Report on sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion

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Executive summary

The present report on sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion forms one of five subregional reports prepared within the framework of the Africa Post-2015 consultations and the Rio+20 follow-up processes. The subregional reports together with the Africa regional report are intended to provide information to the African countries to effectively engage in the global sustainable development goals process and ensure that the goals to be agreed upon were effectively aligned with the subregion's sustainable development priorities. All the reports were presented at the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on sustainable development goals organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) jointly with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input to the work of the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Southern Africa's major economic activities are services (51 per cent of the subregion's gross domestic product – GDP), followed by industry (32 per cent). Agriculture comes in third place at 17 per cent. The subregion has also posted positive economic growth since 2000, the highest being over 6 per cent in 2006 and 2007. This is a diverse subregion in terms of its history and economic achievements, despite the fact that member countries share largely similar climatic conditions. Some countries rank fairly high on the Human Development Index (HDI) – one in 80th position – while others are placed near the bottom of the index, as low as 185th. In terms of mean annual income, countries range from as high as $13,300 to as low as $424. Southern Africa has done much better than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of human development over the last 20 years, even though both the Southern Africa subregion and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole have been outpaced by South Asia. On the negative side, the subregion is a net importer and frequently incurs fiscal deficits (nearly 4 per cent in 2012); development seems to be associated with a high debt ratio of 40 per cent GDP; and improvements in HDI have been associated with extensive environmental degradation.

The key issues affecting the subregion on the economic front are high poverty; income inequality; limited value addition (minerals and agriculture); high unemployment; and limited diversification. On the social front, the key issues include a high incidence of disease, in many areas related to or worsened by HIV and AIDs; poor health service delivery, low levels of enrolment in education beyond primary school; increasing gender-based violence, and a persistent gender gap in wealth distribution and decision-making at various levels. On the environmental front, the subregion is confronted by extensive loss of forests and the associated environmental impacts; deteriorating biodiversity and ecosystem quality; the impact of climate change; low energy consumption levels; and narrowly focused economic and sectoral policies that do not prioritize environmental management. Finally, where governance is concerned, key issues include poor funding and the weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, in particular those involved in the environmental management and mainstreaming sectors; poor public sector and rural sector management; and the prevalence of fragmentation, overlap, duplication and competition between institutions.

Given the issues facing the subregion, the following six priority themes have been identified for sustainable development: poverty eradication; education and technical skills; gender equality and social inclusion; health and nutrition; environmental sustainability; and governance. Accordingly, the present report proposes five sustainable development goals, namely:

1. Sustainable poverty eradication;
2. Attainment of improved learning (education and technical);
3. Promotion of gender equality and social inclusion;

4. Improved health and nutrition status;
5. Ensuring environmental sustainability.

The sustainable development goals put forward in the report are premised among other things, on a unified concept of an overall goal of human development, designed to improve human well-being. Some of the major strengths of the Millennium Development Goals that led to their global acceptance, such as their brevity and simplicity, sometimes referred to as their parsimony, and measured outcomes, have been retained.

The following recommendations relate to the implementation of the sustainable development goals:

(a) The system of monitoring Millennium Development Goals at the global level, beginning with country assessments on an annual basis, and ending with high-level plenary reports at the regional and global level, should be maintained. It is proposed, however, that monitoring should take place once every two or three years. For this to succeed, governments should consciously invest in a real-time reporting system for the goals, with a view to producing regular and reliable data on a yearly basis where possible by taking advantage of the advent of the mobile phone, wireless broadband, and remote sensing. A programme of action to produce regular and reliable data, led and designed at the regional level by United Nations or African Union bodies, and streamlined at the national level, could be of assistance in this regard;

(b) There is need to make use of the sustainable development goals in formulating national budgets and in helping to balance economic, social and environmental dimensions in policymaking. If this is to be achieved, advocacy by United Nations agencies through ministers of planning, finance and parliaments is a crucial factor;

(c) Targets should be common but differentiated in terms of indicators, depending on country characteristics and levels of development. This means that targets for the global level can be set just as they had been set for the Millennium Development Goals, but targets for each country should be different and based on their baselines. This effort can be led at the technical level by United Nations regional bodies and streamlined for the benefit of individual countries. There is need for an independent forum – perhaps a review council or commission of governmental and non-governmental representatives at the regional level – to set acceptable and realistic indicator targets for each country;

(d) There is a need to mobilize more resources to finance the implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of the goals. Individual country commitments on finance should be a priority, seconded by official development assistance where it is forthcoming. There is need for a regional fund to be established in this connection that could be accessed by regional and specific country initiatives for the purposes of promoting data collection and the analysis of the sustainable development goals. ECA can take the lead in exploring arrangements for such a fund, with support from other regional institutions;

(e) The second pressing need is for technical skills: capacity-building will be required in terms of training on defining indicators and collection of data. The continuous development and refinement of indicators, their effective use and, indeed, the effective integration of all dimensions of sustainable development depend upon the commitment and capacity of people on the ground. A capacity-building programme on monitoring and evaluation needs to be developed at the regional level, led by an institution such as ECA or the African Union Commission, and this can be streamlined into plans at the national level;

(f)   There is need for the continuous review of indicators and certain targets and this may be handled by institutional experts in the relevant areas, perhaps through internal or intra-office consultation, across regional and national institutions, with limited external assistance. Training on how to collect data for new indicators in each country context will be vital and should be carried out early to allow sufficient time for reporting.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Process of developing sustainable development goals

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was a major landmark in the pursuit of sustainable development and its translation into tangible results at global, regional and national levels. The conference adopted an outcome document entitled "The future we want", which was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, and this gave greater impetus to the follow-up to and implementation of the commitments agreed at Rio+20, among which was the elaboration of sustainable development goals. Sustainable development goals are deemed useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development by integrating its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. The aim is to guide and contribute to transformative change as stipulated in the Rio+20 outcome document, in support of rights-based, equitable and inclusive processes that enhance sustainability at global, regional, national and local levels.

At Rio+20 Member States therefore emphasized, among other matters, that these goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages. They also recognized that the goals should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for the implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole. Member States resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed upon by the General Assembly. As such, an open working group comprising 30 representatives nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups, will propose the sustainable development goals for the consideration and appropriate action of the General Assembly. At Rio+20 Member States also recognized that progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals needs to be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators, while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development.

As a follow-up to the Rio+20 outcomes, ECA, in collaboration with AUC, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting in November 2012, to deliberate on the main outcomes of Rio+20 and their implications for Africa. At this multi-stakeholder meeting, participants adopted the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting outcome document for the post Rio+20 follow-up processes, including the twentieth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The outcome document represents, among other contributions, Africa's collective input to the processes on follow-up to Rio+20, and the twentieth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. On the issues of the goals, participants at the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting reaffirmed the principles on which the goals should be based and identified broad priority areas for Africa that should be covered by the goals. They called on the international community to provide Africa with adequate support to enable the region to establish and implement an effective, broad-based and bottom-up consultative process to flesh out goals, indicators and targets that should underpin the sustainable development goals. The following are the priority areas identified by the meeting.

(i)   Poverty eradication;
(ii) Equity, universal access to social services and social protection;

(iii)   Food security and nutrition, and combating hunger;
(iv)   Combating unemployment and creating job opportunities;
(v)   Infrastructure development;
(vi)   Health;
(vii)   Education;
(viii) Access to affordable/sustainable energy;
(ix)   Sustained and inclusive economic growth;
(x)   Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women;
(xi)   Reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience, including to climate change;
(xii)   Favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology, including climate-change adaptation and mitigation;
(xiii) .   Combating land degradation and desertification, drought and deforestation;
(xiv)   Water resource management and access to safe water;
(xv)   Peace and security; and
(xvi)   Climate-change adaptation and mitigation.

An effective bottom-up process was considered pertinent in the case of Africa, for the following purposes:

(a)   To effectively prepare Africa to speak with one strong voice to articulate and rally international support around sustainable development goals that are well aligned with its sustainable development priorities;

(b)   To lay a firm foundation for the ownership, championing, domestication and implementation of activities leading towards attainment of the sustainable development goals by regional and subregional organizations, African countries and major groups;

(c)   To mobilize, enhance understanding by and strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional organizations, African countries and major groups on the development and subsequent implementation of programmes and activities leading towards attainment of the sustainable development goals in particular and sustainable development in general; and

(d)   To enhance linkages between national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Furthermore, ECA, AUC, AfDB and UNDP jointly organized subregional and regional consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Africa. These consultations were held as follows: Accra in November 2011; Mombasa in October 2012; Dakar in December 2012; and Hammamet, Tunisia in March 2013. The regional consultation in Hammamet aimed among others things at identifying Africa's priorities for the post-2015 agenda; identifying enablers and critical success factors for the Post-2015 Development Agenda; and aligning the post-2015 priorities with other development programmes and agendas including Rio+20 and NEPAD – (the) New Partnership for Africa's Development. The meeting adopted an outcome document in which it agreed that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should incorporate the Rio+20 outcomes and the outcomes of Africa-wide initiatives, national and regional consultations as well as United Nations forums.

The meeting also agreed that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should: (a) emphasize inclusive economic growth and structural transformation; (b) reorient the development paradigm away from externally-driven initiatives towards domestically-inspired and funded initiatives that are grounded in national ownership; (c) prioritize equity and social inclusion and measure progress in terms of both the availability and quality of service delivery; (d) pay greater attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, displaced persons; and

(e) focus on development enablers as well as development outcomes, particularly structural economic transformation and inclusive growth, innovation and technology transfer, human development, and financing and partnerships.

Against this backdrop, the present report is one of five subregional reports prepared within the framework of the Africa Post-2015 consultations and the Rio+20 follow-up processes. The subregional reports and the Africa regional report aimed at preparing African countries to effectively engage in the global sustainable development goal process and to ensure that the goals to be agreed upon are well aligned with the region's sustainable development priorities. All the reports were presented at the Africa regional consultative meeting on the sustainable development goals jointly organized by ECA, AUC and the African Development Bank from 31 October to 5 November 2013. Participants at the meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Sustainable development goals are intended to advance sustainable development at the global level by integrating its three dimensions- economic, social and environmental in a balanced manner. Sustainable development entails mainstreaming social development and environmental protection imperatives into economic development goals and processes. Governance, which comprises institutions, decision-making processes, legislation and the rule of law, among other matters, is considered fundamental and an important prerequisite for sustainable development.

The present report provides an analysis of key issues related to sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion. In this regard, it undertakes the following:

(a) To identify and analyse the priority sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion;

(b) To identify, analyse and articulate the main priority areas and themes of sustainable development for Southern Africa, to inform the formulation of the sustainable development goals taking into account data availability;

(c) To propose a concise set of sustainable development goals and associated targets and indicators for the subregion; and

(d) To provide well-informed, action-oriented recommendations, pointing the way forward for the implementation of the proposed sustainable development goals in the context of the subregion.

1.2 Methodology

1.3.1 Conceptual approach

The development of sustainable development goals is a global effort taking shape at a time when the Millennium Development Goals are nearing their completion date, 2015. The Millennium Development Goals have been crucial in encouraging global political consensus, providing a focus for advocacy, improving the targeting and flow of aid, and improving the monitoring of development programmes. At the same time, the Millennium Development Goals have been widely criticized for being donor-driven, encouraging fragmentation in development efforts, and paying little attention to local contexts in terms of targets. It is partly for this reason that the development of sustainable development goals should be tailored to national circumstances and priorities, treating countries differently, as highlighted at the Johannesburg Global Poverty Summit (2011).

