



Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Second session
Cairo, 17-19 May 2016

Integrated follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Agenda 2063 at global, regional and national level

I. Introduction

1. Follow-up and review encompass monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting on implementation progress. Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 provide for follow-up and review at the relevant levels. The follow-up and review of both agendas are designed not only to ensure that countries stay on track and enhance implementation progress to timely achieve the set goals and targets, but also as accountability mechanisms. The 2030 Agenda calls for, and mandates Governments with the primary responsibility for follow-up and review at the national, regional and global levels, and requires systematic implementation and accountability to all citizens. The M&E of the implementation of Agenda 2063 will be carried out at national, regional (at the level of Regional Economic Communities), and at continental level. According to the first 10-year plan for implementation of Agenda 2063, the rationale of the M&E framework is to reinforce the culture of managing for results; enhance accountability; deepen integration of the continent; and to encourage participation and ownership.

2. Agreed integrated results and reporting frameworks according to each level will be needed for effective follow-up and review at the regional, subregional, national and subnational levels. In light of the intended objectives of conducting follow-up and review processes of the two agendas, the success of these processes will be determined by the ability to: (i) enhance implementation to realize concrete outcomes; and (ii) achieve effective accountability particularly to citizens. Assessing these will be difficult without relevant integrated results and reporting frameworks. ECA and AUC in collaboration with other partners can play an important role in translating the integrated results framework agreed at regional level to country-owned integrated frameworks. Also, success will demand that the actual practice of follow-up and review at the various levels should firstly be multi-sectoral and engage diverse stakeholders based on the notion of ensuring that no one is left behind. Secondly the follow-up and review process, in practice, should provide adequate space and time to reflect on and share experiences and lessons learned, and identify and articulate actions that would boost the integrated implementation of the two agendas to realize inclusive transformative outcomes.

3. In order to be successful and achieve their mandates, there is a need to ensure effective linkages between the follow-up and review process at the various levels based on the principle of subsidiarity. The observance of the principle of subsidiarity is clearly provided for in the monitoring and evaluation architecture for first 10-year plan for implementation of Agenda 2063. Accordingly, there are clear roles for reporting and feedback to and from various levels. The 2030 agenda also provides for linkages among the various follow-up levels. The 2030 Agenda states that inclusive regional processes will draw on national level reviews and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level, including at the high level political forum (HLPF).

II. Global Level follow-up and review

4. A strong and unified voice at the global-level follow-up and review through the HLPF will help Africa effectively advocate and galvanise support for integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The UN General Assembly established the HLPF, among others, to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels. The 2030 Agenda is even more succinct on the role of HLPF. The 2030 Agenda reiterates that the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly (GA) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will have the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level.¹ The Forum will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up.

5. Although global-level follow-up and review of agenda 2063 is not provided for, the HLPF can serve an important platform to galvanise support for and catalyse integrated implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. This can be premised on fact that the 2030 Agenda emphasises the need to support Agenda 2063² This places the onus on Africa to collectively raise the understanding and appreciation at the global level of four related aspects, namely; (i) the intricate relationship and synergies between the two agendas and their mutual relevance to sustainable development in the region; (ii) the unique and dual obligation of countries in region to implement and therefore follow-up on both agendas; (iii) the importance of giving equal attention to the two agendas; and (iv) the required engagement and support for effective integrated implementation and follow-up and review of the two agendas. To effectively accomplish this, Africa's voice at the HLPF needs to be clear, consistent and unified. A clear and unified position need to percolate through various inputs and processes to shape the deliberation at the HLPF. Such processes and inputs include the following:

(a) Voluntary country reviews at the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC. Six³ African countries are part of the 22 countries that have submitted to voluntary review at the 2016 HLPF;

(b) Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues to be conducted at the HLPF;

(c) Voluntary reporting by countries and reports of various partners and in Africa;

¹ Paragraph 47.

² Paragraph 42 of the 2030 Agenda.

³ The six African countries are Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda.

(d) Africa's collective input to the HLPF by the Africa regional forum on sustainable development (ARFSD);

(e) Africa's inputs to the annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals to be prepared by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) in cooperation with the UN United Nations system; and

(f) The Global Sustainable Development Report designed to strengthen the science-policy interface.

6. Through such a joint and strong voice and active participation and contribution to the above processes, Africa stands to galvanise support for the region to effectively and efficiently implement the two agendas in an integrated manner.

