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Briefing note [final version]

Global and continental frameworks: implications for Africa

Context

1. Despite having baseline figures on most Millennium Development Goal indicators that were relatively low compared to other regions, Africa made considerable progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including in terms of placing more children in primary school, bridging the gender gap in primary school enrolment, increasing the representation of women in national parliaments and reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. These achievements underscored the importance of making national commitments and forging global partnerships in order to realize development objectives. Overall, in 2015 Africa was on track to attain three of the eight Millennium Development Goals: Goal 2, on achieving universal primary education, Goal 3, on promoting gender equality and empowering women, and Goal 6, on combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases.¹

2. Nonetheless, Africa's progress in reducing poverty has been slow compared to that of other developing regions. Africa excluding North Africa reduced poverty levels from 56.5 per cent in 1990 to 48.4 per cent in 2010 (a 14.33 per cent reduction), which falls far short of the target of 28.25 per cent by 2015. Efforts at the country level vary, with some countries reducing poverty at much faster rates than others.

¹ Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, African Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme, *MDG Report 2015: Lessons Learned in Implementing the MDGs — Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals* (2015, Addis Ababa).

Tunisia, Egypt, South Africa, Botswana, Guinea, Namibia and Swaziland reduced poverty by more than half (over 50 per cent) from 1990 to 2011. Several countries were very close to reaching the target during the same period, while poverty rates increased in eight countries.

3. Notwithstanding positive trends in respect of the Millennium Development Goals, Africa's aspiration for an inclusive structural transformation that is underpinned by commodity-based industrialization remains largely unmet. At the economic level, the gross domestic product (GDP) of most African countries is dominated by the services and agricultural sectors, with marginal contributions from the manufacturing sector. As a result, most African economies are aid-dependent, undiversified and hence vulnerable to shocks. While real GDP growth has been positive, averaging 5 per cent, it remains below the 7 per cent benchmark generally considered necessary for the eradication of extreme poverty. Furthermore, the positive growth record masks the continued depletion of the natural resource base as measured by the adjusted net savings indicator.²

4. On the social front, notwithstanding improvements in access to primary education and health services, the quality of service delivery remains a concern, as evidenced, in part, by the relatively high levels of maternal and child deaths. Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation is low and characterized by rural-urban disparities and significant variations in performance between North Africa and the rest of the continent. Furthermore, social exclusion as reflected in declining but high levels of spatial and horizontal inequalities in income and access to basic social services remains a challenge.³ Underpinning these challenges is the continent's vulnerability to environmental hazards and stresses, which have been heightened by climate change.

5. Thus, the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa centres on improving the quality of social service delivery; narrowing inequalities; strengthening the economies of African countries to generate employment, including through structural transformation and industrial development; and enhancing capacities and resilience to environmental hazards, including those stemming from climate change.

6. It is against this backdrop that Agenda 2063 (the continental framework for development), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the global development agenda) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (which supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) were adopted in 2015.

7. Agenda 2063⁴ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (which contains the Sustainable Development Goals)⁵ frame the global response to the fundamental challenges facing the world today and signal a two-pronged transition: a transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the 2030 Agenda for the world and a transition from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plan for the continent. Both transitions

² Adjusted net savings are equal to net national savings plus education expenditure and minus energy depletion, mineral depletion, net forest depletion and carbon dioxide. This series excludes particulate emissions damage. See Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Environment Programme, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat, *Managing Africa's Natural Resource Base for Sustainable Growth and Development: Sustainable Development Report on Africa IV* (2013, Addis Ababa).

³ Bartholomew Armah and others, *Structural Transformation for Inclusive Development in Africa: The Role of Active Government Policies* (2015, Society for International Development).

⁴ Agenda 2063 is a 50-year transformation framework that is being implemented through five 10-year implementation plans, the first of which covers the period 2013-2023.

⁵ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an attempt to respond to the global dimensions of Africa's development challenges. This, therefore, means that the Sustainable Development Goals can be considered as a subset of Agenda 2063, as they will be implemented over the 15-year period leading to 2030.

must be effectively coordinated to ensure coherence in implementation follow-up and review.

Lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals experience

8. The Millennium Development Goals galvanized the international community and resources around a core set of global issues, including poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS and maternal and child health. Over a 15-year period, the world witnessed unprecedented declines in poverty, significant reductions in maternal and child deaths, improvements in primary school enrolment and reversals in malaria-, tuberculosis- and HIV-related deaths. Regardless of the performance of African countries, the lessons from the Millennium Development Goal experience are invaluable.¹

Measuring effort

9. An often-overlooked issue in the assessment of Millennium Development Goal performance is the role of initial conditions in influencing the character and pace of a country's progress or lack thereof in achieving the targets. For African countries in particular, which were furthest from the targets at the inception of the journey, merely focusing on the failure to achieve a given target obscured the significant effort and progress made relative to the initial conditions. In effect, the metric for assessing performance should not only be proximity to a specific target, but it should also take into account the pace of progress relative to a country's baseline.

Messaging and communication

10. The Millennium Development Goal experience highlighted the importance of communication and follow-up. Effective communication at the national, continental and global levels, including through regional and national reporting, mobilized civil society and helped sustain competitive pressure on Governments to fulfil their social compacts. Well-performing countries unwittingly encouraged weaker performers through a spirit of positive competition.

Demand for data

11. The data requirements of the Millennium Development Goals were considerable at the time of their implementation and few would have thought that Governments would be up to the task of tracking progress on the Goals, targets and indicators. Nevertheless, the goodwill of Governments to demonstrate results and of stakeholders to track performance invariably resulted in a demand for data, which in turn encouraged investments in data collection and dissemination by Governments and development partners.

Social services: balancing access with quality

12. The Millennium Development Goals have resulted in significant improvements in access to basic social services, including primary education, health, water and sanitation. However, the Goals have also demonstrated that increasing access to social services without making corresponding investments in infrastructure and skilled service providers can compromise the quality of the services. For example, while access to primary schools has increased significantly, a third of pupils drop out and literacy rates in Africa lag behind the global average, reflecting in part quality constraints in service delivery.

13. Only three African countries (Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea) met the Millennium Development Goal on reducing maternal deaths by 75 per cent or more. Low performance can be attributed in part to limited access to skilled birth attendants in Africa. On average, 68 per cent of the population has access to skilled birth attendants compared to an average of 79 per cent in South-East Asia.¹

Tackling the drivers of underdevelopment

14. The Millennium Development Goals laid bare the limitation of focusing exclusively on social interventions without addressing the other dimensions of underdevelopment. The limited focus on the economic and environmental drivers of underdevelopment, such as primary commodity dependence, weak infrastructure and limited capacities for scientific and technological innovation, made the initiative vulnerable to shocks and reversals, aid-dependent and consequently unsustainable.

Arming policymakers with the means of implementation

15. The Millennium Development Goals have also heightened awareness about the need for global agendas to be underpinned by a credible means of implementation. In the absence of such institutional arrangements, accountability is weak and implementation is vulnerable to resource shortfalls.

Breaking the silos and leveraging synergies

16. Country experiences have demonstrated that a silo approach could not result in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Given the synergies among the Goals, an important lesson has been that focusing on development initiatives that have the greatest knock-on effects heightens impact.

17. In this context, prioritizing effective, low-cost interventions that focus on vulnerable and at-risk groups, including women and people living in rural areas, can lead to progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and Agenda 2063: issues, challenges and opportunities for structural transformation in Africa

18. Recent developments at the global and regional levels point to an increasingly supportive environment for sustainable development in Africa. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda have committed the international community to a set of global interventions aimed at promoting sustainable development. Similarly, the agreements reached at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change, held in Paris in December 2015, have heightened awareness about the environmental fallouts of the current global growth trajectory and mobilized the international community around a set of concrete measures that aim to strengthen resilience to climate change and are therefore supportive of the continent's agenda for structural transformation.

Key issues and outcomes of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

19. The signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda identified their task as threefold: to follow up on commitments and assess the progress made in the

implementation of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development; to further strengthen the framework for financing sustainable development and the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda; and to reinvigorate and strengthen the financing for development follow-up process to ensure that the actions and commitments are implemented and reviewed in an appropriate, inclusive, timely and transparent manner (see General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex, para. 2). The intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda were protracted, with developed and developing countries disagreeing on the following key issues: appropriate measures to strengthen domestic resource mobilization; how to increase remittance flows to developing countries; measures to reduce illicit financial outflows; how to address the infrastructure financing gap, including for energy-related infrastructure; measures to enhance science, technology and innovation in developing countries; fulfilling existing official development assistance (ODA) commitments and further increasing ODA, particularly for least developed countries; decoupling ODA from climate financing; and boosting investments in social services and access to social insurance.

20. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda contains a number of key concrete commitments that are of vital importance to Africa. Four of those commitments (on energy, illicit financial flows, remittances and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism) have concrete targets and timelines and hence lend themselves to effective follow-up. Twelve of the commitments are broad statements of intent with virtually no timelines. Two key issues of importance to Africa (taxes and ODA), fall below expectations in terms of the scope and the level of the commitments. Another two key issues (the greening of ODA and common but differentiated responsibilities), are not addressed in the document.

Concrete outcomes of relevance to Africa

Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and other key African initiatives

21. The signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda expressed support for Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plan. In addition, they took note of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and said they would provide support for countries to translate plans into concrete project pipelines, project implementation, feasibility studies, the negotiation of complex contracts and project management (*ibid.*, paras. 8 and 47).

22. With respect to environmental sustainability, the signatories committed to supporting initiatives such as the African Union Great Green Wall Initiative, which is aimed at advancing conservation and restoration of ecosystems, welcomed the NEPAD Africa Power Vision, and committed to substantially increasing the share of renewable energy and doubling the global rate of energy efficiency and conservation, with the aim of ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable modern and sustainable energy services for all by 2030 (*ibid.*, paras. 49 and 63).

Support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism

23. The signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda decided to establish the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and to launch it during the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in New York in September 2015. They also decided that the Mechanism would be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders, and that it would comprise a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Goals and an online platform

(ibid., para. 123). Support for the proposed technology bank for least developed countries is, however, conditional on the findings and recommendations of the task team appointed by the Secretary-General to work on that issue.

Curbing illicit financial flows

24. The signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda expressed their intention to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them (ibid., para. 23). Measures to achieve this objective include strengthened national regulations and international cooperation to combat tax evasion. In the case of Africa, estimates provided by studies on this subject can serve as a baseline for follow-up. Nevertheless, in the absence of an institutionalized tracking mechanism, it will be difficult to measure progress. Moreover, the reluctance of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to assume responsibility for tracking and publishing information on such flows is problematic. The Economic Commission for Africa should, through its project on illicit financial flows, consider taking on this responsibility on behalf of Africa.

Failure to upgrade the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

25. Despite efforts by the Group of 77 and China to promote greater involvement by States in the international tax norm-setting process, the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters was not upgraded to an intergovernmental body. By way of compromise, the Committee will be strengthened by increasing the frequency of its meetings to two sessions per year, with a duration of four working days each, and by increasing the engagement of the Committee with the Economic and Social Council through the special meeting on international cooperation in tax matters, with a view to enhancing intergovernmental consideration of tax issues (ibid., para 29). On tax evasion and avoidance, the signatories made a number of commitments without specifying targets and timelines. For instance, they committed to ensuring that all companies, including multinationals, pay taxes to the Governments of countries where economic activity occurs and value is created, in accordance with national and international laws and policies (ibid., para. 23).

Reducing the cost of remittances and highlighting the positive role of migrants

26. The signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda committed to lowering the average cost of remittances to less than 3 per cent of the value of the transfer by 2030 and to ensuring that remittance costs are no higher than 5 per cent in high-cost corridors (ibid., para 40). This proposal will likely boost remittance flows to developing countries. Furthermore, the fact that a specific timeline has been identified means that follow-up is possible.

Support for infrastructure development and for inclusive and sustainable industrialization

27. The signatories committed to establishing a global forum to bridge the infrastructure gap by coordinating and ensuring coherence across existing infrastructure initiatives. The absence of a timeline for the operationalization of this initiative, however, will pose a challenge for the follow-up process. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether the coordination role of the forum will be sufficient to bridge the infrastructure gap (ibid., para 14). The signatories also committed to investing in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development as a means to spur growth and employment. No specific resource commitments were linked to this commitment.

Commitment to enhancing access and quality of social services

Ending poverty and assuring the right to development

28. The signatories' overarching commitment to ending poverty as opposed to ending extreme poverty is viewed as a victory for developing countries, which were opposed to the latter objective as not sufficiently ambitious. The signatories also committed to respecting the right to development, as proposed by the Group of 77 and China (ibid., para. 1).

Improving access to social protection

29. The signatories committed to supporting the provision of fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, with a particular focus on the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society, and to doing so by exploring coherent funding modalities to mobilize additional resources (ibid., para. 12). No specific timeline is associated with this commitment.

