



## Consolidated progress report for the period April 2014–March 2015

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The annual meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) has evolved over the years into a formal event at which United Nations organizations and agencies operating in Africa take stock of their support for the implementation of programmes and activities of the African Union and its organs, including the departments within the African Union Commission (AUC), the regional economic communities, the Planning and Coordination Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Pan-African Parliament, the Human Rights Commission and the African Court, among others. RCM-Africa helped to streamline planning and coordination between partners to allow for the better use of resources, comprehensive programming, and targeted approaches to benefit both sides in the partnership.

2. RCM-Africa has been supporting the African Union and its organs through the implementation of continental programmes and priorities, in particular NEPAD and the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union. RCM-Africa and its nine clusters and sixteen subclusters can look at the year running from April 2014 to March 2015 with a sense of satisfaction in terms of deepening consultations and refocusing on ways of strengthening the United Nations-African Union partnership and the scaling up of United Nations support for the African Union and its organs. Thus, guided by the recommendations of its fifteenth session, held in Abuja from 28 to 30 March 2014, RCM-Africa carried out a wide range of activities during the reporting period. At its fifteenth session, RCM-Africa came up with a number of recommendations with a view to strengthening the coordination mechanism and making its support to the African Union more focused and meaningful. Those recommendations that apply specifically to RCM-Africa are reviewed in the present reporting exercise and are considered in chapter II below, on key achievements.

3. Chapter III presents a summary of the challenges, lessons learned and conclusions. Lastly, chapter IV provides recommendations and the way forward.

## **II. Key achievements**

4. The present chapter reviews the key achievements by RCM-Africa over the period since its fifteenth session.

### **A. Refocusing the United Nations-African Union partnership and strengthening RCM-Africa**

5. At its fifteenth session, RCM-Africa made a number of recommendations to refocus the United Nations-African Union partnership and to strengthen the regional mechanism. The following sections review the implementation of the relevant recommendations by the RCM-Africa secretariat.

#### **1. Conduct of RCM-Africa annual sessions**

6. Pursuant to the recommendation that annual sessions of RCM-Africa should be held in the margins of the Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, the present annual session of RCM-Africa is being held in the margins of the ninth Joint Annual Meetings. In this context, it should be noted that

the African Union Conference has been redesignated the African Union Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers of Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration.

7. The purpose of the joint conduct of the two meetings is to provide an opportunity for senior United Nations officials to engage directly with ministers responsible for finance, planning and economic development on pertinent issues relating to Africa's development agenda. Accordingly, special provision has been made in the programme of work for senior African experts to deliver statements on the theme of the meeting, to ensure better engagement with the RCM-Africa.

## **2. Alignment of RCM-Africa clusters with the strategic plan of the African Union and its Agenda 2063**

8. RCM-Africa, together with its cluster system, was requested to align its support for the African Union with the outcomes of the latter's strategic plan for 2014–2017 and its Agenda 2063. To this end, the RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to organize a retreat for further consideration of a new framework of engagement and subsequent reconfiguration of clusters, based on the new priority areas of the African Union derived from Agenda 2063 and the African Union's medium-term strategy for 2014–2017.

9. Accordingly, the RCM-Africa secretariat organized a retreat of its coordinators on 13 and 14 November 2014 in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, under the theme "African Union-United Nations collaboration in support of emerging issues". The retreat was co-chaired by Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of AUC, and Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, and attended by two commissioners and a number of directors. High-level representatives of AUC made presentations on the African common position on the post-2015 development agenda and its accompanying ten-year implementation plan, Agenda 2063 and the AUC strategic framework and work programme for the period 2014–2017.

10. The meeting recommended that the structure of the RCM-Africa be aligned with the AUC strategic plan for 2014–2017 in the short term, the ten-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 in the medium term and Agenda 2063 in the long term. The areas listed below were outlined for United Nations partnership:

(a) *AUC strategic framework for 2014–2017*: AUC has identified the following eight priorities as part of its strategic framework for the period 2014–2017:

- (i) Promote peace and stability, including regional initiatives, good governance, democracy and human rights as a foundation for inclusion, security and the development of the continent and its people;
- (ii) Expand agricultural production, developing the agroprocessing and agribusiness sectors, increase market access and attain collective food self-sufficiency and nutrition for Africa through the promotion of smallholder agriculture, sound environment and natural resource management, including climate change;
- (iii) Promote inclusive economic development and industrialization through the acceleration of infrastructure development projects that will aid economic integration and use of the continent's mineral and other natural resources;

- (iv) Build Africa's human capacity through the prioritization of primary health care and prevention; education, skills development and investment in science, research and innovation, access to clean water and sanitation with the inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- (v) Mainstream the participation of women and youth in all priorities and activities of the Union and the continent;
- (vi) Implement resource mobilization strategies, with special emphasis on alternative sources of funding, and additional funding to enable Africa to finance its programmes and development;
- (vii) Strengthen a people-centred Union through active communication of the programmes of the African Union, the branding of the Union and the participation of Member States and other stakeholders in defining and implementing the African agenda;
- (viii) Strengthen the institutional capacity of AUC, the regional economic communities and other organs, and its relations with strategic and other partners;

(b) *Agenda 2063*: Where Agenda 2063 and, in particular, its first ten-year plan are concerned, the United Nations is requested to support efforts by the Union to promote advocacy and communication through consultations and awareness raising at national levels, with regional professional and business associations, and with civil society organizations. The United Nations is also requested to support the implementation of Agenda 2063 at the national level, including training programmes;

(c) *African common position on the post-2015 development agenda*: The African common position on the post-2015 development agenda has been significantly and adequately captured in the current set of sustainable development goals. Realization of the African common position requires the following:

- (i) Productive capacity development, notably in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, industrial and services sectors development;
- (ii) Science technology and innovation;
- (iii) Value addition;
- (iv) Youth development and engagement;
- (v) Women's empowerment;
- (vi) Sustainable natural resource management;

(d) *Alignment of RCM-Africa support*: In keeping with the recommendation of RCM-Africa at its fifteenth session and the outcome of the Debre Zeit retreat, the RCM-Africa secretariat has developed a proposal for RCM-Africa and its clusters to align their support for the priority areas of AUC as identified at the retreat. The proposal is to be considered by RCM-Africa at its sixteenth session for endorsement.

