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**Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – reporting
and discussion: subprogramme 9 – poverty, inequality and social policy**

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

I. Introduction

1. The purpose of subprogramme 9 of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is to promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development, in line with internationally and regionally agreed commitments and frameworks, and to support the priorities of ECA members. The subprogramme is implemented by the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division through two sections: the Social Policy Section and the Urbanization and Development Section.
2. The purpose of the present report is to provide an overview of the work done under the subprogramme, pursuant to the strategic framework for the biennium 2022–2023.
3. The work of ECA under the subprogramme contributes to the objectives of eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality by improving the policies and strategies of ECA members for social investment and productive urban job creation. The core mandate of the subprogramme is for ECA to undertake policy-oriented and empirical research to strengthen the capacity of its members to design and implement policies that promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development in the areas of poverty and inequality, employment, social protection, population, migration and urbanization, in a manner that is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. Informed by the decisions and guidance of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender, the subprogramme is used by ECA to respond to the social development priorities of Africa through analytical work, policy and advisory support, the development of tools, the convening of policy dialogues and capacity-building. Under the subprogramme, ECA collaborates with its members, the African Union Commission, agencies of the United Nations system, civil society, regional economic communities and other development partners.
4. In response to growing poverty and vulnerability because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the work carried out under the subprogramme has been reoriented to generate new evidence on vulnerable

* E/ECA/CSPPG/5/1.



populations and support has been provided to improve economic recovery and resilience in African countries.

II. Progress made in the implementation of subprogramme activities

5. The main activities carried out in the 2022–2023 biennium fall into the following thematic areas:

A. Poverty

6. The Social Policy Section led the production of the issues paper for the fifty-fifth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in March 2023 under the theme “Fostering recovery and transformation in Africa to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities”.

7. In recent years, Africa has found itself facing a perfect storm of overlapping and recurring crises that are perpetuating poverty and inequality, which were already significant even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The issues paper set out the key issues related to poverty and inequality and informed the proceedings of the forty-first meeting of the Committee of Experts and the fifty-fifth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The document presented the status of poverty and inequality in Africa in the context of the recent crises, outlining the compounding factors, and highlighted opportunities for African countries to pursue a people-centred recovery.

8. ECA held an expert group meeting in December 2022 on “Enhancing countries’ capacities to better address poverty and vulnerability”. The meeting brought together selected ECA members, including those with the highest number of people living in poverty, to deliberate and identify opportunities to address risks that can lead to poverty and inequality in Africa during global shocks and crises. ECA members identified opportunities to better hedge against and mitigate risks that increased poverty and vulnerability and shared lessons learned on effective policy responses and strategies in that regard.

9. In its policy brief on renewing the social contract to reduce poverty and inequality in Africa, ECA highlighted the impact that ongoing crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, were having on poverty and inequality on the continent and proposed pathways that could help to deliver on a social contract that could reduce poverty and inequality in Africa.

10. Since the COVID-19 crisis adversely affected routine data collection in African countries, a method was developed to assess poverty, vulnerability and inequality without the latest household-level survey data.

11. ECA used the method to carry out a diagnostic assessment of poverty, vulnerability and inequality in Namibia following the recent crises and formulated robust, evidence-based policies that could effectively address poverty and the risks associated with vulnerability while also building resilience. Following the assessment, a national report was prepared in which the findings of the study were presented, including the ongoing risks and vulnerabilities that pushed people into poverty.

12. Building on demand for technical assistance from its members, ECA is implementing a project to strengthen the collection of data to be used in assessing poverty and inequality and in building the capacity of government officials in relevant departments in Ghana, Namibia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to use new estimation methods to assess, monitor and

respond to poverty, inequality and vulnerability so that their policymaking can be robust and evidence-based.

B. Social protection

13. The work on social protection initiated during the 2020–2021 reporting cycle in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was completed in 2022. The work culminated in a report issued in 2023, titled “Strengthening social protection for pandemic responses: identifying the vulnerable, aiding recovery and building resilience”, which included the scores of African countries on the Multidimensional Vulnerability to Poverty Index.

