



# Sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion

## Summary report



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First printing October, 2015

ISBN: 978-99944-61-69-1  
eISBN: 978-99944-62-69-8

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Edited, designed and printed by the ECA Publications Section

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## Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AUC	African Union Commission
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# 1. Background and introduction

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, otherwise referred to as Rio+20 held in June 2012 in Brazil, adopted an outcome document entitled “The future we want”, which was subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. This gave impetus to the implementation of the commitments agreed at the conference, among which was the elaboration of sustainable development goals. These goals would be useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development at the global level by promoting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental.

According to the outcome document, the goals should address and integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages in a balanced manner. They should also be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. The conference had resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on developing sustainable development goals that would be open to all stakeholders with the aim of developing global goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. Progress towards achieving the goals should be assessed and the accompanying targets and indicators should take into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development.

As a follow-up to Rio+20, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting in November 2012. This meeting reaffirmed the principles on which the goals should be based and identified broad priority areas for Africa as provided below. The meeting also called on the international community to provide Africa with adequate support to enable it to establish and implement an effective, broad-based and bottom-up consultative process to develop goals, indicators and targets that would underpin the sustainable development goals. The meeting identified priority areas that cut across the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as peace and security.

- 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.

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 the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). –. 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, the other four subregional reports, and the Africa regional report were prepared within the framework of the Africa consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Rio+20 follow-up processes. They aim at enabling African countries to engage effectively in the process of developing global sustainable development goals and to ensure that the goals to be agreed on were aligned with the continent's sustainable development priorities. The six reports were presented at the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals jointly organized by ECA, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank from 31 October to 5 November 2013. Together with the reports of the other four subregions, the present report informed the preparation of a consolidated Africa report on the sustainable development goals. The meeting adopted the outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The report provides an analysis of key issues related to the sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion. It identifies and analyses the priority sustainable development issues and challenges, and articulates the main priority areas and themes of sustainable development for Southern Africa. It submits sustainable development goals for the Southern Africa subregion and proposes recommendations and the way forward in implementing the proposed goals.



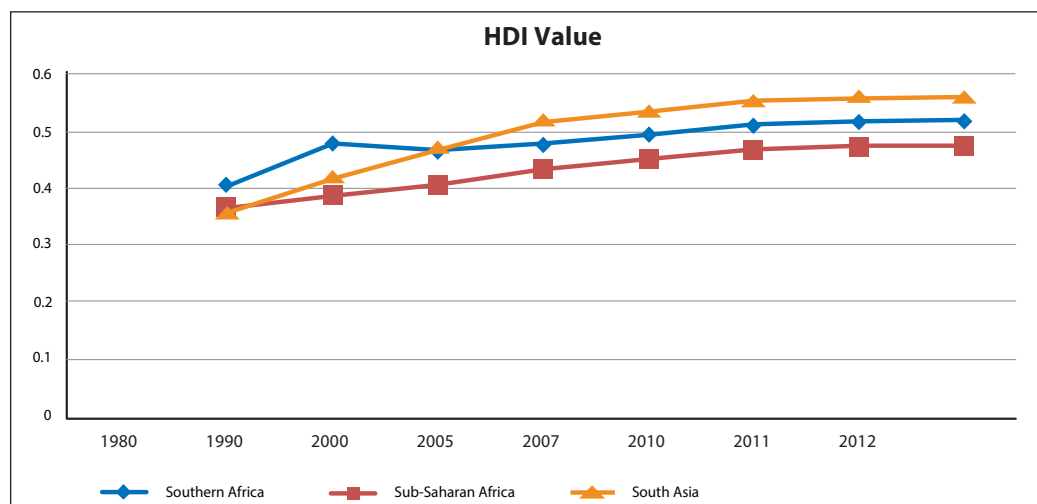
## 2. Sustainable development issues and challenges

### 2.1 Overview of progress on development

Southern Africa's major economic activities are services (51 per cent of gross domestic product – GDP), industry (32 per cent of GDP) and agriculture (17 per cent). The subregion has posted positive economic growth since 2000, peaking at over 6 per cent per year in 2006 and 2007. On the negative side, the subregion is a net importer and frequently incurs fiscal deficits (nearly 4 per cent in 2012). Its development seems to be associated with a high debt ratio of 40 per cent of GDP. While Southern African countries share largely similar climatic conditions, they differ in terms of history and economic achievements. Some countries rank high on the global human development index (HDI),<sup>1</sup> such as Mauritius, which is 80 on the global index and ranked highest in Africa, while others are very low such as Mozambique at 185 out of 187 countries worldwide. Average personal incomes, as measured by gross national product per capita based on US dollar purchasing-power parity, range from as high as \$13,300 for Mauritius to as low as \$424 for Zimbabwe. The subregion includes four countries officially classified as middle-income countries: Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.

