

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR  
AFRICA TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a product of an original research that I conducted under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah. I have taken reasonable care to ensure that the work does not breach copyright law. References to all publications have been cited and acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the glory of the Almighty God. I also dedicate it to my family for their consistent support throughout my education, and to my husband Ebenezer Allotey-Pappoe.

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My first thanks go to the Almighty God, for His grace throughout the course of this research. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my supervisor, Dr. Juliana Appiah for her advice, encouragement, patience and support, which helped me complete the study on time. I am also grateful to Prof. S.K.B. Asante, Ambassador Patrick Hayford, Ambassador William Brandful, Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah and Mr. Mickson Opoku for the invaluable assistance they provided for this study. I am also thankful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for giving me the opportunity to undertake this programme of study.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	-	African Economic Community
AfCFTA	-	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	-	African Development Bank
AGEPAR	-	Association for African Road Managers and Partners
ARIA	-	Assessing Regional Integration in Africa
ARII	-	Africa Regional Integration Index
ATPC	-	African Trade Policy Centre
ATRCW	-	African Training and Research Centre for Women
AU	-	African Union
AUC	-	African Union Commission
BIAT	-	Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade
CFTA	-	Continental Free Trade Agreement
COMESA	-	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CRIA	-	Centre for Regional Integration in Africa
ECA	-	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	-	Economic Commission for Europe

ECLAC	-	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	-	Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	-	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
IDEP	-	African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
LDCs	-	Least Developed Countries
LPA	-	Lagos Plan of Action
MRAG	-	Multi-disciplinary Regional Advisory Group
MULPOCS	-	Multinational Programming and Operational Centres
NEPAD	-	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
PADIS	-	Pan-African Documentation and Information Services Unit
PAIDA	-	Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda
PIDA	-	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PPCO	-	Policy and Programme Coordination Office
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
RITD	-	Regional Integration and Trade Division
SADC	-	South African Development Community
SADCC	-	South African Development Coordinating Conference

SADR	-	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SRO-CA	-	Subregional Office for Central Africa
SROs	-	Subregional Offices
SRO-SA	-	Subregional Office for Southern Africa
TACOO	-	Technical Assistance Coordination and Operations Office
UEMOA	-	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN	-	United Nations
UNGA	-	United Nations General Assembly

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	2
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY .....	3
1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
1.9 SOURCES OF DATA .....	11
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA..</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	14
2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA.....	14
2.3 MANDATE OF THE ECA AND TERMS OF REFERENCE .....	16
2.4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECA .....	19
2.5 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ECA.....	20
2.5.1 The Secretariat .....	21
2.5.2 The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development ..	21
2.6 SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE ECA .....	23

2.7	THEMATIC AREAS OF FOCUS .....	24
2.8	HISTORY OF AFRICA’S REGIONAL INTEGRATION EFFORTS.....	25
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>		<b>29</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ECA TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES .....</b>		<b>29</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	29
3.2	ECA’S OBJECTIVES IN THE FIELD OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION .....	29
3.3	THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND TRADE DIVISION (RITD) .....	31
3.4	ECA’S ACTIVITIES IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION.....	32
3.4.1	Assessing Regional Integration in Africa .....	32
3.4.2	The Africa Continental Free Trade Area .....	34
3.4.3	Promoting Intra-African Trade .....	36
3.4.4	Infrastructure Initiatives.....	36
3.4.5	African Regional Integration Index (ARII) .....	37
3.4.6	Capacity-Building .....	38
3.5	SUCSESSES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE ECA IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION ...	38
3.6	THE ECA AND THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs) .....	39
3.7	OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE ECA .....	40
3.8	CHALLENGES OF THE ECA.....	40
3.8.1	Poor Infrastructure on the African Continent .....	40
3.8.2	Inadequate Human Resources.....	42
3.8.3	Inadequate Financial Resources.....	43
3.8.4	Voluntary Membership of the ECA.....	43
3.8.5	Lack of Political Will.....	44
3.8.6	Inadequate Information for Data Collection.....	44
3.8.7	Overlapping membership of Regional Integration Schemes .....	45
3.8.8	UN Rules and Procedures .....	45
3.8.9	Linguistic Divides in Africa.....	46
3.8.10	Co-location of the ECA and the AUC and Matters Arising .....	46
3.8.11	Political Differences around Membership .....	47

3.9	ECA’S RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA .....	48
3.10	CONCLUSION .....	49
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>		<b>50</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>		<b>50</b>
4.0	INTRODUCTION.....	50
4.1	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	50
4.2	CONCLUSION .....	53
4.3	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	54
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>		<b>56</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

The promotion of regional integration in Africa has been on the agenda of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) since its inception in 1958. In spite of the activities and programmes adopted by the ECA to further this agenda on the continent, achieving greater integration has proved elusive and most of the regional integration arrangements on the continent have not achieved the expected results. Some of the programmes of the ECA have achieved limited success whilst others have failed altogether. Using mainly primary sources, complemented by secondary data, this study sought to evaluate the contributions of the ECA to regional integration in Africa, as well as the critical challenges that hinder the smooth and successful implementation of its programmes to enhance the integration process on the continent. The study found that although the ECA has contributed enormously to the progress of integration on the continent, major challenges such as inadequate finance and human resource within the organization, poor infrastructure on the continent and the multiplicity of Regional Economic Communities in Africa, among others, have hindered the ECA from effectively contributing to the integration of Africa. The study offered recommendations on how the ECA can better aid Africa in the future to deepen integration.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Research Problem**

African leaders have, for several years, promoted the idea of integrating African countries and sub-regions. This call for the integration of Africa commenced prior to the attainment of self-rule by many African states. In the 1950s and 1960s, leaders of African states believed that the African continent had to be integrated to ensure that the distorted neo-colonial trading practices and relationships that had made Africa over-dependent on primary commodity exports would be restructured (Gibb, 2009). African countries, therefore, pursued regional integration as a necessary part of their strategies for development. This was mainly to enable the countries overcome the limitations caused by small economies working in isolation (ECA, 2018). Consequently, some African countries in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) called for the creation of an African Regional Economic Commission to promote integration among African states and to address the problems of social development (Adedeji, 1979). This led to the establishment of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

In 1958, the ECA was established by the Economic and Social Council (ESOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) pursuant to Resolution 671 (XXV), to encourage economic cooperation among its Member States. It was the fourth Regional Commission of the United Nations created within the period following the destruction of the Second World War and came only after a protracted campaign by African countries in the UN General Assembly (ECA, 2008). The ECA became the first ever inter-governmental organization in Africa whose geographical scope covered the whole continent and paved the way for the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963

(Adedeji, 1979). The core mandate of the ECA is to advance intra-regional integration, promote the economic and social development of its member states, and actively encourage international support for the development of Africa (ECA, 2018).

Regional integration issues have been on the agenda of the ECA since its inception in 1958. The ECA promoted regional integration in the 1960s, and called for the splitting of Africa into regions to advance economic development (Matthews, 2003). Since its establishment, the ECA has promoted activities that have led to the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its later evolution into the African Union (AU), the creation of the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos and the development of physical infrastructure on the continent, over the years. In 2006, the ECA restructured its activities and programmes to respond to pressing needs at the time, since the priorities of the continent had changed with the evolution of the OAU to the AU and the adoption of the framework of the NEPAD (ECA, 2007).

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

The main centre of activity of the ECA is to promote programmes as well as policies that deepen the process of cooperation and integration in conformity with the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community as well as the African Union's Constitutive Act. The ECA has, therefore, adopted several programmes, strategies and policies to further the regional integration agenda in Africa. In spite of the activities and programmes of the ECA, however, achieving greater integration on the African continent has proved elusive and most of the regional integration arrangements on the continent have not achieved the expected results. Some of the programmes of

the ECA have achieved limited success whilst others have failed altogether. This study will thus evaluate the contributions of the ECA to regional integration in Africa as well as the critical challenges that hinder the smooth and successful implementation of its programmes to enhance the integration process on the continent. The study will also proffer recommendations for the improvement of the work of the Commission.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What have been the contributions of the ECA towards regional integration in Africa?
2. What challenges are the ECA faced with in its quest to promote regional integration in Africa?
3. What can be done to improve the role of the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This research seeks to:

1. Assess the contributions of the ECA towards regional integration in Africa.
2. Identify the challenges facing the ECA in its quest to promote regional integration in Africa.
3. Recommend strategies to improve ECA's role in the promotion of regional integration in Africa.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The research will study the contributions and challenges of the ECA towards regional integration in Africa since its establishment with particular focus on its activities since its restructuring and repositioning in 2006. It will also recommend strategies for the improvement of the work of the Commission.

## **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

Several studies have been conducted on the ECA as well as on regional integration in Africa. However, not much has been written on the contribution of the ECA to regional integration among its member states. This area of research has been chosen due to the increasing importance that has been attached to the concept of regional integration within Africa. It could serve as a reference for policy-makers in Africa as well as a body of literature that could be used to further improve the capacity of the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This research is framed on the theory of neo-functionalism. Neo-functionalism is a theory that explains the process of integration. The notion developed in the late 1950s to explain the level of growth in the integration of Europe as well as the function of the European Union (EU), as a supranational institution, in promoting this integration. Prominent proponents of neo-functionalism include Ernst Haas, Joseph Nye and Leon Lindsey (McCormick, 2005).

