Governance Mechanisms and Challenges for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 & the SDGs

APRM Side Event, 26 February, 13h00-14h15

Intervention of 7-10 minutes

COVER SLIDE:

- Let me begin by congratulating the APRM on their new report, which is being launched here today. It provides a comprehensive overview of SDG governance in Africa and confirms the need for guidance and support as it relates to institutional mechanisms – this is something that we also see in OECD countries, as well as in other regions of the world.

- And this is precisely why global partnerships are so important – we share the same challenges and can benefit from the same solutions and policy tools, while also tailoring these to country contexts and priorities.

SLIDE 1: GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

- The 2030 Agenda is a universal agenda. With only ten years to go towards the 2030 deadline, there is a general recognition that progress on the SDGs is uneven, and even slowing in several areas, both across and within countries.

- As mentioned, there are a number of common challenges in SDG implementation that we see in countries around the world. Although, depending on the country context, they can play out differently, many of them are linked to the governance of the process of implementing the SDGs in terms of visioning, integrated planning, whole-of-government approaches, financing and budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation.

- The most frequent ones which countries are reporting include the following:
  
  o SDG implementation efforts are often disconnected from the mainstream policy agenda.
  o There are frequent gaps in the leadership capacities.
  o SDGs are often not yet integrated into core governance mechanisms (e.g. budget, public procurement).
  o There is little tracking of SDG implementation and impact.
  o There is often a lack of accountability and inclusiveness.

- Interestingly, all of these key challenges relate to the skills and institutional capacities that must be in place to successfully navigate the complexities of SDG implementation – ultimately strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD = SDG target 17.14).
SLIDE 2. PCSD DEFINITION

- But what do we mean by PCSD?

- PCSD is an approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policy making. It has three main objectives:
  - Fostering synergies and maximising benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas.
  - Reconciling domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives.
  - Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies.

- PCSD is thus about addressing the complex interconnections among the SDGs and targets to effectively capitalise on synergies, while avoiding costly trade-offs and negative externalities beyond borders.

SLIDE 3. PCSD RECOMMENDATION - EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PCSD

- OECD’s work on policy coherence responds to an the growing demand by OECD Member and Partner countries to deal with the “how” of coherent 2030 Agenda implementation.

- Importantly, we have identified eight guiding principles for strengthening policy coherence in support of the SDGs. They are organised around three pillars:
  - I. A strategic vision for implementing the 2030 Agenda underpinned by a clear political commitment and leadership to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.
  - II. Effective and inclusive institutional and governance mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions between levels of government.
  - III. A set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies.

- The eight principles are outlined in a new Recommendation on PCSD, which provides countries with a comprehensive standard and tool for integrated SDG implementation. It represents the culmination of more than 20 years of lessons learnt in promoting policy coherence (from e.g. DAC Peer Reviews, PGRs and Governance as an Accelerator report).

- Given the many similarities between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, I believe and hope these principles can also be useful to African countries, including as an organising structure for VNR preparations. Learning from each other is how we will make collective progress.
SLIDE 4. EVIDENCE-BASED STANDARDS, TOOLS AND GUIDANCE

- To complement the PCSD Recommendation, we are currently developing an **implementation toolkit** which would include more **technical guidance**, analytical tools as well as good practice examples to support countries develop institutional mechanisms for policy coherence. Here I would like to commend APRM on the many case studies included in the report – they are extremely useful and also complementary to the online PCSD country profiles we have developed for OECD countries. Again, I’m struck by the many similarities between different countries.

- In addition to online country profiles, we are also conducting more in-depth institutional **country scans and reviews** to explore how core governance systems are adapted to deliver cross-cutting policy objectives and support an effective and integrated implementation of the SDGs. These reviews often begin with a PCSD self-assessment (**checklist**), which aims at helping to appraise the existence of the mechanisms of coherence and the conditions in place (who does what?) as well as the level of implementation (how the mechanism operates for enhancing coherence?).

- But institutional mechanisms are not enough – to meet these challenges, governments need to ensure that the institutions involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are equipped with skills, resources and digital tools to support effective implementation.

- This is also confirmed in APRM’s report of their member countries (p. x in the Executive Summary):

  “Most Member States have very strong institutional frameworks for the implementation and coordination of efforts towards realising the SDGs and Agenda 2063. However, dedicated leadership is also important for the effective implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.”

