



Institutional and Strategic Frameworks for Sustainable Development in Africa Summary Report



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RIO+20
United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Acronyms.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the regional level	1
The African Union and its Organs	1
African Development Bank	7
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	8
United Nations Development Programme.....	12
United Nations Environment Programme	13
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	14
Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the subregional level.....	15
Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the national level.....	18
Sustainable development governance	20
Sustainable development governance at the global Level	20
Position of African environment ministers on international environmental governance	21
Sustainable development governance at the regional and subregional levels	21
Sustainable development governance at the national level.....	22
Good governance: an essential element for sustainable development.	23
Conclusions and the way forward	24

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List of Acronyms

A21	Agenda 21
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCHUD	African Ministerial Council on Housing and Urban Development
AMCOST	African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology
AMCOW	African Ministerial Council on Water
ARDWE	Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CARPE	Programme regional d'Afrique central pour l'environnement
CEFDHAC	La Conference sur le Ecosystemes de Forets Dense et Humides d'Afrique
CFSSD	Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development
COMIFAC	La Commission des Forets d'Afrique Centrale
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COPAX	Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
EAC	East Africa Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEMA	Forum of Energy Ministers in Africa
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCSDs	National Councils for Sustainable Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
NSSDs	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
PFIA21	Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21
PICI	Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PIESA	Power Institute for East and Southern Africa
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
PRC	Permanent Representatives Committee
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RIMs	Regional Implementation Meetings
RIO+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
ROA	Regional Office for Africa

RSFA	Regional Strategic Framework for Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDRA	Sustainable Development Report on Africa
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
TACC	Territorial Approach to Climate Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UN-CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEO	United Nations Environment Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEO	World Environment Organization

Introduction

This report assesses the institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at regional, subregional and national levels on the basis of data gathered through desk review and field visits. The desk review covered published and unpublished material and online resources of a wide array of institutions at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels. The field visits covered the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission, the ECOWAS Commission, AMCOW Secretariat and SADC Secretariat. In addition, direct teleconference was held with officials from UNEP Africa Regional Office, which also acts as the interim Secretariat of AMCEN, the African Development Bank, and the UNECA sub-regional Office for North Africa. Direct interview was conducted with the Director, Programme Implementation and Coordination Directorate of NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA). The objective of the study is to show how relevant and effective are institutional and strategic frameworks in promoting the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced manner, enhancing institutional linkages and encouraging multi-stakeholder participation and decentralization in the planning and implementation of programmes. The study also aims at assessing how these frameworks cater for intra-generational and intergenerational equity through long term planning and strategies that bridge the equality gaps. In terms of scope, the report focuses on the institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the regional, subregional and national levels. It is understood that the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) is leading the review of the frameworks at the global level. Therefore the coverage of the few UN organizations in this report is limited to their regional activities and to the linkages they foster at regional, subregional, and national levels.

Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the regional level

The African Union and its Organs

The review shows that at the level of the continent, the African Union works on sustainable development through the programmes and instruments of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD initiative.

The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) coordinates sustainable development within the AUC, and specific AUC-led sustainable development initiatives which include:

- a) The African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development programme (AMESD) whose products were to be integrated into planning and decision-making processes;
- b) Capacity-building for natural resources accounting;
- c) Establishment of the Sustainable Development Forum;
- d) The Great Green Wall initiative for the Sahara; and
- e) Climdev Project.

Adopted in 2001, NEPAD aims at accelerating growth and sustainable development, eradicating widespread and severe poverty, and halting the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process. These objectives translate into priorities in six sectors: infrastructure, human resources, agriculture, environment, culture, science and technology.

Progress made

African Union Commission-led Initiatives

AMESD has enhanced institutional linkages around the development of geo-information services.¹ The project is a continent-wide project financed by the European Union and allocated to the various RECs, the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). It therefore promotes partnership among the AUC, RECs, ACP Secretariat and the European Union. UN institutions such as UNECA, UNEP and the FAO and the World Meteorological Organization are also linked to the programme.²

The Green Wall of the Sahara Initiative is a multi-stakeholder programme aimed at arresting the advance of the Sahara desert. It brings together partners from regional, sub-regional and national levels to enhance environmental sustainability, control land degradation, promote integrated natural resources management, and contributes to poverty eradication.³

New Partnership for Africa's Development

Since its inception, NEPAD has proven to be both an institution and a strategy for sustainable development. A UNECA assessment concluded that overall NEPAD is designed as a sustainable programme. It is African-led and owned, mainstreams the active participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, although with variations across priority areas. Furthermore, it is based on strong partnerships, including the UN system, the donor community, and African subregional and continental organizations

Thus NEPAD has increasingly gained recognition from the international community and Africa's development partners. In November 2002, the United Nations General Assembly passed a declaration (A/RES/57/2) and a resolution on NEPAD (A/RES/57/7), affirming the UN system's support for the implementation of NEPAD and recommending that the international community use NEPAD as its framework to support development in Africa. The Secretary-General also established the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa to coordinate the UN's support to Africa to guide reporting on Africa and coordinate global advocacy in support of NEPAD.

1 Marc Leroy, "The African Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD) Programme and Its Link with Disaster Management Issues", Presentation at UN Spider Workshop, Addis Ababa 2010.

2 European Commission, "Research – International Cooperation" available at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm>

See also www.amesd.org

3 AUC, NPCA and CENSAD, *The Great Green Wall: A Sustainable Development Mechanism – Concept Note*; available at http://www.grandemurailleverte.org/donneeseng/Concept_Note.pdf

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation also recognized that NEPAD provides a framework for sustainable development in Africa, and called on the international community to promote technology development, transfer and diffusion to Africa; further develop the technology and knowledge available to African centres of excellence; and support African countries in developing institutions and research activities capable of developing and adapting “world-class” technologies.

NEPAD integrates the three pillars of sustainable development through its development, social and environment programmes. Its agriculture programme for example is meant to achieve economic growth, social wellbeing through enhanced service delivery in the health and education sector, and simultaneously protect the environment.

Integration is also done through the linkages with regional and subregional institutions. NEPAD’s action plans on the environment and agriculture were developed in collaboration with the UNECA and the AfDB and other stakeholders.