The Rio+20 outcome document emphasises the need for sustainable development goals that are grounded in common values and relevant science. The outcome document also highlights the need for sustainable development goals to be complementary to and aligned with the Millennium Development Goals. Equal emphasis is placed on a conceptual framework that represents key domains of sustainable development and interlinkages between the domains. As stated above, the concept of sustainable development encompasses three main dimensions – economic, environmental and social – and involves complex interlinkages and trade-offs between them. Preparation of the present report was guided by the conceptual framework illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of sustainable development
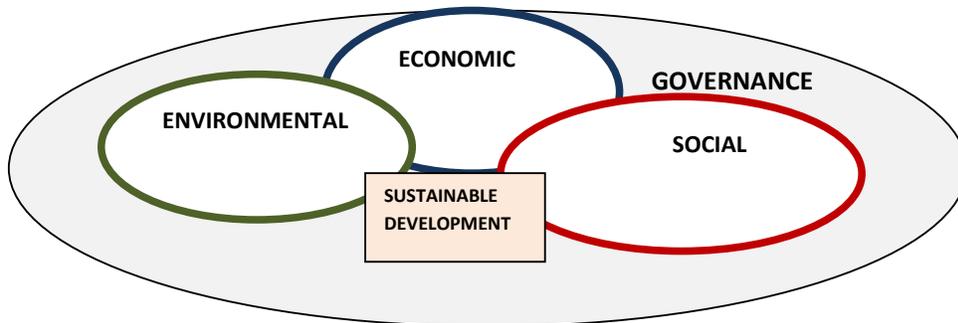
As shown in figure 1, sustainable development is concerned with the intersection or balance of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of development; none of these dimensions should be pursued at the expense of the others and they all interact within a governance system that is a fundamental and important prerequisite for sustainable development.

Simply put, economic systems are essentially products of, and dependent on, social systems, which in turn are products of, and dependent on, natural systems. They share some common areas but they also have unique features. The economic dimension refers to the production of marketable or exchangeable goods and services and the flow of these goods and services through the formal and informal sector. The social dimension refers to human capacities, skills and resources which are necessary for productive work and the creation of a reasonable quality of life. It incorporates the institutions, networks and relationships that support human activity and human efforts to secure livelihoods and enables access to resources and participation in decision-making. The environmental dimension refers to the natural resources (matter and energy) and ecosystem processes that maintain life and produce and deliver goods and services. The governance dimension comprises the institutions, processes, systems and mechanisms that cut across these three dimensions through which development is managed and through which citizens articulate their interests and exercise their responsibilities.

1.3.2 Approaches to data collection

The participation of different stakeholders in designing locally led and owned sustainable development goals is essential. Many individual countries have already set development strategies and priorities based on their own needs, to improve the economic welfare and livelihoods of their citizens in a sustainable manner. From such national plans and priorities, it was possible to identify a few selected common priority themes at the regional and continental levels that would inform the formulation of the sustainable development goals at the global level. This bottom-up approach has national-level participation and ownership, while linking up to the global level to meet the requirements for sustainable development.

Participatory approaches involving a combination of methods applied at various levels (national and subregional) with multiple stakeholders (governments, civil society, regional bodies and donors) and across the different dimensions of sustainable development were adopted. A brief outline of each method and the key issues investigated is set out below.

(a) Literature review

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to identify and analyse priority sustainable development issues and challenges in the subregion as specified in the terms of reference. Literature sourced, included from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) secretariat, SADC partners, and national, regional and international bodies. To this end, literature on development strategies, key plans and programmes on sustainable development, such as, where available, national annual reports on progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, and reports on current consultations in each country on "The future we want" were consulted.

(b) Subregional and country consultations

Telephone consultations and questionnaires at national level targeted relevant departments such as ministries responsible for national planning and development, energy, social development and gender, and finance; environmental civil society organizations involved in sustainable development and environmental issues; and private sector organizations from selected counties within the subregion, namely: Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia.

The telephone interviews were guided by a structured questionnaire similar to the multiple choice questionnaire that was circulated to countries in the region. Country respondents were encouraged to consult competent authorities on specific questions in areas that were not within their jurisdiction or competency.

The responses in each country questionnaire were augmented by a literature review on country-specific issues for the purposes of triangulation. Questionnaires were coded in a simple spreadsheet for the purposes of analysis. Telephone consultations were held, among others, with development partner representatives at the subregional and country levels, government representatives and civil society organizations involved in sustainable development and environmental issues. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), SADC and the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were contacted and interviewed using a key informant guide. The report was finalized based on the comments and recommendations of the Africa regional consultative meeting on sustainable development goals.

1.3 Structure of the report

The report has five chapters, beginning with the introduction. Chapter II is on priority sustainable development challenges and issues in the Southern Africa subregion; chapter III sets out the priority sustainable development themes; in chapter IV, sustainable development goals, targets and indicators are discussed; and chapter V sets out the report's conclusion and recommendations.

2. Sustainable development issues and challenges

2.1 Overview of Southern Africa

The data in table 1 demonstrate that the subregion's major economic activities are services (51 per cent of GDP), followed by industry (32 per cent). Agriculture comes in third place, at 17 per cent. The subregion has also recorded positive economic growth since 2000, the highest in 2006 and 2007, at over 6 per cent. On the negative side, the subregion is a net importer and frequently incurs fiscal deficits (nearly 4 per cent in 2012). Its development appears to be associated with a high debt ratio, of 40 per cent of GDP. As noted in the following sections, this overall performance masks stark differences between countries in the subregion. For example, the largest economic sector in some countries is agriculture, and not services. Table 1 below sets out the overall social and economic performance of Southern Africa.

Table 1: General data on Southern Africa

Indicator	Data	Indicator	Data
Member States	15	Trade imports	$254 billion
		Trade exports	$245 billion
Year established	1992	Debt (2012; % of GDP)	32%
Land area	554 919 km²	Average life expectancy (2012)	56.6
Total population (2012)	284 million	Average HIV prevalence rate (2009)	12.6 %
GDP annual gtrowth rate (2012)	4.3 %	Gender (seats held by women in Parliament - 2011)	34%
GDP (2012)	$655 billion	GDP contribution: services	51 %
Inflation (2012)	8.0 %	GDP contribution: industry	32 %
Fiscal balance (2012)	-3.6 %	GDP contribution: agriculture	17 %

Source: SADC (2012) and www.sadc.int.

Southern Africa is a diverse subregion in terms of the history and economic achievements of the individual countries, despite their largely similar climatic conditions. Some countries rank fairly high on the 2012 Human Development Index, Mauritius being in 80th position; but a number of others are place near the bottom of the index, with Mozambique lying 185th. In terms of income (using gross national product per capita at purchasing power parity in US dollars), the range is from as high as $13300 for Mauritius to as low as $424 for Zimbabwe (using 2012 data). These differences are captured in table 2 below.

Table 2: Country rankings in terms of HDI and GNP

Country	HDI rank	GNP per capita (US dollars)
Mauritius	80	13 300
Botswana	119	13 102
Namibia	128	5 973
South Africa	121	9 594
Swaziland	141	5 104
Angola	148	4 812
Lesotho	158	1 879
Zambia	163	1 358
Malawi	170	774
Zimbabwe	173	424
Mozambique	185	906

*Source***:** UNDP Human Development Report 2013.

The country differences shown in table 2 above should be kept in mind when considering the subregion's overall performance in terms of development, shown in table 1 above.

2.2   Progress in human development

To some extent, the Human Development Index (HDI) provides a starting point but not a comprehensive measure of sustainable development.[1] The performance of Southern Africa compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 2: Human development in Southern Africa
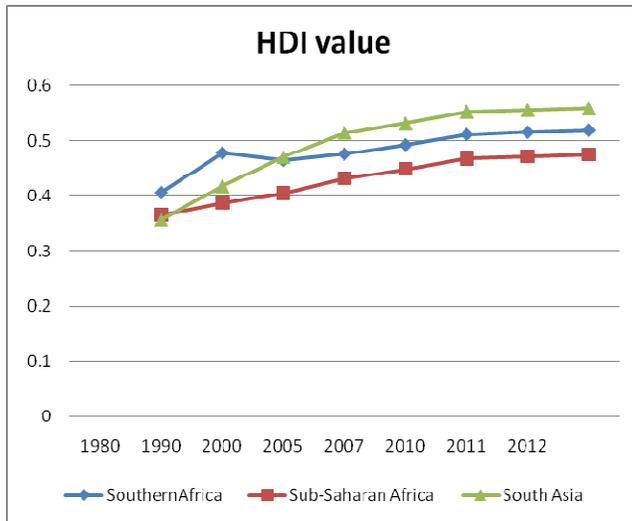
Source: Adapted from UNDP Human Development Report 2013.

Figure 1 demonstrates that, over the last 20 years, Southern Africa has performed much better than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, rising from an HDI value of 0.4 in 1990 to 0.52 in 2012. Both the Southern Africa subregion and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, however, have been outpaced by South Asia, which started off with a much lower HDI value of 0.36.

The average picture for Southern Africa masks wide differences in individual country performance, as the subregion hosts both the highest HDI-ranked country in Africa, Mauritius,[2] and one of the lowest ranked, Mozambique. Despite these differences in individual country performance, and in the context of considering the challenges facing sustainable development, it is important to bear in mind that Africa has made encouraging steps in its human development over the last two decades, even though its pace might have been much slower than that of other parts of the world, such as South Asia.

The consequences on the environment of Southern Africa's human development are discussed in the next section.

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[1] HDI captures the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, but ignores environment and governance. UNDP has already started work on extending the index to include main sustainability issues, in what is termed the Sustainable Human Development Index (SHDI). This will include the measurement of such parameters as carbon dioxide emissions, water consumption, land area and crop area, and inequality.
[2] Three other countries are officially classified as middle income countries, namely, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

2.3   Issues and challenges

The Southern Africa subregion – and indeed sub-Saharan Africa as a whole – has made some progress in human development but, given the slower pace than that achieved in other parts of the world with a similar starting point, such as South Asia, the subregion's achievements are constrained by a number of issues and challenges that have important implications for the sustainability of its development. Table 3 below set out some of the relevant indicators and data that form the basis of this observation. The indicators are discussed in the context of three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Table 3: Indicators on development issues

Country	Population	Poverty rate (%)	Forest change (%)	Population growth (%)	Dependency ratio (%)
	2012	*2002–2012*	*1990–2010*	*2010–2015*	*2012*
Mauritius	1.3	1.5	-9.8	0.5	39.6
Botswana	2.1	20.7	-17.3	1.1	56.7
Namibia	2.4	38	-16.8	1.7	64.8
South Africa	50.7	23	0	0.5	52.9
Swaziland	1.2	69.2	19.3	1.4	69.4
Angola	20.2	40.5	-4.1	2.7	93.9
Lesotho	2.2	56.6	10	1	69.1
Zambia	13.9	59.3	-6.3	3	99
Malawi	15.9	52.4	-16.9	3.2	96.3
Zimbabwe	13	79.2	-29.5	2	71.6
Mozambique	24.5	54.7	-10	2.2	89.1
Southern Africa average	*13.4*	*45.0*	*-7.4*	*1.75*	*72.9*
Southern Africa total	*283.4*				
Sub-Saharan Africa	852.5	48.5	-10.4	2.5	83.4
South Asia	1753		2.4	1.4	54.6

*Source***:** UNDP Human Development Report 2013.

2.3.1 Economic sustainability

Southern Africa's average poverty rate,[3] of 45 per cent, is comparable to that of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, albeit a little lower. It means, in effect, that more than half the population is below the poverty line in most of the countries and this situation has obtained for the last decade and longer. Given the gains in human development, which includes economic growth, the implication is that the failure to reduce poverty substantially for the majority of the population is attributable to income inequality. Economic benefits are being monopolized by a smaller proportion of the population. Given the experience in other parts of the world, however, there is also a strong possibility that economic policies and the implementation of those policies may be playing a bigger role in this trend.

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[3] Based on $1.25 in purchasing power parity terms, except for the first four middle-income countries, where $2 in purchasing power parity terms is used.

(a)   Production base and economic growth

Southern Africa's economic production base is dominated by raw materials, either from agriculture or mining. There is limited value addition on minerals, and subregional trade largely revolves around one country – South Africa. For a number of the subregion's countries, agricultural production is largely focused on achieving food security. The top HDI-ranked country in the subregion – Mauritius – is unusual because of its diversified economic base, which comprises commercial agriculture, tourism and services. The countries that are dependent on minerals have been badly affected by the global financial crisis, because most of the minerals are exported to regions outside Africa.

