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Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Executive summary

This report covers the activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa from May 2018 to April 2019. The report documents the impact of the work of UNCTAD on development in Africa in the following areas: transforming economies, tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience, improving competitiveness, enriching multilateralism, and empowering people and investing in their future.



Introduction

1. This report documents the activities of UNCTAD in support of Africa from May 2018 to April 2019. It provides specific examples of the impact of UNCTAD work on the development of Africa in the following areas: transforming economies, tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience, improving competitiveness, enriching multilateralism, and empowering people and investing in their future.

I. Major highlights: Hosting of or participation in important events

2. The commitment of UNCTAD to spreading prosperity to all manifests itself in Africa through a range of activities, including by convening events allowing stakeholders to discuss specific drivers of economic and social development and share experiences and lessons learned. Below are selected examples. Support to Africa has a cross-cutting focus across all UNCTAD divisions in collaboration with the Regional Office for Africa and the New York Office and is integrated into the broad programme of UNCTAD work.

A. High-level panel side event on migration and structural transformation in Africa, United Nations General Assembly, New York, United States of America, September 2018

3. The *Economic Development in Africa Report 2018: Migration for Structural Transformation* had an impactful launch on the continent and contributed to dispelling myths and false perceptions about migration in Africa. For instance, the report stated that migration in Africa was mostly intracontinental, that intra-African migration could be a catalyst for economic growth and that migration could bring developmental benefits to host countries. Messages and findings of the report were discussed at a high-level-panel, a side event that took place at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Against the backdrop of negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the report contributed significantly to creating awareness and to discussions in 2018 on how to maximize the economic and developmental impacts of migration in Africa.

B. World Investment Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2018

4. The UNCTAD World Investment Forum 2018 was attended by the President of Namibia and a significant number of government ministers from African countries. Several events were organized for the benefit of African countries. These included a round table of ministers from the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), which included the launch of a joint UNCTAD–ACP programme to coordinate the implementation of the guiding principles for sustainable investment policymaking developed by the two entities. A ministerial round table for the least developed countries and business executives and a ministerial meeting on promoting investment in landlocked developing countries hosted speakers and participants from several African countries to discuss how investment could be mobilized for sustainable development. The events were also used as a platform to link potential investors with target countries at the ministerial level. The investment village at the Forum provided an excellent opportunity for countries to showcase their investment opportunities and establish contacts with prospective investors. Many African countries made use of this platform.

C. African Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees, Addis Ababa, November 2018

5. African countries seeking to reduce the cost, time and complexity of interregional and international trade in goods gathered for the first African Forum for National Trade

Facilitation Committees in Addis Ababa on 27–29 November 2018. More than 250 participants from some 44 countries attended. The participants represented public sector agencies such as ministries of trade and customs authorities, as well as the private sector. Women represented one fourth of all participants. This landmark event, held by UNCTAD and seven partner organizations, came as Africa was scaling up its trade-easing efforts after the entry into force in February 2017 of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and as it prepared to implement the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area, signed in March 2018. With well-functioning national trade facilitation committees, countries can make trade easier, faster and cheaper. For developing countries and the least developed countries in particular, the majority of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, full implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation could lead to a reduction in trade costs of up to about 15 per cent.

6. The forum was the result of close collaboration between multilateral and international organizations. The event was led by UNCTAD and co-organized by the Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe/Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, International Trade Centre, World Bank Group, World Customs Organization and WTO, with the support of several bilateral donors (Danish International Development Agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, European Union, Government of Finland, Islamic Development Bank and The Commonwealth). According to 94 per cent of participants who took part in an online satisfaction survey, the forum met their expectations, and 84 per cent considered that they had sufficient opportunities to express their views and interact with other participants.

D. Africa E-commerce Week, Nairobi, December 2018

7. UNCTAD and eTrade for all partners held the first Africa E-commerce Week in Nairobi, from 10 to 16 December 2018. This event, which was co-organized in partnership with the African Union and the European Union, received more than 2,000 registrations from 60 countries, 33 of which were least developed countries. Participants included some 600 government officials, 700 business representatives and more than 250 members of civil society, youth and academia, with more than 30 sessions directly organized by eTrade for all partners. The outcome of the event, the Nairobi Manifesto on the Digital Economy and Inclusive Development in Africa, charted a course for African countries with policy recommendations in seven policy areas: e-commerce readiness assessment and strategy formulation, information and telecommunications technology infrastructure and services, payment solutions, trade logistics (transport and trade facilitation), legal and regulatory frameworks, e-commerce skills development, access to financing, e-commerce and women's empowerment, and measuring e-commerce and the digital economy.

E. Side event on illicit financial flows and trade in Africa: The role of South–South cooperation, second High-level United Nations conference on South–South Cooperation, Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, March 2019

8. The principal aims of the side event entitled “Illicit financial flows and trade in Africa: The role of South–South cooperation”, co-organized by UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Programme, were the following:

(a) To stimulate discussions on how illicit financial flows were impeding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) To delineate policy actions and areas of cooperation, including South–South cooperation, to deal with illicit financial flows in Africa.