### **3. Comprehensive long-term United Nations programme of support for the African Union**

14. AUC, in consultation with the United Nations, is called upon to set up a technical working group comprising members from the United Nations and the African Union, including the NEPAD Agency, the regional economic communities and the African Development Bank, to formulate a comprehensive long-term United Nations programme of support for the African Union, including for its Agenda 2063 and the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union upon its expiration in 2016. The Technical Working Group was established at the meeting of RCM-Africa coordinators held on 12 June 2014, with AUC, the African Development Bank, the regional economic communities, the NEPAD Agency, the United Nations liaison team, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa as its members. ECA represents the RCM-Africa secretariat in the Technical Working Group.

15. The Technical Working Group embarked upon its work in accordance with its terms of reference, which mandate it to perform the following tasks:

(a) Examination of the implementation, accomplishments and lessons learned from the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union;

(b) Evaluation of capacity-development needs for the implementation of the AUC strategic plan for 2014–2017, Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda, including integration agendas;

(c) Harmonization of the existing capacity-development programmes for AUC and its NEPAD Programme;

(d) Assessment of whether or not there is a need for a successor programme to the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme and what the elements of such a programme would be, and, in that event, proposal of an implementation framework;

(e) Reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters to align with Agenda 2063 and the AUC strategic plan for 2014–2017 and other African Union development agendas.

16. The secretariat engaged the consultancy services of the former Foreign Minister of the Gambia and former senior official of the United Nations, Crispin Grey-Johnson, to support it in servicing the Technical Working Group in the preparation of its report. The consultant had meetings with a variety of stakeholders, including senior officials of AUC, the regional economic communities, departments of the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations agencies.

17. In addition, participants at the Kuriftu retreat stressed that the new engagement between the United Nations and the African Union needed to be broadened beyond capacity-building to include mechanisms for the continent to address collectively the threats of communicable diseases such as the Ebola virus, climate change, political and human security, and corruption. The new partnership is to be anchored around Agenda 2063 with the following key principles:

(a) Medium-to-long-term partnership programme with clear strategic focus based on the priorities of the African Union;

(b) Resource mobilization that is strategic, appropriate and predictable;

- (c) Monitoring and evaluation, with benchmarks and time-bound targets;
- (d) Mutual accountability framework;
- (e) Communication and advocacy framework.

18. The work of the Technical Working Group was reviewed by RCM-Africa coordinators in February and March 2015 and the final report will be considered and adopted by RCM-Africa at its sixteenth session. Once adopted, it will be presented for the consideration of the Assembly of the African Union in June 2015. If adopted by the Assembly, the Chairperson of AUC is expected to inform the United Nations Secretary-General of the new programme for United Nations-African Union partnership, which is anchored on Agenda 2063, for the consideration of the General Assembly in September 2015. With the support of the African Group based in New York, the necessary action should then be taken to ensure that the new framework is adequately resourced and is included in the 2016–2017 budget cycle of the United Nations. United Nations agencies, organizations, funds and programmes will also need to include in their budgetary processes their programmes of support for the African Union and its Agenda 2063 in the context of RCM-Africa.

#### **4. Resource mobilization strategy**

19. The RCM-Africa secretariat was requested to develop a resource mobilization strategy which includes the setting up of a trust fund and efforts to tap into existing partnership forums, such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, to support joint activities with the African Union. It was decided to finalize the resource mobilization strategy once the new United Nations-African Union partnership framework had been adopted by the General Assembly.

#### **5. Monitoring and evaluation framework**

20. The RCM-Africa secretariat was requested to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for tracking and assessing the implementation of the programmes and projects of the clusters, and also the implementation of the RCM-Africa recommendations. A draft framework is being prepared by the secretariat for review by an experts meeting scheduled to take place in April or May 2015. It will be tabled for consideration and adoption at the next session of RCM-Africa.

#### **6. Advocacy and communication strategy**

21. The RCM-Africa secretariat was urged to develop an advocacy and communication strategy. Accordingly, such a strategy has prepared and is proposed for consideration and adoption by RCM-Africa at its sixteenth session.

#### **7. Handbook and toolkit**

22. The RCM-Africa secretariat has developed a handbook and toolkit providing basic guidance on how the resources of RCM-Africa may best be harnessed for the benefit of Africa. The handbook addresses the different facets of coordination, collaboration and pooling of resources for maximum impact, and the linkages between regional and subregional coordination and how to translate regional level visions and programmes into tangible results. It also shows ways of enhancing coordination capacities in programming, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization, to ensure the realization of Africa's transformation agenda. Training programmes are

envisaged as part of the handbook and toolkit, to enable all those involved in RCM-Africa to work more effectively. The handbook and toolkit will be made available to all RCM-Africa members in April 2015.

## **B. Coordinated United Nations support for the thematic programmes of the African Union**

23. The work of RCM-Africa is organized around nine thematic clusters and sixteen subclusters. The present section reviews key achievements of the clusters since the last session of RCM-Africa, in March 2014. Each cluster has prepared a detailed report on its activities pursuant to the priorities of the African Union (AUC strategic framework, African Union declarations and plans of action). The cluster reports have been uploaded to the RCM-Africa website and the present report only provides a brief synthesis of the major achievements.

### **1. Agriculture, food security and rural development cluster**

24. The cluster contributed to African Union activities and events carried out pursuant to decisions of the African Union Assembly and the Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, as set out in the following subsections.

