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Activity Report of the ECA Sub-Regional Office for West Africa 2015 and Work Programme 2016

*(ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE OFFICE
FROM APRIL 1ST, 2015 TO MARCH 31ST, 2016)*

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Sub-Regional Office for West Africa

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFRISTAT	Economic and Statistical Observatory for sub-Saharan Africa
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIMES	African Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society
AMV	Africa Mining Vision
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CDP	Community Development Programme COP Conference of Parties
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COM	Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HLM	High-Level Meeting
ICE	Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRU	Mano River Union
MYP	Multi-Year Programme
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGP	National Gender Policy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SRCM	Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism
SRO-WA/ECA	Sub-Regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAIFEM	West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management
WAIGO	West African Intergovernmental Organizations
WAMI	West African Monetary Institute
WAMZ	West African Monetary Zone

I. Introduction

1. This report presents the main activities carried out by the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for West Africa (ECA) during the period from April 2015 to March 2016. These activities were conducted following the Strategic Framework of the work Programme for the period 2014-2014 adopted by the Programme and Coordination Committee in June 2012.
2. *The key aim of the work Programme was to "Build capacity to formulate Programmes and policies based on evidence-based data with a view to fostering social and economic change in West Africa".*
3. Achieving this aim depended on two major outcomes: *(i) Building the capacity of member states to produce and disseminate reliable and updated statistics to support national and sub-regional development priorities; (ii) Build the capacity of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) to fast track implementation of sub-regional initiatives.*
4. During the 18th ICE meeting held in Dakar (Senegal) from **March 26th to 27th, 2015**, the implementation of the Office's 2014-2015 Work Programme was reviewed by member states, international and regional organizations, universities, NGOs and the private sector. The quality of the Programme was acknowledged in the Final Communiqué adopted by the Committee, which equally made recommendations to ECA, Sub-Regional Organizations and member states. More specifically, ECA/SRO-WA was requested to consider these recommendations in implementing its 2015-2016 Work Programme.

II. Key achievements of the 2015-2016 Work Programme

5. The SRO-WA's activities hinge on the two key outcomes mentioned earlier in a clearly established context for production of "country profiles", which is expected to account for approximately 80% of the activities of ECA's Sub-Regional Offices.
6. In view of the need to have reliable and regular statistical data to understand the economic situation of African countries and take relevant decisions with a view to undertake and extend the structural transformation of Africa's economies, ECA decided, over the last years, to focus its statistics activities on the frequent production of socio-economic reports for each country, referred to as "Country Profiles".

2.1 Improving consultation and policy formulation

7. The Office helped to harmonize forecasting methodology and all data from member states in building the capacities of National Statistics Systems (NSS). Under the AU's African Charter on Statistics used as a reference by all member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Office reviewed statistical flow mechanisms, laying special emphasis on harmonizing approaches and methodologies, from data collection to compilation, analysis and dissemination.

8. During the period under review, the Office contributed effectively in harmonizing data collection and analysis methodologies.

9. *On data collection improvement and production of country profiles*

- **From July 27th to 29th, 2015**, to finalize the adoption of the WAEMU Regional Statistics Programme on Statistics 2015-2020, a meeting of sub-regional statistics stakeholders was held in Niamey (Niger). In attendance were Directors General of National Statistics Institutions of WAEMU Zone, the head of the WAEMU Statistics Center, the Director General of Afristat, two World Bank economists, Afristat experts in institutional issues, one of the Deputy Directors of Statistics of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), statisticians of the WAEMU Statistics Center and an economic affairs officer of ECA. The Office took advantage of the meeting to organize a working session on empowerment and institutionalization of Statistical Focal Points.
- **From September 1st to 2nd, 2015**, the Office held a workshop in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) that brought together statistical focal points from eight (8) countries of the sub-regional with a view to establishing a reliable data system for collecting data provided by member states and ease the production of Country Profiles. Actually, considering the somewhat high headcount due to the number of ECOWAS member countries and in a bid to create greater synergy amongst the focal points during working sessions, the 2015 meeting brought together the eight (8) countries whose Profile had to be produced during the 2014-2015 two-year period. These included Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. A second meeting will be held this year, 2016, for focal points of the seven (7) other countries of the community, namely Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Togo. For each of the meetings, one focal point will be convened per institution.

