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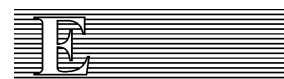**AFRICAN UNION**
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Report on the United Nations System-wide Support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development Programme: the Regional Coordination Mechanism

1.   Introduction

1.   Through successive system-wide initiatives[1], the United Nations has continuously demonstrated its commitment to support African countries, guided by and large by the developmental priorities of the continent. Convinced that a coordinated approach by all United Nations agencies and organizations will improve the support provided to the continent, the Secretary-General of the United Nations launched, in 1999, a reform agenda to improve the activities of the various United Nations agencies and organizations at the regional level. Building on this reform agenda, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/46, called for the establishment of regular regional consultative meetings among United Nations agencies and organizations working in each of the five regions of the world. The resolution also recognized the leadership role of the regional commissions in this regard. The overall purpose of the consultative meetings is to promote synergy and coordination among the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, so as to improve the collective response by the United Nations system in addressing priority needs of the regions.

2.   In the Africa region, the consultative meetings are held under the auspices of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), which calls for United Nations agencies and organizations to coordinate their activities in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)[2] to ensure maximum results and to align their activities with the priorities of Africa as articulated in NEPAD. So far, nine meetings of the RCM have taken place with the aim of ensuring greater coordination, coherence, effectiveness and impact in the delivery of United Nations support to Africa.

3.   The RCM also serves as a means of improving cooperation and collaboration between United Nations agencies and African continental organizations such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD secretariat, the regional economic communities (RECs) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

4.   With regard to the African Union (AU), the Declaration on enhancing UN-AU cooperation signed in November 2006, by the then chief executives of the two organizations established the Framework Agreement for the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU. The agreement serves as a basis for United Nations-African Union cooperation, taking into account

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[1] The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD, 1986 – 90), the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa (UN-NADAF, 1991 –2000) and the United Nations system-wide Special Initiative on Africa (SIA, 1996 – 2005), among others.

[2] The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched by the African Heads of State and Government in 2001 as an African-owned comprehensive framework for development. It is based on a holistic approach to socio-economic development, to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment in Africa, uplift the lives of the African people, as well as reduce their marginalization and increase their role in the global community. More importantly, it was designed as the policy framework to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000. All sectors of African society are called upon to participate in activities aimed at achieving the objectives of NEPAD. Africans are in charge of and accountable for the success of NEPAD.

the needs and strategic priorities of the AU. The implementation of the agreement is coordinated through the RCM.

5.   As for cooperation and collaboration with the RECs, the seventh meeting of the RCM emphasized the importance of developing a mechanism for subregional coordination of United Nations support to AU/NEPAD and recommended that ECA, in consultation with other United Nations agencies, the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat, should coordinate discussions on the needs of the RECs for a better alignment and better targeting of United Nations support to the AU/NEPAD priorities and vision at the subregional level.

6.   Against this background, this paper presents, in part 1, an update on the United Nations system-wide support to the AU and its NEPAD programme. In part 2, it provides an overview of United Nations support to the AU and its NEPAD programme by the RCM and its clusters, including support pertaining to the Ten-Year Capacity-Building programme and subregional support through the RECs. Part 3 shows ECA support to the AU and its NEPAD programme. Part 4 highlights the main issues and recommendations of the ninth meeting of the RCM. Part 5 offers a number of proposals on the way forward for consideration and endorsement by the Conference of Ministers, with a view to providing effective support to the AU and its NEPAD programme.

2.   United Nations Support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme by the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its clusters

7.   The nine clusters of the RCM have been providing capacity-building and other types of support to the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat.

2.1   Cluster support

8.   The advocacy and communications Cluster, convened by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, continued to provide advocacy support to the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat. The cluster added its members to the AU Commission mailing list, which has greatly enhanced awareness and understanding of the Commission's information, decisions, declarations and news. It convened many meetings in this regard via teleconference, thus demonstrating that the physical location of cluster coordinators should not necessarily deter the holding of meetings. It organized a senior media dialogue on 19 and 20 February 2009 in Vaal, South Africa aimed at improving communication about NEPAD amongst continental journalists by providing them with stories and up-to-date information about NEPAD projects, and by creating opportunities for direct contact and interface with senior officials and decision makers from the NEPAD secretariat and the AU Commission. Sixty participants attended the dialogue, which ended with the adoption of the Vaal Consensus, in which participants pledged to continue popularizing Africa's priority programmes and strategies for improving the communications and outreach activities of the African Union and its NEPAD programme.

