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**Reports to the Committee on Social Policy,**  
**Poverty and Gender – reporting and discussion**

### **Report on the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa relating to subprogramme 9: Poverty, inequality and social policy**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The objectives of subprogramme 9 (Poverty, inequality and social policy) of ECA are to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce inequality through improved member States policies and strategies for social investment and productive urban job creation. The subprogramme is carried out by two sections of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division – the Social Policy Section and the Urbanization and Development Section.
2. The core mandate of the Division is to strengthen the capacity of member States to design and implement appropriate policies that promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development in the areas of poverty and inequality, employment and social protection, population, migration and urbanization, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. Informed by the decisions and guidance of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender, subprogramme 9 supports member States through its analytical work, policy and advisory support, and the development of tools, convening of policy dialogues and strengthening capacity.
3. The purpose of the present report is to provide an overview of the work carried out under subprogramme 9 as set out in the strategic framework for the biennium 2020–2021. Tabular summaries of the work undertaken by the Social Policy Section and the Urbanization and Development Section are presented in the annex to the present report.

#### **II. Progress made in the implementation of activities under subprogramme 9**

4. The main activities under subprogramme 9 in the biennium 2020–2021 may be grouped into thematic areas, as set out below, and were undertaken by the Social Policy Section and the Urbanization and Development Section.

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\* E/ECA/CSPPG/4/1.



## A. Social Policy Section

### 1. Poverty

5. In response to the increase in poverty and vulnerability due to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the subprogramme reoriented its work to generate new evidence on economically vulnerable portions of the population, and provided support to improve economic recovery and resilience in African countries. As part of this, subprogramme 9, through the Social Policy Section, led the production of the flagship document of ECA, *Economic Report on Africa 2021*, on the theme “Addressing the challenges of poverty and vulnerability in Africa in the time of COVID-19”.

6. 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 peoples’ lives, the pandemic is only one of the numerous risks faced by poor households. The report provides 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 also to build assets and invest in strengthening social infrastructure to promote growth. The focus of the *Economic Report on Africa 2021* is on identifying practical ways for public policies and the private sector to support vulnerable populations to better manage risks and strengthen resilience against future shocks. The latter is particularly important for “building forward better” in the post-COVID-19 phase, and for sustained and rapid poverty reduction in the region.

### 2. Social protection

7. Subprogramme 9 participated in a global project in the biennium on responses to the COVID-19 pandemic through the three distinct but interrelated streams of social protection, poverty measurement and the care economy. Within the social protection stream, a risk and vulnerability index was developed to assess the likelihood of the vulnerable falling into poverty due to the pandemic. This was done for 11 dimensions and 56 indicators across exogenous shocks including, among others, COVID-19 and climate change. The index will be developed into a toolkit for improved outreach and engagement with Egypt, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa. The subprogramme also participated in the construction of a global website that quantifies fiscal and monetary policy responses to COVID-19. The website was presented at the latest high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened in New York under the auspices of Economic and Social Council from 6 to 15 July 2021, and was widely acknowledged by member States as a useful tool in measuring response and impact. It also responds to the recommendations made by member States at the last Committee meeting to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the issues that are pertinent to reducing poverty and inequality, which should be done horizontally and vertically, so that progress is measured through a predetermined set of indicators that ensure evaluation at all levels, and that information is available to all, even at the community level.

8. In addition, the project has been designed to improve national capacities to measure and understand poverty in the context of the pandemic, and is supporting target countries in developing their statistical and analytic capacities. Through engagement of national experts, the project developed general guidance on adapting household surveys for measuring poverty during the pandemic. A regional situational analysis of poverty measurement for an African multidimensional poverty index was conducted to inform the development of the methodology for such an index, applying this in the context of Zambia, for example.

### 3. Health

9. The significant contribution of the subprogramme to the study of the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 catalysed more specific work on health and economic sustainability by member States. This has led to two deliverables.

