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**Subregional Office for North Africa  
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**Subregional Office for West Africa  
Intergovernmental Committee of Senior  
Officials and Experts for West Africa**  
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**Statutory issues**

**Report on the activities of the Subregional Office for  
West Africa (November 2023–October 2024) and  
work programme for 2025**

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\* ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/39/1–ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/27/1.





## **I. Introduction**

1. In the present annual report of the Subregional Office for West Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a review is set out of the Subregional Office's chief achievements since the twenty-sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa, which was a joint session with the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa.

2. The Subregional Office's work programme was implemented against a backdrop of numerous challenges: the adverse socioeconomic effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, of global geopolitical tensions, in particular the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and of the climate crisis. The challenges have been compounded by the security crisis in the Sahel, and West Africa more broadly, accompanied by the deterioration of socioeconomic indicators. These factors are undermining the efforts of States to respond to the urgent need to harness the demographic dividend. They also make it less likely that inclusive, transformative, climate-friendly development will be achieved by 2030, through attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. It is against this backdrop of multifaceted crises, but also of opportunities, that the Subregional Office for West Africa has been implementing its work programme, in accordance with its mandate, and achieved several results for the benefit of members of ECA. In the present annual report, those results are highlighted, the challenges faced by stakeholders and the steps taken to address them are underlined, and the future plans of the Subregional Office are set out.

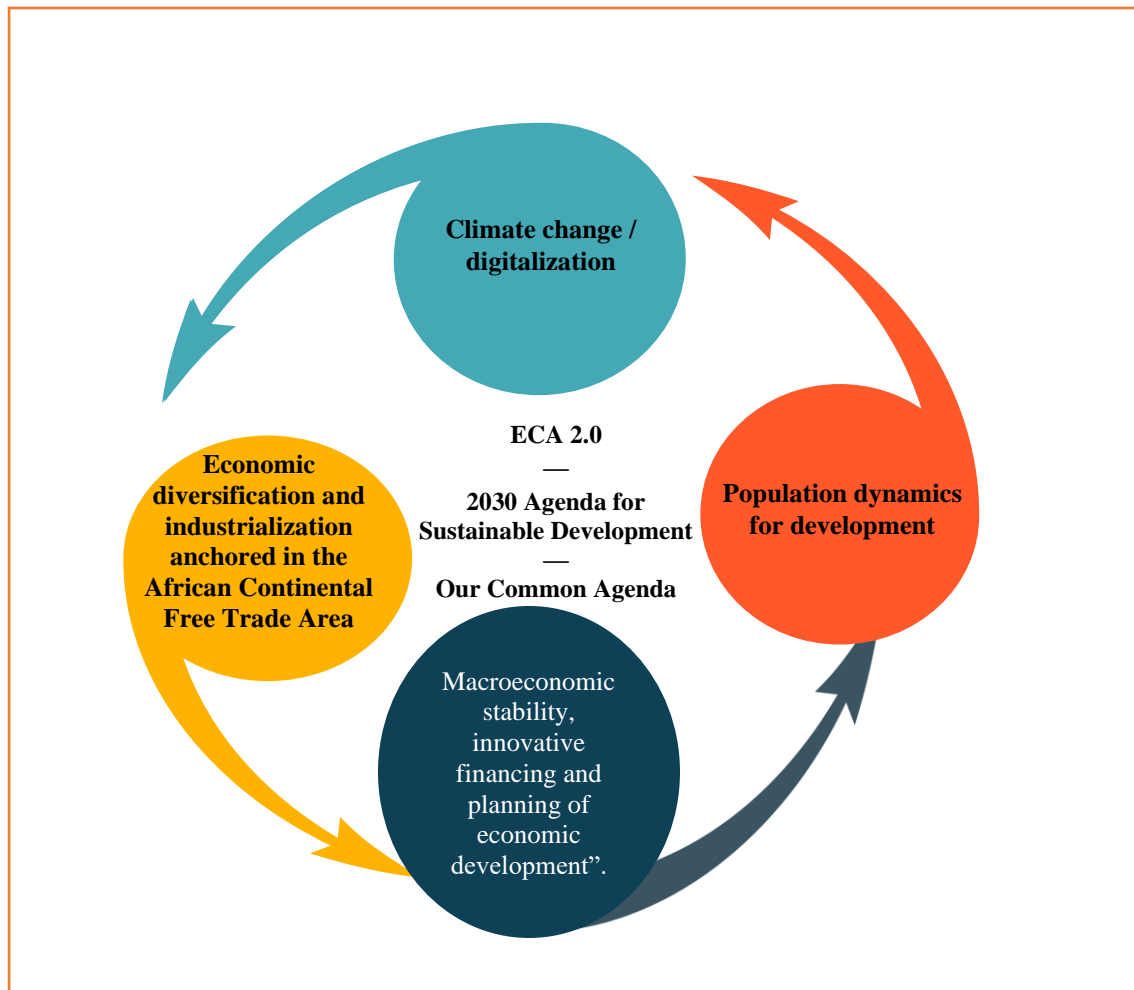
## **II. Policy areas of the Subregional Office for West Africa**