9. The intended outcomes were primarily to devise with an action plan for addressing illicit financial flows and trade in Africa, under the framework of South–South cooperation and to outline the possibilities of technical cooperation involving the Economic Commission for Africa, UNCTAD, the United Nations Development Programme and potential donors. It is estimated that Africa still faces an enormous infrastructure funding gap of about \$170 billion. If Africa could identify and repatriate the \$100 billion per year that it is losing owing to illicit financial flows, the infrastructure financing gap would be largely filled. It is important to understand that illicit financial flows are a global governance problem; therefore, South–South and triangular cooperation can offer an effective platform for collaboration between member States to enhance the capacity of African Governments to track, stop and ultimately repatriate funds that have been illegally transferred from Africa. Illicit financial flows are mentioned several times in the final outcome document of the Conference (A/CONF.235/3*).

II. Outcomes and impact of UNCTAD activities in support of Africa

A. Transforming African economies

10. UNCTAD supports African countries in transforming their economies to create jobs, reduce poverty, accelerate sustainable development and facilitate the region’s integration into the world economy.

Strengthening entrepreneurship and the private sector

11. The industrialization and structural transformation of Africa rests on the building of productive capacities, of which entrepreneurship is a key component. UNCTAD contributes to the strengthening of entrepreneurship through research, advocacy and capacity-building. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2018: Entrepreneurship for Structural Transformation – Beyond Business as Usual* contains detailed policy recommendations on how to overcome obstacles to entrepreneurship in the least developed countries, including those in Africa. The report was launched and disseminated in several African cities.

12. During the reporting period, UNCTAD also provided assistance in the form of advisory services, policy workshops and seminars to 14 established Empretec centres in Africa. This assistance was based on the tools and discussion platforms offered by the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework. Training was provided to entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, and support was given to regional networks and initiatives. The Framework continued to be leveraged for the development of targeted national entrepreneurship strategies, and the United Republic of Tanzania launched an inclusive national entrepreneurship strategy and action plan for its implementation based on the Framework. UNCTAD is now assisting Ethiopia with the development of a national enterprise strategy based on the Framework.

13. UNCTAD implemented a new capacity-building project on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal reporting in Africa. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Governments to measure and monitor the contribution of the private sector to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Building productive capacities

14. Through the project “Indices for benchmarking productive capacities for evidence-based policymaking in landlocked developing countries”, UNCTAD is strengthening the capacity of selected landlocked developing countries in Africa to develop productive capacity indices and use them to support evidence-based policymaking. There were various key outputs: A national case study for Rwanda was completed; a national capacity-building

workshop¹ was held in Kigali in July 2018; and a regional workshop on productive capacities, export diversification and structural transformation was held in Botswana in November. It is envisaged that a publication on such indices will be issued in early 2020 as an input to the midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

Building capacities in industrial policymaking

15. UNCTAD organized workshops in Maputo and Lusaka to help strengthen industrial policy and facilitate dialogue between the public sector, the private sector and civil society. A third capacity-building workshop was held in Mauritius in April 2019. The preparation and delivery of these workshops involves collaboration with local governments and international partner organizations such as the Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Economic Commission for Africa, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

16. UNCTAD has collaborated with the Economic Commission for Africa Subregional Office for Central Africa in building the capacity of government officials in that subregion to use state-of-the-art tools and methods for assisting in designing their industrialization and economic diversification strategies. UNCTAD provided advisory and substantive contributions to capacity-building activities that took place in Yaoundé in May 2018 and for an economic diversification study for Equatorial Guinea that is being prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa.

17. During the reporting period, UNCTAD contributed to building human and institutional capacities of African stakeholders and harnessing the opportunities arising from the trade and the services sectors as engines of structural transformation.

Building capacities in trade in services

18. In 2018, an interdivisional team at UNCTAD organized capacity-building activities in 29 African countries, training 482 specialists (31 per cent women) on issues such as trade-in-services statistics and e-commerce legislation in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and WTO, and regional institutions such as the African Union. It continues to work closely with the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics.

19. In 2018, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, started implementing a project on the services trade in Africa. The project aims to enhance the capacity of beneficiary countries to measure the contribution of services to regional value chains and design services policies that would enable a higher degree of integration into such value chains. The service is extended to six partner countries: Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. The choice of services (finance, transport and tourism) is based on the degree of importance of services for trade and global value chains. As many developing countries have limited data and information on the size and contribution of services and how services are generated, the Economic Commission for Africa and UNCTAD developed a methodology to assess the contribution of services to regional value chains. The agencies set up a capacity-building seminar for national consultants and focal points of the project in January 2019. The quantitative and qualitative instruments provided will enable partner countries to assess a specific regional value chain and distil recommendations for services policy in 2019. To facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned, as well as to expand the access to tools, a knowledge-sharing platform is being developed and will be accessible to a broad range of stakeholders.