Two other initiatives, the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) and the Rural Futures Initiative, are all meant to enhance implementation, horizontal and vertical integration, linkages at programmatic level as well as at regional, subregional and national levels.

A lot of progress has been registered with respect to the implementation of CAADP. At the close of 2010, 18 countries have concluded their national CAADP compacts, thereby committing to allocate a minimum of 10 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. Best practices include subsidizing agric-inputs, infrastructure and marketing systems.

NEPAD’s Bioenergy Programme has been recognized as a multi-sectoral programme that cuts across the energy, environment, agriculture, and science and technology sectors. The programme has built partnerships with institutions such as the Power Institute for East and Southern Africa (PIESA), and has initiated a public-private partnership (PPP) capacity-building programme within the NEPAD-OECD framework. The programme has provided advocacy to promote the involvement of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in electricity business, especially in the use of renewable energy sources. These efforts resulted in programmatic linkages through the inclusion of renewable energy sources as part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

Challenges

The challenges that the AU faces at both the AU and the NEPAD levels is the difficulty of inter-departmental and inter-agency coordination to ensure better synergy and integration of the various dimensions in programme implementation. Although programmatic linkages are provided for in the AUC and departmental strategic plans, the actual implementation does not follow through.

As a multi-stakeholder organization, the AUC has mainstreamed the participation of the major groups in many ways – with gender parity having been attained at the level of the college of commissioners. But the participation of major groups in programme implementation across all sectors has not reached the desired level.

Funding has always been a perennial problem and has affected the capacity of the AUC to integrate all three aspects of sustainable development in programme design and implementation as well as in fostering institutional linkages. While the AUC's recurrent budget is met from the assessed contribution of member-states, the programme budget is largely dependent on donor funding support.

Recommendations

While African Union institutions and AUC departments collaborate in the design of programmes, they do not collaborate sufficiently in the implementation phase. Therefore institutional linkages should be maintained through the various phases of programmes, and integration should be strengthened at the highest level and should go beyond convening meetings.

The African Union Commission should scale up its coordination function by leveraging on the weekly meetings of the College of Commissioners and the monthly meeting of the directors of departments. It should also use the presence in Addis Ababa of the liaison officers of the RECs to strengthen linkages with and among the regional bodies.

NPCA should be strengthened not only to design programmes, but also to monitor their integrated implementation especially now that its new mandate includes facilitating the coordination and implementation of programmes. In this regard, the linkage between NPCA and the UNECA should be strengthened so that they can undertake joint activities.

It is clear that the African Union does not need any other sustainable development framework other than NEPAD. What is needed is calibrating and revitalizing NEPAD which already enjoys recognition at all levels.

AUC and NPCA/AU, AfDB and United Nations agencies that are providing support to the implementation of NEPAD programmes should establish effective outreach and communication channels with RECs and countries and step up information dissemination to enhance public awareness of NEPAD, including its vision, processes, main interventions, implementation criteria, achievements and success stories at regional, national and subnational levels. This will contribute to enhanced ownership and buy-in to NEPAD programmes.

NPCA/AU with the support of African regional institutions should develop results-based, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks for all programmes/projects to ensure accountability and facilitate objective reporting of progress and achievements.

NPCA/AU, AfDB and United Nations agencies supporting NEPAD implementation should strengthen and promote integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development, as well as institutional, including cross-sectoral, collaboration and coordination in the implementation of NEPAD programmes and action plans.

AUC and NPCA/AU should provide RECs and African countries with guidance frameworks for developing and implementing sustainable development plans and programmes.

In order to avoid over-reliance on the donor community for funds to implement NEPAD projects, AUC, NPCA/AU and their collaborating partners should promote ownership of NEPAD at all levels and secure political and policy commitment from African countries to budget for and explore alternative sources of funding for NEPAD programmes.

The identification of champions is essential to ensuring sustainability and enhancing the implementation of NEPAD projects. The concept of “champions” should therefore be promoted by all stakeholders in fostering sustainable development. Furthermore this concept should be extended to more projects. Another important lesson learnt was that sustained effort was needed in communicating the achievement of the Programme.

Specialized Technical Committees of the African Union

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW), African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST), African Ministerial Council on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), Forum of Energy Ministers in African (FEMA) form part of different specialized technical committees provided for by article 5 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

While all these bodies have put in place programmes, the report focuses on AMCEN and AMCOW in the subsequent paragraphs.

For almost 21 years, AMCEN has facilitated the integration of environmental concerns into public policy in many ways, including by providing political guidance to the development of Africa’s positions with respect to multilateral environmental agreements, including the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UN Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. AMCEN’s work also led to the adoption in January 1991 of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa. AMCEN led the process for the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, and prompted and encouraged the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to prepare a comprehensive regional report on the state of Africa’s environment, entitled Africa Environment Outlook. Furthermore, AMCEN successfully facilitated the revision of the 1968 Convention on the conservation of nature and natural resources (Algiers Convention). Measures have also been taken to strengthen the linkages between AMCEN and the region’s two marine and coastal conventions, namely, the Convention for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the Eastern African region (Nairobi Convention) and the Convention for cooperation in the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment of the West and Central African region (Abidjan Convention).

AMCOW has built institutional and programmatic linkages with the RECs, whose water related activities remain largely uncoordinated.

Like AMCEN, AMCOW is a member (or a sub-committee) of the AU agriculture, rural development, water and environment specialized technical committee, and as such has now estab-

lished a formal institutional linkage not only with the African Union, but also with the other sub-committees of the STC. Within this framework, AMCOW is working with the African Union on the African water architecture that will enhance the coordination of water related activities.

AMCOW is aware of the social dimension of water and integrates the three pillars of sustainable development by developing a framework and a work programme and encouraging the RECs to internalize these frameworks. Furthermore, as part of its integration efforts, AMCOW is working with UNECA to convene a joint meeting of African Ministers of Finance and African Ministers of Water as a way of ensuring adequate integration of the water sector in the national planning process.

Challenges

Some of the main challenges that the Ministerial Councils face are overlapping mandates, fragmented approaches and weak horizontal and vertical linkages.

The proliferation of multiple ministerial councils without due attention being paid to future sustainability weakens the effectiveness of the STCs which are required to serve important functions within the African Union.

While civil society organizations take part in the activities of the STCs, the participation of other major groups needs to be enhanced.