14. The report contained an assessment of countries’ vulnerability to poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment method used and the quantitative techniques applied in designing a risk and vulnerability index for Nigeria were described as a case study to test the results of the Index. A key finding of the report was that health care was costly and inaccessible for all households in many African countries, with the poorest and most vulnerable households having been hit the hardest.

15. The report indicated that, over the years, investment in inclusive health and wellness had not been fully prioritized in the development policies and programmes of African countries. A number of recommendations were made to remedy this:

(a) Health-care systems in Africa should respond to the needs of the people and address ongoing challenges, including inadequate health and technological infrastructure, the scarcity of trained health workers and the lack of finance;

(b) Monitoring and evaluation of progress made in improving health systems and providing high-quality health-care services should be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) An explicit pledge should be made to leave no one behind and a commitment should be made to inclusive development to ensure that those who have been left behind can catch up.

C. Ageing

16. A review was carried out to evaluate the progress made by African Governments and institutions in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. As part of the review, a report was prepared to identify progress, challenges and emerging issues related to the planning and implementation of policies and programmes on ageing by ECA members during the 5-year period from 2018 to 2022.

17. The key findings of the review highlighted the uneven implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Some ECA members had made progress, while others had not moved past formulating their strategies. The key constraints identified in the review as impeding progress include a shortage of human and financial resources; inadequate inter-agency cooperation and coordination; the scarcity of data to identify, track, monitor and evaluate the progress in the implementation of national and subnational policies and strategies for ageing populations; and limited public awareness, including among decision makers, of the valuable role that the ageing population can play in the development process. According to the report, only 27 per cent of older people in Africa were covered by a pension scheme. This lack of pension coverage had increased poverty, deprivation and vulnerability among older people on the continent. Furthermore, it was noted that very few African countries had implemented social protection programmes for older people, with only 17 per cent of the

continent's population having been covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2020.

18. The report showed that, with no robust social protection systems in place, it was a significant challenge for most countries to respond to the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older people. Nevertheless, it noted that all ECA members had undertaken various emergency social protection measures, including interventions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on older people.

19. In the report, African Governments were advised to overhaul the health-care financing system and to introduce provisions to support vulnerable groups, including older people. Governments needed to increase public investment in health care systems to strengthen the capacity of health infrastructure to deal with infectious diseases, including through the production of vaccines. It is also noted that volunteer associations, civil society and charities played an important role in significantly increasing the coverage of social protection during major shocks.

D. Migration

20. Regular subprogramme activities addressed the issue of migration statistics. In an issues paper focusing on Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe, ECA called for the creation of a coordinated mechanism to collect accurate disaggregated data on migration and for the use of the data to develop and implement evidence-based policies. Key challenges and gaps in the collection, analysis and dissemination of such data were addressed in the paper. Concrete recommendations were provided on how ECA and its partners could help ECA members to improve their migration data.

21. At an expert group meeting held in July 2022, participants made several recommendations to improve the architecture of data on migration, the collection and analysis of national migration data, and the development of coordination mechanisms and plans to increase the availability and use of data in each country. The experts underlined that technology uptake, including big data, was urgent, as was the introduction of electronic data collection and biometric border-control measures. To further enhance migration statistics, they called for the development of harmonized concepts, data-collection tools and the integration of standard migration modules in all existing data-collection activities, including the strengthening, improvement and use of administrative data sources and stronger advocacy of migration statistics by ECA members. They believed it was vital for members to receive technical support in these areas from ECA.

E. Young people

22. Building on a report prepared during the last reporting cycle, titled "Promotion of youth employment for harnessing the demographic dividend and building resilience in Africa under COVID-19" (Forthcoming 2023), ECA prepared a policy brief on the theme "Youth employment in Africa: a practical policy framework". The report provides a framework to assess the prospects of Africa achieving three related objectives: creating jobs for young people; harnessing the demographic dividend; and building resilience against shocks such as COVID-19. The framework offered conceptual and empirical tools to guide the policy analysis of national prospects for youth employment. The findings of the forthcoming report and the policy brief have provided background information for the policy dialogue that will be held as a parallel event during the current session of the Committee.

