

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2017

# Africa Sustainable Development Report

Tracking Progress on Agenda 2063 and  
the Sustainable Development Goals



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2017

# Africa Sustainable Development Report:

Tracking Progress on Agenda 2063 and  
the Sustainable Development Goals



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# Foreword

The 2017 Africa regional report on Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) assesses the continent's performance in domesticating and implementing the two development frameworks since their adoption in 2013 and 2015, respectively. The report is aligned with the theme of the 2017 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF): "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". It focuses on the following six goals of the HLPF: Goal 1 (End Poverty); Goal 2 - (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); and Goal 14 (Life below water).

A critical contribution of this report is that it provides a baseline for performance tracking going forward. However, the scope and depth of analysis of the report is framed by the availability of data which is weak, particularly on indicators pertaining to environmental sustainability, and the progress on democratic and electoral governance, human rights and rule of law.

Approximately six out of every ten SDG indicators cannot be tracked in Africa due to severe data limitations. Strengthening statistical systems in Africa is an imperative for successful implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 as it underpins evidence based policy making. Disaggregated data by age, gender, income and geographical location is necessary to better target support to groups at risk of being left behind in the development process.

The report is the first to simultaneously track progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and Agenda 2063 (and its first ten-year implementation plan). This is possible due to the substantial convergence at the level of goals, targets and indicators. This is illustrated by a mapping of the links between the global and continental initiatives included at the beginning of each chapter.

The report underscores the slow progress towards poverty reduction in Africa despite the accelerated growth enjoyed over the past decade. Noting the disproportionate prevalence of poverty among women and youth, the report highlights the lack of inclusiveness and sustainability of primary-commodity driven growth and reiterates the call for structural transformation anchored by commodity-based industrialization and accelerated reduction in inequality.

The report observes that Africa's infrastructure deficits undermine industrial development and underline the stagnation in value addition in manufacturing. And, even though value-addition in agriculture has been rising, it remains substantially low by global standards due, in part to limited investments and inefficiencies at all levels of the agricultural production chain. Increased efficiency of investments in agriculture, both private and public, is vital to addressing food insecurity in Africa. Land reforms to ensure that women have more ownership to this important resource and expanding irrigation from the current five percent are critical to improving agricultural productivity and total output.

Improving the productive capacities of the labor force requires investing in skills and health of all segments of the population regardless of gender. The report underlines improvements in gender parity in enrollments at the primary and secondary school levels. It also notes significant improvements in women's representation in national parliaments. Improvements in health systems are also manifested by substantial declines in maternal and child deaths as a result of improved access to skilled birth attendants, reduced adolescent fertility rates and increased access to family plan-

ning. Yet the levels of child and maternal deaths remain unacceptably high and constitute a drain on the continent's human resources.

The dramatic increase in access to mobile telephone networks documented in the report constitutes a unique opportunity to strengthen financial inclusion in Africa. Indeed, technological innovations, such as MPesa that facilitate the use of mobile telephones for financial transactions have made it possible for the under-served and unbanked segments of society to gain access to financial services including mobile accounts. Ultimately this trend could spur entrepreneurship among vulnerable groups and promote inclusive and sustainable growth.

Finally, the report looks at the issue of sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for economic and social development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. While oceans and seas play a critical role in economic activity and regulating the global climate, African coastal and island states are threatened by increased environmental degradation and the risk of flooding. Globally, sustainable levels of fish stocks declined from 70.1 to 68.6 per cent between 2009-2013 owing to overfishing, illegal and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices. Thirty-eight African states are now taking steps towards better management of life below water.

Successful implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 will require an integrated approach that coordinates the efforts of all sectors of government working in collaboration with the private sector and civil society. We are hopeful that the insights and data contained in this report will be a useful guide for policymakers.



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# Executive Summary

The 2017 edition of the Africa Sustainable Development report on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda uses the latest harmonized data to assess the continent's performance with regard to implementing both Agendas, identify opportunities and challenges and recommend actions to hasten progress. Documenting the progress made and the lessons learned in the implementation of both Agendas can be useful in strengthening efforts going forward.

