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Nineteenth session
Second joint meeting of the Regional Coordination
Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations
Development Group
Addis Ababa, 12 and 13 May 2018

African Union

**Report of the Nineteenth session Regional
Coordination Mechanism for Africa and Second joint
meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for
Africa and the United Nations Development Group**

I. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

A. Attendance

1. The nineteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme was held in Addis Ababa on 12 and 13 May 2018. The session was jointly organized by the secretariats of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa under the theme United "Nations system support for the African Union in winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation".

2. The session was co-chaired by the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Thomas Kwesi Quartey, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Vera Songwe, and the Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Service Centre for Africa/regional team of the United Nations Development Group, Lamin Manneh, representing the Chair of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa.

3. The agenda for the session was based on the draft agenda circulated in document ECA/RCM/19/1, as follows:

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
3. Plenary presentation and discussion on United Nations system support for the African Union in winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation

4. Plenary discussion on the nexus between corruption and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063
5. Plenary discussion on curbing illicit financial flows for development
6. Plenary discussion on the threat of corruption to political stability, peace and security
7. Plenary discussion on Strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations Development Group in the context of the reforms of the African Union and the Secretary-General and of the United Nations-African Union frameworks
8. Plenary discussion on presentations and discussion on the progress of the Mechanism and updates and adoption of the workplan:
 - (a) African Union-United Nations progress report of the Mechanism;
 - (b) Update on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
 - (c) Update on the African Forum for Sustainable Development for follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
 - (d) Adoption of the United Nations-African Union joint programme for 2018-2019 for the Mechanism.
9. Other business
10. Presentation and adoption of the draft report of the meeting
11. Closing of the session.

4. The session was attended by representatives of all agencies and organizations of the United Nations system working in support of Africa, the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa, the African Union Commission, the African Peer Review Mechanism secretariat, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community. The full list of participants is contained in the annex to the present report.

B. Opening statements

5. In his opening remarks, the Principal Policy Adviser of ECA, Joseph Atta-Mensah, asked what the essence of development was. He made an analogy to a street kid named Abebe who always begged for alms when standing at a stop sign near ECA. He asked what the future for him and his generation would be if there were no positive interventions to change his life. Abebe needed a solid education and social amenities. Without such an intervention, he and his generation would be poor forever. With the right intervention, his life could be positively altered and he and his generation could move above the poverty line. Given that there were Abebes throughout Africa, development was about altering the lives of all such children on the continent. It was about eradicating poverty through appropriate policies. He cautioned that corruption took away resources needed for development. Governments should therefore embark on positive interventions to raise the living standards for all Africans. Corruptions must be eradicated. Mr. Atta-Mensah thanked members of the secretariats of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa for their hard

work in preparing the nineteenth session. He also thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA and Chief Economist, Abdalla Hamdok, and Mr. Kwesi Quartey for their leadership and guidance of the Mechanism.

6. On behalf of the Chair of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa, Mr. Manneh made his opening statement. He thanked participants for their attendance, underscoring that the chosen theme was indeed timely and pertinent. For Africa, he noted that combating corruption would be essential in accelerating the envisioned sustainable and inclusive transformation set out in both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. He cautioned, however, that more efforts would be required to combat it on the continent, given that, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, 6 of the world's 10 most corrupt countries were from sub-Saharan Africa. He also noted that a study by the African Union estimated that corruption cost the continent roughly \$150 billion annually, compared with \$57 billion in aid to sub-Saharan Africa, resulting in development resource constraints. That corruption, he underlined, ranged from high-level political graft on the scale of hundreds of millions of dollars to that of low-level bribes by State officials in charge of delivering basic public services. In addition, he underscored that, while political and business graft posed the largest direct financial costs on a country, petty bribes had a corrosive effect on basic institutions and undermined public trust in government.

7. On the other hand, Mr. Manneh highlighted, that in the past 10 years, African Governments had made some efforts to combat corruption that, in many cases, had been spurred by international donors pushing for transparency and good governance and by domestic pressure to fulfil promises of reform made by politicians on the campaign trail. He pointed to countries such as Liberia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, which had made substantive progress in reducing corruption. Nevertheless, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at their summit of January 2018, expressed their increased commitment to combating corruption, thus creating an imperative for all partners, notably the United Nations, to step up their support to them in that important fight. In addition, he underlined that a multi-stakeholder partnership and approach to tackling developmental challenges would require that the various key actors, including governments, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system, mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and resources, as supported by the policies and actions outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

8. Mr. Manneh stated that the meeting would provide an opportunity for the United Nations system, together with other development partners, to strategize on programmes and activities to support African countries, in large part through the African Union in the renewed efforts to combat corruption and illicit financial flows and contribute to the improvement in systems that would ensure Africa's transformation and success in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. He reassured participants that the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa remained committed to working with all other partners in supporting member States through the United Nations regional and country teams to take forward recommendations arising from the nineteenth session of the Mechanism.

9. In her opening statement, Ms. Songwe noted that the African Union had made significant strides with the signing by 44 countries of the African Continental Free Trade Area; the signing by 30 countries of a protocol allowing for the free movement of persons; the launch of the single African air transport market; and the decision on the financing of the African Union through the imposition of a 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports by African Union member States, of which 22 countries were either implementing or soon to do so. She

emphasized that those were milestones worth celebrating as the continent moved towards the Africa that it wanted.

10. Ms. Songwe noted that the noble ambitions and aspirations of African countries would be at risk if the scourge of corruption were not addressed decisively. That was why the theme for the nineteenth session was both very pertinent and timely. She recommended that African countries consider instituting laws that encouraged all citizens, including disadvantaged groups, to participate in development planning and policymaking. Countries also needed to strengthen transparency and ensure accountability, in particular fiscal transparency and good public financial governance. Furthermore, African countries needed to call upon the advanced economies to fully commit to their obligations under the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transaction and to ensure its rigorous enforcement. Indeed, pressure should be exercised on non-complying countries to ensure that business firms fully internalized the risks of prosecution when deciding how to carry out business in African countries.

11. Ms. Songwe concluded by registering her full commitment to and support for the collaboration between Mechanism and regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and for Western and Central Africa. She cautioned that, for the collaboration to be truly effective, the United Nations would have to align its work with the priorities of the African Union in a coordinated and coherent manner. She said that the retreat of the United Nations and the African Union in Nairobi in April 2018, at which a workplan was drawn up for the regional teams, represented a positive beginning to deepen the collaboration between the two institutions. She emphasized that the implementation of that collaborative framework could be achieved through ECA leveraging its three core functions: a convening function, such as in the context of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and intergovernmental platforms; a think tank function, with a focus on generating sustainable development solutions that were evidence-based, inclusive, transboundary, intergenerational and grounded in innovative financing options; and an operational function, in the form of capacity development services.

12. In his opening remarks, Mr. Kwesi Quartey greeted the participants on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, who was unable to attend the meeting in person. He noted the importance of the Mechanism since its establishment and that it continued to serve as a vehicle for the United Nations agencies operating in Africa to coordinate and share information on their activities and strategies in support of African Union programmes. He reiterated the commitment of the African Union to strengthening the Mechanism to contribute to the implementation of the continent's priorities and African common positions, all of which were derived from the global strategic development frameworks. He reminded delegates that the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 had a rate of convergence of 90 per cent. While the former addressed mainly economic, social and sustainable development, the latter, in its broader context, included other pillars such as peace and security, the governance architecture and Africa's diverse culture. He therefore underscored the need for the harmonized implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the goals and the indicators contained in both frameworks.

13. With regard to the theme of the nineteenth session, Mr. Kwesi Quartey pointed out that the issue of corruption, although not an old one, did not originate in Africa. To help to address the issue of corruption, there was a need for good institutional synergies and collaboration. He observed that investigations on illicit financial flows should be more nuanced in understanding the complex nature of corruption. He emphasized that processes were deep and profound and that all aspects of Africa's international relations needed to be examined. A key aspect of that examination resided in the need to interrogate the origin of the African States, which could be traced to the proceedings of the Berlin Conference of 1844.

14. With his remarks, Mr. Kwesi Quartey declared the session opened.

II. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

[agenda item 2]

15. The agenda and programme of work were adopted.

III. Plenary 1: United Nations system support to the African Union in winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation [agenda item 3]

16. The panel was co-chaired by Mr. Kwesi Quartey and Ms. Songwe and had the following as panellists: the Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Office to African Union, Haile Menkerios; the Under-Secretary-General and Adviser, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Bience Gawanas; the Assistant Director-General for Africa, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Firmin Matoko; Mr. Hamdok; Mr. Manneh; and Member, African Union Anti-Corruption Board, Daniel Batidam.

17. Mr. Menkerios began by noting that countries that lacked good governance were prone to corruption. He highlighted that African people and institutions should take the lead in ensuring peace and security on the continent in order to advance their development objectives. He stressed that the lack of and the threat to peace and security was likewise linked, among other things, to poor governance, corruption and the enforcement of justice. He stated that peace and security in Africa and global threats should be addressed in partnership with the United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities within existing United Nations-African Union frameworks. He concluded by recommending that the United Nations should use its capabilities to further strengthen institutions in African countries. He called on the Organization to support the financing of interventions that promoted peace and security on the continent.

18. Ms. Gawanas suggested that the focus should not be on combating corruption but on preventing it. This was because it was not possible to combat poverty without addressing the issue of corruption. She also underscored the need to create an environment that developed rules and regulation to prevent corruption. She called for the rewarding of good civil servants and citizens who conducted their affairs with a high degree of integrity and abided by rules and regulations. She further called for the strengthening of institutions and the protection of civil servants working for anti-corruption institutions because their lives could be under threat. She stressed that efforts to combat corruption were about the promotion of social justice, development and peace and security on the continent. She concluded that rooting out corruption would make Africa a more equitable place and bring the continent closer to what it wanted.