Providing technical assistance in trade-in-services statistics

20. In October and December 2018, UNCTAD and WTO delivered an online course on trade-in-services statistics, thus contributing to institutional collaboration on such statistics.

¹ Further information on the workshop is available at <https://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=1881> (accessed 19 July 2019).

The course, which had an emphasis on Africa, had more than 24 participants, including 10 women, from the African Union and 22 countries. The course was a response to several demands for technical assistance in trade-in-services statistics. Based on evaluation responses, the success rate of the course was 72 per cent and the satisfaction rate, 90 per cent.

Promoting services exports and reviewing services policies

21. During this period, UNCTAD finalized country case studies for Senegal and Zambia on the use of the WTO landlocked developing country services waiver. These studies are expected to promote the services exports of these countries through preferential treatment. UNCTAD is also supporting the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to finalize a first-ever region-wide services policy review. The review is carried out in the context of broader support provided by UNCTAD to regional integration and efforts to ensure coherence in member States' negotiating positions across various trade forums.

Deepening regional integration and trade for structural transformation

22. UNCTAD provides support in concluding the negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area (box 1).

Box 1

UNCTAD support towards the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area: Selected examples

Rules of origin. UNCTAD, the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development, is supporting negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area by providing advisory and technical assistance in many areas. As a member of the African Continental Free Trade Area Technical Working Group on Rules of Origin, UNCTAD has provided support to the African Union in drafting technical regulations on the rules of origin for the African Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, including for the case of special economic zones.

Tariff schedules and data. UNCTAD participated in the three sessions organized by the African Union relating to the African Continental Free Trade Area in May, November and December 2018, presenting statistics on intra-African import and export among 54 African countries, taking stock of the progress made in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and analysing the different approaches to listing sensitive and excluded products under the tariff negotiations. UNCTAD helped member States of the African Union carry out detailed analyses and simulations of tariff negotiations in connection with the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Non-tariff measures. UNCTAD, with financial support from the Government of Germany, provides support to the African Union Commission, regional economic communities in Africa and African countries in developing and implementing a framework to report, eliminate or monitor non-tariff barriers and increase regulatory transparency among African countries in the African Continental Free Trade Area. In February 2019, the Commission and UNCTAD organized a meeting in Nairobi with regional economic communities in Africa to discuss and elaborate the details of a possible continental non-tariff barrier mechanism that will deal with barriers of this type faced by traders in intra-African trade transactions in the African Continental Free Trade Area. Participants in this meeting included representatives from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), SADC, East African Community (EAC), ECOWAS, Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development and Arab Maghreb Union, as well as from the Economic Commission for Africa, African Organization for Standardization, National Metrology Institute of Germany and independent experts.

Competition. UNCTAD presented a draft negotiation text for the African Continental Free Trade Area Protocol on Competition, and a report on a case for a stand-alone protocol on consumer protection. UNCTAD participated in the discussion of the African Continental Free Trade Area Protocol on Competition, which took place in Addis Ababa in February 2019 organized by the African Union Secretariat.

Investment and intellectual property. To date, the negotiations have focused on protocols on competition, intellectual property rights and investment, which UNCTAD

supported with presentations on key issues in the Investment Protocol of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The discussions of the meeting fed into the preparation of a report entitled “*Assessing Regional Integration in Africa IX: Next Steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area*”. UNCTAD will assist in the drafting of chapter 5 dealing with investment. UNCTAD also provided written inputs on specific features of international investment agreements for a joint policy paper, which will guide the draft of the Investment Protocol of the African Continental Free Trade Area. UNCTAD also supported the Tripartite Committee of Senior Officials with a presentation on investment-related considerations relevant for the second phase of the Tripartite Free Trade Area negotiations. UNCTAD is providing technical support in discussions on the intellectual property rights aspects of the ongoing negotiations that began in 2018.

23. Through its flagship reports, UNCTAD has identified investment and technology as the two main drivers of structural transformation in economies in Africa. UNCTAD conducts activities to help African countries harness domestic and foreign investment as a means to catalyse structural transformation in their economies.

24. The UNCTAD *World Investment Report* provides annual data on foreign direct investment and a survey and analysis of national and international investment policy developments. The series also dispenses a comprehensive analysis of timely investment-related developments, providing countries with the knowledge and information to respond effectively to such developments. The 2018 edition of the report focused on the themes of investment policy and new industrial policy, both of which are highly relevant to many African countries seeking to develop such policies. The report presents options for deploying investment policy tools effectively in the interest of industrial development.

Conducting investment policy reviews and promoting investment

25. To support developing countries in their efforts to diversify their economies, attract higher levels of foreign direct investment and promote sustainable development, UNCTAD conducts investment policy reviews, which are diagnostic studies of the legal, regulatory, institutional and operational environment for investment. Such reviews encourage official development assistance and investment in countries where needs are the greatest. The investment policy review of Cabo Verde was completed and presented at the tenth session of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, in order to disseminate lessons and facilitate the exchange of best practice, for the benefit of other countries. Work on the investment policy review of Angola and the implementation report of the investment policy review of Nigeria is under way.