The major assumption underlying this theory is that no state is capable of maintaining its economic structures and capable of meeting the economic needs of its people without cooperation with other countries. The main argument of neo-functionalism is that the initial agreement of states to cooperate in a particular sector, subsequently leads to further agreements to cooperate in other similar and related areas (Wallace et al, 2005). Furthermore, neo-functionalism holds that integration in the economic field invariably causes actors to increase relations in a particular region. Thirdly, according to neo-functionalism, the supranational body whose duty is to supervise integration starts to adopt strategies to further strengthen integration in already integrated sectors and then expand integration into other sectors.

The central idea of neo-functionalism is the concept of 'spill-over'. This concept describes a situation when an earlier decision by a government to yield a particular sector to the authority of central bodies creates demands to broaden the authority of the institutions into other policy areas. This means that 'spill-over' triggers the political and economic factors causing further cooperation. This suggests that the process evolves automatically and is beyond the direct control of political leaders.

An important feature of neo-functionalism is the growth of supranational organizations and institutions. The proponents of neo-functionalism argue that supranational bodies may have their own political programme, which will invariably triumph over the interests of Member States (Haas, 1958). According to Rosamond (1999), whilst the progress from national sovereignty to supranational autonomy is projected by policy-makers in the various states to promote their own national interests, the shift of power to a supranational body leads to an integration that is in the interest of all the countries involved.

Neo-functionalism has been subjected to criticism, substantial part of which was made in the form of self-criticism following contrary developments in Europe which created doubts about the validity of the notion of spillover. Neo-functionalism was thought to be useless in the 1970s, when European integration encountered challenges, and the kind of graduated integration that had been predicted by neo-functionalism did not take place. Neo-functionalism had predicted a steady deepening of political integration, which unfortunately had not taken place by the 1970s. The rejection of the European institutions by France, in the mid- 1960s, had led to a more guarded stage in the evolution of the European Community, and recognition of the significance of political leaders as obstacles in the process of integration. Indeed, with the Community having experienced

numerous crises, it could even be argued that the integration process had taken a backward turn (Moravcsik, 1993). The theory could not explain this halt in the regional integration processes.

Some critiques of neo-functionalism are attributed to the concept of intergovernmentalism. This concept was borne out of international relations theory, specifically realism, which posits that the most important and dominant actors in the international sphere are states. It explains the process of European integration describing it as “the converging national interests of states”. Intergovernmentalists have criticized neo-functionalism on the basis that the theory plays down the significance of nationalism and consciousness of sovereignty and as hindrances to the process of integration (Hoffman, 1995). “Empty chair” politics of France under President Charles de Gaulle or British policies under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and in recent times, the British option to leave the European Union are evidence of the continued relevance of these countervailing factors.

In spite of the criticisms of neo-functionalism, it has been selected as a framework for this research because it is still a powerful tool for analysis of regional integration schemes. There has been a revival of interest in the theory of neo-functionalism since the 1990s because of general developments in regional integration around the world. These have been in line with the spill-over effect predicted by neo-functionalism. In Africa, some of the sub-regional groupings have demonstrated this with the creation of common markets, establishment of customs unions and currently, the move towards a Continental Free Trade Area. This theory is a good tool for explaining the importance of the ECA in regional integration as well as why the ECA has achieved limited success in promoting regional integration among African countries.

## 1.8 Literature Review

A lot of literature exists in the area of regional integration in Africa. However, the literature on the contribution of the ECA to the regional integration agenda is limited. This section discusses literature on the Economic Commission for Africa as well as general studies on regional integration in Africa.

Marinov (2014), in his article discussed the importance attached to the concept of regional integration by African governments and donor organizations since the 1950s. According to him, regionalism is recognised as the probable factor for alleviating the numerous economic and political problems on the African continent. He gives an overview of the regional economic communities in Africa and the progress that has been made in the area of regional integration on the continent. He explained that although some progress had been made in trade, communications, macroeconomic policy and transport in Africa, virtually all regional integration efforts on the continent have failed or have dubious results. He further discussed the challenges to achieving regional integration in Africa and identified the multiplicity of integration schemes, unwillingness of African countries to prevent or resolve existing conflicts, reluctance of some countries to take part in the integration processes due to the costs and uneven benefits, as some of these challenges. This article outlines the challenges to achieving integration in Africa and thus helps in explaining why the Economic Commission for Africa has encountered difficulties in its quest to promote regional integration on the continent.

In his work, Matthews (2003) discussed the historical role the ECA had played in pushing the agenda for regional integration on the African continent. According to him, the ECA was the campaigner of regional integration in Africa in the mid-1960s and proposed the partitioning of the continent into subregions for the purposes of economic development. He linked the ECA to the

establishment of the OAU. He also explained that the ECA promoted the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) which was adopted in April 1980 and inaugurated in a special program by the AU. According to the author, the Lagos Plan envisaged three regional arrangements aimed at the establishment of separate but merged and overshadowing integration arrangements in three sub-Saharan subregions. He explained that the Lagos Plan was followed up in 1991 by the Abuja Treaty, which re-affirmed the devotion of the OAU's Heads of State to the attainment of an integrated African economy. The article, however, did not devote attention to the challenges the ECA faces in promoting regional integration among African countries and this study seeks to fill that gap in the literature.

ECA (2008), focused on explaining the early beginnings and orientations as well as the organizational structure and programmes of the ECA. It explained that the 1970s and 1980s constituted the era of consolidating regional economic cooperation and integration among African countries resulting in an ECA programme focused on promoting continued human resource development, economic cooperation and integration, industrialization and social development. Since 2008, however, the aim has been to integrate Africa into the global economy, which led the ECA to restructure its programmes in support of the AU vision and priorities, with a focus on achieving results in promoting regional integration. The work programme is organized around sub-programmes focusing on trade, economic policy, finance, sustainable development and food security, economic cooperation and regional integration among others. The publication also discussed how the ECA does its work through technical cooperation and capacity building, policy analysis and advocacy, convening stakeholders and building consensus, and enhancing the role of the United Nations in Africa. It also outlined the role the ECA has played in regional integration in Africa by focusing its efforts on landmark activities that include the establishment and

transformation of the OAU, the building of institutions, the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action, the establishment of the African Economic Community, the building of the RECs and the development of physical infrastructure. ECA (2018), focused on how the ECA has been supporting Africa's economic integration efforts by providing intellectual groundwork with research and reports to assess regional integration. The ECA's report series, Assessing Regional Integration for Africa (ARIA), covers topical issues at the heart of African regional integration in alternating years. It also discussed the ECA's contribution towards the realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The publications do not explain the challenges facing regional integration in Africa and how the ECA is working to overcome them. This work fills that gap in the Literature.

In his article, Jolly (2009), focused on the establishment of the ECA, its activities over the years and some of the challenges it has been faced with. According to him, the attainment of self-rule reinforced the borders created by the colonial powers, giving the leaders an absolute interest to maintain them. This made integration difficult, posing a serious problem for development and contributed to the ECA adopting as one of its objectives, the promotion of regional integration in Africa. According to Jolly, this issue still complicates continental unity and economic integration today. He states that there are other players in the international system that have overshadowed the voice of the ECA in the past. One of them is the Bretton Woods institutions that proposed the structural adjustment programs. The ECA had advocated that the development of Africa must be pursued by Africans themselves. According to the author, in the 1980s a fierce debate over adjustment policies introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions raged within the United Nations. During this period, the ECA argued that the policies of adjustment did not pay heed to the extreme state of the economies of Africa and that the economic cuts were ineffective to economic recovery as well as human development. The United Nations and the ECA attempted a number of times to

introduce broader policies, leading to the adoption of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes in 1989. The author argued that the development path of Africa over the past few decades might have been significantly different if that approach had been developed earlier. This article identifies a major challenge to ECA's integration efforts, that is, the existence of other organizations which are proposing policies contrary to the proposals of the ECA, which makes it difficult for the ECA to be heard and its programmes to be taken seriously by member states. This work, however, discusses other challenges beyond the ECA fighting to be heard on the continent.

Adedeji (2004) traced the difficulties associated with the establishment of the ECA in the 1950s. According to him, the colonial powers with territories in Africa neither supported the creation of a Commission nor envisaged a rapid rise in the number of independent African states. When the United Nations was formed, there were only four independent countries in Africa. Africa was, however, not in a position to fully participate in and determine the strategy and policy framework of the ECA. It took member states of the ECA several years to realize that venturing into the future together with its colonial economic history and practices did not hold any promise for Africa. As long as Africans continued to preserve the economic system which they inherited from colonial powers, they would not to achieve much advancement in socioeconomic transformation. According to the author, in the battle to forge a future for Africa, the ECA has taken the lead in promoting a holistic development paradigm and steering away from the narrow focus on economic growth. This article does not discuss the achievements and challenges of the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa and this study seeks to fill that gap.