9.   The agriculture, food security and rural development Cluster is convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Members of the cluster try to collaborate and coordinate their support to the AU and its NEPAD programme, but considering the mandate of each of the members, the support takes place more at the bilateral level, based on existing bilateral

arrangements between United Nations agencies and African organizations. The members of Rome-based cluster carried out a number of collaborative activities. For example, they contributed to the design and implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

10.   The cluster was very instrumental at the ninth meeting of the RCM by leading the discussions on the food crisis. It also adopted the NEPAD secretariat's strategic plan 2008-2013 as its medium-term business plan.

11.   The environment, population and urbanization Cluster is convened by UNHABITAT. It deals with crosscutting and sectoral issues and assists the AU Commission and other African organizations in the implementation of their environmental population and urbanization policies. Support to AU/NEPAD is provided through individual United Nations agencies organizations. During the last meeting of the cluster organized in Nairobi, members exchanged views on progress made so far in consolidating collaboration among them. They agreed that the major challenge, which is shared by all clusters, is to revitalize the general cluster system itself. Another challenge is the lack of funding to bring policy and capacity-building activities to scale. The cluster, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme and ECA, was instrumental during the ninth meeting of the RCM in the discussion of issues related to climate change.

12.   The governance Cluster is convened by UNDP. The cluster gives high-level advice to the NEPAD secretariat and participates in meeting of the NEPAD Steering Committee, the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, and the Africa Partnership Forum.

13.   The cluster supports the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the APRM process at regional and country levels. It has been making significant contributions in:

(a)   Developing indicators for the review process;

(b)   Developing joint capacity to facilitate national peer review and self-assessment processes;

(c)   Developing a common framework for encouraging different countries to take ownership of the NEPAD and APRM process;

(d)   Supporting local governance structures;

(e)   Supporting capacity-building programmes for national and regional organizations;

(f)   Helping to launch the APRM and implementing country reviews;

(g)   Assisting in the implementation of the APRM Programme of Action in countries and its integration into national development strategies; and

(h)   Providing technical support for developing a monitoring and evaluation system.

14.   The APRM process encourages African countries to promote good governance and create a positive political and economic environment for growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. So far 29 countries have signed up for the APRM and nine of these countries have been reviewed, namely Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. Twenty countries are preparing for the review, namely Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo in West Africa; Ethiopia, Djibouti and the United Republic of Tanzania in East Africa; Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique and Zambia in Southern Africa; Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe in Central Africa;   Egypt and the Sudan in North Africa.

15.   The industry, trade and market access Cluster is convened by United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The cluster developed a business plan to guide its activities, assessed its challenges and agreed that efforts would be made to improve communication within the cluster using existing electronic means. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) proposed to create a website that would facilitate the sharing of information within the cluster. The cluster will hold its meetings once a year prior to the RCM meeting. Cluster members also assisted the African Union Commission in developing the plan of action for the accelerated industrial development of Africa as well as the strategy for its implementation.

16.   ECA is the convener of the RCM cluster on infrastructure, which has four sub-clusters dealing with water, energy, information and communication technology and transport. This cluster participates in the activities of the AUC and the relevant African ministerial conferences and institutions.

17.   In the area of water development, the cluster provided assistance to the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Ministers' Council on Water. It cooperated satisfactorily with the water units of the regional economic communities, the water and sanitation department of the AfDB and the water and energy section of the NEPAD secretariat. The cluster has become a strategic partner of the above-mentioned pan-African institutions and others such as the African Network of Basin Organizations and the African Network on Water. It has also succeeded in aligning its activities with the water and sanitation agendas of the continent's leading institutions in the areas of water and sanitation.

18.   In energy, the development of the UN-Energy/Africa 2008-2009 work programme was informed by the AU and NEPAD priorities. It includes direct assistance to these two bodies, for example, in the formulation of the Africa Energy Vision 2030 (which the AUC leads) and in the provision of capacity-building for regional integration (proposed by the NEPAD secretariat).

19.   In ICT, the cluster made an important contribution to the adoption by the AU of the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) as its ICT action plan for the next 10 years. ARAPKE, which is part of the Ten-Year AU Capacity-Building Programme, was developed by ECA with full support of the cluster members. The European Commission endorsed ARAPKE as its cooperation framework with Africa and subsequently approved funding for three of the ARAPKE projects amounting to $US 9,912,270.00. The approved projects are: (a) the African Internet Exchange System, (b) Harnessing Information and Knowledge for Youth Development project and (c) the African Leadership in ICT Programme. The second major achievement was the

implementation of the goals of the Connect Africa Summit, led by the International Telecommunications Union with involvement of cluster members and the international private sector. The third achievement was the development of harmonized regulatory frameworks and e-strategies for RECs to enable their respective countries to enter the knowledge economy smoothly with compatible standards and guidelines. As a result of these actions model bills and guidelines on ICT have been adopted at REC level, hence eliminating duplication of activities at country level and thus saving resources and time. Furthermore, in the context of ARAPKE, templates for project design and project selection criteria were approved at the regional level, thus facilitating submission of ICT projects to partners worldwide.

