



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)

STUDY REPORT ON

**MAINSTREAMING REGIONAL INTEGRATION INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia-2012

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACS	African Centre for Statistics
AfDB	African Development Bank
AUC	African Union Commission
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community for Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICT	information and communication technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIP	Minimum Integration Programmes
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RIS	Regional Integration Section
RITD	Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SROs	Sub-Regional Offices
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Acknowledgements

The study is part of the on-going advisory and technical services work which the Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division provide to the African Member States and other Pan-Africa institutions such as the AUC and the RECs. This work was undertaken in line with one of its approved 2012-2013 biennial work programme.

The study benefitted more from the survey results which the Division undertook in close collaboration with all the five Sub-Regional Offices. The study also used ten local consultants who assisted in the collecting and administrating of the survey questionnaire. Interpretation of the survey questionnaire benefited from the Manual of coding of the questionnaire developed jointly by the Regional International Section and the African Centre for Statistics (ACS).

The following RITD interns assisted in organizing the responses from the questionnaires in a matrix form to facilitate the analysis: Mr. George Mugabe, Mr. James Egbetayo, Ms. Lidet Assefa and Ms. Melat Kifle.

The work was carried out under the overall supervision of Mr. Stephen N. Karingi, Director of the RITD. The study benefitted from the valuable inputs of Mr. Daniel Tanoe, Chief of Section and Ms. Laura Páez, Economic Affairs Officer of the Regional Integration Section of RITD. The drafting of the report was coordinated by Mr. Emmanuel Joshua Chinyama, Economic Affairs Officer of the Regional Integration Section of RITD.

1. Introduction

With the increasing global trends in international trade, economic, social and political relations, regional integration remains one of among the key drivers for economic growth and sustainable development. There is increasing commitment by all African countries to accelerate and implement regional integration agenda. Several initiatives on regional integration are on-going at both regional and national levels. Africa needs to embrace these trends more than any other continent due to its combined impact of relatively small economies, weak international terms of trade and production, inadequate ICT, poor economic management and infrastructure bottlenecks. However, Africa is yet to reap the full benefits of regional integration due to the aforementioned challenges.

The benefits of regional integration are many and well documented. In general regional integration helps to promote and enhance: the sharing of resources among member States; intra-African trade; economic growth and development; the conducive environment for business; foreign direct investment; economic competitiveness within the integrated space; the building of infrastructural networks; sharing of best practices; and peace and security. Regional integration arrangements can also increase investment in member countries by reducing distortions, enlarging markets, and enhancing the credibility of economic and political reforms.

Regional integration initiatives do require a large degree of public management and implementation at the national level. Without an absolute commitment to implementation at the national level, there can be little progress at the subregional level. Doing nothing or too little to implement agreed programmes at the national level can severely hamper the integration agenda. One of the main challenges underpinning the acceleration of Africa's continental integration is the limited or lack of progress in mainstreaming regional integration agreements and the several decisions adopted at both continental and regional levels into national development plans and strategies. Although various studies on regional integration¹ support the idea that mainstreaming regional integration significantly contributes to the overall objective of the continent in its endeavors to accelerate the attainment of continental unity as envisaged in the Abuja Treaty. Regional integration arrangements can also increase investment in member countries by reducing distortions, enlarging markets, and enhancing the credibility of economic and political reforms². However, the results from regional integration in many African countries remain mixed. There

¹ Mainstreaming AIDS in development instruments and processes at national level, USAIDS, September 2005; Assessment of benefits of regional integration in SADC and COMESA-a gender analysis; *A Framework for mainstreaming regional integration in national development plans in SDAC region, ECA-SA; and Guide note on mainstreaming environment into national development planning*, UNDP, ECA, UNEP.

² Assessing regional Integration in Africa, ECA, AUC, and AfDB, Volume V: particularly chapter four-African Trade flows and patterns and six-Trade facilitation and intra-African trade

are both winners and losers resulting from implementing regional integration protocols among African member States.

However, one of the main challenges underpinning the acceleration of Africa's continental integration is the limited progress in mainstreaming regional integration agreements and the several decisions adopted at both continental and regional levels into national development strategies and plans. Until today, domestication of these decisions at national level remains weak and a number of countries are yet to fully integrate the agreed decisions into their national development strategies. According to the survey results, a number of underlying factors attributed to limited domestication of decisions. These include the following: lack of resources; shortage of manpower capacity to cope with and implement the diverse range of regional integration activities and programmes; poor coordination of programmes at national level; and limited consultations among stakeholders on a number of agreed decisions and protocols relating to regional integration. Overlapping membership has also put a strain on member States' resources and ability to implement multiple and competing programmes.

Efforts to accelerate Africa's integration continue to gather momentum, especially in the wake of the January 2012 African Union Summit Decision to fast track the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area by the indicative date of 2017 and to boost intra-African through the implementation of a comprehensive Action Plan in the short, medium and long term at both national and regional levels. It is imperative that the issue of effective domestication of these and other regional integration decisions, treaties and protocols at the national level is resolutely addressed. To this end, various institutions and partners including the African Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development bank (AfDB) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are poised to providing support. But as Member States are at the center of the integration process in Africa, it is their full commitment to implementing the various decisions and agreements that can help make a decisive difference in the progress towards achieving the CFTA, the African Common Market and ultimately the African Economic Community.

In line with its mandate and programme of work, the UNECA undertook this exhaustive study on mainstreaming regional integration in Africa. The purpose of the study has been to examine the progress made in mainstreaming regional integration programmes, protocols, decisions, and activities into national development strategies and plans of member States. The report captures the main findings of the study, in an effort to shed light on the major challenges of domesticating regional integration commitments at the national level. The analysis in this report has largely drawn from results of a continent-wide survey conducted by UNECA and also from face-to-face interviews with government officials and other stakeholders in African Member States, in an effort to reflect how the mainstreaming process is being perceived.

The report is designed to serve as a practical guide for governments, the private sector and civil society organizations, researchers and other interested parties in the process of mainstreaming of regional integration. In this regard, it provides some solutions and policy recommendations to address the challenges currently affecting the implementation of regional integration

programmes and proposes a framework for the mainstreaming of regional integration activities and programmes. It is hoped that the findings of this report will contribute to accelerating regional integration in Africa and also supporting the implementation of the recent Decision by the African Union Summit to fast track the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area by the indicative date of 2017 and to boost intra-African trade.

The study report is organized as follows: section 1 introduces the study and outlines the report; section 2 provides the objectives of the study report; section 3 deals with the methodology of the study report; section 4 highlights conceptual issues about regional integration and mainstreaming; section 5 outlines the rationale and processes of mainstreaming; section 6 defines the different levels of mainstreaming regional integration; section 7 highlights the empirical evidence of mainstreaming and key findings of the study; section 8 looks at the challenges of mainstreaming regional integration; section 9 describes a framework for mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans, and finally the study report ends with conclusions and policy recommendations.

2. Objectives of the study

Within the context of its approved 2012-2013 biennial work programme, the UNECA decided to undertake a detailed research on the subject of mainstreaming regional integration focusing on country's commitments in integrating agreed decisions and protocols into national development plans. This study was undertaken as part of on-going efforts by the UNECA to assist African member States in accelerating regional integration agenda through domestication of regional integration activities and programmes into national development plans.

The study reviewed the status of mainstreaming regional integration activities and programmes at a country level and provides some solutions and policy recommendations to address the challenges currently affecting the process. The study concludes by proposing a framework for accelerating the mainstreaming regional integration activities and programmes.

Specifically, the study was undertaken to address the following:

- i. Undertake a research study on mainstreaming regional integration agreements and decisions into national development plans, strategies and budgetary allocations;
- ii. Identify key challenges leading to limited mainstreaming of regional integration strategies into national programmes;
- iii. Examine the extent to which regional integration has been demonstrated in African countries and identify capacity gaps in mainstreaming regional integration strategies into national plans and how these could be improved;
- iv. Provide policy guidelines on how member States would enhance their institutional capacity building in the area of regional integration;
- v. Identify the level of coordination between member States and regional integration institutions such as the AUC, RECs, ECA, AfDB, regarding the implementation of regional integration decisions; and
- vi. Assess the level of participation by the civil society organizations (CSOs), and partners in the preparation and implementation of regional integration programmes both at national, regional, and continental levels; and

3. Methodology of the study

The study was conducted by the UNECA through its Division of Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade. The Division also worked in collaboration with Sub Regional Offices (SROs) who assisted in the collection of the data in some selected countries. In addition to the ECA staff, the study used national consultants in the 10 selected countries, covering two countries in each region. The selection was made on the basis of ensuring the geographical representativeness of the five regions of African Member States.

The study identified 5 key ministries³ which are responsible for implementation of regional integration agenda as the main sources of information for the survey. Some of these ministries were visited while others were contacted and the survey questionnaires were sent to them. In total, the study received responses from 32 member States with a total number of 69 ministries involved. The following countries responded to the questionnaire: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo DRC, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt; Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In order to have biased results among all regions, geographical sampling technique was applied as per the below table:

Table 1-Countries participated in the survey based on the five African regions

North Africa	West Africa	Central Africa	East Africa	Southern Africa
Egypt, Tunisia Sudan	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo	Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Gabon, Niger,	Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda	Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

The study also undertook a desk review of various papers on mainstreaming regional integration, focusing on the agreed protocols, decisions and programmes relating to regional integration. It

³ Ministries directly involved in regional integration activities such as Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Industry; Ministry of Infrastructure and Works; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were considered.

further reviewed various national strategy papers in 52 African Member States aimed at establishing the linkage between their strategies and regional integration agenda. Based on this desk review, the report reveals that there are some variations in the levels of inclusion of regional integration activities and programmes into national development strategies and plans across Africa.

The analysis of the survey results was interpreted using the manual⁴ of coding of the questionnaire which was jointly developed by the Regional Integration Section and African Centre for Statistics (ACS).

⁴ Manual coding-a document used to interpreter the results of the survey.

4. Conceptual issues about regional integration and mainstreaming

4.1 What is regional integration?

Regional integration is not a new phenomenon. It has been in existence for a long time. During the early years, regional integration provoked huge debate about how the integration terminology could be used considering its lack of understanding and clarity regarding its clear definition. In normal, the term integration means bringing an object into a complete whole, while the narrowest economic term implies coordinating economic activities with the aim of enhancing the development of countries or regions (Mutharika, 1972). In Africa the process of regional integration is being emphasized through the establishment of various Regional Economic Communities. The RECs are deemed to be the regional blocs or the path to the attainment of African Unity as envisaged in the Abuja Treaty.

