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Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Summary

This report covers the activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa from May 2019 to March 2020. It describes the impact that the work of UNCTAD has had on development in Africa in the following areas: transforming economies; tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience; improving competitiveness; enhancing multilateralism; and empowering people and investing in their future. Impact is achieved under the three major pillars of the work of UNCTAD, namely, research and policy analysis, intergovernmental consensus-building and technical assistance. This report provides a non-exhaustive list of examples of how UNCTAD is delivering results in Africa.



I. Introduction

1. This report documents activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa from May 2019 to March 2020. It provides examples of the impact that the work of UNCTAD has had on development in Africa in the following areas: transforming economies; tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience; improving competitiveness; enhancing multilateralism; and empowering people and investing in their future.

II. Highlights

A. Major events

2. UNCTAD is the United Nations body mandated to assist developing countries, including member States in Africa, in harnessing international trade and its interrelated areas, such as science, technology and innovation, development finance and investment, as a means to achieve sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The UNCTAD commitment to achieving prosperity for all manifests in Africa through a range of activities, including convening events to engage stakeholders in discussing specific drivers of economic and social development and sharing experiences and lessons learned.

1. **Participation in the twelfth Extraordinary Summit of the Assembly of the African Union on the African Continental Free Trade Area, Niamey**

3. In July 2019, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD participated in the Extraordinary Summit, to commemorate the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area and to present *Economic Development in Africa Report 2019: Made in Africa – Rules of Origin for Enhanced Intra-African Trade*, emphasizing the findings in the report that rules of origin could be a game-changer for the continent provided they were simple, transparent, business-friendly and predictable. The Secretary-General addressed the African Continental Free Trade Area Business Forum on the theme of “Positioning business to operate to scale in the African Continental Free Trade Area market”. With the President of the Niger, UNCTAD presented a new trade barrier platform to the African Union, which aims to facilitate quicker and more efficient trade.¹ The online tool was developed in coordination with the African Union and will be managed by the African Union through the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which will also facilitate the resolution of reported barriers between countries.

2. **High-level panel: “Assessing the dynamics between migration and development in Africa in the context of the multilateral trade and development agenda”, Cairo**

4. This session was held in January 2020 in the context of the International Forum on Migration Statistics organized by the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The panellists highlighted the need to improve migration data collection to facilitate its use in policy analysis, as well as the need for capacity-building and coordination across various ministries. They underlined that the enhanced and more regular availability of labour market data was needed on both the supply and demand sides, to inform migration and trade policies. The link between trade and migration as an important production factor was emphasized in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the latter was recognized as an opportunity to deepen integration on the continent and harmonize and implement freedom-of-movement policies.

¹ See <https://tradebarriers.africa/>.

B. UNCTAD Regional Office for Africa

5. The Regional Office plays a key role in facilitating and coordinating technical assistance from UNCTAD to the African Union Commission and its member States, regional economic communities and other key stakeholders and partners in Africa. Since 2015, the Regional Office has been committed to supporting member States in Africa in addressing complex trade and development challenges, including those related to alleviating poverty, enhancing employment and addressing barriers to cross-border trade. It works on addressing such development challenges by assisting in research, policy analysis, capacity-building and advisory activities.

III. Outcomes and impacts of UNCTAD activities in support of Africa

A. Transforming economies

6. UNCTAD undertook a range of activities to support member States in Africa in transforming their economies, creating jobs, reducing poverty, accelerating sustainable development and facilitating the region's integration into the global economy. UNCTAD conducts activities to help countries in Africa harness domestic and foreign investment as means to catalyse structural transformation in their economies.

7. **Assistance in the negotiation and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.** The entry into force of the Continental Free Trade Area on 30 May 2019 and the launch of the operational phase on 7 July 2019 represented important opportunities for the continent's growth and integration. In collaboration with government representatives, negotiators, business associations and other institutional actors, UNCTAD provided technical advisory activities and assistance in the drafting of modalities and legal texts of the various sections of the Agreement. UNCTAD supported technical working groups in negotiations on goods and services liberalization and on different protocols. UNCTAD also supported the compilation and processing of customs data, including detailed trade and tariff data, and facilitated its transformation into a common product classification system.

8. **Rules of origin for the African Continental Free Trade Area.** *Economic Development in Africa Report 2019* states that boosting intra-African trade through the African Continental Free Trade Area depends on the effective implementation of rules of origin, as a critical policy instrument for preferential trade liberalization among member States, and that the adoption of lenient and flexible rules of origin and the strengthening of institutional capacities to ensure impartial, transparent and predictable implementation of agreed rules of origin is essential. UNCTAD is a member of the technical working group on rules of origin and in this role has supported the African Union in drafting technical regulations on rules of origin, including with regard to special economic zones. At the request of the African Union Commission, UNCTAD provided technical support and advisory activities to the technical working group on rules of origin and in the negotiation and drafting of the annex to the Agreement on product-specific rules of origin.

