

**Economic and  
Social Council****African Union****United Nations  
Development Group**

E/ECA/RCM/18/2

Distr.: General

13 March 2017

Original: English

**Economic Commission for Africa****African Union****Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa**

Eighteenth session

First joint meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism  
for Africa and the United Nations Development Group

Dakar, 25 and 26 March 2017

## **Report of the seventeenth session**

### **I. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]**

#### **A. Attendance**

1. The seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Programme was held on 2 and 3 April 2016 in Addis Ababa. The session was co-chaired by Mr. Carlos Lopes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, and Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

2. The agenda for the session was based on the draft agenda circulated in document ECA/RCM/17/1/, as follows:

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
3. Plenary session 1: African Union-United Nations partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals
4. Plenary session 2: African Union's theme for 2016, "African year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women"
5. Plenary session 3: Regional integration, infrastructure and trade in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals
6. Plenary session 4: Free movement, migration, youth and gender empowerment in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals
7. Presentations and discussions on strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa):

- (a) Consolidated progress report of RCM-Africa and the subregional coordination mechanisms;
  - (b) Report of the Committee on the alignment of the RCM-Africa clusters;
  - (c) United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027;
  - (d) Proposed communications strategy for RCM-Africa;
  - (e) United Nations-African Union partnerships in promoting synergetic implementation of Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and the programmes of action for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.
8. Other business
  9. Presentation and adoption of the draft report of the meeting
  10. Closing of the session
3. The session was attended by representatives of the African Union Commission, United Nations agencies and organizations, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the regional economic communities and development partners.

## **B. Opening statements**

4. In his opening statement, Mr. Lopes said that RCM-Africa had become an important vehicle for cooperation and the coordination of United Nations activities at the regional level in support of the African Union. He recalled the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the preparation of the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda, which had been Africa's contribution to the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals. He also recalled the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in hosting the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which had produced a landmark outcome document, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Agenda provided a platform for implementing the global Sustainable Development Goals. He called upon all partners supporting the African Union to direct their efforts to turning their commitments into actions that would lead to long-term, concrete results. He urged the United Nations to align its support to the priorities of the African Union and emphasized the need for greater coherence, cooperation and coordination of the support of development partners to the African Union and its organs.

5. Speaking with reference to India's spectacular economic progress, which had been achieved through the leverage of the country's cooperation with international counterparts, he said that global partnerships could undoubtedly provide the impetus for tackling the key socioeconomic development challenges facing Africa, especially if those partnerships were to be aligned with the strategic vision of the continent and bolstered by a universal continental voice. RCM-Africa was an opportunity for the continent to model what such a partnership could be. Global partnerships were fundamental for addressing international concerns such as climate change, conflict, insecurity and financial instability. Global partnerships should be mutually beneficial and promote the autonomy of African States, including through support for skills training, technological developments and industrialization, with a view to addressing Africa's development priorities. Furthermore, future global partnerships should include actors such as the private sector, members of parliament, civil society, women and youth.

6. In addition to national development strategies, African countries would need to fully commit to and subsequently domesticate the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the light of the daunting implementation challenges for African policymakers posed by both development frameworks, the theme of the seventeenth session of RCM-Africa – “African Union-United Nations partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals” – was pertinent as it called upon the region’s key partners to spearhead a common strategy for the implementation of both agendas. He proposed the following guiding principles for an effective implementation process:

(a) Broad ownership by African countries of the common approach to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Build on existing national strategies and processes to ensure convergence and coherence;

(c) Realistic, harmonized targets and indicators to help countries to measure their progress;

(d) Strengthen and build on existing national capacities, both public and private, as part of the implementation strategy;

(e) Create continuous monitoring and evaluation tools based on clear indicators to track and guide progress.

7. Concluding, he said that as RCM-Africa transitioned to the successor development agenda, unity among partners in their commitment to negotiating the financing architecture of the 2030 Agenda vis-à-vis Agenda 2063 would promote the mutual interest of developed and developing countries and hold all sides accountable for their actions.

8. The statement of Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, was delivered on his behalf by Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa. In his statement, Mr. Eliasson noted that RCM-Africa had evolved tremendously as a mechanism for enhancing coordination and coherence among United Nations system entities on the one hand, and between the United Nations and the African Union on the other. The evolution of RCM-Africa signalled its immense potential for ensuring that the United Nations, the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations such as NEPAD and the regional economic communities delivered as one for Africa. RCM-Africa had been the vehicle for the implementation of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which would come to an end in 2016. RCM-Africa has played a vital role in improving synergies and coordination, avoiding duplication, making the best use of limited resources, and facilitating joint advocacy, communication and outreach.

9. Despite the notable achievements of RCM-Africa, challenges remained, some of which were external to the mechanism. Peace, security, human rights and development in Africa were still beset by unresolved conflicts and difficult living conditions that induced migration and refugee flows. He called upon the participants to look ahead with renewed determination in order to find solutions so that Africa could achieve its development objectives. He therefore welcomed the theme of the seventeenth session, “African Union-United Nations partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals”.

10. Recalling the adoption of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, he noted

that those agendas, agreements and plans collectively constituted a transformative plan of action for the people of Africa and the rest of the world. The litmus test for those ambitious new agendas would lie in their implementation. Their comprehensive character necessitated an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach and partnership, not only between the United Nations and African Union entities but also with Governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, media and the African diaspora. He urged stakeholders to embark on joint planning for results-based implementation that would meaningfully impact the lives of all Africans, without discrimination on any basis.

11. Furthermore, he underscored that the effectiveness of the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in Africa hinged on the mobilization of crucial resources from all spheres, including domestic and international, public and private. To that end, RCM-Africa could play a renewed and catalytic role by building on national capacities, mobilizing financial resources, facilitating technology transfer by fostering South-South and triangular cooperation, and collecting data and statistics to support the implementation process through the monitoring and review of commitments. Concluding, he noted that the United Nations was ready to continue to support RCM-Africa at both the regional and global level.

12. In her opening statement, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma said that an important lesson learned from the experiences of previous developmental agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals was that the initial position taken by stakeholders with respect to the implementation framework was pivotal to the attainment of the agenda. Although Africa had made progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it had been unable to meet most of the targets because the continent's initial position had been further behind. Africa's current situation presented a paradox and a confounding universal development challenge, in that despite its richness in resources, most of its population still lived in poverty.

13. The targets of the 2030 Agenda had a convergence rate of approximately 90 per cent with the obligations of Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 was a 50-year framework to transform the continent and ensure that Africa not only met its global obligations as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, but also went further to realize its regional priorities, which included investing in human resources, modernizing agricultural practices, mitigating the effects of climate change, developing infrastructure to provide basic services, industrialization, expanding intra-African trade, ensuring a peaceful and democratic Africa, and empowering women and young people. In essence, the implementation of Agenda 2063 would also help Africa to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. In 2015, at the sixteenth session of RCM-Africa, participants had agreed on the need for joint implementation and had stressed that the seventeenth session must focus on the practicalities of doing so at the regional, subregional and national levels. During the development of Agenda 2063, the national development plans of 23 countries had been reviewed and by the end of 2015, 25 countries had already begun the domestication process. The African Union had agreed in recent joint meetings with the regional economic communities that more would need to be done in order to ensure the alignment between the master plans of the regional economic communities and first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

15. Echoing Mr. Lopes's opening remarks regarding the need to have a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the region's development challenges, she said that the United Nations agencies had many programmes which could be deployed to address both existing and emerging challenges such as poverty,

hunger, youth empowerment and the recent Ebola epidemic. As such, the African Union welcomed the reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters based on Agenda 2063 and agreed on the need for a common monitoring and evaluation framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. She emphasised that, unless timely and reliable data were available, such a framework would not be effective. As such, in order to achieve an African data revolution, the work of African statisticians, including the Pan-African Institute for Statistics, must be operationalized and strengthened by deploying the latest information technology to gather, analyse and disseminate data.

16. Concluding, she recalled the adoption of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 at the African Union Summit in January 2016, which would help strengthen the capacity of both the United Nations and the African Union to implement their obligations under Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. She said that an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens and which takes its rightful place in the world was in the interest of all humanity, and added that a growing and industrialized Africa that uses its natural resources to provide adequate nutrition, health care, sanitation, water and energy to all its people would contribute not only to a more equitable and stable world but also to a more vibrant and diverse global economy. The African Union and its member States looks forward to working with the United Nations system in order to build a better Africa and a better world for present and future generations.

## **II. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work** [agenda item 2]

17. The draft agenda and programme of work were adopted with no amendments.

## **III. Plenary session 1: African Union-United Nations Partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals** [agenda item 3]

18. The plenary session was co-chaired by H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and Mr. Lopes. The panellists were Mr. Abdelaziz; Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa; Mr. Kostas G. Stamoulis, Assistant Director-General for Economics and Social Affairs, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Mr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza, Principal Adviser on Policy and Strategic Planning, United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Mr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs; Ms. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture; and Mr. Eddy Maloka, Chief Executive Officer of the African Peer Review Mechanism secretariat.

19. Plenary session 1 started with a presentation entitled "A common approach to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals" by H.E. Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, African Union Commissioner for Economic Affairs. The presentation highlighted the approach adopted during the development of both frameworks and reminded participants that Africa was the only region to have prepared a common position on the post-2015 development agenda, which had informed the Sustainable Development Goals. While there were 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 contained 20 goals, which gave the regional agenda a broader yet sharper perspective because it catered to the uniqueness of Africa through the inclusion of additional goals on culture and governance.

20. The presentation also made reference to the 12 flagship projects under way that constitute the short- and medium-term development focus of member States and regional economic communities within the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and which are also enablers of growth geared at fast-tracking the attainment of continental integration and development.

