



**REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF
THE REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM
FOR AFRICA**

**THEME: UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT FOR AFRICA'S
INTEGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S
AGENDA 2063**

Abuja, Nigeria
28 and 30 March 2014



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



African Union Commission

Fifteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme

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Report of the fifteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

***Theme: United Nations support for Africa's integration in the
context of the African Union's Agenda 2063***

I. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

1. The fifteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) was held on 28 and 30 March 2014 in Abuja. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

2. The session followed the following agenda, which had been circulated in document ECA/RCM/15/10:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Panel discussions on the theme of the meeting: United Nations support for Africa's integration in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063:
 - (a) Africa's integration;
 - (b) Democratic governance, peace and security;
 - (c) Resilience and social development in regional integration;
 - (d) Infrastructure and trade.
3. Consolidated progress report of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and Subregional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.
4. Presentation and discussion on the review of the regional development cooperation framework, including the mobilization of resources for its implementation.
5. Presentation and discussion on the second triennial review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, including the mobilization of resources for its implementation.
6. Report of the Working Group set up by the RCM-Africa at its fourteenth session.
7. Presentation and discussion on the operationalization of the Millennium Development Goal Africa Working Group and RCM-Africa, with a view to enhancing synergies and aligning the work of both groups as regards the Millennium Development Goals.
8. Conclusions and the way forward.
9. Any other business.
10. Closure 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, regional economic communities, and African development partners. The complete list of organizations is attached in the annex to the present report.

4. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Carlos Lopes, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, announced improvements to the RCM-Africa meeting in terms of both format and value addition. He noted that, for the first time, the session had been aligned with the Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, so as to enable the United Nations leadership to undertake direct and substantive discussions with Africa's senior national authorities on the development priorities of the continent. He pointed out the need for the United Nations to adapt continuously to the changing global landscape and to regional priorities. He noted that the African Union, as the voice of the continent, was playing an important global role by identifying the continent's regional priorities and by framing Africa's common positions on global processes such as the post-2015 development agenda and climate change.

5. He acknowledged that structural transformation was Africa's priority and stressed that the United Nations family must recommit itself to supporting Africa's aspirations, which included the development priorities emerging from the African Union's Agenda 2063 consultative processes. RCM-Africa was therefore an excellent vehicle for the building of coherence and harmonization of United Nations

support for the African Union in the area of development. He highlighted the articulation of the regional development cooperation framework in support of the African Union's strategic framework for 2014–2017 as a commendable first step in that endeavour. He concluded by emphasizing the value that the African Union Commission attached to RCM-Africa and its work and said that the mechanism must be used further to strengthen the African Union-United Nations partnership, taking into account the fact that the African Union had become a viable and credible continental institution.

6. In his opening statement, Mr. Eliasson described RCM-Africa as an important forum for engagement between the United Nations and the African Union. He noted that RCM-Africa was a mechanism designed to bring the United Nations and the African Union together, to build coherence and to promote joint activities. He noted that mechanism enabled the United Nations to gain a better understanding of the priorities and needs of the continent and its people. He added that the review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union would help improve the partnership. Lauding the efforts that had been made to realize Africa's transformation agenda, he stressed that issues of peace and security, human rights and the rule of law were paramount to the United Nations and that the United Nations would continue its support in those areas and in those envisaged under Agenda 2063.

7. In her statement, Ms. Dlamini-Zuma reviewed social and economic achievements in Africa over the last decade. She noted that the vast majority of Africans lived in countries where democratic governance had improved. She also noted the major challenges faced by African countries, however, and explained that Agenda 2063 was precisely meant to improve the general well-being of Africans. The Agenda was being developed through a consultative process, with a view to achieving the African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena, and the broad-based consultations involved all segments of society, including women, young people, academics and senior government officials.

8. She added that regional integration was very important for Africa and that knowledge and experience should be shared to encourage greater innovation and technological improvement. She stressed the need for stronger systems in all sectors and reiterated that Agenda 2063 should be seen as an Africa-owned and Africa-led process that was intended to turn opportunities into reality for an African Union that was peaceful, prosperous and Africa-centred. She called for the RCM-Africa process to be anchored on the understanding that Africans took responsibility for their own development and highlighted some of the key challenges facing the continent, including domestic resource mobilisation to address the financing gap and the need for a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track progress.

9. In conclusion, she assured representatives that Agenda 2063 was a transparent process open to all and well known by the African people. Accordingly, those people expected it to yield tangible results. Lastly, she noted that transformational leadership was critical for the fulfilment of the Agenda.

II. Panel discussions on the theme of the meeting: United Nations support for Africa's integration in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063 [agenda item 2]

A. Introduction

10. Mr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission, gave a presentation on the African Union's Agenda 2063. He explained the rationale for developing Agenda 2063 in a changing global and African context. Agenda 2063, he said, should be seen as a new phase in efforts by Africans to catalyse the development of the continent and strengthen African integration and unity.

11. The main objective of the Agenda was the acceleration of the continent's development agenda, focusing on eight key areas: (a) African identity and renaissance; (b) the struggle against colonialism

and the right to self-determination of people still under colonial rule; (c) an integration agenda; (d) an agenda for social and economic development; (e) an agenda for peace and security; (f) democratic governance; (g) determining Africa's destiny; and (h) Africa's place in the world.

12. The expectation, he explained, was that, once the Agenda had been adopted by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its forthcoming twenty-third ordinary session in July 2014, its member States would integrate it into their national development plans through a people-driven process, to ensure realization of the vision of the African Union. The objective of the Agenda was therefore to develop Africa's growth trajectory over the next 50 years, taking into account the lessons learned over the last 50 years.

13. Agenda 2063 also represented a collective effort and an opportunity for Africa to regain its power to determine its own destiny, and was underpinned by the African Union's vision of building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. Accordingly, to achieve the goals of the Agenda there was a need to accelerate the process of continental integration. The Agenda therefore built on the achievements of past continental initiatives, such as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in order to address new challenges faced by the continent, in the short, medium and long term.

14. He informed the meeting that the African Union Commission was undertaking widespread and all-inclusive consultations with all key stakeholders. Those consultations, he noted, had helped the African Union Commission to incorporate into the Agenda the goals that Africans hoped to achieve over the coming 50 years.

B. Panel discussion 1: Africa's integration

15. The session was chaired by Mr. Eliasson. The panellists were Mr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Minister of Finance of Nigeria; Mr. Lopes; Mr. Maruping; and Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa.

16. In their statements, the panellists raised the following issues:

- (a) Long-term planning is essential for development, with a clear indication of what it is hoped to achieve and of the practical indicators of achievement;
- (b) The plan must be adjusted and recalibrated when and as needed;
- (c) The African Union's Agenda 2063 should help unlock the opportunities that exist in Africa by tackling such challenges as growth, including the kind of growth that creates employment and lifts the poor out of poverty, growth that can help diversify the economies and build safety nets for those at the bottom of the ladder;
- (d) Agenda 2063 could exploit the multiple opportunities offered by regional integration;
- (e) Domestic resource mobilization opportunities must be fully tapped through better tax regimes and administration and measures should be taken to curtail illicit financial flows;
- (f) Natural resources must be better managed, including through the mapping of Africa's untapped natural resources, and the financial securitization of those resources to support the continent's development. In this regard, African countries are called upon to endorse the African Union's African Mining Vision;
- (g) Dynamic and adaptable institutions are needed to assist the implementation of Agenda 2063;
- (h) Agenda 2063 must be aligned with the goals of pan-Africanism and African solidarity, necessitating the continued adjustment and recalibration of countries' national plans;
- (i) Africa should pursue its transformation, taking advantage of its demographic dividend in the

context of global growth;

- (j) Agenda 2063 must be financed through domestic resource mobilization schemes, including remittances, the blocking of illicit financial flows, bank deposits, institutional and sovereign funds, natural resources potentials, and the African Development Bank's Africa 50 Fund;
- (k) Agenda 2063 should be used as a vehicle to promote intra-Africa integration, together with the integration of Africa into the global economies and governance systems;
- (l) African governments should synchronize their efforts with those undertaken at the international level, so as to ensure a strong coordination of efforts;
- (m) The Abuja Treaty outlines six phases in the process of creating Africa's economic community, including the stronger harmonization and integration of regional economic communities and the establishment of a continent-wide free trade area, an economic and monetary union and a pan-African parliament. These phases are scheduled to be concluded by 2034, four years after the anticipated end-date of the post-2015 development agenda and nearly 30 years before the conclusion of Agenda 2063;
- (n) The priorities of the African Union's Agenda 2063 should be reflected in the key development processes that are already under way or forthcoming, including the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, the sustainable development goals and sustainable development financing, and also in many forthcoming summit meetings, such as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, the Climate Summit 2014, and the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference;
- (o) The United Nations must support implementation of Agenda 2063 by monitoring progress in its implementation, by such measures as a special session of the General Assembly on Africa to review progress in the implementation of the continent's priorities;
- (p) The African Union Commission was performing commendable work in developing a comprehensive strategy for its interaction with key strategic partners;
- (q) Africa must own its own ideas and vision;
- (r) The analysis of growth rates has no meaning if it is not contextualized on the basis of the economic development of each country. What matters is whether growth is inclusive and leads to industrialization, job creation and other social and economic benefits. Central banks should play their role in the management and regulation of the economy so as to stop illicit financial flows, and create financial stability that attracts investors.