## **1.9 Sources of Data**

The main sources of data for this research were primary and secondary. The secondary data was sourced from official Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) documents, official records of the African Union (AU), official records of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), journal articles, papers, books and internet sources. Data from primary sources were mainly acquired through interviews with Professor S.K.B. Asante, Executive Director of the Centre for Regional Integration in Africa (CRIIA), Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah, Principal Economic Adviser, ECA, Ambassador Patrick Hayford, Former Consultant to the ECA and Ambassador William Brandful, Former Consultant to the ECA, Mr. Mickson Opoku, Principal Commercial Officer, Ministry of Trade and Industry. The interviews were conducted through telephone conversations, video calling and e-mail. These persons were chosen by virtue of their expertise on the subjects of the ECA and regional integration.

## **1.10 Research Methodology**

Qualitative research methods were employed in collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative research is a type of research that uses non-numerical data to interpret and analyse opinions. It is exploratory and seeks to explain the reasons for the operations of particular phenomenon in a specific context (Attride-Stirling, 2001). According to Tagoe (2001), qualitative research has to do with undertaking in-depth studies of human phenomena and understanding them from the perspectives of the individuals concerned. The qualitative method has been selected for conducting this research because it is considered the most appropriate to address the aims of the study as its methods would allow for understanding the nature of the work of the ECA and why it has achieved limited results in promoting regional integration, from the perspective of the experts on the field.

The qualitative instruments used were semi-structured interviews. An interview guide incorporating broad topics and questions consistent with the aims of the study was used to conduct the interviews. The data obtained was analysed using content analysis, which involved systematic reading and observation of texts which were assigned labels to indicate the presence of meaningful pieces of content.

The purposive sampling method was selected for this study because only limited number of persons can serve as primary data sources due to the nature and objectives of the study. Polit and Hungler (1995) define purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling method by which selection of participants for the study is based on the researcher's personal judgment about which ones will be most representative. Kumar (2005) also explains that, with the purposive method of sampling, the researcher selects persons who in his opinion are likely to have the requisite information and will be ready to share it. Thus, experts on the field were chosen, taking into account their professional relationship with the Economic Commission for Africa.

In conducting this research, the researcher extended courtesy and due consideration to the participants. Verbal consent to conduct the interviews was sought from each participant. The researcher also explained to the participants the purpose of the study. The participants were also made to understand that participation was voluntary.

## **1.11 Arrangement of Chapters**

Chapter One – Introduction

Chapter Two – Background of the ECA and Regional Integration in Africa

Chapter Three – Contribution of the ECA to Regional Integration in Africa: Achievements and Challenges.

Chapter Four – Conclusion and Recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), its mandate and terms of reference. It also examines the organisational structure of the Commission as well as its Sub-Regional Offices. The Chapter further explores the history of regional integration in Africa with particular focus on the role the ECA played in the process, prior to the repositioning of the ECA in 2006.

### **2.2 Establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa**

The ECA is one of five Regional Economic Commissions established by the United Nations. It was created in execution of the pledge of the United Nations to promote full employment, a higher standard of living, economic and social development as provided for in Article 55 of its Charter (Ekpenyong, 1990). Articles 62 (1) and 68 of the United Nations Charter provided the basis for the creation of the Regional Economic Commissions. Article 62(1) provides that the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may undertake studies and present reports on international cultural, social, economic, educational, health and associated matters. The ECOSOC is authorised by Article 68 to establish commissions in social and economic areas and advance human rights as well as “such other commissions which may be required for the performance of its functions” (U. N. Charter).

Based on these provisions of the UN Charter, the ECOSOC established the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in 1946, to provide aid to the European countries that had suffered through war. The following year, in 1947, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, later designated the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), was established to assist Asia in tackling the devastating problems of post-war reconstruction. Later that year, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947, by resolution 70(v), the ECOSOC, established the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA, now ECLAC). This was due to the fact that the low standard of living in the region did not permit its inhabitants from contributing adequately to global progress and welfare. The ECA, however, was not established until several years later, following a long struggle for its creation (Adedeji, 1979).

In 1947, a resolution that was introduced by the ECOSOC urging the establishment of an Economic Commission for North Africa and Ethiopia was rejected. The request was repeated in 1950, but was again rejected on the basis that it would be premature to establish such a commission. Subsequent requests in 1951 and 1956 were also abandoned by the Economic and Social Council, as contenders argued that the continent was a heterogeneous region and that it was unlikely that such a commission would be capable of coping with the peculiar problems of Africa (ECA, 1994). According to Adedeji (1979), the developing countries supported Africa by deciding to circumvent the ECOSOC and introduce the issue directly to the Second Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. The matter was brought up by Ghana in 1957 at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly and received support from twenty eight other countries. These countries argued that Africa needed an organisation which would help expedite economic development, collate information on its economic issues, and promote collaborative action to resolve them. At the

General Assembly, the developing countries found it much easier to gain majority support for the creation of an African regional economic commission.

Consequently, the General Assembly, by resolution 1155 (XII) of 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1957, requested the ECOSOC to give urgent and positive consideration to the creation of an economic commission for Africa at its next session. The purpose of the commission would be to provide assistance to the states as well as territories of Africa in conformity with Article 68 of the Charter of the United Nations (ECA, 1994). On 29 April 1958, the ECA was created by its Resolution 671 (XXV). This resolution also laid down its operational policy, defined the geographical scope, and designated Addis Ababa, as the centre of operations of the Commission.

The ECA, thus, became the first international organisation in Africa, with a geographical scope that covered the entire continent. For five years from its establishment to the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, the ECA was one of the regional forums for promoting economic advancement on the continent and waging battles against colonialism, racial exploitation and racism (ECA, 2018).

### **2.3 Mandate of the ECA and Terms of Reference**

As the regional organ of the United Nations in Africa, the ECA has the mandate to promote the social and economic development, as well as regional integration of its 54 member states, and promote global cooperation for Africa's development. The strength of the ECA stems from its responsibility as the only United Nations bureau which is mandated to function at the regional as well as sub-regional levels to bring together resources to address Africa's issues. The functions to be undertaken by the ECA were stipulated in its terms of reference set by the ECOSOC in Resolution 671A (XXV) and amended by Resolution 974 DI (XXXVI) of 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1963,

Resolution 1343 (XIV) of 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1968 and Resolution 1978/68 of 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1978 (<http://uneca.org>).

The terms of reference of the ECA provide that the ECA, in the execution of its functions shall be under the general supervision of the ECOSOC, which shall be within the framework of the United Nations. It prohibits the ECA from taking any action with respect to any state without the agreement of that state (Akiwumi, 1972). The functions of the ECA as stated in its terms of reference include:

(a) To initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects, with a view to raising the level of economic activity and levels of living in Africa, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of countries and territories of Africa, both among themselves and with other countries of the world;

(b) To make and sponsor such investigations and studies of economic and technological problems and developments with the territories of Africa as the Commission deems appropriate, and disseminate the results of such investigation and studies;

(c) To undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technological and statistical information as the Commission deems appropriate;

(d) To perform, within the available resources of its secretariat, such advisory services as the countries and territories of the region may desire,

provided that such service do not overlap with those rendered by other bodies of the United Nations or by the specialized agencies;

(e) To assist the Council at its request in discharging its functions within the region in connection with any economic problems, including problems in the field of technical assistance;

(f) To assist in the formulation and development of coordinated policies as a basis for practical action in promoting economic and technological development in the region;

(g) In carrying out the above functions, to deal as appropriate with the social aspects of economic development and the interrelationship of economic and social factors (Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Africa, 1994)

In addition to these functions, the ECA has the power to make recommendations and propose solutions directly to the Government of the member states, and to its specialised agencies on matters which are within its competence. It is also mandated to submit proposals that would have significant effects on the economy of the world as a whole, for prior consideration by the ECOSOC.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, delivered a speech at the ceremony for the establishment of the ECA, in which he announced the expectations of the ECA. He stated that

New states are emerging with geographic boundaries which, in most cases, are not best suited to the requirement of rapid economic growth. If such growth is to take place, concerted action and joint endeavours will be needed among countries and territories, each with its own particular political status. New economic links are to be forged among entities belonging to different monetary areas. And all of this should be achieved without losing the present advantage deriving from existing relationships with the rest of the world. These complicated processes can be greatly enhanced and facilitated by the existence of some flexible institutional arrangement such as the Commission can provide (ECA, 1968).

The UN General Assembly Resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 strengthened the mandate of the ECA by designating the Regional Commissions as the main bodies for the promotion of general economic and social development for their respective regions. It also mandated the Commissions to exercise team leadership for co-ordination and cooperation at the regional level. Resolution 33/202 also accorded executing agency status to the Regional Commissions in January 1979 (ECA, 1994).

#### **2.4 Membership of the ECA**

Membership of the ECA is restricted to independent African states. In 1958, the ECA had sixteen full members. Nine of these members were African states, namely Ghana, Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, South Africa, and the United Arab Republic. There were also six non-African states which were full members, including Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Nine associate members were also admitted, including Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Kenya, Zanzibar, British Somaliland Protectorate, Tanganyika, Uganda and the Italian-administered trust territory of Somaliland (Adedeji, 1979).