9. **International investment agreements.** UNCTAD was engaged in the discussions of phase 2 of the investment protocol of the Agreement, which is expected to reflect the modern elements found in the UNCTAD investment policy framework for sustainable development, including its guiding principles for investment policymaking and the international investment agreement reform package. In 2019, several countries in Africa revised their international investment agreement policies by amending and/or terminating outdated treaties, drafting new model international investment agreements and engaging in regional investment agreements that aim to safeguard the right to regulate, while providing protection for and promoting and facilitating responsible investment.

10. **Intellectual property policies.** In 2019, UNCTAD provided technical inputs to the negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Tripartite Free Trade Area. During the Africa Regional Trade Forum, held in Ethiopia, UNCTAD contributed to a

session titled “African Continental Free Trade Area implementation: Breaking down geographical, logistical and regulatory barriers to trade and investment in the Horn of Africa to boost industrialization – A focus on the pharmaceutical industry”. Emphasis was made on progress at the subregional level in advancing the harmonization of regulations on medicines and linkages with the Continental Free Trade Area, and the role of voluntary collaboration in research and development and technology transfer. In 2020, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, UNCTAD will provide training for trade negotiators on intellectual property development and the role of regional cooperation. UNCTAD has prepared two technical reports addressing intellectual property rights and regional trade integration; and customs protection of intellectual property rights and regional trade integration in developing countries, with reference to the Continental Free Trade Area.

11. **Advocacy work on non-tariff barriers.** UNCTAD supported the African Union in the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area online mechanism for the reporting, monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers, launched in July 2019. The mechanism allows for direct reporting by the private sector on trade-related obstacles, with issues sent to government officials formally nominated to coordinate their resolution. In 2019, national focal points from 41 African Union member States were trained in the use of the system. In 2020, UNCTAD expects to provide training in 12 African Union member States. The online mechanism will assist countries in collecting and disseminating comprehensive information on all currently applied trade-related official government regulations, including all sanitary, phytosanitary and technical requirements. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the African Union, disseminates the mechanism through various platforms such as meetings and workshops of the African Union, secretariats of the regional economic commissions and other stakeholders.

12. **Assistance in formulating trade policies.** In cooperation with the African Union Commission, UNCTAD supports countries in Africa in finalizing market access offers and implementing tariff reduction commitments in a manner supportive of their development needs. In Angola, UNCTAD supported the Government in building capacity in trade formulation and implementation in both multilateral and regional trade. In response to a request from Lesotho, UNCTAD updated the consolidated national trade policy. In Namibia, UNCTAD supported the Government in assembling the major components of a national trade policy. UNCTAD supported stakeholders from Zambia in assessing the implications of trade liberalization in the African Continental Free Trade Area on the economy and its intra-African trade performance and provided support in preparing a comprehensive trade policy.

13. **Services policy reviews.** At the request of the Economic Community of West African States secretariat, UNCTAD provided technical assistance in conducting a services policy review to support the deepening of the regional integration of services in West Africa and the region’s participation in African Continental Free Trade Area services-related negotiations. Subsectors reviewed included financial, legal, transport, energy and tourism services.

14. **Contribution to assessing regional integration in Africa.** In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, UNCTAD contributed substantive analysis to *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa IX: Next Steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area*, launched in July 2019 at the Extraordinary Summit.² UNCTAD provided inputs on electronic commerce (e-commerce) and integration in a digitalizing Africa. The analysis reviewed opportunities and challenges related to e-commerce in Africa, including with regard to persisting digital divides and the role of digitalization in national industrial policies. UNCTAD also analysed interlinkages with the action plan of the African Union for boosting intra-African trade,³ issues related to phase 2 of the Continental Free Trade Area negotiations and broader policy issues such as with regard to data, gender, inclusion, cybercrime, taxation, informal trade and consumer protection. Specific policy recommendations were made on the inclusion of e-commerce in the Continental Free Trade Area.

15. **Trade in services.** Integration into higher value-added activities in regional and global value chains is crucial for development outcomes and achieving the Sustainable

² See <https://www.uneca.org/publications/assessing-regional-integration-africa-aria-ix>.

³ See <https://www.uneca.org/pages/action-plan-boosting-intra-africa-trade>.