7. The follow-up and review at HLPF is important in specifically helping Africa to leverage financing and other means of implementation for the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It is noteworthy that the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the outcomes of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), which provides a global level framework for means of implementation of sustainable development, will converge at the HLPF. This makes the HLPF a strategic platform for advocating for financing of the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

8. It should also be noted that AAAA contains important commitments that are crucial for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 as well. These include supporting Agenda 2063 including its first 10-year plan of implementation; and coherent policy, financing, trade and technology frameworks to protect, manage and restore ecosystems, build resilience, reduce pollution and combat climate change, desertification and land degradation. The other key commitments are to improve the policy framework on official development assistance (ODA); decoupling ODA from climate financing; support debt relief; reduce the cost of remittances; and curb illicit financial flows. Additionally commitment was made to support infrastructure development; inclusive and sustainable industrialization; and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

9. An annual UN ECOSOC forum on financing for development (FFD) is established and mandated to follow-up on the implementation of the AAAA. The inaugural session of this ECOSOC forum took place from 18 to 20 April 2016. African countries need to effectively participate in this annual Forum given that it will originate key inputs to HLPF on the follow-up on financing including other means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda.

III. Regional/Continental level follow-up and review

10. Integrated follow-up and review will require the harmonization and adoption of common regional/continental follow-up and review architecture for the two agendas. Common follow-up architecture would be the strong basis for Africa to reach unified and strong position to mobilize support at all levels to advance effective integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. By resolution A/RES/67/290, the UN General Assembly decided that the meetings of the Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC will benefit from regional preparatory processes; and acknowledges the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development. In this resolution, the UN regional commissions, which include ECA, are invited to contribute to the work of the forum, including through annual regional meetings, with the involvement of other relevant regional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.

11. In line with that resolution, ARFSD was instituted in 2015 by resolution 930 (XLVIII) of the eighth Joint Annual Meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Conference of Ministers) held in March 2015. The ARFSD serves as the body to follow-up and review the implementation of sustainable development level regional level. The 2030 Agenda stipulates that “follow-up and review at the regional and subregional levels can, as appropriate, provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets; and, in this respect, welcomes the cooperation of Regional and subregional commissions and organizations”.

12. The 2063 Agenda, has as one of its fast-track initiatives, the establishment of an annual African forum. This Forum is designed to bring together, political leaders, the private sector, academia and civil society to discuss developments and constraints as well as measures to be taken to realize the Aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063.

13. Agenda 2063 mandates the convening of an annual African forum that will, inter alia, take action based on Agenda 2063 progress reports, encourage stakeholders to accelerate the realization of Agenda 2063 and identify best practices and champions to accelerate implementation.

14. Evidently the establishment of the Annual African Forum as a continental follow-up and review mechanism for Agenda 20163 will, alongside the ARFSD create a dual reporting obligation for member States and partners. This duplication is likely to burden member States in the light of the commonalties and synergies between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

15. Moreover, also focused on monitoring and review, AUC will organize annual consultations between the AU Organs and the RECs, while The Pan African Parliament will hold annual consultations with the African Legislatures; the AU Economic Social and Cultural Commission will hold bi-annual consultations with the Member States Focal Groups for Agenda 2063.⁴ On the side of the 2030 Agenda, Africa has many platforms that could support the thematic reviews of Agenda 2030 that may be undertaken under the auspices of ARFSD. These include, the various ECA statutory committees, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Conference of ministers,⁵ (COM), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), other relevant African ministerial bodies; and the relevant intergovernmental regional meetings of the UN system.

16. There will therefore be a myriad of reporting and follow-up process with various outcomes that clearly need to be harmonized if the region is to have a strong and unified position. It is in recognition of this that the 2016 COM adopted a resolution calling upon ECA in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other partners, to take all necessary steps, in the context of the HLPF, to designate the ARFSD as the platform for the review of progress on and follow-up to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; to align the consultations of the ARFSD with the annual reporting cycle of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda; and to enlarge the mandate of the Forum to include a review of progress, challenges and gaps in meeting the commitments outlined in the AAAA. In the same vein, the COM decided that

⁴ First 10-year plan for implementation of Agenda 2063.