17. In the ensuing discussion, participants raised the following issues:

- (a) Human development, population and urbanization should be at the centre of the African Union's Agenda 2013;
- (b) As human resources are Africa's most important asset, high quality education is key to development and investment in education should therefore have a prominent place in Agenda 2063;
- (c) Poverty eradication should be considered as a core element of all efforts to develop human capacities;
- (d) Employment has a central and critical position in macroeconomic policies and Agenda 2063;
- (e) The demographic dividend cannot be seen in isolation and should be planned in a strategic manner, showing its linkages to all sectors of development;
- (f) Issues related to women, gender and youth should be key pillars of development and must be properly articulated in Agenda 2063;

- (g) Given their responsibility for implementing Agenda 2063, national institutions, in particular those dealing with policies for women, should be strengthened;
- (h) The United Nations development goals beyond 2015 should be incorporated in Agenda 2063 so as to create a linkage between the regional and global processes;
- (i) United Nations agencies should improve their coordination in response to the vision of Agenda 2063;
- (j) Given Africa's limitless potential and the multiplicity of paths to the financing of its development, sound planning is needed to tease out the needs and priorities of Africa, and should be articulated around clear and realistic indicators of achievements;
- (k) If the goals of Agenda 2063 are to be achieved, the associated opportunities should outweigh the challenges.

C. Panel discussion 2: Democratic governance, peace and security

18. The second plenary session was chaired by Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, and the panellists were Mr. Haile Menkerios, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union and Special Representative to the African Union; Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information; Mr. Khabele Matlosa, Director for Political Affairs at the African Union Commission; and Mr. Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, former Director and Deputy Head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

19. In their presentations, the panellists made the following important observations:
- (a) The joint United Nations–African Union strategic partnership on peace and security provides tangible examples for the RCM clusters to follow;
 - (b) The United Nations must carefully examine its primary responsibility for international peace and security and the attendant commitments that it must make in respect of those matters, in particular as they relate to regional organizations. In this regard, the United Nations needs to revisit its current approach to intervention in conflict areas, whereby it sends in peacekeepers once there is peace to be kept but shows hesitancy in supporting efforts to establish peace in the first place;
 - (c) Coordinated action is very useful when dealing with conflict management;
 - (d) Agenda 2063 should set ambitious targets on peace and security, to which the United Nations should be fully committed;
 - (e) It is important to promote the opportunities that Africa offers;
 - (f) Africa should build on the partnerships already in place to ensure that African messages are communicated to the rest of the world;
 - (g) Young people, universities, civil society, the creative community, African celebrities and phone-in radio programmes can all be used to change the African narrative, both for Africans themselves and for the global community;
 - (h) It is vital to pursue democracy, peace and development simultaneously;
 - (i) There are seven key strategic imperatives for sustainable development in Africa, namely: a capable democratic and developmental State; the management of diversity; credible and peaceful elections; the combating of unconstitutional changes of government; rule of law and constitutional governance; conflict prevention; and free movement of persons throughout Africa;
 - (j) For any agenda to be implemented properly, adequate financing is needed, in addition to competent and capable human resources to ensure the smooth running of government affairs. Investing in people is, therefore, key for peace and security.

20. In the ensuing discussion, participants made the following points:
- (a) Poor governance is the root cause of conflicts;
 - (b) The African Union Commission should be strengthened so that it can take over election observation responsibilities and judge whether African elections are free and fair;
 - (c) A consolidated approach is needed to tackle the considerable negative effects of drugs, criminal activities, terrorism and trafficking on African countries;
 - (d) The United Nations, which has a responsibility to keep peace and maintain stability around the world, should act quickly whenever there is a threat to human rights. Education and efforts to develop the skills and abilities of young people are vital for safeguarding human rights and curbing drug-related and criminal activities.

D. Panel discussion 3: Resilience and social development in regional integration

21. The session was chaired by Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. The panellists were Mr. Mustapha S. Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission; Mr. Manoj Juneja, Assistant Executive Director for Resource Management and Accountability, World Food Programme; Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Chief of the Regional Programming Unit, International Labour Organization; Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, Director of the Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director of the Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Environment Programme; and Mr. Charles Kwenin, Senior Regional Adviser for Sub-Saharan Africa, International Organization for Migration.

22. The panel presentations highlighted the following points:
- (a) People-centred regional integration is at the heart of the African Union's Agenda 2063. One of the focuses of the Agenda is tackling the social challenges faced by the continent, including ending the major epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria by 2030. Agenda 2063 also sets out a framework for addressing gender inequalities and combating violence against women;
 - (b) Agenda 2063 also serves as a strategy for advancing Africa's development objective of inclusive and high-quality growth;
 - (c) It is imperative that the priorities of Agenda 2063 are incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda;
 - (d) Under Within the AU Agenda 2063, Africa should tackle address environmental issues, including climate change, disasters and conflicts, resource efficiency, ecosystems management, chemicals and waste management, and environmental governance. These could be achieved through effective programming and the implementation of flagship programmes. The UNEP technical report, Africa's adaptation gap, report should be adopted by African countries as a reference point for managing climate change;
 - (e) Despite the considerable progress made by a number of African countries, human development remains a significant challenge on the continent. Agenda 2063 must, therefore, focus on the development of strategies to substantially improve human development;
 - (f) Agenda 2063 should also address youth, child, gender and social protection issues;
 - (g) Africa must position itself to receive increased domestic financing in order to meet the health needs of its citizens by 2063;
 - (h) There a need for Africa to progress from needing food aid to having real food security.

This necessitates taking a more careful look at solutions that are community-specific and focused on individuals and their livelihoods along the entire supply chain. For this to happen, countries facing disasters must be supported by regional mechanisms;

- (i) African countries are encouraged to put in place mechanisms for disaster preparedness and multi-hazard early warning systems with a view to ensuring resilience;
- (j) Africa cannot eradicate poverty without creating decent and high-quality jobs. The catalytic role of labour migration in spurring quality job creation must not be overlooked;
- (k) The policy outcomes on poverty eradication, resilience, regional integration and inclusive growth, agreed upon by African Heads of State and Government at the extraordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union on the theme of employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development, held in Ouagadougou in September 2014, should be mainstreamed into the Agenda 2063;
- (l) Emphasis should be placed on poverty eradication, rather than poverty alleviation, which could be achieved through labour migration and integration policies and the creation of decent and high-quality jobs should be addressed in Agenda 2063;
- (m) With 42 per cent of Africans living in urban areas and the proportion of urban dwellers growing exponentially, urban planning must be incorporated into Agenda 2063. Urbanization is a strong vector for Africa's transformative development, and well-planned urbanization offers an opportunity for promoting inclusive development;
- (n) Given how rapidly African cities are evolving, urbanization management should be a key component of Agenda 2063;
- (o) Africa must address the root causes of migration to prevent further tragedies resulting from human trafficking and illegal migration;
- (p) Migration has become feminized and effective programmes are, therefore, needed to address the migration challenges faced by women;
- (q) Africa should not only ease visa restrictions but also embark on programmes that will ensure the free movement of people on the continent;
- (r) Agenda 2063 should strive to protect African citizens from human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, address the vulnerabilities of people affected by forced displacement and harness the benefits of migration;
- (s) Notwithstanding the numerous international and regional commitments made since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, Africa still lags behind in meeting the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Accordingly, Agenda 2063 must focus on enhancing women's participation in key productive sectors, such as agriculture, industry, technology and mining; ending violence against women and girls; strengthening women's leadership in politics and decision-making (in particular for young women); and addressing the impact of conflicts on women and children;
- (t) Sustainable development starts with investment in child health, education, nutrition, welfare, water, hygiene and sanitation, all of which are central to human development and human rights;
- (u) Although changing demographic trends present challenges, they also present opportunities for sustainable development, including the safeguarding of the rights of children, shared prosperity, protection of the environment and the creation of more stable and safe societies.

E. Panel discussion 4: Infrastructure and trade

23. The session was chaired by Mr. Mwencha and Mr. Hamdok. The panellists were Mr. Adama Deen, Head of Infrastructure, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency; Mr. Vitaly Vanshelboim, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services; Mr. Juvenal Shiundu, Deputy Director and Head of Programme Management and Technical Cooperation Division, International Maritime Organization; Mr. Pedro Conceição, Chief Economist and Head of the Strategic and Advisory Unit of the Regional Bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme; and Mr. Joseph Birungi, Principal International Relations Officer, East African Community.

24. In their presentations, the panellists made the following important observations:

- (a) Infrastructure is a key driver for growth and return on investment on it is high. Africa therefore needs affordable infrastructure and services to propel its transformation;
- (b) There is a need for interconnected economic corridors on the continent which can serve as an engine for trade;
- (c) Efficient infrastructure and services are important for the development of Africa and the pursuit of the continent's regional integration agenda;
- (d) Sound intraregional and overseas transport and communication networks contribute to the facilitation, promotion and expansion of international and intraregional trade, and enable African countries to be full participants in the globalization process;
- (e) Sound infrastructure and services are the means by which a country can achieve sustainable economic growth and wealth, and consequently reduce poverty;
- (f) Sound infrastructure will have a trickle-down effect on the economy in terms of the provision of better services for farmers, improved agricultural productivity, cheaper fertilizers, greater market access, and improved access to education and other services;
- (g) Despite the efforts of Africa's regional economic groupings, the continent's infrastructure remains very weak. There is, therefore, a need to strengthen, promote and expand Africa's infrastructure;
- (h) It is imperative that any infrastructure development programme include the physical integration of networks; convergence of infrastructure policies; joint planning and development of infrastructure components; harmonization of standards; and ratification of international treaties and conventions;
- (i) In 2002, NEPAD launched a short-term action plan on infrastructure to address the infrastructure development needs of the continent. The plan comprises 120 priority regional and continental projects and programmes covering the period 2002–2007, in the energy, transport, water and sanitation, and information and communications technology sectors;
- (j) The short-term action plan has now been replaced by the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, which brings the various infrastructure programmes of the regional economic communities together into a single coordinated and harmonized continental infrastructure programme;
- (k) The cost of the bankable projects identified by the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa has been estimated at \$80 billion, which will be raised through public and private investment;
- (l) Implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa will take place at national level and the regional economic communities are expected to drive implementation of the resulting national programmes. Partners are urged to provide capacity-building programmes for the regional economic communities to prepare bankable projects;
- (m) African countries need to construct the missing links in the trans-African highways;

- (n) Africa's infrastructure investment needs for it to bring its current infrastructure up to international standards amount to approximately \$93 billion annually for the next 10 years. Financial support programmes for Africa's infrastructure development need, therefore, to be scaled up and African countries must also look for innovative means of financing the continent's infrastructure;
- (o) Some 90 per cent of global trade is carried out using maritime transport. Given that Africa's current share of global trade is only 3 per cent, Africa needs to invest more in its ports in order to boost trade;
- (p) Africa should also implement the African Union's integrated maritime strategy for 2050;
- (q) Intra-African trade expansion is expected to generate faster growth and income convergence within the community;
- (r) Africa needs to diversify its production structures in order to move away from primary production and produce competitive value-added products;
- (s) To boost trade, African countries should work together to tackle all forms of maritime crime;
- (t) Africa should remove all forms of physical and non-physical barriers in order to promote intra-African trade.