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

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

5. The Subregional Office also has four strategic focuses. As shown in the figure, the four focuses are all interlinked and all revolve around the central themes of the programme of reform of the Economic Commission for Africa known as "ECA 2.0", the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Our Common Agenda.

### The four strategic focuses of the Subregional Office for West Africa



### III. Selected landmark achievements of the Subregional Office

#### A. African Continental Free Trade Area

6. The landmark achievements of the Subregional Office in relation to the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area include six priority projects. One of the projects is under way in each of Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal.

7. A platform has been established to enable users to learn from best practices that are being employed in other subregions. The intention is to maximize the benefits of the Area and catalyse the mobilization of related resources.

8. A total of 15 strategies – 14 national and 1 subregional – resulting from partnerships between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area have been formulated and approved, 13 of them with technical and financial support from ECA. The States that have actively participated

and have benefitted from exchanges of experience and knowledge between different subregions, concerning best practices on such issues as the effective mobilization of resources to accelerate the actual implementation of strategies pertaining to the Area, include three in North Africa: Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. They also include seven West African States: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

### **B. West Africa Business Linkage Platform**

9. In all, 11 memorandums of understanding on cooperation and commercial agreements have been concluded, with three more under negotiation (on chia seeds, sesame, etc.).

10. As at 15 September 2024, 264 out of a total of 419 entrepreneurs and associations of entrepreneurs are members of the online environment West Africa Business Linkage Platform.<sup>1</sup>

### **C. Budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend**

11. The Subregional Office conducted four reviews of the overarching vision for budget planning documents, and of the drafting and revision of such documents, to make them responsive to the demographic dividend:

(a) Multi-year economic and fiscal programming document for 2025–2027 of the Niger (June 2024);

(b) Budget circular for 2025 of Burkina Faso (June 2024);

(c) Multi-year economic and fiscal programming document for 2024–2026 and public investment programme for 2024–2026 of Senegal (November 2023);

(d) Document on budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend for 2025–2026 of Togo (July 2024).

12. In that connection, 235 national experts, including 91 women (39 per cent of the total) were trained in 2024.

13. In addition, a policy dialogue on budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend was held for the members of the Transitional Legislative Assembly in Burkina Faso on 26 and 27 August 2024.

## **IV. Main successful contributions to the three core functions of the Economic Commission for Africa**

14. ECA has three core functions: the think tank function entails the production of studies, research reports and other knowledge products; the convening function involves the organization of conferences and platforms for discussion and advocacy; and the operational

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.wablp.com](http://www.wablp.com).

function consists of providing States with advice, support and other forms of technical assistance.

15. The implementation of the work programme of the Subregional Office between November 2023, when the twenty-sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa was held, and October 2024 entailed contributions to all three core functions in West Africa. Under the think tank function, 10 knowledge products were produced, with a further 4 still in production. Under the convening function, 9 high-level meetings were held at the request of States, with a further 6 having been scheduled. Lastly, under the operational function, 17 different types of multidimensional support were given to States, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations; such support is ongoing in a further 9 cases.

