responses and an impactful collective contribution to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Furthermore, ECA continued to build on its existing strategic partnership with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other regional and subregional organizations, as well as central banks, universities, think tanks, other research institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

4. The present report outlines the key contributions of ECA in supporting its member States in taking accelerated action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within the context of the decade of action. Some of notable accomplishments in 2021 and 2022 highlighted in the report relate to the following:

- (a) Supporting resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (b) Strengthening policy formulation and implementation through the use of macroeconomic models;
- (c) Supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area;
- (d) Supporting member States in assessing the cost of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5;
- (e) Building forward better for sustainable development, focusing on green recovery and the mainstreaming of climate change mitigation;
- (f) Fostering the development of a battery, electric vehicle and renewable energy value chain and market in Africa;
- (g) Strengthening the production, dissemination and use of credible data and statistics.

## **II. Advancing implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region**

### **A. Progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**

5. Africa has made progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets by 2030. Significant progress is seen in key development areas, such as maternal and child deaths, and incidence rates of communicable diseases such as HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. Progress has also been observed in primary school enrolment and youth literacy. Positive trends are seen in women's representation, which is key to accelerating progress on gender equality and empowerment. In addition, African Governments have made significant efforts to incorporate the Goals into national strategies and development plans. They have identified government units to coordinate their implementation and prioritized specific targets and indicators.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social ramifications have reversed decades of development gains in Africa. The pandemic has reduced economic growth and, in some cases, caused negative economic growth. Lives and livelihoods have been devastated and inequalities exacerbated. In 2020, COVID-19 pushed between 26 and 40 million additional people in Africa (excluding Northern Africa) into extreme poverty. COVID-19 poses a major threat to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Goals relating to peace, security and governance are unlikely to be achieved. Progress on those Goals related to climate and environmental concerns is happening, albeit very slowly. The debt management situation of the region is not sustainable, and most members States have yet to take full responsibility for financing their development goals. An analysis of the progress made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by ECA and its partners concluded that most African countries, especially those to the south of the Sahara, are not on track to achieve the Goals by 2030.

7. It is crucial that African countries be supported in accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Among other things, countries need support in gaining access to finance and debt relief measures, as well as support in expanding businesses and capitalizing on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. They need access to COVID-19 vaccines. Climate action has the potential to create millions of new green jobs and livelihoods. Access to clean renewable energy and Internet connectivity is of crucial importance. Consequently, ECA has been working to support African countries to recover better from the pandemic and accelerate the implementation and achievement of the Goals. The sections below summarize the notable contribution that ECA has made to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

### **B. Supporting resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

8. On financing the continent's recovery, ECA advocacy efforts on the need for additional liquidity for countries resulted in the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the historic release of the special drawing rights that cumulatively provided African countries with nearly \$40 billion in additional liquidity.

9. Following the worsening debt situation, ECA worked with member States to launch the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility in 2021, with the goal of saving African Governments \$11 billion in borrowing costs in the following five years, while fostering greener investment and sustainable development.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the impact of global supply breakdowns in the pharmaceutical industry, inadequate policy attention to supply-side

management within countries, insufficient cold chain management and poor procurement procedures in the continent's fiscal space for equitable health expenditures. In response, ECA stepped up its activities on pioneering the African Continental Free Trade Area-anchored pharmaceutical initiative, the principles of which underpinned the establishment of the African Medical Supplies Platform in 10 pilot countries (Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles and the Sudan).

11. Following the availability of vaccines, and in recognition of its critical role in kick-starting recovery, ECA, as a member of the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust, led continental advocacy efforts and provided technical leadership for the negotiation and acquisition of 35 per cent of the vaccines needed for Africa, the equivalent of approximately 470 million doses, to ensure vaccine availability with a view to reaching herd immunity on the continent. The efforts of member States were supported by a groundbreaking partnership with the World Bank to ensure that countries had access to and finances for the vaccines they needed.