In literature, there are different dimensions of regional integration, including economic, social, and political. Economic integration is a process where barriers to trade are reduced or eliminated to facilitate trade between regions or nations. It involves elimination of tariff and nontariff barriers to the flow of goods, services, and factors of production between a group of nations, or different parts of the same nation. However, the removal of trade barriers comes with costs and benefits, depending on the degree of economic integration and the level of cooperation between member regions or nations. Despite the above challenge, many economies have attempted some degree of economic integration, including free trade zones.

A number of African leaders called for integration as early as their independence days, but it was only in the 1970s and 1980s that concrete steps were taken to re-launch or establish the regional economic groupings based on sub-regions. Despite the re-launch, researchers have found it difficult to precisely formulate the definition of regional integration. Some researchers (such as Lolette Kritzinger-van Niekerk, May 2005) have defined regional integration as an arrangement for enhancing cooperation through regional rules and institutions agreed upon by the member States of the same region (business dictionary). It also means the unification of nation states into a unified group. (June Sooner, October 2003). According to Carbaugh, 2004, regional integration is a process of eliminating restrictions on international trade, payments and factors of mobility. Others have defined regional integration as a dynamic process that entails a country's willingness to share or unify into a larger group.

There are different views regarding the origin of regional economic integration theory. Some believes that the theory of regional integration is believed to originated/based on the broad study done by Balassa, 1961. Others are of the view that the theory of regional integration emerged earlier than 1961 during the contributions of work to customs union (Viner, 1950 and Meade, 1955).

4.2 What is mainstreaming regional integration?

Various studies (UNAIDS/UNDP/World Bank, December 2005; UNEP/UNECA/UNDP 2007; UNECA 2004; UNAIDS 2002; Peter N. King, May 2010; and Salvatore, July 2008) have been conducted on mainstreaming specific sectors into national development strategies and plans, such as AIDS; environment, gender, trade, and climate change, among others. Based on the above studies, some of the definitions of mainstreaming regional integration are presented in the box below:

Box 1: Some definitions of mainstreaming according to the above studies

- UNECA-Mainstreaming trade policies in national development strategies involves the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies, creating synergies in support of agreed development goals.
- Peter N. King-Environment mainstreaming is defined as integrating poverty environment linkages into national development planning process and their outputs, such as Poverty reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- UNAIDS-working definition-mainstreaming AIDS is a process that enables development actors to address the causes and effects of AIDS in an effective and sustained manner, through both their usual work and within their workplace.
- The UNAIDS/UNDP/World Bank study defines mainstreaming AIDS as a process of integrating AIDS into PRSPs or other national development instruments in order to address the root causes and consequences of HIV epidemic and its links with poverty.
- The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of United Nations- "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

In general, the literature on mainstreaming regional integration in general is rather new and the information is limited⁵. Nonetheless, literature provides a number of definitions of mainstreaming regional integration which are useful and set the scope for this study. Mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans is defined as integrating regional integration decisions/developments/programmes into national development planning processes and their outputs, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) strategies, peace and security. Mainstreaming regional integration also refers to the process of integrating decisions and protocols into national development strategies and programmes. The process involves translating strategies into commitments backed by explicit targets, which are fully costed with monitorable indicators of inputs, outputs, and outcomes, and articulating them in a sustained and effective manner in the medium term expenditure frameworks and national budgets. (Akong, N.C., 2007).

In practice, mainstreaming involves domesticating the agreed decisions, protocols and programmes into national development plans. This requires participation of experts who are fully engaged in the planning, budgeting as well as decision making in their respective countries. The overall aim is to establish a well coordinated institutional framework or process within governments, where all stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians, academia, among others, are fully involved, both in the formulation of policies and implementation of activities and programmes.

According to the report on the framework for mainstreaming regional integration in national development plans in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the mainstreaming process is divided into two interrelated components, namely an institutional and a domestication component (UNECA 2009). The institutional component deals with issues of ratification of agreed programmes and setting up of league systems. Domestication of regional integration agenda refers to the integration of agreed protocols, decisions, and programmes into national development plans. A domestication component gives policy makers the opportunity to take into account these decisions, protocols and programmes in their planning, budgeting as well as monitoring processes. Ideally, through domestication of regional integration programmes, governments and stakeholders will own the process. The ownership can have a significant impact on the successful implementation of these protocols and decisions, since the average citizen will be able to tap into regional integration opportunities which create jobs, generate income and access to global markets through value chains, among others.

⁵ See UNECA 2009, A Framework for mainstreaming regional integration in national development plans, Addis Ababa

5. The rationale for mainstreaming regional integration

5.1 The rationale

The process of mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans is not a simple task-it requires a strong political commitment and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders as demonstrated by other issues such as gender, environment and trade, among others. There are a number of reasons why member States should be engaging themselves in the process of mainstreaming regional integration. The survey results revealed numerous reasons why member States are positive about mainstreaming process. These include: effective implementation of activities and programmes relating to both regional integration and national development plans; promoting regional integration agenda; raising national awareness of decisions, protocols and programmes adopted at continental and regional levels relating to regional integration issues; and enhancing and complementing the implementation of national development plans.

5.1.1 Effective implementation of activities and programmes relating to both regional integration and national development plans-Implementation of both regional integration and national development programmes require substantial amount of financial and human resources. The joint implementation of these programmes will minimize both financial and human resources needed in the implementation process. In general, the regional integration programmes and national development plans are aimed at addressing similar objectives both in the short and long run. With the similarity in the activities of regional integration and those of national development, domestication of these activities will significantly assist member States in better utilization of resources as both national and regional integration as projects and programmes would be implemented jointly.

5.1.2 Promoting regional integration agenda- Mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans is key if the continent is to achieve its dream of a United Africa. The continental objective of achieving the African Economic Community by 2027 will not be achieved unless member States intensify the domestication of regional integration decisions, protocols, and programmes. Effective implementation of national development plans will on the other hand, promote regional integration agenda, if the two are harmonized. Through mainstreaming process, member States can be able to address the problem of thin resources through harmonisation of programmes and activities of both regional integration and national development. During the process, resources are ideally secured and allocated into the national budgets which will ensure an adequate level of commitment to see the process through.

Domestication of activities, decisions, and protocols of regional integration, will no doubt contribute ultimately to overall agenda of economic growth, poverty alleviation and socio-

economic development. However, this requires a strong commitment to link the agreed decisions at continental and regional levels into national development plans. A number of regional projects and programs, such as regional infrastructure development, are implemented with the support of development partners. With the mainstreaming process, member States will be able to take advantage of these regional projects to achieve their national development plans. Given the scarcity of human capital within member States, pursuing joint mainstreaming could, to some extent, assist in addressing the problem of limited resources as there will be no need to implement the programmes separately.

5.1.3 Raise awareness and buy in of decisions, protocols and programmes adopted at continental and regional levels relating to regional integration- The mainstreaming process requires active participation of a wide range of actors at all levels. Key implementers of activities, programmes and decisions at national level often lack the knowledge of some of the agreed decisions at both continental and regional levels because they may not have been involved in the planning and negotiation process. They may also lack the necessary technical expertise to interpret these instruments as well as the legal obligations resulting from their enactment, which may result in poor planning and lack of necessary actions.

A number of countries have policies relating to mainstreaming regional integration but these are often not adequately publicized which has resulted into low levels of implementation. Mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans can help to bring a clear understanding of these decisions by all the stake holders and key ministries dealing with regional integration issues and accelerate the implementation process. Take the example of the decision of free movement of people⁶ adopted by the Heads of State and Government during the AU Summit which introduced the *African Union Laissez-Passer*. Until today, not all countries, particularly immigration officers are aware of this *African Union Laissez-Passer*. It is, therefore, still difficult for AUC officials to travel to some African countries with the *Laissez-Passer* despite the formal adoption of the aforementioned decisions by African countries. Some countries still demand the national passports despite the introduction of *Laissez-Passer*. This clearly demonstrates that there are inadequate consultations on a number of decisions at national level which impinge on the operationalization of key instruments that are legally binding in nature.

Mainstreaming will assist in bridging the knowledge gap existing between the continental and regional bodies (i.e the AUC, and RECs) and the national stakeholders (parliamentarians, the private sector, NGOs, civil society, and academia, among others) on issues relating to regional integration matters. The implementation of the treaties requires an active involvement and

⁶ Decision [EX.CL/Dec.337 \(X\)](#) by the Executive Council urging the Commission to accelerate the implementation of [Dec. EX.Cl/Dec.211 \(VII\)](#) on Free Movement of Persons and further requested the Commission to take the necessary measures, in collaboration with Member States, to launch the African Union Diplomatic Passport as early as possible.

participation of all key players. Results by previous studies (Minego, Charles E, and Salvatore Coscione, 2009) have revealed that the participation of the private sector is hampered, to a large extent, by lack of flow of information from the decision makers to the general public. This generates a disconnect between the public and private sector, and reflects as the ultimate failure to represent national and regional economic interests which could thrive with the engagement of the private sector.

6. Levels of mainstreaming regional integration

Documented evidence of mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans is very limited. However, as indicated earlier, mainstreaming of specific issues such as HIV and AIDS, trade, gender, climate change, among others has been well documented and is readily available. As we will see from the survey results, the complexity of decisions and protocols adopted at the highest level; and inadequate financial resources contribute significantly to the slow progress in the process of mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans.

There are numerous ways how member States can mainstream regional integration activities and programmes. At each level, member States need to be very committed in order to see the process move forward. There is need to have both financial and human resources for the implementation of the process. This report identifies five key levels of mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans as follows:-continental, regional, national, sectoral, and sub national levels.

6.1 Continental level-This is the level where decisions on regional integration are mainly formulated, discussed and adopted by the Heads of State and Government. Formulation of decisions at continental level will be done by the African Union while implementation of these decisions are done by the member States. At this level, mainstreaming involves setting a vision, mandate and strategic goals and action plans. This level should provide a clear understanding and awareness of how these goals would fit into national development plans and contribute to the overall agenda of economic development of the continent and a region. Endorsement of decisions and protocols at this level is very critical as this has a bearing on the implementation at national level and other subsequent stages.

6.2 Regional level – This level is the same as the continental level where decisions are discussed and adopted by the Heads of State and Government. However, decisions at this level presuppose a certain degree of peace and security within the given region. At this level, the Regional Economic Communities are responsible for the formulation of decisions at regional level. Just like at continental level, decisions adopted are being implemented by African member States, hence the need to harmonize these decisions to avoid duplication of efforts and resources. In some cases, there may also be some delegation of authority to the REC or another regional body to implement these decisions. In general, the survey results revealed more progress being achieved at regional level compared to continental level.