21. The presentation also touched on the RCM-Africa retreat held in February 2016, during which it had been agreed that the clusters should be revitalized and aligned Agenda 2063. RCM-Africa had agreed to adopt an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals through the development of a monitoring and evaluation system that would enable the production of a single periodic progress report.

22. Furthermore, the presentation recalled the coordination meeting of the heads of the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency and the African Capacity-Building Foundation, during which the proposed approach to implementation, monitoring and evaluation had been endorsed. The proposed approach had also received support from the Committee of Experts during the Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa would be through Agenda 2063. The presenter encouraged all partners to support the approach and called upon the United Nations system to communicate it to the United Nations country missions. Concluding, he said that the accountability channels included the technical joint team and steering committee, representing the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Capacity-Building Foundation, the regional economic communities and the statistics community.

23. In her remarks, H.E.Dr. Rhoda Peace said that the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme had been incorporated into Agenda 2063. There was a strong need to re-affirm mutual accountability regarding actions and results so as to achieve the full import of the Malabo Declaration. The African Union had developed a 10-year implementation plan to guide member States in taking forward the agriculture component of both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the African Union was working with NEPAD, United Nations agencies, donors and the regional economic communities to help countries review their national agriculture investment plans.

24. She emphasized that the focus should be on delivering results and having impact at the grassroots-level. As such, there was a need to improve accountability mechanisms by providing the required capacity-building to African institutions and Governments, farmers' organizations and the private sector. In order to fast-track progress on implementation, African Heads of State and Government had committed themselves to a biannual review process with a view to learning, taking corrective actions, and sharing and scaling up successes with a focus on the agricultural component of the Sustainable Development Goals. Specific tools had been developed by the African Union Commission to support the biannual review process, and help gauge member States' progress regarding the implementation of agricultural programmes. She called upon African countries to increase investment in agriculture, which would in turn have a positive impact on inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Concluding, she observed that the issue of unemployment could be addressed by increasing investment in agro-processing, value chains, trade and integration. She cautioned that risks associated with agriculture, such as climate change, also need to be taken into account.

25. Mr. Abdelaziz began by calling upon the African Union to ensure that all United Nations institutions were clearly identified as partners in Agenda 2063 documents. He noted that the end dates of the 2030 Agenda and the 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 were different, and stressed that despite similarities, the two agendas were not identical. There was, therefore, a need for a clear strategy on the implementation of global and regional agreements, including the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. He urged the African Union, through the RCM-Africa mechanism, to set out what it expected from the United Nations family. He suggested that RCM-Africa should meet twice a year, possibly before the African Union Summit and the General Assembly of the United Nations, for the African Union to review and evaluate progress made in the implementation of both frameworks and to allow for more high-level representation from the United Nations, respectively.

26. He said that awareness should be raised at the General Assembly of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027, which was the successor programme to the ten-year capacity-building programme. He concluded by emphasizing that the United Nations should take the lead in integrating and harmonizing the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 into strategic plans and mobilizing resources for the implementation of the two frameworks.

27. Mr. Stamoulis said that the 2030 Agenda, with its 17 goals, 169 targets and 200+ indicators, heralded a new development model. The narrative was shifting from a development model based on the South being assisted by the North to one where the whole world was required to adopt a sustainable development model. Noting that the Sustainable Development Goals were universal in scope and concern, he stressed that a silo approach in their implementation would stifle development progress.

28. Malnutrition remained a major problem in Africa. According to estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, nearly 23 per cent of Africa's population was undernourished and a further 220 million people were hungry. Projections by the Food and Agriculture Organization also indicated that, under a business-as-usual scenario, by 2030 there would be 216 million chronically hungry Africans, representing 17.4 per cent of the population. Agriculture remained key to sustainable livelihoods in Africa, since about 75 per cent of poor and undernourished people lived in rural areas. Food and agriculture were central to achieving the core objectives of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

29. He commended African Heads of State and Government for setting a target to eradicate hunger by the year 2025. Nevertheless, he underscored achieving it would require targeted and innovative interventions, including food, health and sanitation assistance; social protection; education and training; empowerment of women; and improved infrastructure, all with a special focus on the most vulnerable. Such interventions would create a virtuous cycle of development, leading to food security and improved nutrition. He concluded by noting that the challenge for African Governments was to select from the broad agenda a set of national goals and targets, develop plans and partnerships, and mobilize means of implementation. He called for the deployment of full knowledge, expertise and resources to set the stage for effective and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

30. Mr. Kaloko said that a number of strong initiatives were being worked on, including the Joint Youth Employment Initiative for Africa, on which the United Nations could collaborate with the African Union in achieving Agenda 2063. RCM-Africa remained the most appropriate means of engagement between the United Nations and the African Union. However, the clusters and

sub-clusters needed to be reviewed and realigned as the work of the African Union. He also emphasized the need for a concrete and efficient monitoring and evaluation system for tracking the progress of clusters and sub-clusters, particularly at the subregional level.

31. Turning to the issue of funding, he expressed regret that the unavailability of resources is hampering the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 and said that RCM-Africa should devise ways to secure permanent funding. He suggested that the private sector should be seriously considered as a possible source of funding and/or partner to support the operations of clusters and sub-clusters within the member States.

32. A road map of activities and a matrix that included implementation timelines for both the African Union and United Nations should be developed. The work of RCM-Africa should be framed by Agenda 2063 and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should be carried out with an Africa-specific approach.

33. Mr. Hamdok said that organs and agencies of the African Union, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and non-State actors should be involved in the implementation of both agendas through a well-focused and coordinated approach. That would help to prevent duplication, wastage and unnecessary competition for visibility. A common implementation framework, with clear targets and indicators, should be developed in order to avoid subjecting African policymakers to multiple development frameworks. To support the implementation of such a framework, he called for the development and deployment of monitoring and evaluation tools to measure progress on the implementation of both frameworks.

34. There was a need for building institutions- and capacity-, particularly at national level. Specifically, there was a need for strong capacity in national development planning. To that end, the availability of statistical data was vital and member States needed to recognize that and provide resources to that effect. He concluded by making the point that the United Nations and its agencies should not aspire for the aggregation of individual programmes, but rather should think and work as a collective support system for the implementation of both agendas.

35. Mr. Mutizwa-Mangiza said that the United Nations had a crucial role to play in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Regarding Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals – making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable – he made four interrelated points:

(a) The importance of well-planned and managed urbanization for sustainable development was no longer in doubt;

(b) Well-planned and managed urbanization could contribute to industrialization and structural transformation;

(c) Cities and towns currently contributed around 70 per cent of the world's gross domestic product;

(d) Cities and towns were now the dominant habitat of humanity. By 2035, more than 50 per cent of Africa's population would live in urban areas.

36. He said that the High-level Committee on Programmes' paper on a new urban agenda contained the following guiding principles on sustainable urbanization:

(a) Developing and implementing integrated national policies within the framework of national development plans;

(b) Strengthening urban legislation and systems of governance;



- (c) Harnessing the urban economy, creating employment opportunities and improving existing working conditions for all;
- (d) Strengthening municipal finance;
- (e) Reinvigorating spatial planning and urban design;
- (f) Promoting universal access to high-quality basic services;
- (g) Promoting adequate housing for urban dwellers of all income categories;
- (h) Strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment;
- (i) Placing culture at the heart of sustainable urban development;
- (j) Promoting resource efficiency in the secular economy at the city level.

37. He noted that the multi-stakeholder partnership proposed in the paper was inclusive and adaptable to the subregional levels in Africa. The proposed partnership would benefit from the participation of the African Union, civil society and the private sector. In forging lasting partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union for the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, he stressed that there was a need for a shared vision and a common understanding of the objectives of both agendas.

38. Mr. Maloka said that he was concerned that the issue of governance had been excluded from the recommendations of the report on the alignment of RCM-Africa. Noting that the central thrust of Agenda 2063 was transformative leadership, he proposed that the issue of governance be reconsidered and inserted. With regard to Agenda 2063, he said that the agenda must be viewed in the context of pan-African unity, given that has been Africa's historic objective.

39. He further noted that lessons drawn from the African Peer Review Mechanism over the previous 13 years could help to monitor and follow up on the harmonization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. He called upon the participants to avoid using tools or methodologies that were labour-intensive, pointing out that tools such as questionnaires could be problematic for both institutions and member States. He also cautioned on the deployment of tools or methodologies which are very dense with indicators of success or progress. Instead, he proposed that the tools used should be peer-based and owned by the countries. The processes used for the African Peer Review Mechanism were based on self-assessments, and he suggested that similar methods could be applied to the RCM-Africa processes. The outcomes of such assessments must be followed up, regardless of results, and such follow-up must include the deployment of capacity-building measures to support the national development plans of the countries concerned. In addition, follow-up processes must be standardized and the entities involved monitored adequately. In order to ensure the success of the exercise, the domestication of RCM-Africa processes through the integration and synchronization of follow-up tools into national development plans must be embraced. He proposed that that could be achieved by identifying a national follow-up body for member States.

#### **IV. Plenary session 2: African Union's theme for 2016, "African year of human rights, with a particular focus on the rights of women" [agenda item 4]**

40. Plenary session 2 was chaired by Mr. Abdelaziz and Ms. Febe Potgieter-Gqubule, Deputy Chief of Staff, African Union Commission. The panellists were Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, African Union Commission; Ms. Jeanine Cooper, Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Ms. Isha Dyfan, Chief of the Human Rights Section, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; and Ms. Letty Chiwara, Representative to Ethiopia, the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

41. Mr. Abdelaziz said that the African Union's theme for 2016 had been widely recognized and appreciated, especially with respect to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Success in the implementation of both agendas must be anchored on human rights, peace and security and inclusive development. He underscored the importance of the renewed commitment of the leadership of the African Union to human rights and the empowerment of women, as evidenced by the decision to make the year 2015 the year of women's empowerment and development towards Africa's Agenda 2063 and the year 2016 the African year of human rights, with a particular focus on the rights of women. The year 2016 was a watershed in Africa's human rights trajectory due to the fact that it offered an opportunity to monitor progress by taking stock, consolidating gains and addressing the remaining challenges that continued to stifle development with respect to human rights.