To some extent, the human development index provides a starting point but not a comprehensive measure of sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> The performance of Southern Africa compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Human development in Southern Africa**



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

The figure shows that Southern Africa did much better than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of human development over the last 20 years, rising from an HDI value of 0.4 in 1990 to 0.52 in 2012. However, South Asia, which started off with a much lower HDI value of 0.36 in 1990, the same as sub-Saharan Africa, has outpaced both Southern and sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2013). Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South. Human Progress in a Diverse World. New York.

<sup>2</sup> HDI captures economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, only missing out the environment.

The average picture for Southern Africa masks wide differences in individual country performance, as indicated above.<sup>3</sup> Despite these differences in individual countries' performances and in the context of discussing sustainable development challenges, Southern Africa has made encouraging steps in terms of human development over the last two decades, even though much slower than other parts of the world, such as South Asia.

## 2.2 Key issues and challenges

Southern Africa, and indeed sub-Saharan Africa, has made some progress on human development but progress is constrained by a number of issues and challenges that have important implications for its sustainable of development. Table 1 below gives some of the relevant indicators and data that form the basis of this observation. The indicators are discussed in the context of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

**Table 1: Indicators on development issues**

Country	Population	Poverty rate (%)	Forest change (%)	Population growth (%)	Dependency ratio (%)
	2012	2002-12	1990/2010	2010/15	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	38.0	-16.8	1.7	64.8
South Africa	50.7	23.0	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.

**Notes:** "Poverty rate" refers to the percentage of people with income below the national poverty line, and the data refer to the most recent year available within the specified period. "Forest change" refers to change in forest area over the period, measured by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "Population growth" is a projection based on medium-fertility variant and data are average annual estimates for 2010–2015. "Dependency ratio" refers to the sum of the population aged 0–14 and aged 65 and older per 100 people aged 15–64.

This progress notwithstanding, Southern Africa faces economic, social and environmental challenges. This raises concerns about the sustainability of its progress in economic, social and environmental terms, as outlined below.

<sup>3</sup> Based on \$1.25 purchasing power parity, except for the first four middle-income countries where \$2 is used.

## 1. Economic sustainability

Southern Africa's average poverty rate of 45 per cent is not much different from the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (48.5 per cent). More than half the population of most countries have been living below the poverty line over the past decade or longer. Key economic issues and challenges are summarized below.

- (a) *Production base and economic growth:* Southern Africa's economic production base is dominated by raw materials from agriculture and mining. There is limited value addition to minerals and subregional trade largely revolves around a single country, South Africa. Mauritius, which is top ranked on HDI, is unusual because it has a diversified economic base comprising commercial agriculture, tourism and services.
- (b) *Income inequality and employment:* Countries with high per capita income in the subregion seem also to have the highest income inequality between the rich and the poor. Namibia and South Africa, for example, are among the countries with the highest per capita incomes but they have also the highest income Gini-coefficients, South Africa at 63.1 and Namibia at 63.9. Mozambique and Swaziland, at the opposite end of the scale on per capita income, have income Gini-coefficients of 45.7 and 51.5 respectively.<sup>4</sup> Other statistics show that income inequality has also been increasing for low-income countries in the subregion. Another challenge is that unemployment, especially for the youth, has been increasing despite the reported economic growth. Where youth unemployment exists alongside high vacancy rates, it is attributed to a mismatch between education skills and the job market. In many cases, however, unemployment is simply due to lack of employment opportunities.
- (c) *Infrastructure and markets:* The provision of good infrastructure (especially for transport), energy supply and markets (through subregional integration) remains an important factor in the economic development of countries in Southern Africa. Many of them are landlocked and small. The availability of well-functioning markets with unconstrained access has an impact on peoples' livelihoods, social relations and well-being, as well as on their relationship to natural resources.
- (d) *Energy:* Energy is a key driver for economic growth. Southern Africa is rich in renewable and non-renewable energy resources, including coal, oil and natural gas hydrocarbon resources, as well as significant deposits of uranium, a source of nuclear energy.<sup>5</sup> Despite these rich natural resources, energy access and utilization are low 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.<sup>6</sup> The development and supply of energy in many parts of Southern Africa is still a critical resource constraint on development. Tackling it involves developing infrastructure (in terms of transmission networks) and energy in sufficient quantities to meet demand.
- (e) *Regional integration:* Trade integration is potentially a powerful driver of economic growth in Southern Africa, particularly if it creates export opportunities and promotes value addition in manufacturing sectors. In particular, since the subregion includes a combination of countries with different income levels as well as a mix of coastal and island countries, subregional integration offers possibilities to leverage and extend economic comparative advantage at a subregional level in ways not accessible through national or bilateral trade programmes.<sup>7</sup> The low level of intraregional trade, however, reflects limited progress towards implementing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade Protocol, eliminating transport bottlenecks and improving trade facilitation, including customs administration. It also indicates limited trade potential among

<sup>4</sup> UNDP (2013). Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South. Human Progress in a Diverse World. New York.