Development Goals. Services are essential in this endeavour due to their ability to stimulate trade and provide comparatively high value addition. UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Africa are implementing a United Nations Development Account project in Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Togo on strengthening the capacities of national and regional policymakers and stakeholders to measure and analyse value chains and design services policies aimed at enabling higher integration into regional and global value chains. A train-the-trainer seminar to discuss and validate a methodology for measuring the contribution of services to regional chains was held in Ethiopia and six national workshops were delivered, with a focus on the selected sectors of finance, infrastructure and tourism services. One value chain case study in each country has been analysed and quantified using appropriate tools and methodologies.

16. **Tools for the measurement and analysis of trade in services.** In partnership with the West African Economic and Monetary Union, UNCTAD set up statistical tools for the measurement and analysis of trade in services to assist the eight member States of the Union in the formation of tailored policies on services trade, aligned with their social and economic development goals. The partnership aims to develop harmonized methods for data collection, processing and dissemination, to provide support in the application of these methods and to build a joint statistical database. Workshops were hosted in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo to validate survey results and refine methodological issues. In June–September 2019, training on trade in services was provided to approximately 80 participants from the eight member States via an electronic learning tool. UNCTAD provided methodological documents on imputing missing values, treating non-response and weighting population. UNCTAD is developing a methodology and database to address freight costs. In 2020, under the project, UNCTAD has begun to build an information technology statistical system that member States can use to compile and disseminate their statistics.

17. **Investment data in Africa.** UNCTAD publishes foreign direct investment data and trends analysis, as well as its survey and analysis of national and international investment policy developments, in the annual *World Investment Report*. *World Investment Report 2019: Special Economic Zones* provided an overview of the global landscape of special economic zones and offered advice on how to respond to fundamental challenges to zones posed by the sustainable development imperative, the new industrial revolution and changing patterns of international production. In 2018, foreign direct investment flows to Africa rose by 11 per cent, to \$46 billion, making it the fastest growing region in terms of foreign investment. In addition in 2018, foreign direct investment flows to the 33 least developed countries in Africa increased by 27 per cent, to \$12 billion. In 2019, among countries in Africa, Kenya and Nigeria were listed among the top 20 economies with the most special economic zones.

18. **Training on investment and special economic zones.** In 2019, building on the *World Investment Report 2019*, UNCTAD held three events related to the issue of special economic zones in Africa, as follows: in Eswatini, training on an introduction to and policy objectives of special economic zones, as well as best practices in special economic zone development and management, arranged with the support of the African Export-Import Bank and including policymakers from Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia; in Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, a seminar at the headquarters of the African Union to present the key findings of *World Investment Report 2019*; and, in Tunisia, a policy briefing arranged with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the topic of special economic zones, with participants from several countries in North Africa.

19. **Africa Investment Forum, Cairo.** In November 2019, UNCTAD participated in this forum and shared an analysis of investment opportunities and potential in Africa. In addition, at a high-level workshop for countries in Africa, UNCTAD delivered training on African and global foreign direct investment trends, investment promotion and facilitation, international investment agreements and digitalization.

20. **Investment policy reviews.** In 2019, UNCTAD prepared reviews for Angola, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire. UNCTAD continued to assist Cabo Verde and Kenya in implementing the recommendations from their reviews, to improve their investment climates and secure additional development gains from foreign direct investment. UNCTAD also delivered other regional activities on capacity-building for investment policymaking. In 2019, UNCTAD

continued its capacity-building activities for investment promotion officials and policymakers and its advisory activities for investment promotion agencies, notably in the Anima Investment Network for Mediterranean agencies, the East African Community and the International Network of Francophone Investment Promotion Agencies. A regional seminar on the facilitation of investment in Goals-related projects was organized in partnership with the East African Community secretariat.

21. **Digital economy.** *Digital Economy Report 2019: Value Creation and Capture – Implications for Developing Countries* examines the scope for value creation and capture in the digital economy by developing countries, including in Africa, and pays special attention to developments in digital platforms and digital entrepreneurship in Africa. Many new opportunities are created, yet widening digital divides threaten to leave developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and countries in Africa, further behind. A smart embrace of new technologies, enhanced partnerships and greater intellectual leadership are needed to redefine digital development strategies and the future contours of globalization. The report presents recent trends and discusses key policies for value creation and capture in the digital economy, notably with regard to entrepreneurship, data, trade, competition, taxation, intellectual property and employment.

B. Tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience

22. UNCTAD assists countries in Africa in reducing the vulnerability of their economies to commodity dependence and seeking opportunities to increase value addition in their economic activities based on commodities. UNCTAD provides guidance on how to harness trade as a tool for structural transformation and how to improve trade policy regimes to boost their competitiveness and facilitate their integration into regional and global value chains.

