



**Economic Commission for Africa
Committee of Experts**
Thirty-fifth meeting

**African Union
Committee of Experts**
Second meeting

**Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary
Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the
Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic
Development**

Meeting of the Committee of Experts
Addis Ababa, 31 March – 2 April 2016

Draft concept note

I. Background

1. For over a decade, economic growth in African countries has exceeded the global average and remarkable progress has been made on several socioeconomic indicators despite low initial conditions. Notwithstanding the positive performance, much more remains to be done to reduce poverty and improve access to health and education services that meet minimum standards of quality. Almost one out of every two individuals in Africa lives below the extreme poverty line and the continent has the highest levels of maternal and child deaths. Approximately 3.2 million of the continent's children did not reach their fifth birthday in 2012 and the maternal mortality rate of 289 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births exceeds the global average of 210 deaths per 100,000 live births.

2. The relatively high level of poverty is linked to the structure of most African economies. African countries are largely dependent on commodities which are exported with little or no value added, undermining prospects for job creation. Through commodity-based industrialization, economic transformation can create decent job opportunities, substantially reduce poverty and minimize income and wealth inequalities.

3. It is against this backdrop that African Member States prioritized structural transformation in Agenda 2063 (the continental framework for development), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the global development agenda, which sets out the new Sustainable Development Goals) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which supports the implementation of

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Agenda 2030. Through the adoption of Agenda 2063¹ by Heads of State and Government at the African Union Summit in January 2015, in Addis Ababa, and the first ten-year implementation plan during the June 2015 Summit in Sandton, South Africa, African policymakers have designed the continental, sequenced, forward-looking vision for the next fifty years. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with the Sustainable Development Goals,² were adopted in September 2015 as the international community's response to the fundamental challenges facing the world today: eradicating poverty and achieving inclusive and sustainable development for present and future generations.

4. In this context, African countries are confronted by a dual transition: at the continental level, the transition to Agenda 2063 and its first ten-year implementation plan; and at the global level, the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Both transitions must be effectively coordinated to ensure coherence in implementation, follow-up and review.

II. Objective of the Conference of Ministers

5. Accordingly, in the light of the above, there is an imperative need for Africa to adopt a coherent strategy for the effective and coordinated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, more commonly referred to as the Conference of Ministers, provide an ideal opportunity to address this challenge, as the gathering has become the premier forum on the continent for African ministers responsible for finance, economy, planning, integration and economic development and governors of central banks to discuss issues pertinent to the development of Africa. The 2016 Conference of Ministers will be held under the theme: "Towards an integrated and coherent approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals". The theme builds on recommendations made by the African Union on the need to fast-track the implementation of Agenda 2063, including flagship projects, and the global discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. The Conference of Ministers will, therefore, address the question of how African countries could adopt and implement effectively the first ten-year implementation plan, with a wider mandate to support the promotion and implementation of a common framework for meeting the goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such strategies should not only focus on promoting strong and sustainable long-term growth but also ensure that the benefits of such growth are widely shared in order to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living for all Africans. Furthermore, at the end of their deliberations, the ministers will offer guidance on mechanisms for the adoption and successful integration of the first ten-year implementation plan at the national, regional and continental levels.

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¹ Agenda 2063 is a 50-year transformation framework that is being implemented through five ten-year implementation plans, the first of which covers the period from 2014 to 2023.

² The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an attempt to respond to the global dimensions of Africa's development challenges. This means, therefore, that the Sustainable Development Goals can be considered as a subset of Agenda 2063, as they will be implemented over a 15-year period, to the year 2030.

7. The Conference of Ministers is expected to draw on lessons learned from the ongoing process of domesticating the first ten-year implementation plan, which has already taken place in 23 countries, as well as Africa's development experience with other continental initiatives and global development processes, to ensure that the implementation framework includes:

- Effective implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation arrangements at the national, regional and continental levels
- Mobilization of resources for implementation at the national, regional and continental levels
- Provision to enhance the capacities of national, regional and continental institutions involved in the execution of the common framework
- Raising awareness among institutions and organizations at the national, regional and continental levels responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the common development goals
- Engagement with the African public, civil society organizations and all other identifiable groups for information exchange and participation in decision-making with respect to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the framework.

8. The Conference of Ministers offers an opportunity, therefore, to discuss the harmonization of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda during implementation by addressing the following issues: harmonization, synergies and sensitization regarding the two frameworks; integration of the frameworks into national development plans; monitoring and evaluation; and financing.

9. The specific objectives of the Conference of Ministers will be to:

- Provide insights as to how an integrated and harmonized approach for the execution of Agenda 2063 and its first ten-year implementation plan and the Sustainable Development Goals could be designed and implemented at the Member State level
- Provide guidance on mechanisms for the development of an integrated and harmonized approach, in order to contribute coherently to the achievement of Agenda 2063.

