



USAID Development Information Services

Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Organizations

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Many of Sub-Saharan Africa's regional organizations were initially formed to enhance regional economic development, promote trade and cooperate in developing natural and human resources. A number of organizations have expanded their mandate beyond economic concerns to encourage cooperation in a wide-range of areas that include security, tourism, research and technology, and social and cultural issues. The East African Community (EAC), whose members include Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, is one example of an organization that has recently revived and broadened its agenda after collapsing in 1977 as a result of major political differences. Similarly, the seven member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD) have expanded their mandate from combating drought and desertification to also providing a forum for discussing food security, economic cooperation and conflict management. Most recently, the Organization for African Unity (OAU), which had aimed to promote solidarity among African countries since 1963, was replaced by the African Union (AU) in July 2002 in an effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

Profiles of these regional organizations are summarized on the following pages:

AU - African Union, formerly the Organization for African Unity (OAU)
CILSS - Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel
COMESA - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC - East African Community
ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States
Franc Zone - includes the Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA)
IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
SADC - Southern African Development Community
UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

A bibliography of recent journal articles about regionalism in Africa is also included.

African Union (AU)

Sources: AU Website at <http://www.africa-union.org/> and Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

In May 2001 the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) entered into force, and the AU became fully operational in July 2002, replacing the Organization for African Unity (OAU). The OAU was founded in 1963 to promote unity and solidarity among African states. There were various attempts at establishing an inter-African organization before the OAU Charter was drawn up (e.g. Monrovia Group, Casablanca Group). African states were finally brought together despite regional, political and linguistic differences in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963. Representatives of 32 African states attended the meeting and discussed cooperation among African states in the following areas:

- Economic and Social
- Education, Culture and Science
- Collective Defense
- Decolonization
- Apartheid and Racial Discrimination
- Effects of economic grouping on development
- Disarmament
- Creation of a Permanent Conciliation Commission
- Africa and the United Nations

A Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration was founded in 1964 to hear and settle disputes between Member States by peaceful means.

In May 1994 the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community entered into force. The formation of the Community was expected to be a gradual process, to be completed by 2028.

The Secretariat is located in Addis Ababa and carries out functions assigned to it in the OAU Charter and by other agreements and treaties between Member States. Its departments include: Political; Finance, Education, Science, Culture, and Social Affairs; Economic Development and Cooperation; and Administration and Conferences. The Secretary-General is elected for a four-year term by the Assembly Heads of State.

There are 53 members in the AU. [Morocco withdrew from the OAU in 1985 because it disputed the 1982 admittance of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara).] The structure of the AU is based loosely on that of the European Union, and the AU proposes to strengthen and advance the process of African political and economic integration initiated by the OAU. The terms of its establishment provided for the AU to have a supreme body, an executive council of foreign ministers, a court of justice, and a central bank. The AU is also intended to accelerate the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

Financial sustainability for the organization has been problematic. Member States contribute to the budget in accordance with their United Nations assessment. No Member State is assessed for an amount exceeding 20% of the yearly regular budget of the organization. The budget for 2000/2001 was US\$31million, but as of February 2001 Member States owed about US\$39million in outstanding contributions. More than a dozen Member States had their voting rights suspended owing to the outstanding arrears.

Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité permanent inter-états de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel - CILSS)

Sources: CILSS Website at <http://www.cilssnet.org/> and Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

Formed in 1973, CILSS works in cooperation with the UN Office to Combat Desertification and Drought. It aims to combat the effects of chronic drought in the Sahel region, where deficits in grain production are high, by improving irrigation and food production, halting deforestation and creating food reserves. CILSS achieves its goals by investing in participatory and multi-disciplinary research in the area of food security. It also studies domestic energy issues and how decentralization and good governance impact local development in the Sahel. Its six major research areas include:

- Politiques et Stratégies de Sécurité Alimentaire
- Politique et Stratégies de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles et Lutte Contre la Désertification
- Information Agro-hydro-météorologique
- Formation Agro-hydro-météorologique
- Recherche agro-socio-économique
- Recherche en Population & Développement

CILSS is headquartered in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and maintains the Institut du Sahel in Bamako, Mali and a research and training center in Niamey, Niger. It is funded by donors and member states: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

Source: COMESA Website <http://www.comesa.int>

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was formed in 1994 to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA) which had existed since 1981. It was established as an organization of free independent sovereign states committed to cooperate in developing natural and human resources. COMESA's main focus has been on the formation of a large economic and trading unit to overcome some of the barriers that are faced by individual states.