Some specific country examples now follow. Despite its strong economy, South Africa has recently been affected by social unrest and the euro-crisis, causing the depreciation of the rand and increasing the cost of living. South Africa faces the triple challenge of chronic high unemployment, poverty and inequality, amid a slow and volatile domestic and global economic environment.[4] The country's extractive industry continues to operate below potential, owing to the lack of technological progress and to policy uncertainty. Botswana's economy has also been adversely affected in the past few years by the global slowdown, which has led to a decline in the country's major export commodity, diamonds; real GDP registered lower growth at 5.8 per cent and is expected decline further in the short term. Namibia's economic growth has recovered from the impact of the global economic crisis, but slowed in 2012. Downside risks stemming from global uncertainties remain and the country needs to put in place stronger policies and strategies for managing its available mineral resources and promoting the addition of value to mining products in order to make growth more inclusive. Zambia's economic growth accelerated to 7.3 per cent in 2012 and is expected to remain strong. This growth is being driven largely by the mining sector with contributions from agriculture, services (tourism and financial services) and construction. Challenges remain on the economic and governance landscape, however and, given the country's relatively high poverty headcount, it cannot claim any significant gains in social and human development.

(b)   Income inequality and employment

All across Southern Africa, the inequality arising out of economic growth has been growing between the rich and the poor. Namibia and South Africa, for example, are among the countries with the highest per capita income in the subregion but they also have the highest income Gini coefficients: South Africa's stands at 63.1 and Namibia's at 63.9, while Swaziland and Mozambique, at the opposite end of the per capita income stream, have coefficients of 51.5 and 45.7 respectively (UNDP, 2013). Income inequality is, therefore, more pronounced for higher income countries in the subregion. Other statistics show that, even for low income countries, income inequality tends to have increased over the years.

Another challenge facing the reported economic growth is that unemployment, especially for youth, has been increasing. Where youth unemployment coexists with high vacancy rates in institutions, this is attributed to a mismatch between education skills and the job market. In many cases, however, it is simply due to lack of employment opportunities. For example, South Africa reports unemployment as a major challenge, with the rate of unemployment estimated at around 25 per cent (South Africa National Development Plan: Vision for 2030).[5] Policies that can target and stimulate the growth of high employment industries are seen to be the key to resolve this problem. A large majority of the population across Southern Africa is employed in subsistence farming in the

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[4] www.afdb.org/en/southern africa. This is the source of all other brief country descriptions and data in this paragraph.
[5] Many Southern Africa countries have difficulty reporting reliable employment figures.

rural areas and in informal activities in urban areas. To a large extent, the majority of the population is employed in "non-wage" employment. This employment scenario means that labour is playing a weak role in its main task of wealth redistribution and hence widening income inequalities across the subregion.

(c)   Infrastructure and markets

The provision of good infrastructure (especially for transport), energy supply and markets (through regional integration) remains an important factor in the economic development of countries in Southern Africa because most of them are landlocked and small. Infrastructure development is a key priority area pursued by NEPAD and it encompasses the availability, ease of access and affordability of basic transportation and communication services that facilitate movement to carry out duties, lead a productive life and obtain the basic necessities of life including food, shelter, and water. It also includes opportunities to access markets to buy or sell technology for daily transactions, disseminate research findings, create networks and means for sharing knowledge and experiences. Availability of well-functioning markets with unconstrained access has an impact on people's livelihoods, social relations and wellbeing, as well as their relationship to natural resources. In many Southern African countries, people have to walk long distances to reach a market against the backdrop of poor infrastructure, non-supportive legal and regulatory frameworks and limited or no access to financial and other support.

(d)   Energy

Energy is a key driver for economic growth. Southern Africa is rich in renewable and non-renewable energy resources. The region is rich in coal, oil and natural gas hydrocarbon resources, as well as significant deposits of uranium, a source of nuclear energy (Merven et al., 2010). Southern Africa also has significant coal reserves, with the exception of Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius and Namibia. Angola is the subregion's only significant producer of crude oil. However, the majority of Southern Africa's renewable energy is derived from hydroelectric power stations and biomass, with solar and wind power currently contributing negligible amounts to the subregion's energy supply (ibid).

Although rich in natural resources, energy access and utilization are low (less than 1 per cent) by world standards. Outside South Africa, power consumption averages 124 kilowatt-hours per person per year or just about enough to power one light bulb per person for six hours a day (African Development Bank, 2010). The development and supply of energy in many parts of Southern Africa is still a critical resource constraint on development. Consequently, infrastructure needs to be developed (in terms of transmission networks) and energy in sufficient quantities to meet demand.

(e)   Urbanization

Urbanization has also been on the increase over the past decade. The level of urbanization in Southern Africa is just under the average for the Africa region, with 36 per cent of the population of the subregion living in urban areas (UNCHS, 2001). Botswana and South Africa are the most highly urbanized, with urban populations of 50 per cent each, and Malawi is the least urbanized with just 24 per cent of its population urbanized (UNCHS, 2001). This situation can be compared to 30 years ago, when just 11.2 per cent of the Southern African population lived in towns and cities (WRI, UNEP and UNDP, 1992). The current rate of urbanization is also seen to be high and is projected to average around 3.5 per cent over the next 15 years, with wide variations across countries in the subregion. For example, South Africa, one of the most urbanized countries in the subregion, has the lowest rate of continuing urbanization at 1.2 per cent per year; whereas Malawi, currently the least

urbanized, has estimated urban growth rates of over 6 per cent per year (UNCHS, 2001). The high urbanization rates are largely due to rural-urban migration and high population growth rates. Migration is a result of the pull factors of urban settlements – such as perceived job and economic opportunities, better infrastructure and housing – in addition to push factors from rural areas, such as shortage of land and declining returns from agriculture. In Angola and Mozambique, urbanization has been driven largely by civil conflict which forced many rural residents to flee to relatively safer urban areas.

(f) Subregional integration

Regional integration constitutes an integral part of development strategies in Southern Africa. It has been viewed as a means to achieve sustained economic growth and development and to overcome the subregion's structural problems such as political fragmentation, low per capita incomes and small intraregional markets. Trade integration is a potentially powerful driver of economic growth in Southern Africa, particularly if it creates export opportunities and promotes value addition in manufacturing sectors. In particular, with a combination of countries with different income levels as well as coastal and island countries, regional integration offers possibilities to leverage and extend economic comparative advantage at a subregional level in ways not accessible through national or bilateral trade programmes (Mbekeani, 2013).

Southern Africa is one of the few subregions in the world where regional integration has always been perceived as both an economic and a political endeavour. The economic and political dimensions to regional integration, if implemented successfully, are capable of improving not only the economic well-being of the Southern Africa member countries at the macrolevel, but also that of their citizens at the microlevel. The Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC, 2003) has provided SADC for the first time with a comprehensive framework for regional integration and development through the two key factors facilitating integration:

(a) Peace, security, democracy and political governance, where member States promise to "promote common political values, systems and other shared values and further acknowledge that economic growth and development cannot take place under "conditions of political intolerance, the absence of the rule of law, corruption, civil strife and war"; and

(b) Economic and corporate governance: in particular, the creation of the SADC Free Trade Area will only be possible if "good economic and corporate governance" is being complied with at subregional and national levels. According to SADC, this includes "sound macroeconomic management, transparent public financial management and accountability and best practice corporate governance".

The low levels of intraregional trade, however, reflect limited progress towards implementing the SADC Trade Protocol, eliminating transport bottlenecks and improving trade facilitation, including customs administration. It also indicates limited trade potential among countries in the subregion, particularly because the poorer States trade similar goods. The key challenges in this regard are inadequate local capacity, limited financial resources, weak political commitment to regional integration and poor alignment of national priorities in planning and budget allocation to regional integration efforts. If regional integration efforts are to be successful, it is essential to meet the needs of landlocked and island States. For example, landlocked countries such as Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe depend on transit infrastructure, good political relations with neighbours as well as their peace and stability. In this case, a review of transit policy and regulatory frameworks would be necessary.

To sum up, the challenges for Southern Africa on the economic front are:

(i)   High poverty
(ii) Income inequality
(iii) Limited value addition (minerals, agriculture, livestock and fisheries)
(iv) High unemployment
(v)   Limited diversification of the economic base
(vi) Dwindling land resources for productive agriculture
(vii) Limited infrastructure, including markets
(viii) Low intraregional trade
(ix) High rate of urbanization

2.3.2 Social sustainability

Table 3 captures only one of the major issues related to the social dimension of development, that of population. Population becomes a social challenge only when its growth cannot be sustained by available economic means. As shown in table 3, the average population growth for the subregion, at 1.75, is below the sub-Saharan Africa average, and for several individual countries it is below 3 per cent. The countries with 3 per cent population growth, Malawi and Zambia, have had average economic growth exceeding their population growth over recent years. This means that such countries have the potential to translate their economic growth into reduction of poverty. It is expected that many countries should be able to sustain economic growth rates higher than population growth in the medium term. The major challenge on the social side is the high dependency ratio: the labour force (aged 15–64 years) may be too small to sustain further economic growth. Labour is a major component of production factors and its availability is critical to sustaining high levels of investment.

The other main indicators on the social dimension of development, such as education, health and gender, are presented in table 4 below. The indicators chosen relate to life expectancy, literacy rate and gender inequality.

Table 4: Selected social indicators

Country	Life expectancy (yrs)	Literacy rate (%)	Gender inequality index
	2012	*2002-12*	*2012*
Mauritius	73.5	88.5	0.377
Botswana	53.0	84.5	0.485
Namibia	62.6	88.8	0.455
South Africa	53.4	88.7	0.462
Swaziland	48.9	87.4	0.525
Angola	51.5	70.1	..
Lesotho	48.7	89.6	0.534
Zambia	47.4	71.2	0.623
Malawi	54.8	74.8	0.573
Zimbabwe	52.7	92.2	0.544
Mozambique	50.7	56.1	0.582
Southern Africa average	*54.29*	*81.08*	*0.516*
Sub-Saharan Africa	54.9	63	0.577
South Asia	66.2	62.8	0.568

Table 4 shows that Southern Africa performs better than sub-Saharan Africa on the literacy rate and gender inequality, but practically the same on life expectancy. In fact, the literacy rate for the subregion is even considerably better than South Asia. Three Southern African countries – Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa – rank below 100 in the world on the gender inequality index. These indicators reveal continued challenges, especially concerning issues to do with life expectancy.

Life expectancy has been used as a proxy to indicate the status of the health situation in Southern Africa and in this case there are signs that health systems or delivery may not differ greatly from the rest of Africa. Except for Mauritius and Namibia, the rates for the subregion's medium and low-income countries are not very different and not encouraging. While progress has been made to improve health outcomes, many challenges still exist. Health systems are still weak and the subregion continues to face an increasing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases and recurrent epidemics such as cholera and other humanitarian crises. The HIV/AIDs epidemic has taken a significant toll on the subregion in relation to health service delivery, among other issues. On the whole, HIV-prevention programmes have not yet adequately reached the most at-risk populations including youth, sex workers, drug users and prisoners (WHO, 2010).

In the sphere of education, adult literacy rates are reasonably impressive, with some of the subregion's low-income countries like Lesotho and Zimbabwe doing even better than the medium-income countries. The challenge appears to be in relation to gross enrolment at secondary level and above. For example, Malawi's secondary school gross enrolment stands at 32 per cent and that of Mozambique is 25 per cent (UNDP, 2013). For the same countries, respectively, primary school enrolment is 135 per cent and 115 per cent. Gross enrolment at secondary school level in the middle-income countries of the subregion stands at 94 per cent (South Africa) and 89 per cent (Mauritius) respectively.

Gender inequality remains a major challenge to achieving sustainable development in the subregion. The rationale for gender equality has at least three dimensions: as a rights issue, an economic issue and a social issue. In particular, gender equality is relevant to the future growth and stability of economies in the subregion. In fact, gender empowerment is an established regional priority at the political level and there is a strong degree of political commitment within the subregion to the empowerment of women both as a human rights issue and a development issue. In this context, the significance of gender empowerment is more to do with the need for national level political drive and commitment rather than a demand on more tangible resources, such as budgetary commitments.

Many gender policies and instruments have been established at national levels. SADC has advanced in this area, with most if not all countries being signatories to international conventions. At member State levels, noticeable political interest on gender issues is to be commended. Despite such strides having been made, in terms of status and control over resources, women remain marginalized. The lack of tangible progress in public action reinforces the need to systematically mainstream gender equality in all aspects of sustainable development. As is often realized, gender considerations are in many instances an add-on element to pre-designed programmes and interventions. This requires a much more vigorous and a bolder commitment to deal with the persistent inequalities that exist in the subregion.

