



5 | 60 YEARS OF ECA  
PROGRAMMATIC  
ORIENTATION



Sixth session of the economic commission for Africa, Africa Hall, February 1964.



The signing of a Plan of Operation, providing for the establishment of a new investment-promoting service in the African Development Bank on 1 February 1967, by representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Technical Cooperation and the African Development Bank. From left to right: Commissioner for Technical Cooperation, Victor Hoo; Administrator of the UNDP, Paul G. Hoffman; and President of the African Development Bank, Mamoun Beheiry of Sudan. Photo © United Nations



The Central Africa Training Centre on Statistics at Yaoundé, Cameroon, February 1964. A middle level training centre established to promote statistical development for French-speaking African countries. A student in training on the use of graphics by the instructor, Marcel Nenert (left) of the French Technical Assistance organization. Photo credit: United Nations.

## 1958-1968 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The first decade coincided with the independence of the majority of countries in Africa. It was thus a decade when special emphasis was placed on laying the foundations for institutional and human resource development across the region. Besides setting up the administrative framework of the secretariat, ECA focused its initial programme on the compelling development issues of the time: building capacities for development through training in development planning, agriculture, industrial development, transport and natural resources management. These were underpinned by the development of statistics for social and economic research and development planning.

At the same time, the Commission not only promoted the creation of numerous important regional and subregional institutions, such as the African Development Bank, but also established its own subregional offices for West Africa in Niamey in 1963, North Africa in Tangiers in 1963, Eastern and Southern Africa in Lusaka in 1964 and Central Africa in Kinshasa in 1965. The structure and locations of these offices were subsequently realigned with the regional economic communities as they evolved over the years.



Somalia Celebration of Independence: The Republic of Somalia achieved its independence on 1 July 1960. This picture shows students of the Islamic Cultural Centre participating in a Parade at the Mogadiscio Football Stadium, carrying banners, flags and emblems. Photo © ECA



An early textile factory in Malawi. Photo © United Nations



African women journalists attending a regional study tour on mass communication media and the integration of women in development. Photo © United Nations



MECHANIZATION: Evolution of agricultural mechanization in Africa. Photo © Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).



Group of participants attending a Budget Planning training course held at ECA, Addis Ababa, 1970. Photo © ECA



## 1968–1978 REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

This was the era of the consolidation of regional economic cooperation and integration among African countries. The programme therefore focused on promoting continued human resource development, economic cooperation and integration, industrialization, natural resources development, population, social development (almost exclusively in relation to problems affecting women in development), international trade, finance, agriculture, transport and communications.

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:** In the rural village of Godino, a woman grinding grain to make a meal. In an effort to help rural women in Africa to improve their living conditions, ECA appointed experts on rural development, to the Pan African Women's Centre in Addis Ababa, 1976. Photo© United Nations



The Republic of Burundi becomes the sixth member country of the African Coffee Organization. The signing ceremony was held at the Africa Hall on 6 October 1986. Photo © ECA



The Comoros became the nineteenth ECA/OAU Member State to sign the constitution for the African Regional Centre for Engineering, Design and Manufacture on 15 October 1979. Photo © United Nations



ECA marking its twenty-fifth Anniversary. Photo© ECA



## 1978–1988 ARTICULATING AND ADVOCATING A COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO AFRICA'S CRISES

The late 1970s saw a marked deterioration in the socioeconomic conditions of Africa and a subsequent quest for a unique African response and solution to the situation. The third decade thus focused on socioeconomic policy analysis and formulation to meet this challenge. ECA conceptualized key economic and social strategies and programmes, which made up the policy framework for Africa's socioeconomic development. These included the Lagos Plan of Action, the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, and the Industrial Development Decade for Africa.