The African Member States of the ECA, raised concerns, right from the early years, that some non-independent African territories were not even admitted as associate members, whilst non-African States colonial powers in Africa enjoyed full membership. The African states argued that it was their right to take decisions which affect the African continent independent from the influence of foreign and colonial powers. These states, therefore, insisted on the termination of the full membership of all the non-African countries in the ECA. Consequently, some of the colonial powers including the United Kingdom, France, and Spain agreed to reduce to associate membership, their status in the ECA. These powers later lost their associate membership when their territories gained independence. In the case of South Africa, the Member States were opposed to its apartheid policies and were not satisfied with the fact that it was a full member. This led to its suspension from participating in the activities of the ECA. Thus, by 1965, the ECA was fully composed of African countries (Ekpenyong, 1990). Currently, there are 54 independent African member states of the ECA.

## **2.5 Organisational Structure of the ECA.**

In 1959, there were three main Divisions of the Secretariat of the ECA: a Research Division, which comprised sections that dealt with social and economic research, as well as statistics; a Community Development Branch, which was made up of units in social welfare services; and the ECA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division. Currently, the programmes and activities of the ECA are executed by its Secretariat while major decisions are taken by its policy-making organs established at both the continental and sub-regional levels, including the Conference of African Ministers (Ekyenpong, 1990).

### **2.5.1 The Secretariat**

The Secretariat of the ECA is headed by the United Nations under Secretary General and Executive Secretary. The Secretariat is the core of the ECA and at the top is the Cabinet Office of the Executive Secretary, followed by the Policy and Programme Coordination Office (PPCO), the Technical Assistance Coordination and Operations Office (TACOO), the Pan-African Documentation and Information Services unit (PADIS), the Multi-disciplinary Regional Advisory Group (MRAG), the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) and the Economic Cooperation Office. Each division has separate objectives, goals and programmes (ECA, 1994).

The functions of the Secretariat are stipulated in Rule 28 of its Terms of Reference which stated that “the Secretariat shall interpret speeches made at meetings; shall receive, translate and circulate the documents of the Commission, its committees and its subsidiary bodies; shall publish and circulate the records of the sessions, the resolution of the Commission and the relevant documentation required. It shall have the custody of the documents in the archives of the Commission and generally perform all other work which the Commission may require” (Adedeji, 1979).

### **2.5.2 The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**

The highest legislative organ of the ECA is the Conference of African Ministers. It was established by Resolution 188 (IX) of 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1969, and comprises Ministers of responsible for finance, economic and social development and planning in Member States. It is responsible for reviewing the execution of programmes, as well as approving the work plan for the succeeding biennium (ECA, 2018). The Conference holds its meetings annually and reports to the General Assembly

through the ECOSOC. The Conference of African Ministers is supported by several sectoral technical committees, a technical committee of experts, and the Inter-governmental Committee of Experts of the sub-regions (ECA, 2008). The functions of the Conference of African Ministers include:

- a) To consider matters of policy and the priorities to be assigned to the programmes and other activities of the Commission;
- b) To consider intra-African and international economic policy issues and make recommendations on such issues to member states;
- c) To review programme implementation during the preceding year and approve at every other meeting the proposed biennial programme of work and priorities;
- d) To consider reports submitted to it by the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole;
- e) To consider questions relating to the representation of the African region on international and inter-governmental bodies dealing with economic and social matters;
- f) To consider and endorse for onward transmission to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly proposals emanating from sectoral ministerial conferences; and
- g) To consider the work programmes of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and integrate these with the overall programme of work and priorities of the Commission (ECA, 1994).

According to Ekpenyong (1990), although the Conference of African Ministers has to perform these functions, it faces problems because it does not take part in the formulation of the policies and programmes of the ECA.

## **2.6 Sub-regional Offices of the ECA**

The ECA, in 1963, established an office in each of the five sub-regions in Africa, to better serve its African Member States. To better reflect the changes introduced in the programme functions, these representative offices were later renamed Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), Sub-regional Development Centres and ECA offices in 1979, 1997 and 2002 respectively. The creation of these offices was a significant step towards transforming the ECA into a functioning body. It emphasised the practical role intended to be played by the ECA in the promotion of sub-regional cooperation as a step towards regional economic integration (ECA, 1994). The establishment of the ECA offices also allowed the ECA to find appropriate solutions to problems, which were unique and peculiar to each region.

The sub-regional offices of the ECA provide policy advisory services to Member States and regional economic communities (RECs) to support regional integration initiatives. They develop statistical information on sub-regional basis, which feed into the common databank and support the research requirements of the ECA. The offices also facilitate the integration activities of other organisations of the United Nations operating within the respective sub-regions. The ECA sub-regional offices include the Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa based in Kigali, Rwanda, Sub-regional office for Central Africa, located in Yaounde, Cameroon, Sub-regional office for Southern Africa located in Lusaka, Zambia, Sub-regional Office for North Africa located in Rabat Morocco, and the Sub-regional office for West Africa based in Niamey, Niger (<http://uneca.org>).

According to the ECA (1994), whilst each ECA office has the primary responsibility to promote multinational and multi-sectoral projects within its sub-region, the five offices together can be considered a single team with a single purpose to forge and promote sub-regional common markets as a first crucial step towards the establishment of a common market for Africa. By Resolution 46/185 of 199, the United Nations General Assembly strengthened the ECA offices by allocating more resources to them, in acknowledgment of the vital role they were playing in promoting regional cooperation and integration. The sub-regional offices have been rationalised in terms of their geographic coverage and functional relationships with the RECs. They have formed joint programmes and activities with RECs and other Intergovernmental organisations for the benefit of member states.

## **2.7 Thematic Areas of Focus**

The ECA's first programme of work and activities was endorsed at its first Session in December 1958. The Secretariat was mandated to initiate action to boost economic contact among African countries in the areas of trade, international use of roads, railways and harbours, as well as, conservation of water. At different point in the history of the ECA, issues such as education, women and gender, industry, agriculture, communications, human resources development, information technology, population, science and technology, among others, have been added to the agenda (ECA, 1998).

To augment its impact, the ECA focuses a lot of effort on collecting current and original statistics in order to establish its advocacy and policy research on clear evidence. The thematic areas of focus for the ECA include regional integration and trade, macroeconomic policy, social development, innovation and technology, natural resources, gender, governance and statistics (<http://uneca.org>). The ECA's work programme has been realigned with emphasis on

strengthening the knowledge it produces, and making the ECA the authoritative source of analytical data on African development (<http://uneca.org>).

A major function of the ECA is to undertake studies and investigations and provide advisory services within its field of competence. According to Weiss (1960), during its first year of operation, the ECA held a meeting of experts on techniques of development programming in Africa, organised a Conference of African Statisticians and held a community development workshop. It also arranged for the preparation of important documents including the "Economic Survey of Africa Since 1950", "International Economic Assistance to Africa: A Review of Current Contributions," and "The Impact of the European Economic Community on African Trade."

## **2.8 History of Africa's Regional Integration Efforts**

Adedeji (1976) indicates that economic cooperation among African states is important for achieving national socio-economic goals, and should not only be given attention after the process of development has made considerable progress. According to Asante (1995), Africa's new and fragile borders, limited infrastructure, small internal markets, as well as weak economies, economic integration has, over the years, been considered a way of helping to surmount the challenges associated with small size, small populations, narrow resources bases, and low per capita incomes.

The ECA recognised that the attainment of self-rule by African countries would not be of much worth, if it was not supported by economic independence, based on independence and self sustenance (ECA, 1998). Thus, in the 1960s, the ECA recommended the creation of subregional groups on the continent to address the challenges of poor governance and poverty and to promote global cooperation for Africa's development. During that period, the Heads of State and

Government of thirty of the thirty two independent African nations came together to establish the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU) at on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1963 (<http://uneca.org>). The objectives of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) were to organise and strengthen cooperation for development on the continent, promote unity and solidarity among African States, to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its member States, as well as, to encourage international cooperation (<http://au.int>).

Currently, there are several institutions promoting technical cooperation among member states. The cooperation spans fields such as natural resources, finance and banking, industrial development, engineering, design and manufacturing, science and technology, trade, transport, economic planning and management, remote sensing and communications. These institutions include the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the African Regional Centre for Technology, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Regional Standards Organisation (ECA, 1998).

The ECA was also the driving force behind the creation of several African inter-governmental institutions in various social and economic fields. The aim was to build indigenous capacity and promote self-reliant socio-economic development (ECA, 1998). The ECA also supported the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 at the OAU Extraordinary Summit in Lagos, which was necessary for continental and national self-sufficiency and the establishment of a self-reliant continental economy. It was developed as a continental design through which Africa could, achieve rapid economic and social development based on the principle of collective self-reliance (Madziwa, 2005). The Lagos Plan of Action also called for an extensive regional approach to the socio-economic problems of Africa that would lead to the establishment of an African Common Market as a major step towards the continent's union (<http://uneca.org>). It outlined short, medium

and long-term actions and targets covering a broad range of issues related to the continent's socioeconomic development, including “food and agriculture, industry, natural resources, human resource development and utilisation, science and technology, transport and communications, trade and finance, economic and technical co-operation, the environment, energy, women and development, development planning, statistics and population” (Vickers, 2017).