10. *On production of vital statistics in Africa*

- **From June 16th to 20th, 2015**, as part of its coordination of the Regional Group of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS) for French-speaking African countries, the Office conducted a, advocacy and sensitization mission to the OIF (international organization of French-speaking countries), AIMF (international association of French-speaking mayors) and the Paris 21 Consortium. The mission, which continued to Slovenia - the reference in terms of CRVS best practices - , where the SRO-WA was joined by representatives of UNICEF and the AfDB, was aimed at examining support actions to improve CRVS in Africa.
- **From November 2nd to 6th, 2015**, a, APAI-CRVS workshop for African French-speaking experts was organized in Yaounde (Cameroon) by the Regional Support Group, made up of ECA, AUC, AfDB, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR. This served as a platform for experience sharing and validation of amendments to the APPAI-CRVS guides and tools, based on recommendations from the first training workshop held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) from February 15th to 19th, 2015.
- The Office helped to carry out a pre-evaluation and evaluation of the CRVS in Mali (ongoing, Benin (November 2015) and Cameroon (January 2016).

11. *On harmonization of policies, especially mining*

- **From October 6th to 7th, 2015**, a high-level dialogue on harmonized natural resource management policies in the ECOWAS region was organized at the African Institute for

Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar (Senegal). This gathering brought out some key observations on mining policies. The findings were related to the small number of ECOWAS countries that had adopted a new mining policy, namely Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. However, the mining policy revision process is underway in many countries, especially Senegal and Togo. The main challenges were low financial resources to manage and domesticate regional initiatives and the difficulties the countries were facing in mineral mapping and research.

2.2 Generation and dissemination of knowledge products

12. The SRO-WA continued efforts to sensitize and mobilize partners to finance and involve the most affected countries in the recovery plan, by circulating the report on **"The socio-economic impacts of the Ebola pandemic on Africa"**.

13. **During the period from October to November 2015**, the Sub-Regional Office completed four (4) country profiles (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Senegal) based on the Concept Note and the validation mechanism adopted by ECA in *June 2015*.

14. **In January 2016**, the 4 country profiles mentioned earlier were reviewed and finalized following the new profile content structure adopted by ECA in *December 2015*. Three (3) other country profiles (Cape Verde, Ghana and Gambia) are being prepared. In this regard, the Office organized data collection missions in these countries in February 2016. These country profiles are expected to be finalized in March 2016.

15. **From May 12th to 14th, 2015** the Office participated, making a significant contribution, in a training workshop held in Cotonou (Benin) for French-speaking countries on the African Social Development Index (ASDI).

16. **From May 25th to 29th, 2015**, the Office equally made a significant contribution at the 50th Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the 41st Annual Meeting of the African Development Fund (ADF) held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) mainly to deliberate on issues of key interest to ECA. This latter meeting was an ideal opportunity to engage cooperation with Statistics Department of the AfDB to fine-tune the APAI-CRVS. The Office also participated actively in expert debates organized by *Perspectives Economiques en Afrique*, on the topic "Gender equality: Where are we?" and in launching the AfDB/ World Bank jointly sponsored Post-Ebola Recovery Programme and on development efficiency.

17. **From January 26th to 29th, 2016**, the Office jointly organized the launching of AGDI (African Gender and Development Index) in Niger followed by a capacity-building workshop on gender-related issues.

18. **In March 2016**, a training workshop for over a dozen strategic planning and monitoring/evaluation trainers from Niger will be organized by IDEP with support from the Office.

As concerns communities of practice and/or knowledge networks, the Office has already formed two Communities of Practice (CP).

19. The first stems is related to the findings of the Ad hoc EGM held in Dakar (Senegal) from March 16th to 17th, 2015 on the topic "West African regional infrastructure: overview, challenges and impacts on the Free Trade Zone". Sensitization of experts and their progress in preparations in this regard were developed in articles, research documents and sharing of

CP findings and other networks like the SRO-WA Facebook and Twitter pages (https://twitter.com/ECA_SROWA, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bureau-Sous-Regional-pour-lAfrique-de-lOuest-de-la-CEA/>), LinkedIn, "Observatory on regional integration in West Africa" and websites (<http://ourintranet.uneca.org/ecaintranet/west-africa>, <http://www.uneca.org/sro-wa>; UNteamworks: <https://eca.unteamworks.org/fr/node/143852>) and the United Nations network, "Unite Connections".