F. Recommendations from the plenary sessions

25. At the end of the four plenary sessions, it was agreed that the following recommendations should be appropriately articulated in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

1. Africa's integration in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063

- (a) The United Nations is called upon to support the implementation and monitoring of the African Union's Agenda 2063. In this regard, the United Nations is urged to organize a special session of the General Assembly on Africa to review progress in the implementation of the continent's priorities;
- (b) The United Nations system is urged to harmonize its regional architecture in Africa to ensure effective coordination of and support for the Africa Union's Agenda 2063 and related regional planning frameworks, at both subregional and regional levels;
- (c) African countries and their regional and subregional organizations should strategically and effectively plan their development with clear benchmarks and indicators, and also a mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of progress and achievements. To this end, the plans must be flexible, adjustable, and recalibrated when needed;
- (d) African countries should increase the financing of their development through domestic resource mobilization schemes, including the blocking of illicit financial flows and the harnessing of remittances, funds from financial institutions and sovereign wealth funds, resources generated from natural resources potential, and the African Development Bank's Africa 50 Fund;
- (e) African Union initiatives, including its Agenda 2063, need to be synchronized with those at the global level, such as the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals;
- (f) African countries are called upon to build and strengthen their institutional capacities to effectively deliver the national objectives;
- (g) African countries are urged to map out all their natural resources and to process them within the continent in order to add value to them.

2. Democratic governance, peace and security in the African Union's Agenda 2063

- (a) The African Union Commission is urged to ensure that the African Union's Agenda 2063 sets ambitious targets on peace and security, to which the United Nations should be fully committed;
- (b) The United Nations is urged to respond quickly whenever there is a threat to peace and human security;
- (c) African countries are urged to increase their investments in education and developing the skills and abilities of young people, with a view to safeguarding human rights and curbing drug-related and criminal activities;
- (d) African countries need to improve the key strategic imperatives of good governance and to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems, conflict prevention and peace-building that will address the root causes of conflict;
- (e) The United Nations is urged to collaborate with the African Union and its organs, including the regional economic communities, to promote and protect human rights, in particular during armed conflicts, and to strengthen the protection of civilians in line with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy and the "Rights up front" action plan launched by the Secretary-General;
- (f) African countries are requested to develop early warning mechanisms to prevent and adapt to climate change effects;
- (g) African countries are urged to invest in science and technology: in this process, they should identify 50 top research institutions in Africa with which to collaborate with a view to exploring innovative approaches to the delivery of Agenda 2063 and to its systematic propagation in school curriculums.

3. Resilience, social development and regional integration in the African Union's Agenda 2063

- (a) African countries should strategically tap into all aspects of their prospective demographic dividends, given the immense potential in the various categories of their population, including women, young people and urban populations, who constitute the human pillars of development;
- (b) African countries are urged to make the creation of decent employment a central objective of macroeconomic and social policies to ensure that the needs of this group are more effectively met;
- (c) African countries are urged to formulate policies and systems which foster better alignment between the skills provided and the needs of the labour market;
- (d) African countries should tackle all the environmental issues relating to water, land, climate change, disaster risk reduction and green economy;
- (e) African countries are urged to increase their investments in health, including with a view to ending the major epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and to enhancing nutrition, sanitation and human rights. In addition, early warning systems should be strengthened to help African countries to prepare for disaster and to respond more effectively;
- (f) African countries should ensure that the commendable growth achieved to date is inclusive and leads to good quality job creation, and also to improved and expanded social protection;
- (g) African countries should work with development partners in making concerted and consolidated efforts to address criminal activities, including human, wildlife and drug

- trafficking, maritime crime, terrorism and money laundering;
- (h) The African Union, the regional economic communities and African countries should establish effective governance mechanisms for labour migration and foster regional integration;
 - (i) African governments should ensure the inclusion of migration in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 as a driving force of development, given its wider social and economic benefits for Africa's regional integration and poverty eradication;
 - (j) African countries should develop strategies to build the resilience of their societies, economies and natural environments to the adverse impacts of climate change;
 - (k) The African Union Commission is urged to ensure that the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Agenda prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment. A dual approach should be followed for this purpose, comprising a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment; and efforts to ensure that all goals adequately integrate targets and indicators measuring progress towards the empowerment of women;
 - (l) The African Union Commission is called upon to give high priority to women and youth in the African Union's Agenda 2063. To this end, there is need to prioritize institutional strengthening and funding from national budgets for national institutions by conferring mandate to build capacities, create opportunities and demand accountability for the empowerment of women and youth, including national women's machineries;
 - (m) The African Union Commission is urged to place greater emphasis on the role of women in intra-Africa trade in the framework of the African Union's Agenda 2063 as women generate between 70 and 80 per cent of the revenue from informal trade, including cross-border trade. To this end, there is need for African countries to create a conducive policy environment which ensures the safety of women cross-border traders, access to facilities, protection, credit and other services.

4. Infrastructure and trade in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063

- (a) African countries and development partners should 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) African countries are urged 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) African countries are encouraged to diversify their production structures in order to move away from primary production and produce competitive and value-added products;
- (d) African countries are urged to work together to tackle all forms of maritime crime, including piracy, with a view to boosting international and intra-Africa trade;
- (e) African countries are called upon to remove all forms of physical and non-physical barriers in order to promote intra-African trade;
- (f) African countries are encouraged to document and share best practices with the African Union Commission on regional barriers that have been overcome. In order to facilitate trade, African countries are urged to improve and harmonize their customs and industrial policies.

III. Consolidated progress report of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the subregional coordination mechanisms [agenda item 3]

26. Agenda item 3 was taken up at the fifth plenary meeting of the session, and comprised presentations, plenary discussions and feedback, as outlined in the following sections.

A. Strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

27. A representative of the RCM-Africa secretariat made a presentation under this agenda item. He highlighted the key achievements of the clusters and subclusters, and described challenges encountered and lessons learned, and put forward recommendations to address the challenges. The second triennial review of the ten-year capacity-building programme had been completed and preliminary findings had been presented to participants at the fourteenth session of RCM-Africa for consideration and further guidance. The full report of the review was considered at the fifteenth session of RCM-Africa. In accordance with paragraph 37 of the outcome document of the fourteenth session, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission had directed cluster coordinators to establish a working group to determine clear roles and responsibilities and to prepare a proposal for consideration at the fifteenth session of RCM-Africa, in March 2014, on a framework of United Nations support for the African Union and its NEPAD programme, including Agenda 2063 and a successor programme to the ten-year capacity-building programme after 2016. The Working Group prepared a full report that outlined key recommendations under each specific objective, to be considered carefully by the co-chairs of RCM-Africa and the coordinators of the clusters and subclusters.

28. The activities of the nine clusters and their subclusters, as per their business plans, were described. Those activities related to advisory services, technical assistance, training, and financial support provided to the African Union Commission for the implementation of various programmes for Africa's development. Resource constraints remained a major challenge as far as full implementation of clusters' business plans and capacity-building support was concerned, as there was no specific budget allocation. Inter-cluster collaboration was a work in progress, and difficulties in that area were further compounded by the absence of a communication strategy.

29. In addition, the joint secretariat required further strengthening so that it could coordinate the clusters effectively and ensure that they carried out their respective activities, including monitoring of the implementation of the ten-year capacity-building programme. Furthermore, many clusters were faced with the challenge of elaborating joint programmes for maximum impact, despite constraints in programming cycles, the lack of any common funding pool, and differences in the mandates of the individual governing bodies.

B. Progress reports of the subregional coordination mechanisms

30. Subregional coordination mechanisms are now operational in West Africa, Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa Subregional Office for North Africa is implementing its multi-year programme together with the Arab Maghreb Union. The progress report of the subregional coordination mechanisms was delivered by [??]. The salient points of the reports relating to the various subregions are summarized in the sections below.

1. North Africa

31. The entry point for joint collaboration between the Arab Maghreb Union and the United Nations is through the following four priority areas identified in the multi-year programme of the Partnership for Maghreb:

- (a) Strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Arab Maghreb Union;
- (b) Economic development and the promotion of the private sector;
- (c) Millennium Development Goals and social development goals;
- (d) Food security and sustainable management of natural resources.

32. The main achievements during the reporting period include a study on the feasibility of a self-financing mechanism for regional integration, which was conducted with regard to strengthening the capacities of the Arab Maghreb Union; a road map for the subregional banking and financial market sectors as part of the initiative for enhancing stakeholders' role in the financial integration process; a proposal for a more coherent and inclusive strategy on population and migration in North Africa; a strategy for revising the Social Security Convention of the Arab Maghreb Union; and the elaboration of a regional policy framework for renewable energy.