42. Ms. Diop said that Agenda 2063 was revolutionary in that it analysed Africa's development issues by articulating goals and aspirations in terms of what Africans wanted. Agenda 2063 was also a unique and innovative agenda in the sense that it pondered on the continent's development road map for the following 50 years. She underlined that women and young people constituted 70 per cent of Africa's population and emphasized that development would only be realized if adequate investment was made in those groups and as such Agenda 2063 presents an opportunity to harness and tap into these resources.

43. While there had been significant achievements since the Beijing Declaration, there was still a great deal more to be done with respect to women's rights. Africa had made commendable strides, with 46 countries having signed the Maputo Protocol and 37 countries ratifying it. Nevertheless, while this is laudable, she said that it would be 'a gift to women' if all 54 member States sign and ratify the protocol. Furthermore, it was important for States Parties to the Protocol to report regularly on its implementation, as with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

44. Despite instruments such as United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which specifically sets out the need to appoint more women as special envoys, this was not enough, much more needed to be done to ensure that women and children in conflict regions were well protected. Strong partnerships were important for resource mobilization to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063.

45. Concluding, she stressed the need for better data collection to support the development of targets and indicators for measuring progress made in the implementation of Agenda 2063's first 10-year implementation plan.

46. Ms. Cooper, speaking on behalf of Mr. Stephen O'Brien, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency

Relief Coordinator, began with an emotional account of the immense hardship that had befallen Liberians as a result of the lengthy civil war in the country. She said that during such events, women and girls were confronted with violence that posed a great risk to their lives and livelihoods. She underlined that 60 per cent of maternal deaths took place in humanitarian environments and that all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls spiked during disasters and conflicts. While such conflicts affected the population as a whole, existing structural gender inequalities meant that women and girls faced greater obstacles to reaching their full potential and leading safe, healthy and dignified lives.

47. Ms. Cooper added that during armed conflicts in Africa, there were serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, such as direct attacks against civilians, rape, torture and arbitrary arrest and detention. International humanitarian law and human rights laws, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report for the World Humanitarian Summit entitled "One Humanity: Shared Responsibility", remained fundamental in the quest to protect civilians. The African Union's decision to make 2016 the African year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women showed the continent's commitment to emphasizing and highlighting respect for the dignity of its citizens, which was also encapsulated in Agenda 2063's seven core aspirations.

48. Ms. Dyfan welcomed the opportunity to coordinate and collaborate with other United Nations agencies towards finding a common strategy for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. She welcomed the African Union's themes for 2015 and 2016 as a demonstration of the strong commitment of the African Union and its leaders to ensuring respect for human rights, in particular women's rights. She underscored that gender-based discrimination was one of the most prevalent forms of discrimination, which she attributed to deep-seated discriminatory norms, harmful gender stereotypes and pervasive violence against women and girls. Women faced inequalities in accessing resources and services, bore heavy and disproportionate unpaid workloads, and faced unacceptably high levels of preventable maternal mortality.

49. She said that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, through its framework of cooperation with the African Union, had been working on a number of fronts for years to strengthen its human rights frameworks, methodologies and tools to enhance the human rights system. The Office was also providing technical and financial support for the African Union's Project 2016 under all three clusters with a view to making the African year of human rights a landmark for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

50. Ms. Chiwara, speaking on behalf of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, recognized African Union member States' continued efforts regarding gender equality and women's rights in Africa. Nevertheless, she said that women in Africa continued to face human rights abuses unparalleled elsewhere in the world. The sustained increase of diverse forms of violence pointed to the prevalence of a patriarchy which perpetuated unequal power relations and the violation of women's rights in Africa.

51. Referring to the 2013 edition of the *African Women's Report*, which focused on the socioeconomic costs of violence against women, she said that intimate partner violence remained a serious challenge. Not only was it a human rights violation, but it also had a significant impact on the economy, costing up to 3 per cent of national gross domestic product in Africa. Early child marriage

was another serious human rights violation that prevented girls from getting an education and enjoying optimal health and life. She noted that wars had moved from the battlefields to villages, and that rape was being used as a weapon of war, leaving women and girls vulnerable, as illustrated by the abduction of over 200 girls in Chibok, Nigeria, in 2014. Nevertheless, through legal frameworks such as the African Union's human rights mechanism, which had been recently revised to include rape, abduction and forced marriage as violations of women's rights, the African Union had made significant progress in addressing such issues. To fully realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, strong partnerships would be required at various levels to address such challenges.

52. To move the agenda of women's rights forward in a sustainable manner, she proposed some key actions which included asking African Union member States to re-examine facets of cultural, socioeconomic, and legal systems that contribute to the violation of women's rights and guaranteeing health and reproductive rights for all women, including young women, adolescents, women with disabilities, women living with HIV and other marginalized groups. That could be achieved by countries ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, providing comprehensive sexual education and the including women in leadership roles at all levels of decision-making.

53. In the ensuing discussion, the participants emphasized that the promotion of civil liberties and political rights must not be given prominence over the pursuit of basic and fundamental rights such as access to food, shelter, education, health care and other basic necessities. Women's rights programmes would be jointly implemented by the Department of Political Affairs and the Gender Directorate of the African Union in the context of the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

54. The participants noted that women made a substantial contribution to Africa's agricultural sector and rural development. It was highlighted that the Food and Agriculture Organization's 2011 report on the state of food and agriculture indicated that, granted more access to resources, women could boost agricultural productivity and reduce the number of people suffering from food vulnerability by 150 million. To address the challenges, the participants suggested improving the collection, dissemination and use of disaggregated data; strengthening national capacities to recognize and address existing gender inequalities; and sharing good practices.

55. With regard to the perpetrators of gender-based violence, it was suggested that rehabilitation was as important as access to justice. It was also emphasized that national Governments should prosecute perpetrators of gender-based violence. Lastly, the participants emphasized the need to ensure that women's civil, political, economic and social rights were upheld. They urged African countries to provide adequate resources for gender mainstreaming activities at the national and regional levels and to strengthen gender ministries.

## **V. Plenary session 3: Free movement, migration, youth and gender empowerment in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals [agenda item 5]**

56. Plenary session 3 was chaired by Mr. Kaloko and Mr. Gilbert Hougbo, Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships, International Labour Organization. The panellists were Ms. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director-General, International Organization for Migration; Mr. Engida Getachew, Deputy Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Mr. Mabingue Ngom, Regional Director for West

and Central Africa, United Nations Population Fund; Ms. Rosemary Museminali, Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; and Mr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of the Department of Political Affairs, African Union.

57. Opening the session, Mr. Kaloko said that the subject of the free movement of people was an overdue initiative. On the topic of migration, he invited the participants to see the challenges as opportunities. In addition, he said that issues concerning young people and women were an important aspect of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. Mr. Matlosa gave a presentation on the issue of free movement of persons in Africa which described the African Union's normative framework. He said that the African Union's instruments on the free movement of persons were derived from the Abuja Treaty (article 43); the Minimum Integration Programme of the African Union (article 2.1.2); and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights (article 12).

59. During the presentation, he also discussed the new African passport, which was one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063; the experiences of the regional economic communities regarding free movement; and the African Development Bank's visa openness index. According to the index, 30 per cent of African countries did not require a visa for Africans, while a further 35 per cent allowed Africans to get visas upon arrival. Almost half of the most open countries in terms of visa arrangements were located in East Africa, against 30 per cent in West Africa and 5 per cent in North Africa. He concluded by highlighting the African Union's road map on the development of a protocol on the free movement of persons and the issuance of the African passport.

60. In his opening remarks, Mr. Hounbo made a number of observations on migration. He pointed out the importance of data and statistics to monitor the impact of free movement on markets; the need for a protocol or framework to recognize the skills of migrant workers from one country to another and from one subregion to another; the importance of having a minimum social protection system to empower women and young people; and the need for basic social protection for migrant workers, including domestic workers. He said that agriculture had a key role to play in ensuring inclusive growth. On that note, if the subregions wanted to make migration an option rather than a necessity, it would be important to look at the working conditions in the agricultural sector and make it more appealing to young people and women. Lastly, he noted the importance of skills and vocational training in order to fight inequality.

61. Ms. Thompson highlighted the importance of free movement of persons in the context of Africa's industrialization and infrastructure development. She said that Africa needed a larger regional market facilitated by free trade. Other regional experiences indicated that the addition of free movement of persons had positive results. She expressed regret that internal mobility in Africa was difficult and that irregular movements made the movement of people through regular ways even more difficult. She welcomed regional initiatives on free movement and said that the International Organization for Migration was supporting various regional consultative processes on migration in the form of platforms at the disposal of African countries which would contribute to their understanding of free movement and build on the momentum of regional integration.

62. She added that the Joint Labour Migration Programme for Africa, an initiative of the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration, sought to facilitate labour mobility in Africa. Currently, half of all migration movement happened within Africa, and better

integration and more free movement and trade zones would boost that phenomenon. Skills recognition and transferability in social rights were key. Migration was empowering for the individual and society at large. She also pointed out the feminization of migration, with women accounting for 50 per cent of migrants. Women now migrated independently as the head of the family, which was empowering for them and was helping to change traditional perceptions and norms in their respective communities. However, migration also exposed women to more abuses and risks.

63. Young people were the most likely to migrate. As of 2013, African migrants under 19 years of age accounted for 34 per cent of the total number of Africans leaving Africa, in comparison to 9 per cent of Asian migrants, a trend that was expected to continue. Youth migration was especially relevant as there was an increasing global demand for highly skilled workers. At the same time, Africa also faced the danger of having a high number of low-skilled workers.

