

**16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa  
28 and 29 March 2015, Addis Ababa**

**Report of the Advocacy and Communication Cluster (ACC, 2015)**

## **1. Background**

In the reporting period, April 2014 to March 2015, members<sup>1</sup> of the Advocacy and Communications Cluster (ACC) implemented a range of individual and joint activities that collectively promoted advocacy for the AU, NEPAD, APRM and RECs and generated support for socio-economic development, peace and security in Africa. Activities were undertaken at both global and continental levels, and aligned to major events such as the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of UN General Assembly high-level debate on the development of Africa, ECOSOC Special Meeting on Ebola, the 24<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the 2014 Africa Day and the 2014 Africa Industrialization Day.

In line with the outcome document of the 15<sup>th</sup> RCM, the main framework documents that informed the advocacy, outreach and public information activities of the ACC were the Strategic Plans of the AUC and NEPAD Agency (2014-2017), the Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Agenda 2063. Activities in specific areas such as gender equality and women's empowerment was also guided by the outcomes of the regional consultations on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform Action and the UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), respectively.

## **2. Key activities implemented in the reporting period**

- a. **Launch of the 2014 Economic Report on Africa** on "*Dynamic Industrial Policy in Africa: Innovative Institutions, Effective Processes and Flexible Mechanisms*". The event took place at the UNHQ in New York, on 11 April 2014 and was jointly implemented by AU, DPI, ECA and OSAA. The event was attended by UN Member States, representatives from civil society, private sector, academia, and UN system agencies. Amongst the participants were about 40 UN Permanent Representatives from Africa, traditional development partners and new and emerging donors, at Ambassadorial level, highlighted the critical need for the strengthening of credible institutions to boost industrialization in Africa. The event also demonstrated the close collaboration between OSAA, DPI and ECA. The three institutions made strong interventions that advocated for support from the international community as well as the private sector. DPI also provided media and publicity support for the event, as well as arranged for interviews with key personalities for the Africa Renewal magazine, as well as for African and international news agencies and newswires.

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<sup>1</sup> Cluster Members include: 1) AUC/DIC, 2) NEPAD Agency, 3) ILO, 4) IOM, 5) UNAIDS, 6) UNDP, 7) DPI, 8) ECA, 9) UNEP, 10) UNESCO, 11) UNFPA, 12) UNHCR, 13) UNWOMEN and 14) OSAA.

- b. **The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Retreat of the African Permanent Representatives to the United Nations:** three cluster members - OSAA, UNDP and UNFPA took part in the Retreat, held on the theme “*Common African Position (CAP) on Post-2015: Ensuring Ownership and Speaking with One Voice*”. The Retreat, which took place on 25-26 April 2014 in Rye Brook, New York, provided a platform for defining strategies to: (1) ensure a coherent approach and synergy with the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, and the post -2015 development process; and (2) ensure African ownership and unity of purpose in advocacy for Africa’s development priorities, particularly with regard to defending and integrating Africa’s CAP in the post-2015 development agenda. The event helped the African Group to strengthen their common understanding and ownership of the CAP, and to develop a common strategy to advocate for its priorities in the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.
- c. **TICAD V First Ministerial Meeting:** three members of the cluster – AUC, OSAA and UNDP collaborated with the World Bank and the Government of Japan to organise the first ministerial meeting of TICAD V, in their capacities as TICAD co-organisers. The meeting, which took place from 3 to 5 May 2014 in Yaoundé, adopted the Implementation Matrix of the Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017. The meeting provided Africa Member States and their development partners the opportunity to exchange views in three main areas: i) Agriculture, Food and Nutrition; ii) The Post-2015 Development Agenda; and iii) Empowering Women and the Youth. Approximately 800 participants, with representatives from 52 African countries including 20 foreign Ministers, donor countries and Asian countries, international organizations and regional organizations, as well as representatives from civil society, the private sector and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. The Implementation Matrix of the Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017 that was adopted at the meeting contains 617 concrete development initiatives of African institutions and development partners. To support implementation, Japan has disbursed US \$ 3.5 billion in ODA, being about 25% of the US \$ 14 billion ODA that was committed during the TICAD V Summit, as a part of the overall US \$ 32 billion that was pledged.
- d. **Africa Day 2014:** four members of the cluster, OSAA, DPI, AUC and NEPAD Agency, collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to commemorate the annual Africa Day on 23 May 2014 in UNHQ in New York. They jointly hosted a panel discussion on the theme “*Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods: Strengthening the African Union/United Nations Partnership for Tangible Impact*”. The event was instrumental for increasing global awareness of the AU’s NEPAD flagship programme on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in Africa.
- e. **High Level Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on the Promotion of Investment in Africa:** on 17 July 2014, the President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. John Ashe, convened a High Level Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on the “*Promotion of Investment in Africa and its Catalytic role in Achieving Africa’s Development Objectives, including those of NEPAD*” in accordance