Gender-based violence, unequal distribution of wealth and wide gender gaps in participation and decision-making at all levels pose the greatest challenges in the subregion. SADC defines gender-based violence as all acts perpetrated against women, men, boys and girls on the basis of their sex which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm. It covers domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, human trafficking and sexual and emotional abuse. Gender-based violence seems to the most critical issue which is also widespread in the subregion and presents a major obstacle to attaining gender equality and equity. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development has set specific targets to be attained by 2015 and aims to eliminate gender-based violence at every level; however, the challenge has been centred around implementation.

Poverty statistics for Southern Africa reveal that women make up the majority of the poor. Consequently, any poverty eradication and economic growth policy must include a gender analysis lens. It is for this reason that Governments in Southern Africa need to reinforce political commitment to support and empower women. Economic empowerment of women not only has a positive impact on their own life situations but is also central to mobilizing their potential for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Gender equality at the economic level therefore contributes directly to the reduction of poverty and overall sustainable development.

In terms of achieving gender equity in political participation, the subregion is performing better than other subregions especially as it relates to decision-making in the corporate world as well community levels. Despite this progress, the gender gap in participation and decision-making between men and women is still huge and needs to be dealt with.

Box 1: An integrated approach to environmental management in the SADC region

The Environment and Land Management Programme evolved from the mid-1980's under the previous Southern African Development Coordination Conference mandate and structure. Over the years, the Programme gradually expanded without a comprehensive SADC policy or integrated strategic framework. As unsustainable development accelerated throughout the subregion, neither the national environment agencies nor the regional Programme had the financial or staff resources to cope with the backlog and escalating pace of environmental degradation. The largest resource in the subregion, the energy and talents of local people who are directly involved in the use of natural resources, remained largely untapped because participatory approaches to research, planning, decision-making and implementation were either lacking or underdeveloped.

In the early 1990s, SADC issued a new policy for increased agricultural production and sustainable use of the environment and natural resource base. A new SADC policy and strategy for environmental and natural resource management for equitable and sustainable development is clearly both necessary and timely, with the principal aim being to support the overall goals of achieving development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Although environmental sustainability is the starting point and main focus for a new subregional environmental policy, it must also take into account the equally important economic and social sustainability dimensions. Similarly, new SADC economic and social policies must also incorporate environmental sustainability concerns. Together, economic, social and environmental sustainability are the three crucial components of a single integrated agenda for sustainable development in the SADC region. A new SADC policy for environment and natural resource management is not and cannot be separate. The new SADC policy must be developed and implemented as an integrated part of a larger SADC agenda and strategy for equity-led growth and sustainable development within and among the countries of the SADC region.

Source: www.sadc.org (abridged version)

To sum up, the challenges for Southern Africa on the social front are:

- High incidence of communicable and non-communicable diseases probably related to or being worsened by HIV and AIDs
- Poor health service delivery
- Low enrolment in education beyond primary school
- Gender-based violence
- Unequal distribution of wealth between gender

- Wide gender gap in participation and decision-making at various levels

2.3.3 Environmental sustainability

The weakest point for Southern Africa is the environmental dimension and this is clear from the data presented in table 3. The subregion may have progressed at no small cost to its forests, even though at 7.4 per cent per year the forest loss is only slightly better than sub-Saharan Africa's average (10.4 per cent).[6] Perhaps some cause for discomfiture comes from South Asia, which has a higher population and has outpaced the subregion on human development, and yet has recorded a forest gain of 2.84 per cent.[7] The data indicate that Southern Africa's development has taken a huge toll on the environment, and it is important to prioritize the environment in future development plans.

Table 3 shows that there has been extensive forest cover loss in both mining and agriculture-based countries in Southern Africa. The high poverty rates in the subregion may have compromised the need for, or prioritization of, environmental issues in development strategies. For example, Malawi has prioritized the environment only in the current development strategy running from 2006 to 2016, whereas the previous two national development strategies (Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002–2005 and Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006–2011) simply mention the environment without giving it priority consideration.

Climate change is also a central environmental concern and cause of poverty and a growing threat to any sustainable future for the subregion. The extent and diversity of the climate change threat to Southern African livelihoods is becoming increasingly apparent. With various global climate models predicting increased warming and greater rainfall variability in the subregion, this is expected to affect all aspects of the economy of member States. In this respect, it is largely considered a cross-cutting issue. Although not consistent across the subregion, evidence shows that the extent of the impacts will vary between countries. The effects of changing temperatures and precipitation patterns will be felt in various sectors, including agriculture, forests, biodiversity and ecosystems, coastal areas, human settlements, water resources, and human health. Agriculture, the mainstay of African economies and livelihoods, is facing the greatest threat from climate change. At a general level, agriculture faces a serious decline as a result of global warming and sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to suffer an average decline of between 10 and 25 per cent in agricultural productivity by 2080 (Cline, 2007).

Forest loss is therefore not the only measure of the environment, or a comprehensive one for that matter. Other important indicators are carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity measures, natural resource depletion, fossil and renewable energy usage, clean water sources and others. The main challenge with respect to environmental indicators is availability of data for all countries and at all times, an issue that is considered in later sections of this report. The forest loss indicator shows that it is a good overall proxy indicator for the state of the environment for many Southern Africa countries. It shows at this stage the strong possibility that Southern Africa's development trajectory has been achieved at significant cost to the environment. The loss of forest cover leads to many other negative environmental conditions: soil and fertility losses, land degradation, water pollution, loss of natural habitat for animal species, among others. The loss of forest cover reflects a very broad problem at policy level: economic, agricultural, energy, industrial and other sectoral policies have failed to take full account of their adverse impacts on the environment and natural resource base needed for future development.

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[6] The average for Southern Africa is somewhat misleading in relation to the true picture, as it is based on country averages, whereas it should be much higher. Lesotho and Swaziland are very small countries and they are the only two countries in the region with forest gains over this period.

[7] At the world level, South America is next to sub-Saharan Africa with 8.9 per cent loss in forest cover.

As already stated, forest loss is also associated with poor utilization and conservation of natural resources, such as fisheries, land and water, and of rangelands. Land degradation in the subregion is caused by overcrowding, poor land management, overgrazing and soil erosion. Poor land management therefore has a direct impact on food security including fisheries production. The subregion is said to have one of the highest potentials for fish and a considerable potential for aquaculture development. Inland and marine fisheries make a major contribution to the economies of main coastal and island SADC member States. However, fish production is being undermined by a range of factors such as overfishing, environmental degradation and weak management systems (SADC, 2012). Similarly, livestock production, although not given prominence in debates on poverty reduction and sustainable development, plays a significant role in livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Yet its productivity is also dependent on good land management systems. In addition, the sector has suffered from low productivity, lack of efficient and effective animal disease control, lack of marketing infrastructure and poor market access of livestock products among others. Good land management practices, alongside the efficient control of transboundary animal diseases, sanitary standards and regulations for animals and their products, including risk assessment and the optimal use of animal genetic resources in the subregion, need to be prioritized for sustainable livestock management (Hulman, 2009).

To sum up, the major challenges on the environmental front for the subregion are the loss of forests and the related environmental conditions such as climate change and increasing energy access to development of infrastructure. This includes broadening the narrowly focused economic and sectoral policies to prioritize environmental issues. It is possible to infer from the subregion's failure to conserve its forests that its mining endeavours may have been equally unsustainable because the same policy environment pervades all these areas. It will be important to develop, prioritize and implement pertinent policy measures – in all sectors of the economy – to resolve this problem.

2.3.4 Governance

Across Southern Africa, it is recognized that there is a need for States to be able to play transformative and developmental roles to effectively challenge the stubborn problems of poverty and inequality.[8] This means that State or governance institutions in particular should have highly professional staff capable of delivering consistently high quality services. Governance therefore becomes one of the most important enablers or support sectors for the delivery of sustainable development. Economic, social and environmental programmes can only be effective if there is good governance and this is an area which has received limited attention in terms of monitoring and collection of data because of the difficulty of setting up commonly agreed quantitative indicators.

In supporting better governance that promotes sustainable growth and development, ECA has been tracking progress being made in this critical area through the publication of the *African Governance Report*. In the second edition of the *African Governance Report* (AGR II), evidence shows that Africa has made modest progress in improving governance. Though marginal, this progress has had positive spin-offs that include declining levels of violent conflicts and civil wars, consolidation of peace and security, economic growth averaging 5 per cent in recent years, modest improvement in the living standards of the African people and fewer deaths from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Africa also continues to post remarkable progress in economic governance and public financial management. African economies are better managed, with improvements in the tax system and revenue mobilization, improved budgetary management and an environment that is more conducive to private investment and private sector growth.

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[8] From the national development plans of Botswana, Malawi and South Africa.

In the Mo Ibrahim index on governance,[9] Southern Africa emerges as the leader of the five African subregions in both the 2010 and 2012 reports. The subregion performed strongly in all four categories, ranking in first place in safety and rule of law and in participation and the observance of human rights. The subregion ranked in second place in the other two categories: sustainable economic opportunity and human development. Only Angola and Zimbabwe scored below the continental average in 2012. Southern Africa displays a relatively balanced and equitable governance performance with strong average subregional performance in all categories and almost all underlying sub-categories. The subregion's best performing country is Mauritius which ranked either first or second in all of the subcategories of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.

Despite these relative achievements of Southern Africa, the subregion's major challenges on governance relate to the persistent deficits in skills and professionalism affecting all elements of public service. Economic opportunities and human development for the subregion may not be sustained for future generations, given the extensive environmental degradation for many of its member countries. Poor funding and weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, especially those involved in environmental management, needs to be resolved. This would involve strengthening governance and capacities across all the mainstreaming sectors for the environment: agriculture, industry, and others. At the regional level, there is continued fragmentation, overlap, duplication and competition between institutions, in spite of the existence of good frameworks such as those of NEPAD and the regional economic communities.

2.4   Overall sustainable development issues and challenges

This chapter has identified issues and challenges related to sustainable development in relation to its three interlinked dimensions: economic, social and the environment, and the enabling cross-cutting governance sector.

The following issues and challenges have been identified:

Economic
(i)   High poverty
(ii)   Income inequality
(iii)   Limited value addition (minerals, agriculture, livestock and fisheries)
(iv)   High unemployment
(v)   Limited diversification
(vi)   Dwindling land resources for productive agriculture
(vii)   Limited infrastructure, including markets

> *SADC sustainable development success stories*
>
> *Southern Africa has some isolated cases of success on sustainable development that can be duplicated or scaled up, so the overall picture is not entirely pessimistic.*
>
> *The subregion has widely adopted the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Approach. This approach to conservation and development recognizes the rights of local people to manage and benefit from the management and use of natural resources. Countries involved include Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Namibia and Botswana.*
>
> *The subregion has also notable examples and best practices in governance to share with the rest of the African continent. For example, 7 out of a total of 29 African countries which have acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) are from Southern Africa. The best governed country in Africa, Mauritius, is from the same region including four other nations in the top ten ranking on governance.*
>
> *Source: ECA (2012)*

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[9] Many African countries do not view this index positively because of its limited international application and because some of the factors used are not seen to be relevant to the context or purpose.

(viii) Low intra-regional trade

Social
(i)   High incidence of disease probably related to or being worsened by HIV and AIDS
(ii)   Poor health service delivery
(iii)   Low level of enrolment in education beyond primary school
(iv)   Gender-based violence
(v)   Unequal distribution of wealth between gender
(vi)   Wide gender gap in participation and decision making at various levels

Environmental
(i)   Extensive loss of forests and its related environmental impacts
(ii)   Deteriorating biodiversity and quality of the ecosystems
(iii)   Impact of climate change and climate variability
(iv)   Low energy consumption levels despite the abundance in the resources
(v)   Narrowly focused economic and sectoral policies that do not prioritize environmental conservation
(vi)   High rates of urbanization

Governance
(i)   Poor funding and weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, especially those involved in environmental management and mainstreaming sectors: agriculture, industry, and others.
(ii)   Poor public sector and rural sector management
(iii)   Prevalence of fragmentation, overlap, duplication and competition between institutions, in spite of the existence of good frameworks such as those of NEPAD and the regional economic communities

3.   Sustainable development priorities

In order to identify subregional priorities for sustainable development in Southern Africa, it is important to understand the issues and challenges facing sustainable development outlined in the previous chapter and make an assessment as to whether they are being dealt with in the existing national and subregional plans for development. This will involve an assessment of the relevance of current prioritization of development issues and the identification of gaps. This section begins with a brief review of the strategic development plans of subregional bodies to which individual countries belong and then proceeds to the national development plans. The complication here is that member States can belong to more than one subregional body and such bodies do not share the same priorities among themselves and even with the member States either in the short term or long term.