64. Concluding, she highlighted the fundamental role of remittances in the development of African economies. The negative impact of remittances should also be recognized, as remittances could lead to lower productivity and innovation and put pressure on migrants, which in turn could increase their vulnerability to abuses by pushing them to accept certain types of employment.

65. Ms. Museminali talked about various joint programming and strategic initiatives in the health sector, including the African Union's health strategy, the catalytic framework to end AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and the landmark declaration on youth, women, girls and HIV, as well as high-level advocacy such as AIDS Watch Africa.

66. She stressed the importance of health in addressing cross-cutting issues. Emphasizing the devastation caused by HIV/AIDS on the continent, she welcomed visa restrictions for people living with HIV in Africa. Concluding, she called upon the participants to increase their efforts in order to agree on a African common position for the 2016 High-level Meeting on Ending AIDS, which aimed to lead to the adoption of a Political Declaration on Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030.

67. Mr. Engida Getachew began by expressing his regret that the recommendations of RCM-Africa had omitted the topic of culture in the realignment of the clusters. He argued that culture was the greatest resource and driver of development and warned that development strategies that did not include culture were doomed to fail. He emphasized that the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 both recognized the role of culture in development.

68. He continued by stressing the importance of the demographic dividend. Africa's population was its greatest asset, particularly its youth, who represented 50-60 per cent of the population. Africa's youth needed to be empowered, particularly young women, who were its most unexploited resource. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was helping African member States to review national youth policies and implement strategies and action plans. The support provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also entailed the consolidation of gains made in youth policy development, as well as social innovation and youth entrepreneurship, in an effort to promote a culture of peace and civicism. Pressing issues such as gender inequality, the brain drain, remittances and deaths as a result of migration called for greater efforts.

69. Mr. Ngom acknowledged the collaboration between the African Union and the United Nations system in terms of "delivering as one". He identified three areas for advancing the implementation process. First, he noted the importance of adequate institutional capacity support (both within the United

Nations and other partners) in order to deliver in the context of the integration agenda by avoiding a silo mentality and having the right institutional architecture aligned to the business model for Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Second, he said there was a need for effective partnerships, which would reduce transaction costs and boost the impact of initiatives. Lastly, he stressed the importance of joint programming and planning. Such partnerships would involve an integrated multi-stakeholder approach that included the private sector, civil society organizations, religious leaders, local communities, women and young people. The active participation of women and young people was especially important as their lack of access to education, health services and employment opportunities posed a significant development challenge and could lead to risky and dangerous behaviours with a potential impact on peace and stability.

70. He concluded by explaining the United Nations Population Fund's expectations for enhanced capacity, fit-for-purpose arrangements and an integrated approach. He reaffirmed the Fund's proactive support for the African Union Commission and member States in preparing the road map of activities and outcomes for the 2017 African Union Summit, which would focus on advancing the demographic dividend and youth empowerment.

71. In the ensuing discussion, the participants made a number of observations. On the issue of migration, it was noted that it was the business community that had pushed for the free movement of people within Africa and that many African countries were integrating the issue of migration into their development strategies. Protecting and empowering young people through high-quality health care, appropriate education, gainful employment and access to justice would help to leverage Africa's youth bulge and derive a demographic dividend. Regrettably, the statistical base on migration was lagging, and not only in Africa. The International Organization for Migration was working on an initiative aimed at tracking progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **VI. Plenary session 4: Regional integration, infrastructure and trade in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals [agenda item 6]**

72. Plenary session 4 was chaired by Mr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency. The panellists were Ms. Fatima Haram Acyl, African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry; Mr. Adeyemi Dipeolu, Senior Adviser to the President of Nigeria; Ms. Potgieter-Gqubule, Deputy Chief of Staff, African Union Commission; Mr. Juvenal Shiundu, Deputy Director, International Maritime Organization; Mr. Olubunmi Adetunmbi, Senator, Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Mr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, Deputy Executive Secretary, Southern African Development Community; and Mr. Charles Njoroge, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Political Federation, East African Community.

73. Ms. Potgieter-Gqubule said that Africa was the only region to have developed a common position on the post-2015 development agenda, with a view to providing inputs into the development of the Sustainable Development Goals. The common African position positioned the continent's development priorities around six pillars: structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; science, technology and innovation; people-centred development; environmental sustainability, natural resources management and disaster risk management; peace and security; and finance and partnerships. The common African position was aligned to Agenda 2063 and therefore achieving the goals

of Agenda 2063 would help ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve the goals, she stressed the need for countries to pursue sound policies that combined short-term imperatives of growth with long-term development considerations such as equality, environmental sustainability and social inclusion at the national, subregional, continental and global levels. She further underscored that private sector development must be encouraged by improving the investment and business climate in the region.

74. Turning to peace and security, she noted that the peace and security architecture of the African Union was centred around:

- (a) Silencing the guns;
- (b) Addressing new threats to the integrity and continued existence of African States, notably the increasing incidence of ethnic, regional and religious insurgencies;
- (c) Confronting emerging health threats such as Ebola;
- (d) Addressing the risk posed by climate change for African agriculture and fishing, as well as to its islands, coastal villages, towns and cities;
- (e) Addressing the causes of conflict and strengthening Africa's conflict intervention initiatives;
- (f) Intensifying efforts to ensure the full protection of women in conflict situations, as well as their involvement in conflict resolution initiatives and their participation in post-conflict decision-making processes.

75. She concluded by observing that Africa needed to live in peace in order to advance its integration agenda. More needed to be done in terms of harmonizing skills and qualifications, particularly in the areas of science and technology, engineering and medicine, which would support integration efforts on the continent as skilled Africans would be able to move around freely.

76. Ms. Acyl said that business persons needed to be allowed to travel freely within the continent so as to spur cross-border investments. The energy crisis plaguing the continent could be addressed through regional energy pools. Solving the energy crisis would support the promotion of investments on the continent and allow countries to embark on trans-boundary projects. There was also a strong need to address infrastructure bottlenecks, including transport infrastructure and ICT, to support Africa's development agenda.

77. Regarding the free movement of people, holistic policies were needed, including the facilitation of the movement of skilled workers such as engineers and nurses, especially in areas with shortages. Culture and diversity programmes must be used as a means of deepening integration on the continent. Diversity should be seen as a strength rather than an impediment in driving the continent forward. She called upon member States to harmonize their policies on social inclusion and climate change, as the impacts of such issues transcended borders.

78. Foreign direct investment must target and support Africa's industrialization efforts. It was also important that industrialization policies were reconciled with overall national strategies and development plans. She urged African countries to embark on value chains at the regional level that fitted into global value chains.

79. Concluding, she noted that the establishment of the continental free trade area would contribute to the deepening of intra-African trade, enhance Africa's competitiveness at the industrial and enterprise level, solve food security problems, and improve the continent's ability to better fulfil its import needs with its own resources.



80. Mr. Mhlongo said that there was a need for a robust communication strategy geared towards achieving more progress on industrialization. The Southern African Development Community had an industrialization policy that supported its free trade agenda. In terms of infrastructure, Africa needed to develop bankable projects as finance was not the main challenge. He concluded by suggesting that the region's industrialization policies could borrow from South Africa, which was the most industrialized country in Africa.

81. Mr. Njoroge said that countries should identify their individual trade obstacles that were hindering progress towards achieving regional integration. Such obstacles included non-tariff barriers, poor communication and the existence of borders and visas. To address some of those challenges, the East African Community had launched three passports – diplomatic, ordinary and regional – which were set to be issued in the coming months within the East African subregion. He underscored the need to look at complementarities as well as opportunities for promoting transboundary projects.

82. Echoing Mr. Mhlongo, Mr. Adetunmbi also emphasized on the need for a communication strategy to promote Africa's industrialization efforts in view of achieving Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The communication strategy should aim to raise awareness among member States of Agenda 2063. He also stressed the need for Africa to tackle its infrastructure deficits through the development of bankable projects to attract investment finance. Africa had to address its payment system so as to reduce transaction costs incurred on remittances and trade. It was also imperative to capture the level of trading transactions within the informal sector in order to see how they could be leveraged and supported.

83. Citing several success stories, including the Lagos-Abidjan road, Rwanda's policy of visa-free access for all Africans and Ghana's 30-day visa-free entry scheme, he recommended that future RCM-Africa sessions invite innovative countries to share their success stories so that lessons could be learned from bi-lateral approaches to regional integration. Africa could learn from the success stories of other regions. He concluded by calling for national parliaments to be invited to future RCM-Africa sessions.

84. Mr. Dipeolu made a number of key points. First, he called upon African countries to improve connectivity. In that regard, he said that existing continental projects, such as the trans-African highways, must be completed before new ones were started. Second, appropriate regulatory frameworks and environments must be created to allow for investments in infrastructure projects. Third, African countries must tap into regional and global value chains. For that to happen, he called for the harmonization of existing rules of origin to enhance the movement of goods across African countries. Fourth, he called for the free movement of African people so as to allow for skilled Africans to move freely to where their services were needed. Fifth, African countries must work on reducing the cost of doing business which was prohibitive compared to other regions. Easing the cost of doing business would support the deepening of Africa's private sector. Lastly, he urged African central banks to improve the payment systems and manage their currencies better in order to withstand external shocks.

85. Mr. Shiundu said that Africa did not recognize the full potential of its marine resources. He recalled the adoption by the African Union of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050, which urged African countries to focus on the blue economy as there were enormous opportunities to be gained. He was heartened that the blue economy had been incorporated into Agenda 2063. Africa was the second biggest continent, with a total coastline of 26,000 nautical miles, 38 coastal and/or island countries, and about 100 seaports, yet marine resources had not been fully exploited in support of international and

intra-African trade. He called for the development of inland water ways to support intra-African trade. In that context, the development of ports must be aligned to the promotion of intra-African trade. He encouraged African countries to implement maritime trade conventions and establish the “single window” concept to speed up the turnaround time in ports and ease cargo flows. He concluded by urging the African Union to establish a maritime department within the African Union Commission.