- Our work on Public Service Leadership and Capability encourages responsive and adaptive civil servants – with the empowerment, resources and agility needed to effectively and efficiently address fast-changing, ongoing and emerging challenges. We need a flexible workforce to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration – a prerequisite for effective SDG implementation.

**Other work (tools):**

- Budgetary Governance to support governments implement budgeting frameworks that align strategic expenditure allocations with fiscal targets, medium-term priorities and development objectives.

- Regulatory Policy Evaluation assists countries in systematically evaluating the design and implementation of regulatory policy against the achievement of strategic regulatory objectives, such as those derived from the SDGs.

- Public Procurement ensures the strategic and holistic use of public procurement, which is key pillar of strategic governance and services delivery. Well-designed public procurement systems also contribute to achieving pressing policy goals such as environmental protection, innovation, job creation and the development of small and medium enterprises.
We are currently working to devise an umbrella platform – a Hub – to bring all this work together, making it easier for countries to access a wide range of expertise and seek support.

Here are a few examples (next slide) of recent or ongoing work that we have undertaken to help countries strengthen their governance practices in support of the SDGs, and where we are gathering new evidence.

**SLIDE 5. ONGOING WORK**

- For instance, one can mention the recent partnership with the Slovak Republic to develop an SDG strategy and review the budget practices in support of the SDGs.
- The Czech Republic and the OECD have collaborated to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for SDG co-ordination.
- The Italian government intends to implement a project with the OECD’s support to address the governance challenges related to implementing Italy’s National Sustainable Development Strategy.
- The government of Poland has requested the support of the OECD to review the co-operation mechanisms among public administration staff and strengthen the knowledge and capacities of its public service in the area of sustainable development. By increasing administrative capacity, the project would contribute to bridging silos and enhance long-term planning.
- In Romania, an ongoing scan by is reviewing the institutional mechanisms in place to implement the SDGs and the co-ordination function of allocating SDG-related responsibilities and tasks between the Centre of Government and the different line ministries. This scan is undertaken in tandem with a report on SDG Budgeting in Romania.

  *Demand for support from partner countries, in turn, would be provided in partnership with UNDP, helping to ensure global reach and impact globally of the Global Hub.*

**SLIDE 6. GLOBAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- When designing this new initiative, we want to make sure that it responds to the most pressing governance challenges which countries are encountering in their SDG implementation, recognising that these may differ between regions and countries.
- We already have a solid understanding of the country challenges related to SDG implementation and achieving policy coherence, both through the OECD work and UNDP MAPS assessments (which were conducted in more than 50 countries) – and, indeed, as echoed in APRM’s report.
- To complete this analysis and to test a proposed operational approach, we propose an in-depth consultation process:
An important part of this consultation process is a series of regional consultations across different world regions to identify the key governance challenges to SDG implementation as the basis for a needs assessment – this is the first such regional consultation.

In fact, we launched an online survey for Africa at the Regional VNR Workshop of Monday, where some of you may have participated.

Let me illustrate the initial results that we have received over the past two days [3 slides from Ricardo, with titles and notes from Hendrik] – we encourage you to participate as the survey is still open.

SLIDE 7. SURVEY RESULTS (1/3)

SLIDE 8. SURVEY RESULTS (2/3)

SLIDE 9. SURVEY RESULTS (3/3)

SLIDE 10. SURVEY STILL OPEN

- And the survey remains open, so I invite you all to participate: oe.cd/sdgARFS. This will give us a better idea of existing governance bottlenecks and the support that is needed.

- Finally, we are also planning to launch a few country pilot projects to test and refine the approach. Let me say a few words on this.

SLIDE 11. COUNTRY PILOTS – REGIONAL REACH – APRM COLLABORATION

- We are advancing a number of joint UNDP-OECD pilot projects which would be designed as country-specific activities to help build leadership skills and institutional capacity for policy coherence and SDG implementation.

- The envisaged pilots represent geographical, size and development diversity; potentially including Brazil, Kazakhstan, Uganda and Aruba. These pilots could also contribute to developing regional approaches – here APRM’s assessment of regional efforts to foster sustainable development will be helpful.

- In fact, our collaboration with the APRM will contribute to disseminating this work in Africa and help to ensure context-specific support.
• We are very much looking forward to shaping this global initiative together and I thank the APRM for the opportunity to be part of this event.