with operative paragraph 42 of the UNGA resolution 67/294 of 15 August 2013, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support". OSAA provided extensive support on the substance and logistical preparation of the event which highlighted the key role of investment as a vehicle for development enhancement and poverty reduction in Africa, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and Agenda 2063. Participants included Member States, the African Union, the World Bank, the NEPAD Business Foundation, all UN members of the ACC, Representatives from the Private Sector and the civil society, the media and academia.

- f. **The Africa Rising Forum:** on 22 September 2014, two members of the cluster, OSAA and DPI, collaborated closely with the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and The Africa Center to host the "*The Africa Rising Forum*". The Forum provided a global platform that assessed and identified how governments, the public and the private sectors as well as civil society could partner in ensuring inclusive, sustainable and resilient transformation of Africa's economies. Speakers at the forum included President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, the President of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa, the AUC Commissioner for Economic Affairs, and the Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security.
- g. **Briefing by Regional Economic Communities to Member States of the United Nations:** on 1 October 2014, four cluster members – the AUC, OSAA, DPI and UNDP, jointly convened the annual briefing by RECs to UN Member States at the UNHQ in New York. The event provided a platform for exchange among RECs and for interactions between RECs and the international community on the theme: "*The Role of Africa's Regional Economic Communities in Consolidating Peace, Security, Governance and Development in the Context of Africa's Agenda 2063*". The event, which was well attended by the RECs at principal level, featured keynote remarks by the UN Deputy Secretary-General. The event was followed by a media dialogue in which the AU Observer Mission to the UN, RECs and OSAA participated at principal levels. Overall the event contributed to raising awareness on a range of RECs' concerns, including the critical need for: (i) greater involvement and engagement of the RECs in the AU decision making processes; (ii) stronger collaboration, coordination and synergies between the AU, RECs and UN at operational levels; and (iii) enhanced support from the UN in strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of the RECs, including in reviewing their respective strategic plans to ensure alignment with Agenda 2063 and in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Agenda at regional levels.
- h. **Africa Week 2014:** five members of the cluster – AUC, NEPAD Agency, OSAA, DPI and ECA collaborated closely in organizing the Africa Week 2014, which took place from 13 to 17 October 2014. The Week was convened at UNHQ in New York to raise awareness and mobilize support at the global level for the implementation of Africa's peace, governance and development priorities, including Agenda 2063, NEPAD and the APRM. The theme for the Week was "*The Africa We Want: Support of the United Nations System to the African Union's Agenda 2063*"; and it featured a high-level panel discussion, a meeting with the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs (IDTF),

briefings to Member States and a launch event of knowledge products. The Week's activities culminated with the UN General Assembly debate on the development of Africa. The activities were attended by UN Member States, representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia, the Diaspora and United Nations system agencies.