86. In the ensuing discussion, the participants made the following points:

(a) The establishment of a maritime department within the African Union Commission should be accelerated;

(b) The role of urbanization must be taken into account in the development of programmes on regional integration, infrastructure and trade;

(c) Appropriate trade and competition laws must be enacted by African countries to ensure equity and fairness in trading practices;

(d) While Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda were similar, they were certainly not identical. Africa’s development agenda should be based on Agenda 2063. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda would be carried out in support of Agenda 2063, as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would not be the same in every country;

(e) Africa had to recognize that it had made a great deal of progress. Established frameworks on the continent had contributed in deepening regional integration;

(f) Africa should have a strong determination to own its markets. It was important that restrictions were removed to allow for a deeper expansion of markets.

## **VII. Recommendations from plenary sessions 1-4**

87. At the end of the four plenary sessions, the participants agreed on a number of recommendations in support of Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals.

### **A. Plenary session 1: African Union-United Nations Partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

88. In the light of the panel discussion on the topic of the African Union-United Nations Partnership for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, RCM-Africa made the following recommendations:

(a) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations, should support African countries to integrate Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda into national development plans and strategies;

(b) The United Nations, through RCM-Africa, should partner with the African Union in enhancing the capacities of African countries for the planning and implementation of Agenda 2063;

(c) African countries should encourage the participation of the private sector in the implementation of Agenda 2063;

(d) The African Union, with the collaboration of the United Nations and other partners, must enhance its communication on Agenda 2063 so that all

stakeholders are aware that by African countries implementing Agenda 2063, they are also implementing Agenda 2030;

(e) The United Nations should support the African Union in preparing a common report for Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda;

(f) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations, should develop a resource mobilization strategy in support of the implementation of Agenda 2063;

(g) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners, is urged to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to measure the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 2063. In this regard, the United Nations is encouraged to support the capacities of the African Union, the African regional economic communities and African countries in the collection of appropriate data for measuring the indicators of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(h) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners, is urged to use the African Peer Review Mechanism to assess progress made by African countries in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

## **B. Plenary session 2: African Union's theme for 2016, "African year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women"**

89. In the light of the panel discussion on the African Union's theme for 2016, "African year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women", RCM-Africa made the following recommendations:

(a) The African Union should encourage its member States to put in place policies and strategies to ensure that the priorities of women and girls are mainstreamed into the goals, targets and indicators of Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plans as well as national development plans;

(b) The African Union should encourage its member States to establish and implement legislation that empowers, protects and upholds the rights of young women and girls, including laws that give women and girls the right to own, purchase and inherit land and productive assets; ensure their reproductive rights; and prohibit early, child and forced marriages and all forms of violence against women, including sexual and gender-based violence and female genital mutilation;

(c) The African Union should encourage its member States to end impunity for violence against women by establishing comprehensive and effective legal frameworks and strengthening the capacity of judicial institutions to ensure full implementation of relevant legislation;

(d) The African Union should encourage its member States to strengthen legislative capacities to adequately respond to and address the gender impact of cross-border and regional conflicts and humanitarian crises, including arms and human trafficking and displacement of women and children;

(e) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners, should promote economic empowerment and secondary and tertiary education opportunities for women and girls as a strategy for combating sexual violence against women, and uplifting their social status and eradicating poverty;

(f) The African Union, in partnership with the United Nations, should ensure that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's rights and

gender-sensitive targets and indicators are included in Agenda 2063, with emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and accountability for implementation;

(g) The African Union should encourage African Governments to devote the necessary resources to women's organizations and initiatives to ensure that women's rights are protected and that women and girls receive appropriate services;

(h) The African Union should encourage African countries to put in place policies and strategies that expand women's socioeconomic rights and opportunities, in particular in respect of women's economic opportunities, earnings and productivity; maternal mortality and women's reproductive rights; access to education; and issues involving women's voices and agency;

(i) The African Union should encourage African countries to enact appropriate laws to strengthen the ability of women in rural Africa to gain access to finance. In this regard, they should encourage financial institutions to provide innovative mechanisms to remove the difficulties that women face in posting collateral assets to support requests for credit;

(j) The African Union should encourage African countries to put in place policies and strategies that ensure a legal and regulatory framework on property and land rights for women; enable women to move beyond microfinance and into regular financial services; and encourage financial institutions to develop a diversified range of gender-responsive financial products that meet the needs of different groups of women;

(k) United Nations agencies should join the African Union's Project 2016, with a special focus on ending poverty and inequality, employment creation, and respect for basic human rights, including access to food, shelter, water and sanitation.

### **C. Plenary session 3: Free movement, migration, youth and gender empowerment in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

90. In the light of the panel discussion, RCM-Africa made the following recommendations:

(a) The African Union should encourage African countries to remove visas for Africans travelling within the continent;

(b) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners, should develop a protocol to recognize educational certificates and skills from different countries with a view to promoting regional integration and migration within the continent;

(c) The African Union should encourage African countries to put in place mechanisms, incentives and strategies to encourage Africa's youth and women to engage in agriculture;

(d) The African Union, in collaboration with African countries, regional economic communities, the United Nations and other partners, should develop a continental strategy for the creation of a single market to support its industrialization and trade policies;

(e) The African Union, with the support of the United Nations, is urged to mainstream culture in the strategies and policies for the implementation of Agenda 2063;

(f) The African Union, with the support of the United Nations, should develop a continental framework for protecting and empowering young people

through quality health care, appropriate education, gainful employment and access to justice as a way of ensuring that Africa's youth bulge is leveraged and the demographic dividend derived;

(g) The African Union should encourage African countries to integrate migration into their development programmes and activities;

(h) The African Union should encourage African countries to increase their investments in education and developing the skills and abilities of young people, with a view to realizing sustainable development, safeguarding human rights and curbing drug-related and criminal activities.

#### **D. Plenary session 4: Regional integration, infrastructure and trade in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals**

91. In the light of the panel discussion, RCM-Africa made the following recommendations:

(a) The African Union should encourage African countries and development partners to redouble their efforts to scale up investment in the infrastructure projects of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa so as to boost intra-African trade, which in turn will generate faster and more inclusive growth;

(b) The African Union should encourage African countries to develop sound intraregional and overseas transport and communication networks that contribute to the facilitation, promotion and expansion of international and intraregional trade and enable full participation in the globalization process;

(c) The African Union should encourage African countries to diversify their production structures in order to move away from primary production and produce competitive and value-added products;

(d) The African Union should encourage African countries to remove all forms of physical and non-physical barriers in order to promote intra-African trade;

(e) The African Union should encourage African countries to improve and harmonize their customs and industrial policies;

(f) The African Union should encourage African countries to fast-track implement the African Union's Accelerated Industrial and Development Agenda;

(g) The African Union, in collaboration with African central banks, should encourage African countries to put in place mechanisms to enhance payments without comprising the financial stability of financial institutions and markets;

(h) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations and other partners, should harmonize the regulatory frameworks for infrastructure development with a view to attracting investments for infrastructure projects;

(i) The African Union should encourage African countries to put in place mechanisms, policies and strategies to incentivize the African private sector to engage in transboundary projects with a view to deepening regional integration. In this regard, African countries should increase their efforts to remove all bottlenecks and constraints to doing business so that the cost of doing business will be substantially reduced;

(j) The African Union should encourage African countries to put in place mechanisms to enhance the development of the blue economy so as to

achieve the full economic potential of the African maritime domain and inland waterways;

(k) The African Union and the regional economic communities should encourage African countries to harness the opportunities presented by urbanization and infrastructure development, with a view to enhancing regional integration, structural transformation, industrialization and economic growth.

## **VIII. Plenary session 5: Strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa)** [agenda item 7]

### **A. Consolidated progress report of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the subregional coordination mechanisms** [agenda item 7a]

92. A summary of the consolidated progress report of RCM-Africa and the subregional coordination mechanisms for the review period of April 2015 to March 2016 was entered into the proceedings of the session as time did not permit its presentation.

93. The report noted that the period 2015-2016 was a transition year because of the proposed alignment and reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters. Nevertheless, during that period, RCM-Africa had registered a number of achievements.

94. First, there was significant progress in terms of deepening consultation and refocusing on ways to strengthen the United Nations-African Union partnership and also scaling up United Nations support to the African Union and its organs. One significant achievement had been a series of consultations and awareness-raising activities geared towards supporting the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. RCM-Africa had been asked to align its structure with that of the African Union Commission's strategic plan for 2014-2017 in the short term, the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 in the medium term, and Agenda 2063 in the long term.

95. Second, the report highlighted that a new programme anchored on Agenda 2063 had been developed. The new programme, dubbed the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda for 2017-2027, had been adopted by the African Union in June 2015. Subsequently, with the support of the Africa Group in New York, the new framework was going through the United Nations processes for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly. That process was still on-going and the RCM-Africa secretariat, with the support of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, would continue to follow-up on the matter.

96. Third, the report noted that the RCM-Africa secretariat had prepared comprehensive guidelines on joint programming, which included an articulation of roles, responsibilities and commitments. To introduce those guidelines and their mode of utilization, a workshop had been held from 30 September to 1 October 2015.

97. Fourth, the report added that the RCM-Africa secretariat had prepared a framework document for enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of the RCM-Africa mechanism. The framework document had been reviewed at an expert group meeting held in September 2015 and subsequently endorsed by RCM-Africa at a coordinators meeting in February 2016. The core purpose of the framework document was to strengthen further the mechanism at both the

regional and subregional levels through a results-based implementation strategy for the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063. It was expected to address the issue of demonstrating tangible results and achievements, a major challenge facing the mechanism. Furthermore, the report highlighted the achievements of the clusters during the period under review as per the progress report.