#### **(a) Cost of hunger in Africa**

25. Work on the cost of hunger in Africa was endorsed by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its twenty-third ordinary session, in Malabo in June 2014. The Assembly requested AUC, the World Food Programme, ECA and other development partners to analyse the cost of not addressing nutrition for a nation's economy and finances – i.e., the cost of hunger in Africa. The first study unveiled the impact of child undernutrition on the economies of four African countries: Ethiopia, Egypt, Swaziland and Uganda. The study, which was launched in Abuja in March 2014 on the sidelines of the seventh Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, showed that the economies of the countries under review suffered an estimated annual loss associated with undernutrition equivalent to between 1.9 and 16.5 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP).

26. The studies are continuing in four other countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana and Malawi. A third phase, for the next group of countries – Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia – will be covered by this ground-breaking initiative by the end of 2016. The cost of hunger reports have played a major role in creating awareness of the long-term costs of malnutrition and, within AUC, there is a strong conviction of the importance of expanding and deepening the studies and also of undertaking complementary studies that uncover hard facts about the state of malnutrition and provide a baseline for concerted actions. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are joining this project.

#### **(b) Other initiatives in the area of food and nutrition security**

27. The African regional nutrition strategy for the period 2015–2025 was reviewed, with a view to bringing the issue of nutrition to the centre of the political and development agenda of African countries and to advocate the eradication of hunger and prevention of all forms of malnutrition on the continent. African nutrition champions and nutrition ambassadors will be identified regularly as

a way of promoting the strategy. The fifth Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security was celebrated in Kinshasa on 3 November 2014, under the theme “Accelerated action for a hunger-free Africa”.

### **(c) Gender mainstreaming**

28. A training course supported by FAO was organized to guide cluster members in the process of gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the cluster work programme. Thanks to this training, members were able to conduct rapid assessments of the extent to which gender issues had been mainstreamed. Given that 2015 is the African Union’s Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063, the plan is for the cluster, in collaboration with the AUC Gender Department, to incorporate women’s economic empowerment with a view to attaining food and nutrition security through the events carried out in 2015.

## **2. Environment, population and urbanization cluster**

29. The cluster, which comprises the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ECA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was involved in activities to increase awareness and advocacy on global and continental issues. The major activities and accomplishments of the cluster are summarized in the following three subsections.

### **(a) African Environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day**

30. The 2014 African Environment and Wangari Maathai Day was celebrated on 3 March 2014 in Maseru, under the theme “Combating desertification in Africa: enhancing agricultural productivity and food security”. This event acquired a new dimension with the active engagement of RCM-Africa in its celebration. Activities marking the day included media training on challenging environmental issues in Africa and an official launch and tree-planting ceremony conducted in memory of the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement and a champion of biodiversity conservation.

31. The cluster supported the event with technical and financial assistance and with the production of advocacy materials. A workshop was also organized for journalists as part of the celebrations. It was held from 1 to 3 March 2014 and focused on sustainable land management in line with the African Union’s Year of Agriculture and Food Security. It covered issues of sustainable land management, the status of land degradation in Africa, ecosystem-based adaptation, land-related intergovernmental negotiations and the role of the media in advocacy, awareness-raising and education in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

### **(b) Green economy development**

32. Assessment reports were prepared with a view to identifying the opportunities for transition to a green economy and the associated challenges. The assessments reviewed existing green economy and green economy-related policies, plans and programmes in a range of countries. Among the challenges facing these countries, they identified in particular financing, capacity-building and technology transfer. Green economy scoping and assessment studies have been undertaken in a number of countries, including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. The studies and various regional workshops on the issue also identified capacity-building needs, including in the areas of data collection, economic modelling, technology transfer and policy analysis, such as fiscal policies to support countries in their endeavour to



achieve sustainable development. The studies demonstrate that a green economy development pathway brings a range of benefits – economic, environmental and social – in the medium term and, in the long term, will lead to improved forest cover, increased water supply and lower carbon emissions.

**(c) International conference on the illegal exploitation and illegal trade of African wildlife and flora**

33. At its twenty-third ordinary session, in Malabo in June 2014, the African Union Assembly requested AUC and other partners to prepare an African strategy to combat wildlife trafficking and the illegal trade of flora and fauna in Africa and to organize an international conference on the illegal exploitation and illegal trade of African wildlife and flora. To that end, AUC, UNEP, UNDP, FAO and the African Development Bank initiated a series of consultations, resulting in a joint road map to the conference. Three committees were formed to support the conference and to develop an African common strategy on combating illegal trade in wild flora and fauna. The international conference will be held from 27 to 30 April 2015 in Brazzaville.

**3. Advocacy and communications cluster**

34. The advocacy and communications cluster plays a strategic role in branding and building a positive image for the African Union and its organs. The cluster implemented a range of joint activities that collectively promoted advocacy for the African Union, NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the regional economic communities, and generated support for social and economic development, peace and security in Africa. Activities were undertaken at both global and continental levels and aligned with such major events as the high-level debate on the development of Africa at the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council on Ebola, the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the 2014 Africa Day and the 2014 Africa Industrialization Day. The key activities implemented during the reporting period are described in the following subsections.

**(a) *Economic Report on Africa***

35. The 2014 edition of the flagship publication, *Economic Report on Africa*, prepared by ECA under the theme “Dynamic industrial policy in Africa: innovative institutions, effective processes and flexible mechanisms”, highlighted the critical need for the strengthening of credible institutions to boost industrialization in Africa. It was launched in Addis Ababa and New York and the launching programme was attended by United Nations Member States, representatives of civil society, the private sector, universities, United Nations system agencies, development partners and others. In its statements the cluster made a strong appeal for support from the international community and the private sector and it also provided media and publicity support for the event.