COMESA's current strategy is 'economic prosperity through regional integration'. With its 20 member states (Tanzania withdrew from COMESA in 2000), COMESA forms a major market place for both internal and external trading. The objectives of COMESA were designed to remove the structural and institutional weaknesses in the member States by pooling resources to sustain development efforts either individually or collectively. These are as follows:

- to attain sustainable growth and development of the member States by promoting a more balanced and harmonious development of its production and marketing structures;
- to promote joint development in all fields of economic activity and the joint adoption of macro-economic policies and programs; to raise the standard of living, and to foster closer relations among its member States;
- to cooperate in the creation of an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic investment, including the joint promotion of research and adaptation of science and technology for development;
- to cooperate in the promotion of peace, security and stability among the member States in order to enhance economic development in the region;
- to cooperate in strengthening the relations between the Common Market and the rest of the world and the adoption of common positions in international fora; and
- to contribute towards the establishment, progress and the realization of the objectives of the African Economic Community.

Member states agree on the need to create and maintain the following:

- a full Free Trade Area guaranteeing the free movement of goods and services produced within COMESA and the removal of all tariffs and non-tariff barriers;
- a customs union under which goods and services imported from non-COMESA countries will attract an agreed single tariff all COMESA States;
- free movement of capital and investment supported by the adoption of common investment practices so as to create a more favorable investment climate for the entire COMESA region;
- a gradual establishment of a payments union based on the COMESA Clearing House and the eventual establishment of a common monetary union with a common currency; and
- the adoption of a common visa arrangement, including the right of establishment leading eventually to free movement of bona fide persons.

Several institutions have been created to promote sub-regional co-operation and development. These include the Trade and Development Bank; Clearing House; Association of Commercial Banks; Leather Institute; and Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE). In addition a Court of Justice was also established under the COMESA Treaty and became formally operational in 1998. Further initiatives exist to promote cross border initiatives, form a common industrial policy and introduce a monetary harmonization program.

COMESA has a comprehensive decision-making structure, which includes the Heads of State of the 20 member countries, a Council of Ministers, and technical committees and advisory bodies.

East African Community (EAC)

Source: UN institutional profile and press release

The East African Community (EAC) has recently been revived, after its collapse in 1977 as a result of major differences in political philosophy. A new unifying treaty was signed on 15 January 2001 in Arusha by the three Partner States: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The three governments are expected to promote investment codes by protecting property and rights and properly regulating the private sector.

The renewal of the EAC is a potential building block for the envisaged African Economic Community.

The Community envisions a better and expanded trading environment. Its objectives are to develop policies and programs aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the Partner States in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, environmental conservation and tourism, defense, security, and legal and judicial affairs, for their mutual benefit. The Community shall ensure:

- the attainment of sustainable growth and development of the Partner States by the promotion of a more balanced and harmonious development of the Partner States;
- the strengthening and consolidation of co-operation in agreed fields that would lead to equitable economic development within the Partner States and which would in turn, raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life of their populations;
- the promotion of sustainable utilization of the natural resources of the Partner States and the taking of measures that would effectively protect the natural environment of the Partner States;
- the strengthening and consolidation of the long standing political, economic, social, cultural and traditional ties and associations between the peoples of the Partner States so as to promote a people centered mutual development of these ties and associations;
- the mainstreaming of gender in all its endeavors and the enhancement of the role of women in cultural, social, political, economic and technological development;
- the promotion of peace, security, and stability within, and good neighborliness among, the Partner States;
- the enhancement and strengthening of partnerships with the private sector and civil society in order to achieve sustainable socio-economic and political development; and
- the undertaking of such other activities calculated to further the objectives of the Community, as the Partner States may from time to time decide to undertake in common.

There are eight established organs of the East African Community. They include the Summit; the Council; the Coordination Committee; Sectoral Committees; the East African Court of Justice; the East African Legislative Assembly; the Secretariat; and such other organs as may be established by the Summit.

See <http://www.eacq.org/eac-in-brief.htm> for more information.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Source: Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

The Treaty of Lagos, establishing ECOWAS, was signed on May 18, 1975 by 15 states with the objectives of promoting economic integration through trade, co-operation and self-reliance in West Africa. Cape Verde joined in 1977. A revised ECOWAS treaty, designed to accelerate economic integration and to increase political co-operation, was drafted in 1991-92, and was signed in July 1993. The revised treaty designates the achievement of a common market and a single currency as economic objectives. In the political sphere, it also outlines the establishment of a West African parliament, an economic and social council and an ECOWAS court of justice. The treaty also assigned the Community with the responsibility of preventing and settling regional conflicts.

ECOWAS consists of the following members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Mauritania withdrew in 2000.

The organizational structure of ECOWAS revolves around the Conference of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Tribunal, Executive Secretariat, Specialized Commissions, Parliament, and the Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development. There are eight commissions, the objectives of which are outlined below.

