Ninth Meeting of the Regional Consultation Mechanism of UN Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the AU and its NEPAD Programme

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
21-22 October 2008

Outcome Document
Review Meeting on Measures to Enhance the Regional Consultation Mechanism (RCM) of UN Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16-17 September 2008

Prepared by
The RCM Secretariat

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I   Introduction

1. The Review Meeting on Measures to Enhance the Regional Consultation Mechanism (RCM) of UN Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme, was held at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 16 to 17 September 2008.

2. The following African regional and subregional organizations were represented; The African Union Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, AfDB, CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC. Also represented were the following United Nations agencies and organizations; OIOS, OCHA, UNLO-AU, UNDPKO, UNOHCHR, UNHCR, FAO, IMO, IOM, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP, WHO and all five ECA's Sub Regional Offices

3. Mme Lalla Ben Barka, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA delivered welcome remarks on behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of the Commission. Advocate Bience Gawanas, the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Mr. Bankole Adeoye, the Coordinator, External Relations and Partnerships of the NEPAD Secretariat and Honorable Beatrice Kiraso, the Deputy Secretary General of the East African Community, also addressed the meeting.

4. The meeting addressed both in plenary and in the breakout sessions, the following: alignment of the cluster system with AU and NEPAD priorities, strengthening cooperation and collaboration at the regional level, strengthening cooperation and collaboration at the sub regional level, resource mobilization for the sustainable financing of the RCM, and monitoring and evaluation system for the RCM. This report summarizes the main outcomes of the meeting.

II   Alignment of the Cluster system with AU and NEPAD priorities

5. The current arrangement of nine clusters and ten sub clusters should be maintained, while bearing in mind the need for refinement on the basis of lessons learned and on the needs of the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and the RECs.

6. The proposal to reconfigure the HRD cluster to the Social and Human Development cluster is acceptable, but consultations with the Environment, Population and Urbanization cluster should take place, given that the reconfiguration would have implications for the latter. This matter should be resolved before the 9th Meeting of the RCM.

7. There is no need to create a separate cluster on gender given that there would be a sub-cluster on the same under the proposed reconfigured HRD cluster. However, clusters should report on their activities relating to gender, in order to ensure that it is adequately mainstreamed.

8. Regional integration is a cross cutting issue that touches on all the nine clusters. All the RECs (except for UMA) now have liaison officers with the AU Commission that can participate in cluster activities and attend meetings. However, regional integration could be

given more visibility by explicitly incorporating it in the ITMA and/or Infrastructure clusters. Irrespective of the approach that would eventually be adopted, cluster activities need to be guided by the vision and goal of the AU, to achieve the full integration of the African continent (economically, physically, culturally and eventually, politically).

9. RCM should be changed from Regional Consultation Mechanism to Regional Coordination Mechanism, given that the mechanism has gone much further than consultations. In this regard, the role of cluster conveners is not only to convene, but also to coordinate the activities of members, and they should therefore be called cluster coordinators. In the same way, the AU Commission should be referred to as co-coordinators of the different clusters.

10. A code of conduct should be developed for clusters to govern their interactions with the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission in order to ensure adherence to the principle of delivering-as-one. Further, cluster conveners should prepare Terms of Reference for their respective clusters to be tabled for approval at the 9th Meeting of the RCM.

11. There is need for a GA resolution that explicitly mandates the RCM to serve as the vehicle for which support to the AU would be coordinated, to ensure clarity of mandate and to provide the justification for mobilizing additional resources. In this regard, the Secretariat should prepare a draft resolution for the African Group in New York, Geneva and Addis to enable them consider and table the resolution.

12. The role of the advocacy and communication cluster in promoting the AU and its NEPAD programme is important and remains relevant. The work of the cluster will help in providing visibility to the advocacy and communication dimension of NEPAD, which has not been explicitly identified as a NEPAD priority, but which is recognized as key to ensuring the effective implementation of NEPAD. In addition, advocacy and communication should be an integral part of the functions of the RCM Secretariat, which should effectively promote RCM achievements. To this end, methods of promoting and marketing the RCM should be fully explored.

III   Strengthening Cooperation and Collaboration at the Regional Level

The meeting agreed on the purpose, objectives, outcomes and impacts of the RCM as follows:

13. *Purpose and objectives:*
The purpose of the RCM is to ensure coordination, coherence and efficiency in the delivery of support to the AU and its NEPAD programme at the regional and subregional levels, and to enhance partnerships between UN agencies, and African continental organizations for greater effectiveness and impact.