20.   The transport sub-cluster continuously supported the AUC in developing a consolidated plan of action for the transport sector in the various modes by making substantive contributions at the conceptualization and formulation stages.

21.   The cluster on peace and security has three sub-clusters, namely peace and security architecture of the AU convened by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, post-conflict reconstruction and development convened by the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees, and human rights, justice and reconciliation convened by the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Department of Political Affairs is the convener of the cluster.

22.   The work of the cluster and its sub-clusters is guided largely by the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU, which is the United Nations and African Union cooperation framework based on the priorities identified by the AUC. The cluster continued supporting the AU in the implementation of its post-conflict reconstruction and development policy and the planned development of an AU humanitarian framework.

23.   A number of specific cluster achievements are mentioned below:

        (a)   Capacity-building: the cluster helped in the establishment of the Panel of the Wise. The Department of Political Affairs has put at the disposal of the AUC an expert to help set up the secretariat for the Panel of the Wise;

        (b)   Provision of material and logistical support: UNHCR seconded a professional staff member and an administrative assistant and provided a driver and vehicle to support activities of the Commission that are closely related with those of the cluster as a whole. The cluster published the AU post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa Policy (one thousand copies) and four other peace and security policy documents believed to contribute greatly to the implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa Policy;

        (c)   Undertaking studies: 12 comprehensive post-conflict country assessment reports were published to facilitate the understanding of post conflict reconstruction and development in Africa challenges in countries emerging from conflict and to provide recommendations for addressing major needs and gaps in peacebuilding. An Africa-wide report on post-conflict reconstruction has been compiled. A peacebuilding practical guidance note has been developed based on the already adopted AU policy on post- conflict reconstruction and development in Africa

and the specific peacebuilding needs of Africa. An Africa-wide report on the peacebuilding challenge in Africa was published by the end of 2008;

(d)   Organization of meetings: The cluster and its sub-cluster have been meeting regularly. They have been working closely with the AUC, following up on their respective programmes of cooperation with the AUC. The AUC is participating more in cluster meetings, and the cluster is exploring the possibility of visiting the RECs in order to spur the active participation of RECs that are not represented in Addis Ababa. The United Nations Department of Political Affairs sends representatives to cluster meetings most of the time; and

(e)   The collaboration with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission was strengthened through the visit to the AU of the former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding support, Ms. Caroline McAskie, and through the launch of the fourth virtual pillar of the United Nations Peacebuilding architecture – the Peacebuilding community of practice.

24.   The science and technology cluster is convened by UNESCO and deals with crosscutting and sectoral issues. All cluster members respect their respective mandates to assist the AU Commission in the implementation of AU policies in science and technology, particularly its Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology. A close look at cluster activities shows that support to the AU/NEPAD is provided through individual United Nations agencies institutions.. For example, UNESCO and UNIDO supported many activities at the level of the AU Commission or the NEPAD secretariat. The current challenge of the cluster is to plan and coordinate United Nations system-wide activities in science and technology in Africa due to the large scope of activities and the diversity of the mandates of the United Nations agencies involved. Developing a consensual framework of joint actions and organizing a planning meeting and sharing responsibility for joint implementation is another challenge. With this realization, the cluster members agreed to identify joint activities for collaboration and coordination. But human and financial resources are recognized as major constraints that need to be overcome for an effective participation of all members in cluster activities and for a more coherent inter-agency collaboration.

25.   The social and human development cluster is convened by the United Nations Population Fund[3]. The cluster developed work plans and action plans jointly with the AUC. Cluster meetings and consultations resulted in a more coherent, coordinated support to the AUC informed by both the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AUC and the AU priorities. There was strong collaboration between the AUC, United Nations agencies and the NEPAD secretariat and reduced duplication of efforts in support of the AUC. The cluster has adopted a three-year business plan and implemented joint activities (meetings on gender; support to AU summits, experts and ministerial meetings in January and July 2008 on thematic areas; joint drafting of policy and issues documents).

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[3] The cluster used to be called the human resources development, employment and HIV-AIDS cluster before it was renamed in July 2008.

26.   All meetings and activities held by the cluster saw strong interaction among cluster members resulting in excellent coordination and collaboration, as in the case of the preparations for the AU Summit on Water. Participation of the AUC, the NEPAD secretariat, the RECs and the AfDB in cluster activities was stronger than ever.