### **C. Strengthened policy formulation and implementation through enhanced macroeconomic models, public finance and governance mechanisms**

12. In response to the increase in poverty and vulnerability caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, ECA reoriented its work to generate new data on the economically vulnerable portions of the population and provided support to African countries in improving their economic recovery and resilience. This context led to the production of the *Economic Report on Africa 2021* under the theme "Addressing poverty and vulnerability in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic". A key conclusion of the report is that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role of risk management in poverty reduction in Africa. Although it has caused severe disruption in people's lives, the pandemic is only one of the numerous risks faced by poor households. The report contains policy recommendations to encourage policymakers not only to reduce immediate poverty (ex post), but also to reduce vulnerability to poverty (ex ante); and not just to expand social assistance, but to build assets and invest in strengthening social infrastructure to promote growth and economic recovery in Africa.

13. The integrated planning and reporting toolkit was developed in response to a request made during the 2016 Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to ECA and the African Union Commission to create tools and an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework to align the 2030 Agenda with Agenda 2063 for ease of adaptation and reporting. Since its creation, the toolkit has been improved and tested. In 2021, four countries – Burkina Faso, Egypt, the Gambia and Ghana – graduated from deployment to adoption of the toolkit, mainstreaming it into their national development plans. A financing module has been added to the initial four modules (agendas, national development plan, continental view and reporting) in the toolkit, and efforts are under way to have an integrated approach to macro-level modelling, planning and financing to maximize the impact and optimize resource use and the status of toolkit model development in member States, as well as intradivisional collaboration on countries undertaking macro-level modelling.

## **D. Supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area**

14. The implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, together with innovative financing and the development of the private sector and infrastructure, is expected to contribute to the acceleration of socioeconomic recovery in the post-pandemic period; to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa through the identification of new opportunities and the design of operational frameworks and mechanisms aimed at translating them into job creation; and to increased investment and improved industrialization, ultimately leading to strengthened regional cooperation and integration.

15. Notwithstanding COVID-19 restrictions, ECA pursued its efforts to accelerate the ratification by African countries of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. A total of 42 member States have now ratified the Agreement, with the United Republic of Tanzania being the most recent country to do so, on 9 September 2021, following sustained awareness-raising and advocacy activities undertaken since 2019.

16. ECA has been actively assisting member States in developing their national strategies for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and progress has been made on the diversification of productive capacities and production patterns, thereby contributing to accelerated industrialization. In 2021, seven countries (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia and Niger) formulated national strategies for implementation of the Area with technical support provided by ECA. Two of those national strategies have been validated. In addition, five countries developed the African Continental Free Trade Area country business index to monitor the impact of the Area on the private sector.

17. Given the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the economy, it has become crucial to develop intra-African regional value chains and to unlock the continent's business potential. In that context, ECA has continuously provided support to member States in developing, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes on regional value chains and on issues relating to the second phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which covers investment, competition policy and intellectual property rights.

18. A new comprehensive and dynamic framework to inform the formulation of subregional and national industrialization and economic diversification masterplans has taken root in Central Africa, with the aim of turning the zone into a central hub for green growth and net-zero industrialization in multiple sectors, such as agro-industry; batteries, electric vehicles and renewable energy; nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium fertilizers; petrochemicals; iron and steel; and livestock and leather. Initiated by ECA on the basis of existing plans by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Economic Community of Central African States the masterplans framework pinpoints huge opportunities for developing several high-value products on the strength of Central Africa's endowments, including renewable energy, and anchored on the development of natural and human capital, the digital economy and regional economic zones and clusters. The framework was reviewed and validated in June 2021 by representatives of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community Commission, the coordinator of the technical secretariat of the steering committee for the rationalization of the regional economic communities of Central Africa, and officials and experts from Central African countries.

## **E. Supporting private sector and infrastructure development, and innovative financing for a prosperous Africa**

19. ECA recorded significant achievements in the infrastructure sector in 2021, related to its work on the link between the African Continental Free Trade Area and transport and the liberalization of air transport in Africa. Regarding the African Continental Free Trade Area, ECA carried out research on its implications for the demand for transport infrastructure and services. The method used for the study was to quantify the investment opportunities provided by the Area for the transport sector on the continent, including more than \$400 billion for the acquisition of transport equipment (trucks, railway wagons, maritime vessels and aircraft). The findings from the study formed the basis of the fifth Africa Business Forum, which was held on 7 February 2022 under the theme “Investing in multimodal transport infrastructure to optimize the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area: a focus on air transport and tourism”. The Heads of State of Botswana and Sierra Leone used the findings from the study to showcase investment opportunities in their countries at the Forum.

