Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union

2-3 November 2010
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1. Introduction

1. The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) for the Review of the "Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Frame work for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP-AU) was held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 2 and 3 November 2010. The meeting was organized by the NEPAD Support Section of the Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND) of ECA, in collaboration with the AU Commission (AUC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office to the African Union (UNO-AU).

2. The main objective of the meeting was for experts from various UN and AU organizations including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) to assess the draft report of the Review of the TYCBP-AU and provide comments and inputs for its finalization. The meeting also provided a forum for experts to share their views and experiences and reach consensus on specific, practical and action-oriented recommendations on the Programme, including mechanisms and processes aimed at supporting its effective implementation. It was envisaged that the final report of the meeting would feed into the discussions of the 11th Session of RCM-Africa scheduled to take place on 14 and 15 November 2010.

2. Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by the following UN organizations: United Nation Office to the African Union (UNO-AU); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR); International Organization for Migration (IOM); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)*;* and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Representatives of the AUC and the following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) also attended the meeting: Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN SAD); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

4. The full list of participants is attached as Annex 1 of this report.

3.   Opening of Meeting

5. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director of the Economic Development and NEPAD Division of ECA. He welcomed all participants to the meeting and recalled that the Declaration on the TYCBP-AU, signed by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of AU in 2006, was an evolving Framework conceived as the UN overall platform for cooperation with the AU. He noted that the objective of the Programme was to enhance the capacity of the AUC and African sub-regional organizations to act as effective UN partners in addressing Africa's challenges. Mr. Nnadozie recalled that the Declaration on the TYCBP-AU provide for the review of the Framework at three-year intervals. It was in that context, and in line with recommendations of the 10th RCA-Africa, that the present review was undertaken.

6. The Director commended the consultant who undertook the work as well as colleagues from the UN system, AUC, NPCA, and RECs who contributed to the accomplishment of the important assignment. He stressed that the purpose of the meeting was to critically examine the outcome of the review with a view to improving the draft report, and urged participants to focus their discussions on the main issues, challenges and lessons learned from efforts to implement the TYCBP-AU, especially as spelt out in the draft report. He also urged them to place special attention to the recommendations of the draft report to ensure that they were realistic, action oriented, and specific in terms of assignment of responsibilities.

7. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, in an opening statement read on her behalf by Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, said she was delighted to note that several organizations, including AUC had responded to the draft review report. She highlighted important issues that called for close attention by participants of the meeting, including: the need to critically examine whether the review had adequately assessed the extent to which the objectives of the TYCBP-AU are being met; the role of AUC and RECs in ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme; and recommendations on how to improve the RCM-Africa and its clusters as the main vehicle for delivering on the TYCBP-AU.

8. Ms. Kargbo recalled that RCM-Africa was established at the regional level as part of the UN reform to improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination of UN support to AU and its NEPAD Programme. The effective functioning of RCM-Africa was therefore crucial to "Delivering as

One" UN support to AU the Programme. She therefore urged participants to provide recommendations on how to mobilize resources and align activities of the UN System in the context of RCM-Africa and to upscale implementation of the Programme

9. Ms. Adwoa Coleman also made opening remarks on behalf of AUC. She said as a major stakeholder and beneficiary, AUC was pleased to be associated with the review of the TYCBP-AU, and welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft report of the exercise.

10. By way of general comment, she said AUC was quite satisfied with the overall content and thrust of the report, adding that it was successful in pinpointing in a fairly comprehensive manner, the difficulties being encountered with regard to the implementation of the TYCBP-AU.

11. However, she took issue with the impression given in the report, and apparently prevalent in the UN system, that AUC has been the main source of difficulties experienced in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU, primarily because of its failure to assume ownership and leadership in the Programme. She stressed that both the UN system and AUC had to share the blame for the limited progress in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU. She expressed support for a number of recommendations of the review report, including those related to the reconfiguration of RCM-

Africa; cluster and sub-cluster system; strengthening of RCM-Africa Secretariat; financial support to RCM-Africa and its processes; sub-regional coordination mechanisms; and reporting processes. Ms. Coleman concluded by recommending that RCM-Africa Clusters be re-aligned to the issues dealt with by the various AUC departments.

