



**Report on
sustainable development goals for the
North Africa subregion
Key messages**

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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



African Union
Commission



African Development
Bank

A. Introduction

- (1) At a time when the international community is assessing achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and progress made with regard to sustainable development, and identifying and addressing remaining gaps, including emerging challenges, North Africa must not only participate actively, but also contribute to the development of the new world vision, building on the momentum arising from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.
- (2) The Rio+20 outcome document, entitled “The future we want”, identified a number of priorities to guide the discussions: (i) inclusive economic development; (ii) environmental protection, and sustainable natural resources management and development; and (iii) peace and security. The United Nations has launched two processes to feed into those discussions: development of the sustainable development goals, and the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.
- (3) As a follow-up to Rio+20, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in cooperation with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting held in Addis Ababa, in November 2012, to deliberate on the main outcomes of Rio+20 and their implications for Africa. The outcome document of that meeting called for the establishment of an effective, broad-based, bottom-up consultative process in Africa to flesh out the goals, indicators and targets that should underpin the sustainable development goals.
- (4) Furthermore, ECA, AUC, AfDB and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly organized subregional and regional consultations on the post-2015 development agenda in Africa. These consultations were held in Accra, in November 2011; Mombasa, Kenya, in October 2012; Dakar, Senegal, in December 2012; and Hammamet, Tunisia, in March 2013. The Hammamet consultations were designed to determine Africa’s priorities for the post-2015 development agenda; identify enablers and critical success factors for the agenda; and align the post-2015 priorities with other development programmes and agendas, including Rio+20 and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The meeting adopted an outcome document in which it was agreed that the post-2015 development agenda process should incorporate the Rio+20 outcomes and the outcomes of Africa-wide initiatives, national and regional consultations, and United Nations forums.
- (5) It is against this backdrop that the report on the sustainable development goals for the North Africa subregion was written. Like the reports of the other subregions, this report was prepared in an effort to guide African countries in their engagement in the sustainable development goals process at the global level, and to ensure that those goals are in line with the continent’s sustainable development priorities. The five subregional reports among other things, informed the Africa regional report on the sustainable development goals. All six reports were presented at the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals, organized by ECA, jointly with AUC and AfDB, held in Addis Ababa from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The outcome document was adopted as a technical input for consideration by the African High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- (6) The key messages from the report can be summarized as follows:

B. Sustainable development priorities

- (7) **Development policies and strategies implemented at the subregional level are helping to foster economic growth and good governance in the subregion.** They are designed in such a way as to leverage a number of the subregion's major assets, including its natural resources, sound physical infrastructure, homogenous geographical and cultural attributes, and abundant human resources. A review of these policies also reveals a number of impediments to their implementation, and an analysis of these impediments has led to the identification of priorities for future action.
- (8) **Economies are particularly vulnerable to climate variation and change.** Even though climate change is gaining in significance, it remains to be tackled adequately. In the short term, this could affect the lives of the people of the subregion, through productivity losses, declining farm incomes, migration, etc., and contribute to natural resources degradation and depletion.
- (9) **The economies of the countries of the subregion are highly dependent on natural resources and are not very diversified.** Countries whose economies are highly dependent on natural resources extraction include Algeria and Libya (hydrocarbons), Mauritania (mining), and the Sudan and Morocco (agriculture). Economic growth is currently insufficient to generate enough jobs. Economic growth and employment policies in the subregion are also limited by low productivity and other national policies, including those on value addition and redistribution of wealth arising from natural resources.
- (10) **High unemployment, which is holding back development of the subregion.** High unemployment affects young people, women and university graduates in particular. Despite considerable investments, the education systems of countries in the subregion do not provide students with the skills required for the job market. This situation is hindering sustainable growth and employment and spurring growth in the informal sector, which has weak safety nets and where most workers do not have any form of social protection.
- (11) **Threatening food insecurity.** Countries of the subregion are still heavily dependent on cereal imports for their basic food supplies, which make them vulnerable to shocks caused by weather conditions and fluctuations in food commodity prices on the international market. Considering that commodity prices have been increasing steadily for more than the past ten years, food security is now a strategic priority issue and an important factor for budgetary considerations, and social and political stability.
- (12) **Major disparities among countries and regions in the same country.** The disparities concern economic development, food insecurity and access to basic health services, water, energy and sanitation. Discrimination against women as regards salaries, employment and decision-making is also a major concern. This is regularly raised by civil society organizations and development partners in the development discourse..
- (13) **The countries of the subregion share some common environmental concerns.** These concerns include desertification and natural resources degradation and depletion. The subregion has been experiencing water scarcity, degradation of land, forests and pastures, exacerbated by climate change; strong pressures on the marine environment; and pollution originating from industrial, urban and agricultural sources.
- (14) **Widespread energy insecurity, despite the real potential in renewable energy.** Energy demand in all the countries of the subregion has been increasing steadily and energy needs are still being met by subsidized fossil fuel. With the inevitable depletion of fossil energy sources in the long-term and the implications of the carbon emissions reduction requirements, the energy question is now at the very heart of the environmental challenges facing the subregion.