Box 2-Protocols on relations between the African Union and the RECs

Introduction:

- In order to enhance the relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities in the area of regional integration, the two parties signed the protocols on 27 January 2008, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The protocols take into account the role of the African Union in terms of the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Article of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) of promoting closer cooperation among RECs, in particular, through the coordination and harmonization of their policies, measures, programmes and activities in all fields and sectors.

Objectives

- To strengthen the existing regional economic communities in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, treaties and this Protocol;
- To promote the coordination and harmonization of the policies, measures, programmes and activities of regional economic communities;
- To promote closer co-operation among the regional economic communities; and
- To provide an institutional structure for the coordination of relations between the Community and the Regional Economic Communities on the implementation of the stages 1 through 4 set out in Article 6 of the Treaty.

Coordination Organs

- Coordination Organs shall be established for coordinating policies, measures, programmes and activities of Regional Economic Communities and ensuring the implementation of activities arising from the provisions of this Protocol: a) the Committee on Coordination; and b) the Committee of Secretariat Officials.
- The Committee on Coordination shall consist of: a) the Secretary-General; b) the Chief Executives of the Regional Economic Communities; c) the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; and d) the President of the African Development Bank.
- Members of the Committee may be accompanied to meetings by experts and advisers.

General Undertaking

- The Parties undertake to promote the coordination of their policies, measures, programmes and activities with a view to avoiding duplication thereof. To this end, the Parties agree;
- To ensure that their policies, measures, programmes, and activities do not duplicate efforts or jeopardize the achievement of the objectives of the Community;
- To provide for the exchange of information among their respective Secretariats for the implementation of the Treaty and treaties.

Progress to date

- Coordination meetings of the three institutions are being held every year in line with the signed protocols.

6.3 Country level - Planning of regional integration activities and programmes at the national level is critical. This level provides the overall framework within which national stakeholders and other key partners should operate. For effective implementation, decisions and protocols need to be mainstreamed into national development plans which can be translated into actions plans and as well as budget processes. It is important for the adopted decisions and protocols to find their way into national development plans of member States. Practically, the easiest entry points at the national level is through National Development Plans such as Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs) which are country development plans describing the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a period of time aimed at promoting broad-based growth and reduce poverty. As governments are already committed to implement these national development plans, and resources already allocated, it is appropriate to link regional integration decisions and protocols to the national development plans.

6.4 Sectoral level - Sectoral planning is important because numerous decisions on regional integration are sector-specific. Ministries dealing with regional integration matters cannot work in isolation as a number of the activities and programmes are cross cutting. It is not possible for the coordinating ministry to effectively achieve and implement the agreed decisions and programmes without the support of other key stakeholders and line ministries. There is need to involve and task the key ministries and institutions, directly involved in regional integration matters, particularly in the planning and implementation of the activities and programmes. The private sectors, NGOs, and other stakeholders are also critical at this stage, given the financing and human capacity constraints many African member States face. Development partners may also be crucial if the process of mainstreaming requires additional financing in addition to the domestic resources, which is generally the case.

6.5 Sub-National - As outlined earlier, decisions and protocols need to be translated into actions. This will involve translating the decisions into targetable and achieved programmes and projects. This is a critical level which requires the participation of many stakeholders, including those at district level. This calls for a strong coordination and collaboration between the line ministries and the people at grassroots levels. People implementing the programmes and projects need to be involved or linked to the mainstreaming process at country level. An inclusive public-private dialogue on regional integration between line ministries and grassroots will raise the awareness of regional integration decisions and accelerate the overall implementation agenda of regional integration. In addition, capacity building and awareness raising activities will be necessary in order to operationalize programmes and disseminate the necessary information for the average citizen to understand and take advantage of regional integration.

7. Empirical experience in mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans

From the survey results, progress on the mainstreaming of regional integration at country level remains mixed. While some countries have made tremendous progress in mainstreaming regional integration activities, others continue to face numerous challenges, including political, economic, coordination as well as structural arrangements at ministerial level. As indicated earlier, regional integration initiatives do require a large degree of public management and capacity at the national level including budgeting and programming. Without an absolute commitment to implementation at the national level, there can be little progress at the sub regional level.

7.1 Reasons for joining Regional Economic Communities

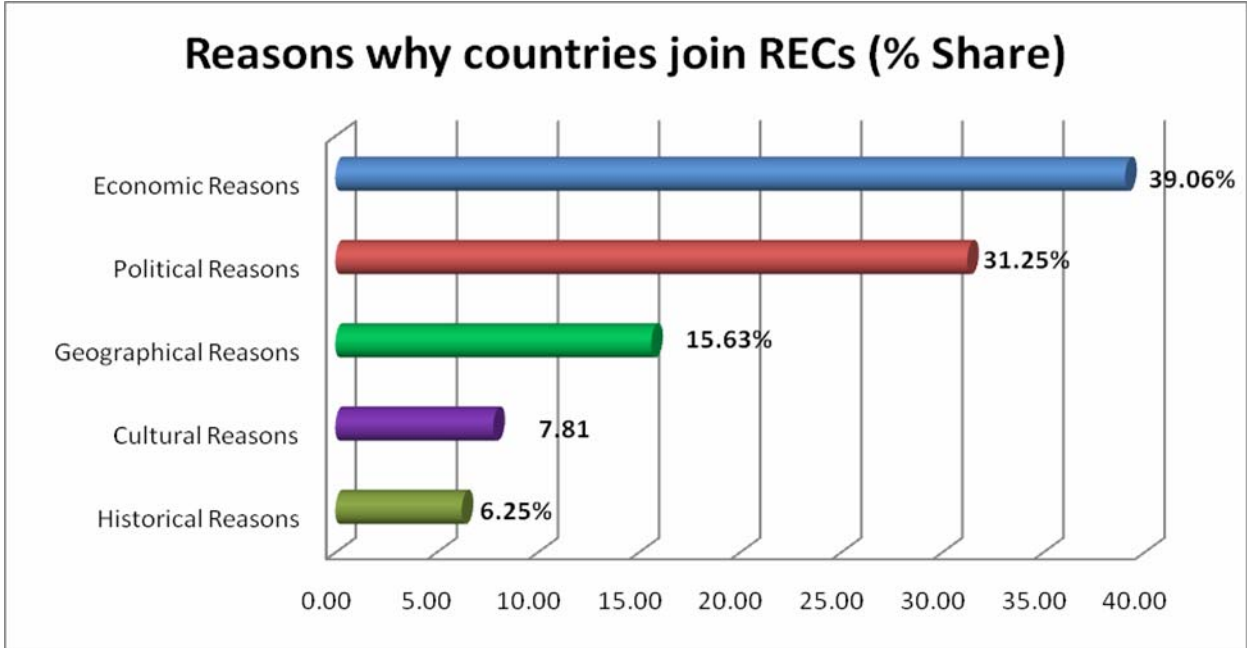
There are several motivations for African Member States to join various RECs. In general, countries belong to more than one REC in order to pursue common visions of regional integration that aim to create a prosperous, peaceful and internationally competitive region and ultimately contribute to the realization of the Abuja Treaty. Regionalism also assists member States to reap the full benefits of regional integration which brings the needed growth and sustainable economic development.

The survey results highlighted numerous reasons why countries belong to different RECs. These include: economic and social; political; cultural; geographical; and historical reasons. The analysis of the responses from all respondents found that multiple memberships arise from both strategic socio-economic and political reasons. From the economic point of view, countries want to expand market access coupled with enhanced infrastructure to enable the smooth flow of trade in their regions. All countries indicated that regional integration has opened up regional markets to producers and service providers in their countries giving them the opportunities to take advantage of the bigger markets.

Countries also join various RECs in order to strengthen economic, social, cultural and political ties among the countries in the region and derive benefit from it with the aim of improving the livelihood of the people. Outside the continent, countries could have the opportunity to create and strengthen their collective bargaining power in international trade negotiation forums to ensure mutual benefit among the parties. The survey also revealed that regional groupings greatly contribute to increase in foreign direct investments among member States through joint economic and political strategies within their regions. Through regional groupings, member States are in a better position to effectively address cross-cutting issues such as climate change, drought and other natural and man-made disasters which could not be possible if countries would address them individually.

Under peace and security, countries join RECs to ensure collective peace and security in the region. For instance, SADC started as a political grouping aimed at addressing peace and security issues in the region, which later changed its focus to include economic issues. Respondents also indicated that political stability in many regions has contributed positively to good governance and sustainable development. Figure 2 below illustrates some of the main reasons why countries decide to join Regional Economic Communities.

Figure 1: Various motives for member States to join different RECs



Source: UNECA Survey on mainstreaming 2012

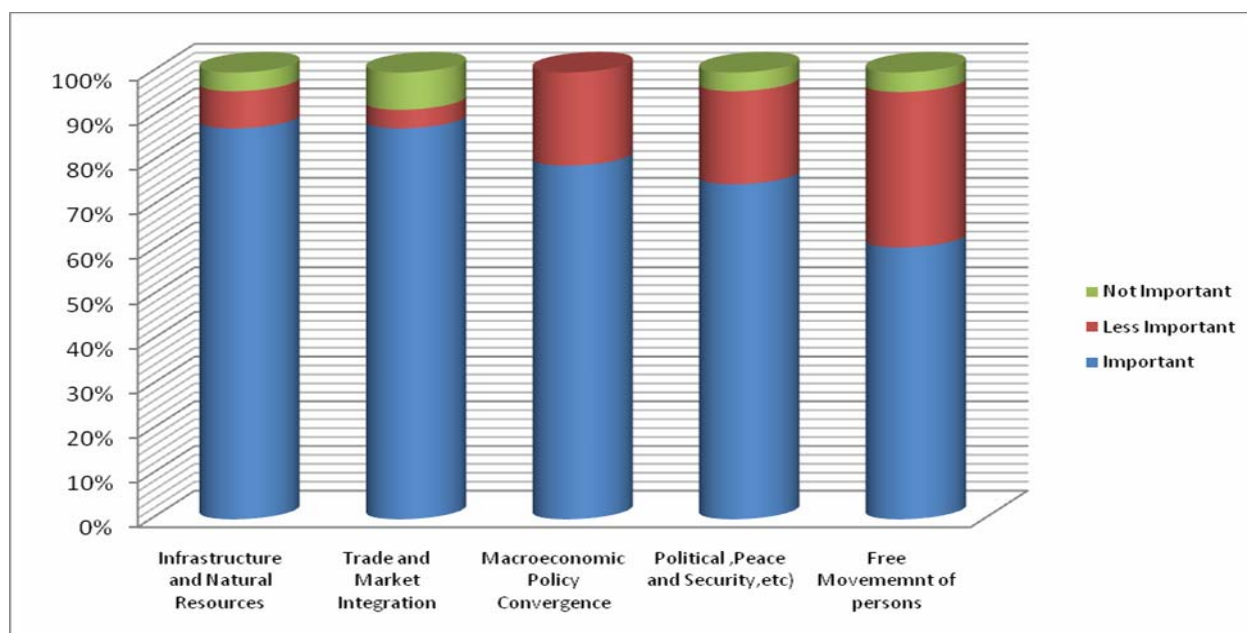
A number of countries indicated that they joined the RECs because of economic reasons, followed by political reasons. Although the geographical position plays a key role according to the scenario for rationalizing by merger and absorption, (The AUC study on rationalization of the RECs, 2006), the survey results rated this option very low. As we can see in Figure 1, only 15.6 per cent of the respondents recorded that countries joined the RECs because of geographical reasons. This is against the Abuja Treaty which strongly recommended acceleration of regional integration agenda in Africa based on five regions of the continent, namely, north, south, east, west and central.

