



**African Institute for Economic
Development and Planning**

59th

SESSION OF THE IDEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

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Report of the 58th Session of the IDEP Governing Council

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10 December 2020

**Report of the fifty-eighth session of the Governing Council of the African
Institute for Economic Development and Planning**



A. 21-00570

I. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

A. Introduction

1. The fifty-eighth session of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) was held online on 10 December 2020. The meeting was chaired by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Vera Songwe, and attended by representatives of the following member States: Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal, the Sudan, Uganda and Zambia. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of IDEP, acted as Secretary to the Council. The present report outlines the proceedings of the session in line with the 11 items on its agenda. The reports presented during the session refer to the years 2019 and 2020. The names of those participating and the members submitting apologies or unable to participate are listed below.

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by the following members:

Vera Songwe	Chair (Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa)
Joseph Paul Ibouili Maganga	Member (Gabon)
Alhassan Iddrisu	Member (Ghana)
El Hadj Abdoulaye Touré	Member (Guinea)
Mouhamadou Bamba Diop	Member (Senegal)
Faisal Guma Abdelrahman Adam	Member (Sudan)
Joseph Muvawala	Member (Uganda)
Simon Miti	Member (Zambia)
Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane	Secretary and ex officio member (Director of IDEP)

3. The following members submitted apologies or were unable to attend because of connection difficulties:

Miguel Luba Bahosi	Member (Equatorial Guinea)
Joseph N. Mukui	Member (Kenya)
Khomoatsana Tau	Member (Lesotho)

4. In addition, the following persons attended as observers:

Thierry Amoussougbo	Head of the E-Learning and Knowledge Management Division, IDEP
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Mustapha Sadni Jallab	Head of the Training and Research Division, IDEP
Ron Kamwendo Jr.	Head of Administration, Finance and Partnerships, IDEP
Mamadou Cisse	Training Officer, Training and Research Division, IDEP
Flavia Ba	Research Officer, Training and Research Division, IDEP
Antonin Benoît Diouf	Head Librarian, E-Learning and Knowledge Management Division, IDEP
Woojoo Kim	Sustainable Development Goals and Volunteer Knowledge Management Specialist, IDEP
Pierrette Lou Nan Zah	Programme Assistant, IDEP
Zeynabou Kane	Assistant Training Officer, Training and Research Division, IDEP
Aime Mbatkam	Assistant Training Officer, Training and Research Division, IDEP
Catherine Lalyre Faye	Assistant Training Officer, Training and Research Division, IDEP
Anna Diop	Assistant to the Director, IDEP
Mamadou Diaw	IT Assistant, IDEP
Charles Bara	Library Assistant, IDEP

C. Opening remarks

5. Opening the fifty-eighth session of the Council, Ms. Ben Soltane welcomed the Chair and the members of the Council and thanked them for their participation in the current very challenging circumstances. She reminded participants that the session had been deferred to December 2020 following its postponement due to a lack of quorum at the session scheduled for November 2020 and the cancellation of the session scheduled for March 2020 due to the travel restrictions necessitated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

6. In her opening remarks, the Chair also welcomed and thanked the attending members for their availability to participate in the fifty-eighth session, which was being held online in consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. She commended the Institute on its agility in rapidly adapting to the new context through the transition of its in situ training programme to one held fully online, ensuring continued support for member States in their efforts to combat the varying

impacts of COVID-19 on their respective economies. She stressed the importance of the role of the Governing Council in guiding and supporting IDEP and reiterated the commitment of ECA to supporting the Institute and ensuring that it was able to discharge its mandate.

II. Adoption of the agenda [agenda item 2]

7. The Council adopted the following agenda for its fifty-eighth session:
 1. Opening of the session.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Adoption of the report of the fifty-seventh session.
 4. Matters arising from the report of the fifty-seventh session.
 5. Presentation and discussion of the 2019–2020 report of the Director:
 - (a) Activity report;
 - (b) Financial performance;
 - (c) Administrative matters.
 6. Approval of the revised 2019–2023 strategic plan.
 7. Review and approval of the 2021 annual budget.
 8. Other matters.
 9. Dates of the fifty-ninth session.
 10. Closing.