4. Account of Proceedings

4.1. Adoption of Agenda

10. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

   (i)   Opening Session;
   (ii) Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of work;
   (iii) Presentation of the Report of the Review;
   (iv) Plenary Discussions on the Main Issues, Challenges and Lessons Learned;
   (v)   Discussions on Key Recommendations of the Review in Breakout Sessions;
   (vi) Plenary Working Group Presentations and Discussions;
   (vii) Adoption of the Outcomes of the Meeting and the Way Forward;
   (viii)Key Recommendations for Consideration at the 11th RCM-Africa Meeting; and
   (ix) Closing Session

4.2. Presentation of the Report of the Review

12. Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson, who reviewed the TYCBP-AU made a presentation under this agenda item. He started by recalling the terms of reference for the review and the methodology used, including desk studies, interviews with key stakeholders, and questionnaire-based surveys. He then gave a historical perspective of UN system-wide initiatives related to capacity building of the AUC, NEPAD and RECs; and a comprehensive description of RCM-Africa and its Cluster system. He also discussed the lessons learned from implementation of the TYCBP-AU so far, and made several recommendations for the way forward. Some of these

recommendations were related to: reconfiguring RCM-Africa; mandates
and responsibilities of UN agencies and organizations in the TYCBP-AU;
strengthening RCM-Africa Secretariat, Clusters and sub-Clusters; and fi-
nancial support to RCM-Africa and its processes.

4.3. Issues Discussed and Recommendations

13. Participants noted that the UN system and AUC itself had expressed
the desire   for the Commission to play a leadership role in the imple-
mentation of the TYCBP-AU. They pointed out that the challenge in that
regard was for AUC to effectively take over the leadership of RCM-Africa
thematic Clusters and sub-Clusters, where they were not already driv-
ing the programme, from the UN partner agencies. It was also pointed
out that Clusters and sub-Clusters led by AUC, such as that on Social and
Human Development had been quite effective and could actually serve
as examples of good practices. In that regard, the agenda of RCM-Africa
meetings should allow for the sharing of best practices;

14. The Experts acknowledged that there were several definitions of the
term "capacity- building" that had popular following within development
nomenclature. However, the relevant definition in relation to the TYCBP-
AU should be the one proposed in the consultant's report, and the deter-
mination of what "capacity building" should be undertaken within the
TYCBP-AU should be made by AUC and related beneficiary institutions.

15. The Experts noted that most UN agencies have signed Memorandums
of Understanding (MoUs) with AUC. In light of this, these agencies had to
reflect on how the MoUs best feed into the implementation of the TYCBP-
AU. They also underscored the importance of aligning the TYCBP-AU to
the AUC strategic plan, especially as this was necessary to address the
perceived lack of ownership of the TYCBP by AUC. Essentially, it was
stressed that a programmatic dialogue between AUC and the UN system
should be held. It was also stressed that coordination at all levels, includ-
ing between UN agencies as well as among the beneficiaries – AUC (in-
cluding among its Departments) and the RECs should be strengthened.

16. It was noted that the location of RCM-Africa Cluster meetings influ-
enced the participation of members. For instance, holding meetings at
AUC could enhance participation of the Commission. However, some

flexibility as to the time and venue would enable Clusters to meet on the side lines of events that bring together their members.

17. Participants acknowledged that AUC, NPCA, and RECs had partners apart from the UN system. In that regard, what was critical for RCM-Africa was for it to identify the kind of support that it could best provide within the framework of the TYCBP-AU. To that end, it was more important to develop a realistic and bankable programme (s) that can yield concrete results than an unrealistic programme with a long list of activities.

18. Participants noted that participation at RCM-Africa meetings and Cluster activities had resource implications for both AUC and UN agencies. Supporting the Secretariat would further increase the burden on these organizations and as such must be carefully planned. Therefore, ways of attracting a larger share of total UN resources allocated to support the AU and its NEPAD programme to the RCM Secretariat as well as to activities of the AUC (incorporating the NPCA) and the RECs had to be explored. Participants stressed that appropriate attention had to be given to the RECs in developing work programmes for the TYCBP-AU, especially in their capacity as implementation pillars of the AU.

19. Finally, participants recognized the importance of strengthening reporting on progress in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU at the highest political level and in that regard recommended RCM-Africa Secretariat to provide more guidance on how best progress in the implementation of the Programme could be reported to the UN General Assembly and the AU Heads of State Summit,

20. The following recommendations emerged from the discussion:
- The agenda of RCM-Africa meetings should include an item on the sharing of best practices in the functioning of Clusters, and RCM-Africa should endorse AUC's commitment to assume greater ownership of Clusters and sub-Clusters;
- In addition to strengthening the capacity of the RCM-Africa Secretariat, coordination among AUC Departments, and between the Commission and RECs should also be strengthened;
- Efforts at joint programming between the UN system and AUC based on the   priorities of AU and its NEPAD programme, as well as priorities of RECs should be strengthened; for RECs the

multi-year programmes with ECA Sub-regional Offices (SROs) could serve as a starting point;

- Ways should be explored to attract a larger share of AU and UN resources in support of the AUC Strategic Plan (and related priorities and programmes); the TYCBP-AU; and the RCM-Africa Secretariat in particular as it is the key enabler of the TYCBP-AU.

