Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union

2-3 November 2010
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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1. **Introduction**

1. The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) for the Review of the “Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP-AU) was held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 2 and 3 November 2010. The meeting was organized by the NEPAD Support Section of the Economic Development and NEPAD Division (EDND) of ECA, in collaboration with the AU Commission (AUC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office to the African Union (UNO-AU).

2. The main objective of the meeting was for experts from various UN and AU organizations including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) to assess the draft report of the Review of the TYCBP-AU and provide comments and inputs for its finalization. The meeting also provided a forum for experts to share their views and experiences and reach consensus on specific, practical and action-oriented recommendations on the Programme, including mechanisms and processes aimed at supporting its effective implementation. It was envisaged that the final report of the meeting would feed into the discussions of the 11th Session of RCM-Africa scheduled to take place on 14 and 15 November 2010.

2. **Attendance**

3. The meeting was attended by the following UN organizations: United Nation Office to the African Union (UNO-AU); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR); International Organization for Migration (IOM); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA); and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Representatives of the AUC and the following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) also attended the meeting: Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN SAD); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

4. The full list of participants is attached as Annex 1 of this report.

3. Opening of Meeting

5. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director of the Economic Development and NEPAD Division of ECA. He welcomed all participants to the meeting and recalled that the Declaration on the TYCBP-AU, signed by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of AU in 2006, was an evolving Framework conceived as the UN overall platform for cooperation with the AU. He noted that the objective of the Programme was to enhance the capacity of the AUC and African sub-regional organizations to act as effective UN partners in addressing Africa’s challenges. Mr. Nnadozie recalled that the Declaration on the TYCBP-AU provide for the review of the Framework at three-year intervals. It was in that context, and in line with recommendations of the 10th RCA-Africa, that the present review was undertaken.

6. The Director commended the consultant who undertook the work as well as colleagues from the UN system, AUC, NPCA, and RECs who contributed to the accomplishment of the important assignment. He stressed that the purpose of the meeting was to critically examine the outcome of the review with a view to improving the draft report, and urged participants to focus their discussions on the main issues, challenges and lessons learned from efforts to implement the TYCBP-AU, especially as spelt out in the draft report. He also urged them to place special attention to the recommendations of the draft report to ensure that they were realistic, action oriented, and specific in terms of assignment of responsibilities.
7. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, in an opening statement read on her behalf by Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, said she was delighted to note that several organizations, including AUC had responded to the draft review report. She highlighted important issues that called for close attention by participants of the meeting, including: the need to critically examine whether the review had adequately assessed the extent to which the objectives of the TYCBP-AU are being met; the role of AUC and RECs in ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme; and recommendations on how to improve the RCM-Africa and its clusters as the main vehicle for delivering on the TYCBP-AU.

8. Ms. Kargbo recalled that RCM-Africa was established at the regional level as part of the UN reform to improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination of UN support to AU and its NEPAD Programme. The effective functioning of RCM-Africa was therefore crucial to “Delivering as One” UN support to AU the Programme. She therefore urged participants to provide recommendations on how to mobilize resources and align activities of the UN System in the context of RCM-Africa and to upscale implementation of the Programme.

9. Ms. Adwoa Coleman also made opening remarks on behalf of AUC. She said as a major stakeholder and beneficiary, AUC was pleased to be associated with the review of the TYCBP-AU, and welcomed the opportunity to comment on the draft report of the exercise.

10. By way of general comment, she said AUC was quite satisfied with the overall content and thrust of the report, adding that it was successful in pinpointing in a fairly comprehensive manner, the difficulties being encountered with regard to the implementation of the TYCBP-AU.

11. However, she took issue with the impression given in the report, and apparently prevalent in the UN system, that AUC has been the main source of difficulties experienced in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU, primarily because of its failure to assume ownership and leadership in the Programme. She stressed that both the UN system and AUC had to share the blame for the limited progress in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU. She expressed support for a number of recommendations of the review report, including those related to the reconfiguration of RCM-
Africa; cluster and sub-cluster system; strengthening of RCM-Africa Secretariat; financial support to RCM-Africa and its processes; sub-regional coordination mechanisms; and reporting processes. Ms. Coleman concluded by recommending that RCM-Africa Clusters be re-aligned to the issues dealt with by the various AUC departments.