**(b) Annual retreat of the African Permanent Representatives to the United Nations**

36. The seventh annual retreat of the African Permanent Representatives to the United Nations was held on 25 and 26 April 2014, on the issue of the African common position on the post-2015 development agenda, and under the theme: “Ensuring ownership and speaking with one voice”. The retreat provided a platform for participants to define strategies for a coherent approach and the harnessing of synergies in ensuring African ownership of its development priorities and in

promoting unity of purpose in their pursuit, in particular with regard to the integration of the common position in the post-2015 development agenda.

**(c) Other events**

37. Recurrent events such as Africa Day, Africa Week and Africa Industrialization Day, and also regular briefings of United Nations Member States by the regional economic communities, were all used as opportunities by the cluster to raise awareness and mobilize support at the global level for the implementation of Africa's sustainable development priorities. To this end, it turned a spotlight on the key sectors that serve as driving forces behind economic growth and the realization of Africa's strategies for structural social and economic transformation.

38. In addition, an array of other events served to raise awareness at the global level and provide vital information on Africa's potential and the challenges that it faces. These events included the first ministerial meeting of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the high-level thematic debate of the General Assembly on the promotion of investment in Africa, the Africa Rising forum, the meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport, the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and advocacy on the issue of Ebola response and recovery. These events advocated efforts to enhance the management of Africa's natural resources, particularly in the extractive industries, with a view to fully harnessing their potential as major factors in the continent's sustainable development and inclusive growth.

39. Measures were taken by the cluster to highlight the role of African women and girls in peace, security and development and to showcase good practices in implementing the agendas on women, peace and security and on women in leadership in Africa. It also provided public information on the wider impacts of the Ebola virus on the livelihoods of the affected countries.

**4. Infrastructure and development cluster**

40. There are four subclusters within the cluster on infrastructure and development, dealing with the issues of energy; transport; information and communications technology; and water, sanitation and hygiene. The cluster's accomplishments in these areas are described briefly in the following subsections.

**(a) Publication of the *African Bioenergy Framework and Policy Guidelines***

41. This document has become the official document, guiding, and setting benchmarks for, bioenergy mainstreaming in the policies of African Union member States. It has become a reference point for policy formulation and is widely cited.

**(b) Gender mainstreaming in bioenergy development**

42. A publication is in preparation which will give guidance on how to factor gender dimensions into the process of bioenergy development, focusing in particular on the empowerment of women and children. The activity's starting point is that women, especially in rural areas, are managers of energy at the household level. In addressing the energy needs in such areas, therefore, women's perspectives must be taken into account.

**(c) Biofuel development in Africa**

43. A programme to ensure modern biofuel development in Africa is in progress. The programme is designed to enhance the understanding of biofuel issues by stakeholders in select African countries, so that they can develop viable and sustainable biofuel strategies, to strengthen the capacity of policymakers to design and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes on biofuel development, and to improve the capacity of African countries to package biofuel programmes for investment purposes.

**(d) Trans-African Highway Agreement**

44. The Trans-African Highway Agreement was endorsed by the African Union Assembly at its twenty-third ordinary session, to promote the physical, political, economic and social integration and cohesion of Africa; to facilitate the safe movement of goods and persons and links between production and consumption areas; to reduce transport cost on the continent; and to set up common minimum norms and standards for design and maintenance of the highway network. The cluster contributed by providing finance for the preliminary study on the harmonization of the regional norms for highways; assisting AUC to mobilize resources to finance the preparation of the agreement and its annexes; and participating in the substantive work related to the agreement and its annexes.

**(e) African Road Safety Action Plan for the period 2011–2020**

45. The African Road Safety Action Plan for the period 2011–2020 was developed in the context of the United Nations Global Road Safety Decade, to provide a framework for road safety challenges on the African continent. There is now a better understanding by all stakeholders of the status and challenges of implementation of the African Road Safety Action Plan in member States. A comprehensive status report on the implementation of the action plan is being developed for review in July 2015.

**(f) Transport facilitation**

46. Work on transport facilitation is under way to provide landlocked and transit developing countries the sustainable capacity to improve cross-border and transit transport operations; to develop corridor-based institutional and technological methods for the identification of operational barriers to transit transport; to design and implement readily applicable solutions; and to formulate national and corridor action plans for transport facilitation. A toolkit and an action plan were developed by the cluster and are being used by the transit corridors.

**(g) Air transport**

47. With regard to the issue of air transport, the cluster reviewed the draft report of the study on competition rules, dispute settlement mechanism and consumer protection, with a view to improving the regulatory framework for the Yamoussoukro Declaration on a New Africa Air Transport Policy.

**(h) Cybersecurity in Africa**

48. The Convention on Confidence and Security in Cyberspace was drafted by the African Union to support efforts by member States to tackle the growing threat of cybersecurity and cybercrime.

The Convention was adopted by the African Union Assembly at its twenty-third ordinary session, in Malabo, on 27 June 2014.

**(i) African Internet Governance Forum**

49. Over the reporting period, consultative meetings have been organized for a range of stakeholders, with the aim of deepening their understanding of internet governance.

**(j) Open government in Africa**

50. Over the same period, consultative meetings have been organized, to bring stakeholders together to review studies of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks related to open government and the implementation of open government data programmes in Africa, and also to discuss lessons learned and best practices in African countries and elsewhere.

**(k) Promoting policies and creating awareness**

51. The cluster has worked to promote policies and create awareness through the preparation of reports assessing the contribution of information and communications technology to Africa's recent economic growth performance; trends in innovation and knowledge generation through broadband infrastructure and services harnessing the advantages of broadband as a driving force for Africa's improved competitiveness on the global stage; and the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum. Policy briefs have also been prepared on cybersecurity, e-commerce and e-government, providing key policy instruments for the development of the information society in Africa.

