



# Report on sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion

## Key messages



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa



African Union  
Commission



African Development  
Bank



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## A. Introduction

1. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Brazil in June 2012, represented a major landmark in the pursuit of sustainable development and its translation into concrete results at the global, regional and national levels. The conference adopted an Outcome Document, which, among other commitments, provide for the elaboration of sustainable development goals. The 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 in support of rights-based, equitable and inclusive processes that enhance sustainability at global, regional, national and local levels.
2. As a follow-up to the Rio+20 outcomes, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting to deliberate on the main outcomes of Rio+20 and their implications for Africa. The meeting called for an effective, broad-based and bottom-up consultative process in Africa to flesh out the goals, indicators and targets that should underpin the sustainable development goals.
3. Furthermore, ECA, AUC, AfDB and the United Nations Development Programme jointly organized subregional and regional consultations on the post-2015 development agenda in Africa. The regional consultation held in Hammamet, Tunisia, was intended to, among others things, identify Africa's priorities for the post-2015 agenda, determine enablers and critical success factors for the post-2015 development agenda, and align the post-2015 priorities with other development programmes and agendas, including Rio+20 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The meeting adopted an outcome document in which it was agreed that the post-2015 development agenda should incorporate the outcomes of Rio+20, Africa-wide initiatives, the national and regional consultations, and United Nations forums.
4. It is against this backdrop that the report on sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion was prepared. It is one of five subregional reports prepared to inform the engagement of African countries in the global sustainable development goal process and ensure that the goals to be agreed upon are well aligned with Africa's sustainable development priorities. The report together with those of the other four subregions, informed the Africa regional report on SDGs. All the six reports were presented at the African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals organized by ECA, AUC and AfDB from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
5. The following constitute the key policy messages emanating from the sustainable development goals report for Southern Africa.

## B. Key sustainable development issues and priorities

6. Overall, the Southern Africa subregion has made some progress in the area of human development. However, there are wide disparities in individual country performance, as the subregion hosts both the highest human development index (HDI)-ranked country in Africa, Mauritius, and one of the lowest ranked, Mozambique.
7. High poverty; income inequality; limited value addition in minerals and agriculture; high unemployment – especially among the youth; limited economic diversification, dwindling land resources for productive agriculture; poor infrastructure, including markets; and a low level of intraregional trade are the main constraints to economic development in the subregion . Overcoming these constraints calls for investments and actions to reduce inequalities; enhance

agricultural productivity and food security; promote infrastructure development and ensure adequate energy supply; intensify regional integration efforts; promote job creation; improve market access and trade; address the persistent debt burden; increase levels of development funding; and foster industrial development and value addition.

8. **The region is confronted with a high incidence of disease which is exacerbated by HIV/AIDS; poor health service delivery; low enrolment in education beyond primary school; increasing gender based violence, and a persistent gender gap in wealth distribution and decision making at various levels.** In order to tackle these challenges, countries of the subregion need to enhance access to quality education at all levels combat communicable and non-communicable diseases; ensure fair and equitable access for all to productive resources, employment, education, and health services; and promote social inclusion of all disadvantaged groups.
9. **There is extensive forest degradation and biodiversity, as well as deterioration of fresh water and marine ecosystems in the subregion. These are exacerbated by the impact of climate change.** Climate change adaptation and mitigation should be made an integral priority in the development frameworks of the subregion. Countries also need to intensify investments and develop innovative intervention to reduce and reverse forest and biodiversity loss; and enhance the integrity and productivity of ecosystems.