<sup>5</sup> B. Merven, A. Hughes and S. Davis (2010). "An analysis of energy consumption for a selection of countries in the Southern African Development Community", *Journal of Energy in Southern Africa*. Vol. 21, No. 1, February 2010.

<sup>6</sup> African Development Bank (2010). *The African Development Bank and Energy. Meeting the Challenge of Energy Access for all Africans*. Tunis.

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy K. Mbekeani (2013). *Regional Integration Policy Papers. Intra-Regional Trade in Southern Africa. Structure, Performance and Challenges*. No. 2, June 2013. African Development Bank, NEPAD, Regional Integration and Trade Department, Tunis.

countries in the subregion, particularly because the poorer states trade similar goods. Key challenges are inadequate local capacity, limited financial resources, weak political commitment to subregional integration and poor alignment of national planning and budget allocation priorities with subregional integration efforts.

- (f) *Urbanization*: Urbanization has also been on the increase over the past decade with 36 per cent of the subregion's population living in urban areas,<sup>8</sup> compared to just 11.2 per cent 30 years ago. Botswana and South Africa are the most highly urbanized (50 per cent each), while Malawi is the least urbanized (24 per cent). The current rate of urbanization is high, and is projected to average around 3.5 per cent over the next 15 years, with wide variation across countries in the subregion. The high urbanization rates are largely due to rural-urban migration driven by perceived job and economic opportunities, better infrastructure and housing in urban areas, shortage of land and declining returns from agriculture in rural areas. In Angola and Mozambique, urbanization has been driven largely by civil conflict.

## 2. Social sustainability

Major issues on the social dimension of development are population, education, health and gender inequalities. Population becomes a social challenge only when its growth cannot be sustained by available economic means. The average population growth for the subregion is 1.75 per cent, below the average for sub-Saharan Africa but several countries are close to 3 per cent population growth. It is expected that many countries should be able to sustain higher economic growth rates than population growth in the medium term.

Southern Africa fares better than the whole sub-Saharan Africa on literacy rate and gender inequality, but practically the same on life expectancy. Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa rank among the top 100 countries worldwide on the gender inequality index.<sup>9</sup> Life expectancy has been used as a proxy for the health situation in Southern Africa, with signs that health systems or delivery may be no different from the rest of Africa. Except for Mauritius and Namibia, the life-expectancy rates for the subregion's medium-income and low-income countries are not encouraging and similar to those for the wider zone. Progress has been made to improve health outcomes, but many challenges still exist. Health systems are still weak and the subregion faces an increasing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, recurrent epidemics such as cholera, and other humanitarian crises. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken a significant toll on the subregion and there are issues related to delivery of health services.

Gender inequality remains a major challenge for achieving sustainable development in the subregion. Many gender policies and instruments have been formulated at national levels. SADC has advanced in this area and most, if not all, countries are signatories to international conventions. At national level, there is noticeable political interest in gender issues and this is to be commended. Despite such strides, women remain marginalized in terms of status and control over resources. The lack of tangible progress in public action reinforces the need to mainstream gender equality systematically in all aspects of sustainable development. As often realized, gender considerations are many times an add-on element to programmes and interventions. Addressing the persistent inequalities that exist in the subregion requires a much more vigorous and bold approach.

Gender-based violence, unequal distribution of wealth and wide gender gaps in participation and decision-making at all levels are the major challenges in the subregion. 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 and also at community level. Despite this progress, the gender gap in participation and decision-making between men and women is still huge and needs to be addressed.

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8 United Nations Environment Programme (2002). Website on the first Africa Environment Outlook publication. <http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/publications/aeo-1/213.htm>. UNEP/GRID-Arendal. Arendal, Norway.

9 According to 2012 figures cited in UNDP (2013).

### 3. *Environmental sustainability*

Environmental problems loom large in Southern Africa's development. It appears that the subregion has progressed at no small cost to the environment in general and to its forests in particular. Forest loss has been 7.4 per cent per year, only slightly better than the 10.4 per cent rate for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The situation is all the more worrying when compared with South Asia, which has a higher population but has outpaced Southern Africa on human development and still recorded a forest gain of 2.8 per cent. Southern Africa's development has taken a toll on the environment and urgent remedies are needed to reverse forest loss and create resilience towards climate change, at the same time ensuring infrastructure development to provide access to energy.