Harnessing science, technology and innovation for transformative growth

26. UNCTAD has conducted science, technology and innovation policy reviews in Uganda and Ethiopia. In 2018, UNCTAD conducted two missions in Uganda in connection with the science, technology and innovation policy review of that country: a scoping mission in May and a fact-finding mission in October. During these missions, the national partner, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Uganda, developed and set up a national science, technology and innovation policy review task force. Partnering agencies, namely the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and United Nations Technology Bank, are engaged in advisory and substantive contributions. In Ethiopia, UNCTAD conducted a fact-finding mission in December 2018 in collaboration with national counterparts, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology of Ethiopia and other ministries and agencies under an intergovernmental committee for the policy review. These activities, carried out in connection with these policy reviews, have enabled science, technology and innovation stakeholders in these countries to reach a better understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of their innovation systems and identify strategic priorities and policy options for their development.

27. UNCTAD worked closely with the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People’s Republic of China to strengthen South–South collaboration in science, technology

and innovation. Under this initiative, experts and government officials from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, and participants from other regions attended capacity-development programmes in September 2018 on science, technology and innovation policy and management for sustainable development (Guangzhou) and on a high-technology park and incubator development (Wuhan).

B. Tackling the vulnerabilities of economies in Africa and building their resilience

28. UNCTAD assists African countries in reducing the vulnerability of their economies to commodity dependence, increasing the value addition of their economic activities and engaging in export and economic diversification.

Promoting economic diversification and linkages

29. UNCTAD actively assisted countries in diversifying their economic activities, engaging in value-chain processing and building linkages across sectors. For instance, in 2018, UNCTAD continued to support Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe towards adding more value to their cotton crop through a project on the promotion of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa. UNCTAD initiated a new, two-year project to support integrated value-chain development in four landlocked commodity-dependent developing economies, including one in Africa (Ethiopia), which focused on the agri-food sector.

30. At the request of several member States in the Sahel region, UNCTAD produced a report examining the economic, social and environmental relevance of gum arabic as an important agriculture commodity. The UNCTAD report shows that gum arabic is a promising commodity for producing countries due to its potential to generate foreign exchange, promote sustainable agriculture and forestry, ensure food security and combat desertification and climate change.

31. Following the publication of *Commodities at a Glance: Special Issue on Gum Arabic*, UNCTAD held a round table in Geneva in April on the economics of gum arabic in Africa. Over 90 participants attended, including representatives from 33 permanent missions to the United Nations Office in Geneva, 24 private sector entities and 11 civil society and international organizations. Nine African countries made formal declarations and concurred with the suggestion to create an association of gum arabic-producing countries in Africa. Participants agreed on nine concrete recommendations emanating from the presentations and discussions and called upon UNCTAD to help producing countries realize the full potential of their gum arabic resources. A project proposal on strengthening capacities to improve value added of the gum arabic sector in African economies was prepared. The goal of the project, to be financed by the South–South Cooperation Assistance Fund of China, is to identify and implement coherent, evidence-based and inclusive policies aimed at improving value added of gum arabic, bolstering smallholder farmers' profitability, achieving gender equality, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

32. UNCTAD established strategic partnerships and memorandums of understanding with Nha Trang University in Nha Trang, Viet Nam, as well as with the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping of Mauritius. The two countries will host a regional centre of excellence on fisheries. The first regional training course on harnessing the potential of the fisheries sector for economic development in the least developed countries was held at the Asian Regional Centre for Excellence in October and November 2018. The participants included 19 representatives of 10 African countries. A second training course was held at the African Regional Centre of Excellence in Mauritius in May 2019.

Harnessing geographical indications of origin in trade diversification strategies

33. UNCTAD assisted in the implementation of the continental strategy for Africa on geographical indications through technical assistance in Benin and the Niger and a capacity-building workshop in Florence, Italy. It has also been providing technical

assistance to the National Geographical Indications Committee of the Niger. UNCTAD participated in an executive workshop for the aforementioned committee in Niamey in November 2018. UNCTAD held a session on its work on and vision of geographical indications for the least developed countries. Lessons learned drew on the case of Kampot pepper in Cambodia. The objective was to assist the Geographical Indications Committee of the Niger in identifying a way forward, including possible funding opportunities, and to delineate UNCTAD assistance to further efforts in that area.

Providing technical advisory services on debt management

34. UNCTAD contributes to reducing the exposure of African countries to debt sustainability by providing them with targeted technical advisory services on debt management.