19. Mr. Hamdok emphasized the political, economic and developmental impacts of corruption in Africa. He recognized that a great deal of work had been done on its impact. He called for the swift implementation of existing frameworks for combating it. He concluded by noting three issues in the analysis of corruption:

- (a) Social trust, especially among governments and public officials who were in higher political offices;
- (b) Prevention and detection of corruption and the consequences of managing corruption in leadership;

(c) Corruption being a multifaceted vice with many dimensions, including illicit financial flows. There were frameworks and instrument to help Africa to combat corruption. In that regard, he welcomed some existing initiatives such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the *African*

Governance Report.

20. Mr. Matoko focused on the nexus between education and corruption and its social costs. He identified some areas of corruption in education, such as the procurement of materials for the construction of schools, ghost teachers, nepotism in teacher appointments, bribery in access to education and fake diplomas. He stated that corruption was an issue of social justice, equity and culture. He advocated preventive measures such as procurement guidelines, a code of conduct and the encouragement of integrity through accountability and the enforcement of rules and laws and the involvement of civil society. He mentioned that leadership and political will were imperative for any preventive actions to succeed. He reported on the existence of two initiatives of UNESCO and other partners that promoted best practices and provided capacity-building through training and a new and unique ethics portal. In that regard, he recommended that further exchanges of information and best practises be shared between the United Nations and the African Union.

21. Mr. Batidam expressed his satisfaction that the African Union had dedicated the year 2018 to efforts to combat corruption. He recognized that it and the United Nations organization had the conventions on corruption necessary and the mandate and mechanisms in place to combat it. He called for the harmonization of those conventions to ensure that all their articles were strengthened. He also recommended that the United Nations support the African Union in such collaboration. He discussed the issue of inequality on the continent, saying that it was not sufficient to have economic growth that did not translate to better livelihoods. He noted that part of that inequality was due to corruption. He therefore recommended the provision of better mechanisms by the United Nations to support the African Union in transparency to tackle inequality. He raised the issue of tax transparency and acknowledged the Addis Tax Initiative. He recommended further support to African countries in tax collection and systems. He mentioned illicit financial flows and the fact that corruption was an issue for both the countries of origin and the countries of destination. Given that corruption was endemic on the continent and cut across all sectors, further cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was needed. Lastly, he suggested working more on gender issues in relation to corruption.

22. Mr. Manneh expressed the need for setting baselines and sharing experiences by considering individual cases, both good and bad. Monitoring progress was therefore necessary in that regard. He informed the delegates that, in Rwanda, there was a very clear policy regarding the efforts to combat corruption. He also stated that such efforts could be dangerous in some countries owing to weak institutions and the fact that corruption had become institutionalized and that those who engaged in it had the means to get away with it. He suggested making greater efforts to make the recently signed United Nations-African Union agreement on development effective in order to avoid the duplication of efforts and strengthen complementarities, under the strong leadership of the African Union. He also drew attention to the need to make the public sector management more effective and improving regulatory frameworks, especially by improving the conditions of civil servants who were, in comparative terms, poorly paid.

Discussion

23. In the ensuing discussion, the participants noted the following:

(a) Poverty reduction should be placed at the forefront of the efforts to combat corruption;

(b) Protection and support systems for whistle-blowers needed to be strengthened;

(c) Destinations receiving illicit financial flows that left Africa should be studied. Questions were raised relating to potential progress on how the United Nations could assist member States in preventing countries from receiving such flows;

(d) Investing in policies regarding taxes and inter-country cooperation was suggested. The Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters was mentioned in that regard;

(e) With regard to management and the utilization of donor and multilateral funding, the need for further transparency was recommended. Sanctions mechanisms and regional courts to address corruption would also be needed on the continent. Focusing on efforts to combat corruption on a sectoral basis was suggested;

(f) Corruption was a human rights issue. The rights to education, health and housing, among other things, had been reduced, thereby creating a social justice issue owing to the social cost that it bore on affected societies. Further technical assistance and awareness at the country level needed to be in place to address that issue in relation to the nexus between human rights and corruption;

(g) More attention should be given to local governments and at the municipal level in addressing bribes, embezzlement and misappropriation, in particular in infrastructure projects. In that regard, urban planning and development systems, including those that addressed environmental challenges, were proposed as solutions;

(h) The concrete approach of the United Nations and the support of the African Union at the national level were questioned, bearing in mind that, when combating corruption, there was pushback;

(i) Efforts to combat corruption should engage civil society and the private sector and use technology;

(j) Political will and leadership condition the support necessary from organizations. The specific needs should be raised by the country;

(k) There was a danger of normalizing the culture of corruption. Societal and cultural attitudes must change for such normalization to be prevented;

(l) United Nations support needed to be focused on what kind of support that Africa wanted. In every country, corruption, human rights and other issues were muddled. Unless there was political support, it would be hard for organizations to be of any use. African countries and civil society needed to speak out in that regard;

(m) Strengthening internal institutions that combat corruption would reinforce the leadership of African countries in such a process. Member State should assume that leadership. The reform of the public sector should not be underestimated;

(n) Efforts to combat corruption needed to rest ultimately with Africans themselves. While laws existed, weak institutions could not enforce them. The strengthening of institutions was crucial for the success of the efforts to combat corruption. The United Nations could be an enabler to support the capacities of countries to combat corruption by providing technical assistance that strengthened institutions;

(o) Research regarding the institutionalization of corruption should be undertaken to assess the internal system and investigate the role of integrity;

(p) Illicit financial flows need to be understood, given that curbing them went beyond Africa and engaged multinational corporations, institutions and countries on other continents. The major issue regarding those flows in Africa was, as always, the weak capacity of the institutions to prevent them.

Recommendations

24. After exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) African Governments were urged to strengthen existing policies, laws, rules and regulations to prevent corruption;

(b) African Governments were urged to put in place mechanisms for rewarding good civil servants, citizens and ethical people who abide by rules and regulations and did not engage in corrupt practices;

(c) African Governments were called upon to strengthen existing procurement guidelines and codes of conduct and to encourage integrity in order to prevent corruption. In that regard, countries needed to establish stricter accountability, enforce rules and laws and involve civil society in efforts to combat corruption;

(d) The United Nations was urged to support the African Union in transparency and financial disclosure rules for public officials, with a view to eradicating corrupt practices;

(e) The United Nations was urged to support African countries in putting in place transparency rules governing the collection of taxes, as enshrined in the Addis Tax Initiative;

(f) The United Nations was urged to collaborate with the African Union in the implementation of conventions on corruption;

(g) The United Nations, in collaboration with the African Union, was urged to carry out studies on the impact of corruption on the livelihood of women and girls;

(h) African countries were urged to strengthen their public sector management, with a view to making it more effective and efficient. In that regard, African Governments should consider paying civil servants competitive salaries;

(i) The United Nations was urged to support African countries in strengthening laws and mechanisms to support whistle-blowers.

IV. Plenary 2: The nexus between corruption and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want [agenda item 4]

25. The session was co-chaired by the Associate Lecturer, Thabo Mbeki Leadership Institute and University of South Africa, Hespina Rukato, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Rwanda, Fode Ndiaye. The panellists were the African Union Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Victor Harison; the Subregional Coordinator for Eastern Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and representative to the African Union and to ECA, David Phiri; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) representative to Ethiopia, the African Union and ECA, Letti Chiwara; the Head of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Regional Office in Addis Ababa, Joy Kategekwa; the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Benin, Siaka Coulibaly; and the Director of Trade for COMESA, Francis Mangeni.

26. In her opening remarks, Ms. Rukato began by underscoring that corruption went beyond money and was probably a reflection of the loss of the shared values of a people. She emphasized the need to rebuild value systems. To that end, she drew attention to the shared values of the African Union. She recalled that, in 2003, 16 member States of the African Union had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption and that 13 more did so the following year. She noted that 50 per cent of fiscal revenue, equivalent to 25 per

cent of gross domestic product (GDP), was lost through corruption. She also noted that some signatory countries had since fallen in rank in the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International. Lastly, she stressed that the efforts to combat corruption would be critical, in particular in the realization of the full benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

27. Mr. Harison highlighted many issues. First, he underlined that, in order to realize the “Africa we want”, investment in the rule of law, good governance, transparency and accountability was paramount. He noted that corruption on a global scale diverted an estimated \$1.5 trillion, equivalent to 2 per cent of the global GDP and 10 times the value of official development assistance (ODA). Second, he highlighted that, in the continent’s agribusiness sector, 70 per cent of landholdings were not protected by secure titles, which hindered access to credit and other critical production elements. Lastly, and with regard to fisheries, he noted that illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing still posed a developmental challenge in Africa. He highlighted that, owing to corruption, foreign fleets could access sovereign territories and harvest their marine resources, thus depriving locals from reaping the full benefits of their natural resources.

28. Mr. Phiri underlined that corruption was a huge impediment to economic development and crippled all sectors, including the agricultural one. Issues of land allocation, titles and tenure, credit availability, quality of supplies, water allocation, marketing and the development of agribusinesses all suffered in developing countries. While corruption affected both urban and rural populations, corruption relating to natural resources had a greater impact on small-scale producers, fishers and the landless rural poor, in particular women. Indigenous communities were affected in a particularly harsh manner, given that corruption could result in the misappropriation or dispossession of indigenous land for private or political gain. Indigenous peoples often lived in areas that were rich in natural resources and depended on access to those resources for their livelihoods. Corruption exacerbated violence and insecurity in rural areas, in addition to eroding trust in public institutions and contributing to widening inequalities. He stressed that the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security involved all stakeholders and provided for a set of actions that could reduce corruption and facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those normative instruments also explicitly contained calls upon Member States to take effective anti-corruption measures necessary for improving food security and nutrition and the livelihoods of thousands of small-scale producers around the world. He concluded that the only way to measure the success of the Goal would be for rural men and women to believe that their livelihoods and food security had markedly improved. If, through corrupt practices, they were denied secure access to the land, water, forests and fisheries on which their livelihoods depended, there could be no improvement.