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

16. The results achieved in relation to this function include 14 research reports, studies and guidance notes, which helped:

(a) To consolidate the results associated with support for intergovernmental organizations and with turning recommendations into action;

(b) To launch a consultation between intergovernmental organizations, as part of the increased harmonization of measures to accelerate subregional integration and sustainable development against a backdrop of numerous challenges;

(c) To share best practices relating to the main achievements of intergovernmental organizations.

**1. Recommended joint partnerships for the period 2020–2025**

17. With a view to facilitating fundraising in the energy and water sectors, the Subregional Office informed the following international organizations and river basin authorities of funding opportunities and financing mechanisms to support initiatives:

(a) ECA;

(b) African Solidarity Fund;

(c) Gambia River Basin Development Organization;

(d) Organization for the Development of the Senegal River;

(e) Niger Basin Authority;

(f) Central Bank of West African States;

(g) West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU);

- (h) West African Development Bank;
- (i) ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development;
- (j) Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel;
- (k) African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development;
- (l) Mano River Union.

18. In order to address food insecurity, the Subregional Office disseminated the results of analysis of the effects of macroeconomic conditions on food security by:

- (a) ECA;
- (b) World Food Programme;
- (c) ECOWAS;
- (d) Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT);
- (e) African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development;
- (f) WAEMU.

19. The road map toward an ECOWAS single currency and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area are being implemented rapidly and efficiently. In addition to furthering progress towards the establishment of the single currency, the road map is intended to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement. The relevant knowledge of monetary, macroeconomic and commercial issues is being made available and accessible. The following entities are involved:

- (a) ECA;
- (b) West African Monetary Agency;
- (c) West African Monetary Institute;
- (d) Central Bank of West African States.

## **2. Incorporation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area into domestic law and its accelerated implementation**

20. In order for the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area to be implemented at the national and regional levels, it must be incorporated into domestic law. Consequently, starting in September 2024, the Subregional Office helped the following ECOWAS member States and the ECOWAS Commission with drafting, approving and implementing such strategies for the national and subregional levels: Benin, Burkina Faso,

Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

21. A joint project was conducted, involving the North and West African subregions, in which ECA, the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation were involved. The project was implemented in eight countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia.

22. In addition, the Subregional Office produced the following documents and took the following specific measures to support the implementation of national strategies on the Area:

(a) Technical validation, in July 2024, of the revised document outlining the national strategy of Liberia on the Area;

(b) Issuance, in March 2024, of the closure report of the joint project, involving the North and West African subregions, of ECA, the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation in support of the implementation of priority projects and activities derived from national strategies on the Area;

(c) Preparation of the document outlining the national strategy on the Area of Cabo Verde;

(d) Launch of a study on estimates of bilateral trade flows in services in Guinea, broken down by partner and by available sector, and the formulation of a strategy to promote and develop trade in targeted services;

(e) Preparation of a handbook on the Area for exporters in Guinea-Bissau, including an export promotion strategy;

(f) Preparation of a report on the top 10 products traded by women and young people, as well as related product guides on various markets in Nigeria.

### **3. Other studies and research reports to inform the decisions and action of members of ECA**

23. A review was conducted of the socioeconomic situation in the subregion, with a view to helping to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and responding effectively to the multifaceted crises that States face.

24. A study was conducted on trends in and the outlook for the Sahel, with a focus on the implications of the announced withdrawal of the members of the Alliance of Sahel States<sup>2</sup> – Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali – from ECOWAS. Guided by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, the Subregional Office jointly led the production of this study, as part of the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, as a means of reporting on the ongoing technical support of the United Nations for

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<sup>2</sup> The Alliance has been renamed the Confederation of Sahel States.



the States of the Sahel, in the context of the complex and volatile situation in the subregion.