14. Expected outcomes/results
R-1   Improved coordination, coherence and efficiency in the delivery of support at the regional and subregional levels;

R-2   Increased partnerships between UN agencies and African regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of activities; and

R-3   Strengthened capacities (AU Commission, NEPAD Secretariat and RECs) to implement the UN-AU Cooperation Programme and NEPAD.

15. Intended impacts

I-1   Priority subregional and regional development initiatives consistent with the UN-AU Cooperation Programme and NEPAD promoted, developed and implemented; and

I-2   Effective and tangible contribution to Africa's goal of realizing sustainable growth and development.

The meeting agreed on the roles of the different institutions participating in the RCM as follows:

16. ***ECA-*** Strategic coordinator of the RCM, primarily as a facilitator, and: serve as a liaison, and facilitate coordination between UN agencies and African regional and subregional organizations; provide a platform for knowledge generation, networking and management; fostering inter-cluster coordination; organize the annual meetings of the RCM and other fora relevant to the RCM; and monitor and report on progress in the RCM and on the implementation of recommendations of RCM meetings.

17. ***Other UN Agencies-*** Act as strategic partners, supporting the implementation of AU/NEPAD programmes; integrate RCM priorities into their work plans; and foster collaboration and coordination.

18. ***AU Commission-*** Provide political and strategic guidance on the priorities of the AU; provide an effective linkage with the RECs in the context of the RCM; provide leadership and actively engage in RCM activities, including the designation of a focal point for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme and for the clusters.

19. ***NEPAD Secretariat-*** Raise awareness and provide timely information on NEPAD priorities and programmes; provide leadership and actively engaging in RCM activities, including designating a focal point for RCM activities and ensuring the active engagement of sectoral advisors in cluster activities.

20. ***African Development Bank-*** Actively engage in RCM activities, including the work of all clusters (designation of focal points); and facilitate the mobilization of resources for RCM activities.

21. ***Regional Economic Communities-*** Actively engage in RCM activities, including the work of clusters (designation of focal points for RCM activities); provide timely information on priorities and programmes; and facilitate the establishment of subregional coordination mechanisms.

In order to enable the institutions effectively fulfill their respective roles, the meeting agreed as follows:

22. The RCM Secretariat at ECA should be strengthened and in this regard, a project proposal should be prepared for the consideration of agencies. The question of whether ECA's role should be that of a facilitator vis-à-vis, an enforcer, should be examined.

23. It is important to bring to the attention of the highest level of UN leadership, the need for joint planning and programming in the context of the cluster system, and for adequately integrating RCM activities into the programmes and budgetary allocations of participating UN agencies in order to ensure effective collaboration and delivery.

24. The capacities of the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and the RECs should be strengthened in order to enhance their participation in the RCM. Furthermore, the establishment of effective internal coordination mechanisms on the RCM by these organizations, as well as by the AfDB, would ensure the active involvement of all relevant staff and sustained actions.

25. In order to ensure optimal reporting to the RCM Secretariat and the active engagement of focal points in RCM-related work, biannual, instead of quarterly reporting should be instituted, and adequate recognition should be given to the time and effort staff dedicate to RCM related activities (work programme and performance appraisals). Furthermore, there is need to ensure the continuity of focal points and to involve all relevant staff in RCM-related work, as well as to ensure proper handing over when focal points are absent or leaving the organization.

26. Given their roles in the RCM and the implications of some RCM meeting recommendations for African regional and subregional organizations, these organizations should prepare annual progress reports on the implementation of RCM recommendations pertaining to them.

27. The APRM Secretariat should be invited to join the Governance Cluster and the AU Commission should be more actively engaged in the activities of the Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation sub-cluster.

IV   Strengthening Cooperation and Collaboration at the Subregional level

The meeting agreed on the purpose, objectives, value added, expected outcomes/results and intended impacts of the proposed subregional coordination mechanisms (SRCMs) as follows:

28. Purpose and objectives:
- To facilitate the attainment of deeper regional integration by the RECs and their membership
- To contribute to REC capacities for regional integration
- To promote efficiencies and synergy in the way the UN leverages its limited development assistance budget and reduce fragmentation and transaction costs of regional integration

- To link UN programmes at country, sub regional and regional levels

29. Value added:
- The SRCM will fill a void at a crucial level of regional integration efforts where currently there is no coordinated UN presence
- Result will be greater effectiveness of UN development cooperation at this level

30. Expected outcomes/results:
R-1 Increased operational capacities and effectiveness of the RECs
R-2 Improved advocacy by the UN regarding the activities of the RECs
R-3 Joint programmes leading to efficiency, less duplication and reduction of transaction costs for the RECs
R-4 Improved alignment of UN programmes to the priorities of RECs and the needs of member States

31. Intended impacts:
I-1 Deeper and accelerated attainment of regional integration programmes
I-2 Improved livelihoods of citizens in the regions served by the RECs

Suggestions on the structure and operational modalities for the SRCMs and on the role of SROs, other UN agencies, RECs and other actors

32. The structure should replicate the RCM i.e. based on a cluster approach, which includes all agencies at the subregional level and with the clusters defined by the major areas of the programme of work of the RECs.

