



Report on sustainable development goals for the West Africa subregion

Key messages



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



African Union
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African Development
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A. Introduction

1. One of the key commitments agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was the compelling need for the elaboration of sustainable development goals because of their potential usefulness for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development at all levels. Rio+20 also recognized that the goals should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.
2. As a follow-up to the Rio+20 outcomes, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, organized the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting to deliberate on the main outcomes of Rio+20 and their implications for Africa. The meeting called for an effective, broad-based and bottom-up consultative process in Africa to flesh out goals, indicators and targets that should underpin the sustainable development goals.
3. Furthermore, ECA, AUC, AfDB and the United Nations Development Programme jointly organized subregional and regional consultations on the post-2015 development agenda in Africa. The regional consultation held in Hammamet, Tunisia, was intended to, among others things, identify Africa's priorities for the post-2015 agenda, determine enablers and critical success factors for the post-2015 development agenda, and align the post-2015 priorities with other development programmes and agendas, including Rio+20 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The meeting adopted an outcome document in which it was agreed that the post-2015 development agenda should incorporate the outcomes of Rio+20, Africa-wide initiatives, the national and regional consultations, and United Nations forums.
4. It is against this background that the report on sustainable development goals for the West Africa subregion was prepared. It is one of five reports prepared within the framework of the Africa post-2015 consultative and Rio+20 follow-up processes to inform the engagement of African countries in the global sustainable development goal process and ensure that the goals to be agreed upon are well aligned with Africa's sustainable development priorities. Together with the four other subregional reports, the report informed the Africa regional report on sustainable development goals that was presented at the African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals organized by ECA jointly with AUC and the African Development Bank from 31 October to 5 November 2013. The meeting adopted its outcome document as a technical input for consideration by the Africa High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
5. The following constitute the key messages:

B. Sustainable development issues and priorities

Education

6. Gradual improvements have been made in educational development, although this is more in terms of school enrolment than quality; and, with the exception of a few countries, the gender gap has improved. However, there are obstacles to making the current formal education system more responsive to the labour market by developing vocational and technical skills training. Efforts should be geared towards improving the quality of education to ensure a balance in labour demand and supply, and also to facilitate decent jobs for citizens, especially for young people.

Health

7. Although there are marginal improvements in terms of maternal and infant mortality, life expectancy, health service coverage and the health workforce, much remains to be done to improve the health status of the population. Improving the health situation calls for effective policies and investments to eliminate preventable diseases; improve nutrition security; enhance access to clean water and sanitation facilities; and improve access to health services that are affordable and of good quality.

Sustainable infrastructural development: energy, water and transport

8. There are huge infrastructure supply deficits in the areas of energy, water and transport. Close to one third of West Africans have no access to improved water sources, while efficient and reliable transport and energy service delivery remains elusive. In addition, private sector participation in infrastructure development and operation and cost recovery is still low. Progress towards sustainable development will be greatly accelerated if the provision of sustainable energy, water and transport is enhanced in an efficient and effective manner.

Inclusive economic growth, diversification and transformation

9. Over the past two decades, the subregion has experienced a stable economic growth largely attributed to political stability, strong global demand for the main export commodities, better macroeconomic management, rapid recovery by post-conflict countries and new mineral discoveries. Sustaining and augmenting this growth over the long term remains a challenge, however. This is because growth has been driven mainly by foreign direct investment inflows rather than domestic savings and has failed to generate employment, since these inflows focus more on the exploitation of natural resources with little or no value addition. Governments should embark on a structural transformation that will ensure diversification, reduce risks, significantly improve the quality of life of the people and ensure sustainable development.

Good governance, rule of law, peace and security

10. Ensuring good governance, adherence to the rule of law, peace and security remains a key challenge, although some improvement has been observed over the years. This can be attributed to weak State institutions for the enforcement of laws and statutes, corruption, loopholes in national constitutions and outdated anti-graft laws, among other factors, that do not create the necessary incentives for people and leaders to be law-abiding. There is a need to strengthen governance institutions and the rule of law, as well as to ensure wider stakeholder participation in decision-making and governance.