35. The Debt Management and Financial Analysis System Programme of UNCTAD continued to provide public debt management support to African countries. Debt management offices in 29 ministries of finance or central banks in 23 African countries used the programme's debt management software to manage their central government debt and government-guaranteed debt. As a result, these countries benefited from comprehensive debt databases for operational and reporting purposes. In addition, the programme provided capacity-building opportunities for debt management officials in debt data validation, debt statistics, debt portfolio analysis and operational risk management. With UNCTAD support, 12 countries produced debt statistical bulletins, and 6 countries, debt portfolio reviews, thus enhancing debt data transparency. Operational risk management was strengthened in 12 countries through the elaboration of procedures manuals or by implementing disaster recovery arrangements. As clear evidence of improved capacity, more than 95 per cent of African countries supported by the programme reported effectively to the World Bank Debt Reporting System database during the period under review.

Box 2

European Union–UNCTAD joint programme of support for Angola: Train for Trade II

The European Union–UNCTAD joint programme of support for Angola (Train for Trade II) was launched in Luanda in April 2018. The high-level launch was aimed at raising political and institutional awareness about the overall project and its implementation strategies. It further sought to enhance coordination and mobilize all relevant stakeholders for the full and effective implementation of the project. The project is an UNCTAD-wide undertaking that cuts across several work programmes and addresses several Sustainable Development Goals (directly or indirectly), including Goals 1, 8, 9, 12 and 17. In 2018, UNCTAD conducted 15 activities – training workshops, study tours and train-the-trainer workshops. The activities focused on several key issues: a national green export review, entrepreneurship, trade facilitation and commercial diplomacy. By 31 December 2018, UNCTAD had trained more than 304 stakeholders. Train for Trade II has had 304 beneficiaries so far. Further, key export items outside the oil sector – timber, honey, fisheries and coffee – were identified, and their potential export market was mapped. For example, under the European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme of Support for Angola, a training session was held in Luanda in October and November 2018 to raise awareness and policy understanding of the trade integration of Angola into SADC, the Tripartite and the African Continental Free Trade Area. Sixty participants attended the session, which focused on market access conditions, customs tariffs and non-tariff measures, and tools that could be used to conduct trade analysis. As a follow-up, a module on non-tariff measures that will serve as a basis for further training of policymakers and private sector entities is under preparation.

C. Improving competitiveness in African economies

UNCTAD support to improve the competitiveness of countries in Africa

36. Support aimed at improving competitiveness often takes place through the creation of new regulatory and legal frameworks, revisions to existing frameworks and the improved enforcement of these frameworks.

Strengthening the capacities of competition authorities and improving legislative and policy frameworks on competition and consumer protection

37. With UNCTAD assistance, Morocco engaged in a voluntary peer review of its consumer protection law and policy. As a result, the Government of Morocco amended its legislation based on the recommendations in the report, an example of how this exercise contributes to the improvement of the consumer protection framework of that country. UNCTAD, in cooperation with the host country Governments, established four regional training centres on competition (in Egypt and Tunisia) and consumer protection (in Egypt and Lebanon). The centres will serve as infrastructures to further develop and expand cooperation in both areas at the regional levels. This will eventually pave the way for strengthening the capacities and expertise of the beneficiaries' officials towards a more effective enforcement of competition and consumer protection laws and policies.

38. UNCTAD conducted training workshops for staff of the fair competition commissions of both mainland United Republic of Tanzania and Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, in November 2018. This event served as an inception capacity-building programme for the new agency. Most of the newly recruited staff of the Zanzibar Fair Competition Commission were women. According to feedback from the participants, the programme enhanced their understanding of competition and consumer protection issues. Further, UNCTAD conducted a voluntary peer review of the competition law and policy of Botswana. The findings and recommendations stemming from the review were launched during the seventeenth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy in Geneva in July 2018. The peer review contributed to legislative reform in Botswana, as Botswana revised its competition law in 2018.

39. UNCTAD is implementing a regional programme on competition and consumer protection legislation in Central Africa funded by the European Union. The programme covers eight countries. The effective implementation of this programme will contribute to the improvement of the business environment in Central Africa with a view to building a competitive subregional economy, integrated into the world economy and stimulating growth and development while ensuring consumer protection.

40. Selected achievements of this programme include the revision of the community competition rules for the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the development of regional guidelines on consumer protection for Central Africa based on the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection, the revision of the consumer protection law of the Republic of Congo and the revision of the competition law of Sao Tome and Principe. The regional guidelines on consumer protection for Central Africa were validated in December 2018 by six government ministers in charge of competition law and policy in the Community.

41. Two draft reports on gender and competition, and gender and consumer protection provided an opportunity to introduce the gender aspect into discussions with competition and consumer protection agency officials. This raised awareness among the stakeholders about the importance of gender equality and the need to mainstream gender in policies on competition and consumer protection.

42. UNCTAD provides guidance to African countries on how to harness trade as a tool for economic transformation by improving their trade policy regimes, thus boosting their competitiveness in regional and world markets and facilitating their integration into regional and global value chains.

