



AD HOC MEETING OF EXPERTS

MALABO

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

26 SEPTEMBER 2019

«Achieving SDGs through development planning»

CONCEPT NOTE



Introduction

1. During a special summit convened by the United Nations in September 2015 in New York, the world adopted Agenda 2030 and its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that replaced millennium development goals (MDGs) previously under implementation during the period 2000 – 2015. The SDGs are ambitious and complex. They cover three major dimensions of development, namely economic, social and environmental. They promote peace, security and good governance and define the policy guidelines for mobilizing financial resources needed to achieve the goals. The SDGs cut across the board and apply to all countries of the world, though priorities differ from country to the next.
2. Using a holistic approach, they seek to radically transform economies and societies across the globe via such important goals as poverty eradication, industrialization of economies, creation of decent jobs for all and reduction of inequalities. Sustainable Development Goals are thus of special importance to countries of Central Africa where, in spite of abundant resources and the middle-income status for some of the countries, they have not been able to build economic resilience and raise social and human development standards, which are essential to taking their economies to the next level of development. Given the impressive progress of SDGs in some developing countries and regions, it is hoped that harnessing the most successful stories will be beneficial for achieving the SDGs in Central Africa.
3. One of the main lessons drawn from all experiences is that development planning was decisive in achieving the SDGs. The story began in 2005 when, in a report titled “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all”, the United Nations Secretary General urged extremely poor developing countries to adopt and implement by 2006 bold enough National Development Plans (NDPs) to enable them in achieving the MDGs. In addition, during the Joint ECA and African Union Commission Annual Conference of Finance Ministers (COM), held in March 2006 in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, policy makers described NDPs as indispensable tools for achieving MDGs. The concept MDGs-based planning appeared or gained momentum with the *millennium project* that drove the initiative to lay down guidelines, steps and clear principles on how to mainstream MDGs into national development frameworks. During the 2011 AU Summit and COM 2015, African Heads of State and Government asked the ECA to provide African countries with assistance in development planning and on how to mainstream Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 into NDPs in seamless fashion.
4. The count down for achieving the SDGs has begun thus speaking to the urgency to identify ways of boosting the chances of successful implementation.
5. While past and current experiences have demonstrated that development planning jump-started the development process in several developing countries, it actually did not contribute much to transformation of the economies and societies of countries of Central Africa. Such a situation calls for interrogation of the conditions under which planning is undertaken in the sub-region.
6. It is against this backdrop that the Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa (SRO-CA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) contemplated a study on the role that development planning may / could play in promoting industrialization and the other SDGs in Central Africa with the intent of proposing a gamut of concrete recommendations to speed up sustainable development in the sub-region.

7. Accordingly, in its programme of work for 2019, the SRO-CA of the ECA intends to organize on 26 September 2019 in Malabo/Equatorial Guinea, a meeting of the Ad-hoc Group of Experts on the theme: “**achieving the SDGs through development planning**”. As part of advocacy for development planning in Central Africa, the meeting comes in sequel to the 34th session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) held in N’Djamena in September 2019 under the theme: “Financing industrialization in Central Africa”. The 2018 ICE session afforded the opportunity to discuss issues of economic and social development in Central Africa, especially development of the industrial fabric in Central Africa, in order to propose strategies for structural transformation of the economies of the sub-region.

8. The ECA/SRO-CA conducted a study to deepen reflection on “achieving the SDGs through development planning”. The study report will recall the role, importance and key success factors of development planning and will review the experiences of countries of Central Africa in the area. Also, the report will review the operationalization of planning frameworks by exploring best practices in respect of policy-making and reform in the area of industrial policy and by determining whether such practices have existed in Central Africa. The next section of the report will consider the current situation of the countries of Central Africa in respect of the major sustainable development goals and assess what still has to be done to reach satisfactory levels and speed up the industrialization process. The financial cost of implementing the SDGs and the financing gaps will be reviewed in the next section that will also propose the possible solutions for covering such gaps. The last section will contain a gamut of actions recommended to governments and to non-State players to leverage development planning towards achieving the SDGs in Central Africa.

Objectives of the meeting

9. The meeting is intended to:
- Consider and validate the study on “achieving the SDGs through development planning”.
 - Provide guidance and/or make recommendations to enable countries of Central Africa achieve the SDGs.

Organisation and format of the meeting

10. The meeting shall last one day and shall feature plenary discussions and break-out sessions on the study conducted by the ECA/SRO-CA.

Expected outcomes

11. The expected outcomes of the meeting will be as follows:
- Validation of the ECA/SRO-CA study on “Achieving the SDGs through development planning”.
 - Recommendations to enable countries of Central Africa adopt national planning systems towards achieving the SDGs in Central Africa.

Participation

12. Participants in the meeting of the ad-hoc group of experts shall include representatives of Ministries in charge of planning and social and economic development, finance, agriculture, industry, and trade respectively. Participants will also comprise experts from the ECCAS Secretariat General, the CEMAC Commission as well as representatives of technical and financial partners such as UNIDO, FAO, UNDP and the AfDB. The private sector, civil society, universities and research centres in the sub-region will also be represented. To capture the gender dimension in the discussions, ministries responsible for women affairs as well as women's associations shall be invited to participate in the meeting.

Date and venue of the meeting

13. The meeting shall hold in Malabo on 26 September 2019.

Working languages

14. The proceedings will be conducted in French with simultaneous interpretation into Spanish, Portuguese and English.

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