33. Planned activities for 2014–2015 include:

- (a) Achieving an effective free trade agreement;
- (b) Implementing the Subregional Action Plan Against Desertification;
- (c) Following up the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
- (d) Drawing up policies on young people and employment;
- (e) Examining gender strategies ;
- (f) Carrying out studies and research on the diversification and sophistication theme.

2. West Africa

34. The subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa was established in 2013. The initial plan to establish a joint mechanism for Central and West Africa, on the premise that most United Nations agencies operated in both subregions, did not materialize as the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa was more advanced. The subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa identified six thematic areas which formed the basis for an action matrix. All work carried out under the mechanism is in line with the strategic objectives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), ECOWAS' Vision 2020, and ECOWAS' community development programme. Further consultations are under way on which United Nations agencies should lead the thematic groups.

3. Central Africa

35. The subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa, operated in partnership with the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and their specialized agencies, has implemented 52 per cent of planned activities in the common indicative programme (2010–2012), which covers 6 thematic areas and 14 subthemes. A new common indicative programme has been adopted, covering a longer period (2013–2016) and containing 112 selected activities out of the 167 activities proposed by the partners.

36. Taking into account the constraints and limitations faced in the implementation of the first programme, the partners recommended improving the mechanism's institutional framework by updating the network of focal points and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system. In order to improve the financing of the programme, they also recommended operationalizing the subregional institutions' self-financing mechanisms, to increase the absorption capacity of resources already allocated by donors and to strengthen the capacity in planning and formulating funding requests.

4. Eastern and Southern Africa

37. A two-year intensive facilitation and consultative process culminated in the 2013–2017 business plan for the subregional coordination mechanism for Eastern and Southern Africa, which was adopted at the fourteenth session of RCM-Africa, held in November 2012 in Addis Ababa. At the inception meeting for the subregional coordination mechanism, held in Kampala on 19 and 20 February 2013, six flagship programmes were launched. Implementation has started on the first three flagship programmes, as follows:

- (a) Regional food security programme (validated in July 2013 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the East African Community, covering six pilot countries);
- (b) Sustainable tourism development (leading to the sustainable tourism master plan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, launched in Nairobi in December 2013);
- (c) International Conference on the Great Lakes Region regional initiative against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the business plan for which is currently under development;
- (d) Regional programme on industrialization, focusing on value addition in agri-processing (embedded in the regional programme on food security);
- (e) Regional programme on energy security and sustainable energy for all (programme document currently under development);
- (f) Mainstreaming intelligent transport systems in corridor infrastructure (not yet started).

5. Challenges and lessons learned

38. High turnover of staff in the regional economic communities and United Nations agencies has affected progress and institutional memory. There is a strong need to demonstrate the value that subregional coordination mechanisms can add to regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies, and to promote greater ownership by those bodies. Mainstreaming and embedding the mechanisms into the planning cycles of regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies is crucial for the effective implementation of the flagship programmes. Defining an optimal division of labour and boosting the involvement of the United Nations Development Group is central to the success of the subregional coordination mechanisms.

39. It was noted that all regional economic communities have programmes that are aligned to every cluster. Some of the communities have gone further in designating focal persons for each cluster. It was therefore recommended all the regional economic communities should be members of each cluster.

40. Furthermore, some regional economic communities, such as those under the ECA subregional offices for Eastern and Southern Africa, have developed subregional coordination mechanism business plans, which have been adopted by RCM-Africa at its previous sessions. It is hoped that the current institutional changes within ECA will be concluded and that appropriate dedicate staffing put in place expeditiously, so that the subregional coordination mechanism business plans can be implemented.

IV. Regional development cooperation framework [agenda item 4]

41. Mr Robert M. Okello, an independent consultant, presents the report on the regional cooperation framework. The presentation included a review of the historical evolution and challenges of RCM-Africa, the subregional coordination mechanisms and other United Nations processes conducted previously in support of Africa, an overview of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and a summary of the consultations with African organizations regarding their views on RCM-Africa.

42. He focused on the experience of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which, in his view, provided a useful framework which could be adopted for better coordination of RCM-Africa, in particular in terms of its formulation of United Nations support in direct response to a country's national development plan. Taking as an example the Zambian experience with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, he showed how joint programming among United Nations agencies could yield better coordination and mobilization of resources for programme implementation by the agencies.

43. He then presented a proposal for a regional development cooperation framework, modelled on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as a vehicle for United Nations support to the African Union organizations. The proposed regional development cooperation framework was based on the following guiding principles:

- (a) It should be anchored on the African Union's Agenda 2063 and implementation frameworks, such as the African Union Commission's strategic plan 2014–2017 and its successors, together with the related plans of the NEPAD Agency, the regional economic communities and other African Union organs;
- (b) The African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities should be co-leaders with United Nations-designated cluster leaders;
- (c) Cluster work plans should be based on selected activities from the strategic plans and priorities of African Union organizations;
- (d) A memorandum of understanding should be signed between African Union organizations and the United Nations, in order to stipulate the cooperation arrangements;
- (e) Cluster business plans and workplans should include estimates of resource requirements as the basis for developing resource mobilization strategies.

44. With the above explanations, he recommended a slight adjustment to the current structure of the RCM-Africa clusters, in order to align it with the operational structures of the African Union Commission: eight departments and three directorates or bureaux. This would be consistent with the implementation arrangements of the Commission's strategic plan for 2014–2017. That realignment would naturally call for changes in cluster membership.

45. Where planning was concerned, he suggested that the planning cycles of United Nations agencies and the African Union Commission's strategic plan cycle for 2014–2017 should be harmonized. In that context, he proposed the cluster business plans in support of the Commission's strategic plan for 2014–2017 should be finalized no later than the end of June 2014. Lastly, he outlined a resource mobilization strategy in which the amount and types of resources needed would be specified in accordance with the cluster business plans.

46. The meeting noted that the development of the RDCF would support the implementation of cluster programmes. To that end, it should be an all-inclusive framework with priorities of engagement aligned to the AU Strategic outcomes. The resulting grouping could be the cluster reconfiguration. The RCM-Africa secretariat should prepare a guidance note on how to develop and implement the regional development cooperation framework (RDCF) while building on United Nations programming principles. There should be clarity on the management of the framework and it should be fully transparent, containing an accountability framework. In addition, there should be an indication on the next steps and milestones in terms of development and implementation of the framework.

47. In that regard, the meeting agreed that the issue of resources should be articulated at the regional level with a clear vision of what needs to be done based on Results-Based Management (RBM). Lessons drawn from other RCMs should be part of the bases of how the mechanism evolves.

48. It was noted that further consideration should be given to the issue before taking up the consultant's recommendation on the reconfiguration and that there was no need to align the clusters with the outcomes of the African Union Commission's strategic plan 2014–2017 and the various departments of the Commission.

V. Second triennial review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union [agenda item 5]

49. Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson, senior consultant on the second triennial review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, presented his report on the review. He said that the main objectives of the review had been to ascertain the extent to which the activities of the United Nations had been sufficiently aligned to the needs of the African Union, including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the regional economic communities, in the period 2010–2012, as required by the ten-year capacity-building programme, and to determine how well the recommendations of the first triennial review had been implemented. In addition, the review had undertaken to make recommendations on measures to be taken to enhance the management, coordination and monitoring of the actions of the RCM-Africa clusters and subclusters, and on the way forward, including initiating preparations for a post-2015 agenda.

50. The review had found that the ten-year capacity-building programme did not have regular, predictable funding from the United Nations General Assembly, which had provided its mandate. It continued to be accommodated within section 11 of the United Nations regular budget in a somewhat ad hoc manner, and explicitly by only one of the three subprogrammes of section 11.

51. Where the recommendations of the first review were concerned, he noted the findings of the review that the implementation rate had been satisfactory, with some 75 per cent of recommendations implemented. Most of what remained unimplemented had to do with resource mobilization and the clarification of mandates, roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders on the side of the United Nations. RCM-Africa recommendations had also been implemented.

52. Much had been accomplished by the clusters and subclusters in the review period. Substantial efforts had been made to develop the capacity of the African Union through interventions that had advanced the organization's objectives and responded to its priorities at the subregional, regional and global levels. Advisory services, technical, material and financial assistance, and training had been provided. A number of challenges remained, however, relating to issues of communication, coordination, management, monitoring and, above all, resources.

53. He then put forward recommendations on ways of significantly strengthening the ten-year capacity-building programme, including the need to review the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders, and to begin formulating a successor to the Programme that would be anchored on the current and evolving agendas of the African Union. To that end, he recommended that the African Union Commission should put together a technical working group, comprising stakeholders from the African Union and the United Nations, to work out the elements of a new United Nations programme designed to support the African Union and replacing the current arrangements to support the NEPAD programme and the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union. The African Union Commission was also required to take the necessary steps with the United Nations to ensure the eventual adoption by the General Assembly of the new programme.

VI. Report of the Working Group set up by RCM-Africa at its fourteenth session [agenda item 6]

54. At the fourteenth session of RCM-Africa, which was held in Addis Ababa in November 2013, cluster coordinators had been instructed to establish a working group to determine clear roles and responsibilities and to prepare a proposal for consideration at the fifteenth session of RCM-Africa in March 2014 on a framework of United Nations support for the African Union and its NEPAD programme, including Agenda 2063 and a successor programme to the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union after 2016.