The Abuja Treaty made more tangible the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. It envisions the establishment of the African Economic Community to enhance continental and regional economic integration, as well as, to expand trade. The Final Act of Lagos, in 1980, reaffirmed national and collective self-reliance, including the establishment of an African Common Market as a step towards the establishment of the African Economic Community. According to an ECA publication, negotiations to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) began in June 2015 at the 25<sup>th</sup> African Union Heads of State and Government Summit which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Since then, the ECA has been working hard to ensure that the potential of the AfCFTA is realised by providing advocacy and technical assistance for African countries to sign the agreement, ratify and implement it. The AfCFTA aspires to liberalise trade between African countries across the continent and to build on the significant successes achieved within Africa's RECs (ECA, 2017).

In 2013, the board of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the AU-ECA joint Conference of Ministers and the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Integration agreed that Africa needed a mechanism for monitoring regional integration. They therefore decided to develop the Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII). This index is a gauge for governments and the general public, to check the performance of countries and RECs in the area of regional integration. It tracks progress, identifies bottlenecks to be addressed, and informs policy decisions at the continental,

regional and national levels to achieve a more integrated Africa (Davis, 2016). The fourth extraordinary session of the OAU Assembly of African Heads of State and Government met in September 1999 in Sirte, and adopted the Sirte Declaration to accelerate the execution of the Abuja Treaty by establishing the African Union (AU). The Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted during the Lome Summit of the OAU on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2000 to replace the OAU Charter.

In July, 2006, the African Union Summit of Heads of State, in Banjul, sanctioned the repositioning of the ECA to respond better to Africa's priorities, especially, the regional integration agenda. The Summit also confirmed the role of the ECA as a key African institution to assist and support the work of the AU and the RECs in promoting the development agenda on the continent (ECA, 2007).

This chapter discussed the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), its mandate and terms of reference. It also examined the organisational structure of the Commission as well as its Sub-Regional Offices and explored the history of regional integration in Africa with particular focus on the role the ECA has played in the process. The next chapter will focus on the contributions of the ECA to regional integration in Africa, as well as the challenges faced by the ECA in its regional integration efforts.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF THE ECA TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the contribution of the ECA to regional integration in Africa. It focuses on the initiatives undertaken by the ECA in the field of regional integration since its repositioning in 2006, the extent of implementation of the initiatives, as well as, their impact on the continent. This would be preceded by an analysis of the objectives of the ECA in the area of regional integration, to provide for better understanding of the initiatives the ECA has taken in this regard. The chapter also analyses the challenges confronting the ECA in its quest to promote regional integration on the continent, and well as, the ECA's response to these challenges. Finally, recommendations are proffered on how the ECA can improve its role in promoting regional integration in Africa.

#### **3.2 ECA's Objectives in the Field of Regional Integration**

The promotion of regional integration in Africa was one of the major reasons for the establishment of the ECA. In an interview with Ambassador William Brandful, he indicated that in 2005, the ECA laid emphasis on re-aligning its programmes with the priorities of the AU to enable the ECA better address Africa's development challenges and regional integration goals, using a better partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC). Dr. Atta-Mensah indicated in an interview that the African Union Summit of Heads of State, in July 2006, sanctioned the repositioning of the ECA to be more responsive to the continent's priorities, mainly the regional integration agenda. The aim of the repositioned ECA is

to make the promotion and strengthening of regional integration among African states an essential focus. The ECA is to achieve this by supporting the efforts of the African Union to increase the pace of the socio-economic and political integration of Africa, create the right conditions to enable Africa execute its role in the global economy and promote and defend African common positions (ECA, 2007). This is also to be actualised by promoting exchange of ideas and undertaking research in the field of regional integration.

In addition, the objectives of the ECA include increasing capacity and providing support in technical areas to institutions promoting regional integration in Africa, including the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The ECA also aims at increasing its involvement in trans-boundary initiatives and deepening its partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC) in all activities that further the African regional integration agenda.

The focus of the ECA on regional integration is in conformity with the consistent affirmation of the desire of African countries for closer integration. This commitment is expressed in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), as well as, the transformation of the Organisation for African Unity into the African Union (ECA, 2008). The ECA implements its regional integration programmes and activities mainly through its five subregional offices (SROs), which serve as the link between the headquarters of the ECA, Member States and the RECs. The regional integration agenda of the ECA is largely undertaken by its Regional Integration and Trade Division (RITD).

### **3.3 The Regional Integration and Trade Division (RITD)**

In an interview with Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah, he stated that the main responsibility of the Regional Integration and Trade Division (RITD) is to contribute to regional integration on the continent by supporting efforts to deepen regional markets, boost intra-African trade, accelerate industrialisation, foster market institutions and tackle the challenges of structural transformation. The Division has three main sections: African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), NEPAD and Market Institutions. The core functions of the Division, as stated on the website of the ECA, are as follows:

- a. Contributing to enhancing the capacity of member states and regional economic communities to develop, implement and monitor policies and programmes to deepen regional markets and accelerate industrialisation;
- b. Contributing to enhancing the capacity of member states and regional economic communities to develop, implement and monitor policies and programmes in the areas of intra-African and international trade;
- c. Assist member states, pan-African institutions, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organisations in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for the advancement of Africa's structural transformation;
- d. Developing and disseminating policy tools, instruments and guidelines and helping to build the capacity of member states to identify opportunities for diversification, value adding and the development of manufacturing and industrial clusters;
- e. Creating an enabling environment across the continent that is conducive to deeper regional integration;

- f. Supporting member States to ensure trade and industrialisation policy coherence and the alignment of trade and industrialisation policies with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- g. Supporting United Nations system-wide support for the African Union and Agenda 2063 and other regional priorities, including its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme (NEPAD), at the regional and subregional levels, within the context of the United Nations- African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA), as well as strategic plans and priorities of the African Union organs and institutions, coherent with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (<http://uneca.org/ritd>).

The Regional Integration and Trade Division promotes the regional integration agenda of the ECA mainly through assisting member states and RECs to develop policies and programmes to accelerate industrialisation and boost international trade. It also supports programmes of the African Union in the area of Regional Integration, including NEPAD and Agenda 2063. These are undertaken through the publication of policy briefs and other documents including “Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA)” and the “Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII)”.

### **3.4 ECA's Activities in Regional Integration**

The activities and programmes undertaken by the ECA in the field of regional integration in Africa are discussed below.

#### **3.4.1 Assessing Regional Integration in Africa**

The ECA has been promoting Africa's economic integration efforts by providing intellectual groundwork and reports to measure regional integration. In an interview with Ambassador Patrick

Hayford, he indicated that the ECA has done a lot of analytical work to support the regional integration agenda of Africa. One of the ECA's major flagship projects in this regard is the policy research report series titled "Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA)". The main focus of this report is on topical issues crucial to African regional integration. The ECA has, since 2004, published nine of these reports.

Professor S.K.B Asante, in an interview, indicated that the Regional Integration and Trade Division published the first ARIA report (ARIA I) in 2004. He stated that ARIA I focused on the evolution of regional integration on the African continent and provided a sectoral analysis of integration among African states and outlined the approach to be adopted to accelerate the integration of the region. A second edition of the ARIA was published in May 2006. It provided information and data on the regional integration programme of Africa, including successes, challenges and obstacles throughout the RECs. It also made a case for rationalisation of the RECs. ARIA III, which was published in 2007, centered on monetary and financial integration in Africa. It focused on gauging the performance of African RECs in the areas of monetary cooperation, macroeconomic policy convergence and financial integration. It also provided recommendations on how to deepen monetary and financial integration on the continent.

ARIA IV made proposals for enhancing intra-African trade. It undertook practical investigation of intra-African trade to determine the reason it had been constantly low over the years. It proposed recommendations to be implemented by member states, RECs and other stakeholders to overcome the challenges of intra-African trade. ARIA V, published in 2012, focused on the expected benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It did an empirical analysis of the AfCFTA and provided recommendations for its fast-tracking. ARIA VI focused on harmonising policies to improve the conditions of the trading environment. It discusses the harmonisation of three

important factors to pave the way for meaningful continental market. These include trade facilitation instruments, rules of origin, and cross-border linkages for information and communications technology.

In March 2016, the ECA published the report titled “Assessing Regional Integration in Africa-VII” under “Innovation, competitiveness and regional integration”. It contains an assessment of how innovation and competitiveness are related to regional integration on the African continent. ARIA VIII, published in 2017 was titled “Assessing Regional Integration in Africa VIII: Bringing the Continental Free Trade Area about”. It revisited the case for the AfCFTA and elaborated on its benefits. The ninth edition in the series, known as ARIA IX 2019, responds to Agenda 2063 of the African Union, establishing a trade agreement among African countries that goes beyond trade liberalisation of goods and services to address “behind the border” trade issues (ECA, 2019).

The ARIA reports, published by the ECA and its partners, aid policy makers in taking strategic decisions that affect regional integration. Moreover, they are important means for monitoring advancements in achieving integration in key sectors at both the sub-regional and regional levels. The reports published over the years, have bordered on relevant issues in regional integration in Africa and provided recommendations which have largely contributed to the promotion of regional integration on the continent. A major breakthrough in regional integration in this regard is the adoption of the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA).