20. With regard to air transport, ECA developed key performance indicators to assess the implementation by member States of the Yamoussoukro Decision on air transport liberalization and the Single African Air Transport Market. The key performance indicators were used to develop a performance monitoring dashboard. ECA provided the key performance indicators and dashboard to the African Civil Aviation Commission, which is the executing agency for the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market. At present, ECA is providing support to the African Civil Aviation Commission to undertake gap assessments in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market in selected African countries (such as Cabo Verde and Cameroon) using the key performance indicators and dashboard.

21. Working in partnership with the International Chamber of Commerce, ECA launched the Centre of Entrepreneurship in Africa on 16 September 2021. The first hubs were announced in Ghana, Kenya, Morocco and Nigeria to inspire innovation and to improve the business environment for small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa. In addition, ECA organized the West African Business Forum, which was held in Lagos, Nigeria, from 21 to 23 September 2021. The Forum provided a platform for sharing business opportunities among women and young people, in particular, and identifying business champions who would promote the interests of women and youth entrepreneurship in West Africa.

## **F. Building forward better for sustainable development, focusing on green recovery and the mainstreaming of climate change mitigation**

22. ECA, together with the Government of Rwanda and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system, convened the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Kigali, in a hybrid format featuring both in-person and online participation, from 3 to 5 March 2022. The Forum was attended by more than 1,800 participants, comprising ministers and high-level representatives of the Governments of 54 ECA member States, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, other international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders. Given the magnitude of post-pandemic financial needs in areas such as infrastructure and health, and as the pandemic has reversed hard-earned gains over the past two decades, Governments need to work in partnership with the private

sector and international players such as the United Nations and multilateral banks to meet these urgent challenges. The event ended with adoption of Kigali Declaration.

23. ECA organized the ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa as a milestone for the African Continent on the road to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The event took place in Cabo Verde from 13 to 17 September 2021 under the theme “Towards a just transition that delivers jobs, prosperity and climate resilience in Africa: leveraging the green and blue economy”. The Conference concluded with an outcome statement that summarized Africa’s positions on the main issues under negotiation and put forward the continent’s expectations of what a successful Conference should deliver.

24. The research efforts of ECA in order to build intellectual leadership in climate science in Africa led to a number of initiatives. Covering themes in foundational climate science, climate impacts and climate policy, 21 research outputs were produced by engaging an equal number of post-doctoral researchers from Benin, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. ECA also supported Burkina Faso and Cameroon with the process of revising their nationally determined contributions and integration of climate resilience in national development plans and programmes, respectively. Furthermore, four initiatives are currently under way to harness green and blue economies, assisting countries to build forward better from COVID-19.

25. Another international meeting in which ECA participated was the United Nations Food Systems Summit, convened by the Secretary-General on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly and described as the most important United Nations event of the year. The Summit was aimed at advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through game-changing solutions that tackle food insecurity and build resilience, which is essential in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was action-oriented, with 500 dialogues on issues beyond agriculture, including climate change, health and peace and security. One of the key outcomes was the African Common Position, presented by the Chair of the African Union at the Summit. In addition, the five regional commissions came up with a common position on tackling food transformation across the globe.

## **G. Strengthening the capacity of member States to monitor progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5**

26. ECA has continued to work with the African Development Bank over the years to produce the “Africa Gender Index Report” and to organize a virtual global dissemination event, held in December 2020. The event was attended by more than 150 participants from Governments, development institutions, the private sector and civil society, who discussed how to accelerate progress for women and girls in Africa. Representatives of member States requested support from ECA and the African Development Bank in analysing the gender gaps detected, identifying the bottlenecks that caused the gaps and prioritizing policy interventions to close them. To help disseminate the findings of the report, ECA and the African Development Bank worked with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to hold high-level policy dialogues in 2021 that charted action-oriented road maps to tackle gender-based discrimination in East, Southern and West Africa.