The report is aligned with the following six Sustainable Development Goals of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero hunger); Goal 3 (Good health and well-being); Goal 5 (Gender equality); Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure); and Goal 14 (Life below water). The key messages and findings regarding these six Goals and data issues are summarized below. Progress on the other Goals will be discussed in future reports.

## 1 Slow progress made in reducing poverty and inequality owing to limited decent employment opportunities and weak social insurance mechanisms

The rate of decline in extreme poverty (\$1.90 per day) has been slow in Africa, declining a mere 15 per cent during the period 1990-2013. Women and young people bear the brunt of poverty. Decent jobs, which are an important route out of poverty, are hard to find because Africa's growth has not created sufficient jobs to match demand. Approximately 60 per cent of jobs in Africa are considered vulnerable. Less than 1 per cent of the unemployed receive unemployment benefits and only 19 per cent of the African (excluding North African) population is covered by social insurance. The lack of decent jobs, coupled with weak social insurance schemes, have, in turn, contributed to high rates of poverty among the working population. Notwithstanding a decline in the prevalence of the working poor in Africa (excluding North Africa), one of every three workers lived in extreme poverty in 2015. Working young people and women are disproportionately affected by the burden of poverty. In 2015, 32.1 per cent of working men, compared with 35.1 per cent of working women, were classified as poor.



## 2 Rising food insecurity and undernourishment are a growing concern in Africa (excluding North Africa)



Some 355 million people in Africa were moderately or severely food insecure in 2015. Although food insecurity declined in North Africa, from 7.7 per cent in 2014 to 6.4 per cent in 2016, in Africa (excluding North Africa), severe food insecurity increased from 25.3 per cent to 26.1 per cent during the same period. Food insecurity is invariably undermining efforts to address undernourishment. Some 217 million people were undernourished during the period 2014-2016, an increase of 6 per cent compared with 2010-2012. This was largely the result of low agricultural productivity and high population growth rates.

### 3 **Agricultural value added is rising but low, due in part to limited irrigation coverage and declining investment in the sector**



Improving agricultural productivity is vital to addressing food insecurity in Africa. Measured in terms of agricultural value added, Africa's agricultural productivity is on the rise but remains well below the global average. Agricultural value added increased 9 per cent during the period 2010-2015 but was only 62 per cent of the world average in 2015. Binding constraints to agricultural productivity in Africa include limited irrigation infrastructure and low budgetary allocations to the sector. Only 5 per cent of agricultural land in Africa is irrigated, compared with 41 per cent in Asia and 21 per cent globally. Furthermore, fiscal allocations to the sector are well below the 10 per cent of budgetary resources committed in the Maputo Protocol. Globally, support for agricultural producers more than doubled, from \$258 billion in 2000 to \$584 million in 2014.

### 4 **Gender disparities in education and national parliaments are declining, but conservative norms and practices are holding back progress**

Gender disparities have narrowed at the primary and secondary school levels, but progress remains slow, in particular at the tertiary level. Gender parity in primary school increased from 86 per cent in 1990 to 96 per cent in 2013, while parity in secondary schools rose from 71 per cent to 90 per cent during the same period. On the other hand, parity at tertiary levels remains low. Nevertheless, the continent has made significant progress in increasing the representation of women in national parliaments; this figure increased 14 percentage points (from 8 to 22 per cent) during the period 1990-2015.



Furthermore, more women are seeking employment in the formal and informal sectors; however, limited education, conservative norms and traditions that relegate women to unpaid house work, for example, constitute obstacles to women's empowerment.

Conservative norms such as child marriages can truncate women's careers and thereby limit the full realization of their productive capacities. While child marriages have been declining, they remain high, in particular in Africa (excluding North Africa), where 37 per cent of women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married by age 18.

Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, constitute a form of discrimination against women. Notwithstanding substantial progress, female genital mutilation is particularly high in North Africa, where an estimated 70 per cent of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age were subjected to the procedure in 2015.