Recommendations

AUC should leverage AMCEN, AMCOW, and AUC/UNECA joint meetings of ministers of finance, planning and economic development to promote coherence and integration in the development and implementation of programmes. And the linkage of their programmes should be strengthened to ensure synergy.

The status of AMCEN and AMCOW within the agriculture, rural development, water and environment STC should be clarified as some of them believe their individual councils form distinct STCs. Such clarification will facilitate coordination and programmatic linkages.

Linkage with other African Union organs such as the permanent representatives committee (PRC) and the executive council should be clarified and strengthened to ensure a harmonious working relations and better coordination. Some of the ministerial councils have expressed the desire to report directly to the Assembly of the African Union, when the existing rules of procedure provide for reporting through the executive council.

Similar linkages should be established between the ARDWE STC and the group of African Ambassadors in New York, especially the African members of the UNCSD to ensure better coordination. The role of the African Union Office in New York in this process will be crucial;

therefore a joint AU/UNECA/AfDB mechanism should be put in place to enhance the capacity of the office.

African Development Bank

Within the framework of its medium term strategy, the bank has provided high-impact, well-focused integrated support to Africa's development. It has also put in place the *Green Growth Strategy*, whose objectives include ensuring sustainable and equitable economic growth, climate and environment protection, ensuring efficient use of natural capital and promoting best practices. It is also intended to strengthen the bank's medium term strategy, and sector strategies; and support the existing Bank's climate change policies.

At the national level, the bank promotes the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development by taking into account these considerations during the designing and implementation phases of its projects. The bank also sponsors capacity-building programmes to raise awareness of sustainable development and the need for an integrated approach to development. Similarly, it also hosts international and regional gatherings on sustainable development, publishes the Africa Development Report, and partners with the AU and the UNECA in many areas including the climdev project.

One of the objectives of the bank's support to higher education, science, technology and vocational training (HEST) is to deepen knowledge on the linkages between employment, youth and skills development at the country level as well as to deepen multi stakeholder participation in education through the promotion of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the sector.

The bank has also aligned its agriculture portfolio with CAADP. The Agriculture Strategy 2010-2014, for example, is an integrated response to the challenges of enhancing agricultural productivity, food security and poverty reduction. It is within this context that the bank invests UA about 53 million in the Mali Markala Sugar Project which is expected to develop 14,132 hectares of farmland and produce an annual yield of 1.48 million tonnes of sugarcane to enable Mali to be self sufficient in sugar and therefore reduce imports with a direct positive effect on its balance-of-payment, macro-economic situation and social cohesion.

The bank is supporting African countries to access global resources to help integrate climate change imperatives in their national initiatives, while developing its own innovative mechanisms such as the Africa carbon support project, the ClimDev Africa programme, the Congo basin forest fund and the sustainable energy fund for Africa.

Besides the strategies and policies put in place, the bank has made significant strides in developing an appropriate institutional structure that enhances horizontal and vertical programmatic linkages and integrated delivery of programmes and projects that satisfy sustainability and poverty reduction objectives.

Recommendations

Limited financing is a persistent constraint in the implementation of sustainable development plans and programmes at subregional, national and local levels. The AfDB, in collaboration with the AU, UNECA and NPCA, should analyse and elaborate possible mechanisms for financing sustainable development programmes taking into account the region's specificities and priorities.

The bank, in collaboration with African Union, the UNECA and NPC, should deepen capacity-building programmes to strengthen the capacity of RECs and member States in the application of integration tools such as natural resources accounting, economic valuation of environment and natural resources, environmental and social impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment and other integration tools;

In order to boost the sense of ownership of projects, the bank should promote multi-stakeholder participation in project design and implementation at all levels. In particular, the participation of the rural communities in all phases of project cycle will ensure that local culture, traditional knowledge and wisdom is taken into account.

The scope of the environmental impact assessment that routinely precedes project decisions should be widened to cover social issues such as teenage pregnancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS that have been associated with major projects in rural areas.

Feasibility studies that pay scant attention to integration account for the numerous "white elephant" project across the continent. The bank, should therefore ensure that projects it funds address multidimensional concerns. United Nations Institutions

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

As the regional arm of the United Nations, the UNECA has been specifically mandated by the WSSD and the UN General Assembly to integrate sustainable development in its own work programme and assist African states, regional and subregional organizations, to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner. UNECA has responded to this mandate through various measures such as the setting up of various sectoral committees including the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CFSSD) and its predecessor, the Africa Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD);⁴ convening the Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs), establishment of Africa Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) in support of the AU and its NEPA programme, publication of Sustainable Development Report of Africa (SDRA). The Response also includes the development and implementation of programmes in specific sectors such as climate change, water, mining and trade. The UNECA also embarked on internal reforms and reorganization that aim at enhancing its response to the tasks assigned to it by the WSSD and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/7 of 2002..

⁴ In addition to the CFSSD, there are six other committees that UNECA has put in place and which also deal with various aspects of sustainable development. These are the Committee on Women and Development (CWD), The Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST), Committee on Human and Social Development, Committee on Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration (CTRCI), Committee on Governance and Popular Participation (CGPP) and Committee on Statistics

Progress made

UNECA Intergovernmental Committees

As part of its repositioning exercise, the UNECA restructured its intergovernmental machinery and realigned it with its new strategic orientation and programme structure. The restructured intergovernmental machinery has enabled UNECA to achieve greater congruence and coherence between its subprogrammes and sectoral committees.⁵

A review of the CFSSD and its predecessors reveals that together the two mechanisms, have:

- a) Fostered partnerships among UN Agencies, African regional and subregional institutions to support African countries implement sustainable development commitments, prepare for and follow-up on the outcomes of the UN-CSD sessions;
- b) Ensured that Africa's concerns and priorities are well articulated in the outcomes of the various sessions of UN-CSD by facilitating the provision of substantive inputs to the UN Secretary-General's reports and the UNCSD review and policy sessions;
- c) Created awareness to enhance implementation of sustainable development commitments in the region;
- d) Contributed to the promotion of balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development by enhanced advocacy and capacity building in the application of integration tools; and
- e) Facilitated the production of the SDRA as a monitoring and advocacy tool for sustainable development.

