



6TH AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
“2020-2030: A DECADE TO DELIVER A TRANSFORMED AND PROSPEROUS AFRICA THROUGH 2030
AGENDA AND AGENDA 2063”

SIDE EVENT

Africa stakeholders consultative meeting
“Review of the implementation of commitments made towards Africa’s development:
a decade to deliver on commitments”

26 February 2020
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

1. Background and Rationale

As mandated by Resolution 66/293, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has, in coordination with relevant entities of the United Nations system, operationalized the biennial report of the Secretary-General on the review of the implementation of commitments made towards Africa’s development. The Resolution is based on the principles of mutual accountability and partnerships and focuses exclusively on reviewing the implementation of multilateral commitments by African countries and their development partners – traditional and new and emerging partners, arising from, *inter alia*, major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and political fields, among others.

The Secretary-General’s Biennial report is a tool to ensure accountability and hence delivery of commitments made by African countries and their development partners, to ensure that commitments made are commitments kept. The first biennial report in 2014 covered four themes: (i) Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition; (ii) Financing for Development; (iii) Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change; and (iv) Good Governance. The second biennial report in 2016 covered: (i) Infrastructure Development; (ii) Gender and Women’s Empowerment; (iii) Trade; and (iv) Achieving a Conflict Free Africa. The third biennial report in 2018 covered: (i) Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Regional Integration; (ii) Health, Water and Sanitation; (iii) Climate Change; and (iv) Finance and Partnerships. In addition, several critical factors such as peace and security, migration, gender and youth empowerment, education as well as data availability and statistical capacity were analyzed in the report as cross-cutting issues.

By focusing on a broad spectrum of commitments covering economic, social, environmental, peace and security and governance issues, the Biennial reports have proven to be important instruments in reinforcing the peace, security and development nexus and the importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing challenges to sustainable development. Member States have welcomed the Biennial reports as an important step towards galvanizing the full implementation of commitments made towards Africa’s development.

In view of the enormous development challenges facing Africa and the need to ensure progress across the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development, the timely implementation of

commitments becomes crucially important to support Africa's efforts towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063.

In taking this work forward, as in the previous processes, OSAA will work in close collaboration with the relevant UN entities through the institutional framework of the Interdepartmental Taskforce on African Affairs (IDTFAA) which serves as the mechanism for UN System-wide consultations and coordination on important UN activities on Africa straddling the nexus between development, peace and security. This partnership will also include other regional and international institutions both within and outside the UN system including UNDP, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ECA, DESA, DPPA, UNFPA, AfDB, IMF, the World Bank, OECD, AUDA-NEPAD, APRM, and UNSD. Furthermore, the Office will engage, through a series of consultations with a wide spectrum of stakeholders to mobilize their perspectives.

2. Thematic Focus

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU Agenda 2063, the report themes have been linked to the follow-up and review frameworks at the regional and global levels, thus ensuring alignment with the goals for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Africa Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD). It also ensures alignment with African processes and priorities as outlined in the AU Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan as well as the main themes of the AU summits.

These principles have informed the choice of themes for the fourth report, which will be submitted to the 75th session of the General Assembly in September 2020. The report will address specific thematic areas: (i) silencing the Guns in Africa (SDG 16); (ii) promoting regional integration through trade (SDG 17); and (iii) tackling inequality through quality education, with a focus on STEM, and decent work (SDGs 4, 8 and 10). Furthermore, several critical enablers to sustainable development, such as gender, youth, and climate change will feature prominently in the analysis as cross-cutting issues throughout the report.

(i) Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17 and Goal 20 of the AU Agenda 2063)

A thorough periodic review of the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the African context as well as that of Africa's own Agenda 2063 is critical for furthering our understanding of the implementation of commitments made towards Africa's development. Against this backdrop, the 2020 biennial report will have an introductory section that reviews SDG 17, in the context of the specific SDGs to be addressed in each report, particularly taking into account the most recent data points and trends in international cooperation, including commitments regarding Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the cost of remittances; commitments by Africa's New and Emerging Development Partners (NEDPs) and Commitments by African countries themselves, on domestic resource mobilization and tax cooperation, among others. This will not only frame the subsequent discussions in the report, but also align the report with the well-established practice of reviewing SDG 17 annually at the HLPF in July at the UN Headquarters in New York. In this respect, the 2020 Biennial report will review SDG 17 in the context of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 16 and 17 itself, as it pertains to trade. Among the commitments to be reviewed periodically are:

- Strengthened domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

- Full implementation of ODA commitments by traditional development partners including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the majority of whom are in Africa.
- Mobilization of additional financial resources for Africa’s development, including through Foreign Direct Investment and remittances.
- Strengthening South-South cooperation, North-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation in order to leverage the means of implementation.

This section will also briefly comment on the outcomes and achievements of various partnership forums, including the 3rd Turkey Africa Summit (May 2019), 12th US-Africa Business Summit (June 2019), TICAD VII (August 2019), 1st Russia-Africa Summit (October 2019); UK-Africa Summit; Africa-India Summit; and others.