29. Ms. Chiwara took note of the importance of analysing the differential impact of corruption on women and young people. She highlighted the findings contained in a 2018 report of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on the state of Africa’s public services, in which the authors underlined that public service was the pillar of governance and that, without strong public services and committed public servants, there would be no efficient delivery of expected public goods and services. In that regard, she reminded the participants that both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 had spelled out what Africa wanted and what was required of African leaders to provide strong leadership and the citizenry to demand their rights. She also took note of the 2017 toolkit published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development entitled “Gender and corruption: a toolkit to address the ‘add women and stir’ myth”. That resource helped to analyse the notion of mainstreaming and applying a rights-based approach to addressing the issue of corruption and encourage women to participate in public

life and services; re-examine the impact of corruption on gender; and introduce calls for the improvement of research on the differential impact of corruption on women. She noted that a focus on research that helped to address the impact of corruption on women, in order to strengthen governance and accountability for gender equality as a means to improving the gender-responsiveness of public policy, was needed. She called for the comprehensive understanding of gender and specifically sought a more nuanced definition of the term, as opposed to the common male or female attributions. She also called for the employment of a more inclusive notion of corruption and the creation of equitable indices to measure corruption by going beyond numbers and looking at the impact of corruption on the lives of women and the identification of sextortion as an abuse of human rights.

30. Ms. Kategekwa echoed the sentiments of previous speakers. She stressed the retrogressive role played by corruption in the implementation of the continental development agendas. Nevertheless, she noted that good governance on trade, in particular through the strengthening of multilateral and continental instruments, including trade licences, investment permits and border tariffs, could reduce corruption and ultimately be a key component in mobilizing critical resources for development. Specifically, she emphasized the need for the digitization and automation of the trade sector, with the aim of reducing human interaction that created environments that fostered corruption. Lastly, she called for the leadership in Africa to exercise political will and implement existing strategies for good governance on trade, which were mutually beneficial to countries and throughout the continent, rather than retreat to protectionist approaches.

31. In his remarks, Mr. Coulibaly also reiterated the importance of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, noting that both represented a clear and strong commitment to good governance and the rule of law. In retrospect, he reminded the participants that the Millennium Development Goals, the predecessor to the Sustainable Development Goals, had presented valuable lessons by outlining the detrimental aspects that weak governance and corruption presented through the loss of public resources that would have otherwise been deployed to provide basic needs and address social inequalities. He noted that, while the calculated cost for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals had been estimated at \$600 billion, financial losses in Africa attributed to corruption in Africa alone were estimated at \$150 billion, thus highlighting the severity of corruption in the quest to mobilize adequate resources to finance development. Lastly, he made the following proposals for consideration in addressing corruption: encourage the United Nations to formulate robust development strategies that could be embedded in national development plans; ensure capacity-building for public institutions such as houses of parliament; have civil society play a proactive role in highlighting corruption issues; and call upon African governments to deploy information and communications technology (ICT) and digitize public administration.

32. In view of the overwhelming consensus that corruption rightly undermined the adequate resourcing of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, Mr. Mangeni noted that Agenda 2063 was intended to achieve "the Africa we want", which was integrated, prosperous and peaceful and democratic and efficacious in international relations. He noted, however, that that would not be possible until there were "the Africans we want" who could achieve that result. He observed that targeted sociopolitical processes needed to be deployed to generate a critical mass of those Africans to quickly reach a tipping point for transformation into "the Africa we want". He noted that role models would assist in inspiring young people to grow up to become like them. Such role models should be charismatic and widely known. He said that there was already a good number of role models, but that it would need a refinement of criteria that went beyond Nobel laureates to include innovators, game-changers and influential Africans. Laudable initiatives by people such as Nigerian entrepreneur and philanthropist Tony Elumelu to instil entrepreneurship in young people and the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, who promoted leadership

training, could also support such a process. Mr. Mangeni called for coherent continental and regional systems to identify "the Africans we want", given that an evidence-based strategic objective was lacking. He stressed that threats to implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, including corruption and a host of other matters such as climate change, wars and conflict, the lack of implementation of globally agreed instruments and programmes and inadequate financial and human resources, all needed priority attention. He commended African leaders for rightly identifying corruption as a priority area that deserved urgent and targeted attention. He emphasized that corruption cost Africa at least \$150 billion annually and that illicit financial flows amounted to more than \$80 billion annually. In the light of resource gaps, for example, the approximately \$45 billion annually for infrastructure, tackling corruption was critical. A 1 per cent decrease in corruption would lead to a 4 per cent increase in GDP. With respect to trade and the African Continental Free Trade Area, he called for adequately integrating programmes to address non-trade barriers, the digitization of trade to eliminate opportunities for rent-seeking and related corruption, the participants to look into the COMESA digital economic integration initiative and efforts to address the gender dimensions of trade.

Discussion

33. In the ensuing discussion, the participants noted the following:

(a) Recalling the figures presented by an earlier speaker on the extent of the cost of corruption, it was noted the United Nations had a strong platform for advocacy against corruption that could be integrated into the eligibility criteria for member States receiving funding for infrastructure projects. In particular, it was highlighted that, in addition to the existing social and environmental impact assessments required before embarking on infrastructure projects, an additional dimension on anti-corruption would also need to be considered;

(b) There was a need to examine corruption from a cultural perspective, emphasizing that Africans intrinsically possessed strong value systems that could be used to tackle it;

(c) It was noted that regional economic communities had prioritized the development of programmes on post-conflict reconstruction and development through the COMESA "Trading for peace" programme. Under that initiative, information such as pricing, taxes and markets had been availed to small-scale cross-border traders at various border posts in the Great Lakes Region, with the aim of empowering communities at the border area and encouraging interaction between them. To facilitate that programme, participants wanted to know how UNCTAD could help in articulating the role of economic partnership agreements vis-à-vis the African Continental Free Trade Area, given that the former had been used by corrupt African leaders to extract rents, continuing to marginalize groups for whom the programme was intended to benefit;

(d) The importance of digitizing African economies by setting up e-administrations was underscored, which could greatly minimize corruption, for example, in the import and export market.

Recommendations

34. After exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) African countries were urged to strengthen the harmonized approach in reporting on progress for both development agendas. In that regard, countries should revisit the indicators of development and include component on measuring corruption;

(b) The United Nations was urged to support African countries, through the African Union, in ensuring that gender would be reflected in studies on the impact of corruption;

(c) The United Nations was also urged to support the capacity development efforts of African countries in creating strong public institutions;

(d) African countries were urged to continue to deploy ICT in the automation of public administration systems as part of efforts to combat corruption;

(e) The African Union, in collaboration with the United Nations, was urged to create a continental online platform for sharing experiences on corruption.

V. Plenary 3: Curbing illicit financial flows for development [agenda item 5]

35. The session was chaired by Mr. Hamdok. The panellists were the Director of Political Affairs, African Union Commission, Khabele Matlosa; Mr. Ndiaye; the Global Campaigns Director, Crisis Action, Janah Ncube; the Executive Secretary, African Tax Administration Forum, Logan Wort; and the professor at the Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Mohamed Salih.

36. Mr. Hamdok referenced the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. He provided background on the report, including the sources of data used within it, including research from ECA, the International Monetary Fund and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Given the sensitive and political nature of the issue, however, some of those same institutions had since expressed doubt in their current discourse on illicit financial flows. He then invited the rest of the panel to offer their views.

37. Mr. Matlosa underlined a crucial paradox of how Africa, being the richest continent in the world in terms of resources, was still home to the poorest people in the world. He added that, while the continent accounted for only 2 per cent of global GDP, Africa had 15 per cent of the world's crude oil, 40 per cent of its gold and 80 per cent of its platinum. Incidentally, one important factor that explained that paradox were illicit financial flows. Regarding their magnitude and impact, Africa had lost between \$850 million and \$1.8 trillion between 1970 and 2008. Currently, Africa was losing between \$50 million and \$150 billion annually in illicit outflows. That was far more than the total ODA of \$75 billion that Africa received annually. Africa was therefore a net creditor to the rest of the world, given that it struggled to finance its own socioeconomic development, while inadvertently helping to finance the development of other continents.

38. Mr. Ndiaye stressed the issue of illicit financial flows and their impact on the Sustainable Development Goals, which could be summarized in terms of leadership and management. Notwithstanding all those figures on illicit financial flows, they did not resonate with ordinary citizens, and that should be addressed. He highlighted that, by indicating the value that recovered outflows could bring to the continent, the public could relate and there would be increased buy-in of efforts to stem illicit financial flows. For example, although two thirds of Africans lacked access to electricity, recovering the illicit outflows could help the continent to address that issue. In addition, the \$50 billion in annual outflows, if stemmed, could provide up to 2,800 schools for each African country. Those outflows were reducing tax revenue and consequently compounding the debts of some African countries. He made the following recommendations:

(a) Ensure better mapping of institutions working on illicit financial flows in order to set up a broad alliance at the global, regional and national levels with various actors (e.g., academia, civil society organizations, citizens, the public and private sector, development partners, international organizations and the United Nations) and strengthen their capacity, including the judiciary, parliament and other institutions controlling public financial management;

- (b) Have a more harmonized United Nations approach, considering its agencies' mandates but avoiding silos;
- (c) Empower people and raise awareness, including of the citizens;
- (d) Support countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda, which specifically addresses illicit financial flows;
- (e) By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime;
- (f) Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms;
- (g) Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels;
- (h) Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection;
- (i) Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence;
- (j) Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development;
- (k) Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development;
- (l) Support a clear study on the incidences of incentives (a cost benefit analysis);
- (m) Consider appropriate ways of financing election campaigns and political parties;
- (n) Support strategies to mobilize domestic resources.