10. The subprogramme and a private-sector stakeholder decided to analyse the implications for communicable disease prevention and treatment (e.g. measles inoculation) of the shift in budgetary resources towards COVID-19 prevention and treatment during the pandemic. A report was therefore prepared, entitled “Beyond the Big Three”, to analyse the status of efforts to combat more common infectious diseases in six African countries. The cost of inaction and the cost of action in respect of two disease categories – diarrhoeal diseases and lower respiratory tract infections (pneumonia) – which account for 14 per cent of under-5 mortality, were modelled. The models showed significant rates of return in terms of productivity gains and gross domestic product (GDP) growth if action were to be taken immediately. The presentation of the report has generated demand for the application of the modelling toolkit in Ghana to inform more sustainable health policy design and action.

11. The subprogramme, in collaboration with a private health provider consortium (ABC-Health) is producing a report on improving the provision of health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. With a focus on access, availability and affordability of health services, the report will analyse three areas – technology and its application to health, financing and supply-side management; the preliminary results of the slow progress towards standard service delivery; and high import dependence on international supply chains – and proposes recalibrating continental targets towards progressive universalism to universal health coverage and leveraging the ratified African Continental Free Trade Area as policy responses. The construction and production of a quantitative index that allows the broadening and deepening of member State health policy responses, including the engagement of the private sector, will constitute an integral part of the report.

12. The work of subprogramme 9 has garnered particular attention from several member States, which have requested related technical assistance. For instance, the Government of Namibia has requested assistance in analysing public health expenditure and its sustainability, given the additional burden due to COVID-19, and leveraging the recently ratified Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

### 4. Migration

13. From 26 August to 1 September 2021, subprogramme 9 – in collaboration with Morocco, the International Organization for Migration, the African Union Commission, the United Nations Network on Migration and other United Nations agencies – conducted the first meeting to review the implementation in Africa of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration since its adoption in 2018. This continental review of the Global Compact was held in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 73/195 and 73/326, which require member States to conduct reviews in 2020 and 2021, ahead of the 2022 International Migration Review Forum.

14. The regional review revealed that, since the adoption of the Global Compact in 2018, there has been progress in respect of migration policies and governance on the continent. Notably, some member States have established mechanisms for the portability of social entitlements and earned benefits, by re-examining bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with destination countries, in order to protect the right to repatriate social entitlements and earned benefits. In addition, several member States have put in place national mechanisms to implement and monitor the Global Compact.

15. The Africa regional meeting undertook a review of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact. The participants made several recommendations to inform policies and strategies for safe and orderly migration.

16. Through high-level participation and media coverage, the regional review raised awareness of international migration policy issues. It has also mobilized political commitment for the Global Compact, as demonstrated by 8 member States developing national action plans to support its implementation, and 23 undertaking national reviews to assess progress and challenges in that regard. The empirical knowledge and evidence generated through the national and regional reviews will inform national policy, as well as the upcoming global review of the Global Compact in 2022.

## **5. Youth employment**

17. Subprogramme 9 prepared a report on promoting youth employment for harnessing the demographic dividend and building resilience in Africa in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Africa strives to advance its development objectives, member States face a mix of constraints, including the pandemic. While the pandemic has so far exacted a lower death toll in Africa compared with other regions of the world, the continent's containment efforts have come at a heavy price. Some of the costs have been direct (slowed economic activity), but others reflect opportunity lost from underemployment and the indirect effects of dwindling remittances and development assistance from the rest of the world. As the pandemic freezes hiring, young people and other new entrants into the labour market bear the brunt of economic hardship. Keeping these young people out of the labour market hurts African prospects for harnessing demographic dividends. It also increases the risk of insecurity and social unrest, especially in countries already beset by high levels of inequality and latent political conflict.

18. The youth employment report develops and applies a framework for assessing African prospects for achieving three related objectives: creating jobs for young people; harnessing demographic dividends; and building resilience against shocks such as COVID-19. The framework offers conceptual and empirical tools to guide the analysis of youth employment with a view to designing effective policies. The proposed framework describes youth employment as a three-corner problem, in which none of the corners is, a priori, a leading or sufficient driver. Likewise, none of the corners, taken alone, guarantees sustainable employment over the long run.

## **6. African human security index**

19. Subprogramme 9, through the Social Policy Section, prepared an African position paper that contributes to the intellectual debate around the human security framework within the region. The position paper builds on the positions of the African Union and the United Nations in respect of human security to make the case for an African human security index.