(ii) **Silencing the Guns in Africa (SDG 16)**

As a flagship initiative of the AU’s Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU in May 2013, adopted a *Solemn Declaration* in which they committed to ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020’. This commitment demonstrated their renewed determination to “achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide”. It also was evidence of their strong recognition that conflict is one of the biggest impediments to the full and effective implementation and realization of the aspirations, goals and targets contained in both Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa, Aspiration 4 and Goal 16 respectively.

In the seven years since the adoption of this *Solemn Declaration* and its ambitious initiative on Silencing the Guns, several concrete measures and additional commitments have been made by African countries and institutions at all levels towards realizing this goal. For instance, in 2016, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) further developed the ‘African Union Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020’, called the “Lusaka Roadmap 2016”, which was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the AU in January 2017.

This Roadmap acknowledges the interlinkages or nexus between peace and security, governance and development, as a basis for achieving sustainable conflict prevention and sustaining peace. It also offers a comprehensive analysis of the challenges confronting Africa in its efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, highlighting a range of triggers, proximate and root causes of conflict. In addition, it outlines actionable steps within set deadlines for addressing several political, economic, social, environmental and legal challenges confronting the continent, in the immediate, short to long-term. It further earmarks specific roles to AU Member States, the AUPSC, AUC, RECs/RMs, various AU organs (including the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council – ECOSOCC), civil society (including women and youth) and the private sector in contributing to the initiative.

As the 2020 deadline approaches, the AU is accelerating actions to implement this initiative and has declared 2020 the year of “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”. Against this backdrop, the report will map and review the implementation of the various commitments that have been made to the AU’s Silencing the Guns initiative since 2013. It will specifically

focus on commitments made by African governments and institutions, as well as by its development partners towards achieving this shared common mission to silence the guns and prevent conflicts in Africa.

(iii) Trade and regional integration (SDG 17)

The 2030 Agenda and the African Agenda 2063 recognize the important role of trade in promoting growth, improving productivity and creating opportunities. In particular, the AU's Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan set the target of establishing the continental free trade area as one of the key flagship projects of Agenda 2063. The entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents a corner stone in the efforts to strengthen regional integration and promoting inclusive growth, including through the creation of decent jobs and a consumer market of 1.2 billion, boosting regional infrastructure and intra-African trade by 52% by 2022. This positive development builds on the progress made in enhancing trade flows among members of the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Given the crucial role of trade as a driver of economic growth and an important means for achieving the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized the importance of promoting a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. Strengthening intra-African trade contributes to increased economies of scale and the diversification of African economies. This is crucial for supporting industrialization, increasing value addition and expanding opportunities for the economic participation of African people, particularly women and youth.

In this regard, this section of the report will analyze the progress made in the implementation of commitments by African countries to enhance trade flows regionally and externally, including within the framework of the RECs and towards the operationalization of the AfCFTA. It will also examine the support by Africa's development partners in the areas of capacity-building, in tackling trade barriers and improving market access.

(iv) Tackling inequality through quality education, with a focus on STEM, and decent work (SDGs 4, 8 and 10)

This theme aligns with the UN President of the General Assembly's priority (education), commitments made at the first ever summit of the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government of the African Union (C10) on "Championing Education, Science and Technology"; and key AU strategies such as the Continental Strategy for Technical, Vocational, Education and Training, and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025). It also aligns with the AU "1 Million by 2021 Initiative" with focus on employment, entrepreneurship, education and engagement; the AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth; and the Malabo Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development and Empowerment.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education is considered as a development enabler for Africa. The African Union, through the decision on the Science Technology and Innovation (STI), encouraged its member states to spend 1% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on research and development to enhance STEM innovations.

3. Objective

The objective of the stakeholder's consultative meeting is to have a broad and structured discussion with relevant stakeholders, including governments, academia, CSOs and the private sector. More specifically it will: (i) identify key important commitments in the three thematic areas; (ii) highlight major achievements

and challenges in the implementation of the commitments towards Africa's development; (iii) generate consensus on measures to advance national, regional, and international actions in the proposed thematic areas.

4. Questions for discussion

- i. What specific multilateral commitments were made?
- ii. To what extent have these commitments been delivered?
- iii. In the case of commitments by Africa's international partners, were there any conditionalities imposed?
- iv. What have been the results and outcomes/impacts?
- v. What are the challenges and gaps in delivering on these commitments?
- vi. What additional measures are required, if any, to make sure the commitments are delivered, and the expected outcomes/impacts realized?
- vii. How have civil society and the private sector – both African and international - contributed to this process?
- viii. To what extent have gender issues been incorporated in the delivery of these commitments?
- ix. To what extent have climate change issues been incorporated in the delivery of these commitments?

5. Expected outcome

The meeting will promote greater understanding of the scope of the challenges to accelerate progress in the thematic areas. It will help mobilize national efforts and international response in support of the implementation of relevant policy measures and actions to accelerate progress in the thematic areas. It will also foster a better understanding of the roles of each key stakeholder in the process.

6. Expected participants

Experts from the 16 VNR countries, UNS, CSO, Youth representatives, Private sector, AUC- AUDA-NEPAD, APRM, RECs, AfDB.

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