3.1   Southern Africa Development Community

Every country of the Southern Africa subregion is a member of SADC, which developed the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, principally designed to deepen regional integration in Southern Africa. It provides SADC member States with a consistent and comprehensive programme of long-term economic and social policies. It also provides the Secretariat and other SADC institutions with a clear view of the approved economic and social policies and priorities of SADC. There are 13 subregional priorities set out in the Plan:

(i)   Poverty eradication
(ii)   Combating HIV and Aids
(iii)   Gender equality and development
(iv)   Science and technology
(v)   Statistics
(vi)   Trade, economic liberalization and development
(vii)   Environment and sustainable development
(viii) Infrastructure development
(ix)   Private sector development
(x)   Sustainable food security
(xi)   Human and social development
(xii)   Resource mobilization
(xiii) Institutional framework

It is stated that the priorities of the Plan were established through consultation with member countries[10] and the common elements in line with the vision of SADC have been prioritized. The list seems too extensive to reflect prioritization, and in practice, in terms of funding and actual routine activities, it may be possible that some priorities are falling through the cracks. The last six priorities require some detail if they are to be understood: it does not look contextually admissible to list "human and social development" – a very broad topic – at the same level as "gender equality and development", or "statistics", or "science and development". There is a mixture of "ends" and "means" stated at the same level and this reflects conceptualization challenges at the policymaking level that will not be made any better during implementation.

3.2   Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Some members of SADC are also members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the biggest subregional economic grouping in Africa in terms of population and

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[10] There is no explanation of how these consultations were carried out, nor are the participants to the process identified.

geographical coverage, which implies that they share in the development priorities of the COMESA subregion as enshrined in its medium-term strategic development plan. The COMESA medium-term strategic plan focuses on tackling issues affecting ordinary people, such as poverty, public health, education, gender, children's welfare, equal opportunities and international solidarity.

Six strategic and priority areas that have been identified as key drivers in the COMESA subregion are:

(i)   Removing barriers to trade
(ii)   Building productive capacity for global competitiveness
(iii) Addressing supply-side constraints related to infrastructure
(iv)   Peace and security
(v)   Cross-cutting issues (gender and social affairs, climate change, statistical development, knowledge-based society and human capital, cooperation and partnerships and aid for trade)
(vi)   Institutional development

Most of the issues may be identified as common to SADC but there is already an observable difference in prioritization and terminology which becomes even starker in terms of actual activities being implemented by the two institutions. SADC has, for example, gender equality and development (in Millennium Development Goals "gender equality and women's empowerment") as a stand-alone priority while COMESA has "gender and social affairs" as one of its cross-cutting issues.

3.3   Southern Africa Customs Union

Five members of SADC also belong to a special subregional grouping called the Southern African Customs Union: Botswana**,** Lesotho, Namibia**,** South Africa and Swaziland. This has an influence on subregional priorities. The priority objectives of the Union are the following:

(a)   To facilitate the cross-border movement of goods between the territories of the member States;

(b)   To create effective, transparent and democratic institutions that will ensure equitable trade benefits to member States;

(c)   To promote conditions of fair competition in the Common Customs Area;

(d)   Substantially to increase investment opportunities in the Common Customs Area;

(e)   To enhance the economic development, diversification, industrialization and competitiveness of member States.

It is perhaps easy to say that at face value many of the priorities of the Customs Union are the same as those of COMESA, as they are all concerned with trade facilitation. In terms of practice and implementation, however, there are many differences in programmes of implementation and activities. The level of integration in the Customs Union is much higher than that observed under COMESA and this has practical implications for each country on the deployment of attention and resources in terms of priorities.

3.4   National development priorities

In addition to the above-mentioned subregional frameworks, every country has developed a national development plan which highlights their individual national priorities. It is important to mention that many of the national development programmes are short-term in nature even where they respond to medium-term national development strategies. In many cases, the annual programme and priorities, if not the national development strategy itself, are changed each time a new Government comes into power.

It is important to highlight the disaggregated picture of the subregional priorities in terms of national development plans because it is this picture which guides member States on a daily basis. This is the basis upon which member States build institutions, mobilize resources, build capacities and develop partnerships with the international community. This is also the basis on which their peoples hold them accountable for delivery on commitments. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation should start from these and progress towards the subregional level.

It is important to note that national development priorities vary from country to country. Where the priorities converge, it is more by coincidence than by deliberate purpose. For example, South Africa's core challenges are: mass unemployment, poverty and inequality. For Mauritius the priorities are clustered growth, employment generation, housing, social development and infrastructure. The critical issues for Zambia are infrastructure development, economic growth and diversification, rural investment and poverty reduction and enhancing human development. Zambia's cross-cutting priorities are governance, HIV and AIDS, gender, disability, nutrition, environment and disaster risk management.

For Malawi, the following are key priorities: agriculture and food security, irrigation and water development, infrastructure development, energy generation and supply, integrated rural development and HIV and AIDS prevention and management. In Mozambique, where they have yet to launch an officially recognized medium-term national development strategy, their priorities are to:[11]

> **Box 2: People - Planet - Prosperity: A national framework for sustainable development in South Africa, July 2008**
>
> Sustainable development is about enhancing human well-being and quality of life permanently, in particular those most affected by poverty and inequality. Its core principles are resource use efficiency and intergenerational equity.
>
> The purpose of the National Framework on Sustainable Development is to enunciate South Africa's national vision for sustainable development and indicate strategic interventions to re-orientate South Africa's development path in a more sustainable direction. It proposes a national vision, principles and areas for strategic intervention that will enable and guide the development of the national strategy and action plan.
>
> **Priority areas for strategic intervention**
> The identification of five priority areas for strategic intervention and supporting priority recommendations was based on the analysis of the natural resources, economic, social and governance trends. These priority areas or "pathways to sustainable development" are:
>
> (i) enhancing systems for integrated planning and implementation
> (ii) sustaining our ecosystems and using natural resources efficiently
> (iii) economic development via investing in sustainable infrastructure
> (iv) creating sustainable human settlements
> (v) responding appropriately to emerging human development, economic and environmental challenges
>
> **Making it happen**
> Implementation calls for decision-making and action at various levels. The first is the identification of an existing institutional mechanism that can facilitate cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination. Secondly, we need an action plan to make sense of the directions contained in the five priority areas; then ongoing communication and consultation on achieving our national vision and strategy. Finally, we must strengthen appropriate monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to determine success or failure and take appropriate action.

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[11] The first medium-term national development strategy has bee[...]
These priorities are as stated in the National Annual Development Plan.

(a)   Increase output and productivity in the agricultural (including livestock) and fisheries sectors;

(b)   Promote employment (including that of youth); and

(c)   Foster human and social development, while maintaining a joint focus on governance and macroeconomic affairs and fiscal management.

3.5   "The future we want"

Several countries in the subregion, notably Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe are participating in "The future we want" initiative that will inform the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. They have carried out extensive nationwide consultations to assess national aspirations in terms of development priorities and some of them have reached the stage of discussing draft reports based on the exercise. One draft document available, produced by Malawi, may already provide useful lessons on what to expect.

Malawi's current national development strategy, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2, has nine priority areas and five thematic areas. "The future we want" has identified 13 priority areas, but the nomenclature is not exactly the same and table 5 below represents an attempt to merge them so as to easily identify similarities and differences.

Table 5: Malawi's development priorities

	No.	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2	The future (Malawi) we want
Priority areas	1	Agriculture and food security	Agriculture development and food security
	2	Energy, industrial development, mining and tourism	Private sector development
	3	Transport infrastructure and Nsanje world inland port	
	4	Education, science and technology	Access to and quality of education; Science, technology and communication
	5	Public health, sanitation, malaria and HIV and AIDS management	Access to and quality of Health Services; HIV and AIDS
	6	Integrated rural development	
	7	Green belt irrigation and water development	
	8	Child development, youth development and empowerment	
	9	Climate change, natural resources and environmental management	Environment, natural resource management
Thematic areas	1	Sustainable economic growth	
	2	Social development	
	3	Social protection and disaster risk management	Special and vulnerable groups
	4	Infrastructure	Infrastructure development
	5	Governance	Governance and accountability

No.	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2	The future (Malawi) we want
6	Gender and capacity development	Capacity development; Gender equality and women's empowerment

Source: Adapted from Malawi Government (2006) and Malawi Government and UNDP (2013).

The comparison of Malawi's current development strategy and "The future Malawi we want" in table 2 above shows some interesting lessons applicable to Malawi itself but other lessons reveal certain elements of principle on aspirations that may have broader application.[12] There are both similarities and differences in terms of nomenclature, with "The future Malawi we want" having fewer priorities corresponding to the Millennium Development Goals and much more streamlined themes. This is a sign that Malawians want both a change and a sharper focus in relation to priorities. For example, education and health are retained as priorities, but they want issues of access and quality to take precedence.[13] It may not be of much value to read much into the themes and definitions of the areas of need: the most important lesson here is that "The future Malawi we want" has not identified anything substantially different from Malawi's current development strategy and that may be the case with many of the developing countries on this front. This then raises the prospect that the real issue is not in policy design or identification but implementation. The fact that "The future Malawi we want" is mentioning fewer and more narrowly defined priorities may be the result of recognizing resource and capacity limitations in implementation.

"The future we want" initiative[14] is still in its early stages but chances are high that it will bring up value in terms of refocusing the development agenda and not necessarily in identifying new priorities. The implications of formulating the sustainable development goals are that the priority development themes and areas will remain largely unchanged and the sustainable development goals established will be easily applied or adapted to the context of the upcoming development agenda.

3.6 Setting subregional sustainable development priorities

3.6.1 Subregional and national development strategies and frameworks

The above-mentioned frameworks present a disaggregated picture of subregional priorities and trends. An analysis of the development strategies – subregional and national – shows that the main priorities for the subregion can be stated as follows:

(i)   Poverty eradication
(ii)   Reducing inequalities
(iii)   Food security and agriculture
(iv)   Climate change and its impacts
(v)   Access to water
(vi)   Adequate energy supply
(vii)   Investment for job creation
(viii) Market access and trade
(ix)   Infrastructure development

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[12] This study does not intend to offer a critique of the Millennium Development Goals; it simply highlights the differences worth considering with regard to "The future Malawi we want".
[13] Issues of access and quality appear in the detail of the Millennium Development Goals and as a result this is felt to be the possible reason that not much progress is being made in these areas.
[14] It has targeted 50 countries around the world.

(x) Tackling the persistent debt burden
(xi) Improving levels of development funding
(xii) Industrial diversification and value addition
(xiii) Combating HIV and AIDS
(xiv) Gender equality and development
(xv) Science and technology
(xvi) Statistics
(xvii) Resource mobilization
(xviii)   Institutional development
(xix) Dealing with supply-side constraints related to infrastructure
(xx) Peace and security

There are 19 policy areas mentioned here but a closer look reveals strong linkages that offer the opportunity for reclassification into fewer categories. The terminology or classification is obviously difficult to regularize, for even areas of close consensus like that on poverty carries with it a different emphasis: some put it on poverty "reduction" and some insist it is poverty "eradication". Some differentiate between "governance" and "democracy", some express it as "democratic governance". These semantic differences should not, however, stand in the way of efforts to redefine these areas in the context of sustainable development.

The priorities are considered in more details in the following sections, with a view to redefining them accordingly.

(a)   Poverty eradication

Efforts to eradicate poverty would eventually resolve some of the economic challenges mentioned above: high poverty, income inequality, limited value addition (minerals and agriculture), high unemployment and limited economic diversification. Poverty eradication should take on board wholly or partially some of the policy themes identified above, including reducing inequalities (2), food security and agriculture (3), improving levels of development funding (10), and resource mobilization (16). This regrouping comes about because the eradication of poverty means that poorer people move up the income ladder, a movement that would automatically lead to the reduction of income inequalities. Such a movement would imply food security and adequate access to basic social services that require development funding and resource mobilization. All these items link up well to achieve the economic objectives of sustainable development and should be treated under the dimension of economic growth which is the sustainable driver of poverty reduction. In this connection, it would also include priorities 6 and 7: adequate energy supply, investment for job creation and market access and trade. Poverty eradication also has strong if not direct links to other areas as well, such as science and technology, industrial diversification and trade.

