



AIDE MEMOIRE

**Conference on the role of subnational jurisdictions in
efforts to achieve the MDGs**

**Co-organized by Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the
President of Nigeria on the MDGs (OSSAP/MDGs
And
the African Centre for Gender and Social Development
(ACGSD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
(UNECA)**

**7-9 May, 2009
Transcorp Hilton Hotel
Abuja, Nigeria**

Background

The aggregate scorecard on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) shows that Africa will not meet all the targets by the target date of 2015. This has unleashed a flurry of efforts to scale up interventions to accelerate progress. But progress depends in the main on the effective contribution of various stakeholders, including national and subnational governments. However, attention has remained focused on government at the national level in spite of the self-evident fact that many African countries have, with the objective of improving public service delivery along with advancing national unity in the context of multi-ethnicity, devolved significant policy, spending, revenue and administrative responsibilities to lower tiers of government. In some countries, sub-national governments account for more than 50% of aggregate public sector expenditure.

However, not much is known in the African context of the role/contribution of subnational jurisdictions in the development effort in general and in efforts to achieve the MDGs in particular. In view of the urgency of scaling up action to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and given the potential and challenges associated with the increased role of subnational jurisdictions in this regard, this gap in knowledge has to be bridged. Two issues are worth exploring in this regard. The first relates to what subnational governments have done to advance the MDG agenda and the second concerns with what subnational governments can and should do, within the limit of their functional assignments, to contribute to the acceleration of the rate of progress towards the targets of the MDGs.

To address this gap and provide policy options for consideration by African policy makers on leveraging sub-national governments to accelerate efforts to achieve the MDGs, the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on MDGs (OSSAP/MDGs) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) are co-organizing a *Conference on the role of subnational jurisdictions in efforts to achieve the MDGs* in Abuja, Nigeria, from 7 May to 9 May 2009. The overall objectives of the Conference are: i) to contribute to a deeper understanding of the place and contribution of subnational jurisdictions in the efforts to advance the MDG agenda in Africa; ii) to explore ways and means to scale up their contribution and iii) to propose options for consideration and adoption by policy makers.

Objectives of the Conference

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In particular, the Conference is expected to:

- i) Assess progress made in meeting the targets of the MDGs at the subnational level as well as in addressing regional disparities.
- ii) Review fiscal policies and other instruments deployed by subnational jurisdictions to reach the MDGs
- iii) Identify obstacles that prevent subnational jurisdictions from contributing effectively to efforts to reach the MDGs.
- iv) Provide recommendations on how sub-national jurisdictions can play a more active and effective role in meeting the targets of the MDGs.

Participants

The Conference will be attended by approximately 40 participants, including high-level policy experts, practitioners and policymakers from a range of African countries, the African Union Commission (AUC), African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), UNDP, World Bank, IMF, academia and civil society.

Date and Venue

The Conference will take place at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, Nigeria, from 7 to 9 May 2009.

Working Language

The working languages of the Conference will be in English and French. Interpretation will be provided.

Expected Outcomes

- i) A set of recommendations on how to scale up the contribution of subnational jurisdictions to efforts to achieve the MDGs;
- ii) A non-recurrent publication on the role of subnational jurisdictions in efforts to achieve the MDGs, drawing from the background papers prepared for the Conference as well as the proceedings of the Conference;
- iii) Policy briefs on “*the Role of Subnational jurisdictions in efforts to achieve the MDGs*” that will be disseminated to member states;
- iv) Input into the “Regional Review of Progress in Africa towards the targets of the MDGs”, which ECA is organizing in November 2009, in preparation for the UN General Assembly Review of Progress towards the MDGs in 2010.