23. **Regional training on productive capacities.** UNCTAD, through a project titled “Indices for benchmarking productive capacities for evidence-based policymaking in landlocked developing countries”, is strengthening the capacity of selected landlocked developing countries in Africa to develop productive capacity indices and use them to support evidence-based policymaking. In April 2019, a regional capacity-building training session was held in Windhoek. UNCTAD supported national statistical offices and academia in Botswana and Namibia in developing capacities to collect relevant data and compute their respective national productive capacity indices. In February 2020, a workshop and capacity-building training session was held for statistical experts from Rwanda on the use and applications of a productive capacity index, to assist in evidence-based policymaking.

24. **Support for development efforts in Angola.** The European Union–UNCTAD joint programme of support for Angola aims to support Angola in its efforts towards structural transformation, the identification of potential non-oil export products and the diversification of the economy, as well as integration into the regional and global economy (see box).

European Union–UNCTAD joint programme of support for Angola: Train for Trade II, 2017–2021

This programme is one of the components of a trade support project financed by the European Union, with a total budget of €12 million. The project is an UNCTAD-wide undertaking that cuts across several work programmes of UNCTAD and addresses several of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goals 1, 8, 9, 12 and 17. Through its seven intervention areas, the programme is expected to support the graduation process and beyond, by improving capacity in Angola for policy formulation and implementation, as well as by providing training for private sector enterprises, contributing directly to economic growth, economic diversification, job creation, poverty reduction and improved living conditions for the population.

In 2019, the programme helped to identify eight new, green categories of products with export potential, mapped the value chains and supported the development of action plans for seven derived products. An investment policy review was completed and published with policy recommendations aimed at improving the investment climate and attracting more

foreign investment. The programme provided assistance in implementing the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization, supported a trade logistics review and provided training to over 250 small and medium-sized enterprises through the Empretec programme methodology. To date, there have been nearly 700 beneficiaries in Angola of training and policy-oriented activities and nearly one third of the participants has benefited from multiple capacity-building activities.

The UNCTAD empowerment programme for national trade facilitation committees will continue to provide face-to-face and online training. In 2020, the transport and logistics component will start work on corridor review, with a particular focus on the agricultural sector, and continue to deliver support for public–private partnership modalities. Focused training modules will be developed and delivered on selected areas of the creative economy.

Source: UNCTAD, 2020, European Union–UNCTAD joint programme of support for Angola: Train for Trade II, available at <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/ALDC/Technical%20Assistance/TFBK-Angola-Train-for-Trade-II.aspx>.

25. **Regional centres of excellence.** UNCTAD has established strategic partnerships and memorandums of understanding with the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping of Mauritius, which will host a regional centre of excellence on fisheries. In May 2019, UNCTAD delivered the second regional training course on how to best harness the potential of the fisheries sector for socioeconomic development in the least developed countries and structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies. Course modules addressed the broader social and environmental dimensions of the fisheries sector and the social, environmental and economic benefits of relevant certifications and the application of standards. More than 50 representatives participated from 13 countries, including Burundi, the Gambia, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Sudan and Uganda. In December 2019, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Centre for the Studies of the Economies of Africa, hosted a policy-oriented workshop in Abuja titled “Fostering productive capacities, structural economic transformation and export diversification in landlocked developing countries and other structurally weak West African economies”, with over 55 participants from 15 countries in West Africa. The event provided an opportunity to introduce the productive capacity index, assess the performance of economies in West Africa in building productive capacities and enable the identification of policies and measures needed to build productive capacities and foster export diversification and structural transformation.

26. **Trade in commodities.** In 2019, UNCTAD conducted research and provided assistance to support trade in commodities and explored avenues to overcome key challenges associated with commodity dependence. Through the Trade Policy Training Centre in the United Republic of Tanzania, a training course on commodities-related issues was offered to 32 participants from francophone countries in Middle and West Africa. Through the African Economic Research Consortium, two workshops on macroeconomic issues, including commodities, were held in Kenya and South Africa, with about 50 participants from across Africa. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a seminar on commodities and climate change, aimed at raising awareness of the importance of climate change-related opportunities and challenges, particularly in commodity-dependent developing countries in Africa, was attended by about 100 participants. UNCTAD participated in a validation workshop of the commodity strategy of the African Union and in a validation workshop on agricultural value chains held in Nairobi by the African Union, Economic Commission for Africa and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

27. **Promoting cotton by-products.** UNCTAD is implementing a United Nations Development Account project on promoting cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa, in Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa. The project aims to build national capacity to evaluate and pursue opportunities in adding value to cotton by-products. UNCTAD conducted surveys in each country, which have informed national action plans to develop cotton by-products, agreed by consensus at national multi-stakeholder workshops. UNCTAD also provided assistance in drafting profiles for attractive investment opportunities in processing, for example in surgical cotton wool, feed for chicken and fish and environmentally friendly biomass briquettes and pellets, all derived from different residues

in the cotton value chain. Such commercial initiatives can create new jobs and income opportunities in the cotton sector, particularly for women and for farmers and entrepreneurs.