### **3.4.2 The Africa Continental Free Trade Area**

The ECA is one of the partners in the establishment of a continental free trade area for Africa. The Regional Integration and Trade Division made it a priority to support the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by 2017. In an interview with Mr. Mickson Opoku/

Principal Commercial Officer at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, he indicated that the ECA assists with policy direction and dialogue in order to ensure the AfCFTA is executed. The AfCFTA is an important initiative of the Africa Union, which is projected to promote industrialisation and economic development of Africa. According to Vickers (2017), it has the potential to increase trade within Africa, decrease imports from outside the continent, stimulate investment and innovation, promote export diversification and economic growth, foster structural investment and innovation and rationalise the overlapping trade regimes of the main RECs.

Through the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), the ECA was instrumental in developing a template for the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), as mandated by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Kigali in July 2016. The template was a very important part of the negotiation process for the CFTA. It was used as the basis for technical contributions to the discussions of the CFTA Negotiating Forum. According to Ambassador Patrick Hayford, the African Trade Policy Centre of the ECA also produced the technical documents that aided the discussions held at the Conference of the African Union Ministers of Trade on CFTA and other matters in 2017.

The assistance given by the ECA contributed to the successful conclusion of the negotiations by member states, resulting in the four main legal instruments underpinning the CFTA. The instruments include the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Protocol on Trade in Goods, the Protocol on Trade in Services and the Protocol on Rules and Procedure on the Settlement of Disputes. Forty four countries signed the Agreement at the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Kigali on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018, pending ratification. By April 2019, the Agreement had obtained the

twenty two ratifications required for it to come into force. The AfCFTA came into force on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 (ECA, 2018).

### **3.4.3 Promoting Intra-African Trade**

Mr. Mickson Opoku stated in an interview, that the ECA, through the ATPC, analyses trade-related issues in relation to the integration and transformation agenda of Africa. This has the objective of achieving sustainable and inclusive growth through structural transformation, strengthening Africa's role in the global trade arena and promoting regional integration.

In 2016, the ATPC brought together experts from the RECs, the African Union Commission, the private sector, representatives of academia, as well as development partners, to discuss the continental Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT). The BIAT sets the target of increasing trade within Africa by 25 per cent or more within the next decade. The goal is to deepen market integration in Africa and use trade more effectively to attain rapid and sustainable socio-economic development. At the meeting, participants discussed the plan for creating a tracking system for advancement on the goals specified in the Action Plan.

### **3.4.4 Infrastructure Initiatives**

Infrastructural development is an important driver of regional integration. The ECA works closely with the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). Signé (2017) indicates that the PIDA was created to address the failures of previous infrastructure initiatives. It is a framework for meeting Africa's infrastructure demand up to 2040 (Vickers, 2017). It provides a plan for the development of infrastructure on the

continent as well as a stage for African countries, both individually and collectively, to interact with development partners and investors.

In connection with this, the ECA is spearheading the establishment of the African Infrastructure Network. The network would begin with road and energy infrastructure subsectors, and later be expanded to include other infrastructure sectors. Information from the African Infrastructure network will serve as an important source of information to support the Virtual PIDA Information Centre (Vickers, 2017).

### **3.4.5 African Regional Integration Index (ARII)**

In July 2016, the African Trade Policy Centre launched one of the ECA flagship reports on the African regional integration index to provide information on the status and advancement of regional integration on the continent. The African Regional Integration Index is a multidimensional matrix that allows some quantification, comparison and ranking of performance on economic integration by the RECs and individual member states (Vickers, 2017). The main objective of the African Regional Integration Index (ARII) is to monitor and evaluate the status of economic integration among African countries. The index aims at providing a means for measuring and tracking the progress of the various pillars of regional integration, including the movement of people, trade, financial and monetary integration, productive capacity, and infrastructure. It also serves as a means for facilitating objective discussions on technical matters and policy dialogues on regional integration on the continent. The index measures tariff liberalisation, financial integration, trade facilitation, macroeconomic policy convergence, free movement of persons and labour markets, social and cultural integration, regional economic community institutional capacity, regional value chains, statistical harmonisation, and regional infrastructure. This was confirmed by Prof. S.K.B. Asante in an interview.

### **3.4.6 Capacity-Building**

In an interview with Ambassador Patrick Hayford, he stated that, the ECA, through the Institute for Development Planning (IDEP), trains officials from technical Ministries like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Finance. The ECA equips these officials with skills to perform analytical tasks in relation to regional integration. Thus, thousands of Africans, since the late 1950s, have been provided with the essential skills to prepare proper statistics and to engage in planning. Related to this, is the fact that the ECA has helped to bring African planners and statisticians together across the divide, through various meetings which are hosted by the ECA.

### **3.5 Successes of the Sub-regional Offices of the ECA in Regional Integration**

Ambassador Patrick Hayford indicated that there are ECA Subregional offices (SROs) in Kigali, Yaounde, Lusaka, Rabat and Niamey, which serve as the main vehicles through which the ECA executes its regional integration agenda. The SROs promote multinational and multi-sectoral projects within their respective regions.

The ECA Subregional Office for Central Africa (SRO-CA) is working hard to remove barriers to transportation in the sub-region in line with the objectives of the AfCFTA. The SRO-CA has developed the Central Africa Consensual Transport Master Plan (PDCT-AC), supported by an accessible transport infrastructure linking all capitals of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) member States. Thirty six roadways have been developed to facilitate transport integration in Central Africa, which cover 6,008 km. The development of these roads has contributed significantly to decreasing the cost of transporting agricultural produce such as tomatoes, onions and plantains from Cameroon to Chad (ECA, 2018).

According to Prof. S.K.B. Asante, the Sub regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) has supported the South African Development Community (SADC) in developing the Industrialisation Strategy and Road Map 2015-2063. This road map offers a long-term vision aligned to national, regional, continental and international proportions. It is supported on three pillars namely, industrialisation as a champion of economic and technological transformation, geography as the context for industrial development and economic prosperity and competitiveness as an active process of moving from comparative to competitive advantage and regional integration.

### **3.6 The ECA and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**

In an interview with Prof. S.K.B. Asante, Executive Director of the Centre for Regional Integration in Africa, he explained that in the early 1960s, the ECA felt that Africa could only be developed through the process of regionalism. It, therefore, provided advisory services towards the establishment of regional groupings. This was confirmed by Ambassador Patrick Hayford in an interview. The ECA provided all the support for the creation of the Preferential Trade Area for Southern and Eastern Africa (now the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa). In addition, the ECA provided advisory services for the review of the Lagos Treaty, which focused on the need for the regional groupings to have parliaments and for the ECOWAS to have its own funds and not rely on aid. This led to the introduction of the Community Levy. The ECA also helped in preparing the Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community in 1991. The ECA was also involved in the transformation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) into the South African Development Community (SADC).

Currently, the ECA assists the RECs in many ways, including through institutional capacity building as well as technical assistance. Support to such activities is based on the priorities of each sub region and focuses on food security, minerals, industry, infrastructure and environment, among

others. The SROs are the main means through which the ECA provides technical assistance on various issues specific to each sub region (ECA, 2008).

### **3.7 Other Activities of the ECA**

The ECA builds the knowledge and skills of its member States and increases their capability to make and execute policies that encourage agribusiness and regional value chains. To that end, it produces research and case studies on value chain analysis and trains state officials in this field. The ECA also focuses on land, natural resources and gender issues.

### **3.8 Challenges of the ECA**

Considering the role of the ECA in promoting the process of regional integration in Africa, one would expect appreciable impact of ECA activities on Africa, in that area. Disturbingly, this has not been the case. Preliminary findings of the 2019 African Regional Integration Index, which were released at the Conference of Ministers in Morocco in January 2019 point towards the fact that regional integration is still low on the continent ([www.cnbcfric.com](http://www.cnbcfric.com)). This is because there are critical challenges which hamper the work of the ECA in promoting regional integration on the continent.

#### **3.8.1 Poor Infrastructure on the African Continent**

A major challenge relates to limited infrastructure on the continent. In an interview with Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah/ Principal Policy Advisor at the ECA, he indicated that one of the major challenges faced by the ECA in the promotion of regional integration on the African continent is poor infrastructure on the continent. There are several Africans living without access to improved reliable drinking water, access to basic sanitation, pliable roads and electricity (Signé, 2017). Dr. Atta-Mensah indicated that Africa requires approximately one fifty billion dollars (\$150billion) a

year for the development of infrastructure. Infrastructural development is very important because it is one of the pillars of economic progress and facilitates regional integration.

Regional integration is largely dependent on the growth of the transport system. However, very few roads are in excellent condition in sub-Saharan Africa and this is hampering the integration process. In each member country of the Association for African Road Managers and Partners (AGEPAR), only 30% to 35% of the roads are in good condition and the rest are in a terrible state ([www.newtimes.co.rw](http://www.newtimes.co.rw)). Worsening the problem of inadequate infrastructure are the numerous road blocks on highways on the continent and negative customs practices and corrupt activities of some officials. This discourages tourism and trade across borders, as it increases travel time and inconveniences of travelers. Consequently, it is limiting the free movement of goods and persons on the continent, which is one of the main pillars of regional integration in Africa and which is promoted by the ECA.