Forest loss is neither comprehensive nor the only measure of environmental challenges. Other important indicators include emissions of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases and measures of bio-diversity, natural-resource depletion, usage of fossil fuels and renewable energy, and sources of clean water. A key challenge is that data on environmental indicators are not available for all countries. The loss of forest cover leads to many other negative environmental conditions, including soil and fertility losses, land degradation, water pollution and loss of natural habitat for animal species. 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 into full account their adverse impacts on the environment and on the natural-resource base needed for future development.

Land degradation in the subregion is caused by overcrowding, poor land-management, overgrazing and soil erosion. Poor land-management has a direct impact on food security, including fisheries production. The subregion is said to have very high potential for fishing and considerable potential for developing aquaculture. 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.

Livestock production also plays a significant role in the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and its productivity is also dependent on good land-management systems, although it is not given prominence in debates on poverty reduction and sustainable development. The sector has suffered from low productivity, lack of efficient and effective control of animal diseases, lack of marketing infrastructure and poor market access for livestock products, among other challenges. Priorities for sustainable livestock-management include: good land-management practices alongside efficient control of transboundary animal diseases, sanitary standards and regulations for animals and their products, including risk assessment, and optimal use of animal genetic resources in the subregion.

Climate change is a central concern and a cause of poverty. It is 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 more apparent. Various global climate models predict increased warming and greater rainfall variability in the subregion. The effects of changing temperatures and precipitation patterns will be felt in various sectors, including agriculture, forests, biodiversity and ecosystems, coasts, human settlements, water resources, and human health. In this respect, climate change is largely considered a cross-cutting issue. Evidence shows, however, that the extent of the impacts will vary between countries.

### **3. Sustainable development priorities**

An analysis of the subregional and national development strategies shows that the main priorities for the subregion are:

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

Following a comparison of subregional strategic plans and national development plans in the Southern Africa subregion and identifying the gaps, the sustainable development themes set out below were identified (see table 2).

#### ***3.1 Poverty eradication***

Efforts to eradicate poverty should eventually resolve some of the economic challenges reported earlier: high poverty, income inequality, limited value addition (minerals and agriculture), high unemployment and limited economic diversification. Poverty eradication should incorporate wholly or partially some of the policy themes identified above, including: 2 – reducing inequalities; 3 – food security and agriculture; 11 – improving levels of development funding; and 17 – resource mobilization. Eradication of poverty should mean that poorer people move up the income ladder which would automatically reduce income inequalities. This movement would imply food security and adequate access to basic social services, which in turn would require development funding and resource mobilization. These items link well to achieving the economic objectives of sustainable development and should be treated under the economic dimension, as the economy is the sustainable driver of poverty reduction. In this connection, it would also include priorities 6 – adequate energy supply, 7 – investment for job creation and 8 – market access and trade. Poverty eradication also has strong, if not direct, linkages to other areas such as science and technology and industrial diversification and value addition.

Many national development strategies see sustained economic growth as the key strategy for poverty eradication. It would also involve addressing many bottlenecks such as income inequality, infrastructure and subregional integration. All these initiatives would require resources that may not be adequately provided through national budgets. It would therefore be important to raise adequate resources in connection with these efforts towards poverty eradication. In many Southern African countries, domestic resource allocations are hardly adequate to sustain investments in infrastructure, let alone to sustain its maintenance. There has to be reliance on external sources and debt. Broadening the tax base and motivating tax compliance can be some of the strategies used to raise adequate domestic revenues. Borrowing should be restricted because the debt ratio for Southern Africa (currently 32 per cent of GDP) is too high. Soliciting grants through bilateral arrangements may be one practical way forward, despite donor fatigue.

### *3.2 Education and technical skills*

Good education and technical skills remain important assets for access to more rewarding employment and business opportunities. “Education” refers to both formal (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and non-formal (adult and community education) schooling. Issues include 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 wellbeing including health, contribute to reduced population growth, enhance governance and lead to a more entrepreneurial society. 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 in particular in professions such as doctors, university lecturers and engineers.

This theme on education and technical skills brings together issues relating to priorities 2 – social inclusion and reducing inequalities, 15 – science and technology, 16 – statistics and 4 – climate change and its impacts.

### *3.3 Gender equality and empowerment*

Social inclusion is generally understood to include fair and equitable access for all genders and for 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 takes on board issues of intergenerational equity and vulnerabilities. In Southern Africa, women and youth have significant roles both as the drivers and beneficiaries of sustainable development. There has been commendable progress in many areas, including education, health, HIV/AIDS, employment and participation in political and decision-making processes, but there are still challenges in the form of marginalization and exclusion from benefits of recent economic growth.