C. Crosscutting issues

- (15) **In addition to the economic, social and environmental challenges, the countries of the subregion also face cross-cutting challenges that must be addressed urgently through development policies.** These include:
- (i) the transition towards an inclusive green economy;
 - (ii) balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, which was one of the major shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (iii) mobilization of adequate financial resources for growth sectors, such as renewable energy;
 - (iv) good governance to enhance effectiveness and transparency in the management of public affairs, and ensure social responsibility; and
 - (v) subregional coordination and cooperation to harness economies of scale to increase productivity, mitigate social pressures and ensure the sustainable management of environment and natural resources.
- (16) **The sustainable development goals for the North Africa subregion.** In an effort to bring the priority areas and topics into sharper focus, the report also examined the national consultations launched in a number of countries in the subregion as part of the post-2015 development agenda process. The sustainable development goals for the North Africa subregion were thus proposed (see Annex).

D. Conclusions and recommendations

- (17) **In order to implement the priorities that have been identified, real economic reforms must be undertaken with a view to promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth and improving the general standard of living.** The development path adopted must make it possible to reduce poverty and income inequality, create decent jobs, expand access to social services and promote resistance to natural disasters and climate change.
- (18) **The proposed sustainable development goals and their related targets should enable these expectations to be fulfilled, provided that rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are established, and the necessary human and financial resources are made available.** Indicators have been proposed to ensure detailed and systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress.
- (19) **The sustainable development goals were proposed taking into account a number of recommendations contained in the outcome document of Rio+20.** These include the need to:
- (i) build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (ii) have a limited number of goals;
 - (iii) ensure that the interdependence between the different dimensions of sustainable development is maintained through their balanced integration;
 - (iv) maintain the universal nature of the goals while integrating subregional and national specificities; and
 - (v) facilitate the integration of the sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. In this connection, the report has identified four goals, 36 targets and 54 indicators.
- (20) **The successful implementation of the goals will require:**
- (i) strengthened national data production and analysis systems;
 - (ii) capacity-building for enhanced implementation;
 - (iii) training and sensitization campaigns on the green economy and other approach, principles, tools that foster sustainable development; (iv) mobilization of financial resources, including from domestic sources; and
 - (v) coordination among stakeholders, at all levels, facilitated by regional and subregional institutions.

Proposed sustainable development goals for the North Africa subregion

Goal 1 Reduce poverty, marginalization and social exclusion of vulnerable populations	Goal 2 Structurally transform economies and achieve inclusive green growth	Goal 3 Provide universal access to basic services	Goal 4 Build sustainable peace with transparency at the core
Promote sustainable agriculture and food security	Promote green economy and sustainable management of natural resources	Ensure access to quality health care	Promote good governance
Reduce poverty and generate employment	Foster inclusive growth	Ensure sustainable demographic transition and urban development	Ensure peace and security for development
Enhance nutritional quality and hygiene	Enhance youth employment and social protection	Ensure universal access to water and sanitation	Promote rule of law and social justice
Combat social inequality; and promote sustainable means of existence for all	Promote investment framework and the private sector		Mobilize financial resources for sustainable development
Improve quality education and technical and vocational training	Improve infrastructure for sustainable economic development		Promote capacity-building in all its dimensions
Promote gender equality and empowerment of women	Promote industrial development, research and development and sustainable production		
Promote safety nets and social protection	Combat climate change and implement disaster risk reduction		
Reduce regional disparities; and adopt a territorial approach to sustainable development	Combat desertification and drought		
Foster regional cooperation and integration	Promote sustainable management of natural resources		
	Ensure energy security and clean and renewable energy		
	Preserve biodiversity and ecosystems		
	Integrate Environmental concerns into public policies		
	Combat pollution; and promote management of chemicals and hazardous waste		