As noted in the above section, the strategy for poverty eradication as defined in many national development strategies is through sustained economic growth. This would therefore involve also resolving many of the bottlenecks mentioned in chapter II, such as income inequality, infrastructure and regional integration, among others. All these initiatives would require resources for which there may not be adequate provision in national budgets. Consequently, in connection with these efforts on poverty reduction, it would be important to raise adequate resources. In many Southern African countries, resources from domestic resources are hardly adequate to sustain investments into infrastructure, let alone its maintenance. There has to be reliance on external sources and borrowing. Broadening the tax base and motivating tax compliance can be some of the strategies that can be used to raise adequate domestic revenues. Borrowing should be restricted because the debt ratio for Southern Africa, currently at 32 per cent of GDP, is too high. Soliciting

grants through bilateral arrangements may be one of the practical ways forward, despite donor fatigue.

(b)   Education and technical skills

Good education and technical skills remain important assets for access to more rewarding employment and business opportunities. Education refers to formal (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and non-formal schooling (adult and community education), access to and quality of education and the effective use of educated people. Technical skills include those acquired through vocational training and skills upgrading. Education is expected to improve social well-being including health, contribute to reduced population growth, enhance governance and lead to a more entrepreneurial society. As pointed out in the previous chapter, enrolment rates for Southern Africa, especially in higher education, remain among the lowest in the world. The subregion also faces high levels of brain drain on professionals such as doctors, university lecturers, engineers, etc.

This theme on education and technical skills brings together issues of social inclusion: reducing inequalities (2), science and technology (16), statistics (15), and climate change and its impacts (4).

(c)   Gender equality and empowerment

Social inclusion is generally understood to include fair and equitable access for all gender and vulnerable groups – men, women, young, elderly – to resources, employment, education and health services, participation in all aspects of community life, enjoyment and the exercise of basic human freedoms and fair and equitable access to livelihoods and justice. Defined in this way, it is clear that gender equality and empowerment is a cross-cutting theme and in its expanded form (hence the name social inclusion) also incorporates issues of intergenerational equity and vulnerabilities. In Southern Africa, the role of women and the youth as both the drivers and beneficiaries of sustainable development is significant. There has been commendable progress in many areas, including education, health, HIV/AIDS, employment and participation in political and decision-making processes. Challenges remain, however, in the form of marginalization and exclusion from the benefits of economic growth in recent years.

(d)   Health and nutrition

Health and nutrition tackle the challenges of combating HIV and AIDS, as well as communicable and non-communicable diseases which are often the result of poor nutrition. Health means a state of complete physical and mental well-being: "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature" (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). Health is both a means to and an end of development. Southern Africa faces tremendous challenges on the health front as demonstrated by the life expectancy and HIV/AIDS indicators in the previous chapter. The health theme has strong links to improving levels of development funding (10) and resource mobilization (16) because many developing countries do not have the resources to build modern hospitals. A healthy population is the key to improved economic production as it will maximize labour availability. Southern Africa has a high HIV prevalence rate of around 12.6 per cent which mostly affects the economically productive age group of between 20 and 49 years of age. The subregion also has a high incidence of communicable diseases such as malaria. The diet of a large component of the subregion's population is not diversified despite the prevalence of alternative foods. Ensuring the improved health and well-being of its population remains an important objective for the subregion

(e)   Environmental sustainability

Southern Africa faces serious challenges concerning the environment as reported in section C.3 of chapter II above: extensive loss of forests and its related environmental impacts; deteriorating biodiversity and quality of the ecosystems as a result of climatic factors; and narrowly focused economic and sectoral policies that do not prioritize environmental conservation. Biological diversity has been a defining feature of Southern Africa's history, culture, economic and social organization. However, corporate greed combined with high population growth and policy failures have significantly altered traditional forest management practices and the rural social and economic fabric. As a result, forest reserves are very much endangered areas in the subregion. Dependence on natural resources is relatively high, against the backdrop of pervasive poverty and low technological and institutional response.

The agricultural sector is sensitive to climate change and variability and, combined with poor soil fertility, pests, crop diseases and lack of access to technology, markets, and infrastructure, climate change and its variability are having a huge impact on Southern Africa's livelihood base. Seasons of good rainfall are associated with periods of plenty while dry seasons are associated with adversities, deprivation, frustration, famine, and possible displacement. The subregion is facing increased frequency of severe drought and dry spells, flooding, changes in rainfall patterns, increasing temperatures and other factors resulting from climate change. Fossil fuel carbon emissions are relatively low but the carbon intensity of Southern Africa is on the high side. There is a need to reduce carbon intensity and facilitate a transition to a low-carbon economy.

Apart from improving access to basic services in both rural and urban areas, meeting the challenge of rural to urban migration will require the generation of economic growth and employment for urban areas, with a particular focus on creating an enabling policy environment for private sector investment. The member States should design policies that minimize bottlenecks and protect property rights. In addition, the growing informal sector could be supported by ensuring access to technology, raw materials as well as external markets for marketing their produce (Hove et al., 2013). Investments in rural infrastructure in terms of communication networks and services are another important dimension that will develop rural markets, enhance agricultural productivity and thus improve the rural to urban linkages.

(f)   Governance

Better governance would help the subregion to deal with the challenges it is facing in the areas of institutional development, peace and security, public sector management and resource mobilization. Institutional governance cuts across all three dimensions of sustainable development and it involves State capacity to articulate social needs and respond to them, implement policies and establish new institutions for sustainable natural resource use and negotiate bilateral economic and trade agreements. An important dimension of governance in Southern Africa is the authority exercised by traditional institutions, starting at the family level, which play effective roles in common property arrangements, and usage and conflict management. The authority of a State rests on legislation and its enforcement, but traditional institutions have moral authority and culture behind them. Thus, respect for and effective use of traditional resource management and conflict resolution mechanisms is an important aspect of good governance.

Peace and security are important factors in sustainable development. Armed conflict is on the wane in SADC countries, except in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[15] Intra-State conflicts and

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[15]At the time of the report, major armed conflict between the Government and rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo had ended in defeat for the rebels. It can be expected that peace in the Democratic Republic of

tensions remain, however. These are often related to the process of managing competition over limited economic opportunities and scarce natural resources, notably agricultural land, pasture and water. For example, farm land in Zimbabwe, water (notably including transboundary water resources), minerals, including diamonds, gold, and oil (as in Angola); furthermore, natural disasters have displaced people and generated conflicts in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and Southern Africa.

The discussion on content and interlinkages between priority policy intervention areas for Southern Africa has led us to identify five major themes[16] for sustainable development: poverty eradication, education and technical skills, health and nutrition, gender equality and development and environmental sustainability. These are summed up in table 6 below.

Table 6: Sustainable development prioritization

Sustainable development theme	Sub-themes and content
Poverty eradication	Reducing inequalities; food security and agriculture; adequate energy supply; regional integration; investment for job creation; market access and trade; attempting to resolve the persistent debt burden; improving levels of development funding; and industrial diversification and value addition.
Education and technical skills	Access to and quality of education; and the effective use of educated people; school enrolment, especially beyond primary level; reduced population growth; enhancement of governance and the promotion of a more entrepreneurial society; science and technology; statistics, monitoring and evaluation
Gender equality and empowerment	Fair and equitable access for all gender groups (men, women, young, elderly) i.e., to resources, employment, education, and health services; social inclusion of all disadvantaged groups; participation in all aspects of community life; enjoyment and exercise of basic human freedoms; and fair and equitable access to livelihoods and justice
Health and nutrition	Combating HIV and AIDS; combating communicable and non-communicable diseases; diet diversification and nutrition education; access to water and sanitation; improving levels of development funding; and resource mobilization
Environmental sustainability	Climate change vulnerability and adaptation; access to water and improved sanitation; reducing and reversing forest loss; and preserving ecosystems and biodiversity

It can be noted in table 6 that some sub-themes may fit into more than one thematic area, in other words, they are cross-cutting. Some main themes themselves, such as gender equality and empowerment and environment, can also be cross-cutting. This means that all classifications of themes or sub-themes can hardly achieve precision of definition. It is a challenge to achieve a proper balance between promulgating broad policy themes that may compromise clarity in focus and specific policy sub-themes that can end up being too numerous to be managed within a high level policy document. A trade-off also exists between achieving technical correctness and parsimony that makes things easily understandable for non-technical people. The identification of gaps in policy pronouncements at the national and subregional level in relation to sustainable development suffers from these constraints and it will be difficult to improve upon it.[17]

In relation to the issues on sustainable development identified in the previous chapter, it would appear that most of them are captured in existing national and subregional strategic plans but the differences arise in prioritization. National development strategies are nearly unanimous in prioritizing poverty reduction and eradication, but after that there is not much commonality in ranking despite continued similarity over policy issues of focus. Subregional development strategies incorporate different prioritizations more suited to the mandates for which they were established.

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the Congo will attract back home refugees living in neighbouring countries and open up economic opportunities in terms of trade across them.

[16] "Governance" will be streamlined in the five themes.

[17] It is possible, for example, that there are more specific policy statements on the environmental theme in national development strategies of some countries in the subregion so that in a sense, what has been identified as a "gap" is only that because it is based on the limited information accessed by the author.

They seem to take on other additional development issues that have closer linkages to the delivery of their core mandate.

4. Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators must be in line with sustainable development themes identified in the previous chapter in order for them to be owned by the implementing countries. Targets must be appropriate to the goals and indicators must be appropriate to the targets. The overall goal of sustainable development is to achieve improved human well-being without compromising that of future generations. Other goals have to be derived from the overall goal: they can be short-term or long-term, higher level and lower level, in all the areas of sustainable development.

Figure 3: Illustration of overall sustainable development goals
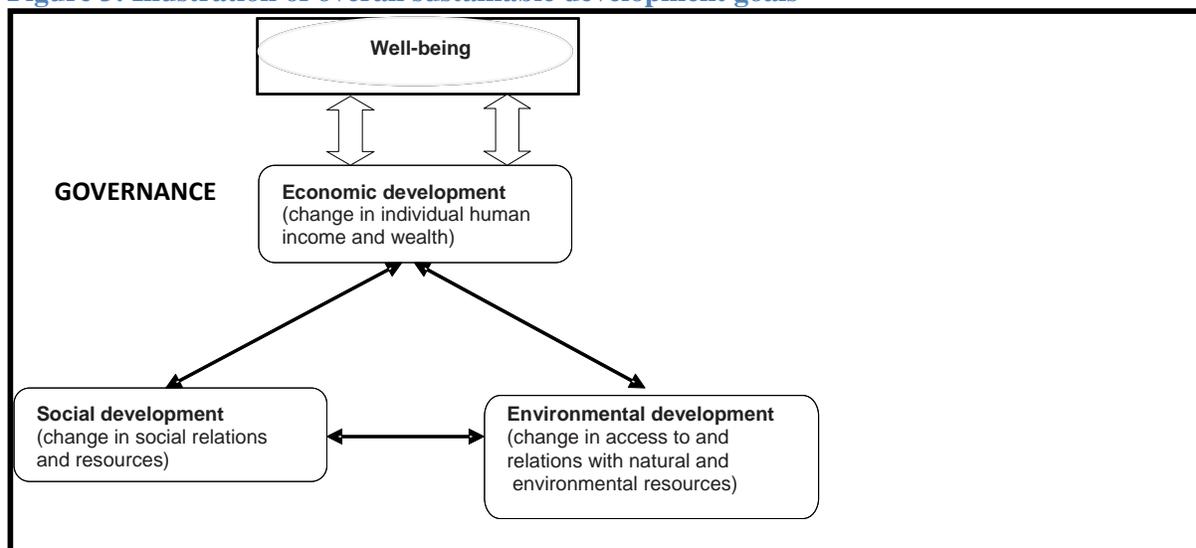
Source: Adapted from Lancet and London International Development Centre Commission (2010).[18]

This conceptualization framework guided the formulation of sustainable development goals being put forward in the present report.

4.1 Guiding principles

In order to develop meaningful sustainable development goals, targets and indicators certain guiding principles have to be followed. The Rio+20 outcome document outlines five principles for sustainable development goals, stressing that they should be:

    (a)   Action-oriented;

    (b)   Concise and easy to communicate;

    (c)   Limited in number;

    (d)   Aspirational;

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[18] Jeff Waage and others, op. cit., p. 21. The difference here is that we prefer to use "economic development", rather than "human development", as human development may already have connotations of "social development", which appears on its own elsewhere. Others would argue that "economic" is part of "social", clearly showing that this illustration is not cast in stone. The double arrows for "well-being" indicate that it is the result of the horizontal interaction of "economic, social and environmental development".