⁵ Conference of Ministers is commonly used to mean The Joint 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.

that the ARFSD will build on existing platforms, avoiding the creation of additional administrative structures, and will promote coordination and coherence, learning and the sharing of best practices within the UN system, and with other regional and sub-regional forums and organizations. COM also decided that reviews of the implementation of all regional outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits should be sequenced and synchronized with the work of the ARFSD, to ensure that such reviews contribute to the assessment of the regional implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

17. Clearly, harmonization of the follow-up and review architecture for the two agendas remains to be concluded. Without harmonized follow-up processes, reaching joint and strong positions on integrated implementation of the two Agendas could be jeopardized. As such, the region runs the risk of reaching out to global and other fora outside the region with fragmented positions that could derail the integrated implementation of the two agendas. The value of common platforms and unified and strong positions is clearly demonstrated by the success that Africa made through adopting common positions on the post-2015 development agenda, climate change agreement and the preparations for Rio+20.

18. An agreed regional-level integrated set of indicators based on the integrated results framework will be indispensable for fostering integrated follow-up and review at regional level. The integrated core indicators need to be developed and agreed upon. They should be well-attuned to the end goal of achieving concrete progress and facilitating accountability on the sustainable goals and aspirations of the two agendas.

19. A comprehensive monitoring framework built around the integrated core set of indicators would be the basis for the development of a unified regional level reporting framework. The reporting is expected to be carried out by the AUC, ECA, AfDB with close collaboration with other regional organizations and UN entities, to support deliberations at the common review forum for the two agendas.

20. The core set of indicators will be useful in facilitating integrated national-level follow-up and review.

IV. National level

21. Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 recognize that effective national level follow-up and review are crucial. This is on account that outcomes of follow-up and review at country level will be the bedrock to foster concrete and reliable policies and actions at all levels to achieve the sustainable development goals and realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The 2030 Agenda recognizes national follow-up and review as the centre-piece of follow-up at both regional and global levels. It states that inclusive regional processes will draw on national level reviews and contribute to the follow-up and review at the global level, including at the HLPF. The importance of national follow-up and review, with regard to, the 2030 agenda has been well summed up by the UN Secretary-General, who observed that notwithstanding the need for and importance of regional and global follow-up, “member States have emphasized that the lynchpin of follow-up and review in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals will be the national level”.⁶

⁶ UN 2016. Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. Report of the Secretary-General. A/70/684.

22. Integrated follow-up and review of the two agendas at national level will need to be properly nurtured through strengthening the relevant processes and systems to support it. While providing flexibility for countries to adopt appropriate national and sub-national follow-up and review, both Agendas provide principles,⁷ criteria and highlight the required tools to make the follow-up effective. The following is a synopsis of some of the key aspects that have implications for the establishment and strengthening of relevant processes and systems to ensure effective integrated follow-up and review at national level.

(a) National ownership and inclusion:

- It is underlined that national ownership of follow-up process will be key given that the outcome from national level processes will be the foundation for reviews at the regional and global levels. As such reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels need to be country-led and country-driven.
- Agenda 2063 categorically states that participation of all stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation is a critical success factor, while the 2030 Agenda provides that reviews should draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. National parliaments, as well as other institutions, can also support these processes. Inclusive processes that engage all stakeholders are more likely to produce equitable outcomes.

(b) Monitoring and evaluation frameworks and data:

- The reviews need to be regular;
- Important for the review processes to be rigorous, evidence-based, and informed by country-led evaluations;
- Countries are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of both the processes and outcomes of the implementation;
- The process need to be based on high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location. Moreover, other considerations according to country specificities need to be included;
- There is the need to ensure data harmonization across the countries; and the adoption of standardized monitoring and evaluation systems, without such indicators aggregation/comparison of performance would be difficult; and
- Countries need national core-sets of indicators to track the progress towards the attainment of the targets.

23. Therefore whereas countries may have tools and process that could be deployed, such tools and processes need to meet the litmus test set for the integrated follow-up and review.

V. Conclusion

24. The follow-up and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda are crucial in assessing progress, sharing good practices and lessons learned; and identifying policies and actions needed to realize the set goal and aspirations. Inclusive and

⁷ See for example paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda which outlines principles that will guide follow-up and review processes at all levels.

integrated review and follow-up of the two Agenda will require multi-stakeholder engagement; and integrated monitoring and reporting frameworks and harmonised follow-up systems including bodies at national and regional levels. Such frameworks will enable Africa to have a strong common position to galvanise international support for the integrated implementation of the two agendas. The Africa regional forum on sustainable development provides an opportunity to reach and advocate for such a position at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. A body of high-quality, reliable, timely and disaggregated data will be indispensable for an effective follow-up process.