27. A project is being implemented to support African countries in assessing the cost of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 and to strengthen the capacity of African policymakers to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment

objectives into national planning processes and budgets. The main deliverables are: a situation analysis of costing interventions to promote gender equality; case studies documenting how African countries have costed gender-equality interventions; a review and assessment of existing methodologies and approaches for costing gender-equality interventions; a conceptual framework for costing gender-equality interventions in African countries; and an estimate of the cost of interventions to achieve gender equality in the education sector in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in selected African countries. In addition, ECA contributed to strengthening knowledge and capacity of five countries (Burundi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) to determine the costing needs of the member States and provide critical pointers for financing gender equality.

### **III. Strengthening the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

#### **A. Data and statistics**

28. Over the past four decades, population and housing censuses and other surveys have been the main sources of data for policy formulation, monitoring, evaluation and decision-making in Africa for national and regional development programmes. In this context, and within its mandate to promote the continent's sustainable development, ECA has been committed to assisting member States in building their statistical capacities and in working with development partners to strengthen national statistical systems by enhancing national strategies for the development of statistics. Its latest contribution was through the development of the implementation guidelines for the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework in Africa.

29. In 2021, ECA supported Ghana and Sierra Leone in conducting digital censuses as a continuation of the 2020 round of censuses in Africa. It resulted in the availability of timely, high-quality data by improving the monitoring of content and coverage errors. The technical assistance provided included digital cartographic work to identify bounded structures and delineate enumeration areas, census design and planning work to migrate data from paper to a digital system, the development and use of an operational dashboard for quality control and the development and use of a census tracking system. In addition, training was provided to the national statistics office staff in digital cartography and the use of digital tracking systems and tools. The work of ECA on digital censuses has increased the demand for support in this area. Other countries being supported by ECA on e-census issues include Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia and Togo.

30. ECA played a major role in developing the Africa UN Data for Development Platform through the opportunity- and issues-based coalition on data and statistics. It was also among the 17 regional entities of the United Nations system under the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa that took part in its launch on 13 September 2021. The common data platform for the United Nations system on Africa caters to the growing demand for data on the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. The platform serves as a one-stop-shop repository capturing high-quality data and evidence on the Sustainable Development Goals from all the African countries.

31. As part of a programme on migration statistics and skills recognition in Africa, ECA conducted a study on the recognition of African migrants' skills in Morocco. With Morocco as the pilot country, the resulting analysis report on migration statistics is an initiative taken as part of the efforts of ECA to increase the capacity of African countries to design evidence-based migration policies and programmes that are

consistent with international and African protocols and frameworks. The project is aimed at strengthening African national policies and programmes on migration and is being carried out in six African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe) by ECA, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration.

## **B. Finance**

32. In 2021, the African Economic Conference was held in Sal, Cabo Verde, from 2 to 4 December, under the theme “Financing Africa’s post-COVID-19 development”. The conference was jointly organized by ECA, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. It provided a platform for valuable discussions, debate and useful insights, bringing together more than 200 participants consisting of representatives of Governments, academia, civil society and the private sector from Africa and the rest of the world, who shared their experiences and innovative ideas on economic and policy issues relating to specific development financing policies, strategies and practices for successful development transformation in Africa. Researchers at the conference presented their latest findings on the theme and identified three critical areas of attention: human capital, institutions and infrastructure. Participants proposed far-reaching policy options for tackling the continent’s development financing needs, including the need to assess the rules of international finance and the need to reform the continent’s financial system to better support development on the continent. In addition, participants proposed that the structural macroeconomic trends of African economies be reassessed to better reflect the impact that COVID-19 has had on the continent.

33. The low level of taxation and the challenge of illicit financial flows continue to define access to development financing in Africa. Accordingly, ECA developed a framework to support countries in strengthening their taxation policy and in launching a pilot project to track and measure illicit financial flows. In order to support countries’ pilot calculation of illicit financial flow estimates, ECA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific organized an interregional training workshop on the statistical measurement of tax and commercial illicit financial flows. The purpose of the workshop was to provide in-depth training on six selected statistical methodologies proposed in the methodological guidelines being refined by UNCTAD, to share case studies and experiences, and to discuss challenges experienced in the data review and use of identified methods.