### *3.4 Health and nutrition*

Health and nutrition include the challenges of combating HIV/AIDS and combating communicable and non-communicable diseases, which often come as a result of poor nutrition. Health, as defined in Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 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”.<sup>10</sup> Health is both a means towards achieving development and an aim of development. The health theme has strong linkages to improving

<sup>10</sup> A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I).

levels of development funding and resource mobilization because many developing countries do not have the resources to build modern hospitals. A healthy population is the key to improved economic production, as this maximizes availability of labour. Southern Africa has a high HIV prevalence rate, of around 12.6 per cent, and this mostly affects the economically productive age group, ages between 20 and 49 years. The subregion also has 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. Improving health and well-being of the population remain important objectives.

### 3.5 Environmental sustainability

Southern Africa faces grave challenges on the environment: extensive loss of forests and 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 and economic and social organization. That said, 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 endangered in the subregion. Dependence on natural resources is relatively high, against the backdrop of pervasive poverty and low technological and institutional response.

The agriculture sector is sensitive to climate change and variability. These, combined with poor soil fertility, pests, crop diseases and lack of access to technology, markets and infrastructure, have a huge impact on Southern Africa's livelihood base. Seasons of good rainfall are associated with plenty, while dry seasons are associated with adversity, deprivation, frustration, famine and possible displacement. As a result of climate change, severe drought and dry spells, flooding, changes in rainfall patterns, increasing temperatures and other changes are increasingly frequent. Carbon emissions from the use of fossil fuels are relatively low, but the carbon intensity of Southern Africa is rather high and there is a need to reduce this and facilitate a transition to a low-carbon economy.

**Table 2: Sustainable development priority themes**

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



Some sub-themes in table 2 above cut across more than one thematic area, as do some main themes, such as gender equality, development and governance. Indeed, all classifications of themes or sub-themes can hardly achieve precise definition. It is a challenge to achieve 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 properly. A trade-off also exists between achieving technical correctness and simplification that makes things easily understood by non-technical people.

Most of the sustainable-development issues identified above are captured in existing national and subregional strategic plans, except for issues of intergenerational equity. There are differences, however, in terms of prioritization. National development strategies are nearly unanimous in prioritizing poverty reduction or eradication, but there is not much commonality in ranking thereafter despite similarity of focus over policy issues. Subregional development strategies also have different prioritizations that are more suited to subregional mandates. Other development issues are taken on as additional issues with close linkages to the delivery of core mandates.

## 4. Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators

For countries to own sustainable development goals, targets and indicators, these must be in line with the sustainable development themes identified in the previous section. Targets must be appropriate to the goals and indicators must be appropriate to the targets. An important goal of sustainable development is to achieve improved human well-being with intergenerational equity. Goals may be short-term or long-term, higher level or lower level but in all the areas of sustainable development they must be derived from an overall goal. This conceptualization guided the formulation of sustainable development goals in the present report. It also guided the review of the Millennium Development Goals in order to formulate sustainable development goals that build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals and address pitfalls.

### 4.1 Guiding principles

In order to develop meaningful sustainable development goals, targets and indicators, certain guiding principles have to be followed. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underscores that sustainable development goals should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, 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.

While most of these principles are self-explanatory, the last reveals the depth of the challenge in developing proper and widely accepted sustainable development goals. Follow-up discussions and literature after the conference indicate that the sustainable development goals must build on and be guided by the Millennium Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. They should also be consistent with other internationally agreed goals and targets. Specifically, the sustainable development goals must complement or link to the Millennium Development Goals by building on their success and learning from their failures.

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

- i) *High-level global political buy-in*: controversial goals and targets, such as goals or targets on peace and security, human rights, or carbon-dioxide and greenhouse-gas emissions, were conveniently or deliberately left out.
- ii) *Simplicity*: anyone with reasonable interest can easily remember at least one of the Millennium Development Goals, if not several.
- iii) *Measurable outcomes*: they have quantitative targets and precise indicators, making for easy management as there is a steady flow of data.
- iv) *Neutrality in terms of policy prescriptions*: each country is free to design policies that can be successful in achieving Millennium Development Goals within their own situation and context.

Some of these features should be maintained to ensure the success of the sustainable development goals. The following key pitfalls of the Millennium Development Goals must be avoided, however:

- i) *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, although, in reality, some appear to be higher than others. “Environmental sustainability” (goal 7) covers an entire sector, unlike “Improve maternal health” (goal 5) or “Reduce child mortality” (goal 4), which both belong to one sector. Failure to design goals at the same level would result in comparing apples to oranges and misleading resource allocations and assessments of achievements.

