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AD-HOC MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP

Theme:

National capacities and mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 agendas: Status, challenges and prospects in West Africa

6 -7 May 2019; Robertsfield; Liberia

CONCEPT NOTE

March 2019



1. Background and Rationale

In September 2015, UN Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) organized into 17 goals, 169 targets and 241 indicators. The strategy that guided the definition of the 17 goals and their targets and associated indicators aims by 2030 to end poverty, to fight against inequalities and injustice, and to deal with the effects of climate change but also to eventually correct the shortcomings recorded in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs therefore have the distinction of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.

The SDGs are also reflected in the vision of the African Union which aims to "build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force on the international stage" by 2063. The implementation of this vision, which covers the period 2013-2063, will be achieved through five five-year plans, the first of which is being implemented over the period 2014-2023.

In terms of scope, the more comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development strongly integrates the strategic directions of AU Agenda 2063. Like the 2030 Agenda, in terms of structuring, the 2063 Agenda, which is based on 7 aspirations, is structured into 20 objectives, 39 priority areas, 256 targets and 248 indicators. This structuring of the two agendas facilitates de facto their monitoring and evaluation. This rationalization of the State workload in terms of monitoring and evaluation is essential for all actors. The production of statistics for the evaluation of the SDGs will then be used for the agenda 2063.

The integrated approach in the follow-up of the two agendas is recommended, and technical and organizational initiatives are being put in place at the level of the States and Regional Communities to make it effective. ECA, AUC, UNDP and ADB are committed themselves in this process since 2017 with initiatives such as the development of integrated monitoring and evaluation platforms and tools, the production of integrated monitoring and evaluation reports, the establishment of joint consultation frameworks, etc.

Table 1: Assessment of the level of alignment between the 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda

2030 Agenda / SDG	Alignment with the 2063			
	Strongly	Weakly	Total aligned	No link
# of objectives	11	6	17	0
% of objectives	64.7	35.29	100	0
# of targets	62	56	118	51
% of targets	36.7	33.13	69.8	30.2
# of indicators	96	66	162	79
% of indicators	39.8	27.4	67.21	32.8

CEA, 2018



While overall agreement on this approach is made, it appears, however, that after three and six years of implementation of the 2030 and 2063 agendas, respectively, States still face capacity challenges in monitoring and evaluating the progress in meeting the goals and targets contained in those agendas. These capacity challenges can be structured in three dimensions: (i) technical capacities for statistical production, (ii) financing capacities and (iii) institutional and organizational capacities.

Statistically, the capacities of States remain too limited to be able to produce quality data in time to cover all the SDG indicators and the AU 2063 Agenda.

National statistical systems, despite their structural weaknesses in human and financial resources in statistical production, had been unable to adapt to the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the MDGs. However, the shift to a larger and more complex set of indicators covering all three dimensions of sustainable development have brought new issues of capacity. That complexity and those requirements for national statistical systems are at the organizational level, as well as at the level of survey and administrative data production operations. At the organizational level, there is a need for restructuring and repositioning of national statistical systems, particularly in terms of widening the coverage of survey and administrative data collection operations to incorporate new indicators that were not included in the MDGs. This restructuring will necessarily require enormous human and financial resources regarding the demands for modernizing the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical data.

The challenges of technical capacity in statistical production cannot be dissociated from the challenges of financing capacity. Complexity and requirements require more financial resources to meet the training needs of modern collection, processing and dissemination equipment. To meet those enormous needs, national budgets devote very little resources to national statistical systems. In addition to the absence of budget lines dedicated exclusively to statistical development, courageous initiatives to set up national statistical development funds have remained unsuccessful, making national statistical systems highly dependent on external funding. This situation of under-funding of national statistical systems negatively affects the autonomy and independence of statistical production entities, in particular the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), and in the long run on the sovereignty of States in the production of statistics.

As for institutional and organizational capacity challenges in monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 and 2063 agendas, States are confronted with leadership conflicts and institutional duplication in steering the monitoring and evaluation process of the agendas. In West Africa, the organizational and leadership difficulties between the ministries in charge of planning, the ministries in charge of the environment and sustainable development and the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) are real. Those institutional organization deficits necessarily affect the monitoring and evaluation process of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas, particularly in terms of quality and regularity in the production of related reports. In that perspective, the Voluntary National Review (NVR) process initiated and encouraged by the United Nations system since 2016 seems to be a good initiative to capitalize on for an integrated monitoring and evaluation of the two agendas.