39. In his intervention, Mr. Salih mentioned the vulnerability of investigators, whistle-blowers and people who normally took up cases to stem illicit financial flows. Many of them had lost their jobs owing to their investigations.

40. Mr. Salih said that, while a number of pan-African jurisdictions existed, there was very little cooperation and activity among them on the continent. They were backed by legal and administrative frameworks and instruments, but to a large extent, there was a lack of enforcement. He said that the apparent failure or challenges being faced on that issue were due to indifference, a lack of commitment by member States, a lack of resources and capacity and executive, judiciary and legislative elements that were corrupt or indifferent.

41. The role of civil society organizations in combating corruption needed to be strengthened to complement the efforts of its governmental and intergovernmental anti-corruption institutions in the implementation of regulations against corruption. It was also stressed that the civil society organizations and government needed to join hands to address weak institutions, weak governance and weak capacities, with a view to combating corruption.

42. In proposing a solution to the above, Mr. Salih said that it was more likely that democracies created space for contesting corruption more than non-democratic ones would do. Democracy itself, however, also opened the doors for corrupt practices when left unchecked. As a democracy grew, he said that there would always be the possibility of holding governments accountable. That could happen only if the relationship between democracy and development, on the one hand, and democracy and corruption, on the other, were mastered. The role of the civil society organizations therefore needed to be more active and complementary.

43. In his intervention, Mr. Wort recalled that the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa had been completed and that all the essential information was contained therein. Accordingly, one should not be distracted by debates on the statistics on and magnitude of illicit financial flows. It was known that those outflows from Africa were predominantly from commercial sources, with 65 per cent coming from illicit commercial practices. Corruption nevertheless damaged the tax system in any country. If citizens did not believe in the tax system, that would erode tax compliance. Addressing multinational tax avoidance was crucial to the growth of Africa's GDP. In most cases dealt with by the African Tax Administration Forum, dealing with aggressive tax avoidance often required very simple changes to tax laws, possibly through increasing investigation and collection capacities through experience-sharing. Unless the rules were changed, money would be lost from something that was capable of being changed. He provided an example of Uganda in 2015, where a merger between British and Ugandan oil companies occurred, which could have led to major losses in illicit outflows. Nevertheless, because of tax laws requiring the company to declare capital gains, the Government was able to earn \$523 million in taxes. The work of the consortium on efforts to combat illicit financial flows showed that those changes could be made and that much could be done to stem those outflows. The same went for the work of Forum, which had developed a model tax treaty for Africa that addressed interest and technical services that had especially disadvantaged Africa. He concluded with a call for the establishment of an inter-country body and/or alliance to deal with tax regulations, treaties and practices.

44. Ms. Ncube focused on illicit financial flows within the continent itself. She emphasized the need to invest in curbing them within Africa, especially when they financed and perpetuated war. As with flows outside the continent, those within the continent could be attributed to much of the same illegal and criminal activity, including but not limited to corruption by leaders, drug trafficking, poaching and smuggling. She used South Sudan as an example of how clear it was that illicit financial flows from countries experiencing conflict flowed into neighbouring ones.

45. Ms. Ncube noted that, had the war in South Sudan continued to 2018, the countries neighbouring South Sudan (Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) would have lost an estimated \$57 billion and South Sudan would have lost \$158 billion. In addition, if the war had stopped in 2015, the international community would have saved up to \$30 billion in peacekeeping and humanitarian infrastructure and operations costs.

46. According to Ms. Ncube, the war in South Sudan was being perpetuated because of the illicit flow of money through banking institutions of neighbouring countries. Those countries facilitated the access of funds to South Sudanese leaders, who used it to finance the lavish lifestyles of the warring parties' leaders and their families. Consequently, there was little incentive for such individuals to search for a solution to achieving lasting peace.

47. Ms. Ncube said that the neighbouring countries of South Sudan had become investment destinations for the looters of the country's coffers and had also become channels for the elite to finance their lifestyles. In the 2015 report of the Auditor General of South Sudan (which was shelved), it was shown how up to \$922 million had been corruptly handled by government officials through letters of credit for the supply of goods and services by Kenyan, South Sudanese and Ugandan companies. Of that money, 54 per cent (\$498 million) ended up in Uganda and 37 per cent (\$338 million) in Kenya.

48. Ms. Ncube said that was a huge threat to the financial systems and economies of those countries. By handling, facilitating and transacting in illicitly gained finances, those countries eroded the trust of international financial systems and thereby brought higher scrutiny, chased potential investment away

and weakened the continent's aspirations for strong institutions and growing economies.

49. Ms. Ncube noted that illicit financial flows within Africa needed to be addressed urgently, given that the consequences of not doing so would be extremely high. A total of 97 per cent of government revenue in South Sudan came from oil and more than 50 per cent of oil revenue was spent on security, including the purchase of military hardware and ammunition. The United Nations Panel of Experts on South Sudan, the Human Rights Council and the reports of IGAD all highlighted that the Government was responsible for much of the violence in the country, with most of the arms acquired illegally. If that trend in violence were to continue, the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative of the African Union would not be successful.

Discussion

50. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

(a) It was agreed that it was important to break down the figures on illicit financial flows and the overall issue into relatable information so that citizens could appreciate the magnitude of the problem. In addition, those figures would remain academic unless those outflows were returned. In that regard, there needed to be more discussion on what kind of partnerships were in place or that could be created to actually recover assets from destination countries;

(b) Transfer pricing had been occurring for 30 years. Capacity and skilled human resources with knowledge on the subject were needed to address the challenges that it posed to illicit financial flows;

(c) Should illicit financial flows ever manage to be dealt with and those funds recovered for use on the continent, it was asked how it could be guaranteed that they would not be used by corrupt officials;

(d) In the context of South Sudan, the African Union was committed to resolving it. The Peace and Security Council met in September 2017 and agreed to take measures to impose sanctions on the parties responsible for the conflict. In April 2018, it undertook a scoping mission to the country as part of the implementation of those sanctions. In addition, IGAD held a forum to address the conflict. The outcome was yet to be implemented by the IGAD Council of Ministers;

(e) The African Union Commission should come up with the ways to address the conflict effectively. A lot of focus was placed on corruption, but there were other sources of illicit financial flows, including criminal activities;

(f) It was observed that illicit financial flows did not leave countries without knowledge of those countries' leaders. Consequently, the imposition of sanctions by the African Union might not address the illicit flow of funds;

(g) It was asked whether there was a database for all those institutions that were complicit in illicit financial practices. If not, it was also asked how one could be created. This was particularly crucial in the case of mineral resource governance. There was the need for frameworks that would allow countries to publicize the contracts of multinational companies in the extractive sector, which would increase transparency. That would help to provide clarity on how much money was coming going. It was agreed that there was a lack of transparency in the mineral sector. To address that issue, it was proposed that there be the need to democratize the sector and strengthen the contract negotiation capacity within it and member States as a whole;

(h) With regard to the establishment of an inter-country tax alliance, clarification was sought on the parameters for that to happen, given that harmonizing the tax laws would be a challenge. In response, it should be clear that tax laws in countries were a sovereignty issue. Accordingly, harmonization could not take place. Nevertheless, agreed standards between various countries

could be incorporated. The main thing to note, however, was to avoid harmful tax competition;

(i) With regard to human rights, protection for investigative journalists and whistle-blowers remained an issue. The role of the media in raising awareness on corruption in general and on illicit financial flows was significant;

(j) Regarding a partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, a recommendation had been made previously that the two institutions could partner using the common African position on asset recovery under the auspices of the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari;

(k) Part of the broader strategy to combat illicit financial flows and corruption lay with the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption;

(l) It was suggested that the various United Nations agencies working on the issue develop a united, clear and comprehensive approach to addressing illicit financial flows. In addition, there was the need for a mapping of institutions working on the issue nationally, subregionally, regionally and globally;

(m) There were discussions on harmful tax incentives and their impact on foreign investment. In one country in particular, \$1.4 billion was lost owing to tax holidays given by the country to multinational corporations. The country received only \$148 million in foreign direct investment;

(n) Combating corruption was impossible without involving citizens;

(o) The power asymmetry between multinational corporations and African countries with regard to technology and information was important to review and take note of when negotiating contracts;

(p) On the issue of partnerships and collaboration, following the release of the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, a consortium of stakeholders was established to work on reducing those flows from Africa. It was open to all institutions and its work would be presented by the Chair annually;

(q) Concerning the issue of tax and investment, one of the recommendations of the High-level Panel was to conduct a study on the issuance of tax incentives by African countries to multinational corporations because the continent ended up losing more by not providing tax incentives.

51. In his summary of the session, Mr. Hamdok stated that the magnitude of illicit finance was very high and increasing. It also had numerous negative developmental impacts on the continent, in particular regarding the financing of conflicts. There were sufficient frameworks and institutions to address the issue, but they were weak and needed to be strengthened. In addition, collaboration in the open budget reporting by countries and the exchange of information of taxes, among other things, would be required. For all those measures to be effective, civil society organizations should be given space to operate, and the engagement of citizens was needed to increase awareness and build greater buy-in.

Recommendations

52. After exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Member States, regional economic communities and the African Union were urged to implement the recommendations of the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, which included the establishment of anti-corruption bodies;

(b) The African Union was urged to strengthen the African Peer Review Mechanism as a robust tool for tracking and curbing illicit financial flows, in particular within its mandate for supporting economic and political governance;

(c) The United Nations and the African Union should partner on the adoption of the common African position on asset recovery;

(d) African countries were urged to do more to improve transparency, accountability and ethics in the natural resources and extractives sectors;

(e) African countries were urged to stem illicit financial flows and enhance global macroeconomic stability through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(f) African countries are urged to establish strong independent anti-corruption agencies to reinforce good governance;

(g) The United Nations and the African Union, in collaboration with development partners, should put in place strict mechanisms for economic transparency and accountability for any country experiencing war and/or undergoing post-conflict reconstruction.