28. **Integration into regional and global value chains.** With funding from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Subfund, UNCTAD is implementing a project on integrating landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries into regional and global value chains. The objective is to support integrated value chain development in four landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries, including Ethiopia, by enhancing capacity in development policies and strategies, to promote better integration into value chains and create development linkages. In 2019, a report on the international export markets for roasted coffee from Ethiopia and a national survey of the downstream value chain were completed. A report on the domestic value chain and a national workshop are scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2020. With support from the African Export-Import Bank and the Commonwealth, UNCTAD is implementing a project on identifying regional value chains in Africa in leather and leather products, with a focus on 11 countries. In addition, UNCTAD is implementing a United Nations Development Account project on development policies for sustainable economic growth in Southern Africa, focused on how to strengthen regional value chains in Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in sectors such as textiles and clothing. With funding from the Subfund, UNCTAD is delivering a technical cooperation project titled “South–South integration and the Goals: Enhancing structural transformation in key partner countries of the Belt and Road Initiative”, aimed at sharing lessons from China in the areas of trade and industry, finance, the digital economy and debt management, with Ethiopia as the pilot country.

29. **Support for national trade facilitation committees.** UNCTAD delivered training workshops to such committees throughout 2019. Work supporting such committees directly supports compliance with article 23.2 of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and achieving target 17 under Goal 17, on encouraging and promoting effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships. The implementation of the empowerment programme for such committees in various countries in Africa was funded through support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the European Union and Trade Mark East Africa.

30. **Enhanced trade facilitation and customs management.** The UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) programme helps facilitate trade, increase and secure customs revenue, reduce clearance times and trade costs, assess customs performance and combat illegal trade. In 2019–2020, 27 countries in Africa benefited from the support of the ASYCUDA programme and five additional countries in Africa, namely, Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar and Zimbabwe, adopted the ASYCUDA system for performance measurement, which provides live information and statistics to detect anomalies in customs operations and increase their efficiency. A co-delegation agreement was signed between UNCTAD and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to develop trade information portals and provide regional ASYCUDA support through the regional support centre in Zambia. The objective is to improve regional skills, enhance South–South cooperation in the region and develop applications to enhance trade facilitation at the national, regional and continental levels. In 2019, the ASYCUDA regional transit solution was launched in three corridors under the Economic Community of West African States, namely between Benin and the Niger for all types of goods and between Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire for hydrocarbons. The solution helps ensure the reduction of delays and costs and the simplification of procedures. The ASYCUDA programme has been collaborating with the International Trade Centre since 2019 in developing a tool that extracts trade data from ASYCUDA to be provided to the International Trade Centre and the African Trade Observatory. The tool was implemented in Uganda in 2019.

31. **Support for trade logistics in freight forwarding services.** To develop a local sustainable training institution on freight forwarding services in Uganda, UNCTAD organized a train-the-trainer session in association with the Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations, the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, the Uganda Freight Forwarders Association and the Uganda Revenue Authority. Trainers included participants from the above institutions and academia.

32. **Support for public debt management.** Debt management offices in 29 ministries of finance or central banks in 23 countries in Africa use the UNCTAD Debt Management and Financial Analysis System programme software to manage their central government and government guaranteed debt. The countries benefit from comprehensive debt databases for operational purposes and reporting. The programme provides capacity-building opportunities for debt management officials in debt data validation, statistics, portfolio analysis and operational risk management. With support from UNCTAD, countries in Africa progressed in the area of debt reporting and analysis, with statistical bulletins produced in 13 countries and portfolio reviews produced in 11 countries, thereby enhancing debt data transparency. Currently, more than 90 per cent of countries in Africa supported by the programme reported effectively to the World Bank External Debt Reporting System database.

C. Improving competitiveness

33. UNCTAD supports countries in Africa in improving their competitiveness by assisting them in improving the functioning of markets in Africa, enhance the efficiency of their State apparatus and achieving a better distribution of functions between States and markets. UNCTAD assists countries in Africa in creating a favourable environment to benefit from opportunities created by information and communications technology and in using such technology to promote trade through e-commerce.