27.   All agencies participating in the cluster, provided substantive human, technical, financial and material support to the AUC. Support to the NEPAD secretariat is provided through joint advocacy, including the promotion of NEPAD as a programme of the AUC. Support to the RECs is provided through joint advocacy, and information-sharing. In terms of inter-cluster collaboration, the sixth African Development Forum, the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights; the Year of the African Youth; and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are good examples of the United Nations system working together with African organizations and advocating social development, peace and security and human rights issues. The cluster has developed a monitoring framework including indicators, criteria and benchmarks used in its business plans. Data and information are available and are used to monitor progress. The cluster also undertook various advocacy and communication activities in support of the AUC and its NEPAD programme.

28.   Achievements at the level of individual clusters are many and have been well articulated above. There is improved communication among United Nations agencies and between agencies and African regional and subregional organizations, and increased participation of these organizations in cluster meetings. Cluster activities are having tangible impact on the implementation of key regional development agenda and on the institutional landscape in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme.

29.   At the level of the RCM, the process has gained an important momentum, which should be sustained, if not enhanced. There is increased and high-level participation of United Nations agencies and African regional and subregional organizations in the RCM process. The chairing of the meetings of the RCM by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations is a major achievement, as is the co-chairing of meetings by African regional and subregional organizations.

2.2   Support to the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union

30.   The Framework Agreement for the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU forms the basis for United Nations and African Union cooperation considering the needs and strategic priorities of the AU. The RCM is the coordination mechanism for the implementation of the framework agreement.

31.   Three RCM meetings (seventh, eighth and ninth) reiterated the commitment of United Nations agencies and organizations to the effective implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU. The meetings recognized the importance of addressing priority needs of the AU Commission within the African Union-United Nations cooperation framework, enhancing AU internal capacity to coordinate support being provided under the programme, and involving the AfDB in the programme.

32.   In this regard, it was recommended to further develop the framework to accommodate existing cooperation and bilateral agreements between United Nations agencies and the AU and to call for stronger leadership on the part of the AU Commission and for the participation of the AfDB in the implementation of the programme.

33.   So far, all efforts are being made to align United Nations cluster activities in support to the AU with the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU, the strategic plans of the AUC and the NEPAD secretariat, and relevant decisions of the AU and RECs and outcomes of AU sectoral ministerial bodies.

34.   But the programme proposed by the AU indicating areas for United Nations support is too broad and incomplete. It is the view of the RCM that it needs to be reviewed and refocused around two or three specific areas. A consultation organized by the RCM secretariat in this regard indicated that there is a need to have further consultations with the AUC to clarify the areas where it requires assistance from the United Nations system. It was felt that a retreat should be organized in this connection.

2.3.   United Nations support at the subregional level through the regional economic communities

35.   The seventh meeting of the RCM emphasized the importance of developing a mechanism for subregional coordination of United Nations support to AU/NEPAD and recommended that ECA, in consultation with other United Nations agencies, the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat, should coordinate discussions on the needs of RECs in order to improve the alignment and targeting of United Nations support to the AU/NEPAD priorities and vision at the subregional level.

36.   The eighth meeting of the RCM recommended that arrangements at the subregional level be promoted, with ECA and the RECs taking the lead. It proposed the review of existing arrangements at the subregional level so as to put in place an institutional framework for collaboration in support of AU and its NEPAD programme at that level.

37.   The RCM secretariat has organized and/or participated in several consultations with a view to responding to the above recommendations. These include:

        (a)   An ad hoc expert group meeting held on 10-11 October 2007 on external review of United Nations system-wide support for the implementation of NEPAD at regional and subregional levels;

        (b)   Discussions at the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meetings of the ECA subregional offices in 2007 and 2008;

        (c)   A commission-wide symposium on ECA support to the AU and NEPAD held on 25 March 2008;

(d)   A review meeting on enhancing the functioning of the RCM in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme held in September 2008. The meeting agreed on the purpose, objectives, value added, outcomes and impact, as well as concrete measures (including the identification of activities, responsible parties and timelines) for establishing sectoral regional coordination mechanisms (SRCM); and

(e)   Consultations with some United Nations agencies and RECs on the possible establishment of these mechanisms.