Agriculture and food security

11. Agriculture, a major economic sector in the subregion, remains largely underdeveloped. Key constraining factors include tenure insecurity, poor farming practices, poor value-chain development, limited access to international markets and poor linkage between research and development. This has rendered the sector somewhat unattractive, with serious implications for food security. Policies to ensure sustainable agricultural development should focus on the provision of agricultural infrastructure and mechanization; provision of research, extension services and marketing; establishment of agro-industries; improved access to inputs and credit; and reform of land-tenure systems to encourage investments in agriculture.

Environment and natural resource management: forest, water and soils

12. The environment and natural resources such as forests, water bodies and soils on which livelihoods depend are being degraded or depleted at a rapid rate because of overuse, over-harvesting and pressure from other land uses, including agriculture. Efforts to minimize environmental degradation should aim to assess the value of the services provided by these resources, so as to inform economic pricing, to provide incentives for conservation, to strengthen institutions and regulatory frameworks, and also to boost public-private partnerships and investment, with a view to restoring, maintaining and enhancing the stock of these resources.

Social protection for the poor and vulnerable

13. Not only is social protection coverage generally low and limited to a minority of the population in the formal sector, but it also does not provide adequate benefits. The majority of the population are in the informal sector and they usually belong to the most vulnerable population categories, who rely on traditional family and social support systems that are either no longer adequate or do not exist at all. Social protection arrangements in the informal sector, which are patchy at best, are grossly inadequate to address the welfare needs of this segment of society. There is a need for comprehensive national social protection systems that ensure the provision of basic income and livelihood security and affordable access to essential health care, food and adequate nutrition, education, housing and other services for all, with particular attention to poor and vulnerable groups.

Sanitation and urban management

14. Urbanization is taking place at a very fast rate and has resulted in many environmental and social problems – poor sanitation and waste management, increased crime, violence, traffic congestion, slums, and youth unemployment and underemployment, among others. There is a real need for investment in modern sanitation facilities and decent and affordable housing, along with the design of cities that offer opportunities for greening through the proximity of urban functions, modal shifts in transportation and increased efficiency in the provision of basic infrastructure.

C. Sustainable development goals and targets

15. The sustainable development goals, targets and indicators for the West Africa subregion were generated following field surveys and extensive consultations with stakeholders in the subregion, and discussed at the African Regional Consultative Meeting. With about a third of the countries in the subregion ranked among the poorest in the world, poverty reduction remains the major challenge. Reducing poverty is an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development. The multidimensional nature of poverty – which affects education, health, sanitation and access to drinking water and other basic services – means that tackling poverty using an interlinkages approach would provide an opportunity to address other sustainable development priorities in an efficient and effective manner. Since many of the problems that the Millennium Development Goals sought to tackle still persist, the sustainable development goals should incorporate key aspects of the Millennium Development Goals into a larger sustainable development framework for the development agenda beyond 2015.
16. The proposed goals, targets and indicators identified for the west Africa subregion are provided in the annex.

D. Conclusion and recommendations

17. The West Africa subregion has, over the past decade, experienced political stability, which has contributed to the achievement of appreciable economic growth, although real economic transformation is yet to be achieved. On the social development front, access to education and health has improved but more needs to be done in terms of quality. Despite these improvements in the economic and social fronts, environmental degradation and pollution still pose major challenges. On the whole, the institutional, financial, technological and capacity constraints notwithstanding, countries in the subregion have made strides in all three dimensions of sustainable development. More effort is needed, however, if sustainable development is to be addressed in a holistic and integrated manner. The following recommendations are crucial in that regard:

- (a) Member States should commit themselves to, and make significant efforts to operationalize the sustainable development goals. Countries should be prepared to make careful policy choices that balance national priorities and international commitments: Member States must ensure good governance; ensure that education and awareness are created on the sustainable development goals; develop a long-term strategy to guide implementation; better involve the private sector and civil society organizations; strengthen institutions by making them more proactive and independent; provide adequate and innovative finance and develop capacity for implementation. There is also need to develop a comprehensive framework for effective monitoring and evaluation with a view to learning lessons for future implementation;
- (b) Subregional and regional bodies should undertake measures to improve sustainable development governance in the subregion: In this regard, there is a need to enhance the role of regional and subregional bodies, such as the Economic Community of West African States and AUC, in the operationalization and implementation of the sustainable development goals, and also in the development of a subregional sustainability index for the concise monitoring of progress. Furthermore, there is a need to promote learning from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, to undertake extensive subregional consultations on the sustainable development goals; and to support countries in effectively monitoring and evaluating implementation;
- (c) The effective operationalization of the sustainable development goals will require the availability of adequate resources, necessitating meaningful support from the international community: This calls for a genuine commitment to aid and development effectiveness. The international community should promote, facilitate and finance appropriate and environmentally sound technologies and their diffusion, together with capacity building, institutional strengthening and global partnership for development.

Annex: Proposed sustainable development goals and targets for West Africa

Goals	Targets
Goal 1: Reduce extreme poverty and hunger	<p>Target 1: Reduce by three quarters, between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people whose daily income is less than \$1.25 (at purchasing power parity)</p> <p>Target 2: Reduce by three quarters between 2016 and 2030, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p> <p>Target 3: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially the vulnerable (women and young people)</p>
Goal 2: Achieve gender equality, and universal equitable primary and secondary education	<p>Target 4: Ensure by 2030 that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of quality primary schooling</p> <p>Target 5: Ensure by 2030 that 60 per cent of boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of quality secondary education</p> <p>Target 6: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2025, and at all levels of education no later than 2030</p> <p>Target 7: Ensure that practical science technology and innovation training, especially ICT training, is an integral part of secondary and tertiary education by 2025 and at all levels by 2030</p>
Goal 3: Ensure universal access to quality health care	<p>Target 8: Reduce by three quarters the under-five mortality rate by 2030</p> <p>Target 9: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by 2030</p> <p>Target 10: Achieve, by 2025, universal access to reproductive health and overall health care</p> <p>Target 11: Reduce annual new HIV/AIDS infections by three quarters by 2025 and ensure universal treatment for HIV/AIDS patients by 2030</p> <p>Target 12: By 2025, stabilize the incidence of malaria and other major diseases at 2015 levels and ensure that deaths caused by these diseases are reduced by two thirds by 2030</p> <p>Target 13: By 2030, achieve universal access to health care delivery, especially in rural areas</p> <p>Target 14: Reduce by three quarters the number of people living in slums by 2030</p>
Goal 4: Increase and improve infrastructure and urban management	<p>Target 15: Increase by half access to sustainable energy by 2030</p> <p>Target 16: Increase the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption by 25 per cent by 2030 and improve energy efficiency in production and consumption</p> <p>Target 17: Increase by half, between 2016 and 2030, waste collection, disposal and management</p> <p>Target 18: Increase by a fifth between 2016 and 2030 the availability of sustainable transport</p> <p>Target 19 : Increase by a quarter the length of motorable roads and by a third rail and water transport between 2016 and 2030</p> <p>Target 20 : Reduce by a third the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2030</p>
Goal 5: Improve inclusive economic growth	<p>Target 21: Between 2016 and 2030, increase gross domestic product (GDP) and GDP per capita growth to 10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively</p> <p>Target 22: Increase by one third overall investments and the share of investments in public expenditure by 2030</p> <p>Target 23: Reduce foreign aid dependency by a third by 2030</p> <p>Target 24: Ensure inclusive economic growth by 2025 and begin the transition to a green economy by 2030</p>
Goal 6: Achieve structural economic transformation	<p>Target 25: Increase by one third the share of manufacturing in GDP by 2030</p> <p>Target 26: Increase by a third, between 2016 and 2030, the share of local content in foreign direct investment and the contribution of natural resource to GDP</p>
Goal 7: Ensure good governance, peace and security	<p>Target 27: Reduce the public perception of corruption by a third between 2016 and 2030</p> <p>Target 28: Reduce by one third the average time needed to access justice between 2016 and 2030</p> <p>Target 29: Ensure the rule of law, peace and security</p>