33. ECA through its Subregional Offices (SROs), should be the strategic coordinator of the subregional mechanism, while the other agencies can lead/coordinate clusters based on their respective comparative advantages.

34. International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) and AfDB should participate in the cluster activities, assist in funding activities and provide technical assistance based on their respective areas of work and comparative advantages.

35. The Framework should be a multi year, multi partner rolling programme owned by the RECs with different UN agencies taking the lead in areas where they have comparative advantages.

Role of the different stakeholders

36. *ECA-SROs-* Strategic coordinator/convener and Secretariat and participate in cluster activities based on expertise.

37. *Other UN Agencies-* Provide leadership for clusters based on comparative advantages, and participate in cluster activities based on expertise.

38. **RECs-** Provide political and strategic leadership, provide programme priorities and ensure that operational activities of the UN are aligned to REC programmes and priorities.

39. **AfDB, ICPs-** Participate in the cluster activities, provide funding and support for technical programmes assistance based on areas of work and comparative advantages and participate in capacity building programmes.

40. The establishment of subregional coordination mechanisms (general framework) would entail: the development of a concept paper for the SRCMs to be shared with all concerned UN agencies; the convening of a meeting of all parties to discuss the SRCMs; the development of a multi-year programme cum business plan; the allocation of tasks and responsibilities within the UN, including developing indicators, results matrices, M & E processes and reporting mechanisms.

41. In assuming their coordination roles relating to the establishment of SRCMs, ECA-SROs should adequately consult with all stakeholders, including UN agencies. This is important in order for all stakeholders at that level to reach a consensus on all pertinent issues. In addition, the lack of subsidiarity of certain UN agencies in some regions needs to be taken into account in the establishment of SRCMs.

42. There is need to examine how to deal with RECs that cut across subregions, such as CENSAD and COMESA, as well as the multiple membership of countries in RECs. The proposed SRCMs could be aligned with the AU's five subregional groupings in order to address the issue of RECs that cut across subregions.

43. The proposed SRCMs once established, could mainstream regional integration into their activities by focusing on the programme priorities of the RECs.

44. Linkage between the proposed SRCMs, the RCM and the Regional Directors Teams (RDTs): The RCM is the regional level consensus building structure that reports to New York and other Intergovernmental organs like the AU. The RDT was set up to improve operational coherence at the country level and not drive regional integration programmes at the sub regional level, which is the mandate the SG has given to SROs. Thus support to RECs where operational in nature, can still be driven by the RDT while the overall structures for regional integration should be driven by ECA through the SROs.

45. The RECs multi- year programmes provide an important basis for UN support to the RECs and NEPAD. In this regard, the multi- year programmes where they exist would need to be revised to accommodate other UN agencies in order to ensure buy-in.

V   Resource mobilization for the sustainable financing of the RCM

The meeting agreed that:

46. The RCM Secretariat should be strengthened in line with its expanded mandate and responsibilities- encompassing in addition to the NEPAD Secretariat, support to the AU

Commission and the RECs. It is important to draw the attention of the UN policy-making organs to this imperative.

47. It is necessary to be bold and ambitious in terms of articulating a resource mobilization strategy for the RCM, as discussions had highlighted huge capacity constraints. The preparation of cluster business plans that would be aggregated into an RCM business plan would greatly facilitate resource mobilization efforts.

48. The RCM business plan would serve as a framework for sustainable financing of the RCM, as it will facilitate: the mobilization of resources for cluster activities at the level of the RCM; the dissemination of best practices; regular and updated information exchange between clusters; joint undertakings by clusters, thus avoiding duplication of activities and enabling effective use of resources; and monitoring and evaluation of cluster activities.

49. The leadership demonstrated by the AU Commission in relation to the RCM process is an important opportunity that should be harnessed to support the Mechanism's resource mobilization drive.

The meeting deliberated on the pros and cons of several funding options for the RCM and recommended the following combination for the sustainable financing of the RCM:

50. *Funding Option 1:* Pooled fund plus ad-hoc funding as and when necessary, entailing the secondment of staff, consultancy and financial contributions from UN agencies and partner organizations such as AfDB.