38.   During the above-mentioned consultations, the following areas were raised as possible challenges that require innovative solutions for the establishment of the SRCMs:

(a)   Mode of working of the SRCM: If United Nations agencies are to be involved in the SRCM, they will have to work around the key priority areas of the RECs with say the International Labour Organization providing leadership over skills building, employment and training issues; UNAIDS on issues of HIV/AIDS; UNCTAD on trade issues,; UNIDO on industrial development; UNDP on social and governance issues; FAO on issues of agriculture and food security, and ECA on matters of regional integration. The challenge here is to effectively coordinate these various contributions in the light of the Secretary-General's call for United Nations agencies and organizations to work as "ONE UN";

(b)   The multi-year programmes: The multi-year programmes, which ECA subregional offices have developed together with the RECs to provide substantive technical support to the RECs based on the latter's priorities, represent one approach of working with the RECs. The subregional offices have signed MoUs to underpin the multi-year programmes, but they do not involve other United Nations agencies and organizations. The programmes need to be aligned with those of other United Nations system-wide programmes, taking into consideration the following factors;

(c)   Mission and mandate of United Nations agencies: United Nations agencies and organizations operate at different levels. Some have regional mandates while others have subregional and/or country-level mandates. These agencies and organizations naturally programme their activities within their organizational missions and mandates and often there is no visible system linking their work with that of others;

(d)   Programme content: There are differences in the content of the work carried out by United Nations agencies and organizations. Some focus on normative issues while others focus on operational matters;

(e)   Programming cycles: The programming cycles are different from organization to organization;

(f)   National coordination structures: The United Nations Country Teams and the Regional Directors Teams are set up to improve operational coherence at the country level. Both of these structures do not drive programmes of a subregional nature and do not have adequate representation;

(g)   Strategic and proactive coordination: The RCM operates as the regional-level consensus-building structure that reports to New York and other intergovernmental organs like the AU. Lessons from the RCM process point to the need to strengthen leadership and capacity to make coordination more effective both at the RCM and at the cluster levels. The Secretary-General's report recommends that ECA should play the role of "coordinating the United Nations system activities for subregional integration". An important issue here is the limited coordination capacity at the RCM secretariat and in the clusters.

(h)   Funding limitations: There are good examples whereby a number of agencies and organizations have made progress in pooling their resources around selected joint projects and programmes that directly respond to the needs of the RECs in the implementation of NEPAD. In the water, infrastructure and environment sectors, United Nations agencies and organizations have merged and pooled their resources to create joint United Nations programmes. But in many other cases, lack of adequate funding limits the capacity and ability of United Nations agencies and organizations to provide more technical assistance and other operational support to African organizations; and

(i)   Monitoring the effectiveness and impact of interventions: The report of the Secretary-General's Panel on International Support to NEPAD emphasizes the need to strengthen the monitoring process. To this end, it stresses the importance of paying attention to the monitoring of outcomes, in addition to policy or programme inputs and processes. Outcome-oriented monitoring additionally assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of programme interventions in creating developmental impact. This justifies the need to clearly identify subregional priority goals for economic integration, the intended outcomes, the role of each implementing United Nations agency and cooperating partner, as well as resource mobilization targets. Similarly, there is a need to clarify the division of labour among the agencies, and to establish a monitoring and evaluation matrix that includes indicators to be used to evaluate programme delivery.

39.   The ECA subregional offices are being strengthened to play a more active role in the activities of the United Nations in their respective subregions. Together with the RECs, they have developed multi-year programmes to provide substantive technical support to the RECs based on the latter's priorities. The multi-year programmes were identified as possible entry points for the establishment of the SRCMs. They provide an important basis for United Nations support to the RECs in the implementation of NEPAD. However, they need to be reviewed to provide an opportunity for further consultation with United Nations agencies and organizations and other stakeholders in order to reach a consensus on all pertinent issues of the SRCMs and ensure their buyin and effective participation.

40.   The review would entail the development of a concept paper to be shared with all concerned United Nations agencies and organizations and other stakeholders. The following are some ideas proposed for the concept paper:

(a)   The proposed SRCMs should be consistent with the mandate that the Secretary-General has given to subregional offices;

(b)   The proposed SRCMs should be aligned with the priorities of the eight subregional groupings recognized by the AU and also address issues of RECs that cut across subregions;

(c)   The structure of the proposed SRCMs should replicate the RCM i.e. be based on a cluster approach, which includes all agencies at the subregional level and the clusters defined by the priority areas of the programme of work of the RECs;

(d)   The multi-year programmes should be framed as multi-year and multi-partner rolling programmes owned by the RECs with different United Nations agencies taking the lead in areas where they have comparative advantages and all of them working in a coordinated manner and creating synergies between them;

(e)   ECA, through its subregional offices should be the strategic coordinator of the proposed subregional mechanism, while the other agencies could lead or coordinate clusters based on their respective comparative advantages;

(f)   All participating stakeholders should be allocated clear tasks and responsibilities within the proposed SRCMs, based on clear sector mandates that address regional or transboundary development concerns;

(g)   ECA subregional offices should participate in cluster activities based on their expertise;

(h)   Other United Nations agencies should provide leadership for clusters based on their comparative advantages, and participate in cluster activities based on their expertise;

(i)   The RECs should provide political and strategic leadership, establish programme priorities and ensure that the operational activities of the United Nations system are aligned to their programmes and priorities;

(j)   The AfDB should participate in cluster activities, assist in funding activities and support technical programmes based on its areas of work and comparative advantages and participate in capacity-building programmes;

(k)   United Nations agencies and organizations should commit adequate resources to selected joint projects and programmes that directly respond to the needs of the RECs in the implementation of NEPAD; and

(l)   Monitoring and evaluation processes and reporting mechanisms should be developed with specific indicators for measuring results and achievements.