ECOWAS aims to promote cooperation and development in economic, social and cultural activity to raise the standards of living, increase economic stability, and improve relations among member countries and contribute to the progress and development of Africa. Objectives include:

- **Trade and Monetary Union:** Elimination of tariffs and other obstructions to trade among member states and the establishment of a common external tariff are the major concerns in this realm.
- **Travel, Transport and Communications:** Free circulation of the region's citizens and the rights of residence and establishment of commercial enterprises are the elements of the Protocol signed in 1979.
- **Economic and Industrial Development:** A private regional investment bank, Ecobank Transnational Inc based in Lome, Togo is in operation, and an Industrial Forum is held every two years to promote industrial investment.
- **Regional Security:** A protocol of non-aggression was signed at the third Conference of the Heads of State and Government. In 1990 a Standing Mediation Committee was formed to mediate in disputes between member states.
- **Environmental Protection:** ECOWAS promotes implementation of the UN Convention on Desertification Control. With CILSS, it has been designated as a project leader for implementing the Convention in West Africa.
- **Agriculture and Fishing:** An Agricultural Development Strategy was adopted in 1982, aiming at sub-regional self-sufficiency, and ECOWAS agriculture ministers adopted an action plan for a common agricultural policy in 2001.
- **Information and Media:** In 2000 ECOWAS approved a new policy on the dissemination of information about the Community's activities.
- **Social Programs:** Four organizations have been established within ECOWAS by the Executive Secretariat: the Organization of Trade Unions of West Africa, the West African Youth Association, the West African Universities Association, and the West African Women's Association. The West African Football Union coordinates the region's soccer activities, and a West African Health Organization was established in 1987.

ECOWAS has made progress in the area of free movement of persons; development of roads and telecommunication links between States; and maintenance of peace and regional security. In the area of the integration of markets, a low level of the intra-regional trade slows the trade liberalization process, and economic and financial policies have not yet been fully harmonized.

See <http://www.ecowas.int/> for more information.

Franc Zone

Source: Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

The Franc Zone members are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Comoros, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, the French Republic, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

Currencies of the Franc Zone include the French franc (the French Republic); Franc CFA (West and Central Africa); Comoros franc; and Franc CFP (Pacific France).

The Franc Zone comprises all countries and groups of countries whose currencies are linked with the French franc at a fixed rate of exchange and who agree to hold their reserves mainly in the form of French francs and to effect their exchange on the Paris market. Each of these countries or groups has its own central issuing bank and its currency is freely convertible into French francs. This monetary union is based on agreements concluded between France and each country or group.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s the economies of the African Franc Zone countries were adversely affected by increasing foreign debt and by a decline in the prices paid for their principal export commodities. The French Government, however, refused to devalue the franc CFA, as recommended by the IMF. In 1990 the Franc Zone governments agreed to develop economic union, with integrated public finances and common commercial legislation. Devaluation of the franc CFA and the Comoros franc were agreed by CFA central banks in January 1994. Following the devaluation, the CFA countries embarked on programs of economic adjustment designed to stimulate growth and ensure eligibility for development assistance from the IFIs.

In recent years meetings have been dominated by discussions of the impact of the introduction of the European single currency, the euro, on the Franc Zone. In 2000 UEMOA and ECOWAS adopted a plan of action for the proposed creation of a single West African Monetary Zone by 2004.

Union économique and monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA)

UEMOA promotes regional monetary and economic convergence, and aims to improve regional trade by facilitating the movement of labor and capital between member states. The UEMOA member countries also belong to ECOWAS and, in accordance with an action plan adopted by the two organizations in 2000, aim to harmonize UEMOA's economic program with that of a planned second West African monetary union, scheduled to be established in 2003 by the remaining - mainly anglophone - ECOWAS member states. A merger of the two complementary unions is then envisaged, prior to the planned creation in 2004 of the West African Monetary Zone.

- **Union monétaire ouest-africaine (UMOA)** – the West African Monetary Union was established in 1973 and constitutes an integral part of UEMOA. UMOA's Banking Commission began operation in 1990 to supervise activities of banks and financial institutions in the region.

Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC)

CEMAC was formed in 1998 to promote the process of sub-regional integration within the framework of an economic union and a monetary union. It continues the work of its predecessor, UDEAC, which had established a common external tariff for imports and administered a common code for investment policy, as well as a Solidarity Fund to counteract regional disparities of wealth and economic development.

Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD)

Sources: IGAD Website at <http://www.igad.org/> and Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

The Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), was created in 1986 by the six African states of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda to support regional efforts to combat the effects of drought and desertification. In 1993 Eritrea became the seventh Member State of IGADD.