Meanwhile, women continue to be victims of violence, both in the household and in public spaces. Violence against women is especially severe in conflict-affected settings and during periods of war.

Cultures and traditions that inhibit women from fully participating in education, economic activities and social life need to be addressed. Keeping girls and boys in school can promote and sustain gender equality by breaking cycles of ignorance, poverty and stereotypes.

## 5 Measures aimed at improving access to contraceptives and skilled birth attendants have reduced adolescent births and child and maternal deaths



There have been significant gains in health in the past decade, including a substantial decline in child and maternal mortality. However, the continent still has the highest burden of maternal and child deaths compared with other regions globally. Maternal mortality rates in Africa (excluding North Africa) dropped 35 per cent during the period 2000-2015, while North Africa has already met the target of 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Similar declines are observed for under-five deaths (46 per cent) and neonatal (30 per cent) deaths during the same period. These positive trends are attributable in part to improved access to skilled birth attendants and family planning. Both interventions may have contributed to the 21 per cent decline in adolescent birth rates observed during the period 2000-2015. The continent has also significantly curbed the incidence of HIV, which declined 62 per cent during the same period. Nevertheless, the averages mask significant subregional and country disparities, and Africa is home to the highest HIV incidence rate globally.

## 6 Enforcing road safety regulations mediates the impact of alcohol consumption on deaths due to road traffic injuries.

Alcohol consumption has been linked to the incidence of road traffic-related deaths and injuries. Overall, per capita consumption of pure alcohol in developed regions is almost double the quantity consumed in developing regions. However, consumption has been falling in developed regions and rising in developing regions. In Africa, consumption declined in North Africa, but rose slightly in the rest of the continent, from 6.2 to 6.3 (2005-2015) litres per capita, equalling the global consumption level. Notwithstanding their higher levels of alcohol consumption, developed regions have the lowest (8.6 per cent) death rate due to road traffic injuries. On the other hand, Africa, excluding North Africa, has the highest rate of road traffic-related deaths (26.6 per cent), much higher than the global average (17.4 per cent) in 2013. This trend underlines the effective role that measures aimed at enforcing road safety regulations can play in mediating the impact of excessive alcohol consumption on road traffic-related deaths.





## 7 Weak infrastructure and limited manufacturing value addition are undermining overall job growth

Access to quality infrastructure is an important prerequisite for industrial development. Infrastructure connects producers to markets in an efficient manner and thereby reduces production and distribution costs, increases competitiveness, attracts new investors and fosters economic growth. Owing to data restrictions, the report largely focuses on air and rail transport infrastructure.



Air freight and air travel remain extremely low in Africa, excluding North Africa, notwithstanding a rising trend. In 2015, Africa, excluding North Africa, represented 1.3 per cent and 1.5 per cent of the world air travel and air shipping, respectively. However, there has been substantial progress during the past decade and a half. Air freight and air travel increased 34 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, during the period 2010-2015.

Rail transportation has been instrumental in promoting industrialization in advanced and emerging countries and could do the same in Africa. However, like air transport, rail transportation is still not very well developed in Africa: it accounted for 6 per cent of the total rail in the world, compared with 12 per cent for Asia and the Pacific and 10 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Weak infrastructure has adverse consequences for manufacturing sector growth. In Africa, excluding North Africa, manufacturing value added stagnated at 10.3 to 10.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) during the period 2010-2015. The corresponding figures for North Africa were 11.2 and 11.5 per cent, respectively. Furthermore, manufacturing value added in Africa tends to be low tech. Medium-tech and high-tech industry value added account for a mere 0.1 per cent of total value added for all African countries with data, compared with approximately 0.5 per cent for the developed countries.



The relatively low share of manufacturing value added in Africa, excluding North Africa, accounted for a 3.57 per cent fall in the sector's contribution to total employment during the 2010-2015 period.

## 8 Limited investment in research and development obstructs prospects for innovation and technology development

Advances in scientific and technological knowledge through research are critical to eradicating poverty and promoting home-grown solutions to economic and social development challenges.