F. State of urbanization in Africa for evidence-based policymaking

23. The Urbanization and Development Section examines trends in urbanization and provides recommendations on how to make African cities inclusive and sustainable. By 2050, the global population is projected to reach 9.8 billion, with the majority of people living in urban areas. In Africa, six in 10 people will reside in urban areas by then. Over the next 50 years, the number of African cities with at least 1 million inhabitants is expected to increase from 60 to 134, and those with at least 5 million inhabitants will rise from 6 to 28. To adequately prepare for this urbanization, Africa needs to act now.

24. ECA collaborated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on a report on urbanization dynamics in Africa.¹ In the report, data from 2,600 cities in 34 countries were used to provide strong evidence that urbanization in Africa improved economic outcomes and living standards, with cities achieving better results on most social and economic metrics than the countries in which they were located, and by a greater margin than cities in other world regions.

25. It was noted in the report that African cities had maintained their strong economic performance despite a population increase of 500 million since the early 1990s – a remarkable feat. According to the report, the growth of cities had created better jobs and better access to services for hundreds of millions of people. Economic and political constraints, however, continued to hinder the potential of cities to contribute to economic growth and social development, with too many people having been left behind.

26. As indicated in the report it has often been people at lower income levels who have moved to urban areas, so additional public services are needed where households are not self-sufficient. Furthermore, urbanization has been accompanied by rising unemployment, growing poverty and inequality, the proliferation of slums, financially weak municipal authorities, and weak institutions.

27. The aforementioned report drew attention to the need for urgent action to address the challenges, with “new approaches tailored to local dynamics” and “better planning for large urban centres”. Smaller urban centres – it was noted – could boost jobs, productivity and service delivery, while better connected cities could encourage economic integration. Policies needed to be coordinated, with cities playing a pivotal role in national development planning. Local governments, meanwhile, needed to be strengthened to boost their contribution to economic development.

28. It was acknowledged in the report that more evidence and analysis were needed to support policymaking and that challenges associated with the recovery from the effects of the pandemic, the African Continental Free Trade Area, urban governance and various regional developments required more local knowledge. More forward-looking, transparent and inclusive policy processes were needed, based on better data. All stakeholders were urged to shape the future of African cities and people.

29. This new perspective on the economy of African cities not only described the significant urban transformations occurring in Africa, but also raised important questions about urbanization and its impact on the environment and provided valuable knowledge on designing effective policy interventions based

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Economic Commission for Africa and African Development Bank, *Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2022: The Economic Power of Africa's Cities*, West African Studies (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2022).

on a better understanding of urban dynamics and social and economic challenges.

G. Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

30. The Urbanization and Development Section prepared a background paper on sustainable cities and communities for the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in reference to Sustainable Development Goal 11.² In the paper, the Section highlighted the pace of urbanization and urban population growth in Africa and in the African subregions. According to *World Cities Report 2022*,³ the level of urbanization in Africa was projected to increase significantly, from 44.4 per cent in 2022 to 58.9 per cent in 2050. Since the turn of the century, rapid urbanization had largely been concentrated in certain subregions, with Southern Africa recording the fastest rate of urban population growth. It was projected that almost 70 per cent of the population of Southern Africa would live in urban areas by 2030.

31. In its background paper, the Section noted that rapid urbanization has profound implications for the achievement of continental targets for inclusive growth and transformation. While theory and experience have shown that urbanization and structural transformation are closely linked, this has not been the case in Africa, as the region has urbanized without industrializing or modernizing its agriculture, resulting in lost opportunities for growth, diversification, poverty reduction and social development.

32. Urbanization is necessary to generate economic growth, but is not sufficient on its own. With the right urban planning and linkages, urbanization can bring major productive advantages to industry, agriculture and modern services. Managing the urban transition through deliberate policy responses is essential for structural transformation and the well-being of urban and rural populations. Most African countries are still in the early stages of urbanization and have a significant opportunity to leverage the power of growing cities to promote inclusive growth. Strategic policies and investments at the regional, subregional, country and subnational levels will be critical in that regard.