## **C. Science, technology and innovation**

34. ECA made progress in building the capacities of member States to design and implement initiatives to harness frontier technologies and innovation through the finalization of a report on science, technology and innovation policy design and implementation, a survey of universities on entrepreneurship and advancing entrepreneurial universities in Ethiopia and Ghana, and the development of curricula for pharmaceutical chemistry and manufacturing, among other things.

35. Through the hybrid Connected African Girls Coding Camp initiative, carried out by ECA in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the International Telecommunication Union and host African Governments, coding camps were held for girls and young women between 12 and 25 years of age, both in person and online. The initiative has

now reached more than 15,000 girls in 52 countries. The coding camps provide girls and young women with the knowledge, tools and platforms they need to develop as entrepreneurs, innovators and technology leaders, while contributing to their communities. The girls are trained in the following areas: (a) technical skills in animation, gaming and web development, Turtlestitch, robotics and the Internet of things, fashion, design thinking, computational thinking, computer science, cybersecurity and 3D printing; and (b) soft skills in leadership, public speaking, gender issues, Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, women's empowerment and gender equality.

36. Through its advisory services, ECA supported seven countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and Zimbabwe) in developing their national digital transformation strategy based on the African digital transformation strategy, and in developing young people's innovations in information and communications technology. Consultative meetings were also organized with partners to assess, design and roll out a digital identification pilot in several African countries, including Botswana and Togo.

37. ECA provided technical assistance to 14 member States (Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to establish the African communications and information platform for health and economic action, which was developed to enhance the capability of African Governments to communicate and interact with their citizens in mitigating and managing the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **D. Capacity-building**

38. The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the economic development of member States by reducing gross domestic product and increasing interest rates. The situation contributed to debt distress, exacerbated by dampened trade, volatile commodity prices and macroeconomic uncertainty. To alleviate this socioeconomic condition, the subprogramme strengthened the capacity of 501 government officials and policymakers (including 122 women) on macroeconomy-related issues. This was achieved through eight courses, three webinars and a conference of the parties session (15 countries) focused on how to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and stimulate member States' economic growth. The training encompassed topics such as a macroeconomic framework for an inclusive green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication amid the new COVID-19 waves. In collaboration with the Open Society Initiative For West Africa, the subprogramme scaffolded member States' economic response in the production of five case studies on debt management and fiscal policies, with a focus on the macroeconomic state of play in the aftermath of the first outbreak of COVID-19.

39. In 2021, training programmes of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning resulted in 75 per cent of public officials attesting to have utilized, with concrete evidence, the knowledge, skills and tools they attained to positively influence socioeconomic policy in their respective countries. An alumnus chose the Institute to launch a book entitled: *The Demise, Alternatives, and Rebirth of Planning: The Gambian Experience* in the presence of high officials from the Gambia. Finally, a special initiative, the Young Economists' Networks, was launched involving 744 Master or Ph.D. students in 70 universities from 27 countries.

40. The subprogramme's work contributed to 441 experts having strengthened their capacities in public policy formulation through analytical research activities in partnership with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, and

the delivery of 40 online training programmes leading to building the capacity of 3,029 officials (including 946 women).

#### **IV. Spotlight on fostering the development of a battery, electric vehicle and renewable energy value chain and market in Africa**

41. As the world is increasingly transitioning towards green energy and rapid decarbonization as a measure against global climate disaster, there are significant opportunities for Africa. The global electric vehicle battery industry is growing at a fast pace and is projected to be worth \$8.8 trillion by 2025 and \$46 trillion by 2050. Africa is in a good position to profit from this global transition towards decarbonization, as it is endowed in natural resources and especially strategic minerals that are components of lithium-ion batteries, such as cobalt, copper, lithium and manganese. Thus, there is an opportunity to create a robust regional value chain for batteries, electric vehicles and renewable energy.

42. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has more than 25 million tons of cobalt reserves identified in its subsoil, which is two-thirds of the identified world reserves. Currently, the country supplies 70 per cent of the world's cobalt used in electric vehicle manufacturing but only captures not more than 3 per cent of the battery and electric vehicle mining value chain. It is important that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other African countries currently engaged in producing and selling raw materials move up the value chain at a speedy pace in order for them to benefit from the transition. For example, if the Democratic Republic of the Congo moved up the value chain, it could gain 25 times more revenue than it does currently. Apart from contributing to Africa's industrialization and climate change solutions, the better integration of African battery mineral producers into global value chains would not only contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and enlarge the share of wealth that is retained locally, but would also strengthen the competitiveness of local small and medium-sized enterprises and enable the creation of decent jobs for young people.

43. Towards that end, ECA and its partners, including Afreximbank, the Africa Finance Corporation, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Arabic Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the United Nations Global Compact, in collaboration with the Government of Democratic Republic of Congo, organized the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Africa Business Forum in November 2021, on fostering the development of a battery, electric vehicle and renewable energy value chain and market in Africa. The Forum brought together representatives from African Governments, as well as Africa's private sector, entrepreneurs, development partners, institutional investors, deal-makers, industrialists and the foreign private sector with a view to engaging in dialogue, identifying opportunities and facilitating investments to increase Africa's share of the battery, electric vehicles and renewable energy value chain.

44. Following the Forum, a battery council was established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a specialized financial framework was set up to enable Congolese citizens and enterprises to invest in the development of the battery precursors value chain. In addition, other African countries, such as Gabon, Morocco and Zambia, committed to get involved in the regional value chain for the production of battery precursors. Furthermore, investors led by Afreximbank have decided to mobilize \$1 billion to put in place a factory for battery precursors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This initiative showcases the continued efforts of ECA for

industrialization through value addition and a push towards inclusive growth, prosperity and climate resilience.

## **V. Leveraging partnerships for sustainable development**

### **A. Collaboration with the United Nations development system**

45. ECA continues to work with other United Nations agencies in facilitating the implementation of the regional reforms in Africa through the newly established Regional Collaborative Platform, in which the ECA Executive Secretary serves as the co-vice chair and ECA is part of the joint secretariat, together with the United Nations Development Programme and the Development Coordination Office. Eight opportunity- and issues-based coalitions and task forces on knowledge management, regional reporting and back offices have been established to drive the Platform's agenda. ECA serves as co-convenor in two such coalitions and three task forces. The first meeting of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa was held on 5 February 2021. At the second meeting, held on 28 February 2022, participants took stock of the progress made in the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa, discussed the work programme for 2022 and identified the four areas of focus for the Platform for 2022, namely, data, macroeconomic framework and debt, climate action and digitalization, and digital transformation and energy.

46. ECA continues to support the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams in two ways: (a) through the Regional Collaborative Platform, whereby resident coordinators request support through the joint secretariat of the Platform and the relevant opportunity- and issues-based coalitions are deployed to provide that support (countries such as Malawi, Eritrea and Ethiopia have requested and been provided with such support); and (b) through the ECA subregional offices, which serve as non-resident members of the country teams in their respective regions and contribute to the work of the country teams, including on the development of common country assessments, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and technical advisory services on macroeconomic and social policies and development planning.

### **B. Collaboration with regional, subregional and national institutions**

47. Innovative and value-adding partnerships with a wide range of national, regional and global stakeholders remain of vital importance for the implementation of the ECA programme of work. During the reporting period, ECA signed a number of framework agreements with a wide range of partners, including: (a) the Common Market West African Economic and Monetary Union, to monitor economic and monetary integration in the region and build the capacity of West African member States; (b) the International Chamber of Commerce, to establish the Centre of Entrepreneurship in Africa (see para. 21) to prepare and mobilize the next generation of entrepreneurs in Africa; (c) the Kofi Annan Foundation, to promote the economic and social development of member States by fostering intraregional integration, promote international cooperation for Africa's development and facilitate policy development and related capacity-building in the transport sector of Africa; (d) the Government of Italy, to cooperate towards the achievement of the goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063; (e) Eurostat, to help build the capacity in the areas of work of ECA in Africa to collect and produce statistics; and (f) the Partnership for African Social Governance Research, to collaborate on research and policy outreach.