34. **Science, technology and innovation policy reviews.** In 2019, UNCTAD finalized the review of Ethiopia in collaboration with the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, continued work on the review of Uganda and began work on the review of Zambia. In Uganda, UNCTAD conducted a second fact-finding mission, prepared a draft of the review and held stakeholder discussions, as well as capacity-building workshops on science, technology and innovation policy and development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Partner agencies in Kampala included the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

35. **Support for science, technology and innovation policy formulation in regional economic communities.** In November 2019, UNCTAD held a regional workshop in Nigeria on “Rethinking technology transfer for sustainable development and transformative change in Africa”, with participants from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. The event was hosted by the Nigeria National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion and its partners and was conducted in cooperation with the Science Policy Research Unit of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. In December 2019, on the occasion of Science Forum South Africa, a brainstorming session was organized with Southern African Development Community member countries on a project to support science, technology and innovation policy in the countries. Consultations were organized to facilitate the participation of countries in Africa in the discussions of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its priority themes for 2020, namely, harnessing rapid technological change for inclusive and sustainable development; and exploring space technologies for sustainable development and the benefits of international research collaboration in this context.

36. **Enhanced electronic government systems.** In 2019, UNCTAD deployed a business facilitation programme with electronic government systems (eRegulation, eRegistration and trade portals) in several countries in Africa, including Benin, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, thereby helping them improve their business climates through transparency, simplification and the reduction of requirements for business creation and operation. A trade portal for the East African Community was established. Preparation of an online investment guide for Cameroon is under way.

37. **Voluntary peer review of competition law and policy in Botswana.** In May 2019, the results and recommendations of the peer review were disseminated at a workshop in Gaborone that included representatives from relevant ministries, the competition authority, sector regulators and the private sector. The peer review contributed to legislative reform in Botswana that led to the expansion of the mandate of the competition authority, to include

consumer protection. The new Competition and Consumer Protection Authority commenced operation following the enactment of the Competition Act and Consumer Protection Act in December 2019. The Competition and Consumer Board and the Competition and Consumer Tribunal were also established.

38. Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-Commerce and the Digital Economy.

The Intergovernmental Group of Experts was established in accordance with the decision of member States in the Nairobi Maafikiano in view of the growing importance of the digitalization of the economy, including e-commerce. A working group on measuring e-commerce and the digital economy was created that aims to advance cooperation on measuring data on e-commerce and the digital economy; to improve the availability of such data; and to enhance the availability, quality, comparability, usability and relevance of statistics, with a view to supporting evidence-based policymaking, in particular in developing countries, including those in Africa, where there is a significant lack of relevant statistics. The first meeting of the working group took place on 3 and 4 December 2019. The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts will focus on digital platforms and value creation in developing countries and the implications for national and international policies.

39. Empowering women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries.

In April 2019, with support from the Netherlands, UNCTAD launched the eTrade for women initiative as a spin-off of the eTrade for all initiative. The initiative aims to make women digital entrepreneurs in developing countries a force for inclusive wealth creation and development. Through a series of regional master classes, the initiative aims to help the next generation of women entrepreneurs in developing countries thrive in the digital economy and become credible contributors to policymaking processes. The first master class in Africa was held in February 2020 in Côte d'Ivoire, with 19 women selected from over 100 applicants from francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It benefited from collaboration with local institutions such as the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire and eTrade for all partners in Africa such as the African Development Bank and the United Nations Capital Development Fund in West Africa.

40. E-commerce and law reform.

UNCTAD began to explore collaborations with the digital centre of excellence established by the Economic Commission for Africa in cooperation with the African Union Commission, in the development of a continental digital transformation strategy to facilitate the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Areas of cooperation include the digital economy and the formulation of framework principles for good digital identity.

41. Information and communications technology policy reviews.

In response to a request by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Rwanda, UNCTAD drafted a national e-commerce strategy in consultation with stakeholders from the private and public sectors in Rwanda and with funding from the United Kingdom. The strategy assesses the situation of e-commerce in Rwanda and offers strategic recommendations and an action plan for its development and use. It integrates the objectives in the Smart Rwanda Master Plan on the development of trade, services and industrial sectors, as well as parallel projects and initiatives related to e-commerce, such as the Made in Rwanda policy. The strategy proposes a governance model similar to that in the Master Plan, with a national e-commerce steering committee that will coordinate with the master plan steering committee.