### **C. Sustainable development goals**

10. **The key sustainable development goals that should be pursued and attained by 2030 in the subregion are: eradicating poverty; improving learning (education and technical); promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; improving health and nutrition status; and ensuring environmental sustainability.** Good governance and institutions should be prioritized as a cross-cutting goal to underpin the realization of all the goals identified.
11. **Poverty eradication should be pursued through sustained economic growth that aims to simultaneously tackle many of the other economic and social challenges faced by the subregion.** As such all countries should by 2030 achieve inclusive economic growth by improving pro-poor investment and financing basic infrastructure, generating employment through appropriate market incentives, ensuring adequate access to land, and adopting best technologies for sustainable food production.
12. **Good education and technical skills will improve social well being, including health, contribute to reduced population growth, enhance governance and lead to a more entrepreneurial society.** By 2030, countries should have expanded coverage and improved access and quality of education, including adult education and technical – or vocational – skills training.
13. **Efforts should be made to address the marginalization and exclusion of vulnerable populations.** By 2030, countries should have promoted 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 the elderly, by addressing the vulnerabilities of each group.
14. **Measures should be put in place to improve the physical health, including nutritional well-being, of the subregion's population.** By 2030, countries should have 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.
15. **Effective environmental management is necessary for improved livelihoods.** By 2030, countries should ensure environmental sustainability by adopting low-carbon energy systems, sustainable food systems, developing sustainable urban areas (including resilience in the face of growing hazards from climate change), and ensuring stabilization of the world's population through voluntary choices.



## D. Conclusion and recommendations

16. The proposed sustainable development goals have retained some of the major strengths of the Millennium Development Goals that led to their global acceptance, such as their parsimony and measured outcomes.
17. **In order to facilitate systematic feedback and review during implementation of the sustainable development goals, 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.** The monitoring of the sustainable development goals should take place once every two or three years. For this process to succeed, governments should consciously invest in a real-time reporting system to produce regular and reliable data. In addition, there is need for a programme of action to produce regular and reliable data, led at the regional level by the United Nations or African Union bodies, and streamlined at the national level.
18. **There is a need to make use of sustainable development goals in the formulation of national budgets and in helping to balance economic, social and environmental dimensions in policymaking.** In this regard, advocacy by United Nations agencies through ministers of finance and parliamentarians would be crucial.
19. **Goals should be common but differentiated in their targets, depending on country characteristics and level of development.** This means that, while global goals may be set, countries could set their own targets, depending on their baselines. This effort can be supported by United Nations regional bodies and streamlined for the benefit of individual countries.
20. **Additional resources need to be mobilized to finance implementation of the sustainable development goals, and also their monitoring and evaluation.** Individual country commitments on finance should be a priority, supplemented by official development assistance as necessary. A regional fund should be established in this connection, to be accessed by regional and country specific initiatives for the purpose of promoting data collection and the analysis of sustainable development goals.
21. **There is need for capacity building to enhance technical skills in indicator definition and data collection.** The continuous development and refinement of indicators, their effective use, and 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.
22. **There is need for the continuous review of indicators and certain targets.** This can be handled through internal or intra-office consultations, across subregional and national institutions. Training on data collection for new indicators tailored to each country context will be vital and needs to be carried out early, to allow time for reporting.

| Goal  | Targets  |
|---|--|
| Eradicating poverty                                     | Achieve inclusive economic growth for all social groups (the youth, women, the elderly, men)         |
|   | Mobilise adequate revenue for development investment   |
|   | Eradicate extreme poverty  |
|   | Proportion of people who are food secure   |
| Improving learning (education and technical) attainment | Achieve universal primary education  |
|   | Proportion of highly skilled people with post primary education                                      |
| Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment       | Equitable enrolment for males and females in formal and non-formal education                         |
|   | Equal distribution of wealth   |
|   | Effective participation in decision making   |
|   | Promote basic human rights across both genders   |
| Improving health and nutrition status                   | Improve primary health care  |
|   | Improve maternal health  |
|   | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases  |
|   | Improve nutritional status for all groups, especially the vulnerable                                 |
| Ensuring environmental sustainability                   | Improve sustainable use of environmental resources   |
|   | Improve access to sustainable energy   |
|   | Increase proportion of people with sustainable access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation |
|   | Reduce internal migration to cities  |
|   | Reduce ozone harming emissions   |