20. Developed through the human security lens, an African human security index would contribute to solutions to regional and transboundary challenges – with a focus on peace, security and social inclusion – by measuring and tracking the triple nexus of humanitarian action, development and peace. In an increasingly interconnected world, such a toolbox would be an invaluable tool for member States to track, mitigate and develop people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses to challenges relating to economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. Through the leadership of the African Union Commission, five countries (Cameroon, Djibouti, Mali, the Sudan and Zambia) were selected for African human security index pilot programmes. Demand-driven requests for assessments of regional economic communities in relation to the index were

met through reports for the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

## **7. Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

21. The seventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was held from 1 to 4 March 2021 in Brazzaville under the theme “Building forward better: towards a resilient and green Africa to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”. The Forum is an intergovernmental platform convened by ECA in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system to review progress, share experiences and lessons learned, and build consensus on policy options and actions in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the two agendas. The key messages adopted by the seventh session of the Regional Forum served as the collective regional input of Africa to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

22. The Forum undertook an in-depth review of the implementation of nine selected Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17), and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. Specifically, subprogramme 9 led the review of Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No poverty), 3 (Good health and well-being), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 10 (Reduced inequalities). The review identified and articulated possible policy options and other measures for building forward better in the light of the pandemic, alongside accelerated implementation of the two agendas.

## **B. Urbanization and Development Section**

### **1. Urban economic recovery and resilience in the light of the coronavirus disease**

23. The subprogramme, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, prepared a policy report on the impacts of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, entitled “COVID-19 in African cities – Impacts, responses and policy recommendations”. It identified the key effects of the pandemic on cities and local governments, and priority interventions for both recovery and longer-term resilience. The acute economic and financial impacts were highlighted, with local governments losing up to two thirds of their revenue at the height of the crisis. Informed by these findings, the subprogramme provided technical advisory support to three cities (Accra, Harare and Yaoundé) in the design of economic recovery and resilience plans and strategies in the light of the pandemic.

24. The development of capacity among experts and policymakers in local government in the three cities was supported through training and technical workshops, development of policy support tools, and global and regional exchange and learning. City-specific economic performance reports and a regional brief were prepared on the basis of detailed diagnostics, which served as a foundation for the formulation of economic recovery and resilience plans. At the continental level, the project’s regional policy brief is one of the outputs of the COVID-19 action plan of the fourth ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union on Public Service, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization. Consequently, the project has improved the understanding of the key factors and drivers of urban economic and financial resilience in Africa, as well as solutions that work for promoting more resilient cities and for making local governments better able to withstand shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other broad-based socioeconomic stressors.

## **2. Urbanization and African regional economic integration**

25. The African Continental Free Trade Area is being operationalized in a context of rapid urban growth. However, there has not been adequate consideration of the links between urbanization and regional economic integration. In response, subprogramme 9, together with the African Trade Policy Centre of ECA, prepared a report entitled “Cities: Gateways for Africa’s Regional Economic Integration”, analysing the links between urbanization and regional trade integration. It argues among other things that cities, as centres of both consumption and production, will play a leading role in realizing the African Continental Free Trade Area. At the same time, regional trade integration has the potential to improve the well-being of Africans by connecting urban centres to markets for both imports and exports, and expanding access to cheaper – and a wider variety of – final goods and services and intermediate inputs. The subprogramme also developed a policy toolkit aimed at providing practical guidance to member States and regional economic communities to leverage the nexus between cities and intraregional trade to boost economic development in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The policy toolkit will also be developed into a fully-fledged online course, which will be made widely available to policymakers in the region. Through this work, the subprogramme has improved the knowledge and skills of policymakers in the region to design policies and strategies that leverage the productive potential of cities and human settlements to accelerate regional economic integration and industrialization, while also leveraging the economic benefits of trade and regional integration for inclusive urban growth.

## **3. Strategic urban and rural priorities in national development planning**

26. Urbanization is a megatrend with profound implications for African growth and transformation, yet often it is not sufficiently prioritized or strategically framed in national development planning. In response, subprogramme 9 delivered an online training course (through the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning) on urbanization and economic growth, to improve the knowledge and skills of African policymakers to design strategies and policies to harness the untapped economic potential of African cities and rapid urban growth.

