

# 16TH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR AFRICA

28 AND 29 MARCH 2015, ADDIS ABABA

## ENVIRONMENT POPULATION URBANIZATION CLUSTER

### REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM (RCM) Africa

#### REPORT 2014

**Members of the Cluster:** UNFPA, AUC, UNEP, UNECA, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO, WMO, UNCCCD, UNCTAD, FAO, ILO, UNISDR, UNIDO, IMO, UNESCO, AfDB, NEPAD(PCA), UNIDO, UNDP, WHO and RECs.

The Cluster is co-chaired by UNFPA and AUC (Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture – DREA). This report covers activities undertaken by the cluster during the period of April 2014 to March 2015 as follows:

#### **I/ Achievements and results**

##### **a) Increasing awareness and advocacy on global and continental issues: African Environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day**

The 2014 African Environment and Wangari Maathai Day was celebrated on the 3rd of March 2014 in Maseru, Lesotho, under the theme *Combating Desertification in Africa: Enhancing Agricultural Productivity and Food Security*. This commemoration took a different dimension for the first time with engagement and celebration of the African Union Commission in collaboration with the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism specifically the Cluster on Environment, Population and Urbanization.

The joint activities that marked the day included media training on challenging environmental dispositions in Africa, official launch and tree planting conducted in memory of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai the founder of Green Belt Movement and a champion of biodiversity conservation. Support within the cadre of the Cluster included inter alia, technical, financial and production of advocacy materials. Member agencies provided the support included UNFPA, UNEP, UNDP, UNECA and UNESCO.

In addition to increasing awareness, UNEP in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD also organized a journalist workshop on 1-3 March 2014 as part of the celebrations of the Africa Environment and Wangari Maathai Day. The workshop focused on sustainable land management in line with the African Union Year of Agriculture

and Food Security. It covered issues of: sustainable land management, the status of land degradation in Africa, ecosystem-based adaptation, land-related intergovernmental negotiations and the role of the media in advocacy, awareness raising and education in the context of the UNCCD.

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

During the reporting period, UNEP with AUC, UNECA, UNDP, ILO, AfDB, NPCA, RECs, WWF, UNIDO and DANIDA have jointly been undertaking assessment reports to identify the opportunities and challenges of a transition to a green economy. In these assessments, there was a review of existing green economy and green economy related policies, plans as well as programmes in the various countries. These reports identified the challenges in the respective countries including financing, capacity building and technology transfer. The green economy scoping studies and assessment studies have been undertaken in several countries including Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritius and Rwanda. In the studies undertaken as well as the various regional workshops undertaken, some of the gaps identified for capacity building include: data collection, economic modeling skills, technology transfer and policy analysis for example fiscal policy to support the countries achieve sustainable development.

A green economy development pathway under environment provides numerous benefits including economic, environmental as well as social benefits in the medium term and higher forest cover, increased water supply and lower carbon emissions in the long term.

#### **c) The International Conference on the Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade of African Wildlife and Flora**

The 2014 AU Heads of State Summit in Malabo requested AUC and other partners to prepare an African strategy to combat wildlife trafficking and illegal trade of wildlife Flora and Fauna in Africa and to organize an international Conference (African Union Decision on African Wildlife Flora and Fauna conservation and illegal trade in wildlife). In order to implement this, AUC, UNEP, UNDP, FAO and AfDB initiated a series of consultative and bilateral, Technical Committee and Organizing Committee meetings.

As a result of such joint consultations, a joint roadmap to the Conference and three Committees have been formed to support the Brazzaville Conference and to develop an African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna:- (i) International Organizing Committee comprises AUC (Chair), Government of Congo, UNEP, and UNDP (new member) –that is coordinating the preparations for conference and provide political guidance(ii) Technical Committee Comprising UNEP (Chair) with AUC, AfDB, UNDP, Cites, Lusaka Agreement, WWF, FAO, and other partners that is coordinating the technical aspects of the conference including drafting the concept note, agenda, draft strategy, (iii) National Committee Congo (Chair) with national partners from the Ministry and whose task is mainly coordination at the National Level and logistical arrangements.

The International **Conference on the Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade of African Wildlife and Flora** will be held from **27-30 April 2015** at the *Salle des Conférences internationales du Palais des Congrès* in Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo and will have three segments (Experts session - two days), Ministerial segment (one day) followed by a high-level segment (one day).

## **II – Challenges and lessons learned**

1) *Challenges:* encountered include the following:

- a) Lack/limited intra-agency communication/coordination with regards to cluster activities
- b) Difficulty in mobilizing cluster members and subsequently resources.

2) *Lessons learned*

- a) Cluster Annual Work Plan to be clear with achievable activities, commitment and accountability of Cluster members;
- b) Need for continuous follow up with cluster members;
- c) Need for agencies to consider aligning their contribution to RCM joint activities to the AU Strategic Plan 2014-17; and
- d) Communication and information flow: need for agencies to designate focal points of RCM to ease intra-cluster collaboration, communication and cooperation.