- ii) *Fragmentation and lack of synergy*: The major weakness of the Millennium Development Goals has been their fragmentation and lack of synergy. Indeed, any goal-setting endeavour with the current level of human knowledge may not avoid this completely. Goal-setting cannot easily avoid creating a fragmented vertical organization of administrative and operational functions that will not relate easily to other areas. Literature shows that the health sector may not have reaped the benefits of consolidation or proper coordination because it covers three of the Millennium Development Goals, goals 4, 5 and 6.
- iii) *Partiality*: Most of the targets or indicators chosen do not present a holistic picture of the goal or target. For example, the number of seats for women in parliament can be achieved through affirmative action. While some countries have been able to achieve this, they still rank very low on the overall goal of gender development.<sup>11</sup> This can also promote the spirit of the end justifying the means, with tragic consequences for long-term development.
- iv) *Lack of ownership and commitment*: Several goals, targets and indicators still go unreported by some countries owing to lack of ownership or commitment. This is especially true for “gender equity and women’s empowerment”. This may be because the preconditions for inclusion are not yet met or agreed universally.

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

## 4.2 Goals, targets and indicators

As pointed out earlier, sustainable development goals should cascade from an overall goal of human well-being and intergenerational equity, and reflect distinct dimensions of human well-being 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 3 shows the goal for each theme and table 4 the targets and indicators for each goal.

**Table 3: Sustainable development themes and goals**

SD Theme	Goal (by 2030)
<b>Poverty eradication</b>	All countries should by 2030 achieve inclusive economic growth by improving pro-poor investment and financing into basic infrastructure, employment generation, appropriate market incentives, adequate access to land, and adoption of best technologies for sustainable food production
<b>Education and technical skills</b>	By 2030, nations should have expanded coverage and improved quality of education and its access, including adult education and technical (vocational) skills training
<b>Gender equality and empowerment</b>	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
<b>Health and nutrition</b>	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
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	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

<sup>11</sup> An African country, Rwanda, ranks first in the world on the number of seats occupied by women in Parliament but ranks seventy-sixth on gender development.

Two aspects of table 3 are worth explaining: the 2030 goal deadline and the goal short name. The 2030 deadline has been chosen because of the need to reconcile with the United Nations-agreed timeline for attaining sustainable development goals. It may be useful to retain a nomenclature using short names as that has contributed to the usefulness of the Millennium Development Goals, although brevity can sacrifice useful detail on issues that cannot be easily communicated in a few words.

Table 4 provides 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 should be measurable and relevant in the context of the identified goals.<sup>12</sup> The sustainable development goals are more simplified than the Millennium Development Goals, despite being more rigorous in terms of measurements, and 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 many other known goals on development, but that is a practical challenge that can be more easily overcome than achieving higher-level consensus for ownership of these goals.

**Table 4: Sustainable development goals, targets and indicators**

Goal	Targets	Indicators
<b>Eradicating poverty</b>	Inclusive economic growth for all genders and vulnerable 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 (hectares)
		Length of bituminized roads (kilometres)
	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)
	Proportion of people who are food secure	Prevalence of underweight children (%)
Population dependent on food aid (%)		
<b>Improving learning (education and technical) attainment</b>	Achieve universal primary education	Net enrolment in primary education (%)
		Proportion of pupils who started Grade 1 and reached Grade 5 (%)
		Literacy rate (ages 15-24 years) (%) Quality of primary education (satisfaction levels)
	Proportion of higher skills people with more than primary education	Secondary and tertiary schooling attainment level
		Quality of university education (perceptions)
		Net enrolment in technical education

<sup>12</sup> It is not possible to ascertain "measurability" for all countries because of differences in data-collection capacities.

Goal	Targets	Indicators	
<b>Promoting gender equality and empowerment</b>	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 (ages 15–24 years)	
		Proportion of disabled in formal and non-formal education	
	Equal distribution of wealth	Share of women in decent wage employment sector (%)	
		Youth unemployment rate (%)	
		Unemployment rate amongst people living with disabilities (%)	
		Ratio of women receiving economic empowerment	
	Participation in decision-making	Proportion of seats held by women in parliament (%)	
	Promotion of basic human rights amongst genders	Proportion of women with access to land	
		Ratio of women to men inheriting family wealth	
		Annual incidence of gender-based violence (%)	
<b>Improving health and nutrition status</b>	Improved primary health care	Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000)	
		Infant mortality rate (per 1,000)	
		Proportion of children age 1 year immunized against measles (%)	
		Life expectancy at birth	
	Improve maternal health	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000)	
		Proportion of births attended to by skilled health personnel (%)	
	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	HIV prevalence among pregnant women (ages 15–24 years) (%)	
		Ratio of orphans to non-orphans in school	
		Death rates associated with malaria (%)	
		Access to malaria treatment (%)	
		Proportion of households with at least one insecticide-treated bed net (%)	
		Death rates associated with tuberculosis (%)	
		Proportion of tuberculosis cases under directly-observed treatment, short-course (DOTS) (%)	
	Improved nutrition status for all groups, especially the vulnerable	Prevalence of underweight children	
		Dietary diversity index	
	<b>Ensuring Environmental Sustainability</b>	Improve sustainable use of environmental resources	Proportion of land covered by forest (%)
			Proportion of area protected to maintain biological diversity (%)
			Proportion of budget/GDP allocated to environment
		Improve access to sustainable energy	Proportion of population with access to renewable energy
			Proportion of population 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	

The goals can also be summed up using the dimensions of sustainable development as the goal-setting conceptual framework (table 5).