Regional Implementation Meetings

RIMs have enhanced the review of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 (A21), the programme for further implementation of Agenda 21 (PFIA21) and the Johannesburg plan of Implementation (JPOI) commitments. And although most member States are represented by diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa during RIMs, the outcomes of RIMs have adequately informed the deliberations at UNCSD sessions in New York, as evidenced by the reports of the various sessions.

Sustainable Development Report on Africa

The SDRA provides relevant, robust and quality analyses of priority sustainable development issues. This should be supported by wide dissemination and advocacy to achieve the desired impacts.

In terms of institutional linkages, the SDRA is produced in collaboration with relevant UN agencies, as well as African regional and subregional organizations.

⁵ UNECA, "Review of the Intergovernmental Machinery of the Economic Commission for Africa" *Note by the Secretariat*, Document E/ECA/COE/26/10 1 March 2007

Regional Coordination Mechanism

Overall, RCM has come a long way since its establishment. Effective coordination has ensured increased and high-level participation of some 30 UN agencies and African regional and sub-regional organizations in the RCM process. This has led to active institutional support and technical assistance to AU and NEPAD, especially in priority areas such as CAADP the APRM and mutual review of development effectiveness.

The 10 meetings that the RCM convened between 2002 and 2009 facilitated institutional linkages and a coordinated approach to various thematic clusters which correspond to NEPAD's priority areas.

Repositioning UNECA

The repositioning of the UNECA and the subsequent review of the process have enabled UNECA to make remarkable progress in integrated programme implementation and fostering linkages with regional and other institutions. Outcomes of the strong partnership forged with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) include joint ministerial meetings, joint knowledge generation and dissemination activities, joint institution such as the AU/UNECA/AfDB Joint secretariat and other initiatives such as the Climdev project. Partnership with bilateral partners has led to increased funding support for the 2007-2009 Business Plan, reaching \$72 million by the end of 2009. Linkages with the regional institutions were strengthened with the signing by the subregional offices of multi-year programmes with their respective regional economic communities.

The repositioning and the subsequent review have also led to internal reorganization and better programmatic linkages.

Challenges

While greater coherence has been established between UNECA intergovernmental machinery and sub-programmes, there is little evidence of stronger linkage among the intergovernmental sectoral committees themselves. Such linkage is required to create synergies, avoid duplication and enhance the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in the work of the UNECA.

In order to fulfill its role as a reference document for monitoring progress towards sustainable development in Africa, the SDRA should be based on an agreed set of sustainable development indicators, covering the four dimensions of sustainable development. However, the paucity and reliability of data remains a challenge for the region.

In spite of the progress made, the United Nations system faces a number of challenges and constraints in providing support to NEPAD at the regional level. First, an increased financial commitment by the United Nations system for NEPAD programmes will depend on whether the agencies receive additional resources for these programmes. Second, if further progress is to be

made, increased commitment and institutional leadership are essential to sustain the existing momentum and intensify support to AU and its NEPAD programme for maximum impact.

Recommendations

There is need to strengthen the linkage among the various intergovernmental sectoral committees themselves especially in cross-cutting areas such as gender mainstreaming, technology transfer, trade and regional integration, statistics, social and economic development as well as sustainable development

There is a need to examine how the Africa RCM of UN agencies in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme could be effectively involved in and complement the CFSSD process.

Stronger linkages should be forged between the CFSSD Bureau and the Africa representatives in the UNCSO Bureau with a view to enhancing coordination and information sharing.

There is a need to ensure effective linkage between the global, regional, subregional and national processes in advancing sustainable development. In this regard, resources should be mobilized to ensure that member States can participate more meaningfully in the Africa regional implementation meetings (RIMs). Furthermore, African regional and subregional institutions, particularly regional economic communities, should play an active role in the RIMs by producing and submitting subregional reports.

For the SDRA to truly become an instrument and an authoritative source of information on progress towards sustainable development in Africa, it is expected to provide relevant, robust and quality analyses of priority sustainable development issues, based on an agreed upon, comprehensive and integrated sustainable development indicators framework. Therefore, it is deemed important to progressively develop a sustainable development indicator framework for Africa, to enable an integrated assessment of the different dimensions of sustainable development in a manner that is responsive to Africa's priorities and specificities.

Appropriate integration tools are urgently needed so that an interlinkages approach (vertical and horizontal) that showcases win-win solutions can be adopted. In this respect, indicators of integration are relevant. The importance of monitoring and evaluation systems to review progress, trends, build on achievements and draw lessons learnt cannot be overemphasized.

Notwithstanding the increasing support of the UN system to the AU and its NEPAD Programme, coordination between UNECA and NPCA within the framework of the RCM needs to be enhanced. According to NPCA, the lack of adequate coordination leaves NEPAD unaware of some interventions that partners report within the framework of the RCM. While some UN agencies consult with the NPCA regularly, a large number of them do not. It is therefore important that all the UN agencies consult regularly with NPCA.

Participating United Nations agencies and African regional and subregional organizations should make the mechanism sustainable by showing more commitment to the process and ensuring that desirable outcomes and impact are registered. Concomitantly, the smooth integration of NEPAD into AU structures and processes would ensure continuity and better coordination

in the implementation of cluster activities. The mechanism and its clusters should play a role in facilitating the smooth transition.

RCM should also explore ways to have non-resident agencies to take part in the process.

The linkages between national, subregional and regional level preparations for Rio+20 should be strengthened, and information exchange between the different levels should be ensured. In addition, coordination mechanisms put in place for the regional preparations for Rio+20 should be maintained, if not strengthened, to ensure effective implementation and follow-up on the outcomes of the conference.

United Nations Development Programme

The UNDP is the development network of the United Nations. It is present in some 45 African countries and focuses mainly on four areas, with gender equality and women's empowerment as cross-cutting areas: poverty reduction and MDGs, democratic governance, environment and energy, crises prevention.

Agenda 21 has identified UNDP as one of the core agencies for delivering sustainable development at the global, regional and subregional levels, in collaboration with other UN bodies and specialized agencies.