**5. Social and human development cluster**

52. The social and human development cluster has six subclusters, on the issues of health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases; education and human resources; gender and development; social welfare and human trafficking; labour and employment; and sport and culture. The cluster supported delivery of the results outlined in the following paragraphs, through the provision of technical advisory services and facilitating the required engagement with key stakeholders.

53. In the area of employment and labour, the cluster achieved a number of outcomes in the following areas:

(a) Revised outcome documents reflecting the views of stakeholders on employment creation, poverty eradication and inclusive development: these were endorsed by the ministers, employers' and workers' organizations at the special session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Windhoek, in April 2014;

(b) Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa, together with its associated plan of action and follow-up mechanism: cluster members supported AUC in the drafting and adoption of these policy documents, which provide the strategies for creating decent employment, eradicating poverty and fostering inclusive development in Africa;

(c) Joint Labour Migration Programme adopted by the African Union Assembly at its twenty-fourth ordinary session: this region-wide programme strengthens the effective governance

and regulation of labour migration and mobility in Africa, under the rule of law with the involvement of key stakeholders;

(d) Joint youth employment initiative for Africa: this initiative was resuscitated in response to the call by the African Union Assembly for more decisive efforts to tackle the challenge of youth employment in Africa;

(e) Joint technical preparatory event to foster inclusive stakeholder discussions on social protection, labour migration and employment for youth and women;

(f) Joint support for the first five-year priority programme for the implementation of the 2015 African Union Plan of Action on Employment Creation, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development;

(g) In the area of communication, outreach and advocacy, a web platform was created, at the address <http://ouagaplus10.org/>, to keep stakeholders informed of all the activities leading up to the adoption by the African Union Assembly of the Declaration on Employment Creation, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development in Africa. All the relevant documents, press releases, reports and speeches were posted on the platform. Social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr were employed to solicit inputs, particularly from young women and men. Joint AUC-United Nations press conferences and press releases were arranged. In order to strengthen the visibility of the Labour Migration Programme, a post card, programme brief and brochure have been produced and a communication strategy is currently being developed.

54. In the area of health, the cluster supported the review of expiring African Union policy documents and its emergency response situation as indicated below:

(a) With regard to the Ebola outbreak: the United Nations family was mobilized to support the efforts of AUC to fight the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa. This support can be considered as an example of good practice in mounting a joint effort. With AUC in the driving seat, United Nations agencies joined other partners in a joint task force to support its efforts. This made possible the identification of needs, roles and responsibilities and adequate mechanisms for monitoring and reporting. Close to 1,000 medical and paramedical personnel were deployed to West Africa to support the worst affected countries;

(b) The United Nations family also came together to support the review of expiring African Union policy documents, such as the Maputo Plan of Action; the Abuja Call and the African Union road map on shared responsibility and global solidarity for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; the report on maternal, newborn and child health status; the Africa Union health strategy; and the Africa regional nutrition strategy. The cluster continued its support for the African Union's response to the problem of HIV/AIDS and its efforts to make better use of the AIDS Watch Africa programme as the leading advocacy, resource mobilization and accountability platform on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and to integrate all HIV-related activities in the other clusters of RCM-Africa.

## **6. Governance cluster**

55. The governance cluster is designed to enhance the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the areas of political and economic governance. Key activities carried out in these areas over the reporting period are detailed in the following subsections.

**(a) Political governance**

56. Where political governance is concerned, the cluster focused on issues of human rights and democracy and elections. It organized technical consultative meetings in the context of peace support operations, including on the deployment of human rights observers in peace missions and the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, among other issues. The human rights due diligence policy provides a cooperation platform between AUC and the United Nations in ensuring that international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law standards are adhered to both by African Union security forces and by those of host governments. There are plans to organize training on the implementation of the policy for African Union civilian staff and military planners, tentatively scheduled for April 2015.

**(b) Economic governance**

57. Where economic governance is concerned, the cluster considered the issues of tackling corruption; combating illicit financial flows from Africa; and strengthening institutional capacity in terms of public financial management. In 2014, the cluster continued to provide support to the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. It coordinated five country-case studies and undertook regional consultations. It also provided technical drafting support for the Panel's progress report and also for its final report. Moreover, in line with its initiatives on combating corruption and improving economic governance in Africa, the cluster is undertaking two research studies within the ECA Regional Anti-Corruption Programme for Africa for the period 2011–2016, which is being implemented in collaboration with the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption. In 2015, a framework study of corruption in public procurement, looking at the case of infrastructure in Africa, will be finalized. This study seeks to show the negative effects of corruption in public procurement on Africa's infrastructure development and proposes corresponding policy recommendations. In addition, a study will also be initiated on corruption in local governance and traditional institutions.

**7. Peace and security cluster**

58. The engagement of the peace and security cluster has evolved in response to the needs and requirements of the African Union, through the establishment of the United Nations Office to the African Union in 2010 and the creation of new and restructuring of existing subclusters. Thus, the cluster has developed four subclusters, on African peace and security architecture; post-conflict reconstruction and development; emergency preparedness and response; and transitional justice, designed to engage AUC, African Union organs and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms. The cluster has been active throughout 2014 and has continued to contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the African Union's programmes in peace and security, in both the development of capacities to strengthen the strategic partnership and the enhancement and coordination of short-term operations. Following the agreed guidelines for regional coordination mechanism processes, the cluster has continued its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective and to address gender issues in its activities. Key achievements by the cluster in this area are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

59. The cluster supported the implementation of the annual workplan of the Joint United Nations-African Union framework for enhanced partnership in the area of peace and security, which enhances the cooperation and coordination between the two partners in all aspects of conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peacebuilding. As such, it reflects the engagement by the United Nations in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture programme in its totality, and incorporates enhanced mechanisms for cooperation and coordination.