25. A report was produced in 2024 on progress made with the Sustainable Development Goals in West Africa, with a focus on accelerating achievement of the Goals by 2030 and on transformative pathways toward greater progress.

26. A socioeconomic profile was produced in August 2024 at the request of the Government of Guinea. In the profile, an in-depth analysis of the progress made in implementing the Government's transitional development programme is set out, and appropriate strategies and policies to accelerate the effects of the programme are proposed.

27. A report was issued in 2024, in which a socioeconomic profile of West Africa was set out, along with the outlook for the subregion.

#### **4. Accelerated harnessing of the demographic dividend**

28. A guidance note was published on budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in Togo, in which the chief results of the related technical work were set out, along with their socioeconomic implications, with a view to informing the preparation of the 2025 budget.

29. A guidance note was issued on budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in Burkina Faso, in which the crucial results of the technical research are set out, with a view to guiding the preparation of the 2025 budget.

30. The Governments of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Togo were given specific technical support on implementing an approach to budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend. The approach was incorporated into the 2025 budget circular of Burkina Faso, the 2025–2027 multi-year economic and fiscal programming document of the Niger and the 2025–2026 gender-responsive budgeting document of Togo. Thus, the ground has been laid for the incorporation, by all three States, into their national budgets of an approach to budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend.

#### **5. Technical materials**

31. A policy brief was published on budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend as the budget structure best suited to harnessing the demographic dividend in the Niger.

32. Another policy brief was issued on the ways in which macroeconomic stability influences food security in Central and West Africa.

#### **B. Convening function: conferences and platforms for discussion and advocacy**

33. In advance of the fifty-sixth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a dialogue was held under the theme “Financing the transition towards inclusive green economies: imperatives, challenges and

opportunities for West African countries”. It was an online dialogue, which was held on 13 February 2024 and had 108 participants. Participants discussed models for financing the transition to the green economy, best practices and success stories from West Africa, and principal recommendations for the policies, measures and solutions that are necessary if meaningful results are to be achieved.

34. A workshop on the technical validation of the national strategy of Liberia regarding the African Continental Free Trade Area was held in Monrovia from 15 to 17 July 2024 and had 75 Liberian participants. The Subregional Office organized the meeting in partnership with the Government of Liberia to refine the national strategy on the Area. At the event, important figures in Liberia came together to ensure that the benefits of the area were maximized in the country. The intention behind the event was for the Government to gain an understanding, from the discussions, of the country’s specific needs and thus be able to adapt the strategy to those needs and adopt it in September 2024.

35. A meeting of West African intergovernmental organizations was held on increasing the harmonization of measures to accelerate subregional integration and sustainable development, against a backdrop of numerous challenges. The meeting was held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, on 10 and 11 June 2024 and had 30 participants. During the meeting, information was shared on the flagship initiatives of ECA in the subregion and of West African intergovernmental organizations. In addition, participants identified prospects for strengthening the partnership between ECA, other entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations to better support the efforts of States in respect of regional integration and sustainable development.

36. A workshop was held on the subject of capitalizing on regional experiences during the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in North and West Africa. The event was held in Lomé on 4 and 5 June 2024 and had 14 participants. The workshop was jointly organized by the Subregional Office, the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the Islamic Development Bank. Participants discussed the experiences of eight States in North and West Africa: Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. It provided a platform for peer-to-peer learning from other States within the two subregions. It was intended to enable States to make the most of the Area and act as a catalyst for mobilizing resources to help with the implementation of national action plans and strategies pertaining to the Area.

37. A high-level policy dialogue was organized on the operationalization and institutionalization of budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in Burkina Faso. During the dialogue, which was held in Ouagadougou on 26 and 27 August 2024 and had 135 participants, the technical results achieved in Burkina Faso with the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend were presented to political decision makers and parliamentarians, with the aim that the principles of the approach should be applied in the 2025 fiscal year. The initiative is intended to accelerate the harnessing of the demographic dividend, which is essential if Burkina Faso is to enjoy inclusive, transformative and sustainable economic development.