A high-level delegation from the AUC participated in the Week, including H.E. Mr. Smail Chergui, AUC Commissioner for Peace and Security; H.E. Dr. Anthony Maruping, AUC Commissioner for Economic Affairs; H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency and Interim Chief Executive Officer of the APRM Secretariat; H.E. Mr. Jean Baptiste Natama, Chief of Staff, Bureau of the AUC Chairperson; H.E. Ambassador Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer of the AU to the United Nations; H.E. Ms. Fatuma Ndangiza, Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons; H.E. Ambassador Ashraf Rashed, Vice Chairperson of the APR Panel; Dr. Mustapha Mekideche, Member of the APR Panel and Ms. Habiba Scheikh, Director of the AUC/DIC.

The debates during the Week raised awareness on how the international community can support the effective implementation of and accountability for Agenda 2063. Participants called for coherence between Agenda 2053 and the CAP on post-2015 development agenda on one hand and the final outcome of the intergovernmental negotiations on the SDGs, its targets and indicators on the other. Development partners were urged to meet their ODA commitments, intensify efforts to address illicit financial flows, as well as increase investments to cover the NEPAD bankable mega projects, including those identified during the Dakar Summit.

The Week also featured a media roundtable discussion on the priorities of the NEPAD Agency which was attended by non-UN accredited New York media; a press conference and press interviews for senior officials from the NEPAD Agency, OSAA and APRM. As part of the outreach efforts, DPI developed a special section called "Africa at the General Assembly" on its website ([www.un.org/Africarenewal](http://www.un.org/Africarenewal)) with regular updates including official speeches, statements and activities of African leaders during the UNGA debate on the development of Africa. OSAA commenced efforts aimed at revamping its website in all the UN official languages, as a platform for advocacy and repository for information on African affairs. A soft launch of the website was initiated during the Africa Week 2014 and an official launch is planned within the current year. Work on the OSAA website (<http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/>) is ongoing in preparation for the official launch.

- i. **Meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport:** two members of the cluster – AUC and UNESCO jointly organised the meeting of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport, from 27 October to 1 November 2014. The meeting, which was themed "*Building the Interface between Youth, Culture and Sport*", provided an opportunity for information sharing and exchange on the joint cooperation activities of the AU-EU-UNESCO in fighting against illegal trafficking of cultural property.

- j. **Africa Industrialization Day:** on 20 November 2014, two cluster members, OSAA and the AU, collaborated with UNIDO to commemorate the 2014 Africa Industrialization Day by organizing a High-Level Panel Discussion on the theme, “*Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development: Agro Industrial Development for Food Security*”. The event raised awareness on the importance of industrial development in Africa. It garnered international support to strengthen efforts to this end, by focusing on how inclusive and sustainable industrial development, including agro industrial development, can serve as a key driver to economic growth and the realization of Africa’s strategies for structural socio-economic transformation.
- k. **Advocacy and Outreach at the African Union Summit:** at the 24<sup>th</sup> AU Summit, two members of the cluster, AUC/DIC and OSAA undertook joint activities in support of NEPAD. During the meetings of the NEPAD Steering Committee and the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee on 25 and 29 January 2015, respectively, OSAA’s USG and Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, briefed participants on the outcomes of the Africa Week 2014. In doing so, he also provided insights on the informal concept note on “*ensuring international support for Agenda 2063*”, which OSAA prepared following the recommendations of the Africa Week 2014. This informal concept note that was submitted to the Members of the High Level Committee on Agenda 2063, *inter alia*, advocates for the establishment of an international structure within the UN to garner support for Africa’s implementation of Agenda 2063. The proposed structure would review the effective implementation of new commitments made in support of Agenda 2063 and its 10-Year Action Plans, in the same way the UN currently reviews implementation of programmes for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, including through summit and Ministerial meetings attended by all UN Member States. The AUC/DIC uploaded the statement by OSAA’s USG and Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, on the AU website (<http://summits.au.int/en/24thsummit/speeches/statement-mr-maged-abdelaziz-under-secretary-general>), and shared same with all members of the ACC and the media.

