



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

10th Session of Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme

Welcome Remarks

by

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Your Excellency, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism,
Your Excellency, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Co-chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism,
Your Excellency, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Secretariat,
Excellencies, Executive Heads of Regional Economic Communities,
Colleagues of the United Nations System,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and great pleasure to welcome you back to Addis Ababa, home of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and to this 10th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of UN agencies and organizations working in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme.

Let me extend a special warm welcome to the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro and express our profound appreciation for her continued support to the RCM. Madam Deputy Secretary General, we are highly honoured and inspired to have you with us for the third consecutive time to chair the RCM. Your keen interest, energy and steadfastness have greatly enhanced the profile of the RCM and the coherence of the UN agencies, in their mission to “deliver as one” for the African Union and its NEPAD programme.

I also thank Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chair of the African Union Commission and Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD Secretariat for their personal interest and faith in the RCM. We are indeed truly grateful for your continued collaboration and support, which have enabled us to achieve significant progress in our shared vision and mission to promote an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

We are gathered here for the 10th session of the RCM, a milestone occasion which signifies a decade of collective engagement of UN Agencies and Organizations with key African institutions in strengthening coherence and coordination of UN support to Africa’s development agenda and programmes. This 10th anniversary provides us an ideal opportunity to take stock of performance and achievements and discuss how to consolidate our vision and commitment of “delivering as one”. It is also a time to reflect on the challenges encountered and lessons learned, and chart a way forward with renewed vigour and energy to better support Africa’s development.

We have, indeed, come a long way, since Africa held its first RCM meeting in 1999. We have established an RCM Secretariat charged with coordinating our

work in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme. The RCM has been strengthened and, has indeed become a veritable tool for coordinating our work, rather than a mere consultative forum. We have created clusters which are better aligned to the priorities of the African Union and NEPAD. The RCM is giving strategic support to clusters and offering sound advice on inter-cluster relations.

The clusters are fulfilling tasks in General Assembly resolution 57/7 which mandates the UN system to support NEPAD; they are planning together and implementing as one. While we celebrate the improved functioning of the clusters, we still have some way to go in utilizing their strengths to the optimum. In particular these clusters need to be backed up by an RCM secretariat which is supported not only by ECA but by other agencies. This should be through financial support and provision of additional capacity through the deployment of staff as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit.

Excellencies,
Colleagues,

This RCM session affords us the opportunity to review our support Africa in key thematic areas, especially that of climate change and MDGs. The Conference of Parties to negotiate a post-Kyoto agreement takes place barely one month from now. It will certainly be important for us to use this session to gain a proper understanding of where Africa stands with regard to the negotiations and how the UN system can provide support to our member States in implementing its outcomes. Next year will leave us five years to the target date for achieving the MDGs. A high-level review meeting is scheduled to take place in New York in September 2010. It is incumbent for us to use this opportunity to explore the potential contribution of the RCM to this process.

Also critical is the need to further strengthen the RCM and achieve greater interagency coherence in our work. In this regard, we should strive to enhance the synergies between the RCM and the Regional Directors Team (RDT). Some regions have the experience of holding back-to-back meetings of RCM and RDT and we should review this practice to see if there is anything we can learn from. We have to take bold steps in establishing linkages between the two mechanisms in order to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

As we ponder these questions, let us be mindful that our preferred solutions should achieve maximum benefits, based on each other's comparative advantage, and not to add unnecessary layers and structures. We should give some thoughts to enhancing the strong collaboration that exists between ECA and UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), since these are critical players in the RCM and RDTs respectively. I am therefore pleased that Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, RBA Director is here with us together with other members of the RDT. ECA's Deputy Executive Secretary has also been participating actively in RDT process in Africa.

Another idea for exploration is that of strengthening the linkage between sub-regional coordination mechanisms (SRCM) --- whose establishment we have discussed in past RCMs --- and the regional economic communities.

These are just few practical suggestions this meeting can deliberate on. Whatever we decide, let us be clear on the division of labour --- in terms of geography, functions and thematic focus.

The 10th RCM session is taking place at a time when significant changes are taking place in the African Union Commission — in its focus, orientation, institutional arrangement and relationships. As you are aware, the AU Summit of July 2009, in Sirte, decided to transform the AUC into an Authority and reaffirmed its decision to integrate the NEPAD Secretariat into the structures and processes of the AUC. These significant developments and institutional transformations will impact the way we work in support of the AU and NEPAD. This is particularly important in the context of the UN Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme which this meeting will review.

This meeting should come up with clear guidance on how we can jointly implement the programme in the seven years remaining. I believe that the RCM will be an extremely useful mechanism for this purpose.

In conclusion, Madam Deputy Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this 10th session of the RCM would have been another success if we are able to accomplish four simple objectives: agree on the modalities for joint support to the RCM secretariat; bringing the RDTs closer to RCM; develop strategies for enhanced implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU and NEPAD; and further elaborate our thinking on the establishment of sub-regional coordination mechanisms where they do not exist.

I wish the meeting fruitful deliberations and every success.

Thank you for your kind attention