98. The report of the subregional coordination mechanism noted that the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa did not have the annual report for the review period but did carry out some advocacy activities. The report described the matrix structure deployed by the subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa, underlining that such an assessment system could be replicated across other subregional coordination mechanisms.

99. The report noted that the endorsement of the proposed communication and advocacy strategy constituted a significant milestone in the operations of RCM-Africa. The objective of the strategy was to enhance communication on the implementation of the objectives of RCM-Africa (specifically the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063) and to enhance collaboration and the exchange of information among and between clusters and subclusters, all with the aim of resolving the problem of weak information and communication, which continued to pose a challenge to the mechanism.

100. With regard to challenges, the report stated that RCM-Africa continued to face recurrent issues revolving around resource constraints, weak information and communication and planning constraints. The lack of resources to support the implementation of RCM-Africa and its clusters remained a major constraint as there was no specific budget allocation to support the implementation of planned programmes and activities. In addition, the absence of dedicated resources meant that many clusters and subclusters were unable to function effectively, which further compromised efforts on joint programming within RCM-Africa.

101. The report noted that issues related to resource constraints entailed the lack of a specific budget allocation for the implementation of planned programmes and activities and a shortage of staff dedicated to the work of the secretariat, especially from the African Union side. With respect to communication, poor dissemination of information was identified as a key constraint to the effective functioning of the mechanism. In the area of planning, the lack of regular interaction between and within the clusters continued to undermine their ability to function in an effective and cross-cutting manner. The proposed communications and advocacy strategy was expected to resolve those challenges.

102. The report recommended that sustainable resources be made available for RCM-Africa in the long term. In the short term, all United Nations system organizations were 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 meant that the cluster activities would have to be integral to the work programmes and budget of each participating agency. That would require participating cluster members on the United Nations side to ensure that RCM-Africa's work was adequately provided for in their regular work programmes and budgets.

103. In the medium to long term, the report noted that the proposed United Nations-African Union partnership framework should be fully supported with adequate resources, with a view to strengthening efforts by the United Nations system and African Union organs to work together on the priorities of the African Union. In the meantime, the United Nations and the African Union were

urged to work together and deliver as one on key joint undertakings by pooling their resources, with the support of African member States. Lastly, with respect to planning, the clusters and subclusters were urged to ensure that key indicators and targets were included in their plans and that their activities were reflected in the regular work programmes and programme budgets of each member agency and organization. Meetings among coordinators and members should be held by the clusters on at least a quarterly basis and by subclusters in the intervals between cluster meetings.

## **B. Report of the committee on the reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters [agenda item 7b]**

104. In presenting the report of the committee on the reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters, the Chair of the committee, Ms. Potgeiter-Gqubule, recalled that at a retreat of the RCM-Africa cluster and subcluster coordinators held in February 2016, a working committee had been set up to examine the proposals of the secretariat on the reconfiguration of the clusters and asked to report its recommendations to the seventeenth session of RCM-Africa.

105. The committee was composed of Ms. Potgiter-Gqubule, Deputy Chief of Staff of the African Union Commission (Chair); Mr. Olawale Maiyegun, Director of Social Affairs, African Union Commission; Ms. Treasure Maphanga, Director of Trade and Industry, African Union Commission; Mr. Chris Kachiza, Acting Director of Strategic Planning, African Union Commission; Mr. Salvatore Matata, Head of the COMESA Liaison Office to the African Union Commission; Mr. Talla Kebe, representing the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency; and Mr. Joseph Atta-Mensah, representing the ECA component of the RCM-Africa secretariat. Ms. Adwoa Coleman of the Office of the Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission, and representing the African Union component of the RCM-Africa secretariat, also assisted the committee.

106. The Chair said that the committee had conducted a series of internal consultations with 10 technical departments and directorates of the African Union Commission. The technical departments and directorates were selected on the basis that their involvement in RCM-Africa as joint coordinators of the clusters or subclusters had equipped them with first-hand experience of the functioning of the system. The 10 departments and directorates were the following: Department of Political Affairs; Department of Economic Affairs; Department of Social Affairs; Department of Trade and Industry; Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture; Department of Infrastructure and Energy; Department of Peace and Security; Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology; Directorate of Women, Gender and Development; and the Directorate of Information and Communication.

107. The Committee had also consulted the Commissioners of the African Union Commission with a view to seeking strategic guidance from its political management. The African Union Commission had also informed the joint coordination meeting of the heads of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the regional economic communities held in Lusaka in March 2016. In addition, the committee had made a presentation to the United Nations Liaison Team. The inputs arising from that presentation and the subsequent discussion had been reflected in the report of the committee.

108. In terms of identifying best practices, the committee had observed that there were many examples of joint action by bodies in the United Nations system, the African Union and the regional economic communities, which provided evidence of the fact that much more could be achieved through



coordinated activities than by acting in parallel. She gave as examples the final push during the last five years of the Millennium Development Goals process, to ensure that better results were achieved at the continental level; the work between the regional economic communities and the subregional mechanisms; and issue-based cooperation on such matters as promoting gender equality and combating HIV, AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and Ebola. She stressed that, as examples of best practice, such joint work must be consolidated, as the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities sought to ensure that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 got off on a proper footing.

109. The Chair stressed the need for concerted efforts to tackle the challenges facing the current RCM-Africa clusters, which were inhibiting their efficient functioning. The proposed reconfigured cluster system was aimed at addressing those challenges, which included:

(a) The need for greater participation by the various departments within the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities, as the main stakeholders in the work of RCM-Africa, to ensure stronger ownership and guidance by the organs of the African Union;

(b) The need for greater coordination among participating United Nations agencies, which had in fact been competing with one another for turf and shown a preference to engage with the African Union Commission outside the RCM-Africa cluster framework;

(c) The perception on the part of African Union departments that there was some reluctance by the United Nations system to place a premium on African Union programmes and priorities, a position which was seen as the single most important factor contributing to the decline of the African Union's participation in cluster meetings;

(d) The infrequency of cluster and subcluster meetings and inadequate attendance and institutional representation at those meetings and, in particular, the lack of continuity in respect of the level of attendance and representation of agencies and organizations at cluster and subcluster meetings;

(e) The lack of resources to support the implementation of the programmes of RCM-Africa and its clusters, as there was no dedicated budget allocation from the General Assembly for the implementation of RCM-Africa-related programmes and activities; the difficulties faced by many clusters in elaborating joint programmes and creating a common funding pool for their activities, because of different programme and budget cycles set by their governing bodies; and the continued inability of the clusters to mobilize resources and commit dedicated resources to the planning and implementation of joint programmes and projects;

(f) The need for better communication, because despite progress in several areas, there was inadequate cooperation between the advocacy and communications cluster and the other clusters;

(g) The lack of clarity regarding the allocation of roles and responsibilities for specific activities among the United Nations agencies themselves, on the one hand, and between those agencies and the African Union Commission, on the other;

(h) The weak monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the mechanism, the work of its clusters and the key indicators of success and targets to be achieved in each area of activity. An effective monitoring and evaluation system would help to ensure a common understanding of impacts, results, outcomes and activities in the context of RCM-Africa and the proper articulation of indicators of achievement;

(i) The failure by the current RCM-Africa system to factor in other coordination mechanisms between the United Nations system, the African Union and the regional economic communities.

110. The Chair said that the committee had observed that an overview of current arrangements between the African Union Commission, the United Nations and other agencies suggested the following trends:

(a) In many areas, cooperation between specific African Union departments and United Nations agencies took place on a bilateral basis, outside of the RCM-Africa clusters, and that resources were therefore available for bilateral programmes;

(b) Cluster systems worked best where there was a multiplicity of stakeholders involved on an issue.

111. Following the discussions and consultations held with various stakeholders, the committee had suggested the following principles for the reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa clusters:

(a) The work of RCM-Africa should be framed by Agenda 2063 and an Africa-specific approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) The clusters should focus on cooperation on specific programmes, consistent with the goals of the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Joint programme planning and implementation should be accompanied by resource planning and resource mobilization by all parties;

(d) The coordination processes should involve the regional economic communities and the subregional coordination mechanisms in an effective manner;

(e) Common indicators and a monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed for the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

112. In making its recommendations on how the clusters should be reconfigured, the Committee had proposed the following operational principles:

(a) Existing African Union-United Nations mechanisms that were effective, such as those in the areas of peace and security, should be used as models. Examples of such mechanisms included:

(i) United Nations Security Council and African Union Peace and Security Council, including joint annual consultations;

(ii) Consultations between the United Nations Secretary General and the African Union Commission Chairperson;

(iii) Joint African Union-United Nations Task Force on Peace and Security;

(iv) Annual African Union-United Nations desk-to-desk meetings;

(v) Oran Process;

(vi) African Governance Architecture Platform and the Task Force on Post-Conflict Reconstruction;

(vii) Joint spatial mechanisms such as on the Sahara/Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Initiative;

(viii) Human Resources, Science and Technology Coalition for Education;

(ix) Continental free trade area processes, which should be continued in their current forms, but a mechanism should be found to ensure that their reports were included in the RCM-Africa reports.

(b) The other reconfigured clusters should meet and agree on priority programmes based on the indicators adopted by ministers of finance, economy, planning and integration, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 flagship projects;

(c) The reconfigured clusters should discuss the mobilization of resources for their priority programmes and report to the coordinators, and the issue of undertaking resource mobilization against a background of differing budgetary cycles should be kept at the fore.