Ending hunger and malnutrition

30. To end hunger and malnutrition, the signatories committed to encouraging increased private and public investments in financing research, infrastructure and pro-poor initiatives (ibid., para. 13). Food security initiatives will target smallholders and women farmers, as well as cooperatives and farmer networks.

Strengthening education

31. The signatories committed to upgrading education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and to increasing the percentage of qualified teachers in developing countries, including through international cooperation, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States (ibid., para. 78). No specific resource targets or timelines are associated with this commitment.

Strengthening financial literacy and inclusion

32. The signatories called on partners to work towards improving financial literacy and inclusion for all, including by adopting and or reviewing financial inclusion strategies, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and promoting financial inclusion as a policy objective in financial regulation (ibid., para. 39).

Commitment to improving the policy framework on official development assistance

33. Development partners merely reaffirmed their existing commitments, including their commitment to achieving 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) and 0.15-0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries. With the exception of the European Union, no development partner has provided a timeline. The European Union reaffirms its collective commitment to achieving the 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI target within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda and undertakes to meet collectively the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries in the short term and to reach 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda (ibid., para. 51). The latter time frame is obviously problematic since effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in least developed countries will depend on the timing of ODA disbursements.

34. Notwithstanding the lack of time-bound commitments in this area, there is a policy commitment to improving the predictability and effectiveness of aid by providing developing countries with regular and timely indicative information on planned support in the medium term (*ibid.*, para. 57).

Support to least developed countries

35. The signatories acknowledged the importance of sustaining support for countries graduating from least developed country status (*ibid.*, paras. 72-73).

Reversing the decline in official development assistance to least developed countries

36. ODA to least developed countries has been on the decline in recent years. While development partners have committed to reversing that decline, no indicative timeline has been specified. Furthermore, contrary to the proposal made by least developed countries, there is no firm commitment to allocate 50 per cent of ODA to such countries. The signatories merely stated that they were encouraged by those who are allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to least developed countries (*ibid.*, para. 52).

Strengthening capacities for trade

37. The signatories committed to supporting capacity-building, including through bilateral and multilateral channels, in particular to least developed countries, so that they may benefit from opportunities in international trade and investment agreements (*ibid.*, para. 91).

Decoupling official development assistance from climate financing

38. Developing countries had argued, during the intergovernmental negotiation process, for a decoupling of climate financing from ODA. They argued that, unlike ODA, climate financing was an obligation of developed countries arising from their significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. However, the issue of double counting climate financing as ODA is not discussed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Common but differentiated responsibilities

39. The Group of 77 and China called for a broader application of the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities. It argued that that concept should not be restricted to the environmental dimension of sustainable development given that, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, a call had been made for a multidimensional definition of sustainability that included the economic and social dimensions. The implication of the Group's position on this issue is that the levels of contributions made by countries to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda should be conditional on their levels of development and on their capacities and resources. Developed countries, on the other hand, advocated a concept of shared responsibilities based on the notion that the world has changed considerably and that the traditional notion of a North-South divide is no longer relevant.

40. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda only made reference to common but differentiated responsibilities in the context of environmental sustainability, which falls short of the proposal made by the Group of 77 and China to integrate the principle in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Support for debt relief

41. The signatories encouraged initiatives to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability and to assist heavily indebted poor countries

eligible for debt relief, in line with their specific circumstances. The signatories stated that, on a case-by-case basis, they could explore initiatives to support non-heavily indebted poor countries with sound economic policies to enable them to address the issue of debt sustainability. They also encouraged consideration of further debt relief measures for countries affected by shocks such as Ebola, and the study of new financial instruments for developing countries, particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, experiencing debt distress (ibid., paras. 94 and 102).

South-South cooperation

42. Developing countries have expressed concern about the position taken by developed countries equating ODA with South-South cooperation. The Group of 77 and China argued that, unlike ODA, which entailed specific commitments and obligations, South-South cooperation was purely voluntary, was based on solidarity and was therefore fundamentally different from ODA. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, signatories acknowledged the distinct character of South-South cooperation.

