



Concept note Session 1

Beyond 2015: Africa's Development Agenda

The African Union Agenda 2063 ushers in the Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development. Through a participative approach, it empowers all stakeholders to contribute to Africa's economic and social transformation during the next five decades. Furthermore, Africa aims to play a more important role in the global development agenda with its Common African Position. In the long term, the stakes are high: transforming African economies, ending poverty, preserving the environment and ensuring well-being and prosperity. What will be the challenges and opportunities for the continent to realise the Agenda 2063?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have not been fully achieved and have been criticised for being too donor-oriented. Hopes are therefore high that a shift towards a universal, rights-based and participatory post-2015 development agenda will galvanise the world into action around the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Meanwhile, Africa is gaining confidence in defining its own development goals, highlighting its own vision of the structural changes that are essential to achieving economic and social transformation.

Agenda 2063¹, endorsed by the Heads of States of the African Union during their January 2015 Summit in Addis Ababa, is a forward-looking framework for Africa to achieve its vision of “an integrated, people-centred and prosperous Africa at peace with itself”. Its overall objective is to chart Africa's development trajectory over the next 50 years. It expresses seven broad aspirations resulting from consultations with a variety of stakeholders, addressing: (i) inclusive growth and sustainable development; (ii) integration and unity; (iii) good governance, democracy, human rights, justice and the rule of law; (iv) peace and security; (v) culture and shared values; (vi) people-driven development; and (vii) Africa as a global player and partner. A number of strategic initiatives to fast-track their implementation are also underway.

Complementing the African Union's Agenda 2063, African regional institutions have engaged in the Post-2015 Development Agenda negotiation process through the Common African Position (CAP), highlighting issues considered unique to the African context². The African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme co-ordinated to identify six CAP priorities:

¹ African Union, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (Popular version - Final Edition), April 30, 2015 - http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/01_Agenda2063_popular_version_ENG%20FINAL%20April%202015.pdf

² African Union, *Common African Position (CAP) on the Post 2015 Development Agenda*, March 2014 - http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/common-african-position_2015.pdf

(i) structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; (ii) science, technology and innovation; (iii) human-centred development; (iv) environmental sustainability, natural resources management and risk management of natural disasters; (v) peace and security and (vi) finance and partnership. Youth employment and good governance have been suggested to play a bolder role. What is the place of Africa's ambitious development agenda within the global post-2015 development processes?

Post-2015 processes allow Africa to play a more prominent role in setting the global development agenda:

- During the United Nations Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in July this year, country ownership in development strategies and in their financing were central to the debate. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda endorsed by the Heads of States and Governments provides a global framework for financing and implementing the global sustainable development agenda. It puts upfront domestic resource mobilisation and South-South co-operation along with a reaffirmed commitment to official development assistance, particularly to the least developed countries. At the same time, fragile states such as Malawi but also countries transitioning from the low-income to the lower-middle-income category –such as Ghana– have expressed concerns about eroding access to development finance and underlined the importance of official development assistance.
- The 17 envisaged Sustainable Development Goals, to be adopted at the United Nations Summit on 25-27 September 2015, represent an opportunity for Africa to thrive in the international dialogue on development.
- Finally, African leaders are preparing for the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), the third and last big event this year setting the path for the future global development agenda. This includes, for example, the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme. Stakes are high for the continent: while its potential is large for promoting a cleaner, greener growth pattern than experienced elsewhere, Africa is also particularly exposed to the consequences of climate change, which session 2 explores.

This session will discuss the challenges and opportunities at the heart of Africa's development agenda. How can Africa contribute to the global post-2015 development processes and increase its ownership? What are the implications for Africa's policy makers and their international partners? And how can these objectives best be turned into concrete action?