38. A technical workshop was held on support for the incorporation, into the 2025 budget

of Togo, of the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend, with participants discussing how to use gender-responsive budgeting as an entry point. The concept of the demographic dividend and the results achieved by the Government of Togo in relation to budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in its 2025 gender-responsive budgeting document were covered during the workshop, which was held in Lomé on 14 and 15 July 2024 and had 70 participants.

39. A technical support workshop was held for managers responsible for budget preparation and out-turn, with a view to ensuring that the results of budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend are taken into account in the budgetary process in Burkina Faso. The event was held in Ouagadougou on 19 to 21 March and had 56 participants. The aim was to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to use techniques and methods relating to the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend, with a view to facilitating its implementation and identifying the measures to be taken as part of the road map towards the adoption of the approach in the 2025 fiscal year, in accordance with the timetable for the preparation of the 2025 budget of Burkina Faso.

40. A technical workshop was held on the conversion, between 2021 and 2023, of conventional budgets into budgets that are responsive to the demographic dividend. It was held in Ouagadougou on 10 to 14 June and had 25 participants. The aim was to conclude the post-2020 changes to the budget to take account of the evaluation of the three most recent multi-year economic and fiscal programming documents and implement budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in the 2025 fiscal year.

### **C. Operational function: advice, support and other forms of technical assistance for States**

#### **1. Strengthening the framework for budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend**

41. Technical assistance was provided to States: capacity-building and technical assistance aimed at strengthening the framework for budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend.

42. With a view to supporting the incorporation of the demographic dividend into the processes of budgeting and of policy formulation, three national technical workshops were held on the following topics:

(a) Conversion of the traditional budgets of the period 2021–2023 of Burkina Faso into performance budgets, using budgeting techniques and methods that are responsive to the demographic dividend, in Ouagadougou from 10 to 14 June 2024;

(b) Incorporation of the demographic dividend approach into the 2025 budget of the Niger, which is essential if the demographic transition is to be accelerated in the country and if benefit is to be derived from the demographic dividend, in Niamey on 20 and 21 June 2024;

(c) Review of the work done and the setting-out of the specific measures needed to incorporate budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend into the 2025 budget of Togo, online on 14 March 2024.

43. More than 235 experts from Burkina Faso, the Niger and Togo, drawn from the ministries responsible for economic planning, finance, the budget, health, education and employment; from national statistical institutes or offices; and from national population observatories underwent capacity-building in relation to the use of budgeting tools and methods that are responsive to the demographic dividend, in preparation for the 2025 budgets. The chief results were:

(a) That the adopted national budget documents are responsive to the demographic dividend;

(b) That the budget circular of Burkina Faso incorporates the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend;

(c) That the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend has been operationalized and institutionalized in the budgetary processes of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Togo.

44. The Subregional Office has helped States to incorporate the results of the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend into the ongoing process of formulating their 2025 budgets. Consequently, the Governments of Burkina Faso and the Niger have taken such results into account when reviewing and preparing their 2024–2026 and 2025–2027 multi-year economic and fiscal programming documents, respectively, with a view to reflecting them in their annual budgets. The results will also be taken into account in the formulation of public investment programmes.

45. The Subregional Office hosted a webinar, on 20 December 2023, to help the Government of Burkina Faso to incorporate the results of the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend into its budgets for the 2024 fiscal year and to understand the benefit of such an approach while implementing the related road map.

46. The Subregional Office organized, on 30 January 2024, a technical guidance meeting on the 2025 national budget of the Niger.

47. The Subregional Office contributed to the workshop on validation of the analysis reports of the Niger about budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend and about national time transfer accounts, organized by the country's Ministry of Health, Population and Social Affairs, in close collaboration with the country office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in Niamey from 16 to 18 April 2024.

48. The Subregional Office held an online meeting, on 25 April 2024, to follow up on the implementation of the road map towards the adoption of budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend in the Niger.