Progress made

Though UNDP primarily represents the 'social' pillar of sustainable development, it also focuses heavily on the environmental pillar through its environment and energy programme, and plays a key role in the efforts to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development at all levels. For example, through its capacity 21, the UNDP supported a number of African countries to establish their national councils for sustainable development and develop national strategies for sustainable development

The UNDP has played a crucial role in programmatic and institutional linkages through the coordinating role it plays at the country level. In most country offices, the UNDP resident representative also serves as the resident coordinator of development activities for the United Nations system as a whole. This ensures the most effective use of UN and international aid resources. And in collaboration with regional institutions and other UN agencies and partners, has been building the capacities of African governments and communities to accelerate progress toward the MDGs. Following the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit which committed to increasing aid to Africa by \$US 25 billion in 2004 dollars by 2010, UNDP has worked with partner governments in Africa and regional institutions to develop "Gleneagles Scenarios" which show that scaling up action toward the MDGs at the country level is feasible.

And the UNDP works with governments, regional institutions, the United Nations and other development partners, including civil society organizations and the private sector, to tackle the multi-dimensional aspect of poverty.

The UNDP has used several initiatives (such as territorial approach to climate change (TACC) in Ethiopia) to promote multi-stakeholder participation. It has also supported decentralization by helping regions in Ethiopia to prepare their own climate resilient adaptation plans.

Recommendations

The evaluation of the United Nations delivering as One pilot phase in eight countries shows that it is indeed important that the United Nations delivers as one. The United Nations development system should therefore coordinate and collaborate closely to ensure synergy and coherence at the national level

The UNDP and UNDESA should deepen their support to the 33 least developed countries (LDCs) in their preparation for the Rio+20 and for the implementation of the outcome of the conference.

UNDP should scale up its support to African countries to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner by mainstreaming sustainable development in their national planning processes. It should also help build reporting capacity at the appropriate levels within the countries.

African countries should also urge the UNDP to engage in more catalytic use of official development assistance to unleash the power of all relevant development resources to drive the transformation towards sustainability. African countries should ensure that Rio+20 help accelerate such key transformations in the way the United Nations development system and the international financial institutions work.

United Nations Environment Programme

As global environmental authority, UNEP sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. In addition to its medium term strategy that focuses on six thematic cross cutting areas, UNEP has adopted a Strategic- Framework for Africa (RSFA) that provides strategic direction and defines modalities for the analysis of environment and development challenges and opportunities as well as providing for a delivery mechanisms for the region. The UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA) plays a central role in coordinating UNEP's Programme of Work in the region.

Progress made

UNEP's Programme in Africa aims at assisting African governments and major stakeholders. The Africa regional programme, UNEP ensures that there is better coherence and coordination in the effective delivery of environmental capacity-building and technical support at all levels in response to country needs and priorities.

Recommendations

In order to ensure synergy, UNEP and partner organizations should streamline mandates, focus on commonalities, and create mechanisms to influence decision-making processes at all levels.

There is much emphasis on the collaboration between UNDP and UNEP in the interest of resource efficiency. The Bali strategic plan for capacity-building and technology development, agreed at governing council in 2005, involved the establishment of an MOU between UNDP and UNEP to deliver capacity-building initiatives on environmental matters at the country level. This partnership should be strengthened.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

In 1995, the FAO established sustainable development department, in response to the need to take a more holistic and strategic approach to development support and poverty alleviation. The department focuses on four key dimensions of sustainability, including sustainable livelihoods, agrarian transformation, and natural resources monitoring.

Progress made

The FAO's sustainable development department serves as a global reference centre for knowledge and advice on the integration of biophysical, biological, socio-economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

The FAO collaborated with NEPAD to develop CAADP and with member States to develop national CAADP compacts which are considered an important step towards ensuring agricultural stability and economic development.

Recommendations

As the main UN body dealing with agriculture, the FAO's support to African agriculture and food security is crucial. The organization should ensure that policies and investments fully integrate agricultural development, the sustainable use of natural resources and enhanced food security. In this respect, the FAO should support African countries to put in place policies that best address development, food security, poverty reduction and natural resource use in an integrated manner, and to identify how aid and public expenditures ensure balance between socio-economic development and environmental protection.

On account of the importance of agriculture to African economies, FAO should play active part in UNDAF to ensure programmatic linkages and trade-offs at national and subnational levels

Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the subregional level

At the subregional level the report reviews the seven of the eight RECs that the African Union has recognized and finds that they all have put in place various programmes on the environment, agriculture, natural resources, energy, disaster reduction, peace and security, governance and socioeconomic development. The sectoral programmes are anchored in long-term strategies that constitute the main regional development framework. These include SADC's regional indicative strategic development plan (RISDP), strategic indicative plan of the organ (SIPO), vision 2020 and the Regional Strategic Plan, the Community Development Programme (CDP) of ECOWAS, ECCAS vision 2025, and regional economic programme (REP) of CEMAC, the Five-year development plans of EAC, IGAD's environment and natural resources strategy, the 2011-2015 strategic plan of COMESA, various sectoral programmes of UMA.

Progress made

The review shows that through the various programmes, plans and strategies the subregional institutions have, with varying degrees of success, encouraged multi-stakeholder participation, built institutional linkages and sought the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. However the RECs face a number of challenges.

Challenges

At a more general level, there is the difficulty of integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development is being equally threatened by several risk factors. There is inadequate commitment that makes consensus difficult to attain on a number of issues. There is also insufficient economic commitment as the region continues to rely on external resources for the bulk of the regional programmes.

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member States is equally inimical to sustainable development on account of the ramifying effects of conflicts.

Although environmental impact assessment (EIA) is routinely done, it is not done in a comprehensive and integrated manner. The regional EIA focuses on fauna and flora alone. It does not look at social issues such as the impact of roads and similar projects on alcoholism and teenage pregnancy in villages through which the infrastructure projects run.

When SADC secretariat was centralized in 2001, environment was left out, and nobody was in charge of the sector up to 2009, when a unit was setup in the food agriculture and natural resources department. Despite its extensive mandate, the late start and the fact that unit has

only one professional staff means that a lot needs to be done with respect to the integration of the environmental concerns in policy planning and implementation at the level of the secretariat. The lack of functional national institutions to effectively coordinate issues of a regional nature; difficulties in harmonization of regulatory and policy frameworks, including integration of national and regional plans; and inadequate funding for both project development and implementation are additional challenges that the organization faces.