60. At the practical level, it involves the development of a common understanding of the root causes of conflict, joint analysis and, where appropriate, assessments, and joint approaches to addressing the conflict cycle. At the implementation level, the two partners established a working group on conflict prevention, with a view to collaborating from the earliest stage on situations of political and peace and security concern in Africa. This group comprises eight teams made up of representatives of AUC, the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms and the United Nations system. The teams are dynamic and evolving and can be reduced or expanded, depending on African Union priorities. The spirit of collaboration is based on regular and continuous engagement at the working level to build trust and openness, and to strengthen a joint approach in responding to conflict situations. This established mechanism provides for a regular exchange of information, shared analysis on current situations of mutual interest, joint horizon scanning and analysis of opportunities for coordinated preventive diplomacy or early response to emerging political conflicts.

61. The cluster continued to support the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms in the development and operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture programme, in particular the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee. It continued providing technical expertise and advice based on United Nations best practices and standards in the areas of the planning, management and conduct of African Union-mandated peace support operations based on the African Standby Force framework. The cluster also continued supporting the AUC Peace Support Operations Division in planning for the conduct of the Amani Africa II field training exercise, which is one of the major milestones on the path towards full operationalization of the African Standby Force.

62. Thus far, work on planning and preparing for the exercise has reached an advanced stage with the conduct of a political strategic seminar and relevant pre-exercise training courses, along with the development of relevant exercise documents. Other activities undertaken as part of the preparation for the exercise include, among others, media training, logistics and evaluation conferences, work sessions on the compilation of main events lists and main incidence lists, consultative meetings with the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms and the final planning conference. Efforts are also under way to harmonize both the African Standby Force rapid deployment capability concept and the concept of an African immediate crisis response capacity.

63. The post-conflict reconstruction and development subcluster has not been active during this reporting period. It is recommended that the co-chair position be transferred to UNDP, with a view to realizing greater substantive benefits from that organization's development and governance mandate. UNDP has agreed in principle to take over the role of co-chairing this subcluster in the future.

64. Consultations and briefings have been held on current humanitarian issues in Africa. Following the launch of the flagship report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow*, a panel discussion was held, at which attention was drawn to gaps in the existing humanitarian system and to the need to create mechanisms that deal with multidimensional crises. World Humanitarian Day was celebrated with a week of activities focusing on the humanitarian situation in Africa, including information sharing and a working session on the Ebola outbreak and displays featuring African humanitarian heroes.

65. In the area of communications, outreach and advocacy, the *Ubuntu* newsletter was published in 2014, to keep partners and other interested parties updated on humanitarian activities. Facebook and Twitter accounts were also set up to serve as a platform for information sharing on humanitarian issues in Africa and cluster activities.

66. The cluster supported AUC by providing technical advice and expertise for the drafting and validation of the African Union transitional justice policy framework. The next step in this process is endorsement of the policy framework by the African Commission of Peoples and Human Rights and by African ministers of justice, prior to its final adoption by the African Union Assembly.

### **C. Developments in the subregional coordination mechanisms**

67. The subregional coordination mechanisms are vehicles for United Nations agencies and organizations operating at the subregional level to work with the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations with a view to reducing fragmentation in their operations and increasing coherence, coordination and cooperation in their support for the programmes and priorities of the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations. The achievements of the subregional coordination mechanisms over the period under review are reported below.

#### **1. North Africa**

68. The annual consultative meeting on the strengthening and coordination of the support provided to the Arab Maghreb Union was held on 24 and 25 June 2014 in Rabat. The objective was to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between United Nations system agencies and other international and regional institutions that, pursuant to their respective mandates, provide support to the Arab Maghreb Union, which is the regional economic community for North Africa.

69. Participants at the meeting adopted a regional platform project for the provision of support to the Arab Maghreb Union, through seven areas of intervention, namely: first, the strengthening of the institutional capacities; second, trade, industry, market access and economic integration; third, agriculture, food security and rural development; fourth, environment, population and urban development; fifth, development of human resources, employment and public health; sixth, development of water, energy, transport, and information and communications technology; and seventh, science, technology and promotion of the products of knowledge. Participants also adopted the following structure, to ensure stronger coordination of the mechanism:

(a) Annual meeting with the Arab Maghreb Union and all the agencies and institutions partaking in the platform;

(b) Joint coordination of the activities of each cluster, moderated by the secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union and partner institutions;

(c) Appointment of a network of focal points for this purpose by each of the agencies and partner institutions;

(d) Establishment of an ad hoc liaison unit, to be moderated by the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa and the secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union, which would serve as the secretariat of the coordination mechanism.

#### **2. West Africa**

70. The subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa was created in 2013. Its work is organized around the following six thematic areas: first, governance, peace, security and humanitarian action; second, economic integration; third, infrastructure development; fourth,



human development and gender equality; fifth, agriculture, food security, water and environment; and sixth, private sector development, industry and mining. Two leading organizations and participants for each thematic group have been identified. The groups are engaged in a mapping exercise, with a view to exchanging information on United Nations programmes and activities and also exploring strategies for the implementation of joint activities in the framework of the subregional coordination mechanism. Initial joint projects and activities with significant potential for collaboration are being identified. Terms of reference for leading agencies have been circulated, to provide clear guidance for group work and to inform their actions.

### **3. Central Africa**

71. The annual meeting of the agencies and partner institutions has been held on six occasions since the creation of the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa in 2009. The sixth annual consultative meeting on the implementation of the African Union-NEPAD programmes in Central Africa was held in Douala on 3 and 4 December 2014. The main objective of the meeting was to review the progress report of the 2013–2016 common indicative programme. Participants exchanged views on a range of issues, including the following needs: for a better communications strategy, to ensure proper functioning of the focal points network; for clarification of the role and responsibilities of the focal points; for the sharing of experiences and good practices of other subregions; and for more complementarity and synergies between partners in the implementation of activities.