Cultural and historical reasons remained at the bottom of the ranking as many respondents were of the view that the two do not bring much needed value addition when it comes to regional groupings. However, many respondents indicated that the two reasons were significant during the early stages of regional groupings.

7.2 General progress in implementing regional integration in member States

A number of countries have made significant progress in implementing regional integration activities and programmes. Results from the survey indicated that regional integration has contributed in boosting the economies of many African countries. This is evident from the survey results, particularly in the following sectors: infrastructure development; trade and market integration; macroeconomic policy convergence; peace and security; and free movement of persons, goods and services.

Figure 2: Degree to which regional integration addresses national development issues



Sources: UNECA survey on mainstreaming 2012

During the survey, member States were asked to examine the extent to which regional integration addresses national development issues. As shown in Figure 2, out of 32 countries, more than 50 per cent of the respondents reported that regional integration activities were strongly national development issues, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and natural resources; trade and market integration; macroeconomic policy convergence; political, peace and security; and free movement of people and persons.

7.3 The role of regional integration in promoting economic growth

There is enough evidence in the literature supporting the finding that developing countries which have opened their markets to international trade during the past two decades have increased their trade volumes and this has led to rapid economic growth (Percy S. Mistry 2003; manone Madyo 2008;). There is no doubt that closer co-operation and faster regional integration among African

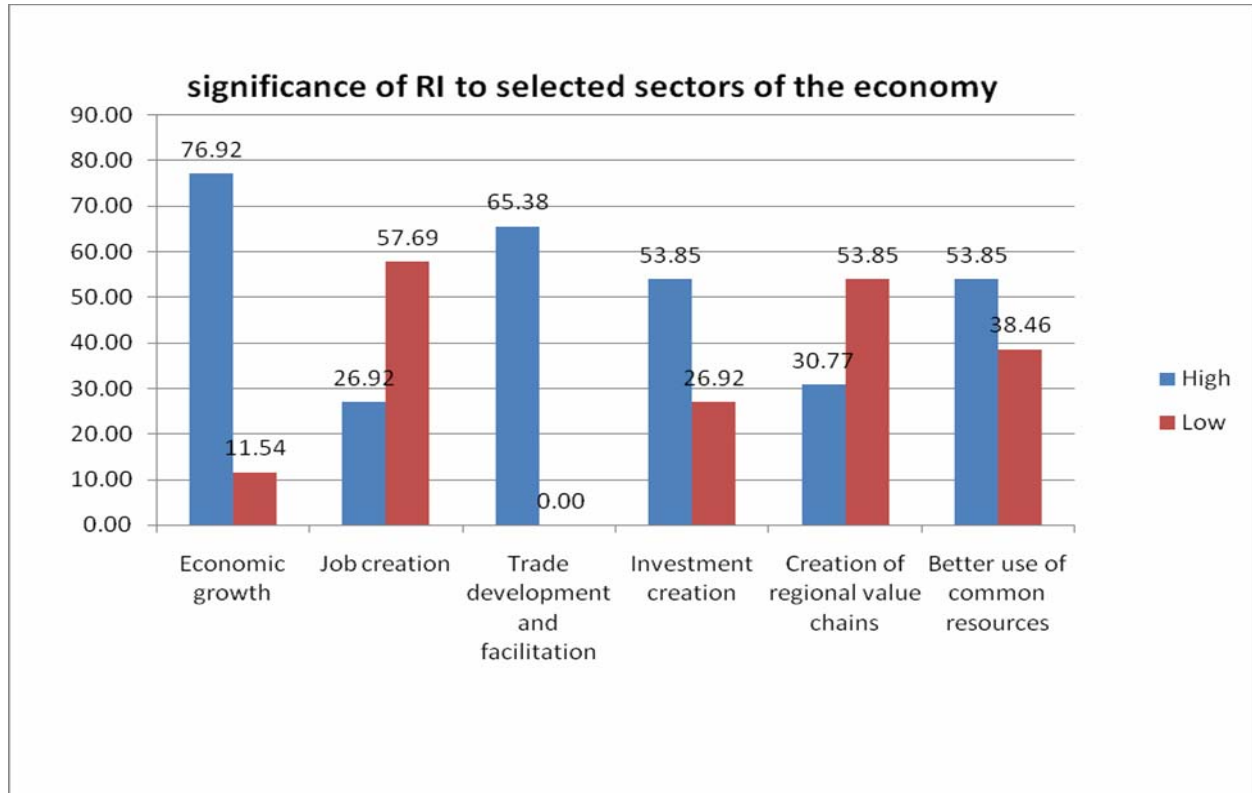
member States will help the entire continent grow stronger and position itself to effectively address the negative impact of the change in the global world. A number of countries cited that regional integration allows disadvantaged countries to realize economies of scale, as countries pool together their resources and avail themselves of regional institutional and human resources, in order to attain a level of technical and administrative competence that would not be possible on an individual basis.

Regional integration can bring larger market access to member States which in turn encourages or lead to: investment and economic growth; improvement regional competitiveness based on comparative advantages; improvement in skills due to increased capital mobility, technology transfers and skills exchange; attract FDI; employment creation; economies of scale in implementation of regional projects; regional infrastructural development; increased transparency and accountability; free movement of goods and people, which promotes regional trade; political stability, peace and security assured by the regional bodies; and stronger voice in international for a (UNECA 2010, ARIA IV; Maxwell and Emmanuel 2007; and Vamvakidid 1198, Vol.12).

Despite recent development in technological, infrastructure, energy and transport etc, the survey results indicated that landlocked countries continue to face structural challenges to accessing both regional and international markets. This has pushed landlocked countries far behind their maritime neighbours in overall economic development as well as external trade performance. Although the relatively poor performance of many landlocked countries can be attributed to distance from coast, some researchers have argued that other factors, such as peace and security, cumbersome tax administration and poor governance, among others, have also contributed to the challenge. Addressing all these challenges, will no doubt assist landlocked countries to benefit more from regional integration arrangement.

The study report reviewed the role of regional integration in promoting economic growth, focusing on selected sectors such as job creation, trade development and facilitation, investment creation, creation of regional value chains, and better use of common resources. The figure below illustrates the importance of regional integration to some sectors of the economy. Respondents indicated that regional integration has significantly contributed to various categories.

Figure 3: Significance of regional integration to selected sectors of the economy



Source: UNECA Survey on mainstreaming 2012

Over 76 per cent of the respondents indicated that regional integration has a significant role in promoting economic growth, followed by trade development and facilitation (with 65 per cent), investment creation and better use of common resources (both at 53.9 per cent). In contrast, about 57.7 per cent and 53.9 per cent indicated that regional integration does not significantly contribute to the creation of jobs and regional value chains. However, some of the respondents were of the view that the impact might be there but due to limited research in these areas has contributed to the responses of questionnaire.

The results from the survey are mixed when compared with the theory. For example, the theory support that regional integration will lead to job creation, and creation of regional value chains. However, results from the survey reveal the opposite-a number of respondents indicated that regional integration has a minimal contribution to the creation of regional value chains and jobs.

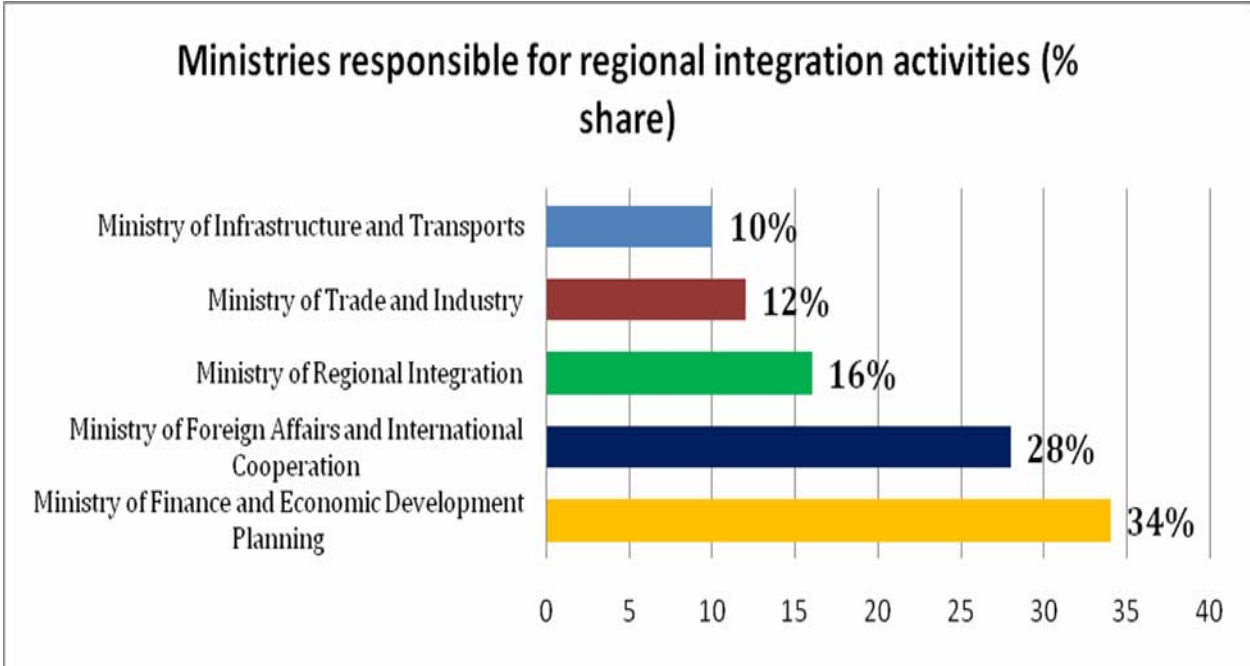
7.5 The institutional arrangements at national level

Coordination of regional integration issues at national level remains one of the major challenges in accelerating the regional integration agenda in Africa. Each country designates a ministry to be in charge of regional integration issues but often fails to institute a coordination mechanism

between that ministry and other stakeholders. In addition, there is often limited manpower to coordinate the implementation process between that ministry and other stakeholders. Recognizant of this problem, the AU Summit decided to institutionalize the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Regional Integration⁷ with the view to holistically look into all issues relating to regional integration, including implementation of protocols, harmonisation of policies and programmes, and coordination among the RECs.