Furthermore, energy is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's largest infrastructure challenges, according to Vickers (2017). Energy is a defining infrastructure pillar for connecting Africa, as documented in the African Union's Agenda 2063. Sustainable energy is needed for manufacturing, which is important in boosting cross-border trade and investment on the continent. Lack of access to sustainable energy resources constitutes a major challenge to the promotion of regional integration in Africa. It continues to be one of the main hindrances to trade within Africa and development of the private sector. According to the June 2012 World Bank report on Energy in Africa, more than twenty five countries on the African continent have difficulties with energy production, but at the same time, Africa possesses several energy resources, many of which are still untapped ([www.lexafrica.com](http://www.lexafrica.com)). Africa has currently realised only about 10 percent of its hydropower generating capacity (World Energy Council, 2010).

### **3.8.2 Inadequate Human Resources**

The work of the ECA in promoting regional integration has been adversely affected by inadequate human resources. To promote regional integration, a wide variety of tasks need to be undertaken, in the light of evolving global trends. This requires strong technical capabilities and skilled human resources. The ECA, however, lacks the requisite human resources to adequately push the regional integration agenda on the continent, particularly in knowledge generation, advocacy and capacity-building. The ECA would promote regional integration more effectively, if it is stationed in more countries on the continent. However, the ECA cannot afford to maintain enough personnel in more offices around the continent. This challenge was disclosed by Mr. Atta-Mensah/Principal, Policy Advisor at the ECA, in an interview.

Ambassador Patrick Hayford also indicated in an interview that, the ECA has had an extremely high vacancy rate. Many of the vacant positions have not been filled because the ECA has very lengthy recruitment procedures and every reform, which has been introduced to solve this problem, has failed.

Furthermore, there is huge deficit of qualified human resources on the continent. The continent, thus, does not have adequate skilled personnel to execute the projects introduced to further regional integration in areas including industry, agriculture, health and education. The regional integration flagship projects on the continent, which are supported by the ECA, however, require experts in these fields. These include the building of infrastructure including roads and dams as well as providing services in communications, airline transportation, education and other sectors. Africa, thus imports human resources for certain projects, making the projects more expensive and contributing to the challenge of funding.

### **3.8.3 Inadequate Financial Resources**

A major constraint faced by the ECA in advancing regional integration on the continent is the problem of inadequate financial resources. This was confirmed by Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah. The ECA requires finances to execute its initiatives successfully. However, regional integration projects are often massive and expensive and the budget of the ECA is not always adequate to execute them efficiently.

Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah also explained that the institutions, which the ECA partners with, including the AU and the RECs, also lack financial resources to implement regional integration programmes. This is because many member states do not fulfil their financial obligations to regional integration blocs promptly, as a result of the extreme poverty experienced in many sub-Saharan African countries. The RECs, unfortunately, do not have internally generated funds, but rely on assessed contributions from member states to implement their programmes and execute projects. This constitutes a great hindrance to the general integration agenda of the continent. This also causes the RECs to rely too much on external sources of funding, leading, eventually, to issues relating to ownership of programmes and projects.

### **3.8.4 Voluntary Membership of the ECA**

A major challenge of the ECA is related to voluntary membership. In an interview with Prof. S.K.B. Asante/Executive Director of the Centre for Regional Integration in Africa (CRIA), he stated that voluntary membership of the ECA is a huge challenge. The ECA can neither impose its policies on member States, nor force member States to implement its programmes and projects. The ECA can also not enforce sanctions on member States which fail to implement its policies. This makes it difficult for the Commission to implement its programmes and support regional integration in Africa. This challenge was also confirmed by Ambassador Patrick Hayford.

### **3.8.5 Lack of Political Will**

The ECA is faced with the issue of lack of political will on the part of African leaders in pushing the regional integration agenda on the continent. Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah stated that leaders of the member States of the RECs, who are publicly in favour of regional integration, are often criticised for their lack of real commitment to the integration process. Whilst African leaders are quick to agree to regional integration programmes and projects, they are reluctant to implement them within their respective countries and technocrats seem to be inefficient in their work. Moreover, there are no sanctions for states that refuse to implement agreed regional integration policies. Thus, many programmes fail or achieve very little success. This was confirmed by Prof. S.K.B. Asante.

### **3.8.6 Inadequate Information for Data Collection**

In an interview with Mr. Mickson Opoku/ Principal Commercial Officer, he indicated that a major challenge facing the ECA is in terms of cooperation from member states to get the relevant information they need to conduct research. Data collection in African countries is a very difficult task, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), where technology is not developed. The ECA often requires a lot of information to conduct research to address specific issues they define and to assist member states. The ECA thus sends experts to the countries to gather some information on these issues, which they can fashion into their strategy or framework designed to support member states. The experts, however, sometimes, either do not get the right people to speak to or they do not get anyone at all to talk to. Moreover, the information required is often not even available in those countries. Thus, the reports presented to member states may present some ambiguities. It may seem as if the ECA was there to do some mischief but it is because they were not provided accurate information by the member states.

### **3.8.7 Overlapping membership of Regional Integration Schemes**

The ECA is also constrained in pushing the regional integration agenda, as a result of overlapping membership in the RECs, which is an obstacle to the overall integration of the continent. This was confirmed by Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah/Principal Policy Advisor at the ECA, in an interview. Africa has been divided into five regional configurations by the Abuja Treaty, which aimed at the establishment of an African Economic Community. The regions include North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa. The African Union recognises eight RECs as the building blocs of the envisaged African Economic Community. Each country in Africa is a member of at least one integration bloc. Some are members of more than one regional body, leading to the phenomenon of dual or multiple memberships of RECs. According to Vickers (2018), the only African states that are members of only one REC are Algeria, Cape Verde and Mozambique.

Membership of several organisations reduces the level of commitment of member states. It strains the members financially, and occasionally makes them unable to fulfill some of their obligations in each organisation. It is also responsible for unhealthy multiplication and duplication of efforts, as well as, misuse of Africa's limited resources (ECA, 2016). The phenomenon also creates the effect of overlapping trade rules and regulations at borders (Vickers, 2017). This seriously hampers the process of integration on the continent.

### **3.8.8 UN Rules and Procedures**

Ambassador Patrick Hayford disclosed that the ECA faces challenges in promoting regional integration in Africa because it is not an African institution. The ECA is a United Nations institution in Africa and thus, operates by United Nations rules and procedures. African leaders, sometimes ignorant of this fact, expect the ECA to perform various tasks which should be

performed by African institutions. The ECA, however, cannot perform tasks that are neither within its mandate nor in line with the rules and procedures of the United Nations. This, sometimes, makes it appear that the ECA is not meeting Africa's expectations and needs.

### **3.8.9 Linguistic Divides in Africa**

One challenge facing the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa is the fact that Africa is divided into language blocs. In an interview with Ambassador Patrick Hayford, he indicated that, these linguistic divides pose serious challenges to the promotion of regional integration. The French speaking countries, especially in West Africa, attach more importance to their organisations like the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), than they do to general regional groupings on the continent. They also owe more allegiance to France, especially due to the fact that their currency, the CFA Franc, is tied to the French currency. Thus, they require permission from France before they can undertake certain activities. Also, the Portuguese-speaking countries are in some ways tied to the Portuguese economy. The Northern African countries are also more aligned to the Middle East. A typical example of how linguistic divides have hindered regional integration is the delays in the introduction of the West African single currency because the francophone countries in the region have not supported it fully. This is because these countries have a long running monetary agreement with France by which they deposit half of their reserves with the French treasury. This apparent lack of unity of purpose on the part of African countries makes it difficult to make any meaningful progress in regional integration on the continent. This challenge was also confirmed by Ambassador William Brandful.

### **3.8.10 Co-location of the ECA and the AUC and Matters Arising**

In an interview with Ambassador Brandful, he indicated that the co-location of the ECA and the African Union Commission in the same capital, poses problems for the ECA in pushing the

regional integration agenda. These include administrative and related challenges. He explained that whilst the ECA logically operates in the UN mode, the AU prioritises the African agenda. According to him, there is an undeclared rivalry between the ECA and the AU, as both organisations have expertise of different kinds and different work ethics. The UN insists that its rules of procedure should prevail anytime there is a meeting with another body. This is, however, sometimes not acceptable to the African Union. These issues hinder the promotion of regional integration on the continent.

### **3.8.11 Political Differences around Membership**

According to Ambassador Brandful, the ECA and the AU have different views on the status of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and this affects their work in promoting regional integration on the continent. Whereas the AU recognises the SADR as a state, as per UN rules, SADR is not a state but a territory and a national liberation movement and as such cannot be allowed to participate in meetings. This has brought about issues when there are joint meetings between the AU and the ECA. In 2017, the joint annual meetings of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development adjourned the Conference, following objections raised by Morocco and other member States on the participation of the SADR. Ambassador Brandful stated that the AU and ECA have decided not to organize joint meetings until the political issues around membership are resolved. This challenge makes it difficult for the ECA to work with the AU in promoting regional integration on the continent.