Ten years after its creation, IGADD was faced with new emerging geo-political and economic challenges that called for innovative approaches, new strategies and directions. In response, the Member States decided to restructure, revitalize, and expand the mandate of the organization. The name was changed to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to better reflect these broadened goals. Under the IGAD charter, the IGAD Secretariat serves IGAD Member States as a regional contact point by providing a forum for discussing regional issues, problems, policies, and concerns in its mandated areas of interest:

- Food Security
- Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management
- Economic Cooperation
- Political and Humanitarian Affairs

The IGAD Secretariat is located in the city of Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti and its operation is funded by the dues of Member States. External donors provide funding for IGAD projects. The Secretariat aims to help maximize resources, harmonize policies and facilitate actions resulting from IGAD discussions.

Among IGAD's projects are:

- **Regional Integrated Information System (RIIS)** – a project initiated by IGAD to enhance the sustainable production and dissemination of timely and reliable information on the Greater Horn of Africa. It is a web-based, distributed network involving private and public institutions at all levels from local to international.
- **Marketing Information System (MIS)** – a component of the Regional Food Information System funded by the Government of Italy and executed by FAO, MIS aims to strengthen the capacity of IGAD to provide market information for the sub-region in order to meet the needs of decision-makers and other users.
- **Regional Household Energy Project** – a series of activities designed to collectively develop and implement effective strategies to address household energy problems in the IGAD region, with the involvement of the private sector.
- **Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)** – sponsored by GTZ and USAID, the project strengthens IGAD's ability to actively contribute to the prevention of violent conflict in the region.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Source: Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

Members: Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The first Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was held in Arusha, Tanzania in July 1979 to harmonize development plans and reduce the region's economic dependence on South Africa. In August 1992 the ten member countries of the SADCC signed a treaty establishing the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which replaced the SADCC. The treaty places binding obligations on member countries, with the aim of promoting economic integration towards a fully developed common market. A SADC tribunal was proposed to arbitrate disputes between member states. The SADC treaty was ratified and came into effect in October 1993, and the protocol on the tribunal was adopted in 2000. The Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation was adopted in August 2001.

A troika system comprising current, incoming and outgoing SADC chairmanship operates the Summit, Council of Ministers and Standing Committee of Officials. The Summit is held at least once a year and is attended by heads of state and is the supreme policy-making organ of SADC. The Standing Committee of Officials is a technical advisory body to the Council of Ministers, which is composed of member country representatives at the ministerial level. A system of SADC national committees comprises representatives of government, civil society and the private sector, and oversees the implementation of regional programs at the country level and helps to formulate new regional strategies.

During 2001 SADC institutions were undergoing a process of intensive restructuring.

The SADC Secretariat was recently strengthened by establishing permanently staffed Directorates covering the four priority areas of integration:

- Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment
- Infrastructure and Services
- Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Social and Human Development and Special Programs

Activities in the area of Regional Security are coordinated through the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, with subdivisions for Defense and International Diplomacy.

See <http://www.sadc.int/> for more information.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Sources: ECA Website at <http://www.uneca.org/> and Europa 2002 Africa South of the Sahara

ECA is the regional arm of the United Nations, mandated to support the economic and social development of its 53 member States, foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. Established in 1958 and based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ECA reports directly to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, which meets every two years. In all matters, the ECA may only act with the agreement of the government of the country concerned. Five intergovernmental committees of experts attached to the Sub-Regional Development Centers (Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern, and West Africa) meet annually in order to enable Member States to play a more effective role in the process of African integration. The Secretariat facilitates meetings, carries out resolutions and implements programs adopted.

Seven additional committees meet regularly to consider issues pertaining to the following policy areas:

- Women and Development
- Development Information
- Sustainable Development
- Human Development and Civil Society
- Industry and Private Sector Development
- Natural Resources and Science and Technology
- Regional Cooperation and Integration

Among its significant contributions to African development, the ECA was instrumental in setting up the African Development Bank (ADB), facilitated the establishment of a number of sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the PTA (now COMESA), and built some 30 technical institutions to buttress the socioeconomic development of Africa. The ECA also played a key role in the articulation of landmark economic strategies, such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Cairo Agenda for Re-launching Africa's Development. ECA provides member States with technical assistance in many fields and fosters the development of civil society groups, including NGOs, professional associations and intellectual networks.

In recent years, new leadership has brought a new vision to the ECA through Ghanaian economist K.Y. Amoako. In 1995 he began a process of restructuring and revitalization of the ECA aimed at fostering an institution that can serve as a network of development expertise, a clearing house for innovative ideas, a leader in consensus-building and forging common African positions, and an organization that would be better placed to identify and respond to the needs of its Member States. New products and modalities of the ECA include: Advocacy and Policy Analysis; Convening Stakeholders and Building Consensus; Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building; Advisory Services; and Enhancing the UN's Role in Africa.

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(Copies of these articles are available from ABIC upon request at abic@dis.cdie.org)

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