The AU Assembly also recently took on board a decision, requesting member States to establish a Ministry in Charge of Regional Integration. To date, only eight countries have fulfilled the AU decision to establish the Ministry in Charge of Regional Integration⁸. Recognizing the difficulties by member States in establishing a special Ministry in Charge of Regional Integration, the AUC is now pushing for focal point in one of the ministries of African Member States to coordinate activities and programmes of regional integration.

The Figure 4: Institutional arrangements in the coordination of regional integration activities and programmes



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

The survey results reported that about 40 per cent of the member States have designated Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as coordinator of regional integration activities and

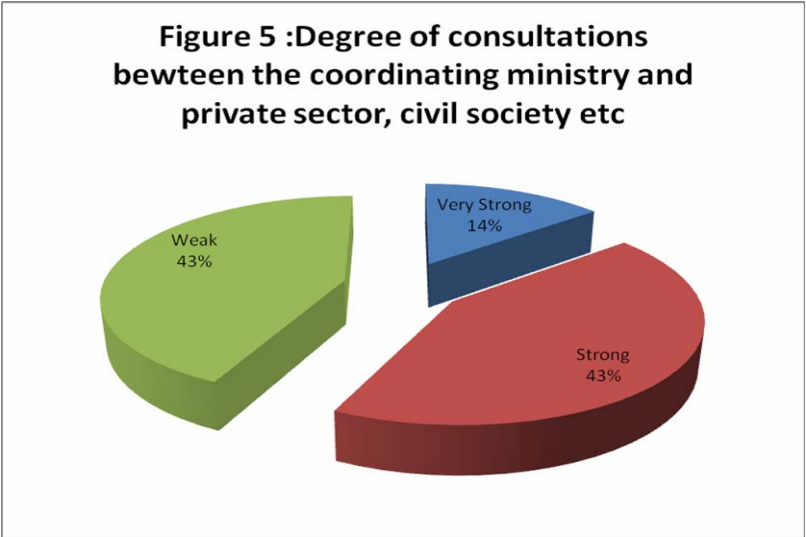
⁷ Decision on the institutionalization of the Conference of African Ministers in charge of integration doc. ex.cl/282 (ix)

⁸ These countries are: Zimbabwe; Rwanda; Tanzania; Gabon, Niger, Tongo, Chad, and Ghana. Some of these countries have their Regional Integration Ministries combined with Foreign Affairs.

programmes. About 33 per cent have reported that regional integration is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Ministry of Infrastructure coordinates only 6.25 per cent which deals with only regional infrastructure projects.

7.6 Inadequate consultations between the coordinating ministry and other line ministries and stakeholders

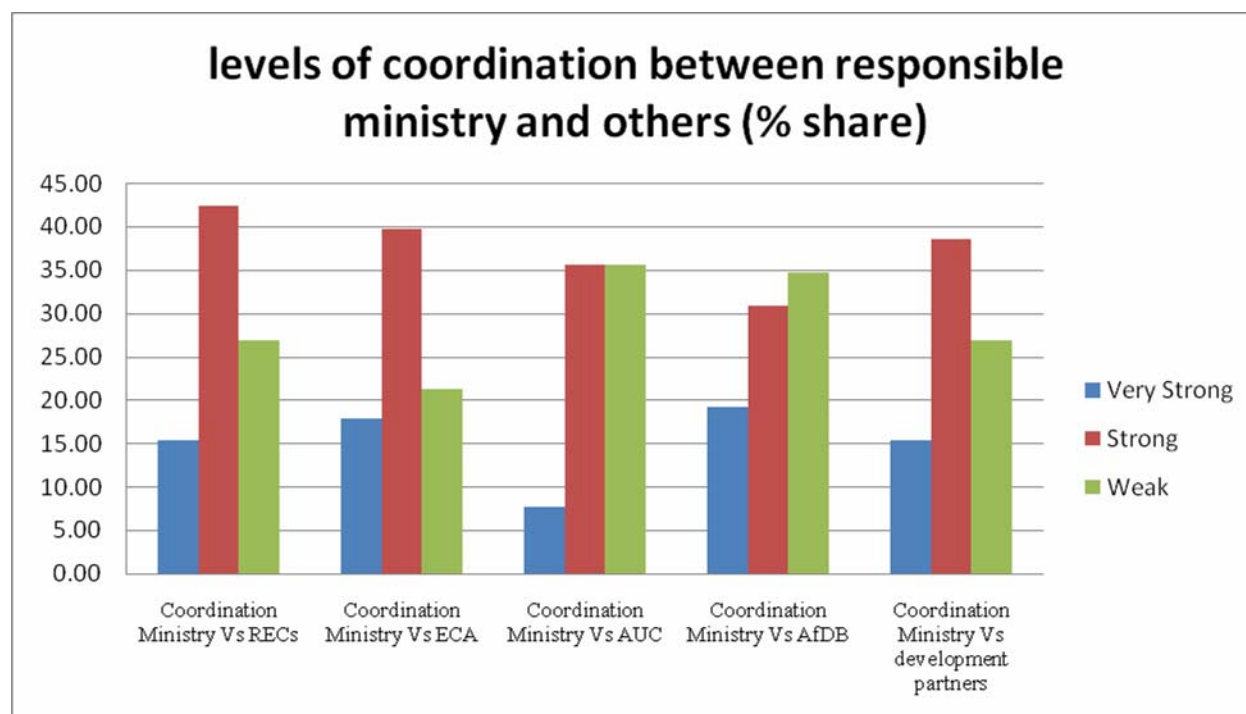
Results from the survey on consultations between coordinating ministries and other stakeholders were mixed. About 43 per cent of the respondents reported that the levels of consultations were weak while the same percentages indicated that the levels were strong. Only 14 per cent of the respondents reported that the levels of consultations were very strong. During the survey interviews, concerns were raised pertaining to the lack of flow of information from the responsible ministries to other stakeholders. Some ministries were not aware of some agreed protocols which were meant to be implemented by them.



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

Despite having designated ministries to oversee the implementation of regional integration issues, coordination with other line ministries and sectors is not very strong. In addition, the survey results revealed communication gaps in the flow of information between ministries and other stakeholders, which calls for strengthening the engagement of multi-stakeholder participation for improved effectiveness of domesticating regional integration at the national level.

Figure 6: Levels of coordination between responsible ministry and others stakeholders



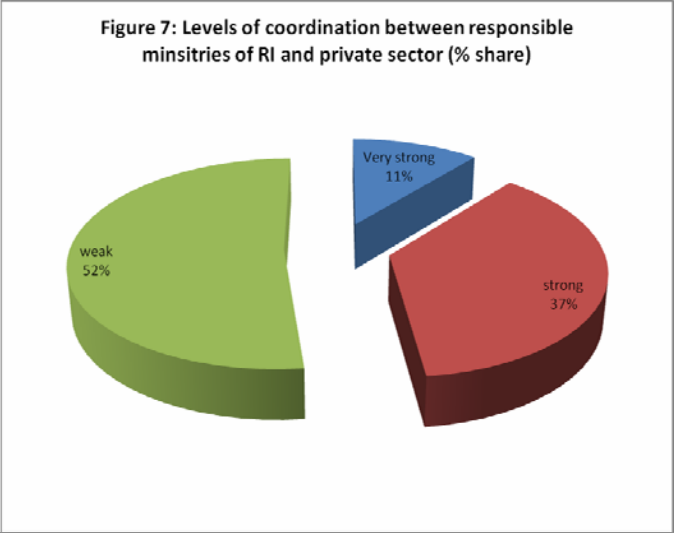
Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

The results on the coordination between the responsible ministries vis-à-vis other institutions are mixed. The majority of the respondents indicated strong coordination between the responsible ministry and the RECs, ECA and partners. Respondents had mixed reaction on the coordination between the responsible ministry and the AUC. About 35 per cent of the respondents indicated that the coordination between AUC and coordinating ministry is both strong and very strong. Despite strong indication of a very strong coordination between the responsible ministry and development partners, 26 per cent of respondents indicated a weak coordination with development partners.

7.7 Limited involvement of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders

Regional integration activities and programmes need a collective participation of all parties-government, civil society, private sector, academia and development partners at all levels. In the early 1980s, there was limited participation of private sector in regional integration activities. Today, things seem not to have changed much. According to the survey results, there has been insufficient participation of other key actors in the process of regional integration issues which has negatively impacted on the mainstreaming of these programmes into national development strategies and plans.

Although some regions have witnessed an important growth in the participation of the civil society in the integration process in the form of professional, women and private sector organizations. The results from the survey indicated limited participation of private sectors in some of the key areas. Based on the interviews conducted during the survey, some private sector organization had little knowledge on issues related to regional integration. From the survey results, 52% of the respondents reported that coordination between the ministries responsible for regional integration and private sectors is weak, 37% indicated that the coordination is strong.



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

More importantly, the surprising issue during the survey was the limited knowledge by many key players on the importance of mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans. Many people were not aware of protocols and decisions adopted by the Heads of States and Government on regional integration issues, despite their countries being part of the process during the adoption of these decisions. This is a clear indication of lack or limited flow of information from the parties directly involved in regional integration issues at the continental, regional and national levels.

8. Challenges of mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans

While countries can benefit from mainstreaming regional integration, numerous challenges continue to affect the domestication process of programmes and activities into national development plans. In general, effective participation of member States in regional integration activities and programmes largely depends on the political commitment in embracing the agreed decisions and protocols on regional integration.

Respondents were asked to highlight some of the key challenges hampering the acceleration of mainstreaming regional integration activities. The following were some of the responses provided: multiple memberships in the RECs; budget allocation to activities and programmes of mainstreaming regional integration; revenues, capital and job losses; limited alignment of integration goals into national development plans; inadequate financial resources to implement activities leading to mainstreaming regional integration; and lack of appropriate monitoring systems.

8.1 Multiple memberships in the RECs

There is no doubt that countries are incurring in some cost as a result of being a member of one or more than one REC. All countries responded to the survey cited similar costs being faced as a result of multiple memberships to the REC. Among the most prominent of their responses were: contributions as a result of multiple memberships and spread of financial resources and human capacity for the implementation of activities and programmes of regional integration.