(d) The reconfigured clusters should make recommendations on a new configuration of the subclusters, based on their priorities and resources, and guidance in this regard should be provided by the RCM-Africa secretariat;

(e) The RCM-Africa programme and the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 should be aligned, with a view to the adoption of the partnership by the General Assembly;

(f) Work should be undertaken with other comparable arrangements, such as the African Union Partners Group, to promote cooperation and joint implementation and monitoring;

(g) A multi-year programme should be developed for the clusters.

113. The Chair said that, in the light of the experience gained from the current cluster system, the inputs from departments of the African Union Commission and the contributions received during the meeting with the United Nations Liaison Team, the Committee had decided to recommend the following reconfiguration of the clusters:

(a) Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade and regional integration;

(b) Infrastructure development;

(c) Human capital development, health, science, technology and innovation;

(d) Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility;

(e) Women and gender equality and youth empowerment;

(f) Humanitarian issues and disaster risk management;

(g) Environment, urbanization and population;

(h) Advocacy, information and communication.

114. Explaining the reconfiguration of the clusters, she said that the focus on industrialization was dictated by the fact that industrialization was necessary for the continent to move forward; related to that was the issue of agro-industry. Furthermore, it had been considered necessary to have a cluster devoted to human capital development, given that was central to Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Human capital development was incorporated into the third cluster, rather than the first one, to ensure that the focus on the development of skills would not be lost. Similarly, although the issues of

women and youth empowerment could have been mainstreamed into all the other clusters, the Committee was of the opinion that there was an argument for setting up a separate cluster devoted to the two issues, in order to allow for a concentration of effort. A separate cluster on humanitarian issues had also been created, given the ongoing effects of climate change and peace and security issues. The Chair suggested that the cluster on advocacy, information and communication could incorporate the issue of culture, especially indigenous culture, given that there was a need to change cultural mind sets across all the areas covered by the other clusters.

115. Under the operational principles proposed by the Committee, the reconfiguration meant that the peace and security cluster would cease to exist, while existing mechanisms between the African Union Commission and the United Nations continued to be utilized. She noted that it had been proposed that the subcluster on humanitarian matters should be elevated to the status of a full cluster. There was also the need to take into account the fact that since United Nations agencies were not involved in sports, there was no need for a stand-alone sports cluster. Furthermore, since only the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization dealt with the subject of culture, there was no need for a cluster comprising only one United Nations agency. Regarding the issue of resource mobilization, the Committee had decided that since it was a cross-cutting issue, it should be part of the work programme of all the clusters.

116. The Chair said that the Committee had made a number of recommendations that, although not directly related to its mandate, would reinforce the reconfigured cluster system:

(a) A monitoring and evaluation framework for the RCM-Africa cluster system should be put in place, to assist with the process of joint evaluation of the performance of the United Nations on the continent, pursuant to the implementation of the RCM-Africa business plans and programmes, and in the overall context of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) United Nations agencies should be encouraged to allocate funding from their budgets for the implementation of RCM-Africa programmes, as a first step towards improved resource mobilization;

(c) A joint African Union Commission-United Nations secretariat for RCM-Africa, which properly represents both the African Union and the United Nations, should be constituted and operationalized, to replace the existing set-up, which is merely consultative in function. This would help meet the need to strengthen both components of the joint secretariat and to mobilize funding from regular and predictable sources;

(d) The critical importance of the regional economic communities could not be over-emphasized.

(e) The United Nations agencies should make greater efforts to deliver as one, to ensure better coordination with and support for the African Union and other continental institutions;

(f) The African Union should assume its responsibility to exercise ownership and leadership of continental development and RCM-Africa processes.

117. In the ensuing discussion, there were expressions of appreciation for the work that the Committee had done. The view was expressed that the results of the Committee's work would help the United Nations agencies to re-orient their engagement with the continent and allow for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, the new cluster structure captured the essence of the two major frameworks and would help to

prevent the perpetuation of the silo approach. In addition, the new configuration would help the United Nations agencies to work together on the basis of the integration of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

118. Some participants, however, raised concerns about the proposal not to provide for a peace and security cluster, as well as one on governance and human rights. It was noted in that regard that their effectiveness had been illustrated in joint United Nations/African Union monitoring and reporting on human rights. It was therefore suggested that the peace and security and governance and human rights clusters should not be eliminated and that the cluster on governance could be subsumed under another cluster. However, it was pointed out that the disbandment of the peace and security cluster as well as the one on governance was necessitated by the fact that the activities on peace and security and governance were being carried out effectively in African Union/United Nations mechanisms outside the cluster system and that a mechanism for reporting would be devised to keep RCM-Africa informed of matters in that field.

119. Regarding the proposal for a cluster on advocacy and information, it was stressed that it was a welcome proposal, given that it was vital to have better communication between the clusters, as underlined in the report, so as to foster clarity about the objectives of stakeholders.

120. It was argued that since the clusters or subclusters were expected to explicitly contribute to the implementation of the recommendations made at the Conference of Ministers of Culture of the African Union, culture should be part of the advocacy, information and communication cluster, in order to be mainstreamed into the work of other clusters.

121. It was stressed that the United Nations system should move away from the approach that it would be business-as-usual for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

122. In addition, it was recommended that the United Nations system and RCM-Africa should work more effectively with the regional economic communities and the country offices.

123. The participants suggested that a separate meeting be held in the near future to map United Nations agencies along the lines of the new cluster system, as well as to define the subclusters, while ensuring that each agency did not end up belonging to too many clusters and subclusters, as had happened in the past. Such a forum would allow RCM-Africa to define priorities, organize joint programming and allocate responsibilities among the African Union departments and the United Nations Agencies.

124. It was also suggested that a dedicated secretariat be set up for each cluster in order to ensure institutional memory, back-stopping and knowledge management.

125. The inclusion of agriculture and agro-industry in the economic cluster was welcomed, given its key role in generating gross domestic product and employment.

126. It was also suggested that in the light of the endorsement by representatives of African Governments (and other Governments) of the Declaration and Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition, which had underlined that nutritional deficiencies could have both physical and cognitive effects on the whole life of a person, and given that nutrition was one of the goals, it would be useful to include nutrition in the cluster on human capital development and health.

127. The participants suggested the need for openness and innovation in order to acknowledge the cross-linkages among clusters.

128. The attention of the session was drawn to the fact that for the recommendation regarding the allocation of 30 per cent of the budgets of United Nations agencies to be implemented, it must be explicitly mentioned in a relevant resolution of the General Assembly. It was also recalled that the draft resolution pertaining to the adoption of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 was based substantially on Agenda 2063 and contained a provision which called for dedicated funding, not only from the General Assembly but also from the United Nations agencies. However, Agenda 2063 had not yet been formally submitted to the General Assembly for endorsement. It was also acknowledged that there would have to be some measure of robust engagement at a high level between the African Union and the United Nations on that matter.

129. In addition, more clarity was sought on the proposal of instituting a financial allocation of 30 per cent, regarding whether it would encompass what agencies and organizations were already providing, or whether it would involve an addition to what was already being implemented.

130. On the issue of culture, it was pointed out that culture was important in the work of all of the clusters. Consequently, it might be useful to make culture a sub-cluster of another cluster. In that regard, the session's attention was drawn to the fact that the African Union had a Specialized Technical Committee on Culture and so it would be necessary to ensure that the ministers' recommendations were implemented by the United Nations. Accordingly, it was proposed that the subcluster on culture could be incorporated into the advocacy cluster.

**C. United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027**  
[agenda item 7c]

131. A representative of the RCM-Africa secretariat said that the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 had been formulated to be the immediate successor programme to the United Nations ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which expired at the end of 2016. He noted that the report of the second triennial review of the ten-year capacity-building programme had indicated that while substantial contributions had been made towards building the capacity of the institutions of the African Union in the context of the programme, the United Nations' mandates of support to the African Union and the NEPAD Agency had been overtaken by developments, and that the time was ripe for those mandates to be updated to respond to present realities by means of a successor programme.

132. He noted that the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 was anchored around the following principles:

(a) Ownership and leadership by the African Union: It is important that the expressed needs and priorities of the African Union provide the context within which United Nations support is to be conceived and delivered;

(b) Respect for Africa's policy space: Every effort should be made to avoid actions that violate this principle or infringe on the sovereignty of the African Union's member States;

(c) Faithfulness to commitments made: Commitments made should, to the extent possible, be adhered to faithfully, so as to maximize results and avoid frustrations;

(d) Consultation and coordination: The partnership will thrive with regular consultation and extensive coordination among all stakeholders. Dialogue and the quest for coherence and synergy should be an important basis for success;

(e) Accountability: Partners will be accountable to one other and to those they represent and serve. Beneficiaries of interventions will be accountable to stakeholders contributing to the implementation of the framework;

(f) Strategic partnership: The partnership should be strategic in terms of its ability to catalyse change towards the attainment of Africa's objectives of integration, development, peace and security and governance as enunciated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;

(g) Proactive engagement: Partners will engage with Africa proactively based on the continent's agenda and priorities;

133. He reiterated that the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 had been formulated and anchored on Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, which covered the period 2013-2023. The partnership therefore recognized that Agenda 2063 was the overarching framework for Africa's integration and development under which all other frameworks, blueprints, programmes and plans of action were subsumed, including the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme and the Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa.

134. The United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 sought to address the following:

- (a) Sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- (b) Human capital development;
- (c) Employment creation;
- (d) Social protection;
- (e) Gender/women development and youth empowerment;
- (f) Good governance and capable institutions;
- (g) Infrastructural development;
- (h) Science, technology and innovation;
- (i) Peace and security;
- (j) Culture, arts and sports.

135. The United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 would help African Union countries to increase their efforts to fast-track the implementation of flagship programmes identified as having an immediate positive impact on growth. Such flagship programmes included the integrated high-speed train network; the Great Inga Dam project; the single aviation market; the outer space programme; the pan-African e-network; an annual African consultative platform; the virtual university; the African passport and the free movement of persons; the continental free trade area; silencing the guns by 2020; the development of a commodity strategy; and the establishment of continental financial institutions, including an African central bank by 2030.