Thus, on recommendation by the 21st meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of West Africa, ECA undertook, through a study, to examine national capacities to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas in West Africa. The main purpose being, in the context of a meeting of experts, to discuss the major challenges faced by States in order to inform and guide the taking of policy measures likely to strengthen national monitoring and evaluation processes of the two agendas in West Africa.

It is in this context that the ECA Office for West Africa, in partnership with the Government of Liberia and the support of the ECOWAS and the African Union Commission, is considering the organization of an Ad-Hoc Meeting of Experts on the theme: "**Capacities and national mechanisms for evaluating**



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progress in the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas: status, challenges and prospects in West Africa". In order to circumscribe the basis of the discussions of the meeting, the ECA prepared on the basis of the study carried out a draft report on the subject that will be submitted to the participants for its enrichment.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this expert meeting is to review the status and identify major challenges related to national capacities for monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas in West Africa.

Specifically, the meeting aims to:

- Analyse national data ecosystems in West African countries to assess their technical, human and financial capacity to monitor the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda;
- Analyse institutional and organizational capacities, including the legal framework, legislation and policies put in place by countries in the monitoring and evaluation process of the two agendas;
- Make proposals for recommendations for strengthening the national monitoring and evaluation processes of the SDGs and the AU 2063 Agenda.

3. Expected Outcomes and Outputs of the Meeting

The participants, including those representing Member States and development actors, will share their experiences and good practices in the provision of technical, statistical, financial and organizational capacities needed for the monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs and 2063 Agenda. The purpose at the end of the day is to achieve better monitoring and an appropriate assessment of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and the achievement of the 2063 Agenda in West Africa.

At the end of the meeting, a report on the main conclusions and recommendations from the discussions will be prepared by the meeting secretariat and submitted to the experts for validation. Those conclusions and recommendations will therefore be submitted to the 22nd Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE22) of West Africa for internalization and implementation by the Member States.

In addition, comments, amendments and contributions from the meeting will be used to finalize the draft report on the theme developed by ECA.

4. Format and target audience of the meeting

The Ad-Hoc meeting of Experts will be held over two days. It will include plenary sessions during which participants will discuss major national issues and challenges related to capacity building of West African States for monitoring and evaluation of public policies in general and the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda in particular, including the national process **Voluntary Reviews** (VNRs). In addition to the presentation by ECA of the preliminary results of the study it has conducted, presentations and communications are planned to be delivered by States, inter-governmental organizations of the sub-region, non-State entities and development institutions intervening in West Africa.

Participants will include experts from Member States as well as representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Intergovernmental Organizations of West Africa. Representatives of the private sector and civil society active in the field of sustainable development in the sub-region will also be present, and will be particularly involved in issues related to strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capacity of public policies. The experts from the ministries in charge of statistical production and public policy monitoring and evaluation, with the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda in mind, are mainly targeted at Member State level. Particular attention will be paid to the countries of West Africa that conducted in 2018 their process of National Voluntary Review (RVN)² within the framework of the SDGs and those engaged in this exercise in 2019 so that they can share their experience.

5. Date and venue of the meeting and logistical details



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The meeting will be held in Robertsfield, Liberia, **from 06 to 07 May 2019**. The ECA Office for West Africa, in collaboration with the host country, will be responsible for local logistics. Further details on the other administrative arrangements will be provided in the information note to the participants.

All participants are invited to confirm their participation by 1 April 2019 and to provide the ECA West Africa Bureau with all information on their travel itinerary as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the mobilization and the organization of the logistics related thereto.

6. Contacts

Confirmation of participations by official mail and e-mail, as well as the transmission of all necessary information, must be sent to the addresses below.

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¹ Benin, Cape Verde, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal

² Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) in English

³ Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Sierra Leone



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7. Draft agenda

1. Opening of the session;
2. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the work program;
3. Objective and expected results of the meeting;
4. Review of the main preliminary results of the study on: *"national capacities and mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas: the status, challenges and prospects in West Africa"*;
5. Country experiences, best practices and initiatives related to the capacities for monitoring and evaluation of SDGs and 2063 Agenda;
6. Sharing of experience, best practices and challenges on Agendas 2030 and 2063 M&E by the Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU)
7. Experience, best practices and challenges sharing by 2018 and 2019 National Voluntary Review (VNRs) countries on the VNRs process in West Africa
8. Non-state institutions, regional economic communities, Intergovernmental Organization and development institutions initiatives to support member States in strengthening their capacity to monitor and evaluate progress on the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda in West Africa;
9. Role of National accountability and leadership in the implementation and M&E of public Policies in the framework of agendas 2030 and 2063
10. Consideration and adoption of the note on the summary of conclusions and recommendations of the meeting;
11. Closing of the session