4. Account of Proceedings

4.1. Adoption of Agenda

10. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

(i) Opening Session;
(ii) Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of work;
(iii) Presentation of the Report of the Review;
(iv) Plenary Discussions on the Main Issues, Challenges and Lessons Learned;
(v) Discussions on Key Recommendations of the Review in Break-out Sessions;
(vi) Plenary Working Group Presentations and Discussions;
(vii) Adoption of the Outcomes of the Meeting and the Way Forward;
(viii) Key Recommendations for Consideration at the 11th RCM-Africa Meeting; and
(ix) Closing Session

4.2. Presentation of the Report of the Review

12. Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson, who reviewed the TYCBP-AU made a presentation under this agenda item. He started by recalling the terms of reference for the review and the methodology used, including desk studies, interviews with key stakeholders, and questionnaire-based surveys. He then gave a historical perspective of UN system-wide initiatives related to capacity building of the AUC, NEPAD and RECs; and a comprehensive description of RCM-Africa and its Cluster system. He also discussed the lessons learned from implementation of the TYCBP-AU so far, and made several recommendations for the way forward. Some of these
recommendations were related to: reconfiguring RCM-Africa; mandates and responsibilities of UN agencies and organizations in the TYCBP-AU; strengthening RCM-Africa Secretariat, Clusters and sub-Clusters; and financial support to RCM-Africa and its processes.

4.3. Issues Discussed and Recommendations

13. Participants noted that the UN system and AUC itself had expressed the desire for the Commission to play a leadership role in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU. They pointed out that the challenge in that regard was for AUC to effectively take over the leadership of RCM-Africa thematic Clusters and sub-Clusters, where they were not already driving the programme, from the UN partner agencies. It was also pointed out that Clusters and sub-Clusters led by AUC, such as that on Social and Human Development had been quite effective and could actually serve as examples of good practices. In that regard, the agenda of RCM-Africa meetings should allow for the sharing of best practices;

14. The Experts acknowledged that there were several definitions of the term “capacity-building” that had popular following within development nomenclature. However, the relevant definition in relation to the TYCBP-AU should be the one proposed in the consultant’s report, and the determination of what “capacity building” should be undertaken within the TYCBP-AU should be made by AUC and related beneficiary institutions.

15. The Experts noted that most UN agencies have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with AUC. In light of this, these agencies had to reflect on how the MoUs best feed into the implementation of the TYCBP-AU. They also underscored the importance of aligning the TYCBP-AU to the AUC strategic plan, especially as this was necessary to address the perceived lack of ownership of the TYCBP by AUC. Essentially, it was stressed that a programmatic dialogue between AUC and the UN system should be held. It was also stressed that coordination at all levels, including between UN agencies as well as among the beneficiaries – AUC (including among its Departments) and the RECs should be strengthened.

16. It was noted that the location of RCM-Africa Cluster meetings influenced the participation of members. For instance, holding meetings at AUC could enhance participation of the Commission. However, some
flexibility as to the time and venue would enable Clusters to meet on the side lines of events that bring together their members.

17. Participants acknowledged that AUC, NPCA, and RECs had partners apart from the UN system. In that regard, what was critical for RCM-Africa was for it to identify the kind of support that it could best provide within the framework of the TYCBP-AU. To that end, it was more important to develop a realistic and bankable programme(s) that can yield concrete results than an unrealistic programme with a long list of activities.

18. Participants noted that participation at RCM-Africa meetings and Cluster activities had resource implications for both AUC and UN agencies. Supporting the Secretariat would further increase the burden on these organizations and as such must be carefully planned. Therefore, ways of attracting a larger share of total UN resources allocated to support the AU and its NEPAD programme to the RCM Secretariat as well as to activities of the AUC (incorporating the NPCA) and the RECs had to be explored. Participants stressed that appropriate attention had to be given to the RECs in developing work programmes for the TYCBP-AU, especially in their capacity as implementation pillars of the AU.

19. Finally, participants recognized the importance of strengthening reporting on progress in the implementation of the TYCBP-AU at the highest political level and in that regard recommended RCM-Africa Secretariat to provide more guidance on how best progress in the implementation of the Programme could be reported to the UN General Assembly and the AU Heads of State Summit.