51. *Funding option 2:* Trust Fund entailing either, the formulation of a business plan with the minimum requirement to function under the current arrangement and perform the duties listed under "deliverables" with incremental resources with the AfDB as a possible funding source; or, formulation of a comprehensive project document detailing the types of support to be provided to African regional and subregional organizations, as well as to the various clusters. The project document would include concrete TORs for the required staff and a business plan for the activities to be undertaken. Donors and partners could be approached for funding.

52. *Funding option 3:* Cluster conveners with support from the RCM Secretariat to raise funds for cluster activities. This could be combined with co-financing.

53. *Funding option 4:* Efforts should be made to access additional RB resources for RCM functioning and to strengthen the capacity of the RCM Secretariat through a General Assembly resolution. To this end, a proposal should be drafted and submitted to the GA through the normal channels.

In addition:

54. The AfDB should explore the possibility of funding the recruitment of consultants during 2009. Secondment of staff of other UN agencies to the RCM Secretariat is an option that needs to be further discussed with the agencies concerned.

55. While recognizing that UNDP has been providing financial assistance for the meetings of the RCM, there is need for UN agencies to provide more support to the RCM Secretariat in order to enable it effectively carry out its coordinating role.

VI   Monitoring and evaluation system for the RCM

The meeting agreed on the purpose and objectives of the monitoring and evaluation framework as follows:

56. Purpose

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is to promote accountability and learning, and to guide UN agencies and partners in making strategic choices and decisions regarding how best to collaborate and coordinate efforts in order to promote coherence, efficiency and effectiveness, in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme.

57. Specific objectives:
o   Monitor overall coordination of the RCM;
o   Monitor and evaluate RCM processes;
o   Monitor and evaluate results/outcomes and impacts;
o   Promote accountability in the implementation of RCM recommendations;
o   Provide a basis for decision-making on necessary amendments and improvements; and document and provide feedback on lessons learned.

58. The abridged version of the M&E framework:

No	Performance indicator
R-1.1	Establishment of a high-level steering committee to oversee the functioning of the RCM
R- 1.2	RCM Secretariat strengthened in terms of human and financial resources
R- 1.3	Institution of regular cluster meetings
R- 1.4	Institution of regular reporting by clusters and African regional and subregional organizations to the RCM Secretariat
R- 1.5	Number of clusters that have developed business plans
R- 1.6	Development of a consolidated RCM business plan
R- 1.7	Number of programmes and projects jointly implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM (intra-cluster)
R- 1.8	Number of inter-cluster programmes and projects implemented
R- 1.9	Number of Subregional Coordination Mechanisms (SRCMs) established

Expected outcomes/results: Increased partnership between UN agencies and African regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of activities	
No	**Performance indicator**
R-2.1	Designation of focal points by the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, the RECs and AfDB for the RCM and its thematic clusters
R- 2.2	Number of RCM and /or cluster activities initiated and /or led by the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, the RECs and AfDB
R- 2.3	Number of clusters that have aligned their activities with the priorities of the AU and its NEPAD programme
Intended outcomes: Priorities and regional development programmes consistent with the UN-AU Cooperation Programme and NEPAD promoted, developed and implemented	
No	**Performance indicator**
I-1.1	Nnumber of regional development programmes consistent with the UN-AU Cooperation Programme and NEPAD, promoted, developed and implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM
I- 1.2	Number of subregional development programmes consistent with the UN-AU Cooperation Programme and NEPAD, promoted, developed and implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM
Intended outcomes: Effective and sustainable development	
No	**Performance indicator**
I-2.1	Number of programmes implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM that have contributed to the attainment of social sustainability goals of Africa (poverty reduction, health and education)
I- 2.2	Number of programmes implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM that have contributed to the attainment of economic sustainability goals of Africa (broad-based and equitable growth in key economic sectors)
I- 2.3	Number of programmes implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM that have contributed to the attainment of environmental sustainability goals of Africa (maintenance of the integrity of environmental systems and resources)
I- 2.4	Number of programmes implemented in the context of the cluster system of the RCM that have contributed to the attainment of Africa's peace and security and governance goals

59. The meeting agreed that concrete measures towards operationalizing the framework should include establishing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism by reviewing existing M&E tools and adapting them to the needs of the RCM, and strengthening the RCM Secretariat to effectively perform M&E duties.

60. In their closing remarks, Advocate Gawanas and Mr. Adeoye commended ECA for organizing the meeting and the UN system in general, for its support to the AU and its NEPAD programme. In closing the meeting, Madame Ben Barka urged participants to convey the messages that came out of the deliberations to their principals and impress upon them the importance of their commitment to the RCM process. She acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the high turn out and active participation of the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, the RECs, and the AfDB. She urged UN agencies to make extra efforts to improve their coordination and work better together. She thanked ECA colleagues for the well-organized meeting and all those who contributed to making the meeting a success.