III. Sub-thematic focus areas for an integrated and harmonized approach

10. The meeting will deliberate on the following four thematic areas:

A. Harmonization, synergies and sensitization: The need for a coherent development approach

11. A shared understanding of the continental and the global frameworks is vital for effective implementation. In effect, implementation of both agendas will require advocacy and sensitization about the details of both frameworks to ensure awareness about their mutual relevance to national development and the relationship and synergies across the agendas. In this context, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be understood as an attempt to respond to the global dimensions of Africa's development challenges, while Agenda 2063

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should be viewed as a response to continent-specific development challenges and aspirations, much of which overlaps.

12. Central to the sensitization discourse are issues of Africa's contribution to the crafting of the Sustainable Development Goals, the similarities between these Goals and Agenda 2063, and the implications of both for the implementation process. Both frameworks are informed by Africa's priorities and aspirations: the Sustainable Development Goals through the Common African Position and Agenda 2063 through its synthesis of existing African frameworks, declarations and development initiatives as well as stakeholder consultations.

13. The synergies provide an opportunity to implement the two initiatives without unduly burdening policymakers with multiple development frameworks. They also minimize some of the coordination challenges associated with implementing and monitoring both agendas.

Issues to be addressed:

- What needs to be communicated to the general public with regard to Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals?
- Who should be responsible for popularizing the two agendas? Should each agenda be taken separately, or should they be popularized together?

B. Integration of the results framework

14. Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will provide the framework for sustainable structural transformation in Africa. Both agendas are comprehensive, underpinned by an extensive consultation process, and share common aspirations of structural transformation and sustainable development. The first ten-year implementation plan is a mechanism that is designed to facilitate the implementation of both agendas at all levels.

15. Synergies notwithstanding, coordination is vital to ensure that implementation and follow-up take into account all dimensions of both agendas: areas of convergence as well as other issues that are tackled separately but that are of importance to the development of the continent.

16. Through a process of domestication, the first ten-year implementation plan attempts to integrate the two agendas. The measurement framework developed revealed convergence between the two agendas at the target level, which enabled common indicators to be identified. Implementation of both agendas will require, therefore, strengthened capacities to implement in a coherent fashion initiatives into national planning frameworks and research to support evidence-based policymaking to minimize duplication, optimize resource use and facilitate integrated reporting.

Issues to be addressed:

- What tools and processes are required for the integration into national plans of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals results frameworks?
- Should the tools be standardized for all member States or should broad guidelines be provided, to enable member States to adapt to their particular circumstances?
- What type of technical assistance should be provided to member States and which body should provide it?

C. Monitoring and evaluation

17. Coherent monitoring and evaluation of both frameworks requires an integrated set of goals, targets and indicators, and a harmonized review and reporting platform. Agenda 2063 has 7 aspirations, 20 goals and 34 priority areas with corresponding targets and indicators, while the 17 Sustainable Development Goals contain 169 targets and approximately 200 indicators. At the level of the indicators, the frameworks exhibit convergence of approximately 70 per cent. Even though convergence is much higher at the level of goals and targets, developing a common set of continental goals, targets and indicators will be essential to ensure coherent tracking, reporting and follow-up of both agendas. It is imperative, therefore, to harmonize the results framework and follow-up mechanisms of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

18. Currently, a unified continental monitoring and evaluation system for Agenda 2063 is being jointly developed by the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the regional economic communities in addition to existing monitoring and evaluation structures and systems. This builds on the draft measurement framework for the first ten-year implementation plan at the national and regional levels. The Sustainable Development Goals are also being mapped on to Agenda 2063 goals and targets. Meanwhile, the three continental bodies, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, are currently working with the regional economic communities to develop a core set of continental indicators to track progress on both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

19. Nonetheless, the sheer number of targets and indicators associated with both initiatives suggests that even with integration, improved data collection, analysis and dissemination capacities will be required in order to track progress effectively.

Issues to be addressed:

- Should the concept of core indicators be introduced for Agenda 2063, which member States could report on to the regional economic communities?
- Should member States establish structures that oversee the reporting and monitoring of the frameworks at the national level? If so, then of what type?

Follow-up mechanism

20. Related to the issue of a harmonized set of goals, targets and related indicators is the question of the follow-up architecture. To avoid overburdening policymakers, it will be essential to develop a common platform for reviewing the findings of reports on the progress of both agendas. That will obviate a siloed assessment and response to such findings.

21. Currently, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals have separate follow-up platforms. Agenda 2063 calls for an annual African forum to, among other things, build cross-sector awareness, cultivate understanding of the role of the African public in the implementation process, take action based on Agenda 2063 progress reports, engage stakeholders to accelerate the realization of Agenda 2063, and identify best practices and champions to accelerate implementation. On the other hand, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has a multi-tiered follow-up mechanism, with a high-level political forum at the apex. The details of the regional and national mechanisms

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have been left to the respective jurisdictional bodies. However, the 2030 Agenda calls upon the regional commissions to support member States in developing an appropriate forum for follow-up.