Similarly, the challenges that ECOWAS faces relate to the difficulty of horizontal integration and interdepartmental coordination. For example, within the Commission, sustainable development is handled by several Commissioners. The Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources handles agriculture and deals with environmental issues such as climate change and desertification. The Commissioner for Human development and Gender deals among other things with social issues such as education, women's right, health and non-conflict humanitarian issues. Mining falls under the purview of the Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy. Major projects that fall under the purview of the Commissioner for Infrastructure include projects that aim at providing modern fuel.

Although the commission meets regularly, there is little evidence of coordination at the programme level. During the consultation with the director of strategic planning within the context of this report, the need for a coordinating mechanism was identified. It is therefore important that partners, including the UNECA, help ECOWAS commission put in place the mechanism in order to ensure greater programme integration and institutional cohesion.

Another major challenge is how to **meaningfully involve the private sector and civil society in regional integration efforts**, although ECOWAS is working on ways to link private sector actors across the community and to strengthen their commitment to developing a regional market

Central African states recognize the peace and security challenges the region faces, and the risks that these constitute for the balanced and integrated development of the region. The peace and security architecture put in place in response to these challenges constitute perhaps the most effective sustainable development strategies for the region.

In the context of subsidiarity, the linkage between the AU's peace and security architecture and COPAX must be strengthened through effective capacity-building.

In Central Africa institutional frameworks focus largely on issues relating to the forest. These include the Central Africa Forest Council (COMIFAC), Conference of the Ecosystems of Dense and Humid Forests in Central Africa (CEFDHAC); Observatory of Forests in Central Africa (OSFAC); Central Africa Regional Programme on the Environment (CARPE), Congo Basin Forest Partnership (PFBC).⁶

⁶ UNECA, et CEEAC, Rapport d'évaluation des progrès de mise en oeuvre du développement durable en Afrique central 2011

Recommendations

Regional integration has a critical role to play in promoting institutional and programmatic linkages as well as the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. There is therefore the need to deepen and accelerate regional integration across the continent.

Appropriate integration tools are urgently needed so that inter-linkages (vertical and horizontal) that showcase win-win solutions and help to change the prevailing perception can be adopted. In this respect, indicators of integration are relevant. In this regard, it is important to establish monitoring and evaluation systems to review progress, trends, build on achievements and draw lessons learnt.

More effort is needed in developing and implementing integrated strategies, as well as in documenting and sharing best practices and demonstrating the multiple benefits of the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental objectives through well-thought out programmes and pilot projects.

In view of the difficulties that the RECs face, the AUC in collaboration with UNECA, UNEP and AfDB should develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme to strengthen the capacity of RECs and member States in the application of integration tools such as natural resources accounting, economic valuation of environmental and natural resources, environmental and social impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment and other integration tools.

AUC and ECA, with the support of AfDB, should analyse and elaborate possible mechanisms for financing sustainable development programmes taking into account the region's specificities and priorities. Moreover, national, subregional and regional parliaments should be actively engaged in the formulation of plans and programmes to enhance policy level ownership and commitment to funding.

Sustainable development indicator frameworks are crucial to promoting sustainable development and in particular, articulating the linkages among the different sectors. AUC in collaboration with UNECA, AfDB and UNEP should step up programmes to promote the development and use of sustainable development indicator frameworks at regional, subregional and national levels.

RECs can play an important role in boosting the establishment and development of institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development, as well as in ensuring their effective operationalization and implementation. They should, therefore, be supported to enhance institutional coherence and harmonize relevant development policies, plans and programmes among their member States.

In order to deepen the involvement of the private sector, ECOWAS Commission should strengthen existing initiatives such as the Commission's sponsorship of periodic ECOWAS Business Forums; fast track the establishment of the ECOWAS Business Council as an body to

advise Heads of State and Governments; and scale up support to regional business organizations such as the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACC) and the Federation of West African Manufacturers Association (FEWAMA).⁷

While the importance of forest to the economies of Central Africa accounts for the concentration of institutional frameworks in the region on forestry and forest-related issues, the regions should integrate social and economic aspects of sustainable development into the works of the various organizations dealing with forestry issues.

In view of the specific constraints that UMA faces, the following recommendations are relevant, although they are equally valid for the other regional bodies. The institution should be supported to:

- a) Institutionalize the integration of sustainable development in the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts;
- b) Define a concrete framework including data and precise indicators for assessing progress on sustainable development;
- c) Strengthen integrated analysis of the economic, social and environmental pillars in policy development and implementation; and
- d) Put in place a mechanism to follow up the progress or remaining gaps towards sustainable development in the subregion.
- e) Encourage multi-stakeholder participation, institutional linkages, and ensure synergy between the environmental conventions and economic and social development plans;
- f) Establish an observatory for drought and desertification control and climate change mitigation.⁸

Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development at the national level

A UNECA study conducted in 2005 found that the majority of African countries had established National Councils for Sustainable Development ((NCSDs) . A survey of 16 countries in 2011 shows that all 16 countries have structures that deal with sustainable development at the national level. The majority of the 16 countries surveyed in 2011 have established distinct NCSDs or structures that mirror that name. Two countries indicate ministries responsible for finance, economic affairs and planning as the main sustainable development body at the national level. In two others sustainable development is coordinated through an environment agency and a department within the office of the Prime Minister.

Both surveys, find that the mandates of the NCSDs and of bodies responsible for sustainable development at the national level cover a broad range of issues, but none of the bodies has a broad mandate with corresponding broad-based activities that address all three dimensions of sustain-

⁷ African Development Bank, *Regional Integration Strategy Paper 2011-2015* March 2011, available at <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/RISP>

⁸ UNECA and UMA, *Rapport d'évaluation des progrès réalisés en faveur du développement durable en Afrique du Nord (Rio+20)*, October 2011.

able development, and only a few of them have been found in both the 2005 and 2011 surveys to have decentralized structures or a revised mandate, as recommended by Agenda 21.

Similarly, the 2005 report, and data collected in 2006 (report published in 2011) and the survey data of 2011 indicate that the majority of African countries have developed diverse types of strategies, plans, and programmes to promote sustainable development. These include national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, national long term visions, and national strategies for sustainable development.

Despite these positive trends, the implementation of integrated frameworks and strategies is generally weak, and less effective. This is due a number of challenges.