III. Adoption of the report of the fifty-seventh session [agenda item 3]

8. The Council considered and unanimously adopted the report of the fifty-seventh session without amendment.

IV. Matters arising from the report of the fifty-seventh session [agenda item 4]

9. All matters arising from previous sessions of the Council were presented by the Secretary to the Council, in her capacity as Director of the Institute, as summarized in the paragraphs below.

10. On the annual contribution of the member States, she commended those member States which had paid their contributions. She also expressed gratitude to the representative of Guinea to the Council, whose efforts had led to a significant payment from Guinea. She further informed the Council that communications on the organization of tailor-made courses had taken place with the ministries of foreign affairs and Guineans living abroad, and with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

11. She noted that the Institute was continuing its awareness-raising campaigns and advocacy among member States at large, with a special focus on those which had significant

arrears in their contributions. Those efforts included engagements: with member States at the session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in March 2019; with selected permanent missions in New York during the meeting of the high-level political forum in July 2019; at the 2019 and 2020 sessions of the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development; and with the permanent missions in Addis Ababa. Furthermore, reminder letters had been sent by the secretariat to member States three times per year.

12. With regard to the rules of procedure, she said that the updated version, incorporating all comments made at the Council's fifty-seventh session, had been circulated and to date no further comments had been received. The document was therefore considered final and adopted by the Council.

13. On the matter of the renewal of membership of the Council, she noted that little progress had been made, as planned engagements with certain member States had been precluded by COVID-19 restrictions and also by a number of electoral processes in 2020. She suggested, and the Council agreed, that the process should continue and be concluded in 2021.

14. Mr. Touré (Guinea) acknowledged the work of the Institute and reiterated the request addressed to the Institute for capacity development and training for public officials of his Government, as a follow-up to a course already delivered. As a consequence of the COVID-19 situation, it had not been possible to deliver the course in situ, as planned.

15. The Director confirmed that the Institute had been following up on the request and that a training measure would be arranged as soon as feasible. On the Institute's strategic plan, she pointed out that the revised plan and framework documents that had been circulated to the members incorporated all comments received and that a formal presentation was scheduled to be made under a separate agenda item during the current session.

16. In response to a question from Mr. Touré regarding the time frame for the renewal of the Council's membership, in view of the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, she confirmed that the Institute was planning to submit a renewal proposal to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development at its session in 2021. Depending on the attendance at that session and other stipulations of the rules of procedure and the statute of the Institute, proposals would be made for the renewal or non-renewal of respective country memberships. The conditions of eligibility for renewal would be communicated to members for their consideration and approval.

V. Presentation and discussion of the 2019–2020 report of the Director [agenda item 5]

A. Activity report

17. The Director presented the report on the activities of IDEP. That was followed by presentations on administrative and financial matters by the Head of Administration, Finance and Partnerships, Mr. Kamwendo Jnr.

18. The Director highlighted the key achievements of the Institute, emphasizing its rapid adaptation to the current situation, by transforming on-site training into digital training measures and development seminars into webinars. A total of 50 courses had been delivered

between 2019 and 2020, 19 in situ and 31 online. In addition, in 2019, the Institute delivered a total of eight development seminars and five high-level policy dialogues (2019); and, in 2020, nine webinars with their respective policy briefs. The number of participants had grown from 1,083 in 2019 to 2,033 in 2020, with a higher number of women participants: 300 in 2020 as against 257 in 2019. The fourth and fifth cohorts of the IDEP-University of Johannesburg master's course in industrial policy had been enrolled in 2019 and 2020 respectively. In terms of knowledge delivery, the number of downloads from the Institute's website had risen to 1,070,911 in 2019 and 1,680,754 in 2020; 1,112 titles had been added in 2019 and 1,616 in 2020 to the institutional digital repository; and 21 bibliographies, including of online texts, had been provided to trainees and participants of online webinars in 2020.

19. Members expressed appreciation of the quality of the report and the presentation and commended IDEP on its excellent achievements. They once again expressed concern over the limited financial contributions from the various sources. While acknowledging the mobilization strategy, they stressed the need for the Institute not only to sustain its current efforts, but also to explore further means of boosting contributions and the settlement of arrears, including through direct engagement with the ministries of economy, finance and planning of the member States concerned.