55. Accordingly, the Secretariat of the RCM-Africa informed the current meeting that the Working Group had been established on 2 December 2013, made up of 10 entities: six from the African Union Commission and four from the United Nations. The Working Group was co-chaired by a representative of the African Union Commission and a representative of the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as the Chair and alternate Chair respectively. The RCM-Africa secretariat had facilitated the work of the Working Group by providing the required secretarial and coordinating support.

56. The specific objectives of the Working Group were the following:

- (a) To review the concept and philosophy of RCM-Africa;
- (b) To assess the current United Nations programmes of support for the African Union and its NEPAD Agency, in order to ensure their alignment with the African Union's new continental development objectives and to inform the formulation of a successor programme to the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union after 2016;
- (c) To harmonize the various different capacity development programmes for the African Union Commission;
- (d) To examine the current structure of RCM-Africa (including the subregional coordination mechanisms) to determine its appropriateness for ensuring effective delivery of United Nations support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme;
- (e) To highlight lessons and experiences from the workings of other regional coordination mechanisms around the world.

57. The Working Group had worked in pursuit of all those objectives, except for that under paragraph (c) above, on harmonization of the several different capacity-development programmes for the African Union Commission, which required a longer time frame.

58. The Working Group had reflected on the historical trajectory of RCM-Africa, in order to ascertain the continued relevance of its concept and philosophy for supporting the African Union in addressing the continent's current realities and priorities. RCM-Africa had, over time, been adopted as the mechanism for coordinating United Nations support in line with the United Nations "Delivering as one" initiative, in promoting development in Africa via the implementation of key global and continental frameworks.

59. The mechanism had evolved organically from a consultation platform to a coordination platform. It was noted that, over the years, work had been undertaken on the mechanism to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in providing support for Africa's development needs. Among the key achievements of the mechanism were the following:

- (a) RCM-Africa had witnessed strong leadership and co-ownership by the United Nations and the African Union, manifested by the co-chairing of its annual meetings by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- (b) Subregional coordination mechanisms had been established in all five subregions of the continent;
- (c) Gender and other cross-cutting issues had been mainstreamed into the work of the RCM-

Africa clusters;

- (d) A comprehensive capacity needs assessment of the African Union Commission had been undertaken in a participatory manner;
- (e) Results-oriented cluster-based business plans aligned with African Union-NEPAD priorities had been developed.

60. Despite the achievements of RCM-Africa, the Working Group had identified a number of challenges related to the lack of financial resources for the implementation of joint programmes and recommendations. Those included the facts that:

- (a) There were no upfront resources for implementation of the agreed business plans;
- (b) The joint programming and implementation, which was the essence of RCM, was still a work in progress;
- (c) Cluster and subcluster agencies were biased towards agency-specific activities with regard to implementation and reporting.

61. Furthermore, despite their full membership, the involvement of both the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities in RCM-Africa was limited. A system for monitoring and evaluating impact, results and outcomes was lacking and was urgently needed. Information exchange and communication within and between the clusters and subclusters, and within the United Nations agencies, needed to be strengthened in order to enhance the effective implementation of the joint activities. An advocacy and communication strategy was needed in order to address that difficulties impeding cluster and inter-cluster communication.

62. The Working Group further reviewed the current United Nations programmes of support for the African Union and its NEPAD Agency with a view to making recommendations on how to strengthen them.

63. Over the last decade, the United Nations had provided support to the African Union primarily through two programmatic frameworks. The first followed the endorsement, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, of NEPAD as the framework for the provision of international support for Africa's development. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Public Information had been mandated to support the NEPAD Agency at global and regional levels – in addition to the support provided by other United Nations system entities to the African Union and NEPAD. The second framework – the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union – had been established in direct response to the African Union Commission's request for capacity-building. As a programme that aimed at enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in their areas of competence and in conformity with their respective mandates, the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, in common with NEPAD, had become an additional base for the work of RCM-Africa.

64. In an effort to make a feasible proposal on how RCM-Africa could effectively support the African Union's priorities, the Working Group had also examined the African Union's continental and global priorities, including:

- (a) African Union Commission Strategic Plan 2014–2017;
- (b) NEPAD Agency and its strategic focus;
- (c) African Peer Review Mechanism;
- (d) Agenda 2063, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the sustainable development goals;
- (e) United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

65. The overall consensus was that RCM-Africa needed to realign the work programme for its clusters more closely with those continental and global initiatives. In that respect, it was suggested that the successor programme to the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union could be shortened to match the lifecycles of the African Union and NEPAD strategic plans.

66. In terms of the current structure of the RCM-Africa, the Working Group had noted that RCM-Africa operated a cluster system that currently comprised more than 40 United Nations system entities, including the World Bank, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the African Development Bank. That cluster system had expanded over the years as RCM-Africa had expanded its own focus on the Millennium Development Goals, NEPAD and the ten-year capacity-building programme of the African Union. There were currently nine clusters, and also a proposed regional integration cluster, that were jointly led by the United Nations and the African Union Commission and supported by a joint secretariat composed of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission.

67. It was explained that the reporting structure of RCM-Africa was three-layered, comprising, first, the annual reports by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on NEPAD, including issues relating to RCM-Africa, to the General Assembly; second, the annual joint sessions that were co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and, third, the subregional reporting on the progress of partnerships between the United Nations and the regional economic communities that was undertaken by the ECA subregional offices.

68. The Working Group had commended RCM-Africa on its excellent role in supporting the African Union and its NEPAD programme, and also on its implementation of the ten-year capacity-building programme of the African Union. The clusters and subclusters had become core forums for the exchange of views and initiatives among United Nations system entities in support of Africa's development agenda. Each of those clusters had a business plan that was aligned with the strategic objectives of the African Union Commission. In addition, the African Union Commission's role in that cluster-based system had catalysed strong political commitments which were vital for decision-making at the highest level.

69. The Working Group had also examined the challenges currently confronting the clusters and subclusters, including weak gender mainstreaming, low-level of leadership commitment within most clusters and subclusters, lack of resources, and the poor engagement of regional economic communities in the RCM-Africa process. To overcome those deficiencies and to strengthen the cluster system, the Working Group had made specific recommendations with regard to the meeting format for the clusters, working instruments, reporting and resource mobilization.

70. Where the meeting format was concerned, it had been suggested that the clusters should meet on a quarterly basis and, to the extent possible, align the first and last quarter meetings with the regular sessions of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government and of the General Assembly of the United Nations, respectively. Such arrangements would also ensure cost-effectiveness, as most cluster members already made arrangements to attend the sessions of both the African Union and the General Assembly. The Working Group had also suggested that the co-chairs of the clusters from both the African Union Commission and the United Nations should rotate every two years. The current arrangement was for them to rotate every three years.

71. In respect of working instruments and reporting, the Working Group had suggested that, instead of retaining the current three-year business plans, the clusters' workplans should correspond to the strategic plans of both the African Union Commission and its NEPAD programme, and also to the United Nations departmental annual work plans and biennium programme budget. Among other measures, the Working Group had also suggested that the annual sessions of RCM-Africa should include special sessions for regional economic communities to report on the subregional coordination mechanisms. That was vital for ensuring ownership and buy-in, and also for giving visibility to the regional economic communities.

72. On resource mobilization, the Working Group had underscored the need for urgent action and

specifically recommended the preparation of a resource mobilization plan.

73. In terms of lessons learned from global regional coordination mechanisms, the Working Group had provided an outline of the regional coordination mechanisms in each region. Generally speaking, it had observed that the mechanisms in different regions had on average a membership of 30 United Nations and affiliated entities, including the regional development banks and the World Bank.

74. Not only had the regional coordination mechanisms become the means for the delivery of joint analytical studies in support of the regional frameworks, they also provided a high-level policy forum for the exchange of views on major strategic developments and challenges faced at the regional and subregional levels, and an opportunity to strengthen links between the regional and global levels. They promoted United Nations system interaction with non-United Nations regional and subregional organizations and policy coherence and joint programming in support of regional and subregional integration efforts and initiatives.

75. In conclusion, the Working Group had noted that, from the various RCM-Africa reviews, both the United Nations and the African Union continued to perceive RCM-Africa as a viable mechanism for joint action by the United Nations to support the African Union and its NEPAD programme. RCM-Africa also demonstrated the spirit of African ownership and international partnership in advancing the continent's development agenda. In other words, RCM-Africa remained a highly relevant mechanism.

76. The Working Group had proposed a number of recommendations on ways of strengthening RCM-Africa in line with the key strategic priorities of the continent. First and foremost, the mechanism must have a resource mobilization plan and a practical work programme with clear roles and responsibilities for both the African Union and the United Nations. Other recommendations relating in particular to resource mobilization and to monitoring and evaluation, which were key challenges for RCM-Africa, included the following:

- (a) To maximize and reinforce political and financial commitments, RCM-Africa must be extended and deepened to involve other development agencies in Africa, such as the African Development Bank;
- (b) Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the effectiveness and impact of the coordination mechanisms should be developed and presented for approval by RCM-Africa. In addition, an award or recognition system should be designed for collaboration and coordination;
- (c) The responsibilities for resource mobilization should be explicitly assigned in the structure. For example, co-chairs of any cluster could be designated to include responsibility for resource mobilization for priority projects identified in the cluster business plan. That would require a firm commitment from all stakeholders and a spirit of innovation;
- (d) The engagement should be sought of existing partnership forums such as the Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, among others, that could financially support some of the work of RCM-Africa and its clusters;
- (e) The subregional coordination mechanisms should be structurally aligned with the regional coordination mechanism system and the operation and effectiveness of the subcluster mechanism should be reviewed.

VII. Building synergies between the Millennium Development Goals Africa Working Group and RCM-Africa [agenda item 7]

77. Mr. Pedro Conceicao, Chief Economist, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, informed the session about effort to build synergies between the Millennium Development Goals Africa Working Group and RCM-Africa. The main points of his report are summarized below.