(e)   Global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

Most of these principles are self-explanatory; the last, however, reveals the depth of the challenge to come with proper and widely accepted sustainable development goals. Further discussions and literature coming as a follow-up to Rio+20 show that that there is a need for sustainable development goals to build upon and be guided by the Millennium Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; furthermore, they should be consistent with other internationally agreed goals and targets. Specifically, there is a need for sustainable development goals to complement or connect with the Millennium Development Goals by building upon their success and learning from their failures.[19]

Some of the key features that have made the Millennium Development Goals successful are the following:

(a)   High level global political buy-in: controversial goals and targets were conveniently or deliberately left out, like those on peace and security, human rights or carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions;

(b)   Simplicity: anyone taking a reasonable interest in the issue can easily remember a Millennium Development Goal, if not several of them;

(c)   Providing measurable outcomes: they have quantitative targets and some precise indicators. This makes management easy as there is a continuous flow of figures;

(d)   Neutrality from policy prescriptions: each country is free to design policies that can be successful in achieving the Millennium Development Goals within their situational context

to ensure the success of sustainable development goals, some of these features have to be retained. However, sustainable development goals will need to avoid the key pitfalls faced by Millennium Development Goals, stated below:

(a)   Confusion between "high level" and "lower level" goals: whether by design or implicitly, the eight Millennium Development Goals are always treated at the same level but some appear to be higher level goals than others. "Ensure environmental sustainability" (goal 7) covers an entire sector, whereas "maternal health" (goal 5) and "reduce child mortality" (goal 4) both belong to one sector. Failure to design goals at the same level would lead to false comparisons and potentially to misleading resource allocations and assessments of achievements;

(b)   Fragmentation and lack of synergy: the major weakness of the Millennium Development Goals has been their fragmentation and lack of synergy, although perhaps any goal-setting endeavour, given the current level of human knowledge, may not be able to avoid this completely. The process of goal-setting cannot easily avoid the evil of creating an isolated vertical organization of administrative and operational functions that does not relate easily to other areas. Literature shows that the health sector, with three of the Millennium Development Goals – goals 4, 5, and 6 – may not have reaped the benefits of consolidation or proper coordination;

(c)   Partiality: the targets or indicators chosen do not in many instances present a holistic picture of the goal or target. For example, the number of seats for women in parliament can easily

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[19] United Nations General Assembly: Sixty-seventh session. Secretary-General's initial input to the open working group on sustainable development goals.

be achieved through affirmative action, as some countries have done, while on the overall goal of gender development they rank very low.[20] This can also promote the spirit of the "end justifies the means", with deleterious consequences for long-term development;

(d)   Lack of ownership and commitment: there are still some goals, many targets and especially indicators that go unreported by some countries owing to lack of ownership or commitment. This is particularly true in relation to the goal on gender equity and women's empowerment, perhaps indicating that the preconditions for its inclusion have not yet been met or agreed universally;

To sum up, in addition to the guiding principles, the global experience from implementing Millennium Development Goals provides useful lessons for identifying sustainable development goals that are universally applicable.

4.2   Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, sustainable development goals should cascade downwards from the ultimate goal of human well-being and reflect distinct dimensions of human well-being being identified as an outcome of sustainable development.

Using the priority themes for Southern Africa developed in the previous chapter, it is proposed that the following goals, targets and indicators should be considered in the formulation of global sustainable development goals. Table 7 shows the goal for each theme and table 9 shows the targets and indicators for each goal.

Table 7: Sustainable development themes and goals

Sustainable development theme	Goal (by 2030)
Poverty eradication	By 2030, all countries should achieve inclusive economic growth by improving pro-poor investment and putting financing into basic infrastructure, employment generation; through appropriate market incentives, adequate access to land and adoption of best technologies for sustainable food production
Education and technical skills	By 2030, nations should have expanded coverage and improved quality of and access to education, including adult education and technical (vocational) skills training
Gender equality and empowerment	Promotion of the capabilities of all individuals to reach their full potential irrespective of class, gender, ethnic origin, religion or race, with special attention to women, youth, and elderly people, by addressing the vulnerabilities of each group
Health and nutrition	Adequate access to primary health services, safe and sustainable water and sanitation, adequate nutrition, and basic infrastructure, including electricity, roads and connectivity to the global information network.
Environmental sustainability	Countries should adopt low-carbon energy systems, sustainable food systems, sustainable urban areas (including resilience in the face of growing hazards from climate change) and stabilization of the world's population through voluntary choices

In table 7, the 2030 deadline has been chosen because of the need for intergenerational equity in the implementation of sustainable development goals. A generation is often understood as an age group or age band, often covering a number of years. Intergenerational equity will require some

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[20] An African country, Rwanda, ranks first in the world in respect of the number of seats occupied by women in parliament but ranks 76th on gender development.

comparisons to be made across at least two generations. For the purpose of the present report, however, the commonly agreed United Nations timeline of 15 years has also been adopted in the post-2015 process.[21]

Table 8: Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

Goal	Targets	Indicators
Eradicating poverty	Inclusive economic growth for all gender groups (youths, women, the elderly, men)	GDP per capita Net trade exports/GDP (%) Poverty gap ratio (%) Adjusted net savings Poorest quintile share in consumption by gender (%)
		Proportion of urban population living in slums by sex and gender (%) Average arable land holdings (ha) Length of bituminized roads (km) Proportion of population with access to electricity (%)
	Mobilize adequate revenue for development investment	Proportion of domestic revenue in national budget (%)
		Incidence of domestic taxation (Number of taxed groups)
		Proportion of grants in national budget (%) Debt/GDP ratio
		Proportion of public investment in national budget (%)
	Eradicate extreme poverty	Poverty headcount (%)
		Unemployment rate by gender (%)
		Development funding into free services (% of budget)
	Boost proportion of people who are food secure	Prevalence of underweight children (%)
		Food aid dependent population (%)
Improving learning (education and technical) attainment	Achieve universal primary education	Net enrolment in primary education (%)
		Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 reaching grade 5 (%)
		Literacy rate (15–24yrs) (%) Quality of primary education (satisfaction levels)
	Boost proportion of persons with higher skills, with more than primary education	Secondary and tertiary schooling attainment level Quality of university education (perceptions) Net enrolment in technical education
Promoting gender equality and empowerment	Equitable enrolment for male and female in formal and non-formal education	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education
		Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education
		Ratio of literate women to men aged 15–24 years
		Proportion of persons living with disabilities in formal and non-formal education
	Equal distribution of wealth	Share of women in decent wage employment sector (%)
		Youth unemployment rate (%)

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[21] This fits in well also with the United Nations Secretary-General choice of 2030 as the planned deadline for this initiative.

Goal	Targets	Indicators
		Unemployment rate amongst persons living with disabilities (%)
		Ratio of women receiving economic empowerment
	Improved participation in decision-making	Proportion of seats held by women in Parliament (%)
		Proportion of women with access to land
		Ratio of women to men inheriting family wealth
	Promote basic human rights including gender equality	Annual incidence of gender-based violence (%)[a]
Improving health and nutrition status	Improve primary health care	Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)
		Infant mortality rate (per 1000)
		Proportion of one year-old children immunized against measles (%)
		Life expectancy at birth
	Improve maternal health	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000)
		Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)
	Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases	HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15–24 (%)
		Ratio of orphans to non-orphans in school
		Deaths rates associated with malaria (%)
		Access to malaria treatment (%)
		Proportion of households with at least one ITN[b] (%)
		Death rates associated with tuberculosis (TB) (%)
		Proportion of TB cases under DOTS[c] (%)
	Improve nutrition status for all groups, especially the vulnerable	Prevalence of underweight children Dietary diversity index
Ensuring environmental sustainability	Improve sustainable use of environmental resources	Proportion of land covered by forest (%)
		Proportion of area protected to maintain biological diversity (%)
		Proportion of budget/GDP on environment
	Improve access to sustainable energy	Proportion with access to renewable energy
		Proportion using biomass (%)
	Improve the proportion of people with sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (%)
		Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation (%)
	Reduce internal migration to cities	Slum population as percentage of urban population (%) Rural poverty rate (%)
	Reduce ozone harming emissions	Carbon dioxide emissions Carbon intensity

Table 8 sets out the goals, targets and indicators on sustainable development. There are five sustainable development goals with their targets and indicators. The overriding criterion in choosing indicators is that they are measurable and are relevant in the context of the identified goals.[22] The

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[22] It is not possible to ascertain "measurability" for all countries because of differences in data collection capacities.

sustainable development goals are also simpler – or more parsimonious – than the Millennium Development Goals, despite being more rigorous in terms of measurement. The sustainable development goals, therefore, offer better potential to encourage broader ownership and commitment from many stakeholders. The demands on monitoring and evaluation will be much higher for sustainable development goals than for many other accepted development goals but that is a practical challenge that can more easily be surmounted than that of achieving higher level consensus for ownership of these goals.

The goals of the goal-setting conceptual framework at the beginning of this chapter and the dimensions of sustainable development are summed up in table 9.

Table 9: Sustainable development dimensions and goals

Sustainable development dimension	Goals
Economic dimension	Eradicating poverty with targets on inclusive economic growth, mobilization of resources for development investments, eradicating extreme poverty and adequacy of food supplies or production.
Social dimension	Improving learning outcomes. Promoting gender equality and empowerment. Improving health and nutrition status.
Environmental dimension	Ensuring environmental sustainability with targets on sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation, unsustainable use of environmental and natural resources, reducing internal migration and reducing ozone unfriendly emissions.

Table 10 shows that all dimensions except the social dimension of sustainable development have one goal. The fact that the social dimension has three goals does not necessarily indicate unequal treatment of the dimensions, but is simply a sign that perhaps in the foreseeable future there are more human well-being issues to consider under the social dimension.

The sustainable development goals proposed in the present report are closely related to the Millennium Development Goals due to expire in 2015 but the relationships are not direct even where the wording has been retained – such as "ensure environment sustainability". To trace the unfinished business from the Millennium Development Goals, it is necessary to refer to the targets to identify the goal under which that endeavour is being carried forward. For example, "poverty eradication", which was the first Millennium Development Goal, will continue but this time it has to be sustainable (not just high) – which is the first sustainable development goal – and its eradication will involve the extremely poor (the third target under sustainable development goal 1). In all, therefore, there are five sustainable development goals and, while most of the issues are new, some have been carried over from the Millennium Development Goals.

An Africa-wide analysis (ECA, 2013) shows that the continent has been making considerable progress towards many of the Millennium Development Goals. Many countries are still far from achieving most of the goals, however. In general, most countries in the subregion are off-track in five goals: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; ensuring environmental sustainability; and attaining global partnership for development. The slow progress in social indicators has been attributed to food insecurity, which manifests itself through malnutrition, in particular among children. It is for this reason that food security is prioritized alongside agriculture development in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and the national development policies. The proposed sustainable development goal thus aims to cover the areas of unfinished business summed up in table 10 below.

Table 100: Linkages between the sustainable development goals and the Millennium Development Goals

Sustainable development goals	Millennium Development Goal-related issues carried over
Eradicating poverty	Eradicate extreme poverty
Improving learning (education and technical) attainment	Achieve universal primary education
Promoting gender equality and empowerment	Equitable enrolment for male and female in formal education and women participation in decision making
Improving health and nutrition status	Improve maternal health and combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Ensuring environmental sustainability	Reduce the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation

4.3   Implementing sustainable development goals

4.3.1   Use of sustainable development goals

National level consultations revealed a general perception among countries that the primary use of sustainable development goals should be to provide information for the preparation of their budgets. In other words, more resources should be allocated to sustainable development goals that are not demonstrating good progress. The second use is to help balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policymaking. There is little or no mention of the use of sustainable development goals for defining national policy priorities, reviewing the impact of national policies, tackling key pressures leading to unsustainable development and guiding development cooperation.