49. The Subregional Office hosted a webinar, on 14 March 2024, on the incorporation, into the 2025 budget of Togo, of the results of budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend.

## **2. Acceleration of the implementation of national strategies on the African Continental Free Trade Area**

50. Technical support was given to States in order to accelerate the implementation of priority projects forming part of national strategies on the African Continental Free Trade Area. The support consisted of six priority projects related to the Area that are in the process of being implemented:

(a) Development and implementation of a strategy to promote trade in services and a programme of targeted priority measures in Guinea;

(b) Institutional and technical capacity-building for entrepreneurs, in general, and exporters, in particular, through the provision of a handbook for the exporters of Guinea-Bissau in the context of the Area;

(c) Development of a digital platform aimed at facilitating the exporting of goods by Nigerian women and young entrepreneurs, by offering them greater access to the international market and providing them with tailor-made support using customized digital tools;

(d) Awareness-raising among businesses in Senegal of the processes involved in ensuring compliance with trade facilitation measures, including application of the Area's rules of origin, and strengthening of the institutional framework for corrective action;

(e) Development of a plan for funding the national strategy for the Area in the Gambia and support for the process of eliminating tariffs in order to mitigate any negative effects on the country's tax revenues;

(f) Development and design of an operational framework for the strategy on the Area of Cabo Verde, incorporating a monitoring and evaluation system and a financing plan.

51. The above-mentioned technical support resulted in:

(a) Provision to States of policies and instruments for facilitating trade in services, of handbooks on the Area, including tools, and of assessments of access to different markets;

(b) Increased awareness and ownership of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on the part of States and their enhanced capacity to stimulate economic transformation anchored in the Agreement.

## **3. West Africa Business Linkage Platform**

52. The West Africa Business Linkage Platform is a digital environment designed to support women and young entrepreneurs, as crucial stakeholders in the African Continental

Free Trade Area. Several initiatives relating to the Platform were conducted.

53. A webinar in the form of a round table for women and young entrepreneurs was held on the Platform, with nine sectoral champions participating. The focus was on the six transitions for accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the themes of which is the circular economy. Five West African countries were represented in the webinar: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.

54. For the second time, a West Africa Business Linkage Platform initiative forging links between East and West Africa is being held in October 2024.

55. An online meeting on the circular economy and value chains was held via the Platform. Sectoral champions were well represented at the meeting, which was held on 9 July 2024, with around 30 women and young people participating in each session. In discussions during the session, the potential of the circular economy in such areas as waste management, recycling and sustainable innovation was highlighted, with a particular focus on the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

#### **4. Other technical assistance**

56. Technical support was provided, in collaboration with the Private Sector Development and Financing Division of ECA, as part of the public-private dialogue on inclusive bonds in Côte d'Ivoire, in January 2024, following the successful implementation of the joint project on the African Continental Free Trade Area in support of two North African and six West African States. The results were presented at two events held in January 2024: an international conference in Nairobi and a capacity-building workshop for African journalists held in Casablanca, Morocco. The two events enabled States to share best practices and explore new strategies for taking full advantage of the Area. Discussions were focused on such subjects as ways in which business opportunities may be seized and the fostering of economic development, in particular for women and young entrepreneurs.

57. The Subregional Office participated in a round table for donors, organized by the Government of Guinea to help to raise funds for the implementation of the country's Interim Reference Programme, 2022–2025, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in February 2024.

58. Interest in sustainable development programmes in West Africa, in particular in Portuguese-speaking countries, led to the joint deployment of the integrated planning and reporting toolkit, in partnership with the Macroeconomic and Governance Division of ECA and the Subregional Office for Central Africa. Following in-depth consultations and the drafting of the relevant terms of reference, a first training session was held in July 2024, for participants from Portuguese-speaking countries, including Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

59. The Subregional Office ran a workshop promoting trade in services and strengthened financial service value chains, in Ouagadougou from 28 to 30 August 2024.

60. The Subregional Office provided the Government of Benin with support in relation

to the ongoing deployment of the integrated planning and reporting toolkit, with training scheduled for September 2024. The toolkit will accelerate and improve the measurement of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Benin.