20. Members urged IDEP to give serious consideration to enhanced capacity-building efforts in the area of macroeconomic planning for a post-COVID-19 pandemic scenario. Mr. Touré noted the possibility of a strategy, based on the collective engagement of member States, on planning for a post-pandemic scenario from an early stage, with the collaboration of experts from member States and other stakeholders. Supporting that proposal, Mr. Muvawala (Uganda) suggested the engagement of a network of planners aimed at harmonizing the approaches, in close collaboration with the African Union Development Agency. That would lead to the framing of a common programme of work relating to macroeconomic planning for a post-pandemic scenario. Mr. Diop (Senegal) also suggested that the Institute should reinvigorate its partnership with the African Capacity-Building Foundation. Noting those suggestions and thanking participants for their comments, the Director observed that the Institute had a collaboration framework with both the African Union Development Agency and the African Capacity-Building Foundation and that a number of activities had been implemented jointly or were planned.

B. Financial performance and administrative matters

21. The presentation on administrative and financial matters was also welcomed by the members. On the administrative matters, Mr. Diop requested feedback on the outstanding matter of medical insurance for United Nations retirees living in Senegal since the deployment of the Umoja system. The Director informed members that the Institute considered the matter as a priority and was addressing it through the Human Resources Management Section of ECA in coordination with United Nations Headquarters in New York and that a solution was expected soon. While no specific comment warranting a response was made on the report on financial performance, the Director took the opportunity to inform members that consideration was being given to the introduction of a fee for the online training. Once a structure had been determined, it would be circulated to members for their consideration and approval.

VI. Approval of the revised 2019–2023 strategic plan [agenda item 6]

22. The 2019–2023 strategic framework and implementation plan was presented by the Head of the E-Learning and Knowledge Management Division, Mr. Amoussougbo, as an updated document of reference that addressed the current regional scenario, within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

23. He recalled that the strategic direction of IDEP was geared to the development of skills of a critical mass of officials on economic management and development planning for building inclusive economies resilient to various shocks, such as those inflicted by COVID-19, climate change and others – the core mission of IDEP as a training institution. The IDEP strategic framework and implementation plan stemmed cumulatively from: the guidance received in 2017 and 2018, at the fifty-third session of the Conference of Ministers of Economy, Finance and Planning and the fifty-seventh session of the Council respectively, and were aligned with the ECA strategic directions.

24. Where composition was concerned, he noted that the strategic framework incorporated an analysis of the regional and global socioeconomic context and the Institute's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Furthermore, it presented the IDEP vision and mission, results framework, stakeholder analysis and risk assessment and mitigation approach, all on the basis of a theory of change and the comments received.

25. On the theory of change underlying the strategic plan presented to the Council at its fifty-sixth session, he informed members that it was based on the Kirkpatrick model – a widely used evaluation model for training, with four levels of transformation. The model had been chosen for its ability to demonstrate, step by step, how the training and research of the Institute influenced the knowledge, skills, practices, habits, policies and subsequently the economic transformation of beneficiary countries.

26. He observed that the implementation plan was results-based, providing a clear outline of the short, medium and long-term results over the five-year planning period. Each result and outcome was supported by well-defined performance indicators, baselines and targets. The plan would be supported by a resource mobilization strategy, communication framework and detailed monitoring and evaluation plan. Among results expected by 2023 he highlighted the following:

- (a) Provision by 25 countries of tangible evidence of improvements made in their country in public sector management or development planning, with a plausible link to the knowledge, skills and tools acquired from IDEP;
- (b) Affirmation (with supporting evidence) by 70 per cent of former training beneficiaries, surveyed annually, that they had used the knowledge and tools acquired from IDEP to influence policies and practice;
- (c) Total of 12,000 persons trained, including 2,600 women;
- (d) Annual growth of 5–10 per cent in the number of technical assistance requests;
- (e) Total of 40,000 visits to the virtual library annually.

27. He informed members that the plan was costed at \$28 million, in other words, an average of \$5.6 million per year.

28. He provided the following additional highlights on performance thus far in the first two years of implementation of the strategic plan:

(a) In all, 70 per cent of the alumni had reported with evidence that they had used the knowledge, skills and tools acquired in IDEP courses;

(b) Between 2012 and 2020, 9,500 African public officials had attended IDEP training, with a notable increase in women's participation, in particular during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

29. Members positively acknowledged the revised strategic plan and commended IDEP on the progress made in its implementation to date.