42. Rapid eTrade readiness assessments.

Since their launch in 2017, 25 assessments have been conducted in least developed country member States, of which 12 are in Africa, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The first assessment in a non-least developed country member State in Africa is under way in Côte d'Ivoire.

43. Second African Union E-commerce Conference, Dakar, 15–17 October 2019.

UNCTAD presented *Digital Economy Report 2019*, participated in a panel titled “Producing in the digital age: How is digitalization changing production and development?” and shared lessons learned from the rapid eTrade readiness assessments conducted in Africa at a panel titled “The governance of digital trade and the economy”.

D. Enhancing multilateralism

44. **Collaboration with United Nations agencies in Africa.** In 2019, UNCTAD deepened its cooperation with United Nations agencies and international organizations, to enhance the development of a coherent approach to trade and development assistance in Africa. UNCTAD participates in the United Nations Country Team in Ethiopia, promoting “Delivering as one” to achieve the Goals. In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, UNCTAD provided expertise in developing and designing the African Continental Free Trade Area country business index, a perception-based questionnaire aimed at analysing the business environment and opportunities and obstacles in countries as perceived by business actors. In collaboration with the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD has advocated for the empowerment of the most vulnerable social groups, namely, women and youth. UNCTAD participated in the She Trades forum organized by the International Trade Centre by sharing its expertise in analysing trade barriers for women across the continent and how women can fully benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area.

45. **Support through the Enhanced Integrated Framework.** UNCTAD is a partner agency of the Framework, which includes the International Monetary Fund, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. The Framework is a multi-donor programme that supports the least developed countries in becoming more active players in the global trading system by assisting them in addressing supply-side constraints to trade. Several of the least developed countries in Africa have requested UNCTAD to act as their lead agency in updating their diagnostic trade integration studies and implementing the related action matrices. UNCTAD thereby directly assists these countries in better exploiting trade opportunities arising from the multilateral trade system.

46. **Cotton by-products initiative.** In July 2019, UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre and the World Trade Organization secured funding from the Enhanced Integrated Framework to conduct a first phase of feasibility studies on the development of cotton by-products in eight of the least developed countries in Africa. To date in 2020, the three agencies have reviewed drafts of the studies and UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre are preparing a project proposal for a second phase of implementation activities.

47. **Diagnostic trade integration study update of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.** In December 2019, with support from the Enhanced Integrated Framework, UNCTAD finalized this update. The update, comprising an analysis of the mining, agricultural and forestry sectors and trade facilitation efforts, was discussed, approved and validated.

E. Empowering people and investing in their future

48. **Entrepreneurship analysis, training and capacity-building.** The UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework continued to be leveraged for the development of targeted national entrepreneurship strategies. Cameroon and Ethiopia launched national entrepreneurship strategies. In 2019, an assessment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Angola was initiated, which will lead to the prioritization of challenges and bottlenecks to be addressed through a national entrepreneurship strategy. Under the UNCTAD Empretec programme, assistance was provided to 15 Empretec centres established in Africa. UNCTAD provided advisory activities, entrepreneurship development training, policy workshops and seminars based on the programme methodology and the tools and discussion platforms of the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework. A new Empretec programme was launched in Namibia and the certification of the first two national Empretec trainers was completed in Angola. In 2019, the Business Linkages programme helped rural entrepreneurs and smallholders in the United Republic of Tanzania in improving the quality and consistency of agricultural products supplied to large processors or exporters. Based on the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework for migrants, UNCTAD and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, organized an East African Regional Dialogue on migration and development in refugee hosting cities, held in Uganda.

49. **Creative economy.** UNCTAD published the second creative economy outlook and country profiles report, including profiles of 23 countries in Africa, which showed that there had been significant growth in the creative economy in developing countries and the least developed countries and that the sector could make a valuable contribution to the achievement of the Goals. In February 2019, UNCTAD collaborated with the Shap Shap Association and Afrodyssée to showcase creative industries from Africa at an event titled “Africa, What’s Up / Africa Magic” as part of the Antigel festival in Switzerland. In June 2019, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Afrodyssée. UNCTAD organized a debate, a fashion show and an international market that showcased designers from 12 countries in Africa.