H. Expert group meeting to review the draft African voluntary local review guidelines

33. An expert group meeting was held in 2021 to carry out an in-depth review of the draft African voluntary local review guidelines. Experts and representatives of localities in Africa and relevant partner organizations and stakeholders provided valuable feedback that was used to improve the quality and relevance of the guidelines and to ensure that they were practical at the local scale. The experts also discussed potential opportunities to apply the guidelines and to disseminate them to increase their use as a guide and as a capacity-building tool.

34. A key outcome of the meeting was an increased understanding of voluntary local review tools and principles among stakeholders, which was expected to improve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in African localities. In addition, participants shared their experiences, lessons learned and good practices to enhance the content of the guidelines.

² ECA/RFSD/2018/4.

³ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities* (Nairobi, 2022).

I. Publication of the *Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines*

35. To enhance the capacity of local and regional governments in Africa to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and support the COVID-19 recovery process, ECA collaborated with United Cities and Local Governments of Africa and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to develop the *Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines*.

36. The primary objective of the *Guidelines* is to support African local governments in preparing voluntary local reviews to accelerate progress towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The *Guidelines* build upon the experience that ECA acquired when it supported voluntary local reviews carried out by five cities and localities: Accra, Harare, Ngora district (Uganda), Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) and Yaoundé.

37. The *Guidelines* incorporate previous research on voluntary local reviews carried out by UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Government. Before their publication, the draft guidelines were assessed during technical consultations held during the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, and in Addis Ababa.

38. The *Guidelines* offer best practices for localizing global and regional goals, including the mapping of global and regional policies to local priorities and activities. They also emphasize the importance of aligning grass-roots stakeholder engagement in voluntary local and voluntary national reviews, which ECA members have been pursuing as part of their commitment to the two agendas. The *Guidelines* also include a set of principles and a common template that facilitate the connection between the common goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and enable peer review among localities.

J. Estimation of city gross domestic product

39. In 2021, ECA expanded the measurement of the economic contributions that cities make to national economies by initiating estimations of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Accra, Harare, Kigali, Lusaka, Maseru and Yaoundé.

40. In a policy brief that ECA prepared based on a summary report on city GDP estimation in Africa, it highlighted the key findings, lessons learned, challenges faced and policy recommendations made relating to the city GDP initiative in Africa. The key findings included the following:

(a) City GDP estimations should be institutionalized in national statistical offices to ensure that reliable data are regularly compiled to inform the investment decisions, revenue mobilization measures and economic development initiatives of policymaking bodies;

(b) Subnational and city-level economic variables such as GDP need to be compiled regularly, given the growing decentralization and devolution of administrations in many African countries.

41. In conclusion, the approaches and methodologies used in the six pilot cities have proved to be effective and should be used to strengthen the capacity of African national statistical offices at all levels. This can be achieved through peer learning, the sharing of key lessons and good practices, and capacity-building for national account experts.

K. Expanded and resilient urban fiscal space for an inclusive and resilient COVID-19 recovery in Africa

42. The objective of the project titled “Expanded and resilient urban fiscal space for an inclusive and resilient COVID-19 recovery in Africa” is to enhance the capacity of city governments in Africa to develop and implement policies and strategies that will expand and strengthen their fiscal space. Fiscal space refers to a local government’s ability to spend money without jeopardizing its overall budget sustainability, which is determined by economic, financial and legislative factors. The focus of the project is on financial factors. Five indicators – liquidity, autonomy, operating surplus, collective efficiency and solvency – are used to assess and improve the financial performance of selected African cities. The purpose of this focus is to enable cities to fulfil their mandates while effectively responding to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

43. The project is a collaborative effort between ECA, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, which provide support to the selected cities: Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania), Kigali, Lusaka, Nairobi and Yaoundé. The support will generate evidence that will inform the design and implementation of interventions that will expand the cities’ fiscal space. The financial performance of the target cities will be assessed to identify areas that need to be improved. The evidence will be used to develop innovative solutions tailored to each city’s local and national contexts. The project has a strong emphasis on ensuring transparency and accountability in the activities carried out by city authorities.