43. In sum, notwithstanding its shortcomings, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda offers an important contribution to Africa's development, particularly in the areas of technology, illicit financial flows, energy and remittances. The devil, however, is in the details. Commitments have been made before and several remain unfulfilled. Ensuring the fulfilment of the commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda will require a robust follow-up mechanism underpinned by the development of regional and national targets and timelines to track progress, particularly on the broad statements of intent. For instance, since estimates of illicit financial flows in Africa exist, these can be used as a baseline for tracking progress. Building on baseline estimates will, however, require resources and the capacity of national statistical systems will need to be strengthened. In the critical area of taxes, and in the absence of new ODA commitments, African countries must continue to engage with development partners to strengthen their tax administration capacities and to stem the tide of illicit financial outflows.

Key issues and outcomes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

44. The proposal made by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on the post-2015 development agenda was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1. Despite the adoption of that resolution, a number of issues emerged from the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda (see below).

Modalities for developing indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals

45. To ensure broad participation by States in the development of indicators, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, with representatives from 28 countries, was established. Seven African countries representing the five subregions are members of the group (i.e., Algeria, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania). Representatives of regional commissions and regional and international agencies, including those responsible for global reporting on the Millennium Development Goals, participate in the Inter-Agency Expert Group as observers, providing important technical advice and support as needed.

46. Indicators have been categorized into three tiers: those for which data is available and for which there is an established international methodology for data collection; those for which data is available but no established methodology for data

collection has been devised; and those that lack data and an established methodology for data collection. A global database for the Sustainable Development Goals will be developed, as was done for the Millennium Development Goals, to ensure cross-country comparisons and global reporting on progress.

Content of the political declaration

47. The introduction to the proposal by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on the post-2015 development agenda contains references to a number of issues considered controversial by some States. For example, it includes a reference to the need to address the challenges of peoples living under foreign occupation and the need to avoid unilateral actions by States in violation of international law (see A/68/970, sect. IV, para.15). The Group of 77 and China insisted that the proposal of the Open Working Group be included in the political declaration section of the post-2015 development agenda. However, developed countries resisted such inclusion, which contributed to prolonging the negotiations. Ultimately, the agreed text retained the reference to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation (see General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 35). It also retained language urging States to refrain from promulgating and applying unilateral economic, financial or trade measures (*ibid.*, para. 30).

Relationship between the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the post-2015 development agenda

48. The key disagreements centred on how the Addis Ababa Action Agenda should be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda and on whether it should constitute the means of implementing the post-2015 development agenda. In General Assembly resolution 70/1, States recognized that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognized that the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda was critical for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Regarding the location of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, during the intergovernmental discussions three options were considered: placing it in an annex; integrating it fully in the section on the means of implementation; or referencing it in the text. The compromise solution consisted in placing it in a footnote (*ibid.*, footnote 10).

Linking the process for following up on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development with the post-2015 process

49. Discussions were held on whether the follow-up mechanism for the post-2015 development agenda should be separate or merged with the process for following up on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. A number of countries expressed concern that the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development would be overburdened by the task of monitoring both processes.

50. The Group of 77 and China was opposed to an integrated follow-up mechanism on the grounds that it would overburden and consequently dilute discussions. States expressed concern that the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the global oversight body for the post-2015 development agenda, would not have sufficient time to undertake deliberations. To address that concern, some countries called for extending the frequency and length of the meetings of the Forum.

51. States agreed to a multi-stakeholder and multilayered follow-up process with the High-level Political Forum at the helm. They also agreed on separate follow-up tracks, but with a convergence of processes related to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the post-2015 development agenda at the level of the Forum. The follow-up process is to be country-owned, country-led and voluntary, and provide a strong role for the regional commissions.

52. Convergence of the two follow-up processes is intended to enhance coordination and avoid duplication. The mechanism for following up on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development will use existing institutional arrangements, including an annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development, and four of the five days dedicated by the forum to deliberations will be devoted to reviewing the outcomes of the financing for development process as well as to reviewing the means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The outcomes of those forums will in turn feed into the deliberations on the post-2015 follow-up process by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

53. The meetings of the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, an existing mechanism of the General Assembly, will be held back-to-back with those of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the General Assembly, to ensure synergies between the two tracks. In addition, the signatories to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recommended the creation of an inter-agency task force comprising, among others, United Nations entities, to report annually on progress in implementing the Agenda.