20. The second CP involves revitalizing the Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM) that oversees support by the United Nations system to the African Union, and the NEPAD Programme, including RECs (<http://knowledge4africa.uneca.org/groups/srcmwa/subgroups>), represented by the six priority thematic sub-groups in the sub-region. Efforts are underway to expand experience sharing with a view to avoiding duplication and foster jointly-organized activities between United Nations system organizations, capitalizing on the comparative advantages of each organization.

21. As regards cooperation and technical assistance, during the period under review, the Office worked with the African Center for Statistics (ACS) to provide technical support to Niger in designing and implementing a Geographic Information System database (SIGCOM). The Office equally worked in close collaboration with the Social Development Policy Division (SDPD) to prepare the training workshop on the African Social Development Index (ASDI) held in May 2015 in Cotonou (Benin). At the request of WAEMU, another training workshop on ASDI and AGDI was held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) from October 26th to 29th, 2015.

22. In the same vein, a training workshop on strategy planning and development, and predictive analysis was organized in Guinea Bissau in tandem with IDEP, in response to the demand from this country for ECA's technical assistance in an effort to fast-track economic growth and structural change in the country, following the ECA joint mission in Guinea Bissau from February 18th to 20th, 2015.

23. By consolidating its mandate and streamlining its Programme, the SRO-WA is seeking to make a greater impact on development and deliver more effective and more appropriate technical assistance to member countries and RECs. In this regard, special emphasis has been laid on collecting quality data at regional level to continue providing information for the development of continental, regional and national policies for member states like Niger (PDES 2015-2015, Diffa Regional Development Programme), Togo, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. The Office is equally involved in intensifying advocacy for the structural transformation of the sub-region's economies and enhance evaluation of progress made towards regional integration.

2.3 Accountability and Learning

24. The Office has incorporated the gender approach in its development of results related to the ICE, AEGM and SRCM, including in concept notes for research and extension of indices such as ASDI, AGDI and IIR. Additionally, the Office has systematically ensured that women take part in all meetings and training Programmes.

25. Furthermore, at the request of the Ivorian government, the Office provided technical assistance to the country in setting up the Pan African Center for Statistical Training (CPFS) at

INP-HB (Felix Houphouet Boigny National Institute of Engineering) in Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire) following the decision by AU heads of State (in July 2012).

26. To improve the quality of its research reports and documents, and comply with think-tank standards with a view to fostering the structural transformation of its member states, the Office took part in a capacity building session organized by IDEP from August 3rd to 7th, 2015 on the topic "Macroeconomic models".

27. The Office pursued efforts for the global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as part of its commitment to advocacy and sensitization on climate change mitigation. In this regard, a working group was organized in early 2015 following the Office's annual strategic planning retreat. The following recommendations were made:

- Printing of documents, materials, flyers and any other documentation must be made upon request only with frequent reminders by the Staff Association;
- Paper and/or other office stationery must be systematically recycled;
- As far as possible, documents must be printed in recto-verso format to promote efficient use of resources;
- Shared printers must be configured for recto-verso printing.
- Staff must be sensitized and encouraged to adopt energy-saving practices and to use lightning and air-conditioning in a more responsible and more sustainable manner.

- **Functional support to the empowerment of ECOWAS and other IGOs**

28. The Office has continued to consolidate its cooperation with the WAEMU Commission. The Memorandum of Cooperation signed with the latter organization was broadened during the month of May 2014. Furthermore, consultations for the establishment of an interconnection of WAEMU and ECA databases have begun.

26. The Office has continued to work closely with ECOWAS on several issues, especially by attending high-level ECOWAS meetings. It contributed to the fortieth anniversary of ECOWAS by producing a comprehensive study on the progress made by ECOWAS since its inception in 1975. It is looking forward in 2015 to obtain the signing of a memorandum accompanied by a multi-year Programme taking into account the needs of all IGOs.

27. From March 14th to 18th, 2016, the Office will take part in a seminar of the economic situation in the first half of 2016 and short-term forecasts by WAEMU countries, Guinea and Mauritania organized by Afristat and the WAEMU Commission. It has already contributed to the two seminars on the economic conditions jointly organized by Afristat in March and November 2015.

- **Statutory reports of the 19th ICE meeting**

28. In keeping with the approved work Programme for the period 2014-2015, the Office undertook to produce four key statutory papers to be examined during the 19th ICE meeting.