41.   A meeting should be convened for all parties to discuss the concept note and agree on the modalities of establishing the SRCMs;

42.   The SRCMs, once established, would enhance the support by the United Nations system organizations to the RECs by mainstreaming into their activities the regional integration priorities of

the RECs. It would also ensure an effective linkage between regional agreements and initiatives and national priorities and actions, and would help address the regional integration agenda of AU. It is therefore incumbent upon all concerned to bring the SRCM to fruition.

3. ECA support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme

3.1. General support

43.   ECA has put in place a structure - the RCM secretariat - dedicated to the coordination of United Nations support to the AU and NEPAD. This structure has been quite proactive in following up on the implementation of RCM recommendations and facilitating networking and consultations. The overall coordination of United Nations support to the AU and its NEPAD programme has been enhanced and strengthened. The RCM process has gained an important momentum following a decision reached at the ninth meeting of the RCM to shift its focus from consultation to coordination.

44.   The RCM secretariat continues to provide significant institutional support to the RCM process. As part of its routine activities, it organizes RCM meetings in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and organizations (see section 2 above for outcomes of the RCM meetings). It continues to backstop cluster meetings for improved coordination within clusters and better alignment of cluster activities with the priorities of the AU and its NEPAD programme to achieve tangible outcomes. It provides updates on RCM activities and clarifications on the implementation of the recommendations of RCM meetings. It also shares the minutes of cluster meetings with all United Nations agencies and African regional and subregional organizations participating in the RCM to facilitate information flow.

45.   The secretariat carries out other follow-up activities, as necessary. For example, as mandated by the eighth meeting of the RCM, the secretariat assisted cluster coordinators to prepare their respective business plans. It prepared a sample outline of a business plan and sent it to all cluster coordinators for the preparation of their business plans. Once all clusters submit their business plans, the latter will be consolidated into one RCM business plan with the aim of promoting joint planning, programming and budgeting, providing a clear direction as to where the RCM is heading, promoting accountability and sharing of responsibilities and facilitating the mobilization of resources and enhancing delivery and impact of the RCM.

46.   In the runup to the ninth meeting of the RCM, the RCM secretariat invited all cluster coordinators to organize pre-RCM cluster meetings on 20 October 2008 to enable them to discuss issues of common interest and prepare their participation in the ninth meeting of the RCM. Cluster coordinators were encouraged to invite all cluster members, including the AU Commission, the NEPAD secretariat, the RECs and the AfDB to the meetings. This pre-RCM cluster meeting proved to be useful in coordinating intra-cluster activities. The clusters have requested the RCM secretariat to continue organizing such meetings.

47.   As part of its communication and advocacy activities, the RCM secretariat has launched a knowledge management platform principally as a knowledge repository and a forum for sharing and consolidating knowledge and information relevant to the RCM. It has also prepared a booklet entitled "Delivering as One for Africa", reflecting the functioning of the RCM, as well as the activities and achievements of the nine thematic clusters in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme. The secretariat prepared and presented a report on United Nations system-wide support to the AU and its NEPAD programme to the meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Joint Annual Meetings of the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The secretariat also prepared a report on the same and presented it to the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICEs) meetings of the five subregional offices of ECA. The reports were well received and elicited recommendations on enhancing coordination of United Nations support to the AU and its NEPAD programme. The secretariat also prepared the contribution of ECA to the report of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa on its support to NEPAD and to regional and subregional organizations for submission to the Committee for Programming and Coordination, and to the General Assembly.

48.   An important activity of the RCM secretariat is the review meeting on "measures to enhance the regional consultation mechanism of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme" that took place on 16 and 17 September 2008 at the ECA headquarters. Many representatives of the AU Commission, the RECs, and the AfDB attended the meeting and played a leadership role in its deliberations.

49.   The meeting, which was requested by the eighth meeting of the RCM, examined the following issues:

(a)   Alignment of the cluster system with AU and NEPAD priorities;

(b)   Measures for strengthening cooperation and collaboration at the regional level;

(c)   Measures for strengthening cooperation and collaboration at the subregional level;

(d)   Resource mobilization for the sustainable financing of the RCM; and

(e)   Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system.