### **3.9 ECA's Response to the Challenges of Regional Integration in Africa**

The ECA is trying to quickly adapt to deal with its challenges. In response to the challenges facing the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa, the ECA is promoting some policies and forming partnerships to boost its capabilities as well as the capabilities of the RECs and member states to ease the process of integration on the continent.

In terms of infrastructure, Dr. Joseph Atta-Mensah in an interview said that, the ECA continues to engage on policy for infrastructure to facilitate trade. To address the challenge of poor infrastructure on the continent, the ECA is supporting the Programme of Action for Infrastructural Development (PIDA), which is a framework for meeting Africa's infrastructure demand up to 2040.

In the area of logistics, the ECA is promoting policies that would ensure the free movement of persons. For example, the ECA is working with countries to ensure that they are able to implement the ECOWAS trade liberation policies. The ECA is addressing the challenge of inadequate financial resources by trying to mobilise resources from other sources besides what the UN provides. In the area of human resources, the ECA is trying to recruit the best for the organisation. The ECA is also forming partnerships with the AfDB in order to augment its human resource.

The ECA, according to Ambassador Patrick Hayford, is trying to establish a closer working relationship and a stronger strategic partnership with the AU and other African institutions. Thus, the Chairpersons of the AU and the Executive-Secretary of the ECA meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern. Also, at the directorate level, the ECA and the AU Commission have established mechanisms to meet regularly and cooperate closely with each other. Also, there is now a conscious effort to ensure that the ECA deals directly with the embassies of the various

member states in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, instead of directly with Ministries and Departments within the respective member states.

Ambassador Patrick Hayford also noted that regional integration in Africa is the primary responsibility of African countries themselves. The ECA can only have a marginal supplementary role and thus, needs the cooperation of African countries in order to perform effectively.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the contributions of the ECA to regional integration in Africa. It focused on the various activities, policies and programmes promoted by the ECA in the field of regional integration. The chapter also analysed the challenges confronting the ECA in its quest to promote regional integration in Africa, and well as, the ECA's response to these challenges.

The next chapter will summarise the findings of this research and proffer recommendations on how the ECA can improve its role in promoting regional integration in Africa.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the study, draws conclusions on the research questions and offers recommendations for overcoming the challenges faced by the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa.

#### 4.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the contributions of the ECA to regional integration in Africa, as well as, the critical challenges that hinder the smooth and successful implementation of its programmes to enhance the integration process on the continent. The study also sought to proffer recommendations for the improvement of the work of the Commission.

The study began with a background of the ECA and its areas of focus. The study found that the ECA was established in 1958, as one of the Regional Commissions of the United Nations and became the first ever inter-governmental organization in Africa whose geographical scope covered the whole continent. The ECA was created to foster regional integration, promote economic and social development on the continent and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. By its terms of reference, the ECA is charged with the duty of maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of African countries, undertaking research into economic and technological problems within Africa, as well as, performing advisory services that may be required by African countries. The ECA collects original statistics to ground its policy research on objective evidence. The thematic areas of focus of the ECA include regional integration and trade, social development, macroeconomic policy, among others.

Africans have been calling for the integration of the continent since the attainment of independence by many African countries in the 1960s, as it has been considered necessary for overcoming the constraint of small and fractioned economies working in isolation and to enable countries benefit from wider markets. Also, African leaders believed that regional integration would lead to greater social and economic development of the African continent. This led to a call by African countries in the UNGA for the establishment of a Regional Economic Commission in Africa to promote integration and cooperation among African states and address the problems of social development. The ECA has since, adopted several programmes, policies and strategies to promote regional integration in Africa. The ECA implements its regional integration programmes mainly through its five subregional offices (SROs), which act as interface between the headquarters of the ECA, Member States and the RECs

The study found that the ECA supports programmes of the African Union in the area of Regional Integration through the publication of policy briefs and other documents including “Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA)” and the “Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII)”. Through the ARIA, the ECA has been promoting Africa’s economic integration efforts by undertaking analytical studies and providing intellectual groundwork and reports to measure regional integration on the continent. The African Regional Integration Index is also developed by the ECA to provide data on the status and progress of regional integration on the continent.

Furthermore, the ECA is one of the partners in the establishment of a continental free trade area for Africa, which is an important initiative of the Africa Union projected to promote industrialisation and economic development of Africa. The ECA also supports the African Union in boosting intra-African trade. In the area of infrastructure for regional integration, the ECA works closely with African Union Commission to develop the Programme for Infrastructure

Development in Africa (PIDA), as well as the African Infrastructure Network. The ECA also trains officials from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies across the continent and equips them with skills to perform analytical tasks in relation to regional integration. These activities of the ECA have to some extent contributed to the promotion of regional integration in Africa. However, some of these regional integration efforts have yielded limited results because of some challenges, both internal and external, which the ECA faces in conducting its work.

The study found that the internal challenges of the ECA include:

- The problem of inadequate financial resources- Regional integration projects are expensive and the annual budget of the ECA is not sufficient to execute all its programmes successfully and efficiently.
- The challenge of inadequate human resources- The ECA lacks the requisite human resources to adequately push the regional integration agenda on the continent.
- Problems associated with voluntary membership- The ECA can neither force its Member States to implement the policies it adopts nor enforce sanctions on states which fail to implement these policies.

The external challenges are those that are obstacles to the overall integration of the African continent. Findings of the study are that these external challenges include:

- Limited infrastructure on the continent to advance regional integration, including good roads and energy.
- Lack of political will on the part of African leaders in pushing the regional integration agenda on the continent, resulting in failure on the part of many African states to implement policies agreed upon at the ECA.

- Difficulties in obtaining requisite data from Member States to conduct its research and provide advisory services.
- Multiplicity of regional integration schemes on the continent and the resulting overlapping membership in the RECs.
- Linguistic divides in Africa, resulting in lack of unity of purpose.
- The Saharawi problem and political differences around membership.

The study found that the ECA is trying to quickly adapt to deal with its challenges. In response to the challenges facing the ECA in promoting regional integration in Africa, the ECA is promoting some policies and forming partnerships to boost its capabilities as well as the capabilities of the RECs and member states to ease the process of integration on the continent. The ECA is addressing the challenge of inadequate financial resources by trying to mobilise resources from other sources besides what the UN provides. In the area of human resources, the ECA is trying to recruit the best for the organisation. The ECA is also forming partnerships with the AfDB in order to augment its human resource.

## **4.2 Conclusion**

The research sought to examine the contributions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to regional integration in Africa. Data was sourced from official Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) documents, official records of the African Union (AU), official records of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), journal articles, papers, books and internet sources, as well as, interviews with experts on the field. It was discovered that the ECA has contributed a lot to regional integration in Africa through its policy research and dialogue, support for the CFTA, boosting intra-African trade, capacity-building and infrastructure. Some of the challenges

hindering the ECA in promoting regional integration include inadequate financial and human resources, poor infrastructure on the continent, overlapping membership of RECs, lack of political will to implement policies, inadequate data for collection, linguistic divides, as well as political differences around membership. The ECA would have to deal with its challenges in order to effectively contribute to the promotion of regional integration in Africa.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

Considering the importance of regional integration in Africa, the ECA and its Member States, as well as RECs, would have to adopt certain strategies to overcome the challenges encountered in the promotion of regional integration on the continent. The following are some recommendations made after conducting the research:

- The scale of infrastructure deficit in Africa requires states and RECs to look beyond their means and partner with other organisations to overcome this challenge. As stated in the previous chapter, the ECA is supporting the Programme of Action for Infrastructural Development (PIDA), which is a framework for meeting Africa's infrastructure demand up to 2040. It is recommended that, in addition to this, the Member States should adopt public-private partnerships to facilitate private sector involvement in infrastructural development on the continent.
- Member States and RECs should also be positioned to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and to solicit funds from international financial institutions and multinational corporations to support infrastructure projects.
- Member states should also be encouraged to maintain road infrastructure in good state.
- To address the problem of inadequate human resources, the ECA must fast-track its recruitment process to reduce the high vacancy rate that exists at the moment. The ECA must also upgrade its staff through training programmes and further education.

- It is also recommended that the ECA organise more joint programmes with other organisations like the African Union and the AfDB in order to augment its staff needs.
- The ECA should also encourage member states to train more officials to reduce the deficit of skilled personnel on the continent.
- There must be more education on the role of the ECA, so that African leaders would not put too much pressure on the organisation to carry out functions which are not within its mandate.
- Since the ECA cannot force Member States to implement its programmes and policies, it should strongly encourage Member States to do so voluntarily.
- To address the problem of inadequate financial resources, the ECA must organise funding from other sources, including international financial institutions and other international organisations, in addition to what the United Nations provides.
- To address the challenge of inadequate information for data collection, Member States should boost their capacity to collect up to date statistics and requisite data and make them easily accessible to the ECA in order to facilitate the work of the Commission.
- The ECA should encourage the ultimate political resolution of the Saharawi problem in Africa which raises political differences around membership of the ECA and the AU.
- There is a need for rationalisation of the RECs, in order to avoid the problems associated with multiplicity of schemes and duplication of efforts.

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