50. **Building capacities of port officials through Train for Trade.** In 2019, Train for Trade delivered capacity-building and training for 285 trade practitioners and policymakers (117 women) from 41 countries in Africa, training specialists on issues such as trade in services statistics and merchandise trade statistics, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Trade Organization. In addition in 2019, the Train for Trade Port Management Programme provided capacity-building on modern port management for 321 port managers from 11 countries in Africa (30 per cent women). In March–June 2019, an online course on merchandise trade statistics was delivered, with 86 participants from 24 countries in Africa (41 women). In June and July 2019, a course on trade in services statistics was delivered for West Africa, in French. In October and November 2019, Train for Trade delivered an online course and contributed to institutional collaboration on trade in services statistics. Train for Trade continues to benefit from collaboration with the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics. The online course, with an emphasis on Africa, was organized in collaboration with the World Trade Organization and had over 199 participants from 34 countries in Africa (76 women). In December 2019, a follow-up face-to-face workshop was organized at the World Trade Organization in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, with 26 participants (13 women), including from Africa.

51. **Measuring illicit financial flows.** In cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNCTAD is working on developing a measurement framework for indicator 16.4.1 of the Goals. The project involves defining and designing measurement tools to capture both illegal and illicit activities which, by their nature, are deliberately hidden. As a custodian of indicator 16.4.1, UNCTAD is working on defining, estimating and disseminating statistics on illicit financial flows in the context of developing economies in Africa, which are some of the economies most affected by this developmental challenge. UNCTAD worked with the task force for the statistical measurement of illicit financial flows to define a conceptual framework for illicit financial flows, as a result of which the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, tasked by the United Nations Statistical Commission to develop the indicator framework, approved the reclassification of indicator 16.4.1 from a tier III to a tier II indicator. The indicator is now conceptually clear and there is agreement on the methodology, but relevant data is still lacking. UNCTAD is developing practical guidelines for countries on measuring illicit financial inflows and outflows. The guidelines were piloted in Nigeria in September 2019 and efforts will continue throughout 2020.

52. **Support for the mobilization of financial resources.** UNCTAD continued to update and expand its country-level financial conditions indicators, an early warning system to assess financial stress on the economy, including for Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania. UNCTAD built an analytical tool to assess the impact of Goals-related investment requirements for the first four Goals on debt sustainability for 30 low-income and middle-income countries, including 10 countries in Africa. The analysis estimates the remaining financing gaps in each country to achieve these Goals by 2030, after allowing for improved domestic resource mobilization, and shows that, unless the financing gaps are closed through increased access to concessional external finance and/or debt relief, average debt-to-gross domestic product ratios in the countries assessed will rise to 185 per cent by 2030. Alternatively, and to avoid unsustainable debt burdens, the countries need to achieve annual gross domestic product growth rates of 12 per cent.

53. **Training on key issues on the economic agenda under the paragraph 166 programme.** UNCTAD delivered five short courses for Geneva-based permanent missions, which provided the latest insights on UNCTAD research on trade and development issues, from a cross-divisional perspective, ranging from topics such as shaping an inclusive gender responsive trade policy, the digital economy and the challenge of structural transformation, to entrepreneurship and the Goals. The objective of regional training courses held in Egypt and Kenya was to invest in human capital towards stronger public institutions for development in Africa, and training was provided to 42 policymakers from 25 developing and least developed economies in Africa.

54. **Trade and gender.** With funding from Finland, UNCTAD developed a teaching package on trade and gender that includes a two-volume manual and an online course to equip government officials, academics and civil society representatives 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. In 20 May–14 July 2019, UNCTAD delivered the fifth iteration of the standard online course, with 142 stakeholders selected for the French and English iterations, including 49 participants from 31 countries in Africa. Building on the success of the course, UNCTAD developed an additional regional-specific module in English and French on trade and gender linkages in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community.

55. **Women informal cross-border traders.** UNCTAD completed a Development Account project on women in informal cross-border trade in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. UNCTAD delivered a series of five training sessions for 147 small and informal cross-border traders, combining one day of training on cross-border trade rules, customs procedures and trader rights and obligations with five days of training on the development of entrepreneurial skills, based on the Empretec methodology. The workshops were delivered in local languages and benefited from the presence of representatives of border authorities. Copies of a small-scale trader's guide were made available, with excerpts in local languages, namely, Bemba, Chichewa and Swahili. The guide was designed to improve trader awareness of the rules and procedures at borders and encourage the uptake of simplified trade regimes by providing key information to traders about processes, rules, rights and obligations. In December 2019, UNCTAD completed the project with a regional workshop in Dar es Salaam, attended by more than 40 policymakers and representatives of traders' associations from the three target countries. The workshop aimed to discuss policies and initiatives to further facilitate cross-border trade, make it more beneficial to women, their communities and their countries and move it from subsistence to sustainability.

F. Financial resources committed to Africa

56. In 2019, 40.7 per cent of the total national, regional and interregional project expenditure of UNCTAD was directed towards Africa, amounting to \$17,618,512.