20. The following recommendations emerged from the discussion:

- The agenda of RCM-Africa meetings should include an item on the sharing of best practices in the functioning of Clusters, and RCM-Africa should endorse AUC’s commitment to assume greater ownership of Clusters and sub-Clusters;
- In addition to strengthening the capacity of the RCM-Africa Secretariat, coordination among AUC Departments, and between the Commission and RECs should also be strengthened;
- Efforts at joint programming between the UN system and AUC based on the priorities of AU and its NEPAD programme, as well as priorities of RECs should be strengthened; for RECs the
multi-year programmes with ECA Sub-regional Offices (SROs) could serve as a starting point;

- Ways should be explored to attract a larger share of AU and UN resources in support of the AUC Strategic Plan (and related priorities and programmes); the TYCBP-AU; and the RCM-Africa Secretariat in particular as it is the key enabler of the TYCBP-AU.

4.4. Plenary Working Group Presentations and Discussions

The TYCBP, AU/NEPAD Agency Mandates, Priorities and Responsibilities

21. This working group recommended that a special expert meeting should be held by end of March 2011 for the AUC to present its capacity-building needs and suggested areas for UN intervention through the TYCBP-AU. Optimally, the proposed programmes should contain “bankable” activities around which resources could be mobilized by all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation.

23. The group agreed that it was necessary for the AUC-led TYCBP-AU process to go through the following capacity building steps: stakeholder engagement, capacity needs assessment, developing capacity responses (strategies); implementation of responses; and evaluation.

24. The Group also underscored the importance for monitoring and evaluation structures to evolve from workable Cluster and sub-Cluster programmes that are defined within specified timelines.

25. The following recommendations are drawn from the above discussion:

- An expert group meeting should be held by March 2011 for the AUC to present its capacity-building needs and suggested areas UN intervention through the TYCBP-AU; and
- Monitoring and evaluation of TYCBP-AU should be based on workable Cluster and sub-Cluster programmes that are defined within specified timelines.
UN Support to and Structure for the Implementation of the Programme

26. The group agreed that the review of mandates related to UN organizations supporting AU and its NEPAD programme and the realignment with the prevailing realities should be carried out in respect of four organizations namely, OSAA, DPI, ECA and UNOAU. They underscored the need for OSAA, DPI, ECA and UNOAU to engage with AUC in consultations aimed at ensuring that issues of mandate, roles and responsibilities are updated and clearly defined, resources - both human and financial - are moved closer to the beneficiaries and that AU takes leadership of the TYCBP-AU. These consultations should be expanded to include UN agencies who are members of the RCM-Africa. This forum should also be mandated to look into issues relating to the strengthening of the RCM-Africa Secretariat.

27. Participants also agreed that the RCM-Africa Secretariat should convene a first meeting to establish the terms of reference for this consultative group and agree on a subsequent meeting to deliberate on the substantive issues of mandate, roles, responsibilities and the transfer of leadership to AU. This process should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2011.

28. In terms of frequency and content, it was felt that the annual meetings of RCM-Africa should be maintained and that the meeting should also focus on policy matters and include a review of activities through Cluster reporting. The meetings should place special emphasis on results and impact. In addition, aspects of monitoring and evaluation should be included in the agenda of the annual forum.

29. Regarding the treatment of capacity-building as a subject for thematic discussion at the next RCM-Africa annual meeting, the group felt that capacity-building was cross cutting and at the core of TYCBP-AU and there was thus a need for urgent attention to ensure a common understanding of capacity building and more importantly of the capacity-building needs of the AU. The group agreed on the consultant’s definition of capacity building and suggested that this sentiment be conveyed during the RCM-Africa so that a final adoption can be made by all stakeholders.
30. Regarding the suggestion that a joint session of the MDG Africa Steering Group and the RCM-Africa be convened, it was proposed that instead of the convening a special meeting, both groups should attend each other’s meetings and provide briefing as necessary.

31. In light of the success of the Social and Human Development cluster chaired by the Commissioner for Social Affairs, it was proposed that the AU Commissioners be designated as the Chair of relevant Clusters and sub-Clusters.