Supporting national trade facilitation committees

43. In 2018, UNCTAD work in support of national trade facilitation committees continued with the delivery of national training workshops to the committees throughout the year and concluded with the First African Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees, held in Addis Ababa in November. Since the launch of the UNCTAD empowerment programme for such committees in 2016, UNCTAD has been providing extensive support to national trade facilitation committees in 22 countries, most of which are in Africa. Such work reached more than 1,800 trade facilitation stakeholders, one third of which were women. In total, 93 per cent of beneficiaries said that the programme had helped them improve their knowledge of trade facilitation, and 82 per cent considered that they were in a better position to assume their roles as members of the committees.

Supporting the use of trade information portals

44. Trade information portals are an information technology tool providing traders with the necessary information on trade procedures for export, import and transit operations. By implementing the portals, African countries are implementing article 1 of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (2015). The portals have become essential in implementing trade facilitation reforms. UNCTAD has helped advance the trade facilitation agendas of numerous African countries. To date, trade information portals have been set up in four EAC countries. The EAC regional trade facilitation index was launched during a ministerial retreat on trade facilitation held in Nairobi in December 2018. The index allows a comparison and harmonization of trade procedures among EAC partner States at the regional level and will be hosted at the EAC Secretariat. The portals not only provide information to traders but also help national trade facilitation committees simplify and streamline trade procedures to reduce the time and costs of trade transactions.

Promoting sustainable transport connectivity

45. UNCTAD provided tailored training in response to needs identified by Port Sudan, the Sudan. The training package focused on the following topics: port performance indicators, private sector involvement in port management/public-private partnerships and port concessions, and port community systems/single window. The training course emphasized the role of improved and efficient port operations to contribute to the economic sustainability of the Sudan. By working closely with local stakeholders – the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency, UNCTAD technical assistance, aimed at building the capacities of developing countries to shift towards sustainable freight transport, promotes ownership by the beneficiary countries and allows for context-specific approaches tailored to the needs of the countries and regions. In 2018, UNCTAD supported the Agency in the preparation of its sustainable freight transport strategy to be incorporated into its master plan.

Non-tariff measures

46. UNCTAD continued to help African countries and their regional economic communities deal with non-tariff measures and non-tariff barriers. UNCTAD is assisting the regional economic communities of the Tripartite – COMESA, EAC and SADC – in streamlining non-tariff measures in Eastern and Southern Africa by enhancing the transparency and availability of information on such measures. Data on non-tariff measures have already been collected and validated in 12 countries in the region. The data are fed into a Tripartite database on non-tariff measures, and capacity-building is provided by UNCTAD to government officials in order to facilitate the updating of the database on non-tariff measures. To support the data collection work, UNCTAD conducted online training on non-tariff measures data collection in May and July 2018 for the Tripartite; 45 people from 12 countries participated.

47. In August 2018, the COMESA Research Forum, held by COMESA and UNCTAD in Nairobi, featured a discussion on the importance of non-tariff measures for international trade and how to exploit growth strategies. The findings of a recent UNCTAD publication entitled “*Non-tariff Measures: Economic Assessment and Policy Options for Development*”

were discussed and contributed to improving the technical capacity of researchers in COMESA to address the implications of non-tariff measures and in turn improve export performance and integration in the global economy.

48. An example of research conducted by UNCTAD on non-tariff measures in Africa can be found in the publication, *Regional Integration and Non-tariff Measures in the Economic Community of West African States*. The study, prepared by the African Development Bank and UNCTAD, provides an institutional overview of such measures and an assessment of their impacts on regional integration in West Africa.

Support in engaging in reforms

49. UNCTAD contributes towards improving the competitiveness of African economies by providing them with assistance in engaging in governance and economic efficiency reforms.

Business facilitation

50. In 2018, UNCTAD deployed its business facilitation programme of web-based e-government systems – eRegulation, eRegistration and trade portals – in several African countries, thereby helping them to improve their business climate through transparency, simplification and the reduction of business creation and operational requirements. A trade portal was rolled out in Rwanda in support of trade operations through transparency and administrative streamlining, and a website was designed to provide information on the procedures required to pass through the Dakar–Bamako Corridor. Online investment guides were designed for the Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria and Zambia.

Intellectual property policy

51. UNCTAD also supports African countries with the formulation of intellectual property policies. In May 2018, the Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa adopted the country's first national intellectual property policy, which was supported by UNCTAD. Key elements of the policy were presented during workshops organized by UNCTAD, and capacity-building in the area of intellectual property rights was also provided.

Information and communications technologies

52. UNCTAD helps African countries create a favourable environment to benefit from opportunities created by information and communications technologies and to use such technologies to promote trade through e-commerce.

E-commerce and e-trade readiness

53. UNCTAD is currently helping Rwanda prepare its own e-commerce strategy. Rwanda aims to leverage e-commerce to foster domestic trade and help its small and medium-sized enterprises export to regional and international markets.