4.4. Plenary Working Group Presentations and Discussions

The TYCBP, AU/NEPAD Agency Mandates, Priorities and Responsibilities

21. This working group recommended that a special expert meeting should be held by end of March 2011 for the AUC to present its capacity-building needs and suggested areas for UN intervention through the TYCBP-AU. Optimally, the proposed programmes should contain "bankable" activities around which resources could be mobilized by all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation.

23. The group agreed that it was necessary for the AUC-led TYCBP-AU process to go through the following capacity building steps: stakeholder engagement, capacity needs assessment, developing capacity responses (strategies); implementation of responses; and evaluation.

24. The Group also underscored the importance for monitoring and evaluation structures to evolve from workable Cluster and sub-Cluster programmes that are defined within specified timelines.

25. The following recommendations are drawn from the above discussion:
- An expert group meeting should be held by March 2011 for the AUC to present its capacity-building needs and suggested areas UN intervention through the TYCBP-AU; and
- Monitoring and evaluation of TYCBP-AU should be based on workable Cluster and sub-Cluster programmes that are defined within specified timelines.

UN Support to and Structure for the Implementation of the Programme

26. The group agreed that the review of mandates related to UN organizations supporting, AU and its NEPAD programme and the realignment with the prevailing realities should be carried out in respect of four organizations namely, OSAA, DPI, ECA and UNOAU. They underscored the need for OSAA, DPI, ECA and UNOAU to engage with AUC in consultations aimed at ensuring that issues of mandate, roles and responsibilities are updated and clearly defined, resources - both human and financial - are moved closer to the beneficiaries and that AU takes leadership of the TYCBP-AU. These consultations should be expanded to include UN agencies who are members of the RCM-Africa. This forum should also be mandated to look into issues relating to the strengthening of the RCM-Africa Secretariat.

27. Participants also agreed that the RCM-Africa Secretariat should convene a first meeting to establish the terms of reference for this consultative group and agree on a subsequent meeting to deliberate on the substantive issues of mandate, roles, responsibilities and the transfer of leadership to AU. This process should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2011.

28. In terms of frequency and content, it was felt that the annual meetings of RCM-Africa should be maintained and that the meeting should also focus on policy matters and include a review of activities through Cluster reporting. The meetings should place special emphasis on results and impact. In addition, aspects of monitoring and evaluation should be included in the agenda of the annual forum.

29. Regarding the treatment of capacity-building as a subject for thematic discussion at the next RCM-Africa annual meeting, the group felt that capacity-building was cross cutting and at the core of TYCBP-AU and there was thus a need for urgent attention to ensure a common understanding of capacity building and more importantly of the capacity-building needs of the AU. The group agreed on the consultant's definition of capacity building and suggested that this sentiment be conveyed during the RCM-Africa so that a final adoption can be made by all stakeholders.

30. Regarding the suggestion that a joint session of the MDG Africa Steering Group and the RCM-Africa be convened, it was proposed that instead of the convening a special meeting, both groups should attend each other's meetings and provide briefing as necessary.

31. In light of the success of the Social and Human Development cluster chaired by the Commissioner for Social Affairs, it was proposed that the AU Commissioners be designated as the Chair of relevant Clusters and sub-Clusters.

32. Concerning the venue of RCM-Africa cluster meetings, it was reiterated that there should be flexibility in the determination of venues. In this regard, participants agreed that the RCM-Secretariat should put together a calendar of meetings as soon as practicable, taking into account the calendar of meetings of the AU.

33. The group found the recommendation of the draft review report calling for the programming and budgeting of TYCBP-AU by UN cluster members pertinent and proposed that the Chair of the RCM should take up the issue of ensuring dedicated funding for the programme with Principals of UN agencies. It was also suggested that the recommendation should include AU departments who should equally ensure that their work plans take into account TYCBP.