All respondents indicated yearly membership fees which countries pay to the regional bodies as one of the major costs. Countries indicated that the yearly membership fees to the AU and the RECs are mandatory. In the case of the AU, countries face sanctions in the event that they fail to fulfill their obligations⁹. Countries which belong to more than one REC suffer more in paying their contributions compared to others which belong to only one REC. For instance, in 2012, Swaziland's costs were projected as follows: about US \$ 453,659 as annual contributions to COMESA Secretariat; US \$ 48,318 contributions to the COMESA Court of Justice; US \$ 3000,000 contributions (once off) to the COMESA Fund. Similar costs were also expected to SADC as Swaziland is a member of the two.

Beyond the financial implications, as countries belong to more than one REC, there is pressure in attending numerous REC meetings. Countries are obliged to use the limited resources both financial and human in order to fulfill these obligations. This calls for the urgent need to accelerate the harmonization of policies among the RECs and speed-up the rationalization of

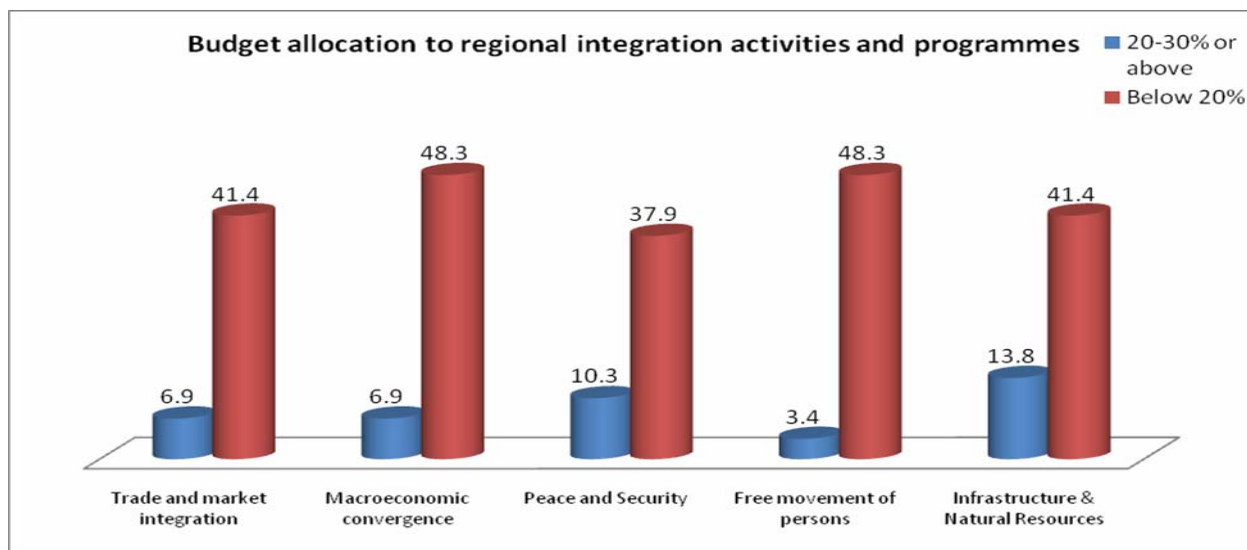
⁹ Countries are given the privilege to attend the AU meetings, but are not allowed to talk during the meetings.

RECs in line with the AU Assembly Decisions adopted in the Gambia in 2006, which put a moratorium on the establishment of new RECs and formally recognized the 8 RECs.¹⁰

8.2 Budget allocation to programmes of mainstreaming regional integration

It is inevitable that mainstreaming regional integration activities and programmes will come with a cost. Implementation of activities and programmes on regional integration requires financial resources. Governments have to commit some resources if these activities are to be implemented. The results from the survey reveal that many countries do not have a specific budget allocation for activities and programmes relating to regional integration. While considering regional integration activities and programmes as activities of national importance, some countries treat the budget of regional integration activities through the usual process of bidding for resource allocation with other competing domestic activities during planning and budgeting periods. Respondents were asked to provide the proportion of allocation of resources to regional integration activities in the budget. Many of them reported that limited domestication of regional integration issues in member States has resulted in poor allocation of resources to the programmes and activities. In a number of countries, there were no specific budgets to support regional integration activities. Ministries/departments use their yearly allocation in implementing regional integration activities. Others consider regional integration programmes as cross-cutting and resources are allocated along the activities which are cross-cutting in nature.

Figure 8: Country budget allocation to regional integration activities



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

¹⁰ The 8 AU recognized RECs are: Economic Community of West African States, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Economic Community of Central African States, Southern African Development Community, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, Community of Sahel Saharan States, East African Community, and Arab Maghred Union

More than 37 per cent of respondents indicated that less than 20 per cent of the resources were allocated to various regional integration activities and programmes. Two sectors, namely, peace and security; and infrastructure and natural resources have a slightly big share, between 20-30 per cent. This is in line with the situation on the ground, where a huge amount of resources are being used to address peace and security issues as well as huge spending on infrastructure development among many member States.

8.3 Revenue losses

With regards to trade, respondents indicated potential losses in government revenues resulting from preferential tariff reductions when engaging in regional integration. Some respondents raised concerns over the loss of revenues as a result of the recently introduced RECs' trade protocols, while others indicated gains. The fear of loss of revenues has contributed to the slow down of the progress in the implementation of some of these protocols by some member States. Reference was made to the on-going efforts on the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite arrangements. Although the member countries of the three RECs have decided to implement the Tripartite arrangements, it is most likely that the arrangement will have a negative impact on the revenues of some member States in the short run. In addition, it is also argued that in some countries, if trade liberalization is accompanied by some tax reform measures, revenue may actually increase.

Although the free movement of people and regional integration are viewed as one of the key milestones in realising the vision of a continental unity, a number of countries raised concerns regarding its impact, particularly those that are considered as more developed and/or middle income countries. It is very clear that one of the problems hampering the implementation of regional integration efforts in the African countries is the fear for labour and capital being gravitating to the most developed countries in the region. Respondents raised concerns regarding migration of both skilled and non skilled labour from less developed countries to more developed countries as a result of elimination of all RECs controls on free movement of people. Despite the above disadvantages, developed countries will also benefit from skilled labour while less developed countries may suffer from brain-drain.

However, trade theory tells us that under perfect factor mobility, there will be an equalization effect on wages and supply and offer will even itself out over the long term. This price equalization effect could be beneficial if accompanied with a redistribution effect. Thus, wages and income could increase in the poorer and less developed countries and especially in the unskilled sectors, which may improve prospects for the poor.

8.4 Limited alignment of integration goals into national development plans

One of the challenges that arise from the survey results is limited progress by the responsible ministries in aligning regional integration goals into national plans such as PRSPs. A number of

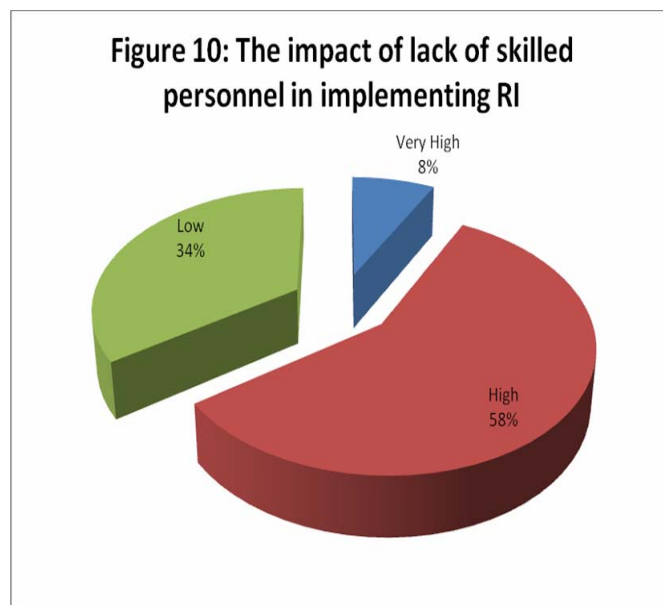
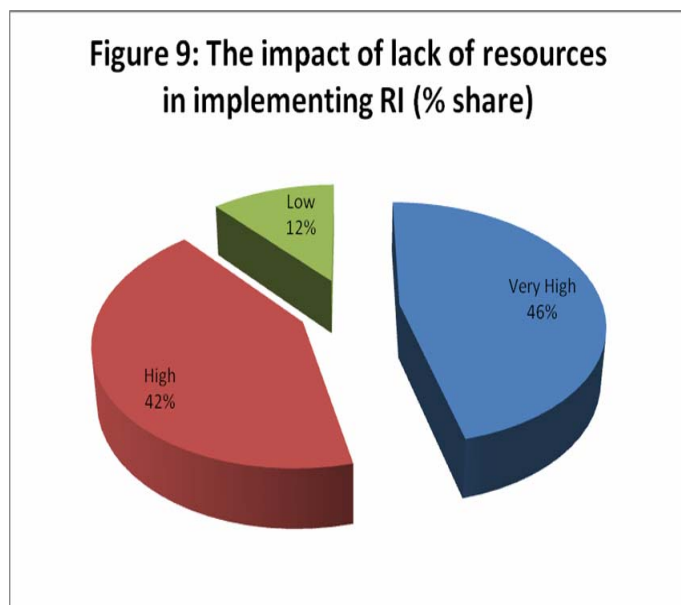
the decisions and protocols on regional integration are not linked to the national development plans. The survey results found that there is lack of a common understanding regarding the term “mainstreaming regional integration”. Based on the face to face interviews, mainstreaming is being interpreted differently by all sectors. A number of respondents used the meaning of mainstreaming interchangeably with integration. This, to some extent, aggravates the limited alignment of regional integration goals into national development plans.

In addition to the aforementioned findings, the study also reviewed the publications of PRSP and similar documents serving as national development plans or strategies 52 African countries. Almost all of them contain, to a larger extent, programmes and activities relating to regional integration. However, many of them do not have in depth analysis of activities and programmes related to mainstreaming regional integration. In many cases, regional integration efforts are acknowledged as part of the process of a country’s development plan or strategy, but there is no holistic or systemic approach towards embedding regional integration into the activities or inputs which are to feed into the national priorities that have been outlined in these strategic documents.

8.5 Inadequate financial resources and human capacity

The importance of human capacity and financial resources in the context of regional integration need not to be overemphasized. The survey results indicated that lack of financial and human resources contributes significantly to the slow implementation pace of some of the activities and programmes. Many respondents reported that a number of programmes were not being implemented because of lack of adequate financial resources and skilled personnel, among others key factors.

