



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

The Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

Committee of Experts Meeting

Statement

By

Dr. Abdalla Hamdok

Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist

UN Economic Commission for Africa

Thursday, 31 March 2016

Economic Commission for Africa Conference Centre

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Hamisi Mwinyimvua, Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Committees of Experts

Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner, Economic Affairs, AUC

Representative of the Government of Ethiopia

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure and an honour to welcome you all to the beautiful city of Addis Ababa, the capital of Africa and to the Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

As the capital of one of the fastest growing economies globally, Addis Ababa stands as an inspiring host on the pathway to ground our discussions and provide high-level guidance for the work of our Ministers in view of the upcoming Ministerial segment. Indeed, in the next two days, our task is to contribute our collective thinking to elaborate a continental unified approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also required to provide guidance on mechanisms for the adoption and successful integration of the first ten-year implementation plan at the national, regional and continental levels.

As you are aware, it is through consultative processes among African people, Pan-African institutions and the leadership of the continent, that Agenda 2063 has been developed and adopted as the continental, sequenced, forward-looking vision for the

next fifty years. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at the global level.

It is against this backdrop that African countries are actually confronted with a dual transition. While at the continental level, it is the transition to Agenda 2063 and its first ten-year implementation plan; at the global level, the transition is from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both frameworks being informed by Africa's priorities and aspirations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be viewed as an attempt to respond to the global dimensions of Africa's development challenges, while Agenda 2063 stands as a response to the continent-specific development challenges and aspirations, much of which overlaps. Henceforth, a shared understanding of the continental and global frameworks and their mutual relevance to national development and the relationship and synergies across the agendas is vital for their effective implementation. Needless to say that the synergies provide an opportunity to implement the two agendas without unduly burdening policymakers with multiple development frameworks, while minimising related coordination challenges.

This explains the choice by AUC and ECA of the theme of this meeting: *“Towards an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals”*. I remain confident, looking across the hall and at the impressive pool of knowledgeable policymakers present here today, that we are ready to engage constructively and hold thought-provoking discussions that will present our Ministers with several suggestions on strategies for effectively fast-tracking implementation of our collective vision for the continent. Permit me to caution that such strategies should not only focus on

expediting the promotion of strong and sustainable long-term growth but also ensuring that the benefits of such growth are widely shared in order to reduce poverty and improve the standards of living for all Africans.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa's growth rate declined slightly from 3.9 per cent in 2014 to 3.7 per cent in 2015 following the slowdown in the global economy, the continent's economic growth being mainly associated with increased exploitation of non-renewable natural resources with minimal value addition and employment generation.

However, Africa's growth has continued to rank as the second fastest after East and South Asia over the last decade, driven by domestic demand and continued investment, particularly on infrastructure projects. While increased consumer confidence and an expanding middle class on the continent continues to influence growth in private consumption, investment remain driven mainly by an improved business environment and lower costs of doing business. Even so, the number of Africans in absolute poverty is still high and inequality remains a major concern as growth in many African countries has not been inclusive.

This should add momentum to the ongoing critical call for Africa's structural transformation and efforts to enhance trade, create jobs and increase income for our people by way of product diversification and value addition underpinned by industrialization. Furthermore, current global economic slowdown underscores the need for Africa to also figure out how it could extract more value from its global trade and other economic activities, in light of its continued exportation of commodities. As

the diversification of trade patterns can contribute to improve resilience to external shocks, African countries should seek to enhance intra-African trade by also strengthening regional integration, lowering the cost of trade, and making a strong commitment to the continental free trade area that is under negotiation.

Considering that both agendas 2063 and 2030 place sustainability at the centre stage in the process of industrialization, environmental standards should be given due attention and not seen as an obstacle to competitiveness, but as a potential driver of growth. This calls for Africa to improve its resilience to both environmental and socioeconomic shocks, manage its natural capital and minimize pollution, all of which can be achieved by greening its industrialization process. For too long, the continent's industrialization and broader development has been held back by erratic energy supplies. The importance of reliable and sustainable energy sources for structural transformation cannot be overemphasized. Africa must tap into and use renewable energy resources to avoid the mistake that developed countries made by not taking into consideration renewable energy issues. In this context, the 2016 ECA Economic Report on Africa has identified "Greening Africa's Industrialisation" as an imperative and as the surest pathway to inclusive prosperity on the African continent.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

During 2015 ECA has contributed to many processes and activities in the interest of Africa's development. Let me highlight some of them: Through ECA's partnership with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, we have come up with the Africa Regional Integration Index, an action tool measuring the

progress of Africa on the integration process. The index will be launched during this conference.

#

Given the centrality of development planning in Africa's transformation agenda, ECA continued to provide planning and forecasting support services to member states. Equally important are the efforts ECA is making towards harnessing data revolution, for proper long term planning as well as addressing the African narrative.

In recognition of the strong nexus between governance and development, the forthcoming special edition of the African Governance Report IV (AGR) titled "Measuring corruption in Africa: the international dimension matters", that ECA has prepared and plans to launch during this conference. It focuses on the importance of measuring corruption and understanding its international dimension.

In the context of providing capacity development services to member states and regional and sub-regional institutions, permit me to indicate that ECA activities included building the capacity of African negotiators for countries to get better deals from mining and natural resources contracts.

Given the potential contribution of migration to the structural transformation and regional integration of Africa, the Tenth Africa Development Forum taking place during the last quarter of this year will discuss issues pertaining to "Migration and Youth". Therefore, we are expecting the Forum will be able to deliver clear outcomes and new ideas on the way forward to significantly make migration work for Africa's transformation.

Another major publication is the country profiles. As we are publishing 20 country profiles produced jointly by the SROs and HQ divisions. These profiles are intended to contribute to analytical work and enhance policy-making and advice.

Finally, among the activities undertaken by the Commission, allow me to mention our continuous support to the advocacy work both regionally and globally led by the Chair of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) from Africa, H.E. Thabo Mbeki, Former President of the Republic of South Africa, as he has been mandated by the 24th AU Assembly of Heads of States and Governments to lead such activities. So far, the High Level Panel has conducted such advocacy visits and activities in Africa and beyond, reaching out to representatives from Government, private sector, civil society, academia, partners, international organizations and institutions.

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

As I mentioned at the beginning of my intervention, our expectations are that we would be able to engage in very fruitful discussions in the coming days and deliver actionable recommendations a continental unified approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063, the first ten-year implementation plan and the Sustainable Development Goals; and, on the provision of guidance on mechanisms for the adoption and successful integration of the first ten-year implementation plan at the national, regional and continental levels.

Let us work collectively to yield concrete proposals, thus, establishing the conditions that allow for the successful outcome of this Conference.

I thank you for your kind attention.