III. Partnerships

44. Under the subprogramme, ECA has worked in partnership with strategic United Nations agencies and pan-African institutions to leverage joint delivery for attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

A. African Union Commission

45. ECA has worked in close cooperation with the African Union Commission under the subprogramme. Specifically, it has worked closely with the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs on the migration-related work stream, including the monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and also on the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the implementation of a joint initiative on international migration in Africa. It has also worked with the Peace and Security Directorate of the African Union Commission.

46. ECA continues to work with the African Union Commission and United Nations Population Fund to conduct a review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa beyond 2014.

47. In partnership with UN-Habitat and the African Union, ECA is strengthening the reporting process of Africa for the New Urban Agenda with the aim of sharing the region’s issues five years after the adoption of the global commitment to urban planning for development.

48. ECA supports the African Union Commission in hosting specialized technical committee meetings as part of the United Nations development system to support the priorities of the African Union.

B. United Nations

49. ECA collaborated with UN-Habitat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the local authorities in Accra, Harare and Yaoundé for the design and implementation of strategies for financial recovery from COVID-19. The knowledge generated for and in partnership with the African Union Commission has been used to implement the COVID-19 response action plan of the African Union. The knowledge generated on COVID-19 responses at all levels, including the local government level, has provided the African Union with credible information that has enabled it to implement its response programmes, including the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines for ECA members through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

50. In collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, ECA supported its members in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This second review of progress in implementation, launched in March 2023, will culminate in a regional review meeting of the Global Compact in May 2024.

51. In 2020, the Urbanization and Development Section began to work with United Cities and Local Government of Africa and UN-Habitat to develop the *Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines*. The Section is also working with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UN-Habitat to provide technical support to six target countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) to help them to develop and implement policy reforms and strategies that will expand and build resilient fiscal space for those countries.

IV. Activities planned for the biennium 2024–2025

52. Activities to address the social development priorities of Africa will continue. Specifically, ECA will carry out analytical work, provide its members with policy and advisory support and capacity-building assistance, develop tools and convene policy dialogues. The planned activities will support national strategies to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, with a focus on such areas as urbanization, social protection, population and development, migration and ageing.

53. More specifically, ECA will provide support in the following areas:

A. Poverty and inequality

54. ECA will carry out work that will provide national policy options that can help its members to reduce poverty and vulnerability and attain the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063. It plans to support the broadening of policy options by its members through the dissemination of empirically grounded knowledge products. It will also provide technical assistance, facilitate regional dialogue and share strategies that promote inclusion and equitable development.

B. Migration

55. ECA members will continue to receive support in implementing the Global Compact for Migration. The planned activities will leverage emerging

continental opportunities and technological solutions to improve policy uptake and thus, ultimately, improve resilience. ECA will engage with specialized agencies of the United Nations, the private sector and all stakeholders, including through the United Nations resident coordinator system.

56. During the 2024–2025 reporting cycle, ECA will work with the African Union Commission to implement a migration project on the theme “International migration in Africa: shaping a positive narrative and removing barriers to mobility”. The two-year project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, leverages the institutional strengths of ECA and the African Union Commission. It focuses on six thematic areas:

- (a) Promoting the economic empowerment of migrant women;
- (b) Improving migration statistics and strengthening the legal identity of migrants in East Africa and the Horn of Africa;
- (c) Supporting the Technical Assistance Facility on Migration Governance of the African Union;
- (d) Combating irregular migration in member countries of the Horn of Africa Initiative of the Africa Union and countries that lie along the three irregular migration corridors from the Horn of Africa;
- (e) Strengthening cross-border infectious disease surveillance and data collection on migrants’ health;
- (f) Enhancing free movement, labour mobility and skills portability in Africa.

