



**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa**  
Twentieth session  
Third joint meeting of the Regional Coordination  
Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations  
Sustainable Development Group  
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**African Union**

## **Report of the subregional coordination mechanisms**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report contains a summary of the support of the subregional coordination mechanisms for the implementation of African Union priorities at subregional levels, including those articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union. In that context, the report contains an overview of the assistance provided to the regional economic communities within the African Union priorities and under their strategic frameworks. It highlights the progress made in the implementation of joint initiatives and activities, challenges and the way forward.

### **II. Progress in the implementation of joint initiatives and activities**

#### **A. Central Africa**

2. As the secretariat of the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa, the Subregional Office for Central Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has succeeded in elevating the profile of the mechanism to become the platform of reference for agenda-setting and partnership-building of agencies of the United Nations and development partners (including the African Development Bank) operating in Central Africa. Under the leadership of the regional economic communities, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders have agreed to federate their programme and activities at the outcome level, with the view to reducing duplication of efforts, realizing economy of scale and maximizing development impact.

3. The extensive review of the modus operandi of the mechanism was aimed at consolidating the work of its members around flagship initiatives as a means to responding better to the development priorities and needs in Central Africa, as well as to the call of the Secretary-General for a more holistic approach in supporting the constituencies of the United Nations. This effort has led to the adoption of the third Common Indicative Programme in Libreville in November 2018.

4. The areas of focus of the third Common Indicative Programme include boosting economic diversification and resilience in Central Africa through structural transformation; improving human and social conditions; and promoting governance, peace and security. The Programme has targeted doubling intraregional trade (to 5 per cent) in the next five years through the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The new configuration of the subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa will have a statutory segment to discuss progress on the flagship initiatives of the Programme and a thematic component for agenda-setting, consensus-building and mobilizing the collective power of the mechanism for transformational change and co-creation.

## **B. East and Southern Africa**

5. The last meeting of the subregional coordination mechanism for East and Southern Africa was hosted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Djibouti in December 2017. The theme of the meeting was refocusing the subregional coordination mechanism for enhanced awareness and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The key outcomes and recommendations of the meeting included the following:

(a) Ensure that ECA information-sharing platform is used to upscale the awareness-raising activities on the two agendas;

(b) Regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations should identify a limited number of projects and initiatives that the United Nations can support, and focal points should be designated;

(c) Establish a task force to meet and follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the subregional coordination mechanism;

(d) The regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group for East and Southern Africa and ECA should closely collaborate and engage each other in undertaking their respective mapping exercises and sharing them, with a view to enhancing synergy and harmonization and avoiding duplication.

6. Key initiatives supported and implemented in East Africa since 2017, within the context of the mechanism, included the following:

(a) Development of a strategic blue economy policy framework for the Comoros, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(b) Consolidation of a strategic blue economy policy framework for Madagascar, in consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

(c) Development of an energy security policy framework for the East African Community.

7. Ongoing initiatives include the development of the tourism marketing strategy for the East African Community and the formulation of the continental tourism strategy for the African Union.

8. In Southern Africa, the key interventions supported and implemented since 2017 were on elaborating and unpacking the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015–2063 of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Those interventions included the following:

(a) Mineral Beneficiation Profiling Exercise, which identified key mineral value chains that the region could focus on as quick-wins in driving forward the SADC industrialization agenda;

(b) Mineral Sector Skills Assessment which identified gaps in the sector and called for deeper integration to facilitate the movement of skills, harmonization of training curricula and the sharing of capacities to tackle the gaps;

(c) Development of the SADC Regional Mining Vision, which is currently under review.

9. Technical support was provided to SADC in developing policy tools on small and medium-sized enterprise development. Technical support was also provided to member States, including to Lesotho, for the development of a minerals and mining framework. In 2019 and beyond, the work of the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa will focus on deepening regional integration towards the implementation of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Subregional Office for Southern Africa will focus on promoting inclusive industrialization, as well as supporting member States, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations in their respective areas of specialization.

### C. North Africa

10. The fourth annual consultative meeting of the subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa was held in March 2018, in collaboration with the Arab Maghreb Union secretariat. The meeting was attended by the Resident Coordinators of the United Nations system for Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco, as well as the Head of the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Egypt. Representatives of the following agencies of the United Nations system at the country level were present at the meeting: FAO; UNDP; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; International Maritime Organization; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Also present were representatives of the following agencies at the regional level: FAO; International Labour Organization; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; and IFAD. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following regional organizations: Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade; Arab Administrative Development Organization. Representatives of the following international institutions also attended: Islamic Development Bank; African Development Bank; Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa; and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation.

11. During the reporting period, the subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa focused its efforts on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in that subregion. A road map for the period 2018–2019 was formulated and adopted by all stakeholders at the end of the meeting to strengthen coordination and partnerships at the regional level and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in North Africa. The road map includes four cross-cutting themes relating to ownership and understanding of the Goals; integration of the Goals and ensuring public-policy coherence; strengthening national capacities for monitoring and reporting of the Goals; and harnessing the potential of South-South cooperation.