VI. Plenary 4: Threat of corruption to political stability, peace and security [agenda item 6]

53. The session was co-chaired by Mr. Matlosa and Mr. Manneh. The panellists were the Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa, International Labour Organization, Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon; the United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ethiopia, Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie; the Chief of Staff, African Peer Review Mechanism, Ferdinard Katendeko; the Adviser on Peace, Security and Governance, Bureau to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Hadiza Mustapha; the Head of the United Nations Environment Programme Liaison Office to the Africa Union Commission and ECA and Representative to Ethiopia, Samba Thiam; the Associate Lecturer, Thabo Mbeki Leadership Institute, University of South Africa, Hespina Rukato; and the Senior Lecturer, University of Yaounde 2, Cameroon, Therese Felicitee Azeng.

54. Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon observed that the growing levels of inequality were fuelled by corruption and that 6 of the 10 most unequal countries in the world were in Africa. She added that, while migration provided an opportunity to foster regional development, corruption could transform it into a tool to foster instability. Employment creation should therefore become a national security issue and not only a socioeconomic one. In addition, social wellness was being threatened by corruption, and political talk had not been matched by concrete action in terms of the implementation of continental and national policies. While protecting employees from reporting violations was crucial, 20 per cent of resources earmarked for protection went missing because of corruption, fraud and the lack of capacity for the implementation of appropriate policies.

55. Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie underlined the danger of focusing on corruption, which was a very elusive target that wore a coat of many colours. Focus should instead be directed at inequality and exclusion, which were its visible faces and triggers. Accordingly, building inclusive and equal societies and addressing the divisions that fuelled instability and security was a more practical approach. That was especially important, given the fact that the some of the most equal and inclusive societies (e.g., Norway and Sweden) were also the least corrupt. She also said that, while the efforts to combat corruption could not succeed, focusing on inclusiveness and equality were issues within reach that could be systematically addressed. She added that Africa had a high tolerance for exclusion and inequality. Consequently, through more research and focus, it would be possible to create a continent that embraced equal societies through two important instruments, namely, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and to unleash African women to use their influence and power in every corner of society.

56. Mr. Katendeko highlighted that, while Africa was not short of laws and mechanisms to combat corruption, implementation and strong monitoring and follow-up remained a key challenge. According to the country review reports of the African Peer Review Mechanism, most corruption was political in nature and perpetrated by African leaders. He voiced the need to hold corrupt leaders accountable by speaking out against activities that promoted corruption. That was an area in which the Mechanism had been supporting countries in their path towards good governance.

57. Ms. Mustapha, while emphasizing the need for honesty when talking about African solutions to African problems, also observed that the West had placed much emphasis on Africa being unstable and shifted the conversation on the continent from other important issues, such as inequality. She said that one of the major causes of conflict in Africa was electoral injustice and related election malpractices. She underlined the need to look at the root causes of failed anti-corruption efforts. She called for more funding of peace support operations by the United Nations and transparency in initiatives such as Silencing the Guns by 2020, especially in the light of the proliferation of small arms on the continent.

58. Mr. Thiam noted that sources of conflict were related to the poor governance of natural resources. A total of 40 per cent of global conflicts were due to inter-State conflicts over natural resources, and Africa accounted for 60 per cent of those conflicts as a result of deforestation in tropical countries. Deforestation was fuelled by poaching, illegal logging, fishing, mining and deforestation, the illegal trade in minerals and timber and the illegal dumping of toxic waste. He added that 80 per cent of major armed conflicts occurred in biodiversity hotspots and that, in countries such as Somalia, 80 per cent of the proceeds from the illicit trade in charcoal went to Al-Shabaab. ODA to the continent was below what Africa lost through corruption or the illicit trade in natural resources, including wildlife. Land as a resource was also a principal driver of conflicts in Africa, while climate change was becoming a threat by exacerbating humanitarian needs, coupled with existing demographic pressures and a heavy reliance on agriculture. It had been observed that, in the Sahel, the resource demand led to local conflicts and cross-border conflicts.

59. Ms. Rukato noted that 6 of 10 refugees from Africa were economic refugees who had left owing to the mismanagement of natural resources. There was therefore a need to examine the impact of corruption in terms of denied opportunities. She also stressed the need to look at the role of society in enabling corruption and for anti-corruption norms and standards for African citizens and leaders. She also called for a holistic approach to address common challenges to managing resources.

60. Ms. Azeng said that all forms of corruption, their magnitude and perpetrators were well known and that their impact was much deeper, given the socioeconomic conditions on the continent. Corruption, while not linked directly to conflicts and instability, was linked to a loss of State legitimacy among the citizenry and thus posed a threat to citizens' sense of security and stability. She added that a corrupt country was a failed State and that corruption was deeply entrenched in the societies of some African countries to the extent of shaming those who worked against it. There were cases of citizens paying bribes for decent employment and access to quality services such as education. While agreeing with Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochi on alleviating inequality and exclusion, Ms. Azeng noted that unemployment among young people should be at the centre of anti-corruption efforts.

Discussion

61. The main highlights of the ensuing discussions were the following:

(a) Citing an incident in April 2018 in which a dam in Kenya broke down, destroying part of a community and resulting in a number of deaths of residents and of national park rangers, it was noted that most human-induced disasters and emergencies were the result of corrupt practices. Addressing the root causes of corruption, including through strengthened disaster risk governance, as prioritized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and its programme of action for its implementation in Africa, was of paramount importance and should be included in efforts to combat corruption;

(b) A disaggregated approach to addressing corruption could be made through establishing those responsible and who was benefiting from and affected by it. Doing so would show that women were more affected by the problem and were less corrupted and that the currency of corruption and bribery could be sexual. There was documented evidence that efforts to address corruption should enable women to lead contract negotiations and that having more women in leadership positions could constitute an innovative solution;

(c) Employment was both a security and stability issue. There was a need to support the implementation of policies aimed at protecting workers from exclusion through instruments such as the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, which provided direct guidance to enterprises (multinational and national) on social policy and inclusive, responsible and sustainable workplace practices;

(d) The issue of State capture by investors and the role of middle men were crucial, especially when some of the investment projects do not reflect priorities contained in national development plans;

(e) Efforts such as “Follow the Money” by young people to combat corruption through social media were important and the protection of whistle-blowers even more so.

Recommendations

62. After exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) African countries were urged to bring on board standards and ethics on elections and social fabric level norms to build lasting institutions on the basis of what had worked and what had not;

(b) African countries were urged to continue to work towards embracing the values associated with inclusive societies, focusing on a rights-based approach, and also to have zero tolerance for exclusion and inequality, thereby supporting anti-corruption efforts;

(c) African countries were urged to mainstream natural resource management into peace and security discussions;

(d) The African Union was urged to enhance support and further train the African Peer Review Mechanism to continue to monitor governance on the continent with regard to the efforts to combat and prevent corruption;

(e) African Governments were urged to demonstrate to their citizens the effect of global governance systems on Africa, including its international dimension, driven mainly through foreign companies and interests;

(f) African countries were urged to promote and reinforce civic education and public awareness of the causes and effects of corruption.

VII. Plenary 5: Strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations Development Group in the context of the reforms of the African Union and Secretary-General and of the United Nations-African Union frameworks [agenda item 7]

63. Mr. Atta-Mensah made a presentation on the highlights of an issue paper prepared jointly by the secretariats of the Mechanism and the United Nations Development Group. In it, the authors indicated that the Mechanism had served as a vehicle for the United Nations system operating in Africa to share information on its activities and to agree to coordinate its strategies for programme delivery in support of the priorities of the African Union. That mandate was strengthened by the General Assembly through its resolution 71/254, in which it called for United Nations-African Union cooperation to be based on the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027, the successor programme to the United Nations-African Union 10-year capacity-building programme. The Framework, which was anchored to Agenda 2063, therefore served as the overall platform for United Nations-African Union cooperation. Accordingly, the Mechanism provided an opportunity for the United Nations system to use Framework as a means for "Delivering as one" and enhancing coordination and coherence of its support to the African Union, its organs and organizations. He said that it should be noted that the Framework also preserved the tenets of Assembly resolution 57/7, in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations system in Africa to coordinate its activities, through the Mechanism, in support of the NEPAD framework. The Mechanism had been functioning through a network of nine clusters. The programme of work of the clusters was fully aligned with the goals contained in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the priorities of the African Union Commission. The clusters were the following:

- (a) Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agro-processing and regional integration;
- (b) Infrastructure development;
- (c) Human capital development, health, nutrition, science, technology and innovation;
- (d) Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility;
- (e) Gender equality and the empowerment of women and young people;
- (f) Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management;
- (g) Environment, urbanization and population;
- (h) Advocacy, information, communications and culture;
- (i) Governance, peace and security.

64. Mr. Atta-Mensah indicated that the Mechanism had achieved modest success. The United Nations as a whole continued to support the African Union in the implementation of its developmental priorities. The African Union Commission's commitment and involvement in the work of the clusters were evident at the highest level of decision-making at the Commission. As with all institutions, however, there was a need for improvement in the functioning of Mechanism. The efficacy of the clusters of the Mechanism continued to face challenges, perhaps owing to the lack of clarity on who was responsible for the

implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the Mechanism. There was also a lack of follow-up action on decisions taken. As a result, decisions were not implemented. Going forward, greater participation and involvement of all stakeholders were needed to address challenges and enhance the efficacy of the Mechanism. There was also a need to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, in which clear expectations of the type of relationship, support and outcome in the context of Mechanism should be outlined. That should extend to the relationship at subregional levels between the United Nations and the regional economic communities and other intergovernmental organizations. It was also important for there to be a monitoring and evaluation framework to support the implementation of the activities of the Mechanism and its clusters.