136. The United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 had been formulated such that all

United Nations entities operating in Africa at the regional level would be required to tailor their programmes to fit the objectives and priorities set forth in the framework. Those priorities were, in turn, based on frameworks established by the African Union, especially the strategic plans of the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda, and Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan.

137. Each of the regional economic communities in Africa's five subregions would have their individual programme priorities, which would be supported by their respective subregional coordination mechanisms. He further noted that apart from the programmes on regional integration, which were common to all – e.g. intraregional trade, infrastructural development, energy, industrialization, peace and security and governance – there were also important priority programmes that were peculiar to each. He also noted that the regional economic communities would all enjoy the full support of the United Nations system operating in each of the subregions.

138. As the implementing agency of the African Union, the mandate of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency was to convert policy into realistic frameworks and implementable programmes. The United Nations, through the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027, would continue to provide support for the promotion of those frameworks and major programmes as well as the needs of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency.

139. The programmes and priorities of the African Union, as laid out in the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027, would enjoy the full support and cooperation of the United Nations at the global, regional and subregional levels. At the global level, the United Nations would continue its advocacy role in support of Africa's requirements in respect of foreign direct investment, official development assistance, trade promotion and global governance issues. Partnerships at the regional level would be in the form of support in the implementation of integration and development programmes and projects of the African Union and the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, while at the subregional level support would be extended to the work of the regional economic communities. RCM-Africa had sharpened the focus of United Nations support to the African Union in terms of relevance and effectiveness, and would continue to serve as the vehicle through which the United Nations system operating at the regional level would continue its support of the African Union.

140. Concluding, he said that the United Nations partnership with the regional economic communities at the subregional level would be through the activities of the subregional coordination mechanism, whose secretariat would be located in the subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa. United Nations entities participating in RCM-Africa and the subregional coordination mechanism would be required to harmonize their programme planning and budgeting cycles and, to the extent possible, align them with those of the African Union. That would make for greater synergy and coherence in the delivery of support.

141. The secretariat informed the participants that the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, through their decision Assembly/AU/Dec.587 (XXV) of 2015, had called upon the United Nations to take the necessary measures to further enhance its cooperation with the African Union, especially in the context of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027, and asked the United Nations General



Assembly to adopt a resolution at its seventieth session in support of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027. The secretariat concluded by urging the participants to support the process in getting a resolution on the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 adopted by the General Assembly.

142. Mr. Abdelaziz said that the Second Committee of the General Assembly had raised two concerns in their review of the resolution on the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027:

(a) No resolution had been passed by the General Assembly on Agenda 2063. The absence of such a resolution was inhibiting the process of getting the process past the Second Committee;

(b) The cost of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 was another issue, with the Second Committee wanting to know how much the partnership and its associated programmes would cost the United Nations.

143. He informed the participants that the above concerns had been communicated to the African Union Commission and he was awaiting a response.

#### **D. New communication strategy for RCM-Africa** [agenda item 7d]

144. The co-chair of the advocacy cluster introduced the new communication strategy for RCM-Africa. At the sixteenth session of RCM-Africa, it had been agreed that the mechanism should strengthen its advocacy and communication efforts and therefore there was a need for the development of a communication strategy. The new communication strategy was intended to enhance the visibility of RCM-Africa; improve inter- and intra-cluster communication and collaboration; promote advocacy at the global, regional and subregional levels; and assist in the implementation of the African Union's corporate communication strategy. The advocacy and communications cluster was expected to lead and implement the strategy with the involvement of all the clusters of RCM-Africa. The proposed strategy would ensure that information was communicated effectively, both internally within RCM-Africa as well as externally to a clearly identified target audience.

145. The co-chair indicated that the objectives of the proposed strategy were to ensure that influential media outlets followed the ethical principles of objectivity and balance in their coverage of Africa's development process and to contribute to changing the narrative on the continent. Those dual objectives would not only enhance communication on the implementation of the objectives of RCM-Africa, and specifically the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, but also promote collaboration and the exchange of information among and between clusters and subclusters.

146. The subsidiary objectives of the strategy were to:

(a) Assist in building and strengthening the capacity, structure, resourcing and staffing of the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union Commission and its ability to fulfil the communication needs of the African Union and its regional and specialized agencies;

(b) Build the capacity of the African Union to enhance its visual identity and efforts to rebrand Africa through the use of the most effective tools and appropriate networks;

(c) Support the enhancing of skills within the Directorate through staff secondments and/or exchange programmes;

(d) Establish a core network of journalists from renowned media outlets on the continent and the diaspora who can support the mandate of the Directorate to promote African Union activities;

(e) Encourage synergies between RCM-Africa and external stakeholders such as member States of the African Union, donor partners and media organizations and keep them updated on the progress being made by providing them with reliable information on the joint activities of the African Union and the United Nations.

147. The strategy suggested that RCM-Africa used the following means of communication:

(a) Periodical reports showcasing progress made and results achieved by the United Nations-African Union partnership, in various formats such as electronic newsletters, blogs, social media platforms and regular updates of the RCM-Africa website;

(b) Monthly or quarterly webinars and/or videoconferencing, in the form of conference calls, videoconferencing or pre-recorded messages, to help ensure continuity in the agendas with minimal cost;

(c) Press conferences and the use of social media to showcase impacts and concrete results, with the aim of building a bridge between RCM-Africa and the general public;

(d) Joint activities and products, which could provide good opportunities to rally greater public understanding and support on specific issues or aspects. For example, certain United Nations and African Union official commemorative days and other special occasions could be celebrated jointly by both organizations.

148. It was emphasized that the main expected outcomes of the communication strategy were to: enhance the mobilization of resources; increase balanced reporting by influential media; survey different target audiences about their knowledge and perception of the work done by the African Union; increase the participation of media, senior experts and leading authorities in relevant meetings and conferences; and increase the traffic on the websites of the African Union and United Nations agencies.

**E. African Union-United Nations partnerships in promoting synergetic implementation of Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and the programmes of action for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States [agenda item 7e]**

149. In his presentation, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya indicated that there were commonalities between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the three international development frameworks designed to address the unique needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway). They all sought to promote inclusive economic growth, reduce or end poverty, boost human capital development, develop infrastructure, promote industrialization, generate employment, and achieve

sustainable development and structural transformation. Africa had been actively involved in developing the programmes of action through national and regional level contributions that fed into the outcome documents.

150. He said that the 2030 Agenda recognized and reaffirmed the importance of supporting the implementation of those programmes of action, and indicated that the programmes and Agenda 2063 were integral to the 2030 Agenda. Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda were complementary and mutually reinforcing to the three programmes of action and their effective implementation would bring benefits for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The global frameworks accounted well for the international dimensions of African development, while Agenda 2063 focused on the specific priorities and aspirations of Africa. As such, because of the complementarities, he proposed that a two-way track in the implementation and follow-up of the programmes should be adopted in the following manner: first, to bring the global agenda to Africa, which was an integral part of such an agenda, and second, to bring Africa's agenda to the world.

151. He stressed the need to mainstream Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and other relevant programmes of action into national development planning; support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the programmes of actions for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in an integrated manner through policy-making support, capacity development and other forms of technical support; and ensure that monitoring of the global agenda, the regional agenda and the relevant programmes of action was done in an integrated way to eliminate duplication. The ongoing discussions on the global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda should provide an opportunity to effectively follow-up and monitor Agenda 2063 and the programmes of action, in particular in the areas where there were synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **F. Recommendations of plenary session 5**

### **1. Reconfiguration of the clusters**

152. The session took note of the report of the Committee on the reconfiguration the clusters of RCM-Africa and thanked the members of the Committee. It adopted the recommendations made by the committee on the new clusters, with an amendment to add culture to the advocacy cluster. The participants also called for enhanced efforts to be deployed to ensure horizontal and vertical integration across clusters.

153. The approved clusters of RCM-Africa are therefore:

- (a) Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade and regional integration;
- (b) Infrastructure development;
- (c) Human capital development, health, science, technology and innovation;
- (d) Social development, labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility;
- (e) Women and gender equality and youth empowerment;
- (f) Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management;
- (g) Environment, urbanization and population;
- (h) Advocacy, information, communication and culture.

154. The participants called upon the Committee to revise its report, taking note of the comments made during the session

155. The RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to organize a meeting of the clusters to discuss the mapping of the United Nations agencies to the new clusters, agree on priorities and subclusters, and discuss joint-programming between the United Nations and the African Union.

**2. United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027**

156. The African Union Commission, through its office in New York and African ambassadors in New York, was urged to obtain a General Assembly resolution on Agenda 2063.

157. The African Union, in collaboration with the secretariat of RCM-Africa, should prepare an estimate of the cost of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027 and submit it to the Second Committee of the General Assembly.

**3. Communication strategy**

158. The participants adopted the new communication strategy.

**IX. Other matters [agenda item 8]**

159. No other matters were raised under the agenda item.

**X. Presentation and adoption of the report of the meeting [agenda item 9]**

160. The report was adopted in principle. The secretariat was called upon to submit the report electronically to participants for their comments, after which the report would be considered fully adopted.

**XI. Closing of the session [agenda item 10]**

161. The seventeenth session of RCM-Africa was closed by Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Mr. Mwencha expressed his gratitude to all the participants for their commitment to the RCM-Africa process. He thanked the RCM-Africa secretariat for facilitating a series of consultations with partners prior to the seventeenth session, which had resulted in fruitful discussions and pertinent recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of the mechanism. He said that RCM-Africa remained an important platform for the common delivery and realization of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There was a need to focus on not only strengthening the mechanism but also the fundamental components of its implementation arrangements.

162. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the seventeenth session of RCM-Africa was then declared closed.