32. Concerning the venue of RCM-Africa cluster meetings, it was reiterated that there should be flexibility in the determination of venues. In this regard, participants agreed that the RCM-Secretariat should put together a calendar of meetings as soon as practicable, taking into account the calendar of meetings of the AU.

33. The group found the recommendation of the draft review report calling for the programming and budgeting of TYCBP-AU by UN cluster members pertinent and proposed that the Chair of the RCM should take up the issue of ensuring dedicated funding for the programme with Principals of UN agencies. It was also suggested that the recommendation should include AU departments who should equally ensure that their work plans take into account TYCBP.

34. The following recommendations are derived from the discussion:
   - RCM-Africa Secretariat should convene a meeting to establish the terms of reference for a consultative group to engage with AUC and clearly define and update issues related to mandates, roles and responsibilities, resources, and leadership of AUC in the TYCBP-AU. This process should be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2011;
   - The RCM- Africa Secretariat should prepare a calendar of meetings as soon as practicable, taking into account the calendar of meetings of the AU;
   - The MDG Africa Steering Group and RCM-Africa should attend each others meetings and provide briefings as necessary; and
The definition of capacity building as proposed in the TYCBP-AU Review report should be considered for adoption by all stakeholders during the 11th RCM-Africa.

The Chair of the RCM-Africa should table the issue of a dedicated funding for the TYCBP-AU with principals of the UN agencies.

AU departments work plans should take into account the TYCBP.

**UN-RECs Cooperation and the Subregional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM)**

35. This group deliberated on the following three issues: UN-RECs Cooperation through a Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM); REC Programme for the Implementation of the Framework Agreement; monitoring and evaluation, and reporting arrangements.

36. With regard to the UN-RECs cooperation, the group noted that differences existed between RCM-Africa and the SRCM in terms of their operational modalities and structural arrangements. It also noted that the SRCM was coordinated by ECA Sub-regional Offices (SROs). In principle, a REC or group of RECs defined their priorities to drive the activities of the SRCM while RCM-Africa’s activities are based on AUC priority areas.

37. The group unanimously agreed that SRCMs should be established in all sub-regions, and that RECs, individually or collectively, should decide how to engage themselves in the process of establishing the mechanism.

38. In terms of progress made in sub-regional coordination, a SRCM has already been established in Central Africa, with ECCAS and CEMAC being members. Modalities for establishing a SRCM in Eastern and Southern Africa are being formulated by a Task Force coordinated by the ECA SRO-EA. UN agencies with sub-regional presence as well as COMESA, SADC and EAC would constitute members of the SRCM.

39. The group noted that CENSAD, ECOWAS, IGAD and UMA are not part of any SRCM and encouraged them to reflect and decide on how to engage in such a mechanism. The UN-AU Joint RCM-Africa Secretariat was requested to approach these RECs by March 2011 to sensitize them on
how to engage in the process. The session also recommended that the capacities of AUC, the RECs and ECA required strengthening to enable them play their expected coordination roles effectively.

40. The group agreed that the strategic plans and joint programmes of RECs should provide guiding principles to develop a workable Programme to be implemented in the context of the TYCBP-AU.

41. In terms of the process, it was recommended that within three months, RECs, individually or collectively – a group of RECs, should decide on a preliminary programme based on which they should meet with UN partners to develop a work programme for the TYCBP. The following considerations should be taken into account in elaborating the work programme: alignment to REC priorities and UN and REC programmatic and budgetary cycles; assigning timeframes and clearly defining benchmarks for monitoring progress in the implementation of activities.

42. The following recommendations are derived from the discussion:

- RCM-Africa Secretariat, in consultation with UN agencies and ECA SROs, should provide overall guidance in the establishment of SRCMs in all sub-regions,
- RCM-Africa Secretariat should guide RECs, individually or collectively, in deciding on how to engage themselves in SRCMS;
- The RCM-Africa Secretariat should approach RECs that are not yet part of a SRCM by March 2011 to sensitize them on how to engage in the process;
- The capacities of AUC, RECs and ECA should be strengthened to enable them play their expected coordination roles effectively; and
- By March 2011, RECs, individually or collectively (group of RECs), should decide on a preliminary programme based on which they should meet with UN partners to develop a work programme for the TYCBP.
4.5 Adoption of the Outcomes of the Meeting and the Way Forward

43. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented a draft outcome document. The document essentially contained decisions of the meeting on the recommendations of the review of the TYCBP-AU as well as reflections on the Programme in general.