Furthermore, the AUC/DIC and NEPAD Agency also undertook a range of joint public outreach activities during the summit, in support of NEPAD. AUC/DIC provided technical support to the NEPAD Agency in the production of media advisories, accreditation of journalists and in the organization of press briefings. Similar support was also provided by the AUC/DIC to the UN in the organization of the press conference of the UN Secretary-General.

- l. **High-Level Expert Group Meeting** - on 24 February 2015 four members of the cluster, AUC, OSAA, ECA, and DPI collaborated with the African Development Bank in hosting a high-level EGM on the theme, “*Towards the post-2015 development agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063-Enhancing the management of Africa’s Extractive industries to promote sustainable and inclusive industrial development, structural economic transformation and inclusive resilient economic growth*,”. Participants at the event included about 20 Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, high-level officials from the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the African Development Bank, United Nations agencies, the private sector, civil society and

academia, including Sir Paul Collier, Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies (University of Oxford). The meeting raised awareness at the global level and provided vital information on how the management of Africa's extractive industries can be enhanced to fully harness their potential as important drivers for sustainable development and inclusive growth. This was particularly timely, in light of the great importance that is attached to the effective management of natural resources, value addition and industrialization in Agenda 2063 and the on-going negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

- m. **59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women:** on 10 and 11 March 2015, four members of the cluster – AUC, OSAA, DPI and UNDP collaborated in hosting two High-level side events. One was on the proposed “*Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security*”, and the second was on “*The Emerging Leadership of Africa's Young Women & Girls Towards 2063*”. The events featured the participation of African Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, the Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security, the Acting Director of the AUC Women and Gender Development Directorate, Gender Focal Points of the RECs and African civil society organizations. The events were complementary in their focus on priorities of African women and girls in the areas of peace, security and development; and provided a global platform to showcase good practices of implementing the ‘women, peace and security’ and ‘women in leadership’ agendas in Africa.
- n. **On-going Advocacy on Ebola Response and Recovery:** in the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in 2014, all cluster members contributed to public information and advocacy efforts at both global and continental levels, aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing support for Ebola response and recovery. The AUC provided leadership in these efforts, including by launching the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) initiative that mobilizes African Governments, the private sector, civil society and the international community in support of Ebola response and recovery efforts.

The UN Secretary-General, at the request of the Peacebuilding Commission, established a UN System Taskforce on Ebola-related Recovery that *inter alia* undertook an assessment of the impact of the Ebola epidemic on post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in the three most affected countries. Five members of the ACC – OSAA, ECA, UNDP, UNESCO and the AUC are members of this Taskforce. Also, UNDP, a member of the ACC is leading the initiatives of the Taskforce. Among others, the Taskforce continues to undertake advocacy in support of Ebola-related recovery efforts in the three affected countries. Furthermore, on 19 September 2014, OSAA participated in the Third Plenary Meeting of the UNGA that adopted the Resolution A/68/L.2 on “*Measures to Contain and Combat the Recent Ebola Outbreak in West Africa*”. On 5 December 2014, OSAA participated in the Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on “*Ebola: A Threat to Economic and Social Progress*” that took place at the UNHQ in New York. The meeting produced concrete proposals and galvanized international action towards addressing the socio-economic and environmental impact of the Ebola outbreak in the short, medium and long-term and strengthening the capacities of affected countries

for resilience to future epidemics. Speakers at the meeting included, H.E. Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC; H.E. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69<sup>th</sup> UNGA; H.E. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General; Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, the Special Adviser on Africa; Dr. David Nabarro, the Special Envoy on Ebola; Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO; H.E. Febe Potgieter-Gqubule, Advisor to the AUC Chairperson; and Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA.

On 10 December 2014, ECA launched the report on the “Economic Impact of Ebola”, which provided public information on the wider impacts of the Ebola virus on the livelihoods of the affected countries.