50.   In terms of achievement, the RCM secretariat (as the strategic coordinator of the RCM) has been quite proactive in following up on the implementation of RCM meeting recommendations and facilitating networking and consultations.

3.2.   Support to the African peer review mechanism process

51.   ECA was designated as a strategic partner institution for the NEPAD/APRM process, along with the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the onset of the APRM in 2002. The mandate of ECA is outlined in paragraph 6.2 of the NEPAD document entitled "APRM: Organization and Processes"

(NEPAD/HSGIC-3-003/APRM/Guideline/O&P) dated 9 March 2003, which states: *"The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been requested to conduct technical assessments in economic governance and management and the African Development Bank in banking and financial standards."* At the conceptual stage, each strategic partner institution was responsible for one substantive area of the four pillars of the APRM. However, due to increased demands from the APRM secretariat and the ECA repositioning exercise, expertise in the other thematic areas of socio-economic development and political governance has been provided by ECA. In addition, ECA has been supporting participating countries in mobilizing stakeholder participation and fostering peer learning among APRM countries. Finally, analytical work of ECA has focused on identifying best practices of the APRM process. The Commission has also provided technical assistance in the integration of the APRM into existing national development strategies.

ECA contributions to date

52. **Participating in five stages of the APRM**: Since 2003, ECA has been providing extensive technical and material support to the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons, the APRM secretariat and the APRM participating countries at each of the five stages of the review process. It provides assistance for country support missions drafting of background documents, country review visits, drafting of country reports, drafting of final country reports and and publication of country review reports and national programmes of action.

53. **Providing guidance for implementation of national programmes of action**: The ultimate strength of the APRM process depends on the quality of policymaking recommendations that goes into the programme of action. The primary purpose of the national programme of action is to guide and mobilize the country's efforts to improve its state of governance and socio-economic development. In line with its analytical and advocacy work in support of the APRM, ECA is undertaking analytical studies in the APRM countries that have completed the process, to investigate the programmatic and budgetary links between the APRM programme of action and the other existing national development strategies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The overall objective is to avoid duplication or parallel strategies that may weaken the value added of the APRM process. In the context of limited domestic resources mobilization and high donor dependency of most African countries, it has became obvious that the success of the national programmes of action depends on their alignment with national strategic programmes in order to avoid national budgets being stretched and costs being duplicated. Based on lessons learned and best practices from these studies, ECA will develop training manuals and, organize peer learning sessions to guide countries at the critical stage of implementation of national progrmme of action.

54. **Building the capacity of key stakeholders.** Realizing that the key to increasing stakeholder capacity and participation in the APRM process lies in sharing of best practices and distilling of key lessons from the pioneer countries, ECA has been facilitating workshops, seminars and brainstorming sessions for stakeholders such as civil society organizations, national, regional and continental parliamentarians, as well as African research institutions. These workshops have enhanced the participation of civil society organizations in the process and encouraged the creation of a pan-African network of civil society organizations collaborating on the APRM and governance issues. They have also deepened the understanding of parliamentarians of their central role in the APRM process and helped African research institutions chart a strategic research agenda in support

of the APRM. These activities have contributed to the effective implementation of the APRM process in participating countries, as well as accelerate the adherence of the countries that have not yet adhered to the process.

55. **Database for APRM pool of experts.** As a part of the ECA mandate to contribute to the institutionalization of the APRM process, the Commission has established an information database on participating APRM countries to support the country review process. The database draws on the Commission's work on governance, economic performance, poverty assessments, trade competitiveness, gender-sensitive indexing and other indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the ECA has developed a database of African experts and the Diaspora on governance, to help the APRM continental secretariat in identifying competent independent African experts in all areas of governance for the country review missions. The development data are provided to the APRM secretariat and participating countries upon request. The ECA governance expert database, which is an ongoing work, contains about 250 African professional profiles.

56. **ECA continued support for the African peer review mechanism process as follows:**

(a) ECA will continue to provide technical expertise to the APRM secretariat during the country support missions and country review missions;

(b) ECA will tailor its analytical support to the needs and priorities of member States as identified through the country review reports, and will work with the APRM secretariat and other strategic partners to deepen the analysis of governance challenges; identified as crosscutting issues confronting African States. In this regard, ECA will align its flagship report, the African Governance Report, to the thematic issues arising from the APRM reports;

(c) In the preparation for the second-generation APRM country review reports, ECA will partner with relevant stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the national programmes of action with a view to identifying the outstanding implementation issues that will provide the basis for the second round of reviews in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa. This exercise will provide a strategic focus for the next round of reviews which will build on the baseline reports;

(d) In collaboration with other strategic partners, particularly AfDB, ECA will use the newly launched Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CODA) to engage African stakeholders and development partners by providing a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas on mobilizing the support of political and external development partners for the implementation of the national programmes of action of the APRM. The objective is to provide the parameters and framework for engaging external development partners in support of the national programmes of action; and

(e) ECA, together with the APRM secretariat and other strategic partners, will continue to support the country process by organizing peer learning workshops for stakeholders, including civil society, private businesses members of national parliaments and the pan- African parliament, and national focal points.