**Table 5: Sustainable development themes and goals**

Sustainable development dimension	Goals
<b>Economic</b>	Sustainable poverty eradication with targets of inclusive economic growth, mobilization of resources for development investments, eradicating extreme poverty, and adequacy of food supplies or production
<b>Social</b>	Improve learning outcomes Promote gender equality and empowerment Improve health and nutrition status
<b>Environment</b>	Ensure environmental sustainability with targets of 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 5 shows that all sustainable development dimensions have one goal except the social dimension. The fact that the social dimension has three goals does not necessarily mean unequal treatment of the dimensions but simply a sign that perhaps in the foreseeable future there are more human wellbeing issues to consider under the social dimension.

The sustainable development goals proposed in the present report bear a close relationship to Millennium Development Goals which will expire in 2015. The relationships are not direct, however, even where the nomenclature has been retained, for example goal 7 is also “ensure environmental sustainability”. In order to trace unfinished business from the Millennium Development Goals, it is necessary to refer to the targets to identify the goal under which that business is being carried forward. For example, poverty eradication (goal 1 was “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”) will remain as a goal with the added dimension of sustainability in the first of the sustainable development goals. The focus will be on eradicating extreme poverty (the third target under sustainable development goal 1). Most of the issues under all five sustainable development goals therefore are new but there are some issues from the Millennium Development Goals that have been carried over. These are summed up in table 6 below.

**Table 6: Linkages between sustainable development goals and millennium development goals**

SDG	MDG issues carried over
<b>Eradicating poverty</b>	Eradicate extreme poverty
<b>Improving learning (education and technical) attainment</b>	Achieve universal primary education
<b>Promoting gender equality and empowerment</b>	Equitable enrolment for male and female in formal education and women’s participation in decision-making
<b>Improving health and nutrition status</b>	Improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
<b>Ensuring environmental sustainability</b>	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 that the primary use of sustainable development goals should be to inform their country’s budget. In other words, more resources should be allocated to sustainable development goals that are not showing good progress. It was also perceived that a second use was helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policymaking. There is hardly any

mention of using sustainable development goals to define national policy priorities, review the impact of national policies, address key pressures that lead to unsustainable development and guide development cooperation. SADC and United Nations agencies should urge ministers of finance and parliaments in Southern Africa to rectify this situation.

### 4.3.2 Setting targets for indicators for sustainable development goals

There is broad agreement that 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, just as for Millennium Development Goals, each country may be allowed to set its own targets, depending on its baseline. Target-setting for individual countries, however, should be done in an objective and transparent manner. There should be a global and regional database keeping track of these targets and advising individual countries on their position. This effort can be led technically 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 regional review council or commission of government and non-government representatives to set agreeable and realistic indicator targets for each country.

### 4.3.3 Defining indicators

Indicators for some goals, in particular the new one on governance, may not be exhaustive. To a large extent, it is beyond the scope of the present report to design new indicators.<sup>13</sup> Institutions such as ECA, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and SADC could be called upon to conduct internal or intra-agency consultations to complete the set of indicators in the relevant areas.

### 4.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

There is already a global system for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, including annual country assessments and high-level regional and global plenary reports. There is a need, however, for more country ownership in terms of initiating and funding the process. The only change put forward is that the frequency should be not less than two years.<sup>14</sup> There is merit in avoiding annual assessments, as many of the comprehensive statistical surveys that provide data are conducted only once every three or five years.

Monitoring sustainable development goals will require data that are accurate, timely and readily available to managers, policymakers, and the public. In many Southern African countries, data are either very hard to obtain or out-of-date. Despite huge differences in incomes among the countries of the subregion, both higher-income and lower-income countries share similar problems of data availability. Many countries can scarcely provide published information from the past year. Despite the advent of the mobile phone, wireless broadband and remote sensing, data are still mostly collected by hand during household surveys. Governments should invest in real-time reporting systems to produce regular and reliable annual data for the sustainable development goals, where possible. It would be useful to initiate a programme of action to produce regular and reliable data, led and designed at the regional level by United Nations agencies or African Union institutions, with the participation of SADC and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and streamlined at the national level.