- o. **Africa Renewal Magazine:** DPI continued to promote issues pertaining to Africa’s peace and development, including NEPAD. Infrastructure development and financing was the theme for the April 2014 edition, which also included an interview with the UN Special Representative for the Sustainable Energy For All initiative, Kandeh Yumkella. Intra-Africa trade and the role it plays in the continent’s development was the theme for the August 2014 issue, which included an interview with the UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz. The December 2014 edition ran a special coverage on the fight against Ebola particularly in the severely affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Gender and women’s empowerment was the theme for the April 2015 issue in support of the African Union’s declaration of 2015 as the “*Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063*”.

In 2014, Africa Renewal’s syndicated features service, through which it produces and places articles in major media outlets worldwide, continued to grow. During the period under review, from January to December 2014, 118 (approximately 60 English, 58 French) feature articles were republished or reprinted in 489 media outlets in Africa and around the world. These articles were republished in media outlets based in 49 countries, including Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, UK and the United States.

- p. **Social media:** in the reporting report, DPI strengthened its outreach activities on Africa, focusing on the region’s development achievements and challenges and the results of its partnership with the United Nations. DPI continued to produce more original content for its social media platforms than in the preceding year on areas such as trade, infrastructure development and most recently on the fight against the Ebola virus. There continue to be increasing reader interest in stories about Africa that are not often featured in the mainstream media. The number of followers on the magazine’s Twitter accounts rose by 78% for French and 47% for English between 2013 and 2014 (see chart below), while other social media accounts, in particular Facebook and Flickr, continued to show steady growth.

<i>Platform</i>	<i>As of Dec. 2013</i>	<i>As of Dec. 2014</i>	<i>Percentage change</i>
<b>Twitter (# of followers):</b>			
<b>@africarenewal</b>	43,6K	64.1K	47%
<b>@ONUAFrique</b>	17,5K	31.2K	78%
<b>Facebook (# of likes):</b>			
<b>Africa Renewal</b>	4,530	5,425	20%
<b>Afrique Renouveau</b>	2,061	2,562	24%

### 3. Challenges

1. Like all other RCM clusters, the Advocacy and Communications Cluster continues to face the constraint of funding.
2. Though there were delays in revitalizing the cluster, the cluster continued to engage in undertaking joint activities aimed at promoting advocacy for Africa's peace and development, as well as mobilizing Member States, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and women and youth. A meeting of the cluster is also scheduled to take place before the 16<sup>th</sup> RCM.
3. Lack of inter-cluster interactions and cooperation, which undermines the ACC's ability to effectively function in a cross-cutting manner as the communications agency of the RCM.

### 4. Recommendations

1. Accelerate efforts to revitalize the cluster, including by: (i) finalizing the review and costing of the RCM communications and collaboration strategy; (ii) aligning RCM communications and collaboration strategy with the Agenda 2063 communication strategy; and (iii) developing a new cluster business plan based on both the RCM and Agenda 2063 communication strategies.
2. Utilize existing platforms such as the AU Summits and UNGA to convene meetings of the cluster.
3. Boost inter-cluster interactions and communications by systematically undertaking joint activities with other RCM clusters based on their thematic issues, exchanging information, as well as identifying and connecting with communication focal points from all RCM clusters.
4. Initiate joint resource mobilization for implementation of cluster activities, including through by sourcing extra-budgetary resources and having cluster members include in their budgetary processes their programmes of support for the African Union in the context of RCM-Africa and the ACC.



## **5. Conclusion**

The cluster members continue to work closely together towards preparing the joint reports for all the above-stated meetings, which would be published electronically and disseminated extensively, including through the respective websites of all ACC members.

Collectively the activities that were implemented by the ACC in the reporting period contributed to efforts to rebrand Africa as a rising continent, increase awareness at the global level on various continental initiatives, and strengthen strategic partnerships in support of Africa's peace and development agendas.