Figures 9 and 10: The impact of financial resources and human capacity in implementing regional integration activities (%)



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

Using the two pie charts above, 79 per cent of the respondents indicated that inadequate financial resources was one of the factors contributing to the slow pace of implementation of regional integration activities and programmes while lack of skilled personnel contributed up to 62 per cent. This also supports previous findings of studies¹¹ which found lack of financial resources and skilled human capacity as some of the key factors hampering the implementation of regional integration activities and programmes.

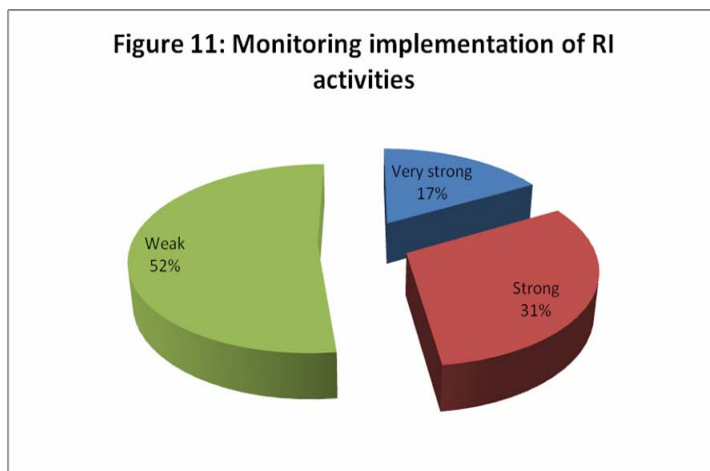
8.6 Lack of appropriate monitoring systems

The results from the survey also showed lack of monitoring and evaluation have an impact on the implementation of activities and programmes of regional integration at continental, regional and national levels. There is no proper reporting mechanism between the continental and regional bodies and the implementing agencies (ministries) on progress of implementation. The survey results also indicate absence of monitoring and evaluation criteria, indicators and processes of regional integration in the early stages of planning and designing projects in key ministries. One of the major reasons attributed to this is the limited domestication of regional integration decisions and protocols into national development plans. In addition, there is no enforcement

¹¹ Study for the quantification of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Rationalization Scenarios

mechanism or sanctioning from the REC or the AUC for those countries which do not comply with the agreed implementations stages of some of the decisions and protocols.

Slightly more than half of the respondents reported that monitoring the implementation of regional integration activities at national level is weak. About one third of the respondents indicated that the monitoring is strong while 17 per cent indicated that the monitoring is very strong. A number of countries do not have monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the levels of progress of implementation of regional integration activities. The problem of monitoring is also linked to the issue of alignment of integration goals into national development plans.



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

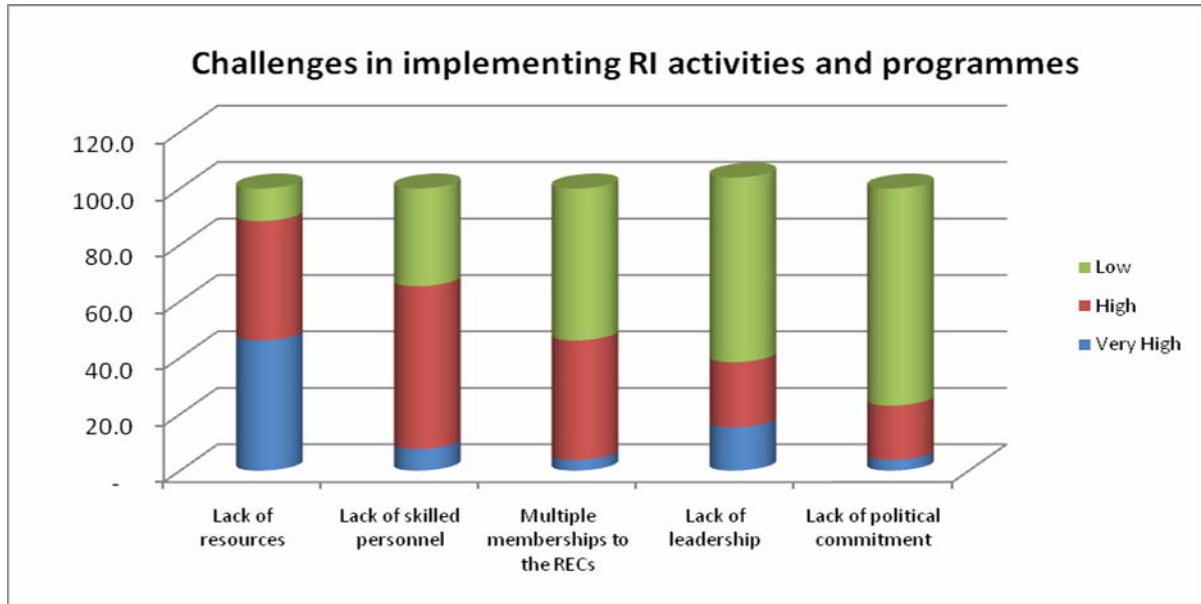
8.7 Hierarchy of challenges affecting the implementation of regional integration activities

As reported earlier, there are numerous challenges affecting the implementation of regional integration activities at all levels. These include: lack of financial resources; lack of skilled personnel; poor coordination of activities and programmes at national level; poor coordination at continental and regional levels; multiple memberships to the RECs; and lack of political leaderships and commitment.

Despite the above mentioned challenges, it should be pointed out that many of initiatives are being undertaken both at continental and regional levels aimed at addressing the challenges. These include: the decision by the Heads of State and Government for COMESA, EAC and SADC to establish a single Free Trade Area, an initiative covering 26 African countries, representing more than half of AU membership; the decision by the AU Summit on the rationalization of the RECs aimed at addressing the problem of multiple memberships; the elaboration of Minimum Integration programmes (MIP) aimed at accelerating the harmonisation of programmes and activities among the RECs; and the establishment of alternative sources of financing in some RECs (ECCAS, UEMOA/CEMAC, and ECOWAS) such as levy on imports; insurance premiums, and airline tickets, among others. The African Union is also in the processing of establishing the alternative sources of financing in order to ensure there is greater sustainability for regional integration programmes¹².

¹² The original study by the Commission of the African Union proposed eight scenarios: tax on imports; tax on revenue from hydrocarbon exports; tax on insurance premiums; levy on airline tickets; involvement of the private

Figure 12: Hierarchy of challenges impacting the implementation of regional integration activities



Source: UNECA survey on mainstreaming, 2012

Rating from high to very high, more than 58 per cent of respondents reported that financial resources and lack of skilled personnel remain the top two challenges affecting the implementation of regional integration activities and programmes. About 52 per cent indicated that the impact of multiple memberships, lack of leadership and lack of political commitment on regional integration process is low. This supports the current initiatives and commitments by the Heads of State and Governments, including the AU Decision at the Summit in Banjul, to put a moratorium on the recognition of new RECs and but to recognize the 8 RECs and on-going initiatives on the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite arrangements.

sector through sponsorship and other forms of support; the sale of items and other products carrying the African Union symbol. To date, only three remain: levy on imports from the rest of the world; levy on airline tickets; and levy on insurance policies.

9. A proposed framework for mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans

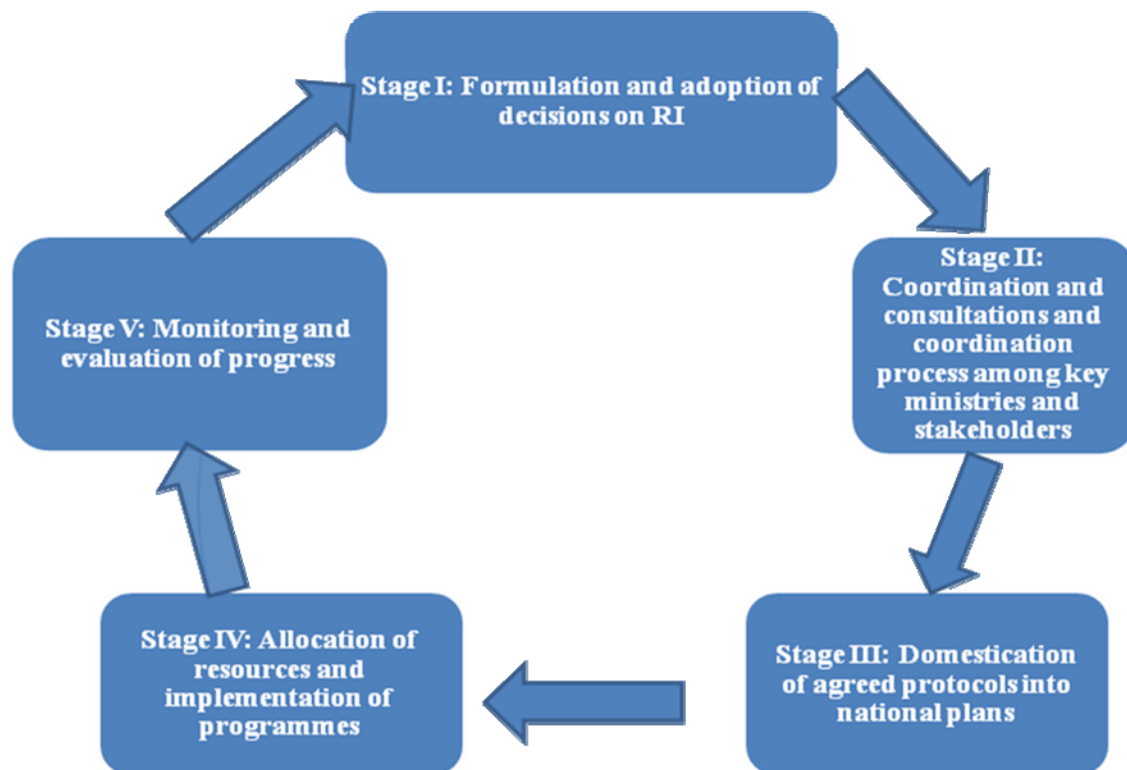
The general responses from the survey revealed limited progress in the mainstreaming of regional integration into national development strategies and plans. Despite strong commitments at continental level in adopting several decisions on regional integration, progress at national level remain mixed. There is however scope to strengthen the process of mainstreaming through strong coordination of instruments and agreed decisions of regional integration.

Despite having frameworks of mainstreaming for some specific issues such as HIV and AIDS, gender, trade and climate change, among other, literature on developing a framework of mainstreaming in general remains limited. Various reasons have been cited as the major hindering blocks to the low level of mainstreaming regional integration which are already outlined in the report.