65. Mr. Atta-Mensah also observed that the United Nations Development Group served as a high-level forum for joint policy formation and decision-making. It was responsible for providing guidance and supporting, tracking and overseeing the coordination of development operations. It united the United Nations funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments, and offices that played a role in development in more than 150 countries. It was established in 1997 following the General Assembly's endorsement of the report of the Secretary-General titled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform." Since 2008, the United Nations Development Group had been one of the three pillars of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the highest-level coordination forum of the United Nations system. CEB brought together the executive heads of United Nations organizations under the Chair of the Secretary-General to provide broad guidance, coordination and strategic direction for the system as a whole in the areas under the responsibility of the executive heads.

66. Mr. Atta-Mensah informed the meeting that, within the structure of CEB, the representation of the United Nations Secretariat noted that the United Nations Development Group was responsible for coordinating United Nations operational activities at the global and regional levels. The United Nations Development Group was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General. The common objective of the United Nations Development Group was to deliver more coherent, effective and efficient support to countries seeking to attain sustainable development. The United Nations Development Group therefore sought to do the following:

(a) Serve as a policy development and management instrument geared to contributing to and affecting policy, administrative and operational decisions by each of the member entities in support of the development work of the United Nations;

(b) Contribute to strengthening policy coherence and cost-effectiveness of United Nations development operations by reducing duplication and by pooling resources and services in order to maximize programme impact and minimize administrative costs;

(c) Provide a forum for heads of entities to consult on submissions to their governing bodies on both substantive and administrative matters relating to operational activities that had implications for other members of the group as a whole;

(d) Promote a more unified United Nations presence at the country level through, among other things, providing a forum for concerted directives to resident coordinators and field representatives in order to ensure a greater unity of purpose and coherence in performance at the country level;

(e) Assist the Secretary-General in leading the process of change and instituting sound management throughout the Organization;

(f) Advocate the comparative advantages and results of United Nations multilateral development cooperation.

67. Mr. Atta-Mensah indicated that the strategic priorities and workplan of the United Nations Development Group were formulated on the basis of the resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular those ones on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, guidance from the Economic and Social Council, the priorities of the Secretary-General and the evolving international development and cooperation environment. The workplans were expected to support the efforts of the United Nations Development Group at the global, regional and country levels.

68. Mr. Atta-Mensah observed that, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group had signed a statement of collaboration for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The statement built on the cooperation framework between UNDP and the five regional commissions, which had been signed on 24 October 2007, and reaffirmed the commitment by the regional commissions and the United Nations Development Group to strengthening collaboration, with the goal of enhancing United Nations policy coherence at the national, regional and global levels in support of Member States' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. That necessitated stronger cooperation between the regional commissions, the regional United Nations Development Group teams, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

69. The statement of collaboration committed the United Nations Development Group and the regional economic commissions to the following actions:

(a) Regional commissions, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams would mutually reinforce one other in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and share information on country demands in that regard;

(b) United Nations country teams would be able to draw on the regional commissions' normative and policy support work, technical expertise and platforms for policy discussion and exchange of experience, and on the commissions' support to member States for the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into their national development planning and fiscal frameworks; and the commissions would facilitate such access to their work and expertise;

(c) Regional commissions would keep the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams informed and, where possible, coordinate with them when working with national governments. The commissions would be able to draw on the country teams' programmatic expertise, coordination mechanisms, including results groups, and body of analytical work, as needed. The resident coordinators would facilitate such access;

(d) Resident coordinators, United Nations country teams and the regional commissions would enhance their cooperation in assisting governments in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda at the country level, including, where appropriate, through joint programmes and other common programming mechanisms;

(e) Working jointly, the regional commissions and the United Nations country teams would apply, where appropriate and based on country priorities, the common methodologies and approaches agreed to by the United Nations Development Group in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through the mainstreaming and acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and integrating policy support to member States;

(f) Regional commissions and the United Nations country teams would use common data and indicators, where appropriate, and share data and other analytical, processing and dissemination resources, such as modelling, methodological and visualization tools;

(g) Regional commissions and United Nations country teams would coordinate and, where possible, integrate capacity development efforts and policy advisory services to member States;

(h) Regional commissions and United Nations Development Group teams would enhance cooperation in the regions between the Mechanism, convened by the commissions and the relevant regional team to enhance the impact of United Nations development activities in response to the regional and subregional priorities of member States;

(i) Regional commissions and United Nations country teams would align United Nations system efforts in the regions in support of regional and subregional priorities and policy frameworks articulated by member States and translate them into action at the country level in accordance with country priorities and in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(j) Promote United Nations system policy coherence and analytical frameworks for the Goals, in line with the priorities expressed by member States. Communicate and advocate shared sustainable development policy messages;

(k) Support the follow-up and review by member States of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels, in particular the support of United Nations country teams at the national level, and the support of the regional commissions at the regional level, including through the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and ensure systematic, timely and coherent nexus and interaction among the three levels, and, when appropriate, by collaborating on regional inter-agency reports;

(l) Undertake any additional needed collaborative action in support of the sustainable development plans of member States.

70. With regard to the reforms to the United Nations put forward by the Secretary-General, Mr. Atta-Mensah indicated that the Secretary-General considered the regional economic commissions to be essential components of the United Nations development system policy backbone. That was because the commissions were policy think tanks, providing data and analytical services and policy advice to address regional issues and supporting the development of a wide range of regional norms, standards and conventions. On the other hand, the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group provided leadership, strategic guidance and services to the United Nations country teams and quality assurance and monitoring of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and joint initiatives, ensured the performance management of resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams and troubleshoot in difficult country situations and disputes.

71. The Secretary-General, in his 2017 report on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda (A/72/124-E/2018/3), made the following suggestion:

Regional Commissions should be empowered as the lead voice of the United Nations development system on policymaking, research and the production of knowledge products at the regional level that nurture integration and balanced progress on sustainable development. Country teams, in turn, should preserve the primary role in supporting national governments in implementing, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, it is important to build on the statement of collaboration between the regional commissions and the

United Nations Development Group, with related accountabilities to ensure a clear division of labour.

72. On the strengthening of the partnership between the Mechanism and the United Nations Development Group, Mr. Atta-Mensah noted that the issues paper on the partnership should be based on the reforms of the African Union and those put forward by the Secretary-General, as well as frameworks of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union: the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027, the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The following recommendations were included in the issues paper to strengthen the partnership between the Mechanism and United Nations Development Group:

(a) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group would benefit from support from the leadership of the United Nations and African Union, beginning with the African Union Deputy Chairperson and the Deputy Secretary-General (as co-Chairs of the Mechanism) and the Chair of the United Nations Development Group. In that regard, the Chairs of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group for Africa should meet at least once annually to provide strategic guidance on the partnership in support of the priorities of the African Union and its organs, including the regional economic communities and member States;

(b) The work of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should be organized around thematic areas of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The current clusters of the Mechanism could be the starting point;

(c) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should seek to coordinate their workplans to ensure the highest combined value added. Regular meetings of their secretariats were therefore strongly recommended;

(d) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should support the resident coordinators in the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as envisaged by the Secretary-General. In that regard, the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should support the capacity-building efforts of the United Nations country teams in African Union member States;

(e) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, should hold periodic high-policy dialogues on topical issues of relevance to the African Union, regional communities and member States;

(f) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should be adequately resourced to develop a common knowledge management platform for the sharing of knowledge products, the creation of communities of practice, blogs on key issues, a skills bank and an expert roster;

(g) The secretariats of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should jointly prepare the annual sessions of the Mechanism and the meetings of the regional teams in Africa;

(h) The Mechanism should participate in the meetings of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group and vice versa;

(i) With a view to avoiding duplication and overlaps, the United Nations-African Union frameworks should be implemented through the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group.

Discussion

73. The discussions following the interventions centred around the following:

(a) The Mechanism had an important role to play in bringing the United Nations together to “deliver as one” in its support to the African Union. Notwithstanding progress made, there remained challenges in the implementation of the various frameworks of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union;

(b) It was noted that appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be put in place to measure progress on the activities of the Mechanism;

(c) It was noted that the delivery of United Nations support to the African Union needed to be more effective. In that regard, the United Nations was called upon to support the African Union on the priorities of Africa;

(d) It was noted that, during the past five years, the Mechanism had improved dramatically. Most of the work of the clusters were aligned to the priorities of the African Union. The cooperation between the two institutions had deepened and they were collaborating better on a number of issues pertinent to the continent. It was noted, however, that there was a need for improvements to make the Mechanism more effective;

(e) In acknowledging the shortcomings of the United Nations, it was emphasized that African countries were also States Members of the Organization. There was therefore a need for the African Member States to push for an increased commitment from the United Nations to scale up its efforts in addressing development matters of importance to Africa;

(f) With regard to the need to reconfigure the clusters of the Mechanism, the participants were reminded that the current cluster composition had been due to the former African Union Commission chief of staff and that it had been done in context of the first 10-year action plan of Agenda 2063. Bearing in mind the same objective, a “re-clustering” should occur with larger participation to enhance the United Nations-African Union partnership;

(g) It was noted that, with the reforms presented by the Secretary-General, the regional economic commissions would have three functions: to act as a think tank to serve the United Nations development system; to use its convening power to bring together stakeholders; and to undertake operational activities to support the capacities of member States through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework at the country level;

(h) It was stressed that United Nations had been a very good partner in the work of the African Peer Review Mechanism. ECA and UNDP were commended for their support to the secretariat of the Mechanism;

(i) It was noted that the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union had improved, compared with the past. Mention was made of the reform agenda of the Secretary-General, which was moving towards empowering field officials of the United Nations to make the decisions on the basis of local realities and priorities in order to bring the Organization closer to the people and to successfully carry out its mandate;

(j) It was noted that part of the reform agenda of the Secretary-General was to remove “silos” in the manner in which the United Nations delivered its services;

(k) It was reiterated that the Mechanism was a partnership and not simply the United Nations providing support to the African Union. The Mechanism was intended to support NEPAD in 2003, but, with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union should go beyond NEPAD;

(l) There was a need to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations Development Group and the Mechanism. The relationship between the two should be based on building on mandates to provide support at the country level (short term); focusing on specific actions that could address the capacity needs of United Nations organs (medium term); and ensuring institutional reforms of the United Nations in order for the Mechanism and the United Nations Development Group to be more effective (long term).