Issues to be addressed:

- Should there be a common approach for reporting on the outcomes of both agendas? If so, should a tool be designed for this purpose? Should member States report based on their national systems? Which body should develop such tools?
- How often should monitoring data and information be requested from member States?
- How often should monitoring reports be generated?
- Where should the harmonized and synchronized reports be sent – first to the regional economic communities and then to the African Union Commission, or directly to the Commission as it was the body that had been reporting on the implementation status of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa?

D. Financing

22. Both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development require substantial amounts of financial and non-financial resources from all sources. At the external level, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Heads of State and Government committed themselves to, among other things, establishing an infrastructure platform aimed at coordinating investments in infrastructure; developing a technology facilitation mechanism to support innovation, science and technology; strengthening international cooperation on tax matters to stem the tide of illicit financial outflows; and improving capacities for domestic resource mobilization. Nonetheless, the reluctance of development partners to commit to a timeline for fulfilling their existing official development assistance commitments coupled with the fiscal consolidation posture of most European countries casts doubt on the reliability of external funding in the near term. Hence, external support notwithstanding, domestic resources will constitute the core of financing for the integrated agendas. This calls for enhanced domestic resource mobilization efforts, both for flagship projects and related programmes. The increased focus on domestic resource mobilization was also called for in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which was the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

23. For Africa, domestic resource mobilization in the context of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a multi-stakeholder endeavour that calls for coordinated interventions targeted at three levels of institutions. These include continental institutions (African Union Commission, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, African Development Bank, Economic Commission for Africa, African Export-Import Bank, Africare), regional institutions (regional economic communities, regional financial institutions including regional development finance institutions, regional insurance and reinsurance companies, political risk insurance institutions, regional stock exchanges), and national institutions (ministries of finance, treasuries, fiscal authorities, central banks, financial institutions such as banks, microfinance institutions, insurance companies, stock, bond and commodity exchanges). Furthermore, the extent of financial market failures across the African continent coupled with the magnitude of the resources required to meet the financing needs of Agenda 2063 call for the promotion and setting up of a number of new financing vehicles such as the Africa50 Fund, an African credit guarantee agency and an African investment bank.

Issues to be addressed:

- Why is a concerted and coordinated approach needed for the implementation of the financing and domestic resource mobilization strategy of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda?
- Which priority areas, best practices and innovations in the area of domestic resource mobilization should be considered in the context of financing both agendas?
- How can existing financing vehicles be scaled up and strengthened to meet the financing needs of the two agendas?
- What should be the practical road maps for the financing of each Agenda 2063 fast-track or flagship project?
- How should the financing, domestic resource mobilization and partnership strategy of Agenda 2063 be domesticated and implemented?
- What should be the institutional framework, roles and responsibilities (between the African Union, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the regional economic communities, member States, the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa) for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the financing and domestic resource mobilization strategy of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda?

IV. Format of the Conference of Ministers

24. The Conference of Ministers will be preceded by a technical preparatory meeting of the Committee of Experts. The Committee will analyse the theme and make recommendations to the ministers for adoption. In addition, the Committee will review the state of economic and social conditions in Africa, consider other statutory issues relating to the work of the African Union Commission and the ECA secretariat and make appropriate recommendations for consideration at the Conference. In addition to the Conference, there will be a number of side events on key development issues, as well as the annual Adebayo Adedeji lecture on a topical issue of importance to African development.

25. There will be four main plenary sessions, as follows:

- (a) The first plenary session will look at the issues pertaining to popularization;
- (b) The second plenary session will consider the integration of the results framework into the national planning framework;
- (c) The third plenary session will address the issue of reporting, monitoring and evaluation, with a view to establishing a common reporting mechanism;
- (d) The fourth plenary session will address the operationalization of domestic resource mobilization strategies.

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V. Expected outcomes

26. The Conference of Ministers is expected to result in:
- (a) Recommendations on a unified approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063, the first ten-year implementation plan and the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (b) Guidance on the mechanisms for developing such a unified approach.

VI. Documentation

27. The present concept note on the theme of the Conference of Ministers, technical background papers on the sub-themes of the plenary sessions, round tables and parallel events will inform the discussions, both at the expert and the ministerial levels.

VII. Participation

28. Participants and delegates will include ministers and representatives of member States, regional economic communities, United Nations agencies, pan-African financial institutions, African academic and research institutions, development partners and other intergovernmental organizations. Invitations will also be extended to other cooperating partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

VIII. Contact information

29. For more information about the Conference of Ministers and the session of the Committee of Experts, kindly contact:

Ms. Sandra Baffoe-Bonnie, Secretary of the Commission, Economic Commission for Africa Tel: +251-11-544-3378 or +251-911-523-267 Email: SBaffoeBonnie@uneca.org	Ms. Selamawit Mussie Policy Officer, African Union Commission Tel : +251-11-518-2672 E-mail: SelamawitMU@africa-union.org	Ms. Ndinaye Charumbira Policy Officer, African Union Commission Tel : +251-11-518-2664 E-mail: CharumbiraN@africa-union.org
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