72. Following the discussions, participants agreed on recommendations to all partners, designed to improve the functioning of the mechanism and the implementation of the second common indicative programme. In particular, they recommended that the Subregional Office for Central Africa should finalize the terms of reference of the focal points of the subregional coordination mechanism, to clearly define their roles; should raise awareness among those partners which have not yet done so of the need to formally nominate their focal points; should develop communications tools to improve the functioning of the subregional coordination mechanism; should update and share the mailing list of focal points; and should create and run a discussion forum on the subregional coordination mechanism's activities on the ECA website.

### **4. Eastern and Southern Africa**

73. The subregional coordination mechanism for Eastern and Southern Africa is implementing its business plan for 2013–2017 in the two subregions, with the two subregional offices serving as secretariat, in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the three main regional economic communities. The implementation process is being carried out in tandem with relevant intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies operating in the two subregions.

74. Where accomplishments are concerned, the subregional coordination mechanism organized its annual meeting on the theme of scaling-up implementation of the subregional coordination mechanism's business plan for Eastern and Southern Africa, in Lusaka on 17 and 18 November 2014. It reviewed progress in the implementation of three out of the six flagship projects agreed upon in the business plan, namely, the regional food security programme; the sustainable tourism development programme; and the regional initiative of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region against the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The meeting resulted in an outcome statement with the following recommendations:

(a) To accelerate implementation of the subregional coordination mechanism flagship projects;

(b) For COMESA, as the current chair, to convene a meeting of the leadership of COMESA, EAC, SADC, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the joint secretariat of AUC, ECA and the African Development Bank, and United Nations regional directors, to define a clear road map and to ensure the mainstreaming of the subregional coordination mechanism's business plan and the post-2015 sustainable development priorities into the programming and implementation cycles of the regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies;

(c) To develop and operationalize an effective and efficient information and knowledge management platform and monitoring and evaluation system;

(d) To operationalize the subregional coordination mechanism handbook;

(e) To establish an effective institutional partnership framework to support the coordination and implementation of the subregional coordination mechanism.

75. The three other flagship projects – namely, the regional programme on energy security and sustainable energy for all; the regional programme on industrialization focusing on value-addition agriculture (agroprocessing); and mainstreaming an intelligent transport system in corridor infrastructure – are at various stages of preparation and development for implementation.

### **III. Challenges and lessons learned**

76. The United Nations system in Africa has made significant contributions to the capacity-development needs of Africa. The active participation of AUC as co-chair of RCM-Africa has continued to make a significant difference to the effectiveness of operations. While waiting for more tangible results, solid foundations have been laid for fruitful cooperation, in terms of the enthusiasm displayed by many members of the AUC management. Disparities between the roles and levels of participation of the various departments within AUC, however, have somewhat affected cluster performance.

77. There is also need for the role of the regional economic communities to be more clearly defined. In order to maintain effectiveness and coherence and to create synergy in the work of RCM-Africa, there is a need to improve cooperation and coordination between United Nations agencies, AUC and the NEPAD Agency, on one hand, and the regional economic communities, on the other. The lack of tangible progress in the representation of the regional economic communities remains a major hindrance to the effective mainstreaming of subregional issues in RCM-Africa and its cluster system.

78. Ownership and leadership by the principal stakeholders in the work of RCM-Africa are essential. Increased ownership and guidance by African Union organs related to the activities of RCM-Africa would result in better performance. At the same time, efforts must be made to remedy the lack of dedicated human and financial resources available to the co-chairs (AUC, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities), to enable them more effectively to coordinate and motivate members.

### **A. Resource constraints**

79. The lack of resources to support implementation of the programmes of RCM-Africa and its clusters remains a major constraint, as there is no specific budget allocation to support the implementation of planned programmes and activities.

80. Financial and capacity constraints are limiting many agencies from contributing to the work of the clusters and this problem must urgently be remedied. The absence of dedicated resources means that many clusters and subclusters are unable to function effectively. It is therefore difficult to encourage joint programming within RCM-Africa and for its members to learn from one another's experiences.

81. The joint RCM-Africa secretariat is expected to effectively coordinate the work of clusters and subclusters and to ensure that they carry out their respective activities, including the monitoring of implementation. Although the functions of the secretariat have been strengthened with the establishment of the Capacity Development Division at ECA, the limited number of staff dedicated to the work of the secretariat on the AUC side still constrains the functioning of the secretariat. This includes responsibility for the organization of the annual RCM-Africa sessions and the implementation of decisions.

### **B. Communication constraints**

82. Communication also needs to be improved. Despite progress in several areas, one of the main challenges is the level of cooperation between the advocacy and communications cluster and other clusters.

83. Awareness of RCM-Africa and its achievements is extremely limited in many quarters, particularly at senior management levels of the African Union and its organs. There is no mechanism in place to share experiences and good practices and the clusters still work independently, despite the fact that communication should be cross-cutting.

84. Another continuing obstacle is posed by the failure to appoint a focal point or dedicated staff for communication within each cluster. Information tends to be confined within the boundaries of each cluster and does not circulate. There is no newsletter or web platform where ideas could be exchanged in real time using contributions from the other clusters and thereby achieve the goal of mainstreaming communication in RCM-Africa.

### **C. Planning constraints**

85. In terms of planning, a number of challenges have been observed. First, meetings are not organized regularly, either by clusters or subclusters, on the issue of support for the African Union, including the regional economic communities, so as to ensure maximum impact of RCM-Africa and its subregional coordination mechanisms. The lack of regular intra-cluster and intercluster interaction and cooperation is rendering it difficult to function effectively in a cross-cutting manner in RCM-Africa.

86. Second, many clusters have encountered difficulties in elaborating joint programmes and drawing on a common funding pool for their activities, possibly due to the fact that their individual governing bodies have different programming and budget cycles. For the most part, key indicators of success and targets to be achieved against each area of activity have not been identified.