78. The Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group, set up in September 2007 and com-

prising chief executive officers of the United Nations, the African Union and six multilateral institutions – the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank – has the mandate to identify practical solutions to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. The Steering Group’s recommendations were adopted and endorsed by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2008, in order to galvanize action on and to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, with a particular focus on agriculture and food security, health, education, infrastructure and trade facilitation, and national statistical systems. The Steering Group’s implementation framework and operational note were endorsed in June 2012. The implementation framework proposed three key actions to operationalize the recommendations: first, focusing on country-level support, including by using the Millennium Development Goals acceleration framework developed by the United Nations Development Group; second, advocating scaled up financing and promoting domestic resource mobilization; and, third, monitoring, coordinating and reporting on the implementation of the recommendations.

79. The Steering Group, which is chaired by the Secretary-General, is supported by the Working Group (chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General) with representatives of United Nations agencies and seven other multilateral institutions as members, and UNDP as the secretariat. The operational note transferred the implementation of the recommendations to the regional level through the regional coordination mechanisms, in Africa, with ECA and UNDP as the secretariat. RCM-Africa is to use its policy knowledge to inform implementation of the recommendations through the three actions mentioned above.

VIII. Conclusions and the way forward: recommendations from the fifth plenary session [agenda item 8]

80. At the fifth plenary meeting, following the discussion of the agenda items, the following recommendation were made:

- (a) The RCM-Africa clusters should be aligned with the strategic outcomes of the African Union’s strategic plan for 2014–2017 and its Agenda 2063. In that regard, the RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to organize a retreat for further reflection on the reconfiguration of clusters and develop a new framework of engagement. The configuration of the clusters should be based on the new priority areas of the African Union, derived from Agenda 2063 and the African Union’s medium-term strategy for 2014–2017;
- (b) The regional development cooperation framework, which supported the implementation of programmes, should be an all-inclusive framework and based on a results-based management approach. The RCM-Africa secretariat should work on a guidance note on how to prepare and implement the framework, while building on United Nations programming principles. There should be sound management and accountability arrangements for the regional development cooperation framework. In addition, there should be an indication of the next steps and milestones in terms of development and implementation of the framework;
- (c) The RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to take the lead in the development of the regional development cooperation framework, following an all-inclusive approach and setting clear milestones for the process;
- (d) RCM-Africa, United Nations agencies, organizations, funds and programmes, with the support of the African group based in New York, were urged to include in their budgetary processes their programmes of support for the African Union in the context of RCM-Africa;
- (e) The RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to develop a guidance note for implementation of the regional development cooperation framework;
- (f) The RCM-Africa secretariat should develop a resource mobilization strategy which includes

the setting up of a trust fund and efforts to tap into existing partnership forums, such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, to prioritize and support joint activities with the African Union;

- (g) The RCM-Africa clusters were urged to focus on strategic flagship programmes so that the limited resources were prudently used;
- (h) The RCM-Africa secretariat was called upon to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for tracking and assessing the implementation of the programmes and projects of the clusters, and also the implementation of the RCM-Africa recommendations;
- (i) The RCM-Africa secretariat should consult with the secretariat of the United Nations Development Group on developing linkages between RCM-Africa, the subregional coordination mechanisms, the UNDG Regional Directors Team, and the United Nations country teams, so as to strengthen coherence and coordination with a view to ensuring better United Nations support for the African Union. In that regard, RCM-Africa should also consult with the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa, chaired by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa;
- (j) The Chairperson of the African Union Commission was urged to inform the Secretary-General on the need for a new programme of support to the African Union, anchored on the pillars of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The necessary action should then be taken to make the requisite submission to United Nations Headquarters in New York, by September 2014, requesting budget support starting in the 2016-2017 budget cycle;
- (k) The African Union Commission, in consultation with the United Nations, is called upon to set up a technical working group comprising members from the United Nations and the African Union, including the NEPAD Agency, the regional economic communities and the African Development Bank, to formulate a comprehensive long-term United Nations programme of support for the African Union including for the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the ten-year capacity-building programme upon its expiration in 2016;
- (l) An extended RCM-Africa meeting should be held on the margins of the annual sessions of RCM-Africa to monitor implementation of the recommendations and support for the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In that regard, members of the RCM-Africa were urged to mainstream the recommendations on attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa and the Common Africa Position into their planning, coordination and reporting processes. ECA and UNDP were to serve as the secretariat and to provide technical support to the extended RCM-Africa meeting;
- (m) RCM-Africa was urged to develop a communications and collaboration strategy by November 2014;
- (n) Future sessions of RCM-Africa should continue to be held on the margins of the Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance;
- (o) RCM-Africa was called upon to harmonize the ten-year capacity-building plan with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

IX. Any other business [agenda item 9]

81. No other business was raised.

X. Closure of the session [agenda item 10]

82. In their closing statement, the co-Chairs, Mr. Abdelaziz and Mr. Matlosa, expressed gratitude to thanked the leadership of the African Union and the United Nations, the host country, the RCM-Africa secretariat and all participants for the successful session. They particularly noted in particular the extensive, rich and fruitful deliberations and the dedication manifested by both the United Nations and the African Union Commission to the deepening of their partnership through RCM-Africa, a mechanism that continued to evolve in its endeavour with the view to support the continent's development agenda. They reiterated that the partnership should be informed by AU strategic documents of the African Union, such as its Agenda 2063, the strategic programme of the African Union Commission for 2014--2017 of the AUC and other strategic documents of the African Union organs, including the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities. They expressed their hope that RCM-Africa meetings would continue to be convened on the margins of the Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, an arrangement that had proven to be effective. They also called on the RCM-Africa secretariat to work with the clusters to ensure that the recommendations adopted by RCM-Africa at its successive sessions were duly implemented.

83. With those brief closing remarks, the fifteenth session of RCM-Africa was duly declared closed

List of Participants

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC)

1. H.E Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma
Chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 55178 44
Email: zuman@africa-union.org
2. H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha
Deputy Chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 55178 44
Email: mwenchae@africa-union.org / dcp@africa-union.org
3. H.E. Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping
Commissioner for Economic Affairs
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: (251) 11 551 58 87
Email: marupinga@africa-union.org
4. H.E. Dr. Mustapha S. Kaloko
Commissioner for Social Affairs
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 11 551 77 00 ext 253
Fax: (251)11 550 49 85
Email: mkaloko@african-union.org
5. Mr. Khabele Matlosa
Director for the Department of Political Affairs
African Union commission
Tel: (251) 11 518 26 10
Fax: (251) 11 551 58 87
Email: MatlosaK@africa-union.org
6. Mr. Olabisi Dare
Head, Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees, Displaced
Persons Division
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251913013199
Email: dareo@africa-union.org
7. Mr. Khalil Mohamed Timamy
Head of Division of Environment and Natural
Resources,
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 11 551 77 00
Fax: (251) 11 55 25 835
Email: timamy.africa@gmail.com
8. Mr. Christopher C. Kachiza
Head of Policy Analysis and Research Division
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 11 551 77 00
Fax: (251) 11 55 25 835
Email: kachizac@africa-union.org
9. Amb. Febe Potgieter
Advisor to the AUC chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: fpotgieter@khaloza.co.za
10. Mr. Anthony Okara
Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 55178 44
Email: OKARAA@africa-union.org
11. Mr. Patrick Ndzana Olomo
Policy Officer-Investment and Resource Mobilization
Economic Affairs Department
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-11-5517700
Fax: (251) 11 551 58 87
Email: OlomoP@africa-union.org
12. Ms. Adwoa Coleman
Principal Policy Officer/Focal Point for RCM/
TYCBP
Office of the Deputy Chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: nyekye45@gmail.com
13. Ms. Anthonia Heanyi-Nwanze
Office of the Deputy Chairperson
African Union commission
African Union Commission
Tel: +251-11-5517700
Email: Anthonial@africa-union.org
14. Mr. Jean-Yves Adou
Senior Programme Officer
NEPAD Coordination Unit
Bureau of the Chairperson
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: Adoujy@africa-union.org/adjeys@yahoo.com
15. Mr. James Maringwa
Trade Expert
Department of Trade and Industry
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251920750424
Email: maringwaJ@africa-union.org

16. Christian S. Minoungou
Policy Officer, Telecommunications/ICT and Post
Department of Infrastructure and Energy
African Union commission
Tel: (251) 115 18 24 06
Fax : (251)-115 18 24 50
Email: MINOUNGOUC@africa-union.org

Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 8033139086
Email: dr.anieboroberts@yahoo.com

COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTH-ERN AFRICA (COMESA)

NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY (NPCA)

17. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki
Chief Executive Officer
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (27 1) 1 256 3611
Email: ibrahimassanem@nepad.org
18. Mr. Abdoul Salam Bello
Senior Coordinator,
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (27 1) 1 256 3611
Email: abdoulsb@nepad.org
19. Mr. Adama Deen
Head of Infrastructure Programme
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (27 1) 1 256 3611
Email: adamad@nepad.org
20. Mr. Mosad Elmissiry
Head of Energy
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (27 1) 1 256 3611
Email: mosade@nepad.org
21. Mr. Shola Akinbade
Special Advisor
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (27 1) 1 256 3645
Email: olusolaA@nepad.org
22. Ms. Lydia Mathia
Advisor
NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: mathia.lydia@nepadkenya.org
23. Ms. Pauline Njoroge
Communication Consultant
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (254) 202733735
Email: pauline@nepadkenya.org
24. Mr. Aniebo Roberts
Coordinator, Global Partnerships
NEPAD Business Group Africa