44. The document presented by the Secretariat was adopted with some amendments. In terms of the next steps, participants agreed that the deliberations at the present meeting would be reflected in the Executive Summary of the report of the review of the TYCBP. It was further agreed that the revised report of the review should have only one set of recommendations, incorporating those emanating from this meeting. Finally, the revised report would be shared among RCM-Africa members and tabled at the 11th session of RCM-Africa.

4.6 Closing Session

45. In his closing remarks, Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie thanked all participants for their useful contributions to the meeting. He said their presence and frank discussions during the two days of the meeting were testimony of their commitment to ensuring that the TYCBP-AU was implemented successfully. He added that ECA would continue to support RCM-Africa, especially within the framework of the TYCBP-AU and through the joint RCM-Africa Secretariat that now has dedicated staff from ECA and AUC. He concluded by saying that some progress has been made in coordinating UN system support to AU and its NEPAD programme and called on participants to step up efforts to demonstrate what has already been achieved.
Annex 1: List of Participants

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

1. Mr. Yao Konan Pascal
   Regional Desk Officer
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Telephone: 0911005340
   Email: ykpascal@yahoo.fr / yaok@africa-union.org

2. Bather Kone
   Head Biosafety Unit-HRST
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Telephone: 0113717770, 0911823305
   Email: konel@african-union.org/latherkone@yahoo.fr

3. Mr. Benjamin Namanya
   Police Planning Officer
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Telephone: 0911504267
   Email: amanyab@un.org

ECA

4. Mr. Omar Ismael Abdourahmw
   Economic Affairs Officer
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Telephone: 0911053543
   Email: oabdourahman2uneca.org

5. Ms. Sandra Zawedde
   Project Officer
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Telephone: 0911053543
   Email: szaweedde@uneca.org

6. Mr. Charles Akol
   Environment Affairs Officer
   FSSD/ECA
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Tel: 251 11 544 3349

7. Ms. Aster Denekew Yilma
   Geographic information Systems Officer
   UN-ECA
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Tel: 251 9 11 601994
   E-mail: adenekew@uneca.org

8. Mr. Guy Ranaivomanana
   Governance and Public administration Officer
   GPAD/UNECA
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   E-mail: granaivomanana@uneca.org

9. Mr. Yinka Adeyemi
   Communication Officer
   Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
   Tel: 011 5 443537
   Email: yadeyemi@uneca.org

10. Ms. Jane Karonga
    Associate Economic Affairs Officer
    Addis Ababa Ethiopia
    Email: jkaronga@uneca.org

OHCHR

11. Mr. Musa Gassama
    Regional Rep.
    OHCHR
    Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
    Mob: 251 9 11511397
    E-mail: mgassama@uneca.org

IOM

12. Mr. Josiah Ogina(Coordinator)
    Head of Office
    International Organization for Migration)
    Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
    Tel: 251-11-5504028
    Fax: 251-11-5514900
    Email jogina@iom.int
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13 Ms. Naomi Shiferaw  
Liaison Officer AU/ECA  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 011 5 511673 / 0911403447  
Fax: 011 5 15 43 54  
Email: snaomi@iom.inr

14 Ms. Mutuli Millicent  
Deputy Representative  
UNHCR AU/ECA  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Telephone 113716277/0911207906  
Fax: 251-113716268  
Email: mutuli@unhcr.org

15 Ms. Kavita Belani  
Liaison Officer, UNHCR AU/ECA  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 011 3 716260 / 0911255545  
Fax: 011 3 716268  
Email: belani@unhcr.org

16 Mr. Constant- Serge Bounda  
Head, UNEP Liaison Office  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Telephone: 115445402  
Fax: 115443004  
Email: unepoffice@uneca.org