VII. Review and approval of the 2021 annual budget [agenda item 7]

30. The proposed budget for 2021 was presented by Mr. Kamwendo Jnr. He reminded members of the change in United Nations planning cycle, from biennial to annual, and noted that the 2021 budget had taken into account the following factors: fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; lessons learned from two years of implementing the strategic plan (2021 being the midpoint of the plan); and the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the delivery of in situ training; and the growing demand for training from member States. In that context, he emphasized the need for strengthened collaboration with ECA divisions in the interests of joint delivery.

31. With reference to the budget itself, he pointed out that it was 22 per cent lower than the 2019 budget, thanks to the shift towards e-learning, and that 68 per cent of the resources were allocated to programme activities, compared to 74 per cent in 2019. In terms of the Institute's budget allotment per division, he highlighted the expected increase for the Knowledge Management Division for 2021, mainly due to the reorientation from face-to-face to online activities. Where sources of funding were concerned, he drew attention to the assumption by the Institute that it would be granted greater access to funds of the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation, on which most of its programmatic outputs would rely. He also emphasized the need for the effective mobilization of resources through effective and win-win partnerships and the contributions from member States.

32. In his concluding remarks, he stated that the Institute would maintain its programmatic orientation towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, while providing for reasonable agility and speed of response to member States' requests. In addition, he highlighted the Institute's continued efforts to frame its training programme to reach a broader audience – especially women.

33. Mr. Touré commended IDEP on the programme plan and budget, applauding its clear focus on strengthened support for member States. He also expressed appreciation for the focus on online learning under the prevailing circumstances but stressed the need to keep that approach under continuous review, to ensure that in situ courses were offered where possible. He recommended in particular that the request by Guinea for a tailor-made course should be

explored, with a view to delivering such a course in situ in Guinea while respecting all relevant COVID-19 protocols.

34. In response, the Director agreed with the assertion that some learning objectives could only be optimally achieved through face-to-face training measures. She informed members that the Institute planned to start organizing such courses and meetings starting from July 2021 and would prioritize in situ courses that required as little travel as possible.

35. There being no further comments, the 2021 plan and budget were approved.

VIII. Other matters [agenda item 8]

36. The Director reiterated the need for the Institute to explore the levying of fees for some training measures, to ensure the sustainability of its training programme. In that context, she reaffirmed that the Institute, together with strong support from ECA, would continue to lobby the General Assembly for an increase in the United Nations grant to IDEP for the purposes of ensuring staff salaries and stressed the need for the adoption of another resolution on that issue.

37. Mr. Kamwendo introduced the matter of a resolution sought by the Institute from the Council which would give it access to funds from the regular programme of technical cooperation, without the need to demonstrate specific requests from member States. The members agreed with that proposal. After some discussion, the Chair recommended that the matter should be given further consideration in internal discussions.

IX. Dates of the fifty-ninth session [agenda item 9]

38. The Director observed that it was not yet possible to suggest a specific venue for the next session of the Governing Council, given the uncertainty of travelling conditions. Nonetheless, and in accordance with past trends, she proposed that the Council should hold its fifty-ninth session in one of the countries of the members of the Council upon invitation from that country, failing which the session would be held in Dakar, should conditions permit travel.

39. If it remained impossible to hold the session in situ, it would once again be held online.

40. Following a discussion, the Council agreed upon June 2021 as the month in which the session should be scheduled.

X. Closing [agenda item 10]

41. In her closing remarks, the Director reiterated her thanks to the Chair and the members of the Council for their attendance at the session, the valuable comments that they had made and their continued interest and support. She lauded the close cooperation between IDEP and the Government of Senegal, which greatly facilitated the work of the Institute.

42. The Chair likewise expressed appreciation to the members of the Council for their participation and constructive comments. She reiterated the importance of capacity-building and its central role in fulfilling the mandate of ECA. She thanked all the staff of IDEP for their hard work during the current difficult period and for the quality of the results achieved.

43. She then declared the fifty-eighth session of the IDEP Governing Council closed at 2 p.m.