25. Ms. Tidenekialesh Asfaw
Programme Officer
COMESA Liaison Office to the AU
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 911 479725
Email: tiduasfaw@gmail.com
26. Mr. Yusuf Atiku Abdalla
Regional Trade Advisor
COMESA Secretariat
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: (260) 211 229 726/32, (260) 962 004046
Fax: (260) 211 225 107
E-mail: yabdalla@comesa.int
27. Dr. Francis Mangeni
Director, Trade, Customs and Monetary Affairs
COMESA Secretariat
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: 260 211 229 726/32, 260 962 004046
Fax: 260 211 225 107
Email: Fmangeni@comesa.int
28. Mr. Ibrahim Zeidy
Director - CMI Monetary Institute
COMESA
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 787 408269/+254 787 7408269
Email: i.zeidy@comesa.int

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

29. Mr. Joseph Birungi
Head, International Relations Department
East African Community
Arusha, Tanzania
Tel: (255) 272 162100/(255) 787 336698
Email: josephbirungi@eachq.org

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)

30. Mr. Kagwe Mutahi
Assistant Liaison Officer to the AU
IGAD
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 9202 43009
Email: kagwe.mutahi@igad.int

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

31. Dr. Angelo Mondlane
Director
Gaborone, Botswana
Tel: (267) 713 11555
Email: amondlane@sadc.org

UNION DU MAGHREB ARABE (UMA)

32. Mr. Kouider Lahoual
Economic and Financial Affairs Expert
Union du Maghreb Arabe
Rabat, Morocco
Tel: (212) 537 681371/212 67405 7393
Fax: (212) 537 681377
Email: kouidera12@gmail.com

NORTH AFRICAN REGIONAL CAPABILITY (NARC)

33. Mr. Enyab Ali Enayab
Deputy Executive Secretary
North African Regional Capability
Tripoli, Libya
Tel: (218) 21340 7229/00218 913206654
Fax: (218) 213 40 7229
Email: Narc2010@hotmail.com

MEMBER STATES AND MINISTRIES

34. H.E. Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Minister of Finance
Federal Ministry of Finance
Abuja, Nigeria
35. Ms. Aisha Omar
Deputy Director
Federal Ministry of Finance
Abuja, Nigeria
Central Area, Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 803 3115666
36. Mr. Mohammed Yakubu
Deputy Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: 07035516551
37. Dr. Sami Danjime
Assistant Director
Central Bank of Nigeria
Nigeria
Tel: 234 8037871814
Email: sadanjumai@gmail.com

38. Mr. Sani Aminu
Assistant Director
National Planning Commission
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 8059159515
Email: yargaya@gmail.com
39. Mr. Simon Lleuml
National Planning Commission
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 8038106917
Email: lenma@yahoo.com
40. Mr. Colin Tshabalala
Economist
Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
Mbabane, Swaziland
Tel: (268) 2404 6875/ (268) 7603 9168
Email: colintshabala@yahoo.co.uk
41. Dr. Hassan Elhassan
Senior Expert
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)
Khartoum, the Sudan
Tel: 249 183 773646/249 906 331814
Fax: 249 1 83 770600
Email: badea@badea.org
42. Mr. Frederic Yves Etame
Administrative Officer
Ministry of Finance
Yaounde, Cameroon
Tel: (237) 76591741/(237) 9503 3966
Email: yetame@gmail.com
43. Mr. Stephane Noad
Head, Service for Specialized Institutions of AU
Ministry of External Relations
Yaounde, Cameroon
Tel: 237 5413 2887/237 9999 1026
Email: nostec30@yahoo.fr
44. Ms. Hadia Amrane
Director
Ministry of Finance
Alger, Algeria
Tel: (213) 21 595 126
45. Mr. Hallime Driss Boughida
Secretary General
Central Bank of Algeria
Alger, Algeria
Tel: 213 21239044
Fax: 213 21239564
46. Mr. Mohamed Belkacem
Sous Directeur
Ministry of Finance
Alger, Algeria
Tel: (213) 550 550341

Fax: 213 595386
Email: mohamed.belkacem@inf.gov.az

47. Dr. Mohamed Abbas Maherzi
Director
Ministry of Finance
Alger, Algeria
Tel: (213) 215 95176
Email: Mohamedabbas.maherzi@inf.gov.az

48. Mr. Aman Agadoni
Director General
Ministry of Industry
Alger, Algeria
Tel: 213 21 74 7644/213 661 684341; Fax 213
21 745318
Email: agadir.mipi@gmail.com

49. Ms. Rakiatou Christeie Kaffa Jackou
Ministre
Ministère Mines et Développement Industriel
Niamey, Niger
Tel: (227) 964 94381
Email: rajaka65@yahoo.fr

50. Mr. Grivas Chiyaba
Economist
Bank of Zambia
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: (260) 955 111123;
Email: gchiyaba@boz.zm

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AFDB)

51. Mr. Gabriel Mougani
Chief Regional Integration Economist,
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 338697544/+221 77182 5093
Fax: +221 338 200 999
Email: g.mougani@afdb.org

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

52. Mr. Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, USA
Email: delenda@un.org

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON AFRICA (OSAA)

53. Mr. Maged A. Abdelaziz
United Nations Under-Secretary -General and
Special Advisor on Africa
New York, USA
Fax: 219 963 3892
E-mail: abdelaziz54@un.org

54. Ms. Juliet Wasswa-Mugambwa
Economic Affairs officer
Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
United Nations Secretariat
New York, USA
Tel: 212-963-9576
Fax: 212-963-3892
E-mail: wasswa-mugambwa@un.org

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION (DPI)

55. Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal
Under-Secretary-General
Department of Public Information
New York, USA
Tel: 212-963-2912
Fax: 212-963-4361
E-mail: launsky-tieffenthal@un.org
56. Ms. Jaya Dayal
Chief of Office
Office of the Under-Secretary-General
New York, USA
Tel: (212) 963 2133/ (917) 292 0573
Email: dayalj@un.org
57. Mr. Masimba Tafirenyika
Chief, Africa Section
Editor-in-Chief, Africa Renewal
Communications Campaigns Service
Strategic Communications Division
United Nations Department of Public Informa-
tion
Tel: 212-963-4295
Fax: 212-963-4556
Email: tafirenyika@un.org

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE TO THE AFRICAN UNION (UNOAU)

58. Mr. Haile Menkerios
Under-Secretary-General and Special Represen-
tative of the Secretary-General to the AU United
Nations Office to African Union
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 115 441006/02
Email: hmenkerios@un.org
59. Mr. Colin Stewart
Chief of Staff and Deputy Head,
United Nations Office to the African Union
Addis Ababa
Tel: 251-911511729
Email: stewartc@un.org
60. Ms. Astrid Evrensel
Political Affairs Officer - Electoral
United Nations Office to the African Union

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 116 470270/251 911 506461
Fax: +251 11 647 9200
Email: evrensel@un.org

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICE (UNOPS)

61. Mr. Vitaly Vanshelboim
Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director
Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: +4545337525
Email: jessicaN@unops.org
62. Mr. Garry Conille
Regional Director Africa
Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: +4545337507/+45 3017 7507
Email: garryc@unops.org
63. Mr. Bamidele Ilebani
Head of Office
UNOPS-ETPC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 55 38653/+251911 512306
Fax: +251 11 5538656
Email: bamidelei@unops.org
64. Mr. Alidu Wirba
Head of Office
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 8106928278
Email: aliduw@unops.org

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

65. Mr. Manoj Juneja,
Assistant Executive Director for Resource Management and Accountability
Rome, Italy
Tel: +39-06-65131
Fax: +39-06-6590632
66. Mr. Abdoulaye Diop
Director, WFP Africa Office, Addis Ababa and Representative to the African Union and ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251(0)115-51 5188 ext. 2600
Fax: +251(0)115-51 4433
Email: abdoulaye.diop@wfp.org
67. Mr. Haile Menghestab
Deputy Director WFP Africa Office Addis Ababa and Representation to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 911 505 072
E-mail: menghestab.haile@wfp.org

68. Ms. Sophia Nesri,
Senior Liaison Officer, WFP Africa Office Addis Ababa and Representation to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 911 215055
Email: sophia.nesri@wfp.org
69. Ms. Ella Getahun
Coordinator Cost of Hunger Project
WFP Africa Office Addis Ababa and Representation to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 (11) 551 5188
Email: ella.getahun@wfp.org

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)

70. Mr. Juvenal Shiundu
Deputy Director
Head, Programme Management, Technical Cooperation Division
London, United Kingdom
Tel: 33 207 463 4047/44 781 47 02167
Fax: 44 207 587 3210
Email: jjshiundu@imo.org
71. Mr. William Azuh
Head, Africa (Anglophone) Section
Technical Cooperation Division
International Maritime Organization
London, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 207 587 3186
Email: WAzuh@iom.org

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

72. Mr. Aeneas C. Chuma
Regional Director
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 5 444480/251 911 502977
Fax: 251 11 5 513633
Email: chumaac@ilo.org
73. Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon
Chief Regional Programming Unit
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 5 444480/251 911 502977
Fax: 251 11 5 513633
Email: Samuel-Olonjuwon@ilo.org
74. Mr. Lawrence Egulu
Economist
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: 4122 799 7366/41767154098;
Email: egulu@ilo.org

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Tel: +234 705 400 6107
Email: lsanya@iom.int

75. Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye
Director
Regional Office for Africa
United Nations Environmental Programme
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254-207-624284/86
Fax: 254-207-623928
Email: Mounkaila.Goumandakoye@unep.org
76. Mr. Samba Harouna Thiam
Head of UNEP Liaison Office to AUC, UNECA and
Representative to Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 544 5402
Email: samba.harouna@unep.org
77. Ms. Catherine Mwangi
Programme Assistant,
Regional Office for Africa
United Nations Environment Programme
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (254) 20 7624997/254 733 707804
Email: Catherine.mwangi@unep.org