27. In addition, responding to requests for technical advisory support, the subprogramme assisted Chad and Djibouti in formulating more strategic urban and rural priorities in national development planning. Using its existing guideline, “An Urban Lens in National Development Planning”, the subprogramme provided technical support to the Government of Djibouti in the drafting of the chapter on rural and urban development in its second national development plan, which covers the period 2020–2024). The chapter outlined strategic priorities to leverage robust economic growth, driven by megainvestment in port and trade infrastructure, to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, while also elevating living standards in rural areas for equitable development. In Chad, the subprogramme prepared a diagnostic report on urban priorities for the industrial and economic diversification master plan of Chad, and organized a technical dialogue with officials and other stakeholders. The issues paper examines and strengthens the role of cities in fostering the economic diversification and competitiveness of Chad as per axis three of the country’s national development plan, which aims to develop a diversified and competitive economy.

## **4. Spatial economic planning**

28. In Ethiopia, the capacity of the Planning and Development Commission was strengthened to mainstream urban and spatial issues in the country’s new 10-year development plan. This was done through technical advisory support to evaluate in depth national spatial and urban development dynamics, challenges and opportunities across the country’s regions, in order to identify



priority actions to align spatial and economic planning in the country. The results of the evaluation became the basis for defining the main strategies required to ensure that economic growth is accompanied by balanced distribution of benefits and prosperity across the country, while leveraging the locational advantages of each region and city, to optimize productivity and competitiveness. A series of technical workshops was held with national, regional and local government officials from a variety of departments, as well as other stakeholders.

29. This work resulted in improved prioritization of regional development in the new 10-year development plan, where it was incorporated as one of the implementation priorities. Subsequently, it also led to a decision to formulate a spatial development framework for the country to serve as an implementation tool for the development plan. This will respond to the constitutional requirement for the Government to attain balanced growth across the country. Based on the work in Ethiopia, the subprogramme is developing a policy toolkit to guide other countries in strengthening the spatial dimension of national economic planning to promote balanced territorial development outcomes, which is a challenge faced by most member States in the region.

## **5. Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa**

30. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), serves as the main guiding framework for the pursuit of sustainable urbanization globally. The first quadrennial review of the New Urban Agenda is due in 2022, and the United Nations Secretary-General is expected to present a global report on progress made since 2016. In this context, the subprogramme, in partnership with UN-Habitat and the African Union Commission, popularized African priorities under the New Urban Agenda through a webinar series in 2021. These priorities, as defined in the Harmonized Implementation Framework, were adopted by the fourth ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union on Public Service, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization, in 2018.

31. The webinar series increased the knowledge of member States on the implementation of African priorities under the New Urban Agenda, which are aligned with the region's specificities. Country experiences and good practices in implementation, monitoring and reporting were shared. Member States also pledged to hold regular and inclusive stakeholder dialogues that would support the mainstreaming of the New Urban Agenda in countries, and strengthen the national and regional preparatory global review process of the Agenda in 2022. Furthermore, informed by the outcomes of the webinar series, the subprogramme – together with the African Union, UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa – is supporting member States in their preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on sustainable urbanization to be held in April 2022, through a regional mobilization and engagement process supported by a framing paper as a guide. This is expected to strengthen the evidence and knowledge base to inform the design and refinement of policies and strategies to accelerate progress to achieve the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

## **6. Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063**

32. The subprogramme provided technical advisory services to local governments to undertake voluntary local reviews of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. To date, the programme has provided technical support to five cities and localities – Accra, Harare, Yaoundé, Ngora District (Uganda) and Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) – to conduct voluntary local reviews. Also, in response to a request from member States during the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (24–27 February 2020, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe), the

subprogramme developed regional guidelines for voluntary local reviews, in partnership with UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa. The guidelines provide clear and practical information on how to conduct such reviews, together with a detailed template to be adapted by local governments that draws on practices from Africa and from other continents.