74. In response to a question concerning concrete ways in which the Mechanism could deepen working relationships with regional teams of the United Nations Development Group, the head of the regional team for Eastern and Southern Africa, Jacqueline Olweya intervened.

75. Ms. Olweya said that, on the basis of the reform agenda of the Secretary-General, which would reposition the United Nations system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, several new initiatives could be developed. Those would be categorized as short term, medium term and long term. In that respect, the comparative advantage derived from specific mandates of each entity would be used by member States/United Nations country teams in support of their work.

76. In the short term, Ms. Olweya said that action might include efforts by the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group, such as co-hosting eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Mechanism. Those efforts had laid the foundation for better working relations. Taking note of the different strengths of the entities involved, she said that the Mechanism might be called upon to leverage its “think tank” abilities and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group provide direct engagement with United Nations country teams in order to work to address issues of data gaps.

77. In the medium term, Ms. Olweya said that there was a suggestion to analyse capacity gaps and take advantage of the regional economic commissions and the relevant interlocutors to support those capacity gaps that were needed to fulfil the development aspirations of member States. Concrete actions in that regard would become clearer only once the dust had settled on the real implications of the current reforms as proposed.

78. Ms. Olweya said that the longer-term suggestions involved institutional reforms of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group and the regional economic commissions that would enable the institutions to work better together. She referred to the meeting of the joint secretariat, held in December 2016, during which the policy dialogue was tailored to the African Union theme for the eighteenth session. Young people and the demographic dividend were used to enhance the participation and involvement of the former on the continent. It was noted that the full report of the meeting was available for wider circulation and readership.

Recommendations

79. After exhaustive deliberations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) The Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group were urged to institutionalize the joint meetings of the sessions of the Mechanism, with a view to deepening collaboration. In that regard, both secretariats should jointly plan the meeting;

(b) The secretariats of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group were called upon to develop a mechanism of cooperation and collaboration. In that regard, the secretariats should plan to meet in the last quarter of 2018 to strategize on areas of cooperation;

(c) The work programmes of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group should be aligned to the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the United Nations-African Union frameworks on peace and security and development;

(d) The work of the clusters of the Mechanism should also be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the United Nations-African Union frameworks on peace and security and development.

VIII. Sixth plenary session: Presentations and discussion on the progress of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and updates on and adoption of the workplan [agenda item 8]

A. African Union-United Nations progress report of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

80. A representative of the Mechanism secretariat, Admore Kambudzi, made a presentation on the progress of the Mechanism and the work of the clusters.

81. On strengthening coordination of the Mechanism, it was noted that the main achievement was the joint planning of work based on the medium-term plan of Agenda 2063. It was also noted that clarity had been required on role of the Mechanism in the context of the reforms of the United Nations and of the African Union and of the three partnership frameworks.

82. The following were among the various achievements of cluster 1: (a) the historic signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area by 44 African States; (b) a memorandum of understanding between the African Union Commission and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on the various areas of collaboration in which the industrial development division programmes were expected to be implemented; (c) discussion on 20 economic zones; (d) a study on cassava value chains; (e) an action plan for small and medium-sized enterprises; and (f) a conference on modern agriculture.

83. With regard to cluster 2, the achievements of the secretariat were in four areas: (a) road safety, including the adoption of the African road safety action plan and charter, country-level road maps and a study on minimum safety indicators; (b) energy, including the submission of outcomes on mainstreaming a bioenergy framework and policy guidelines to the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism and the development of regional frameworks and guidelines on the same and organizing a workshop on waste to energy workshop in North Africa; (c) transport, including an advocacy and action plan for the single African air transport market and plans to strengthen the capacity of the African Civil Aviation Commission as an implementing agency of the market; and (d) tourism, including the continental tourism framework and Ethiopia sustainable tourism masterplan and tourism satellite accounts.

84. The Achievements of cluster 3 included the validation of the continental education strategy for Africa indicators framework; the African Union and United Nations agency partnership on school feeding programmes; the African Union teacher study recommendations; advancing science, technology, engineering and mathematics education; work on gender in education and peace and education; monitoring and reporting mechanisms on global and continental

frameworks; and support for implementing the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States.

85. Achievements by cluster 4 included the development of the first five-year priority programme, joint initiatives on employment for young people, the participatory slum upgrading programme, social security for migrant workers, joint labour migration programmes, support for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and continued work by the tripartite task force to assist stranded migrants in Libya.

86. The achievements of cluster 5 included the review of African Union gender policy of 2009 and the development of the African Union gender equality and women's empowerment strategy for the period 2018-2027, the third edition of the gender scorecard, a continental framework on women, peace and security, mainstreaming issues regarding young people and the African Union demographic dividend road map.

87. Some achievements of cluster 6 were briefings on humanitarian issues, training support, the implementation of decisions in the African Union humanitarian policy framework, support for the disaster prevention and response initiative and a response to landslides in Sierra Leone; support to the African Union Department of Political Affairs in preparatory activities for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the African Refugee Convention and the tenth anniversary of the African Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa through the establishment of a secretariat and support for training on humanitarian law and policy and on relevant publications; support for the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration on disaster risk reduction and its seven commitments by the African Union; training on the Sendai Framework; and country-level support for disaster loss accounting.

88. The outputs of cluster 7 included assistance in decision-making tools for surveillance and information management systems of chemicals; the work of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union on mainstreaming natural resource governance into the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative; the development of a harmonized framework for implementation of the New Urban Agenda; the establishment of the geothermal centre of excellence; and the launch of the African Network of Earth Science Institutions.

89. Cluster 8 provided support to member States on various international conventions on culture and safeguarding cultural heritage; for country-level indicator frameworks; for the African model law on culture; in efforts to combat the illegal trafficking in cultural property; and for joint programmes with the Southern African Development Community on the cultural sector.

90. Cluster 9 achievements included support for the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. Other outputs included assistance in the decision-making capacity of the African Union and greater cooperation between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council, as well as support for field visits of the Peace and Security Council to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, as well as the Lake Chad Basin.

91. With regard to the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa, there was the ongoing joint implementation of the Sahel project and planned training to experts in the Economic Community of Central African States and ECOWAS.

92. With respect to the subregional coordination mechanism for East and Southern Africa, it was noted that there was a need to deepen knowledge and

awareness of the links between migration and governance, industrialization, employment, finance and overall development.

93. The subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa held an annual meeting held, the outcomes of which included coordination at the subregional level, the financing of joint programmes and the promotion of ownership of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

94. A key output of the subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa was the mobilization of other United Nations institutions around subjects of common interest such as the monitoring of the progress of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics through the achievements of its Core Group and the United Nations integrated strategy for economic resilience in the Sahel region.

95. The challenges and recommendations remained the same and included ownership and commitment from both the United Nations and the African Union sides at the leadership and cluster levels, securing sustainable human, technical and financial resources for the Mechanism and its secretariat, the use of the new Mechanism platform for intra-cluster collaboration, budgeting and assigning a person for communications, the need for a two-year work programme and monitoring and evaluation of implementation through the Mechanism's own framework.

B. Update on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

96. A representative of the Mechanism secretariat made a presentation and noted that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 had taken place in large part at the national level. The leadership of member States to adapt and align the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with their national development plans and finance their implementation, monitoring and reporting was therefore very important. The financial and technical support by partners was equally important, as with engagement by civil society and the private sector to incorporate the two agendas into their own strategies.

97. The representative informed the meeting that the annual *Africa Sustainable Development Report*, jointly prepared by ECA, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and UNDP, underscored the progress made in adapting and implementing the two agendas. The 2017 report contained a review of progress on six of the Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 1 (no poverty); Goal 2 (zero hunger); Goal 3 (good health and well-being); Goal 5 (gender equality); Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); and Goal 14 (life below water). In addition, data availability and gaps were underscored.

98. The representative also noted that the 2018 report focused on six of the Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 6 (water and sanitation for all); Goal 7 (modern energy for all); Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities); Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production); Goal 15 (life on land); and Goal 17 (science, technology and innovation).

99. The representative stressed that countries were at various stages in terms of adapting the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and of establishing institutions and systems for their implementation and reporting. Initial progress was mixed, with some countries, in particular those in North Africa, making inroads towards realizing the key targets. Reporting was constrained by the large data gaps: only 50 per cent of the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals had at least one data point and only 37.8 per cent had at least two data points to allow for reporting on progress.

100. The secretariat informed delegates that the integrated planning and reporting toolkit, a software developed by ECA, helped to align the two agendas for harmonized adaptation into national development plans and allowed for reporting on progress. In addition, the common regional indicators provided a framework for monitoring the implementation of the agendas.

101. Going forward, the secretariat emphasized that it was important for member States, with the support of partners, to strengthen the capacity and systems for data-gathering and data analysis as a foundation for adequate reporting on progress. It was also critical to mobilize more resources to enable in-depth analysis of country performance on the two agendas. The African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development signed in January 2018, would enhance collaboration between the two organizations to promote inclusive growth, sustainable development and transformation in Africa.

102. The participants took note of the update and thanked the presenter.

C. Update on the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

103. A representative of the secretariat made a presentation. He informed the meeting that ECA, together with Senegal and in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, FAO, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the African Union Commission and AfDB, had convened the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Dakar from 2 to 4 May 2018, in preparation for the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018.

104. The Forum convened under the theme of “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” and was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Senegal, Mahammed Dionne. He reiterated the country’s commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted national programmes relating to them, including the roll-out of green cities, increasing the use of solar energy and working to incorporate the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national planning.