61. The Subregional Office conducted monitoring of progress with the project to establish a single currency for ECOWAS, scheduled for 2027. In particular, the Subregional Office participated in the 2024 mid-year statutory meeting of the West African Monetary Agency, in July 2024. Contributions to the Agency's discussions enabled the identification of possible synergies with other West African institutions.

## 5. Country testimonials

62. These initiatives and measures on the part of the Subregional Office received broad approval within the political system of Burkina Faso. For example, at the end of the political dialogue, a representative of the country's Transitional Legislative Assembly said that members of the Assembly could appreciate the suitability of the budgeting approach that is responsive to the demographic dividend. She said that such an approach would contribute to combating unemployment and to control the birth rate, with a view to reducing poverty and economic and social dependence. She pledged to work towards budgetary discipline for the benefit of Burkina Faso.

63. Moreover, according to the Ministry of the Economy and Finance of the Niger, "Budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend would enable the country to capitalize on these investments with socioeconomic benefits and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with pillar two of the Resilience Programme for the Safeguarding of the Homeland: inclusive development of human capital."<sup>3</sup>

## V. Partnerships for action and impact

64. Developing and strengthening strategic partnerships with a diverse range of organizations at the national, regional and international levels has been central to the work of the Subregional Office and has helped it to achieve results on behalf of members of ECA.

65. The Subregional Office has partnerships with:

- (a) African Solidarity Fund;
- (b) Compass Global Business Services, Ltd. (strategic partner for the operationalization of the West Africa Business Linkage Platform);
- (c) Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
- (d) AFRISTAT;

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<sup>3</sup> Niger, Ministry of the Economy and Finance, *Multi-Year Economic and Fiscal Programming Document, 2025–2027* (Niamey, 2024).

- (e) ECOWAS;
- (f) International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation;
- (g) Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority;
- (h) National demographic dividend observatories;
- (i) National Transfer Accounts network;
- (j) Regional Consortium for Research in Generational Economics;
- (k) Resident coordinator offices;
- (l) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
- (m) United Nations Development Programme;
- (n) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);
- (o) United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel steering committee;
- (p) United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel;
- (q) UNFPA;
- (r) WAEMU;
- (s) World Trade Organization.

## **VI. Main challenges and risks, measures taken and plans**

66. The chief challenges and risks faced by the Subregional Office are:

- (a) Sociopolitical instability, characterized by many complex, multifaceted crises and by insecurity in the Sahel;
- (b) Weakness of national statistical systems;
- (c) Combined effect of insufficient funding, sovereign debt crises in members of ECA and budget cuts and recruitment freeze in the United Nations;
- (d) Difficulty of filling vacancies, given that new recruits are unable to bring their families with them to the Niger.



67. The main mitigation measures taken and responses made by the Subregional Office are:

(a) Recruitment drive to build up the human resources of the Subregional Office, with three United Nations volunteers having been taken on, along with one scholarship student whose contract ended on 31 July 2024;

(b) Increased focus on the humanitarian-development-security nexus and peace in the Sahel;

(c) Establishment of strategic partnerships and of the coalition of partners with ECA for action and impact, with a view to providing the best possible response to member requests for assistance;

(d) Prioritization, joint establishment and funding of programmes that have a major effect within the subregion, in particular through partnerships with other United Nations entities, for instance ECA and the United Nations Development Programme, or ECA and UNFPA.

68. The principal plans of the Subregional Office for 2025 are:

(a) Consolidation of achievements, in particular with regard to the subregional programme on the demographic dividend and the implementation of national strategies on the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) Advocacy and technical support for States in relation to the adoption of robust planning systems, programming and budgeting that is responsive to the demographic dividend;

(c) Continued support for development planning, by means of disseminating the strategic framework for the period 2023–2027 in relation to *ECOWAS Vision 2050* and encouraging its incorporation into domestic law, of macroeconomic stability and of the mobilization of resources, including innovative development finance.

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