54. With respect to the post-2015 development track, proposals were made for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to review the condensed reports of existing accountability mechanisms that deal with various dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. The global sustainable development report could also provide input to the review process. Other proposals have included clustering the Goals by theme, to streamline the follow-up process. A variant of this proposal would be for the High-level Political Forum to focus broadly on the three dimensions of sustainability as opposed to reviewing each Goal and each target.

Technical proofing of the targets contained in the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

55. The debate centred on whether to revisit the targets contained in the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The Group of 77 and China, with the exception of the least developed countries, was generally opposed to this idea, while the United States of America, the European Union and other developed countries called for “tweaking” the targets to align them with existing international agreements. The least developed countries were in favour of revising target 17.2 to align it with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, which calls for an increase in ODA to least developed countries from 0.20 to 0.25 per cent of GNI as opposed to from 0.15 to 0.20 per cent, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One target in particular (i.e., target 14.c), on the law of the seas, received particular attention as some States were of the opinion that since they were not parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the target was inappropriate. Ultimately, a number of targets were adjusted to replace unspecified targets with specific values and or to align them with internationally agreed targets. In most cases, the compromise position was to replace targets without specific values with the phrase “substantially increase”.

Communicating the post-2015 development agenda

56. There was unanimous support for strong communication of the Sustainable Development Goals, to enhance awareness and buy-in. However, there were differences of opinion as to how that should be done. Developed countries were in favour of focusing the messaging around the six elements set out in the synthesis report of the Secretary-General entitled “The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet” (A/69/700). The Group of 77 and China favoured messaging on the concepts of people, prosperity, the planet (the three dimensions of sustainability) and partnerships (the means of implementation).

Agenda 2063 and the first 10-year implementation plan

57. Agenda 2063, the successor to NEPAD, is a long-term development framework that aims to achieve an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the world.

58. The origins of Agenda 2063 can be traced to the fiftieth anniversary of the African Union, in 2013, on the occasion of which Heads of African States rededicated themselves to the pursuit of a pan-African vision. The African Union Commission, supported by the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the Economic Commission for Africa, was tasked with preparing a long-term vision through a people-driven approach.⁶

59. Agenda 2063 has three key components, namely the vision, the transformation framework and the first 10-year implementation plan. It is anchored by seven aspirations, which are supported by corresponding goals, priority areas, targets and strategies. There are currently 20 goals that apply to the 10-year implementation plan.⁶ In order to ensure effective implementation, Agenda 2063 is divided into five 10-year implementation plans, the first of which spans the period 2013-2023. The first 10-year implementation plan is founded on the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the African Union vision, the eight priority areas set out in the Fiftieth Anniversary Solemn Declaration, the African aspirations for 2063 (identified through a consultative process), regional and continental frameworks, and national plans and visions.

60. The goals and targets contained in the first 10-year implementation plan were selected on the basis of the following criteria, among others: guidance from the Assembly of the African Union, through its decisions; insights from the development priorities of States and regional economic communities; the orientation of existing continental frameworks; and the flagship projects and programmes of Agenda 2063.⁶

61. There is substantial overlap between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both are comprehensive, are underpinned by an extensive consultation process and share common aspirations of structural transformation and sustainable development. For instance, both agendas aim to improve living standards through an inclusive and sustainable growth process. Goal 1 of Agenda 2063 focuses on ensuring a high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prioritizes ending poverty in all its dimensions and improving access to social protection. Both agendas call for poverty eradication, greater equity in the distribution of economic and social assets along with significant improvements in social service delivery for all social groups irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age or geography. The synergies provide an opportunity to

⁶ African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want — First Ten-year Implementation Plan 2013–2023*.

http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Agenda%202063%20Final%20revised%20First%20Ten%20Year%20Implementation%20Plan%2012%2010%2015_0.pdf.

implement both without unduly burdening policymakers with multiple development frameworks.

Rolling out the Sustainable Development Goals: opportunities and challenges

62. By signing on to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, African States have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the implementation and follow-up of both agendas. The significant convergence at the level of goals and targets will minimize some of the coordination challenges associated with implementing both agendas.

63. The similarities between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are not an accident of fate but the result of deliberate efforts by States. Specifically, the crafting of the Common African Position facilitated the integration of Africa's priorities into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since Agenda 2063 builds on the Common African Position, as well as on other existing priorities and programmes in Africa, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, several of the priorities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are also reflected in Agenda 2063. Indeed, as discussed above, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda too is intended to support the implementation of Agenda 2063.