### 4.3.5 Means of implementation

There is unanimity that finance will be a challenge for implementation and for monitoring and evaluation. Resources have to be mobilized more aggressively than before to fund actual investments for sustainable development and also for monitoring and evaluation, as data-collection systems in many countries are still heavily dependent on donors. The second challenge relates to technical skills, as capacity-building will be required to train personnel in defining indicators and collecting data. While the proposed sustainable development goals may be fewer than Millennium Development Goals, monitoring and evaluation requirements will be much higher because of the investments needed to collect reliable and clearly defined data for the comprehensive range of indicators.

<sup>13</sup> As pointed out above, only indicators that were seen as being measurable and relevant have been taken on board. Some of the trade-off challenges amongst indicators 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.

<sup>14</sup> Only one country, South Africa, suggested that they should be held annually. The convergence (57 per cent) is on every three years. South Africa has one of the strongest statistical data systems in Africa.

Where financing is concerned, all countries will need to invest adequately to ensure the success of the sustainable development goals. All countries must agree to set aside some proportion of current consumption to invest in the sole long-term viable path for human destiny. Countries could bind themselves to transparent and specific standards of financing related to national incomes, revenue from exploitation of natural resources and levies on national emissions of greenhouse gases. Where there are legitimate shortfalls, there may be a need for further funding support from high-income countries 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. Such foreign aid should be negotiated at the bilateral level, given the failure at the international level to honour financial pledges. A regional fund should be set up and accessed by regional and specific country initiatives to promote data collection and analysis of sustainable development goals. ECA may lead in exploring arrangements for the fund, with support from other regional institutions.

On capacity-building, there is a continuing need to review and build local capacities in data-collection and analysis. The continuous development and refinement of indicators, their effective use and the effective integration of all dimensions of sustainable development depend on the commitment and capacity of people on the ground. Experts, policymakers, civil-society groups and beneficiaries should be involved to help achieve national ownership of indicators, which is essential for the indicators to be institutionalized and to instil collective responsibility for monitoring progress toward sustainable development. It is crucial to strengthen and develop the capacity of 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 of human resources, institutions, policy and legislation. ECA or the African Union Commission should lead a regional programme to build capacity for monitoring and evaluation, with the participation of subregional institutions such as SADC. The programme could then be streamlined into national plans.



## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

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

Key issues affecting the subregion on the economic front include extreme poverty, income inequality, limited value addition (minerals and agriculture), high unemployment and limited diversification. On the social front, issues include high incidence of disease probably related to or worsened by HIV/AIDS, poor health-service delivery and too little enrolment in secondary and tertiary education. Issues on the environmental front are 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, on governance, the issues are poor funding and weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, especially those involved in environmental management and mainstreaming, poor public-sector and rural management, and 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, 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 overarching and indispensable requirement to underpin the realisation of the proposed goals.

### 5.2 Recommendations

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

- i) The system of monitoring Millennium Development Goals at the global level, beginning with annual country assessments and ending with high-level plenary reports at the regional and global levels, should be maintained. However, the proposal is that this should take place only every two or three years. For this to succeed, governments should consciously invest in real-time reporting systems for the sustainable development goals, to produce regular and reliable data on a yearly basis, where possible, by taking advantage of new technology such as mobile telephones, wireless broadband, and remote sensing. A programme of action to produce regular and reliable data, led and designed at the subregional level by United Nations or African Union bodies and streamlined at national level, could assist.

- ii) Sustainable development goals should be used when formulating national budgets and to help balance economic, social and environmental dimensions in policymaking. Advocacy by United Nations agencies through ministers of finance and through parliaments is crucial for this to be attained.
- iii) Goals should be common worldwide but national targets and indicators can be different, depending on country characteristics and levels of development. This means that targets at global level can be set in the same manner as they were set for the Millennium Development Goals, but that targets for each country should differ, based on the national baselines. This effort can be led technically by United Nations regional bodies and streamlined for the benefit of individual countries. Without guidance, countries may set up targets that are too easily achievable. If external agencies only are involved and not countries, unrealistic targets may be set. An independent forum such as a review council or commission of government and non-government representatives at regional level is needed to set acceptable and realistic targets and indicators for each country.
- iv) Additional resources should be mobilized to finance implementation and monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development goals. The priority should be individual country financing commitments, with secondary support from official development assistance where that is forthcoming. A regional fund should be established in this connection which can be accessed by subregional and specific country initiatives for purposes of promoting data collection and 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 in defining indicators and collecting data. 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 programme to build capacity for monitoring and evaluation should be developed at the regional level, led by an institution such as ECA or the African Union, and this can be streamlined into plans at the national level.
- vi) There is need for continuous review of indicators and some targets. This can be handled by institutional expertise in the relevant areas, perhaps through internal or intra-agency consultations across regional and national institutions, supported by limited external assistance. Not many of the suggested indicators are currently being collected for some goals, especially the new goal on governance. Training on how to collect data for new indicators in each country will be vital and needs to be carried well in advance of the reporting times.