4.3.2   Setting targets for sustainable development goal indicators

Goals should be common but differentiated in terms of targets depending on country characteristics and level of development. This means that, while global goals and target areas may be set, in the same way as for the Millennium Development Goals, each country may be allowed to set its own targets, depending on its baselines. Individual country targets, however, should be set in an objective and transparent manner. There should be a global and regional database to keep track of these targets and advise individual countries on their position. This effort can be led at the technical level by United Nations regional bodies and streamlined for the benefit of individual countries, with the help of subregional bodies such as SADC. There is a need for an independent forum such as a subregional review council or commission of government and non-government representatives to set agreed and realistic indicator targets for each country.

4.3.3   Defining indicators

As observed, the indicators for some goals may not be exhaustive. Generally speaking, it is beyond the scope of the present report to design new indicators.[23] The challenge to complete the set of indicators can be handled by institutional experts in the relevant areas, perhaps through internal or intra-office consultations by global, continental and regional institutions such as the African

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[23] As pointed out above, only indicators that were seen as being measurable and relevant have been incorporated. Some of the trade-off challenges among indicators still remain: using many indicators for one goal can offer a more comprehensive assessment, but it would have huge implications for nascent monitoring and evaluation systems in many countries.

Development Bank, ECA, the African Union Commission, SADC and others, with the help of some limited external expertise where appropriate.

4.3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

There is already a system in place to monitor Millennium Development Goals at the global level, beginning with country assessments on an annual basis and concluding with high level plenary reports at the regional and global level. Few changes have been suggested to this arrangement, except perhaps to say that there is a need for more country ownership in terms of initiating and funding the process. The only feasible change put forward is that the monitoring frequency should be no less than two years.[24] There is merit in avoiding annual assessments, as many of the comprehensive statistical surveys that provide data are held only every three or five years.

Sustainable development goals will need data that are accurate, timely and readily available to managers, policymakers and the public. In many Southern Africa countries, data availability is a problem and available data may often be years out of date. Despite huge differences in income between the countries of the subregion, both higher income and lower income countries share similar problems on data availability. It is scarcely possible to find published information from the past year for many of the member countries. Despite the advent of the mobile phone, wireless broadband and remote sensing, data are still mostly obtained by means of household surveys conducted manually. Governments should consciously invest in a real-time reporting system for the sustainable development goals to produce regular and reliable data on a yearly basis where possible.   .

4.3.5   Means of implementation

There is unanimity on the challenge posed by funding needs, both for implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It is believed that resources have to be mobilized more aggressively than hitherto to fund current investments for sustainable development and also for monitoring and evaluation, as data collection systems are still heavily donor-dependent in many countries. The second challenge is related to technical skills: capacity-building will be required in terms of training on defining indicators and collection of data. Thus, while there may be fewer sustainable development goals than Millennium Development Goals, the requirements concerning monitoring and evaluation will be greatly increased because of investment needed to collect reliable and clearly defined data for the comprehensive range of indicators.

Where financing is concerned,[25] it should be accepted that sustainable development goals will require all countries to invest adequately in their success. All countries must agree to set aside some proportion of current consumption to invest in the only viable long-term path for human destiny. Countries could bind themselves to transparent and specific standards of financing related to national incomes, revenue from the exploitation of natural resources and levies on national greenhouse gas emissions. Where there are legitimate shortfalls, there may be need for further funding support from high-income to low-income countries, notably the foreign aid outlays voted by parliaments of high-income countries that were set at 0.7 per cent of their GDP. It may be best to follow up such foreign aid at the bilateral level, given the failure at the international level to honour financial pledges.

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[24] Only one country, South Africa, suggested that they should be held annually. General opinion (57 per cent) converged on every three years. South Africa's proposal is understandable in view of the fact that it has one of the strongest statistical data systems in Africa.
[25] This is captured as one of the four target areas under the proposed sustainable development goal 1 mentioned above.

With regard to capacity-building, there is need for the continuous review and building of local capacities in data collection and analysis. The continuous development and refinement of indicators, their effective use and indeed the effective integration of all dimensions of sustainable development depend upon the commitment and capacity of people on the ground. The involvement of experts, policymakers, civil society groups and beneficiaries will help achieve national ownership of indicators, a prerequisite for their institutionalization, and instil collective responsibility for monitoring of progress towards sustainable development. It is of primary importance to strengthen and develop the capacity of the national statistical systems and their lead institutional offices and also to broaden the scope to include those involved in policymaking, programme planning and monitoring and evaluation at various levels: human resources, institutions, policy and legislation. A capacity-building programme on monitoring and evaluation needs to be developed at the regional level, led by an institution like ECA or the African Union, which can be streamlined into national plans.

5.　.

Conclusions and recommendations

Southern Africa has fared better than sub-Saharan Africa as a whole in terms of human development over the last 20 years, even though both Southern and sub-Saharan Africa have been outpaced by South Asia. The average picture for Southern Africa masks wide differences in individual country performance, as it hosts both the highest-ranked country on the Human Development Index in Africa and some of the lowest ranked. On the negative side, improvements on the Index for the subregion have been associated with extensive environmental degradation in the form of forest and natural resources loss.

Some key issues affecting the subregion are, on the economic front, high poverty levels, income inequality, limited value addition (minerals and agriculture), high unemployment and limited diversification. On the social front, key issues include a high incidence of disease probably related to or being worsened by HIV and AIDs, poor health service delivery and enrolment in education beyond primary school. Where the environment is concerned, key issues include the extensive loss of forests and related environmental impacts, deteriorating biodiversity and quality of the ecosystems and narrowly focused economic and sectoral policies that do not prioritize environmental conservation. Finally, key issues related to governance include poor funding and the weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, especially those involved in environmental management and mainstreaming sectors, poor public sector and rural sector management, prevalence of fragmentation, overlap, duplication and competition between institutions.

Given the issues facing the subregion, the following six priority themes have been identified for sustainable development: poverty eradication, education and technical skills, gender equality and empowerment, health and nutrition, environmental sustainability and governance. As a consequence and based on the Millennium Declaration, Agenda 21, the Rio Principles, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, five sustainable development goals have been proposed, as follows:

(i)   poverty eradication
(ii)   Improved learning (education and technical) attainment
(iii)   Promotion of gender equality and empowerment
(iv)   Improvement of health and nutrition status
(v)   Ensuring environmental sustainability.

Governance is recognized as an overching and indispensable requirement to underpin the realisation of the proposed goals.

The overall design of sustainable development goals has been based among others things, on a unified concept of the ultimate goal of human development, namely, improved human well-being. Some of the major strengths of the Millennium Development Goals that led to their high-level global acceptance, such as their parsimony and measured outcomes, have been retained. The sustainable development goals build on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, not necessarily in a direct way, but largely by placing the aspirations of the Millennium Development Goals within the overall framework of the sustainable development goals, as explained in the previous chapter.

The following recommendations relate to the implementation of the sustainable development goals:

(i)   The system of monitoring Millennium Development Goals at the global level, beginning with country assessments on an annual basis and ending up with high-level plenary reports at the regional and global level, should be maintained. it is proposed, however, that such assessments should be prepared every two or three years. For this to succeed, governments should consciously invest in a real-time reporting system for the sustainable development goals to produce regular and reliable data on a yearly basis where possible, by taking advantage of the advent of the mobile phone, wireless broadband and remote sensing. A programme of action to produce regular and reliable data, led and designed at the regional level by United Nations or African Union bodies and streamlined at the national level, could assist in this regard.

(ii)   There is a need to make use of sustainable development goals in formulating national budgets and in helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policymaking. Advocacy by United Nations agencies through ministers of planning, finance and parliaments is crucial for this to be attained.

(iii)   Goals and targets with corresponding indicators should be common but differentiated in terms of measurable quantitative targets depending on country characteristics and level of development. This means that targets for the global level can be set in the same way as for the Millennium Development Goals, but targets for each country should be different and formulated on their baselines. This effort can be led at the technical level by United Nations regional bodies and streamlined for the benefit of individual countries. If countries are left to themselves, they may set targets that are too easily achievable, but if matters are left to external agencies, unrealistic targets may be set. There is a need for an independent forum – perhaps a review council or commission of governmental and non-governmental representatives at the regional level – to set agreed and realistic indicator targets for each country.

(iv)   There is a need to mobilize more resources to finance the implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of the sustainable development goals. Individual country commitments on finance should be a priority, backed up by official development assistance where it can be obtained. In this connection, a regional fund needs to be established that could be accessed by regional and specific country initiatives for the purposes of promoting data collection and the analysis of sustainable development goals. ECA can take the lead in exploring arrangements for such a fund, with support from other regional institutions.

(v)   There is a pressing need for technical skills: capacity-building will be required in terms of training on defining indicators and collection of data. The continuous development and refinement of indicators, their effective use and indeed the effective integration of all dimensions of sustainable development depend upon the commitment and capacity of people on the ground. A capacity-building programme on monitoring and evaluation needs to be developed at the subregional level, led by an institution like ECA or the African Union Commission, and this can be streamlined into plans at the national level.

(vi)   There is a need for the continuous review of indicators and some targets and this can be handled by institutional experts in the relevant areas, perhaps through internal or intra-office consultations, across subregional and national institutions, with limited external assistance. As will be noticed for some goals, in particular the governance goal, not many of the suggested indicators are currently being tracked. Training on how to collect data for new indicators in each country context will be vital and needs to be carried out early to meet the reporting timelines.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Semi-structured questionnaire

Development of sustainable development goals. Southern Africa subregion, April 2013

This questionnaire serves as a broad guide for country discussions with key informants to evaluate understanding of the notion of sustainable development and how its implementation can be assessed at the country level.

Introduction

At the global level, the Millennium Development Goals process is scheduled to come to an end in two years' time (2015) and there is now a need, by building on its success and remedying its weaknesses at the global and country levels, to develop a new and more inclusive development agenda. It has been broadly agreed to focus on sustainable development construed as distinct from and much more encompassing than economic development. Three clearly interlinked pillars have been identified in sustainable development – economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection – with a fourth pillar on governance overarching the other three. In the implementation of the United Nations development agenda, the Millennium Development Goals were used as a means of measuring implementation and consolidating results at the global level and there is now need to come up with a comparable arrangement for sustainable development, by developing "sustainable development goals".

It has been broadly agreed that the sustainable development goals must be based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, fully respect all the Rio+20 principles, be consistent with international law, build upon commitments already made, contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, tackle and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages, be consistent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In terms of actual content or what might be termed their "physical outlook", it has been further agreed that the sustainable development goals must be action-oriented, concise, easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational and global in nature. They will have universal application, while taking into account different national contexts, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

Key questions

1.   Please list the important development or thematic areas in the country's national development strategy or its equivalent that address or will address sustainable development: economic growth, social well-being, environmental protection and governance.
2.   Please list the indicators used to measure progress in those areas. Are they easily available and collected?
3.   How can sustainable development goals:
   (a)   Be structured to balance the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development?
   (b)   Reflect social, economic and environmental dimensions within each sustainable development goal, possibly through the associated targets?

(c)   Integrate the Millennium Development Goals, suitably modified or updated for the period beyond 2015, into a larger sustainable development framework?

(d)   Expand goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals ("ensure environmental sustainability") into a number of goals with a natural or environmental resource dimension (water, food, energy, etc.)?

(e)   Other (please describe)

4.   Based on your experience with the use of Millennium Development Goals or other existing goals, what would be the key use of sustainable development goals for your country (select a maximum of two)?

(a)   Defining national policy priorities
(b)   Influencing national budget allocations
(c)   Reviewing the impact of national policies
(d)   Addressing key pressures leading to unsustainable development
(e)   Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making
(f)   Guiding development cooperation
(g)   Other

5.   The sustainable development goals are supposed to be "global in nature". Should targets associated with those goals be:

(a)   Common to all countries?
(b)   Defined by each country? Or
(c)   Common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development? If (iii), please explain how.

6.   Which existing Millennium Development Goals and targets can be incorporated – perhaps in updated form – into a proposal for sustainable development goals?

7.   How should assessments of progress toward the achievement of the sustainable development goals be carried out at the global level?

8.   What principles should underpin the choice of appropriate sustainable development goals (for example, reducing inequalities, promoting human rights, ensuring sustainability)?

9.   What would be the implementation challenges and constraints and how can these be addressed?

10.   What challenges exist in ensuring the linkages between the economic, social and environment dimensions of sustainable development?

11.   Do you have any other observations, ideas or inputs you would like to offer to inform the initial work of the open working group on sustainable development goals?

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