12. The meeting also discussed the subregional priorities and agreed to identify two major themes of work: employment and food security. Implementation of the regional road map is an integral part of the Action Plan for the African Union and United Nations Framework Agreement, which is aimed at coordinating and harmonizing the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The participants were trained on the key targets and indicators relating to Sustainable Development Goal 2, as well as on the methodologies and data needs to measure the indicators. The Subregional Office started research work that highlighted poor governance and a mismatch between public policies related to education, access to finance, the informal sector, the labour market and job creation. A regional dialogue on employment is to be held in April 2019, with the aim of devising a road map and an action plan to overcome existing barriers to creating a dynamic productive sector that creates jobs and provides equal opportunities for young people and women, while ensuring inclusive and balanced development in North Africa.

13. The subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa has also used various platforms to advocate for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and has demonstrated its links to the Sustainable Development Goals in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Subregional Office worked closely with the United Nations system in Mauritania to support the voluntary national review process. Furthermore, it worked with agencies of the United Nations system in Tunisia in the application of the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support, and the rapid integrated assessment tools in that country's development plan. A joint project of the United Nations country teams, on monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, was developed in Morocco. The Office organized a meeting on the Goals in North Africa, in which the report on the Goals in the Maghreb was presented and discussed. The publication was launched in November 2018 during the thirty-third session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa.

#### **D. West Africa**

14. The subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa is pursuing efforts to support the regional economic communities and to mobilize other United Nations institutions around common interests, such as monitoring the progress of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems through the achievements of its Core Group and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. The mechanism is also involved in the Sahel 2043 prospective study being carried out through a regional and inclusive process. The United Nations country team is conducting the process with the full support of the Governments of 10 countries involved in the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel countries. The process is capitalizing on the findings of the High-Level Regional Consultation on the Regional Prospective for the Sahel, organized by UNDP and held in Dakar on 14 and 15 October 2015. The working modalities put in place allowed for the contribution of all regional offices of the United Nations based in Dakar, as well as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

15. The 2018 annual meeting of the subregional coordination mechanism was held in Dakar under the theme of mobilizing efforts to make the Sahel a driving force for development in West Africa. The meeting provided an opportunity for the participating organizations to discuss their respective activities to support development efforts in West Africa in general, and the Sahel region in particular. Participants called upon the United Nations to make the results from prospective Sahel 2043 studies available to all development actors to permit an appreciation of the aspirations of people in the Sahel. This was considered to be important for improving the chances of achieving the best development scenarios in the Sahel region. This would enable the Sahel to position itself as a powerful driving force for development in the subregion.

### III. Challenges

16. The subregional coordination mechanisms reported inadequate collaboration among participating entities of the mechanisms as a major challenge. Furthermore, limited engagement of focal points with the secretariats and in some cases, delays in designating focal points for the mechanisms have hampered the implementation progress. In some cases, the mode of collaboration is through joint interventions in specific projects and bilateral engagements with regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, rather than through joint workplans. Weak implementation of joint workplans has led to the poor division of labour and unclear roles and responsibilities among participating entities of the mechanisms, resulting in the disengagement of entities like the regional economic communities, most of whom are yet to be meaningfully engaged. Furthermore, recommended working groups/task forces in some of the subregional mechanisms are yet to be established, thus hindering effective working modalities and the implementation process.

17. Some subregional coordination mechanisms face specific challenges. For example, the mechanism for East and Southern Africa covers 20 regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and 24 United Nations country teams, and are often confronted with the need to respond adequately to meet the needs of the subregion. In the specific context of the subregional mechanism for North Africa, difficulties remain with regard to achieving alignment and linking with the African Union strategic priorities, the Regional Coordination Mechanism clusters work and the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Arab States and the Middle East and North Africa region; poor linkages and synergies between, and alignment with similar processes such as voluntary national reviews; and interventions of the Sustainable Development Goal work programmes of various stakeholders, among others.

18. The mechanisms lack platforms and tools for information-sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, including agencies of the United Nations system, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, and others such as civil society and the private sector. In addition, the continuous challenge of inadequate resources, both human and financial, hamper the effective functioning of the mechanisms, including coordination, preparation of joint plans, their implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

### IV. Recommendations on the way forward

19. There is a need for consultations and sustained engagement with regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group teams on coordination and collaboration issues and the development and implementation of joint workplans aligned with the priorities of the African Union and its organs at the subregional level. Furthermore, roles and responsibilities need to be clarified. This should include a clear and accepted division of labour between the subregional coordination mechanism secretariats, regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and regional teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The resident coordinators should be involved in the subregional mechanisms in order to ensure effective linkage with the national level.

20. Furthermore, the joint initiatives of the mechanisms should pay specific attention to the Sustainable Development Goals and should be better aligned with the African Union frameworks and priorities. In supporting the work on the African Union priorities and the Goals, the mechanisms should ensure strengthened regional, subregional and national linkages. In addition to having

joint workplans involving all relevant stakeholders, there is a need to develop common planning, monitoring and reporting tools for the work of the mechanisms.

21. The strategies of the regional economic communities should be the entry points for the work of the mechanisms. Furthermore, collaboration and learning across the regional economic communities and subregional coordination mechanisms should be encouraged and strengthened. In that regard, platforms aimed at knowledge management and learning, both within and across regional economic communities and subregional coordination mechanisms, should be strengthened. Such platforms would enable the identification of strategies that work and those that do not.

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