Having a framework is one and making it functional is also another thing. The proposed framework should have both adequate human and capital capacities to deal with the complex procedures of regional integration processes. Results from the survey indicated that all the countries lack adequate human and financial capacity to effectively implement regional integration issues. In an effort to accelerate the process of mainstreaming in member States, this paper proposes a framework for mainstreaming regional integration. Effective implementation of the proposed stages of the framework will significantly contribute to the acceleration of the regional integration process.

The following five stages have been proposed in the framework as shown in Figure 13 below: **stage I**: formulation of decisions on regional integration; **stage II**: consultations process among key ministries and stakeholders; **stage III**: domestication of agreed protocols into national plans; **stage IV**: allocation of resources and implementation of programmes; and **stage V**: monitoring and evaluation of progress. The figure below highlights the five stages in the proposed framework on the mainstreaming of regional integration.

Figure 13: Proposed framework for mainstreaming regional integration



Source: developed based on the survey results

Stage I: Formulation and adoption of decisions on regional integration – The African Union and the RECs remain the major bodies for the formulation and adoption of decisions on regional integration. These institutions provide important fora where high level officials meet to identify key areas of common concerns and build consensus around them. As outlined in the survey results, it appears that consultations between the continental and regional bodies and the member States are not adequate. This inadequacy in consultations contributes to the poor and erratic progress made in mainstreaming regional integration commitments. This stage should, therefore ensure that there is room and scope for ample consultations between the continent and regional bodies and the member States. This will ensure that all decisions and protocols are clear and well articulated to enable all member States have a common understanding of these decisions and achieve comparable progress in mainstreaming regional integration.

Beyond formulation, some decisions and protocols need to be approved at the national level (either through parliament or through other established ratification processes) before being fully adopted. This may particularly be the case when these involve budgetary commitments as well as the ceding of some sovereignty to the continental or regional bodies. This stage is very critical if the decisions are to be effectively implemented by all member States, because they require the legitimization and buy-in of representatives of parliament and/or other authorities with vested powers to programme and assign budgetary allocations to concrete activities that form part of the mainstreaming process of regional integration. These may for instance be located in the ministries of Finance and Economic Planning.

Although adopted decisions and protocols may be binding in nature, without adequate enforcement mechanisms member States may not have the pressure to comply. In this sense, it may also be desirable to have formal notification mechanisms embedded in the RECs and AUC to ensure transparency, as well as peer review and peer pressure mechanisms to secure member States' commitments, so that at the highest level, the formalities of ratifying are seen through and followed-up on.

Stage II: Coordination and consultations process among key ministries and stakeholders:

As outlined earlier, there is limited coordination and consultation among line ministries in the implementation of key decisions, including those on regional integration. This has exacerbated the problem of slow mainstreaming of these decisions into national development strategies and plans. If key partners are not aware of these decisions, there is little to be done in terms of implementation. At this stage, it is desirable that key ministries and institutions directly involved or affected by regional integration matters be sensitized on the decisions, including how the decisions could benefit or negatively impact on the economies, as well as their role in domesticating them.

The issue of effective coordination and consultations calls on the urgent need to address the AU decisions on the establishment of specific ministries In-charge of Regional Integration in each country. There is also need to form a special committee among the key ministries, including private sectors to meet regularly and debate on issues relating to regional integration, including progress, challenges, and solutions. This committee could be reporting to the Minister in Charge of regional integration or to the ministry which has been designated to take the lead. There is no doubt that the establishment of ministries In-Charge of Regional Integration is a political decision and will take a long time. In the meantime, countries are encouraged to designate a special ministry to be coordinating regional integration issues.

In addition to limited coordination among line ministries, there is also an observed disconnect between the line ministries implementing these decisions and key stakeholders who should be part and parcel of the process of mainstreaming. This is mostly explained by the absence of adequate sensitization and consultations. Key stakeholders which include the private sector,

CSOs, academia, development partners and the public in general need to be informed about decisions on regional integration, especially since they have a major role to play in instrumentalizing these decisions on the ground. A popular model to achieve this goal is the use of multi-stakeholder participation and consultation mechanisms. There is ample literature on how these mechanisms operate. For example, in the context of mainstreaming Decent Work into PRSPs,¹³ the ILO has developed a process and mechanism of participation which considers several dimensions of participatory interactions. This framework caters for engagement between the stakeholders and the government processes in the formulation and implementation of the PRSP. Borrowing from this mechanism, a framework which caters for mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans and strategies should consider the following: (i) affording the different stakeholder ample opportunities to be sensitized and informed about decisions and protocols on regional integration, (ii) engage these stakeholders in consultations on what they perceive may be their role in instrumentalizing regional integration protocols and decisions and how these decisions may impact on them, (iii) involve these stakeholders in the joint process of developing key activities and outputs of the implementation process of these decisions, and (iv) establish mechanisms for these stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the impact of their interaction.

Stage III: Domestication of agreed protocols into national plans: Mainstreaming regional integration initiatives requires a large degree of public management at the national level. Without an absolute commitment to implementation at the national level, there can be little progress at the sub-regional level. Results from the survey clearly indicate limited progress in the domestication of decisions and protocols at national level. Various decisions and protocols are not yet mainstreamed in national development plans. As outlined earlier, one of the major reasons attributed to this is limited consultations between the coordinating ministries and the key implementation ministries and stakeholders. Better coordination will ensure early involvement or inclusion of the decisions or protocols in the planning stage. An inclusive public-private dialogue on regional integration between line ministries and grassroots will raise the awareness of regional integration decisions and accelerate the overall implementation agenda of regional integration.

There is need for adopted decisions and protocols to find their way in national development plans of member States. Stage III is an ideal stage in the process which would allow policy goals/ long-term visions at both continental and regional levels to be translated into action plans. As outlined earlier, decisions have to make their way into national plans such as National Development Plans, for example Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs). Implementation of decisions and protocol will be easier if governments and other stakeholders are already committed to implement these national development plans, and resources already allocated.

¹³ ILO (2003), Decent Work and PRSPs: An ILO Advocacy Guidebook, pp 11-12.

Stage IV: Allocation of resources and implementation of programmes: After domestication of decisions and protocols into national development plans, there is need to identify finance resources for the implementation. As we have seen from the survey reports, implementation of regional integration activities and programmes is greatly hampered by lack of adequate financial resources. There should be a strong link between the responsible ministries and the ministry of Finance in preparing the budget to ensure that regional integration activities and programmes are accommodated into the national budget. Improved allocation of financial resources will make a significant difference in the mainstreaming process at national level. This process will also assist in increasing the awareness of the mainstreaming process among all stakeholders as the budget process is normally debated by both parliamentarians and civil society as a whole.

A number of countries do not have special allocation in the budget earmarked for regional integration activities and programmes. In most cases, the allocation of resources are given to the ministries as lump sum and it is up to the ministries to identify some resources from the allocation given to them to finance regional integration activities and programmes. Therefore, identification of financial resources to finance regional integration activities is key to all member States.

Stage V: Monitoring and evaluation of progress. In any project there is need to check on progress (monitoring) and take stock of where things are at one particular time (evaluation). Monitoring and evaluation are critical in giving feedback at all time on the progress made, challenges faced and what options to be established in order to address the identified challenges. Through monitoring and evaluation, implementers are able to measure progress on their projects. Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect and learn from what has been done, assess the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and think about new ways of doing things. In other words, it informs future actions.

The process of monitoring regional integration activities should be factored into initial projects during the planning process at continental and regional levels, where decisions are formulated and adopted. The responsible ministry should develop a measure of achievements/benchmark, key milestones as well as timeframes for the implementation of some of the activities of mainstreaming regional integration. This should be done in collaboration with all key ministries and stakeholders. Priority programmes should be identified by all parties to be implemented within a given timeframe. In most cases, decisions and protocols are adopted at both AU and RECs levels but these are not domesticated into a proper framework for easy monitoring.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

The discussions in this report have focused on the status of mainstreaming regional integration into national development plans and strategies of African member States. The objective of effectively mainstreaming regional integration remains one of the key priorities of African leaders. However, the process suffers from different challenges including: multiple memberships in the RECs; inadequate financial resources and skilled human capacity; revenue, capital and job losses; limited alignment of integration goals into national development plans; and lack of appropriate monitoring systems, among others.

Survey results have revealed that the process of mainstreaming regional integration into national development strategies and plans remains low among many African countries, despite efforts being undertaken at the continental, regional and national levels. Based on the results from the questionnaires as well as face to face interviews with some of the officials from member States, lack of financial resources and skilled personnel remain the key challenges affecting the acceleration of mainstreaming regional integration. In addition, coordination of programmes and activities of regional integration at all levels remains one of the critical challenges.

Dissemination of information from continental bodies (AUC, RECs, UNECA, AfDB) to member States, particularly the line ministries and other stakeholders remains a challenge. Evidence from the survey results indicated that on issues relating to regional integration key implementers of activities, programmes and decisions at national level often lack the knowledge of some of the agreed decisions at both continental and regional levels because they may not have been involved in the planning and negotiation process. This calls for wide involvement and participation of all stakeholders in the formulation of decisions and protocols relating to regional integration.

Despite these challenges, notable efforts in regional integration include: the recent AU decision by the Heads of State and Governments on the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite arrangements; the AU Decision AU Summit in Banjul, to put a moratorium on the recognition of new RECs; the elaboration of the MIP by the AUC in collaboration with the RECs to identify key priorities in implementing regional integration activities and programmes; and recent decision by the AU requesting member States to establish focal points at national level to coordinate activities and programmes of regional integration.

In terms of recommendations, the study report suggests the following:

- i. Accelerate the recommendation by the AU to establish a focal point, at national level, to coordinate the activities and programmes relating to regional integration;

- ii. Member States should afford adequate consultations between responsible ministries and other stakeholders (the private sector, CSOs, development partners, line ministries, academia, etc);
- iii. Member States should put more emphasis in aligning regional integration activities and programmes to the priorities of their national development plans and strategies;
- iv. Budget processes should include regional integration activities and programmes from their preparatory and planning stages. Regional integration activities should not be seen as adhoc activities;
- v. Member States should develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to track the implementation of mainstreaming regional integration at all levels, and where possible, be able to establish a causal relation between development and poverty reduction achievements and progress made in regional integration; and
- vi. Member States should support the AU decision on the establishment of regional integration fund to assist in the implementation of regional integration projects.
- vii. The AUC and RECs should strive to strengthen their consultation mechanisms on regional integration and explore means and ways to enhance the commitment of their member States through greater transparency, peer review and peer pressure.

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