Currently, Africa as a region spends less than 0.5 per cent of its GDP on research and development, compared with more than 1 per cent in the developing region as a whole and 2 per cent in the developed regions. Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP stagnated at 0.4 per cent during the period 2000-2013 in Africa (excluding the North). On the other hand, North Africa experienced an increase from 0.28 to 0.51 during the same period.

## 9 Significant increases in the coverage of mobile cellular services is an opportunity for social and financial inclusion

Reliable access to broadband Internet is a key driver of economic growth, job creation and social inclusion. In addition, it facilitates a transition to knowledge-intensive economies by enhancing access to information. The proportion of the population covered by 3G mobile networks in Africa increased significantly, from 25 to 65 per cent during the 2010-2015 period. This trend has enhanced financial inclusion by facilitating virtual access to financial services by previously unbanked segments of society.



## 10 Globally, the proportion of fish stocks that are at biologically sustainable levels is declining



The world's oceans and seas play a critical role in supporting populations, economic activity and regulating the global climate. Environmental degradation and the risk of flooding are the main challenges to the oceans and coastal areas, respectively. At least 38 African countries are coastal States, 6 of which are island States and thus have a keen interest in better management of life below water.

Globally, sustainable levels of fish stocks declined from 70.1 to 68.6 per cent during the 2009-2013 period owing to overfishing, illegal and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices. Subsidies to the fishing industry induce overfishing and adversely affect the ocean food chain, which can lead to food insecurity and poor livelihoods.

# Africa's Development Agendas Side By Side

AGENDA 2030 GOAL	AGENDA 2063 GOALS		
 <p><b>1</b> NO POVERTY</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p>	 <p><b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 4. Transformed economies and job creation 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 6. Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth 8. United Africa (federal or confederate) 10. World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa 19. Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence</p>
 <p><b>2</b> ZERO HUNGER</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 3. Healthy and well-nourished citizens 4. Transformed economies and job creation 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 8. United Africa (Federal or Confederate)</p>	 <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 10. World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels 16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent</p>
 <p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>3. Healthy and well-nourished citizens 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p>	 <p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 4. Transformed economies and job creation 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels 16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent</p>
 <p><b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 2. Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation 16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life 18. Engaged and empowered youth and children</p>	 <p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p>	<p>5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</p>
 <p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p>3. Healthy and well-nourished citizens 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 10. World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p>	 <p><b>14</b> LIFE BELOW WATER</p>	<p>4. Transformed economies and job creation 6. Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities</p>
 <p><b>6</b> CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities</p>	 <p><b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p>7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities</p>
 <p><b>7</b> AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 6. Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth 7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities 10. World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa</p>	 <p><b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>11. Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels 13. Peace, security and stability are preserve 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life 18. Engaged and empowered youth and children</p>
 <p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 2. Transformed economies and job creation 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels 16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent 17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life 18. Engaged and empowered youth and children</p>	 <p><b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	<p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all 4. Transformed economies and job creation 10. World class infrastructure crisscrosses Africa 12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels 19. Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence 20. Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development</p>

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The 2017 edition of the Africa Sustainable Development Report tracks progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa's Agenda 2063. While it is still too early to report on both development initiatives due to data limitations, the report provides a baseline for performance tracking in subsequent years.

The report underlines the links between sustainable growth, poverty reduction, health, gender equality and the environment. It notes that while the current growth trajectory in Africa has outpaced the global average and contributed to significant reductions in child and maternal deaths the rate of decline in poverty has been slow due largely to the limited employment opportunities associated with such growth.

The report calls on countries to accelerate efforts to diversify their economies including through sustainable investments in agriculture, manufacturing, technological innovation and infrastructure. It further underscores the importance of a coherent approach to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leverage synergies and minimize duplication. It notes however, that ultimately, the capacity of policymakers to effectively implement and track performance will hinge on the availability, timeliness and quality of data. In this context, strengthening the data ecosystem in general, and the capacity of National Statistics Offices in particular, is vital.



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