Opening ceremony of the combined meeting of Trans-African Highway Authorities, Addis Ababa, October 1986. From right to left: Member of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) and Minister of Transport and Communication for Ethiopia, Yusuf Ahmed; Executive Secretary of ECA, Adebayo Adedeji; chief of ECA Transport, Communication and Tourism Division, Bongoy Mpekesa; and ECA Deputy Executive Secretary, MbaktamTchouta-Moussa. Photo© ECA





BIRTH OF A NATION: Secretary-General, Javier Perez De Cuellar (right) congratulating Sam Nujoma as the new President of Namibia, following the swearing-in ceremony on 21 March 1990. Photo© United Nations



Joint meeting of the Organization of African Unity and Economic Commission for Africa with organizations of the United Nations system. Photo © ECA

## 1988–1998 PROMOTING GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

This decade saw attempts to arrive at a more holistic approach to development policy formulation and implementation on the continent, encompassing a greater emphasis on institutional and people-centred initiatives to catalyse change. ECA was a leader in this effort, emphasizing the importance of human and social objectives, promoting gender and development issues, good governance and the “capable State”.



After the signing ceremony. From left to right: Executive Secretary of the ECA, Adebayo Adedeji; Officer-in-Charge of the Pan-African documentation and Information system (PADIS), Djamal-Eddine Benzine; Zambian Ambassador and Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Jegan C. Senghor. Photo© ECA.



Ninth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, held in Addis Ababa, 12 and 13 March 1993. Photo© ECA

ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS: African Union Symposium pre-African Development Forum event to examine the current status of the transition from OAU (from left to right: Secretary-General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, and ECA Executive Secretary, Kingsley Y. Amoako. Photo © ECA





African Centre for Women meeting on the committee on women and development 2001. Photo © UNECA



The Third African Development Forum (ADF III), which was held in Addis Ababa, between 3 and 8 March 2002, under the theme “Defining Priorities for Regional Integration in Africa. Shown from (L-R) NEPAD Steering committee, Executive Secretary of ECA, Kingsley Amoako, and NEPAD Secretariat. Photo © UNECA

## 1998–2008 ADAPTING TO THE EVOLVING INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILDING ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS

With the coming into force of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, ECA, again, reoriented its strategic directions in response to the changed institutional landscape in Africa. Among the key decisions made was significant rationalization of its programme orientation and governance structure in keeping with United Nations reforms, the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals and in enhanced partnership with the African Union–NEPAD programmes and structures.

In that regard, ECA transformed all its sectoral ministerial conferences into the relevant technical committees, retaining only the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The work programme was organized on a thematic basis around which partnerships were built. These were aimed at increasing focus, cost effectiveness and impact on African development. The programme focused on the following themes: economic and social policy; food security and sustainable development; development management; information for development; regional integration; and gender. Later, further adjustments were made to take on board the dynamics created by the establishment of the African Union.

MILESTONE: Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, celebrating the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement on 21 March 2018. In addition, 43 countries signed the Kigali declaration and 27 countries signed the protocol of the free movement of people. Photo© African Union





ECA, through its Social Development Policy Division, convened the first session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development in Addis Ababa, 19 and 20 November 2015. Photo © ECA



The second session of the Committee on Development Information Science and Technology (CODIST II) on the theme “Innovation for Africa’s Industrial Development” was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, 2 –5 May 2011. Photo © ECA

## 2008 – 2018 INTEGRATING AFRICA INTO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Africa has adopted NEPAD as the framework for social and economic development for achieving the Millennium Development Goals as acknowledged and integrated into the vision of the African Union for the twenty-first century. In response, ECA has once more restructured its programme in support of the African Union’s vision and priorities, with focus on achieving results in two related areas: promoting regional integration; and meeting Africa’s special needs and emerging global challenges. The work programme is organized around 10 subprogrammes that are designed to promote complementarities and place emphasis on priority sectors; while at the same time, highlight inconsistencies and duplication of functions.

The subprogrammes are focused on the following themes: trade, finance and economic policy; food security and sustainable development; governance and public administration; information and science and technology for development; economic cooperation and regional integration; gender and women in development; subregional activities for development; development planning and administration; statistics; and social development. Three support Divisions facilitate programme implementation: administration, conference and general services and policy and programme management.



Launch of the ECA Country Profiles at the Joint African Union Commission and ECA Conference of Ministers at Addis Ababa, March 2016. Photo © ECA.