54. UNCTAD, in collaboration with eTrade for all partners, is helping the least developed countries prepare for the digital economy. Assessing readiness in e-commerce and the digital economy is increasingly becoming a priority for many of the least developed countries, as the digital economy expands and covers more business activities. With the support of development partners – the Governments of Germany and Sweden, and the Enhanced Integrated Framework – in 2018, UNCTAD completed seven landlocked developing country assessments in Africa with policy recommendations on how to improve the readiness of such countries for the digital economy.

55. In October 2018, representatives of West African countries, the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, UNCTAD and nine eTrade for all partners gathered in Ouagadougou in a joint effort to consider the region's e-commerce future and to set the milestones of a new regional e-commerce strategy. The rapid eTrade readiness assessments conducted by UNCTAD in the region showed that vast reform projects are needed to seize fully the development opportunities offered by e-commerce. The assessments provided a solid basis for identifying bottlenecks and proposing solutions.

The workshop was the first step in the preparation of a regional e-commerce strategy in the West African Economic and Monetary Union in support of regional integration, which resulted in a range of official recommendations.

56. In February 2018, UNCTAD delivered a follow-up face-to-face workshop in Madagascar on the legal aspects of e-commerce. The workshop was organized by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Justice, Chamber of Commerce and the Committee for E-commerce Development of Madagascar. More than 100 Malagasy participants from the judiciary, the Government and the private sector took the first online course on the topic in 2017. This activity is part of the capacity-building activities planned in Madagascar and sponsored by the Government of Finland.

D. Making multilateralism work for African economies

Accession to the World Trade Organization

57. UNCTAD has helped African countries gain membership of WTO or become more effective members of the organization. UNCTAD, through the Enhanced Integrated Framework, provides support to countries as they move forward to participate in the global trading system.

58. In the area of WTO accession, UNCTAD assisted Algeria, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan in WTO accession negotiations. Further, UNCTAD continued to provide targeted support for recently acceded countries that tend to face particular development challenges in implementing WTO commitments and legal reforms. These included Cabo Verde, Liberia and Seychelles.

Aid for trade

59. UNCTAD is an active partner agency of the Enhanced Integrated Framework, along with the International Monetary Fund, International Trade Centre, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank and WTO. The Framework is a multi-donor programme, which helps the least developed countries participate more actively in the global trading system by helping them tackle supply-side constraints on trade. Several least developed countries in Africa have chosen UNCTAD to be their lead agency to update their diagnostic trade integration studies and implement the action matrices of the studies. UNCTAD is currently providing technical assistance to the Democratic Republic of Congo to update its diagnostic trade integration study.

60. Through its Regional Office for Africa, UNCTAD has become a valued partner for the provision of advisory services on trade integration, policy and capacity-building in Africa. During the reporting period, UNCTAD support was lent primarily to the African Union Commission and its members in negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area. Particular areas of support were the finalization of phase 1, which included technical studies; the preparation of schedules; advisory services; and workshops. Support was also given to launch the preparations for phase 2 of the negotiations. This included technical studies, the preparation of draft negotiating instruments and support to regional economic communities.

61. The Addis Ababa Trade and Development Dialogue Series, produced by the UNCTAD Regional Office for Africa in cooperation with the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme, is aimed at strengthening dialogue on trade for development in Addis Ababa. In October 2018, the theme of the dialogue was migration and trade, which contributed to a stimulating debate on the issue.

E. Empowering Africans and investing in their future

Building capacities of port officials through Train for Trade

62. The Train for Trade port management programme of UNCTAD supports port communities in developing countries seeking to achieve efficient and competitive port

management. To increase trade flows and foster economic development, the programme creates port networks of public, private and international entities.

63. In 2018, the port management programme provided 398 port managers, 27 per cent of which were women, from 12 African countries, with capacity-building in modern port management. That these activities have been largely funded by developing countries testifies to the high relevance and value of the programme on the ground. Train for Trade also fosters international and South–South exchanges, providing a platform for international and regional stakeholders to interact and engage in a sustainable manner.

Building capacities of African statistical systems to strengthen policymaking

64. Since 2013, UNCTAD has been collaborating with the statistics department of the West African Economic and Monetary Union to set up statistical tools for the measurement and analysis of trade in services that will help the eight member countries of the Union devise services policies in alignment with their social and economic development goals. The targets of the project are to develop harmonized methods for data collection, data processing and dissemination; to provide support in the application of those methods; and to build a joint statistical database. In June 2018, UNCTAD and the West African Economic and Monetary Union hosted a workshop in Dakar to prepare for the first comprehensive trade-in-services survey. In March 2019, a workshop was held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, to review the survey and discuss results.

Trade and gender: Online courses

65. UNCTAD work on trade and gender contributes towards women’s empowerment in Africa by highlighting the gender ramifications of African macroeconomic policies and illustrating with country case studies the constraints that create or perpetuate gender inequality in Africa.