- Note on the economic profile of West Africa and the report on the key theme of the ICE: CPs at the service of structural transformation of the economy;
- Report on implementation of regional and global agendas: from MDGS to SDGs;
- Innovative financing for the structural transformation of West African economies;
- Activity report of the ECA/SRO-WA in 2015 and work Programme for 2016

III. Follow-up of recommendations of the 18th ICE

29. At the end of each ICE meeting, the final communiqué made recommendations to the different stakeholders, namely ECA, member states and RECs. The table below outlines the recommendations made to ECA, particularly to the SRO-WA and actions taken by the latter.

Recommendations	Actions taken by ECA
<i>Report on implementation of ECA/SRO6WA work Programme</i>	
<p>Provide details in the Office's report, on the kinds of assistance requested by member states and sub-regional organizations, and the kinds of responses delivered by ECA.</p> <p>Disseminate ECA publications and reports to member states within convenient timelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide assistance to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Senegal and Togo in preparing their respective long-term development plans over a time span of 25 to 30 years. The Office therefore helped to build capacity in development planning systems in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. The Office also provided assistance to the Republic of Guinea in formulating its Vision 2035 and 2015-2020 development strategy in alignment with AU Agenda 2063. A similar technical assistance was provided to Togo, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to renovate their strategic development planning systems. The Office is presently working closely with the Niger government to identify the best way to enhance communications. - The Office helped to carry out vital events pre-evaluation missions in Mali, Benin and Cameroon. - The Office is helping WAEMU to implement a centralized database using the StatBase system. WAEMU has also received training on ASDI and AGDI. - The Office has set up a permanent system to monitor the circulation of publications and reports. The system jointly managed by knowledge management officers and communications officers, monitors deadlines and optimizes the use of all possible dissemination channels: Posts, DHL, Internet, Staff missions, etc.
<i>Report on the socio-economic profile of West African in 2014 and outlook for 2015</i>	
<p>Support member states in enhancing their statistics systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Office identified focal points and is working to build their capacity in data collection, standards and data categorization and dissemination, during an expert group meeting in Abidjan in September 2015. - The Office has produced 4 country profiles for Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Senegal in close collaboration with national statistics officers and other national institutions in charge of statistics in member states, including IGOs and RECs. The Office has equally finalized the draft CPs of 4 other countries, namely

	<p>Nigeria, Ghana, Cape Verde and Gambia that are currently under in-house review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The methodology used to produce the country profiles allows for dialogue and identification of shortcomings of statistics systems and development planning mechanisms with a view to providing suitable solutions thereto as part of a framework for ECA assistance and cooperation with other partners.
<i>ECOWAS Community Development Plan (CDP)</i>	
<p>Help ECOWAS to complete the CDP and organize a high-level conference on internal resource mobilization and the Programme financing round-table.</p> <p>Continue to establish institutional mechanisms for cooperation with sub-regional organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Office took part in all preparatory meetings to organize the high-level conference. Its support was also requested to design communications material for the conference. Additionally, for the 40th anniversary of ECOWAS, the Office wrote a book on the integration process in West Africa. - Cooperation with West African Statistics offices, including RECs (MRU, WAEMU and ECOWAS) and leading IGOs, including Afristat, specialized in data collection and analysis, is being revitalized through different platforms for exchange (field missions, workshops, official designation of statistics coordinator). The sub-regional database has been enriched thanks to an improvement of statistical data circulation mechanisms for downstream data from member states to the SRO data center.

IV. Conclusions and outlook for 2016

30. In 2015, the Office restructured its Programme, taking into account new developments during actions to prepare the country profiles. However, the Office equally took time to address day-to-day issues like responding to queries from countries and providing technical assistance. It equally laid special emphasis on enhancing its cooperation with IGOs.

31. A key milestone in 2015 will be to continue producing West African country profiles. Consequently, in 2016, the Office will produce seven (7) new country profiles for Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It will also update the country profiles of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Senegal.

32. As part of country profile activities, two key meetings will be organized for the statistical focal points. The first will involve the focal points of the seven (7) remaining countries following the meeting with the eight (8) countries in 2015. The second will be a more broad-based meeting with all focal points of all countries of the sub-region to carry out a maiden appraisal of cooperation between the focal points and the Office.

33. The Office will equally continue, as far as possible, to respond to requests for technical assistance by the countries, and to extend cooperation with IGOs.