4.   Report of the ninth meeting of the regional coordination mechanism

57.   RCM meetings have become important annual events. The ninth meeting of the RCM took place on 21 and 22 October 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, chaired by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General. It attracted 197 participants, including the Chairperson of the AUC, accompanied by a good number of AUC Commissioners, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, regional directors and heads of United Nations agencies and organizations, the Head of the NEPAD secretariat, as well as representatives of the RECs and other African organizations.

58.   The meeting focused on two important topical subjects, namely the food crisis and climate change.

4.1   United Nations coordinated response to the food crisis challenge in Africa

59.   The United Nations agencies agreed to take, in the context of the RCM, all necessary measures to help address the food crisis challenge in Africa. In this regard, the meeting called for a United Nations system-wide effort to support the implementation of existing strategic plans designed to boost Africa's food and agriculture sector. This would be done in an integrated manner and taking into consideration the many different aspects of the food situation, including the regional integration and advocacy and communication dimensions, nutritional requirements, and the concept of food availability as a human rights issue.

4.2   United Nations support to climate-related actions at the regional level

60.   The meeting also recognized the grave danger posed by climate change to the fragile economies of African countries in particular and to the world as a whole, and readily embraced the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for the United Nations system to play a major and vanguard role in addressing this global challenge. The RCM was apprized of a number of initiatives and steps already developed or put forward by African political leaders and stakeholders towards meeting the challenges of climate change in Africa. The RCM was also informed of a major multi-stakeholder project, the African Climate Policy Centre, to be based at ECA, designed to provide policy, analytical and capacity-building support to African countries on climate change. The RCM took cognizance of all these planned and ongoing efforts, and resolved to mainstream climate change issues into the work and activities of all the clusters of the RCM. The cluster on environment, population and urbanization was entrusted with the responsibility of catalyzing and coordinating the RCM interventions and support in this area, in close collaboration with the African climate policy centre. ECA was also entrusted with the responsibility of reporting to the United Nations Chief Executives Board on behalf of the RCM on climate change matters.

4.3   Outcomes and impact of the cluster system of the regional consultation mechanism

61.   The meeting reiterated the importance of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the RCM in providing multi-sectoral and coordinated support to the African Union and its NEPAD

programme. In this regard, the meeting endorsed most of the recommendations contained in the report of the review meeting that sought to evaluate the operations of the RCM and the cluster arrangement and make appropriate recommendations for strengthening it.

62.   The meeting resolved to maintain the current configuration of nine core clusters and to change the appellation of the RCM from regional consultation mechanism to regional coordination mechanism.

63.   It also resolved to respect the principle of delivering as one, and to strengthen the RCM secretariat at ECA. In this regard, pledges to provide support for the functioning of the RCM secretariat were made by various agencies.

64.   The AUC and the RECs reaffirmed their commitment to and engagement in the RCM process.

4.4   Recommendations of the ninth meeting of the regional consultation mechanism

65.   The recommendations of the ninth meting of the RCM are as follows:

(a)   Increase United Nations coordination in addressing the food crisis challenge in Africa;

(b)   Increase United Nations support to climate-related actions at the regional level;

(c)   Strengthen coordination and collaboration between United Nations agencies and African organizations and among United Nations agencies at the regional and subregional levels to ensure that the objective of delivering as one is met;

(d)   Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the cluster system;

(e)   Institutionalize subregional coordination of United Nations support to the AU and its NEPAD programme; and

(f)   Mobilize resources and enhance capacity.

5.   Lessons learned and the way forward

66.   Increased commitment and institutional leadership are essential to sustain the existing momentum and intensify support to the AU and its NEPAD programme for maximum impact. Participating United Nations agencies and African regional and subregional organizations should make the RCM a sustainable mechanism by showing more commitment to the RCM process and ensuring that desirable outcomes and impacts are registered.

67.   The smooth integration of NEPAD into AU structures and processes would ensure continuity and better coordination in the implementation of cluster activities. The RCM and its clusters should play a role in facilitating this integration.

68.   A retreat should be organized very soon for consultation between the United Nations system and the AUC leadership to discuss the specific areas where AU requires assistance from the United Nations system in the context of the RCM, to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU, and to provide the leadership and oversight needed for the implementation of RCM recommendations.