64. Nonetheless, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are not identical. For example, the following elements of Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plan are not contained in Agenda 2030: creating a united Africa; creating continental financial and monetary institutions; ensuring a fully functional and operational African peace and security architecture; and ensuring that Africa is a major partner in global affairs and peaceful coexistence.⁶

65. Thus, coordination will be vital to ensuring that implementation and follow-up take into account all dimensions of both initiatives; areas of convergence as well as issues that are tackled separately by each initiative but are of importance for the development of the continent.

Integrated and coherent implementation

66. Going forward, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 will provide the framework for sustainable structural transformation in Africa. A key challenge for States will be the coherent implementation of both agendas in national planning frameworks. Underpinning this challenge is the issue of messaging to ensure awareness about the relationship and synergies between the agendas and their mutual relevance to national development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an attempt to respond to the global dimension of Africa's development challenges while Agenda 2063 responds to the regional dimension. Implementation of both agendas will therefore require advocacy and raising awareness about the details of both frameworks, strengthened capacities to integrate, in a coherent fashion, the two initiatives in national planning frameworks and research to support evidence-based policymaking.

Integrated and coherent follow-up and review

67. With respect to follow-up and review, the reporting burden will be substantial if States have to report on one set of regional indicators in respect of the 2063 Agenda and on another set of indicators in respect of the Sustainable Development Goals. A common reporting framework can serve to monitor progress on both agendas.

68. Related to the issue of a unified set of monitoring tools is the question of the follow-up architecture. To avoid overburdening policymakers, it will be essential to develop common platforms and reporting mechanisms. In Agenda 2063, it is proposed that an annual African forum be organized to, among other things, build cross-sectoral awareness and cultivate understanding of the role of African citizens in the implementation of Agenda 2063, take action based on Agenda 2063 progress reports, encourage stakeholders to accelerate the realization of Agenda 2063 and identify best practices and champions to accelerate implementation. Meanwhile, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on regional commissions to support States in developing an appropriate forum for follow-up. In March 2015, the African regional forum on sustainable development was mandated by African Ministers of Finance and Planning to follow-up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is therefore the need to harmonize the follow-up mechanisms of the two agendas to ensure coherence.

Strengthening capacities for effective implementation

69. The complexity of implementing both agendas calls for enhanced efforts to strengthen policymaking capacities in Africa. Implementing and tracking progress on all three agendas (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda) will require more analytical and scientific rigor than was necessary for the Millennium Development Goals. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 comprise a larger number of goals, targets and indicators. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises 17 goals and 169 targets and Agenda 2063 comprises 20 goals, 34 priority areas and 172 targets, while there were eight Millennium Development Goals and 18 related targets. Both agendas are anchored by the three integrated dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social.⁶ Policymakers will need to build their technical capacities to evaluate the trade-offs associated with achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability. In effect, while the issue of sustainable development is pertinent, achieving it adds yet another layer of complexity to the policy implementation process. Policymakers must not only design programmes that facilitate growth but they must also ensure that growth meets the litmus test of economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Moving forward

70. To ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, it is imperative that African policymakers adopt the following:

- A resolution mandating the African Union Commission and its pan-African partners to develop a common set of goals, targets and indicators that will constitute the basis for the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 into national planning frameworks. This common platform for integration will constitute the basis for follow-up and review of both the continental and the regional frameworks.
- A resolution mandating the African Union Commission and its partners to develop a common format to report on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The purpose is to minimize the reporting burden on States and regional bodies.
- A resolution mandating the African Union Commission and partners to harmonize the review process to ensure coherence in the follow-up process. The rationale for this resolution is that there are currently two

competing platforms for follow-up and review of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063: the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the annual Africa forum to review progress on the implementation of Agenda 2063.

- A resolution requesting the African Union Commission and partners to invest in strengthening the capacities of policymakers to implement Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.

Conclusions

71. The year 2015 culminated in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Several, although not all, of the elements contained in both documents were consistent with the position of the Group of 77 and China, the bloc to which African States belong.

72. In effect, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supported by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, responds to Africa's development priorities. The Common African Position served as a bridge between the global and regional agendas and helped mold the former so as to reflect the continent's priorities. The two agendas are not disparate but complementary and mutually reinforcing. If African leaders are to fully exploit the synergies between the two agendas, they must adopt an integrated approach to implementation and follow-up that is underpinned by strengthened capacities for policy design and execution.