Challenges

The challenges that the 2011 survey has brought out relate to insufficient capacity at all levels, inadequate human, institutional and financial resources, lack of targeted technical assistance, low level of awareness among policymakers and the general public, limited or unknown best practices or successful pilot projects, limited foreign direct investment and low level of international cooperation, and dormant NCSDs.

The relatively weak involvement of planning and finance ministries in sustainable development issues is another major challenge to the balance integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. In many countries, sustainable development is still in the domain of environment ministries.

Recommendations

Countries should be assisted to establish and strengthen national coordinating bodies for sustainable development, taking into account the national development planning process and country specificities. In doing so, the following should be borne in mind:

- a) The composition (multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary) and the need for clear mandates consistent with the recognized roles and responsibilities of an effective NCSD; and
- b) The need to equip the body with sustainable development indicator frameworks to form a basis for integrative planning and monitoring and evaluation of progress towards sustainable development.

Given the key role that planning and finance ministries play in national development planning processes, they should assume the lead role. Social sector ministries also need to be better integrated into the mainstream sustainable development agenda. This will enhance ownership, commitment, political leadership, and broad-based participation.

Countries should avoid multiplicity, duplication and fragmentation of development strategies, and ensure coherence and effective linkages between local, sectoral, medium-term and long-term development strategies. The NSSD should as much as possible be linked with the budget process.

More effort is needed in developing and implementing integrated strategies, as well as in documenting and sharing best practices and demonstrating the multiple benefits of the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental objectives through well-thought out programmes and pilot projects. In this regard, partnership among countries must be strengthened. Countries should be provided with a platform for information and experience sharing on NSSDs to enhance the learning process.

Monitoring and evaluation are key components of an NSSD process. Countries should develop and use indicators that cover the different dimensions of sustainable development, including indicators of integration to enable an objective assessment of progress and achievements.

Appropriate integration tools are urgently needed so that inter-linkages and approaches (vertical and horizontal) that showcase win-win solutions and help to change the prevailing perception can be adopted. In this respect, indicators of integration are relevant.

Sustainable development governance

Sustainable development governance at the global Level

Sustainable development governance has been the subject of extensive debate and various reform proposals. This is largely due to the fact that there is insufficient integration among the three pillars of sustainable development. As the UN Secretary-General has indicated the enabling framework for integration of all three pillars of sustainable development has been weak at all levels, international, regional and national and even subnational and local.

Thus various options for reform at the global, regional and national levels have been advanced including the Helsinki-Nairobi outcome. Proposals include creating new structures, strengthening the existing structures or elevating the existing structures to a higher level. More specifically, there are proposals to change the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) into a Sustainable Development Council or create a forum within ECOSOC that would deal with sustainable development. There are also proposals to elevate the Commission on Sustainable Development to a Sustainable Development Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.

Futhermore to balance the three pillars and align the environmental pillar with the others, there have been proposals to strengthen UNEP. Discussed options have explored elevating UNEP to specialized agency status, creating a UN Environmental Organization (UNEO) or a World Environmental Organization (WEO) or simply revising UNEP's mandate within its current structure.

Position of African environment ministers on international environmental governance

While African countries have taken part in the debate on international environmental governance at all levels, the African collective voice has become louder in recent months. At the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Malabo in June 2011, a decision was taken concerning the revision of institutional frameworks for sustainable development that will take into consideration the need to strengthen, consolidate and transform UNEP into an international specialized institution for the environment based in Nairobi. (Assembly/AU/Dec.381(XVII))

During the fourth special session of AMCEN in Bamako, in September 2011, the African environment ministers did not only support the assembly decision, they went further to indicate what shape the proposed body should take. Most importantly, they stressed that a new specialized institution does not imply the establishment of an environment inspection body, compliance mechanism for developing countries, or the putting in place of green conditionalities or trade barriers, and should not lead to additional financial burdens for Africa.

Sustainable development governance at the regional and subregional levels

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) addresses the regional dimension of sustainable development and provides for a range of measures for strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the regional level. These measures include pursuing the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the summit at the regional and subregional levels, through the regional commissions and other regional and subregional institutions and bodies. The JPOI further called for the regional commissions to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into their work in a balanced way; facilitate and promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in member States.

The review of the UNECA, the African Union, NEPAD and the African Union shows some of the progress made and the challenges that exist with respect to sustainable development governance at the regional level. Thus to enhance sustainable development governance at the regional level, there is need to strengthen the capacity of the regional institutions, including the UNECA, to support the multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary forums such as the African Development Forum, the Regional Coordination Mechanism of UN Agencies working in Africa, in support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme, the joint meetings of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the UNECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the UNECA Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development, and the associated Africa Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs).

RECs can play an important role in spurring the establishment and development of institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development, as well as in ensuring their effective operationalization and implementation. They should, therefore, be supported to enhance institu-

tional coherence and harmonize relevant development policies, plans and programmes among their member States.

Sustainable development governance at the national level.

The review of the sustainable development governance at the national level shows that the principal challenge is the relatively weak involvement of planning and finance ministries in sustainable development issues. In many countries, sustainable development is still in the domain of environment ministries as national authorities tend to view sustainable development as dealing mostly with environment, rather than viewing environment as one of three equally important pillars of sustainable development.

In many countries, the national councils have ceased to function (Report of the UN Secretary-General A/Con/216/PC/2 April 2010). Where they exist, they are weak and lack human and financial resources.

As the UN Secretary General indicated, a significant component of the challenge of integrating economic, social and environmental goals pertains to the national level. Thus reviving and strengthening national sustainable development councils will address the challenge of integrating economic, social and environmental goals by engaging a broader range of ministries and stakeholders from each country. This would require dedicated financial support and capacity-building for developing countries, which could be advanced through existing United Nations channels, by the United Nations Development Group, for example, which could provide guidance at the country level not only on sectoral issues (as at present) but on the integrated agenda of sustainable development (Report of SG).

Recommendations

Without prejudice to the Malabo and Bamako decisions on IEG, it is important that Africa harnesses its resources to secure in Rio reformed governance architecture at the global level that promotes coordination and synergies across various sectors and actors, and where the voice of developing countries is adequately reflected, and is likely to promote integration at all levels.