33. Through its work on voluntary local reviews, the subprogramme has contributed to increased awareness and commitment to the local dimension of accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and the unique role of local governments in this regard. The engagement of local governments in the review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and the visibility of voluntary local reviews in Africa, have been elevated significantly through a number of events during the sixth and seventh sessions of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (held in 2020 and 2021, respectively) and the 2021 convening of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The efforts of the subprogramme to identify the linkages between voluntary local reviews and voluntary national reviews have also been recognized and welcomed by member States. This work has also enhanced the knowledge and skills of local governments in conducting voluntary local reviews, which generated additional requests for technical support, including from Benin, the Congo, the Gambia and Mauritania. Drawing on this work, the subprogramme has further supported the United Nations Task Force on the Future of Cities, a high-level group that is focused on better structuring United Nations engagements with local and regional governments; and Local2030, an initiative of the United Nations to guide and scale up its work at the local level.

#### **7. City gross domestic product estimation**

34. African cities contribute substantially to national economies and often generate the bulk of national gross domestic product (GDP). Information on the GDP of cities attracts private investment and encourages benchmarking between cities. Yet, GDP is not regularly or systematically estimated at the city or subnational level in Africa. This constitutes a significant gap, given the centrality of cities amid the urgent need for rapid and inclusive economic growth in Africa, with a view to mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the subprogramme supported three pilot cities – Accra, Harare and Yaoundé – in estimating their city GDP over the period 2015–2019/2020. Specifically, ECA provided expert technical input for the estimation process, while also providing opportunities for learning and exchange among the national and local experts in the pilot cities. Drawing on the experiences of the pilot cities and other African cities, the subprogramme formulated technical guidelines on measuring city GDP in order to scale up and expand such work in the region.

35. The support provided by the subprogramme has enhanced the knowledge and capacity of member States to compile city GDP statistics, and improved the understanding of the economic role of cities, which helps cities to plan better so that they can realize their full economic potential. Given its importance and the results achieved in the three pilot cities, the subprogramme has scaled up the support that it's providing to three additional cities – Kigali, Lusaka and Maseru. Moreover, a regional working group on city GDP has been established to provide advice and serve as a means for engagement on matters related to the economic role and performance of African cities.

### **III. Partnerships**

36. The subprogramme has partnered with strategic United Nations agencies and pan-African institutions in an effort to leverage joint delivery to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.



## **A. African Union Commission**

37. The subprogramme has worked closely with and supported the African Union Commission, through the latter's Social Development Directorate and its Peace and Security Directorate. In particular, the subprogramme has worked closely with the Joint Labour Migration Programme and the International Organization for Migration to organize the continental review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The main aim of the meeting was to articulate national strategies, priorities, gaps and challenges for improving the implementation of the Global Compact.

38. The subprogramme has also partnered with the African Union as a complementor of the work programme of the Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee of the Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union on Public Service, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization.

39. Overall, the subprogramme supports the African Union Commission in its hosting of Specialized Technical Committee meetings within the framework of the United Nations Development System in support of African Union priorities.

## **B. United Nations**

40. The subprogramme partnered with UN-Habitat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on projects supporting local authorities in Accra, Harare and Yaoundé in the design and implementation of COVID-19 economic and financial recovery strategies. In addition, the subprogramme collaborated with other regional commissions on joint delivery of a project under the thirteenth tranche of the Development Account on responses to COVID-19. The joint production of an updated website with data on all countries (193) was key to understanding both fiscal and monetary responses and drawing further country-specific conclusions.

41. The subprogramme collaborated with the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and other United Nations specialized agencies in organizing both the seventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the continental review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

## **IV. Planned activities under subprogramme 9 for the biennium 2022–2023**

42. The subprogramme plans to support broadening policy options for member States through empirically grounded knowledge products; and provide technical assistance and opportunities for regional dialogue and learning on strategies that promote inclusion and equitable development in Africa. Support will be provided to strengthen national strategies to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, with a focus on social protection, population and development, health, young people, migration and ageing. The work will provide options for developing national policies to reduce poverty and vulnerability, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The resilience and sustainability of health systems will remain vital features of the subprogramme's work. It will also provide continued support to African member States in the implementation and appraisal of the Global Compact for

Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing; the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action; and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development. The planned activities will leverage emerging continental opportunities and technological solutions to improve policy uptake towards improved resilience. In so doing, the subprogramme will engage with United Nations specialized agencies, the private sector and all stakeholders, including through the United Nations Resident Coordinators' offices.