66. As a component of a capacity-building project on trade and gender funded by the Governments of Finland and Sweden, UNCTAD developed a teaching package on trade and gender. The package includes a two-volume manual and an online course. The objective of this distance-learning initiative is to equip academics, government officials and members of civil society in developing countries and the least developed countries with analytical tools to analyse the two-way relationship between trade and gender and to produce gender-aware policy recommendations and research. Four iterations of the standard online course have been produced so far. The 2018 iteration took place in May and July 2018. Some 79 stakeholders were selected for the course, including participants from 14 African countries. Building on the success of the standard online course and of the regional course for COMESA stakeholders in 2017, UNCTAD developed additional teaching resources with a focus on two other regions in sub-Saharan Africa, namely EAC and SADC. The EAC online course on trade and gender hosted 86 participants, 47 of which successfully completed the course. The development of the teaching module and the online course was supported by Trade Mark East Africa. Sixty-three per cent of the course participants considered the course to be excellent. The SADC online course on trade and gender hosted 62 participants; 37 successfully completed the course.

Research, advocacy and policy recommendations relating to gender

67. In partnership with Trade Mark East Africa, UNCTAD issued two reports, one entitled “*East African Community Regional Integration: Trade and Gender Implications*” and the other, “*Advocating for Gender-sensitive Trade Policymaking in the East African Community*”. The reports were launched in Nairobi in May 2018 during a regional workshop organized in cooperation with Trade Mark East Africa. The main report looks at gender and trade issues in the five EAC countries to assess the impact of regional integration on women’s employment and quality of life. It underlines the importance of putting in place a range of different policies to address gender inequalities and ensure that women fully benefit from international trade.

68. In April 2019, UNCTAD held three national seminars on women in informal cross-border trade in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia to present the

findings and policy recommendations of the UNCTAD report, *Borderline: Women in Informal Cross-border Trade in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia*, published in 2019. The seminars provided an opportunity to discuss with national stakeholders the challenges and opportunities of women in cross-border trade and the possible means of redressing trade barriers to informal cross-border trade. The study integrates findings and consultations with government stakeholders, focus-group discussions with formal and informal cross-border traders held during a fact-finding mission and online surveys administered to a sample of 40 representatives from cross-border trade associations and civil society organizations working with small-scale or informal cross-border women traders in the three target countries.

69. UNCTAD also completed a document entitled “A *Small-scale Trader’s Guide to Rules and Procedures*”, to be distributed during capacity-building activities that will be organized by UNCTAD at six selected borders. The guide, which responds to a general lack of information, is expected to provide traders with key information about their rights and obligations, and rules and procedures.

70. UNCTAD continues to help African policymakers enrich their learning and training for the direct benefit of the continent and its human capital accumulation under the Paragraph 166 programme.

71. UNCTAD conducted two regional courses on key issues on the international economic agenda for government officials, in partnership with the Institute for Diplomatic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt (25 November to 6 December 2018) and the University of Nairobi, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya (25 March to 5 April 2019). The contribution of UNCTAD focused on investing in human capital towards the development of Africa in general and stronger public institutions in particular. The capacity-building programme focused mainly on enhancing the knowledge of government officials of various economic issues, including economic development, trade and trade agreements, foreign direct investment and trade facilitation, and technology and innovation. In this regard, UNCTAD trained 42 policymakers from 25 African countries of developing and least developed economies. In addition to the regional courses, the Paragraph 166 programme delivered short courses in 2018–2019 for delegates of permanent missions of the United Nations Office at Geneva, including representatives of African countries. These courses provided the latest insights of UNCTAD research on cross-divisional trade and development issues, with topics ranging from the formulation of inclusive gender-responsive trade policies, trade and inequality, to better trade with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

F. General impact assessment

Financial resources

72. With regard to the financial resources earmarked for Africa in 2018, it is estimated that total expenditure on national, regional and interregional projects in support of Africa was \$17,505,936, representing 40 per cent of total expenditure.

Impact of UNCTAD work

73. The impact of UNCTAD work in Africa can be summarized in five outcome areas: transforming economies, tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience, improving competitiveness, enriching multilateralism, and empowering people and investing in their future. As the leading United Nations body on trade and trade-related issues, UNCTAD in 2018–2019 produced a noticeable impact on the following areas: fostering trade, regional integration, and investment; building productive capacities; harnessing information and communications technologies; and maintaining debt sustainability to accelerate inclusive structural transformation in Africa. Five examples are listed below:

(a) In the area of supporting negotiations on the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, UNCTAD is actively engaged in providing technical advisory services, research and capacity-building in most areas of the negotiations (box 1);

(b) In the area of trade facilitation, UNCTAD has played a major role in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and empowering national trade facilitation committees;

(c) In the area of investment, UNCTAD has provided support to improve the investment and business climate in Africa and to channel investment into entrepreneurship;

(d) In the area of benchmarking and measuring productive capacities, UNCTAD has provided assistance in evidence-based policymaking;

(e) In the area of monitoring and managing debt sustainably, UNCTAD has provided African countries with targeted technical advisory services on debt management.