At the regional level and subregional levels, governance should be strengthened by leveraging upon the comparative advantages of existing institutions to ensure effective vertical linkages, as well as efficiency and effectiveness in sustainable development actions. More specifically, the Regional Commissions of the UN should be strengthened to foster balanced integration through inter alia, promoting sharing of experiences and cooperation among countries with similar experiences, circumstances, and levels of development.

At the national level, Rio+20 could reactivate and reinvigorate the national councils for sustainable development, to follow up UNCED 2012, with mandates for:

- a) Outreach, for consultation and feedback, to their constituencies in the country;
- b) Development of guidance on implementation strategies within a country;

- c) Development of national reports; and
- d) Development of national targets for policy, strategies and future implementation.

Good governance: an essential element for sustainable development.

The linkage between good governance and sustainable development has not only been recognized it has also been demonstrated. At the regional level, progress on good governance includes new governance parameters and benchmarks that the African Union and NEPAD have defined. At the national level democratic politics and practices have progressed significantly with the establishment of competitive multiparty democracy in many countries. The creation in most African countries of watchdog institutions such as the ombudsman, human rights commission, anti-corruption commissions, auditor general, inspector of governance or minister for good governance, present perhaps the most significant examples of these initiatives. Parliaments have also performed with increasing responsibility and effectiveness towards improving standards of transparency and accountability.

Challenges

Despite the progress made, a number of challenges exist including fragile and weak institutions, instruments and processes, and the dependence of watchdog and advocacy agencies on government.

Recommendations

Conscious efforts are needed to build on the emerging structures and practices and to consolidate the modest progress recorded so far.

The plural nature of most African countries makes it imperative for them to recognize and accommodate diversity in political systems. In this regard, furthermore, political and governance bodies must institutionalize policies that guarantee gender equality, and the AU should create and enforce a minimum standard for countries with respect to the level of women's political representation in elected institutions and decision-making organs.

As the democratic process grows and is consolidating, electoral laws will have to be reformed in many African countries to reflect new realities and meet challenges of political modernization. To imbue confidence in the electoral challenge mechanism, efforts must be strengthened to ensure that elections, as well as their preparations, including campaigning, voter registration and candidature eligibility, are free and fair and are also recognized as such by key stakeholders. Furthermore, the structures that manage post-election conflicts must be invigorated. In this regard, greater autonomy, professional competence to handle election disputes, and adequate resources (finance, infrastructure and logistics) are needed.

African countries must begin to devise ways to finance their elections, as donor funding of elections is not sustainable. Options include setting up an African Elections Fund at the continental level by the AU for countries to subscribe to, and benefit from, when preparing for elections. Africa will have to look inward more in terms of planning and financing of elections. At the national level, there must be a mix between state and private sources of funding for political parties in order to provide the financial base necessary to carry out their activities.

Conclusions and the way forward

The interdependent and mutually-reinforcing nature of the three dimensions of sustainable development requires a balanced integration of its three pillars - economic, social and environmental - by institutions and strategies that promote holistic and integrated approaches. The region has responded to this requirement with varying degrees of success.

Institutional reforms have been undertaken and sustainable development strategies developed and implemented at all levels. To a large extent, multi-stakeholder participation has improved, and institutional and programmatic linkages have been established. The various long-term visions, plans and strategies developed have also catered for inter-generational and intra-generational equity.

NEPAD continues to serve as Africa's regional strategy for sustainable development. However, in order to enhance its effectiveness, NEPAD frameworks should be revitalized and implemented actively. Consequently, Rio+20 should result in a strengthened governance framework that leverages the comparative advantages of existing regional and subregional institutions to ensure effective vertical and horizontal linkages, as well as efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the implementation of NEPAD programmes. In this regard, AUC, NEPAD and ECA should be strengthened to promote the balanced integration of all pillars of sustainable development.

Regional and subregional institutions have a significant role to play in spurring the establishment and development of institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development, as well as in ensuring their effective operationalization and implementation. There is therefore the urgent need to support these institutions and facilitate institutional coherence and harmonization of relevant development policies, plans and programmes among their member States. In this regard stronger collaboration should be fostered among regional and subregional institutions such as AUC, ECA, AfDB, UNEP-ROA, the RECs and the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA). Rio+20 should therefore provide strong impetus for enhanced cooperation. Effective linkages among global, regional, subregional and national processes should be ensured in order to advance sustainable development, based on the principle of subsidiarity.

Countries should consider reviving and further strengthening national sustainable development councils, with a mandate to address the challenge of integrating economic, social and environmental goals, by engaging a broader range of ministries and stakeholders at country level. Rio+20 should explore the possibility of reactivating and reinvigorating the National Councils for Sustainable Development which should be adequately capacitated to play a more active role. In this connection, the international community should assist in developing effective and responsive institutional frameworks for sustainable development in the region.

The inadequate involvement of the ministries of finance, economic affairs and planning and the ministries for social affairs in sustainable development is a serious concern as it constitutes major impediment to successful integration of all pillars at the national level. It feeds the erroneous impression that sustainable development is simply about environment. Rio+20 should therefore decisively address this shortcoming, so that all ministries exercise their rightful responsibilities in sustainable development.

Sustainable development is still unclear to some countries and stakeholders. Platforms for dialogue on sustainable development should thus be encouraged among stakeholders at the regional, subregional and national levels, to promote a common understanding of what sustainable development means in the African context. In this regard it is important to promote and support these stakeholders to share experience and lessons learned on how best to implement sustainable development commitments, and determine what works and what does not work and why.

A common challenge that persists is balancing the integration of the pillars in planning, budgeting and implementation of plans and programmes, due to the lack of synergy among the institutions dealing with the different pillars. There is the need for a clear and actionable indicator framework for sustainable development, to enhance understanding, guide integration modalities and identify the type of linkages that should exist among different sectors. In this connection, global and regional institutions should promote the development and application of sustainable development indicator frameworks at all levels.

ECA should enhance its work in promoting a balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in the region, and lead other regional institutions in developing and applying monitoring and evaluation frameworks for sustainable development in the region, developing a database to facilitate performance tracking, and providing country technical support on sustainable development strategy, policy and programmes.

ECA, AUC and AfDB should continue to lead consultative meetings and processes to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments by the region.