34. The following recommendations are derived from the discussion:
- RCM-Africa Secretariat should convene a meeting to establish the terms of reference for a consultative group to engage with AUC and clearly define and update issues related to mandates, roles and responsibilities, resources, and leadership of AUC in the TYCBP-AU. This process should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2011;
- The RCM- Africa Secretariat should prepare a calendar of meetings as soon as practicable, taking into account the calendar of meetings of the AU;
- The MDG Africa Steering Group and RCM-Africa should attend each others meetings and provide briefings as necessary; and

- The definition of capacity building as proposed in the TYCBP-AU Review report should be considered for adoption by all stakeholders during the 11ᵗʰ RCM-Africa.
- The Chair of the RCM-Africa should table the issue of a dedicated funding for the TYCBP-AU with principals of the UN agencies
- AU departments work plans should take in to account the TYCBP

UN-RECs Cooperation and the Subregional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM)

35. This group deliberated on the following three issues: UN-RECs Cooperation through a Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM); REC Programme for the Implementation of the Framework Agreement; monitoring and evaluation, and reporting arrangements.

36. With regard to the UN-RECs cooperation, the group noted that differences existed between RCM-Africa and the SRCM in terms of their operational modalities and structural arrangements. It also noted that the SRCM was coordinated by ECA Sub-regional Offices (SROs). In principle, a REC or group of RECs defined their priorities to drive the activities of the SRCM while RCM-Africa's activities are based on AUC priority areas.

37. The group unanimously agreed that SRCMs should be established in all sub-regions, and that RECs, individually or collectively, should decide how to engage themselves in the process of establishing the mechanism.

38. In terms of progress made in sub-regional coordination, a SRCM has already been established in Central Africa, with ECCAS and CEMAC being members. Modalities for establishing a SRCM in Eastern and Southern Africa are being formulated by a Task Force coordinated by the ECA SRO-EA. UN agencies with sub-regional presence as well as COMESA, SADC and EAC would constitute members of the SRCM.

39. The group noted that CENSAD, ECOWAS, IGAD and UMA are not part of any SRCM and encouraged them to reflect and decide on how to engage in such a mechanism. The UN-AU Joint RCM-Africa Secretariat was requested to approach these RECs by March2011 to sensitize them on

how to engage in the process. The session also recommended that the capacities of AUC, the RECs and ECA required strengthening to enable them play their expected coordination roles effectively.

40. The group agreed that the strategic plans and joint programmes of RECs should provide guiding principles to develop a workable Programme to be implemented in the context of the TYCBP-AU.

41. In terms of the process, it was recommended that within three months, RECs, individually or collectively – a group of RECs, should decide on a preliminary programme based on which they should meet with UN partners to develop a work programme for the TYCBP. The following considerations should be taken into account in elaborating the work programme: alignment to REC priorities and UN and REC programmatic and budgetary cycles; assigning timeframes and clearly defining benchmarks for monitoring progress in the implementation of activities.

42. The following recommendations are derived from the discussion:
- RCM-Africa Secretariat, in consultation with UN agencies and ECA SROs, should provide overall guidance in the establishment of SRCMs in all sub-regions,
- RCM-Africa Secretariat should guide RECs, individually or collectively, in deciding on how to engage themselves in SRCMS;
- The RCM-Africa Secretariat should approach RECs that are not yet part of a SRCM by March 2011 to sensitize them on how to engage in the process;
- The capacities of AUC, RECs and ECA should be strengthened to enable them play their expected coordination roles effectively; and
- By March 2011, RECs, individually or collectively (group of RECs), should decide on a preliminary programme based on which they should meet with UN partners to develop a work programme for the TYCBP.

4.5   Adoption of the Outcomes of the Meeting and the Way Forward

43. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented a draft outcome document. The document essentially contained decisions of the meeting on the recommendations of the review of the TYCBP-AU as well as reflections on the Programme in general.

44. The document presented by the Secretariat was adopted with some amendments. In terms of the next steps, participants agreed that the deliberations at the present meeting would be reflected in the Executive Summary of the report of the review of the TYCBP. It was further agreed that the revised report of the review should have only one set of recommendations, incorporating those emanating from this meeting. Finally, the revised report would be shared among RCM-Africa members and tabled at the 11th session of RCM-Africa.

4.6   Closing Session

45. In his closing remarks, Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie thanked all participants for their useful contributions to the meeting. He said their presence and frank discussions during the two days of the meeting were testimony of their commitment to ensuring that the TYCBP-AU was implemented successfully. He added that ECA would continue to support RCM-Africa, especially within the framework of the TYCBP-AU and through the joint RCM-Africa Secretariat that now has dedicated staff from ECA and AUC. He concluded by saying that some progress has been made in coordinating UN system support to AU and its NEPAD programme and called on participants to step up efforts to demonstrate what has already been achieved.

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