C. Social protection

57. ECA will work in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to implement a project to strengthen country-level social protection policies and capacity to respond to three concurrent crises (relating to finance, energy and food) in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. The work is expected to enhance the capacity of target countries to develop integrated social protection policies and strategies that enhance the delivery of social protection services and increase resilience to future crises in six countries (Cambodia, Maldives, Namibia, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. The project will enhance the capacity of the six countries to design and implement public policies and programmes geared towards implementation of universal social protection, with a focus on identifying and incorporating into the policies and programmes the people most affected by the three crises and people in vulnerable situations who have been disproportionately affected by the three crises.

D. Urban jobs creation

58. ECA will continue to promote the prioritization of urban job creation through the development of urban strategies and investment frameworks for national development planning, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 11. It will develop the knowledge of its members, provide technical assistance and facilitate regional policy learning and dialogue to advance planned and managed urbanization for accelerated structural transformation. The technical assistance will strengthen members’ capacity to measure and monitor urbanization dynamics. The work will be carried out largely in partnership with

the African Union Commission, UN-Habitat, the African Development Bank and United Cities and Local Government of Africa.

59. The Urbanization and Development Section will contribute to knowledge production by launching a robust research agenda focused on the nexus between urbanization dynamics and social policy. The Section will leverage existing platforms that support African cities and mayors, which it will use to inform and influence the design of policies based on empirical research and the development of analytical products. In partnership with United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders, the Section will disseminate regional and global best practices and tools to address urbanization and development.

V. Challenges and lessons learned

A. Challenges

60. Data are currently insufficient and too outdated for a number of subprogramme activities to be fully implemented. Moreover, there are new and emerging issues that affect subprogramme activities, including climate change and disaster risk and response, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises affecting poverty, inequality and social policy. In addition, the development and implementation of such policy frameworks as the Global Compact for Migration remain a challenge. Tracking progress in the implementation of the Global Compact is hampered by the absence of specific indicators for that purpose.

61. Another data-related issue is the lack of spatial data and microdata at the city level for quantitative analysis, which makes it difficult to monitor urbanization dynamics on the continent and to develop recommendations based on robust empirical evidence.

62. Another major challenge is that the scope and coverage of the work streams of the subprogramme, in particular on social policy, are too broad. As a result, the human and financial resources available are insufficient to effectively support the planned activities.

63. A final challenge is the delayed responses caused by the need to coordinate among the large number of partners that are involved in the subprogramme's work, including United Nations entities, global, regional and subregional agencies, national departments and ministries, and academic and research institutions. It is urgent to address such delays.

B. Lessons learned

64. Collaboration between ECA and research institutions needs to be part of a sustained cooperation framework rather than on a project-specific basis. In this respect, research centres and academic institutions should be identified and formal arrangements should be made at the start of the planning cycle.

65. Meeting demand from ECA members for technical assistance needs to be better matched to internal and external resource mobilization. Additional requests also need to be prioritized. In addition, sustaining and deepening technical support to ECA members over time is a challenge because of

inadequate resources, changing priorities and institutional turnover in government.

66. The design, uptake and implementation of appropriate policies at the country level that emerge from ECA knowledge products can be optimized through the use of a two-year planning cycle.

VI. Conclusion

67. Through subprogramme 9, ECA responds to the social development priorities of Africa through analytical work, policy and advisory support, the development of tools, the convening of policy dialogues and capacity-building. This is consistent with the current strategic orientation of ECA and the objectives to which the subprogramme contributes, namely, to eradicate extreme poverty and to reduce inequality by improving the policies and strategies of its members for social investment and productive urban job creation.

68. The core mandate of the subprogramme is for ECA to undertake policy-oriented and empirical research to strengthen the capacity of ECA members in their efforts to design and implement appropriate policies that promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development in the following areas: poverty and inequality; employment and social protection; and population, migration and urbanization. The policies should be designed and implemented in a way that is consistent with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

69. Under the subprogramme, ECA collaborates with its members, the African Union Commission, entities of the United Nations system, civil society, regional economic communities and other development partners and will continue to be informed by the decisions and guidance of the intergovernmental Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender.