48. In the area of trade and regional integration, ECA worked in partnership with the African Export-Import Bank on informal cross-border trade data collection, with the aim of collecting data in the Economic Community of West African States region and other pilot corridors and to using the African Continental Free Trade Area as an opening to ensure that the full potential of informal cross-border trade is harnessed under a single comprehensive African Union framework for informal cross-border trade data collection in Africa. ECA entered a partnership with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation to support the formulation and implementation of national strategies in selected African countries relating to the African Continental Free Trade Area. ECA also joined UNCTAD to develop and include green initiatives in the national implementation strategies relating to the African Continental Free Trade Area in 10 African countries. More broadly, the initiative aims to have strategic interventions in investment, competition policy, innovation, digitalization, trade facilitation, greening trade and climate change.

49. Furthermore, ECA signed a partnership agreement with the African Organization for Standardization on promoting the adoption of environmental standards to support globally competitive African value chains in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area by creating more awareness of the benefits of standardization in areas such as textiles, mining, cotton, leather and tourism.

50. In the area of capacity-building and knowledge generation, ECA collaborated with Universities South Africa by supporting African member States in transforming universities with the aim of driving innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development through higher education. ECA continued its partnership with the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy on building the resilience of infrastructure, communities and ecosystems in selected rural watersheds of the Nile subbasins, by providing hands-on training and contributing to the national climate-resilient green economy strategy and policy of reducing greenhouse gas emission. ECA collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia to implement the revision of nationally determined contributions within the programme on delivering climate-resilient development policies in Africa. ECA provided technical support to the Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa to respond directly to threats relating to food insecurity and several other emergencies caused by migratory locust outbreaks in Eastern Africa, and to protect, apply and assess the environmental effects of its green inventions.

51. ECA worked in partnership with the Gates Foundation to strengthen the capacity of ECA on international finance topics. This is particularly timely given the number of initiatives that are being considered by the international community to support post-pandemic recovery financing in low- and middle-income countries. ECA has emerged as an important voice for the continent and a visible counterpart in global efforts. It will ensure that there is a technical grounding and adequate advocacy for African voices on issues related to economic recovery.

52. ECA collaborated with the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa on designing and implementing a training programme on policies that promote the nexus between peace, security and development to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. A partnership was renewed with Vital Strategies and a new partnership was agreed with Bloomberg Philanthropies to support the accelerated programme on civil registration and improve birth and death data collection systems in Africa, respectively. Furthermore, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ECA seeks to provide support African countries in strengthening their capacities in basic agricultural statistics.

## VI. Conclusions

53. Africa has made good progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, however challenges still remain. The average score across all African member States was 53.82 in 2020, which was slightly higher than the average in 2019. An analysis performed by ECA and its partners of the five pillars of the Goals (people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships) shows that most African member States – especially those south of the Sahara – are not on track to meet the Goals and targets. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation, resulting in severe socioeconomic impacts on the lives of millions of people. However, on a positive note, African Governments have made significant efforts to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals into national strategies and development plans, to identify government units to coordinate their implementation and to prioritize specific targets and indicators. ECA is supporting African countries in recovering better from the pandemic and accelerating the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

54. The interventions of ECA as they relate to its think tank, convening and operational functions have been effective in strengthening member States' capacities in a wide range of development issues. Its interventions in the reporting period included cutting-edge research and related integrated policy and capacity support geared towards economic diversification, with a special focus on the design of innovative financial instruments to increase resource mobilization; the development of national and subregional strategies; support for the process to operationalize the African Continental Free Trade Area; and digital transformation. Evidence from evaluations performed in the period under review revealed that the work of ECA is relevant to member States needs and priorities and is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. ECA has a critical role to play in providing sets of innovative solutions, along with demand-driven and tailor-made policy and technical advice to member States, the African Union and regional economic communities, with a view to accelerating recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and fostering the emergence of more prosperous and inclusive societies.

---