43. Furthermore, the subprogramme will continue to promote the policy prioritization of urban job creation, through the development of urban strategies and investment frameworks for national development planning. The subprogramme will develop the knowledge of member States, provide technical assistance and facilitate regional policy learning and dialogue to advance planned and managed urbanization for accelerated structural transformation. Specifically, the subprogramme will support member States in leveraging urbanization through national development planning, industrial policy and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. In addition, technical assistance will be provided to strengthen member States' capacities to better measure and monitor urbanization dynamics, including city fiscal and economic performance. The work will be carried out largely in partnership with the African Union Commission, UN-Habitat, the African Development Bank and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, among others.

## V. Challenges and lessons learned

44. Challenges and lessons learned include the following:

(a) ECA collaboration with research institutions needs to be planned in a sustained cooperation framework rather than being project-specific. Implementation of the framework can be tailored based on which research institutes/academic organizations are identified, and which formal arrangements are made at the beginning of the planning cycle;

(b) Meeting the cumulative demand from member States for technical assistance needs to be better matched to internal and external resource mobilization. Sustaining and deepening technical support to member States over time is a challenge, due to resource limitations, changing priorities and institutional turnover in government;

(c) Member State demand for assistance in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been provided by ECA on short notice in response to the urgent and changing situation, has given rise to specific challenges that have delayed the implementation of planned activities. Given the persistence of the pandemic, the increase in such requests needs to be factored into the planning cycle;

(d) While meetings were held virtually, connectivity posed many challenges, as gauged by the significant difference between the numbers of those who registered and those who attended. There is a need for adequate arrangements to be made in advance to ensure that those who register are able to actively participate in virtual meetings.

## VI. Conclusion

45. The subprogramme will continue to undertake policy-oriented and empirical research in order to strengthen the capacities of member States in their efforts to design and implement appropriate policies that promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development in the areas of poverty and inequality, employment and social protection, population, migration and

urbanization, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It will do so through analytical work, policy and advisory support, development of tools, convening of policy dialogues and strengthening capacity. In doing so, the subprogramme will align its work with the decisions and guidance of the Committee on Social Development, Poverty and Gender. Partnerships will be leveraged, especially with the African Union Commission, the agencies of the United Nations system, civil society, member States, regional economic communities and other development partners. Given the impacts of COVID-19, the subprogramme's work will continue to emphasize policies that are geared towards building forward better and increasing resilience, while pursuing the overall objective of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.

## Annex

### Tabular summaries of work carried out under subprogramme 9, 2020–2021

Table 1  
Social Policy Section

	<i>Domain</i>	<i>Core functions</i>	<i>Geographic areas of focus</i>
1.	Poverty	Think tank, convening	All African member States
2.	Social protection	Think tank, convening	Ethiopia, Namibia
3.	Health	Think tank, convening, programmatic	All African member States, in particular Namibia, Nigeria
4.	Migration	Think tank, convening, programmatic	All African member States
5.	Youth employment	Think tank, convening, programmatic	Algeria, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
6.	African human security index	Think tank, convening	Cameroon, Djibouti, Mali, Sudan, Zambia

Table 2  
Urbanization and Development Section

	<i>Domain</i>	<i>Core functions</i>	<i>Geographic areas of focus</i>
1.	Urban economic recovery	Think tank, convening, programmatic	Accra, Harare
2.	Urbanization and integration	Think tank	African subregions
3.	Strategic priorities in national planning	Think tank, programmatic	Chad, Djibouti
4.	Spatial economic planning	Think tank, convening, programmatic	Ethiopia
5.	New Urban Agenda implementation	Think tank, convening	African subregions
6.	Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063	Think tank, programmatic	Accra, Harare, Yaoundé, Ngora District (Uganda), Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)
7.	City GDP estimation	Think tank, programmatic	Accra, Harare, Kigali, Lusaka, Maseru, Yaoundé