105. An in-depth review was carried out of selected Sustainable Development Goals for the high-level political forum, along with Goal 17 and the corresponding goals contained in Agenda 2063, under the following subthemes: (a) clean water and sanitation; (b) affordable and clean energy; (c) sustainable cities and communities; (d) responsible consumption and production; (e) life on land; and (f) strengthening the means of implementation and the partnership for sustainable development.

106. The participants took note of the update and thanked the presenter.

D. Adoption of the United Nations-African Union joint programme for 2018-2019 for the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

107. The secretariat informed the session that the United Nations-African Union joint programme for 2018-2019 for the Mechanism had been agreed upon at a retreat of the Mechanism, which was held in Nairobi from 24 to 27 April 2018. The main objective was for the United Nations and the African Union to agree to a common work programme for the Mechanism clusters.

108. On the basis of the decision of the seventeenth session of the Mechanism, the work programme for 2018-2019, presented to members, was anchored to the priorities of the African Union enshrined in its Agenda 2063. It was also aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027, the African Union-United Nations Framework for Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

109. The Mechanism secretariat collated and prepared the work programme following the retreat, ensuring that it was properly aligned with the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the three United Nations-African Union frameworks.

110. The secretariat asked participants to adopt the work programme.

Recommendation

111. The participants adopted the work programme.

IX. Any other business [agenda item 9]

112. No issues were raised.

X. Presentation and adoption of the draft report of the meeting [agenda item 10]

113. The report was adopted in principle. The secretariat was called upon to submit the report electronically to participants for their comments, after which the report would be considered fully adopted.

XI. Closing of the session [agenda item 11]

114. Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie made her closing remarks on behalf of the Chair of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group. She noted that the meeting had engaging discussions and came up with key strategies that would enable Africans collectively to succeed in combating corruption for a prosperous Africa, in which the continent's aspirations would be fully achieved. She recalled that the meeting had agreed that corruption had a huge impact on Africa's development. Corruption took various forms that ranged from financial (e.g., illicit financial flows, high-level political graft, corrupt practices by big business and bribery) to sextortion.

115. Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie observed that corruption not only led to exclusion and inequalities, but also that exclusion and inequalities caused and exacerbated corruption. Those issues needed to be addressed collectively if efforts to combat corruption were going to succeed. Because the dynamics of corruption affected gender and young people, with women more affected, solutions should take account of those dimensions. Unless everyone joined forces at all levels, the efforts would not succeed. She called for a transition from combating to preventing corruption by addressing its root causes and reinforcing African value systems. She observed that it had been agreed that Africa did not lack the policy and legal frameworks to address the issue of corruption and that there was a need to move forward to enforcement, implementation, follow-up, monitoring and reporting on those legal frameworks in a coordinated way.

116. Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie concluded by reminding everyone that one of the delegates had brought to the attention of the meeting the number 6, which was the number that the United Nations and the African Union should focus on

in their efforts to combat corruption. She elaborated on the point by discussing the following six points:

(a) Ensure access to information for citizens, media, political parties and countries to enable them to understand budgetary and procurement processes and markets and strategies for addressing corruption. Information should also be shared on best practices in combating corruption;

(b) Implementation of the policy and legal frameworks and instruments aimed at combating corruption, with clear accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanisms. There should also be put in place mechanisms that rewarded ethical and anti-corruption behaviour by individuals and institutions. As had been agreed to in the meeting, the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets of the 2030 Agenda and the aspirations of Agenda 2063 provided a solid basis to support national frameworks. Their achievement was a prerequisite for combating corruption;

(c) The independence of institutions that combat corruption should be adequately resourced and strengthened. There should also be protection of human resources/individuals/whistle-blowers in such institutions;

(d) Adopt innovative strategies in efforts to combat and prevent corruption, including through ICT, social media, digitalizing procurement, business processes and engaging all citizens. The “Follow the money” initiative was one such strategy;

(e) Ensure that all strategies aimed at combating corruption were taken forward in an integrated manner across sectors, addressing the various facets and types of corruption, whether in the economic, social, environmental and political spheres. There was also a need for the harmonization of legal frameworks involving all partners and across countries (e.g., transit and recipient countries of illicit financial flows);

(f) Noting the interrelatedness between inequality, exclusion and corruption, it was agreed that ensuring inclusion and addressing inequality was the only way that the United Nations system, working with all other partners, could support the African Union in succeeding in efforts to combat corruption in a sustainable way for the prosperity of Africa.

117. Ms. Eziakonwa-Onochie assured the meeting of the commitment of the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group to working with all stakeholders in taking forward deliberations arising from the meeting.

118. In his closing remarks, Mr. Hamdok acknowledged the good discussions and recommendations arising from the session and how the United Nations could support the African Union in the efforts to combat corruption. He observed that the adoption of the annual African Union theme by the sessions of the Mechanism was one of the good practices to emerge from the Mechanism.

119. With regard to the discussion on the role of the Mechanism in the implementation of the various United Nations-African Union frameworks, Mr. Hamdok said he appreciated the frank discussions arising from the forum and advised the meeting that the recommendations had been well captured by the secretariat in the report of the meeting.

120. Mr. Hamdok concluded by expressing his gratitude to the leadership of the United Nations and the African Union, the Mechanism secretariat and all participants for the successful session. He stated that the Mechanism was an important instrument for cooperation and that the ideas and outcome of the session would enhance the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

121. In his closing remarks, Mr. Kwesi Quartey thanked the participants for their attendance at the session, which was a testament to their commitment and

belief in the Mechanism and its work. He noted that the session had very fruitful discussions on the problem of corruption that was affecting every facet of the continent's social and economic development. It was also acknowledged that corruption did not originate on the continent and would not end on it, either. He reminded the participants that the partitioning of the continent had roots in corruption. Deeper interrogation of that issue was needed and solutions could be reached only after undertaking profound reflection. He acknowledged that the paralyzing effects of corruption could be found in the education systems, public administration, financial institutions and governance systems.

122. Mr. Kwesi Quartey noted the important role of the Mechanism in ensuring that the United Nations delivered as one to meet the priorities of the African Union. He called for greater coordination, communication and the strengthening of the partnership between it and the United Nations. That cooperation was important if Africa were to succeed in its integration efforts. He reiterated the commitment of the African Union and its organs in ensuring that the Mechanism was more effective in responding to the needs of the everyday citizen. He was confident that, with the combined efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 could be implemented through the effective implementation of the various joint cooperation frameworks. With those remarks, he declared the meeting closed.

Annex

List of participants

African Union Commission

1. Thomas K. Quartey
Deputy Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis, Ababa
2. Hadiza Mustapha
Adviser
Bureau of
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
3. Agbor Ambang
Head of NEPAD Unit
Bureau of
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
4. Anthonia Iyanda
Senior Policy Officer
Bureau of Deputy
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
5. Cheikh Beddah
Director
Infrastructure and
Energy
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
6. Kevin Eldridge T.
Tchetda
Governance Analyst
and Advisor
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
7. Lami Omale
Associate Legal
Officer
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
8. Hussein Hassan
Head, Trade and
Industry
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
9. Gamal Eldin Ahmed
Harran
Communications
Officer
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
10. Niamkey Malan
Adviser
Bureau to Deputy
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
11. Victor Harison
Commissioner
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
12. Jean-Denis Gabikini
Head, Economic
Integration and
Regional Cooperation
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
13. Khabele Matlosa
Director
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
14. Mahawa Wheeler
Director, Women,
Gender and
Development
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
15. Andisiwe Hlungwanr
Youth Volunteer

- Bureau of
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
23. Valentine Atonde
Programme Officer
ECOWAS
Addis Ababa
16. Blaise Banoum
Advisor
Bureau of Deputy
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
24. Salvator Matata
Head of COMESA
Liaison Office to the
African Union
Addis Ababa
17. Doreen Apollos
Communications
Adviser
Bureau of Deputy
Chairperson
African Union
Commission
Addis Ababa
25. Nelson Magbagbeola
Head, ECOWAS
Liaison Office
ECOWAS
Commission
Lagos, Nigeria
18. Daniel Batidam
Board Member
African Union
Commission-ACB
Arusha, United
Republic of Tanzania
- African Peer Review
Mechanism
secretariat**
26. Ferdinand Katendeko
Chief of Staff
African Peer Review
Mechanism
Pretoria, South Africa
- Regional economic
community**
- Economic
Commission for
Africa**
19. Abdi Fidar
Capacity
Development
Coordinator
IGAD
Djibouti
27. Vera Songwe
Under-Secretary-
General and
Executive Secretary
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis, Ababa
20. Suma Watson
Mwakyusa
Principal
International
Relations Officer
East African
Community
Arusha, United
Republic of Tanzania
28. Abdalla Hamdok
Deputy Executive
Secretary
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis, Ababa
21. Francis Mangeni
Director, Trade
COMESA
Lusaka
29. Giovanni Biha
Deputy Executive
Secretary for
Knowledge Delivery
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
22. Julien Emile
Razafintsalama
International
Cooperation Officer
COMESA
Lusaka

30. Stephen Karingi
Director, Capacity
Development
Division
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
31. Lilia Naas
Director
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Rabat
32. Karima B. Ben
Soltane
Director
African Institute for
Economic
Development and
Planning
Dakar
33. Said Adejumobi
Director
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Lusaka
34. Andrew Mold
Officer-in-Charge
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Kigali
35. Aida Opoku-Mensah
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
36. Joseph Atta-Mensah
Principal Adviser
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
37. Adeyemi Adeyinka
Senior Interregional
Advisor
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
38. Meaza Ashenafi
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
39. Nozipho Freya
Simelane
Economic Affairs
Officer
Economic
Commission for
Africa
Addis Ababa
40. Peter Mundala
Special Assistant to
the Deputy Executive
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