17 Mr. Anthony Mwangi  
Public Affairs Manager  
UNICEF Liaison Office to the AU/ECA  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 011 5 18 4223/0911513058  
Fax: 011 5 517648  
Email: amwangi@unicef.org

18 Mr. Sunday Babatunde  
Coordination Officer  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 0911511955  
Email: babatundes@un.org

UNESCO  
19 Dr. Alexandros Makarigakis  
Science Programme Officer  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Telephone: 0115 513953  
Fax: 001 5 51 1414  
Email: a.makarigakis@unesco.org

20 Mr. Marques Vieira Carlos Edmilson  
Diplomate  
Liaison Officer UNESCO/AU/ECA  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 011 5 445392/  
Mob: 251 9 20 221 202  
E-mail: ce.marques-vieira@unesco.org

ILO  
21 Ms. Judica Amri-Lawson  
Senior Advisor, External Relations Partnerships  
International Labour Organization  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 251 11 544 3214  
Mob: 251 9 11 502977  
Fax: 251 11 551 3633  
Email: Lawson@ilo.org

UNIDO  
22 Dr. David Tommy  
Rep. to Ethiopia and Regional Director  
UNIDO  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Mob: 251 9 11 502949  
Email: dtommy@unido.org

UNAIDS  
23 Ms. Karen Pettersson  
UNAIDS  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Program Officer  
Tel: 011 5 44 4394  
E-mail: petterssonk@unaids.org
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UNDP
24 Mr. Khabele Matolsa
Programme Advisor
UNDP/ECA Joint Governance Initiatives
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 552 1639
Mob: 251 9 20 336510
E-mail: Khabele.matolsa@undp.org

FAO
25 Mr. Kidane Weldeghaber
Senior Policy Officer
FAO
Rome, Italy
Tel: 390657054616
Mob: 393470665600
E-mail: Weldeghaber.Kidane@fao.org

Regional Economic Communities RECs
26 Dr. Abdurraouf Abdelaal
CEN SAD
Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs
Tripoli, Libya
Tel: 00218913751975
Fax: 00218214440076
Email: raouf207@yahoo.com

27 Mr. Salvator Matata
COMESA
Liaison Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 0913 53 98 92
Email: salmatfr@yahoo.fr

28 Mrs. Tidenekialesh Asfaw
COMESA
Programme Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 011 5 526373
Fax: 011 4 670097
Email: tiduasfaw@yahoo.com

29 Dr. Joao Ndlova
Head SADC LO
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: jonom@africanunion.org

Consultants
30 Mr. Michael Sudarkasa
CEO
Africa Business Group
South Africa
Tel: 27 11 884 3710
E-mail: Michael@ABGHQ.com

31 Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson
Lead Consultant
Email: cgreyjohnson@hotmail.com

ECA RCM Secretariat
32 Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie
Director EDND
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Email: enadozie@uneac.org

33 Mr. Kwabia Boateng
Chief, NEPAD Support Section
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Email: kboateng@uneca.org

34 Ms. Rawda Omar Clinton
Economic Affairs Officer
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Email: romar-clinton@uneca.org

35 Mr. Getachew Tessema
Economic Affairs Officer
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Email: gtessema@uneca.org

36 Mr. Robert Tama Lisinge
Economic Affairs Officer
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Email: tlisinge@uneca.org
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**AUC RCM Secretariat**
37 Mr. Adou Jean Yves  
Senior Programme Officer  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 0912149860  
Email: ADOUJY@africa-union.org

38 Ms. Adwoa N Coleman  
Principal Policy Officer  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 011 5 517700  
Email: adwoacoleman2003@yahoo.co.uk

39 Ms. Victoria A Egbetayo  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: 910204691  
Email: VictoriaF@africa-union.org/forsterjones@gmail.com

**UN/DESA**
40 Mr. Sibanda Amson  
Division for Social Policy and Development  
Social Affairs Officer  
New York, USA  
Tel: 19173677010  
Fax 12129630111  
Email: sibanda@un.org

**UNIFEM**
41. Ms. Florence Butegwa (Coordinator)  
Representative to the African Union and UNECA  
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: +251-11-5221067 (office); +251-913-202321 (cell)  
Fax: +251 -11-5538163  
Email: florence.butegwa@unifem.org