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

78. Ms. Axumite, Gebre-Egziabher
Director for Regional Office for Africa and Arab
States (ROAAS)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-HABITAT)
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (254) 20 7623075
Fax: (254) 20 7623904
Email: axumite.gebre-egziabher@unhabitat.org
79. Mr. Mohamed Halfani,
Head, UN-Habitat Liaison Office in Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia
Email: mohamed.halfani@unhabitat.org

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

80. Mr. Charles Kwenin
Senior Regional Advisor for Africa
IOM
Geneva, Switzerland
Tell: +41 227 179278/+41 179 4067244;
Email: ckwenin@iom.int
81. Ms. Lily Sanya
Migration Technical Advisor to IGAD
IOM
Abuja, Nigeria

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

82. Mr. Pedro Conceicao
Chief Economist and Head of the Strategic and
Advisory Unit
Regional Bureau for Africa
New York, USA
Tel: 212-906-3660
Email: pedro.conceicao@undp.org
83. Mr. Ayodele Odusola
MDGs Advisor
Regional Bureau for Africa
New York, USA
Tel: 212-906-5905
Email: ayodele.odusola@undp.org
84. Mr. Forster Akuoko
Programme Specialist, Governance
UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: + (251) 09 37 44 98 51
Email: forster.akuoko@undp.org
85. Mr. Kwasi Amankwaah
UN Coordination Specialist
UNDP
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: 234 806060094/234 80606009;
Email: kwasi-amankwaah@undp.org
86. Ms. Colleen Zamba
Economic Advisor
UNDP
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: 234803 402 2099;
Email: colleen.zamba@undp.org

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)

87. Mr. Amson Sibanda
Social Affairs Officer
Division for Social Policy and Development
New York, USA
Tel: (917) 367-7010
Fax: (212) 963-0111
Email: sibanda@un.org

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS (DPA)

88. Mr. Samba Sane
Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-
General

United Nations Department of Political Affairs
New York, USA
Tel: 1 212 963 0613/1 917 251 5873
Email: sanes@un.org

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)

89. Ms. Jeanine Cooper
Representative to the African Union,
Economic Commission for Africa and Head of
Office
AU-Liaison office UNOCHA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 115 444 265/251 911 511 897
Fax: 251 111 554 1871
Email: Cooper1@un.org

JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

90. Ms. Rosemary Museminali
Representative to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 115 445379
Mob: 251 911 502229
Email: museminalir@unaids.org

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

91. Mr. Constant-Serge Bounda
UNFPA Representative to the AU, ECA and Re-
gional Institutes
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251-11-5444085
Fax: 251-11-517133
Email: bounda@unfpa.org
92. Mrs. Ratidzai Ndhlovu
Country Representative
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 811 3935333/
(234) 811 393 5333
Email: ndhlovu@unfpa.org
93. Ms. Mayah Ngalla
Programme Specialist/RCM-Africa
UNFPA Liaison Office to the AUC and UNECA
United Nations Population Fund
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: (251) 115 444307
Fax: (251) 115 517133
Email: manjuh@unfpa.org

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (UNOHCHR)

94. Mr. Idrissa Oumar Kane
Regional Representative a.i.
United Nations Office of the High Commissioner
for Human Rights
UNOHCHR-Eastern Africa Office
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 115 443415/+251 920 126648
Fax: +251 115 516078
Email: ikane@uneca.org

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

95. Mr. Anthony Mwangi
Public Affairs Manager
Liaison Office to the AU and UNECA
Tel: (251) 115 184 223/(251) 115 184000 ext
4223
Email: amwangi@unicef.org
96. Ms. Jean Gough
Representative - Nigeria Country Office
UNICEF
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: (234) 803 4020870;
Email: jgough@unicef.org

UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UN WOMEN)

97. Mrs. Letty Chiwara
Country Representative
UN WOMEN
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 912 506699/ 251 912 506688
Email: letty-chiwara@unwomen.org
98. Dr. Josephine Odera Ajema
Regional Director
UN WOMEN
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: 221 338 699970/221 776 384810
Fax: 221 338 605495
Email: Josephine.odera@unwomen.org
99. Mr. Themba Kalua
Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist
UN WOMEN
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (254) 20 762 4301/ (254) 737 394 353
Email: themba.kalua@unwomen.org

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

100. Mr. Chrysantus Mbeb Ache
UNHCR Representative to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 544 2103/251 911 208655
Email: Achec@unhcr.org
101. Mrs. Monique Ekoko
Deputy Representative
UNHCR Representative to the AU and UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 5 442103/251 911 207906
Email: ekoko@unhcr.org
102. Ms. Selamawit Tesfalidet
Assistant Liaison Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 924 480860/251 11 6443211/251 924 480860
Email: haile@unhcr.org

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)

103. Mr. Patrick Osakwe
Chief, Africa Section
Division for Africa and LDC, and Special Programmes
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: 41 22 917 3661
Fax: +41 022 917 0274
Email: Patrick.osakwe@unctad.org

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

104. Ms. Anne Therese Ndong-Jatta
Regional Director
UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Africa for the Sahel
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 3384 92323/+221 7756 98357; Email: at.ndong-jatta@unesco.org

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

105. Ms. Mariam Sissoko
Country Representative
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: 08025014967/08025014967
Email: mariam.sissoko@unodc.org

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)

106. Mr. Benjamin Odoemena
Country Programme Officer
IFAD Country Office in Nigeria
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel. 0034 7098810651
E-mail: b.odoemena@ifad.org

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO)

107. Mr. Joseph Romanus Mukabana
Director WMO Offices For Africa and LDCs
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 730 8236/+41 79 814 6247
Fax: +41 22 730 8037
Email: Jmukabana@wmo.int
108. Mr. Ishiaku Muhammed
Ag. WMO Representative for North, Central and West Africa
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: +234 802 3004106/+234 802 3004106
Email: imuhammed@wmo.int

UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRE (UNIC)

109. Mr. Oluseyi Soremekun
National Information Officer
United Nations Information Centre
Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: +234 803 3030002
110. AUC/ECA/AfDB JOINT SECRETARIAT SUPPORT OFFICE
111. Mr. Christian Georges Diguimbaye
Coordinator
Joint Secretariat Support Office
AU/AfDB/UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
Tel: +251 938 047 193;
Email: c.diguimbaye@afdb.org

PANELIST

112. Mr. Ejeviome Otobo
Former Director and Deputy Head of UN Peace Building Support Office
New York, USA
Tel: 914 793 4159/914 462 2040
Email: oheriu@yahoo.com

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA (UNECA)**

Tel: +237-2 223 56 22
Fax: +237 22303185
Email: eahohe@uneca.org

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

113. Dr. Carlos Lopes
Executive Secretary
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. +251 11 551 1231
Fax +251 11 551 2814
114. Mr. Abdalla Hamdok
Deputy Executive Secretary
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. +251 11 544 5203
Fax +251 11 551 1929

**REGIONAL INTEGRATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
and TRADE DIVISION (RITD)**

115. Mr. Stephen N. Karingi
Director
Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade
Division
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 11 544 54 43
Fax: + 251 11 515 30 05
E-mail: skaringi@uneca.org

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY DIVISION
(SDPD)**

116. Ms. Takyiwaa Manuh
Director
Social Development Policy Division
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 544 38 23
Email: Tmanuh@uneca.org

ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE - EAST AFRICA

117. Mr. Antonio Pedro
Director
UNECA Sub-Regional Office, East Africa
Kigali, Rwanda
Tel : +250 252 586 547
Fax: 250 252 586 546
Email : apedro@uneca.org

**ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE - CENTRAL AFRI-
CA**

118. Mr. Emile Ahohe
Director
UNECA Sub-Regional Office, Central Africa
Yaoundé, Cameroon

ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE - NORTH AFRICA

119. Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane
Director
UNECA Sub-Regional Office, North Africa
Rabat, Morocco
Tel : +212 5 37 717829/ 715613
Fax + 212 5 37 71 27 02
Email : kbounemra@uneca.org / srdc-na@
uneca.org

ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE- WEST AFRICA

120. Mr. Dimitri Sanga
Director
UNECA Sub-Regional Office, West Africa
Niamey, Niger
Tel: 227-20-72-29-61
Mob: 227 90 90 7094
Fax: 227-2072-2894
Email: dsanga@uneca.org / srdcwest@uneca.
org

**ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE - SOUTHERN AF-
RICA**

121. Mr. Said Adejumobi
Director
UNECA Sub-Regional Office, Southern Africa
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: +260-964 104175
Fax: 228 502/236949
Email: sadejumobi@uneca.org

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

122. Mr. Adeyemi Dipeolu
Director
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 5 44 5489
Fax: 251-11-5514461
Email: adipeolu@uneca.org
123. Mr. Joseph Atta-Mensah
Senior Advisor
AU/NEPAD Team
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251-11-5445379
Mob: 251-9-11-201817
Fax: 251-11-5514461
Email: jattamensah@uneca.org

124. Ms. Rawda Omar Clinton
Programme Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251115443363
Fax: 251-11-5514461
Email: romar-clinton@uneca.org

125. Ms. Nozipho Freya Simelane
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-11-544-5468
Mob: +251-93-744-9796
Fax: +251-11-551-4416
Email: nsimelane@uneca.org

126. Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson
Senior Consultant

Banjul, the Gambia
Tel: +2209391082
Email: Cgreyjohnson@gmail.com

127. Mr. Robert Mokokodo Okello
Senior consultant
Tel: 251-11-544 5492
Email: robert.okello@lyciar.com

128. Ms. Eaman M. Abdella
Consultant
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251115445259/+251911656313
Email: eabdella@uneca.org, eaman.mohamed@gmail.com