87. Third, management of the clusters tends to be overly personalized, in that it is assigned to a single staff member in each institution, without proper arrangements to institutionalize the process, creating the risk that institutional memory and continuity are lost as individual staff members relinquish their management posts.

#### **D. Geographical constraints**

88. Geographical constraints are particularly severe for the infrastructure cluster, as most institutions dealing with transport are based outside Africa and most of the activities tend to be carried out on a bilateral basis. Moreover, United Nations organizations are not necessarily engaged in the same domains of transport. For instance, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) focuses on maritime issues, while ECA has been more active in the areas of land and air transport – although current interest in the blue economy has provided an avenue for the Commission to engage more in maritime transport. As a result, United Nations system support to AUC in the area of infrastructure has mainly been provided by individual agencies or organizations. Members of the infrastructure cluster need to meet and agree on how best to work with AUC.

### **IV. Recommendations and the way forward**

89. There is general agreement on the part of both the United Nations system and the African regional and subregional institutions that more needs to be done to enhance RCM-Africa in support of the agenda of the African Union and its organs. An enhanced mechanism would lead to better coordination of United Nations actions, improve coherence and increase cost-effectiveness and impact through the implementation of the activities of the clusters, with a view to achieving meaningful results. Looking ahead to the future and with a view to improving the mechanism, the following recommendations are put forward.

#### **A. Sustainable resources**

90. To ensure that RCM-Africa effectively plays its role in support of the priorities of the African Union at the regional and subregional levels, the mechanism in general and its secretariat in particular need to be well resourced in ways that enable them to provide more effective substantive support to mechanism-related measures and activities. This requires the provision of resources on a sustainable basis for the mechanism to be effective and credible. Recommendations are made at two levels, in the short term and in medium-to-long term, as set out below.

91. In the short term, as requested by the General Assembly, all United Nations system organizations are urged to work together, in accordance with the Secretary-General's "Delivering as one" initiative, by pooling their resources in pursuit of key joint outputs. The resources required for the implementation of cluster activities should be mobilized by the cluster agencies, primarily from their respective agency programme budgets, which means that the cluster activities would have to be integral to the programme budget of each participating agency. This would require participating cluster members on the United Nations side to ensure that RCM-Africa work is adequately provided for in their regular work programmes and budgets. Their performance within the mechanism should also be taken into account in their performance reviews. Furthermore, it requires the programming and planning cycles of cluster work to be harmonized with that of the African Union, in order to enable United Nations organizations to identify, incorporate and implement activities in line with their yearly programme implementation plans.

92. In the medium-to-long term, the proposed United Nations-African Union partnership framework should be fully supported from the budget, with a view to strengthening efforts by the United Nations system and African Union organs to work together, in line with the “Delivering as one” initiative, on the priorities of the African Union.

### **B. Communications strategy**

93. It is imperative that, at its sixteenth session, RCM-Africa endorse the proposed communications strategy. Such endorsement will enable the secretariat to advocate and mobilize resources for its activities in support of the various programmes of the African Union and its organs.

94. In order to increase awareness, involvement, ownership and leadership at all levels, regular briefings on RCM-Africa and its activities should be organized for the commissioners and department directors of AUC, the leadership of the NEPAD Agency and those in charge of the regional economic communities.

95. Newsletters and other means of communication should be developed to promote the mechanism. With minimum funding, the advocacy and communications cluster could create a newsletter or web platform on which ideas could be exchanged in real time using contributions from the other clusters and thereby achieve the goal of mainstreaming communication in RCM-Africa. Communication-related activities should be factored into cluster business plans and provided for in their budgets. Clusters should also designate a member to work with the advocacy and communications cluster.

### **C. Planning**

96. All clusters should prioritize intra-cluster and intercluster collaboration, cooperation, partnerships and communication in line with previous decisions of RCM-Africa in order to create coherence and synergy in their work and ensure maximum effectiveness. To that end, all participating members of clusters and subclusters are encouraged to continue:

(a) Improving the coordination and implementation of joint undertakings and activities among themselves;

(b) Drawing up calendars of events and meetings for each cluster and subcluster at the beginning of the reporting cycle. For ease of planning, the RCM-Africa secretariat will maintain and circulate a consolidated calendar of events and meetings for all clusters and subclusters to all stakeholders and enhance intercluster collaboration and partnerships;

(c) Ensuring that activities by RCM-Africa and its clusters and subclusters are adequately planned and reflected in the regular work programmes and programme budgets of each member agency and organization;

(d) Preparing business plans that are realistic, well planned and provided for in the related budgets, to ensure meaningful impact and to contribute to the overall effectiveness of RCM-Africa. Key indicators of success and the targets to be achieved against each area of activity need to be clearly indicated in the business plans;

(e) Holding more frequent regular meetings among coordinators and among members: clusters on at least a quarterly basis, and subclusters in between the regular meetings of clusters.

97. The management of the clusters should be strengthened in a manner designed to preserve their institutional memory and continuity. Lastly, the performance of the members of clusters and subclusters in the mechanism should be taken into account in the performance reviews carried out by their respective organizations.

98. Looking forward, it is recommended that the commitment and good leadership that has existed thus far should be maintained. African Union co-chairs should show more dynamic leadership, ensuring that African Union-desired outcomes are clearly articulated and thereby enabling the clusters to identify areas for their collaboration and provision of support, to ensure greater effectiveness. In addition, they should play an important role in facilitating the engagement of other relevant AUC departments, to ensure that AUC too delivers as one. The United Nations co-chairs must also demonstrate a higher level of commitment and provide complementary leadership to AUC. This involves the allocation of both the necessary time and the human and financial resources necessary for the organization of regular meetings, the implementation of the decisions adopted, and the reporting on that implementation in a timely manner.

99. RCM-Africa has proved to be an effective instrument that can contribute to efforts to rebrand Africa as a rising continent. The strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union should be further strengthened in support of Africa's peace and development agendas.