Harmonized regional framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa

Why Africa developed a Harmonized Framework

There is a renewed dynamism in Africa to achieve inclusive growth, spurred by Agenda 2063: the Africa we want, of the African Union, which is a collective vision and an action plan, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the priorities related to it and several other global agreements. In this regard, the rapid urban transition in Africa is a major transformative force contributing towards the reduction of poverty in all its forms and efforts aimed at tackling inequality and achieving a continent that is inclusive, integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful. The global and regional commitments made by African member States pertaining to the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11 serve as vehicles to harness this urban dividend aligned with regional priorities, as articulated in the Common African Position on Habitat III. Additional urban priorities emanating from other frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development provide further grounds to leverage cities and human settlements for inclusive growth.

To implement the New Urban Agenda in Africa, it is necessary to localize the policy and strategic imperatives to the regional context, while enhancing linkages and synergies with Agenda 2063 and other global agreements with the objective to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainable development. The fundamental shared principles and synergies between the New Urban Agenda and other relevant agendas present opportunities to leverage resources for planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting urban commitments in Africa, given the multidimensional and multisectoral nature of urbanization. For this reason, a dynamic regional framework with a robust operational interface was developed to identify and guide policy prioritization and strategic actions for the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

Development and mandate

The decision of Africa to develop the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda was directed by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization at its second ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 7 December 2016. It was subsequently adopted by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization at the Ministerial level in December 2018.

Similarly, the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programmes, in its resolution 26/8 adopted in May 2017, encouraged the United Nations

1 The African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization called on the African Union Commission to spearhead, supported by its partners, the development of a coherent and harmonized strategic framework for the follow-up of EX.CL/Dec.933 (XXIX) regarding ‘the Common African Position towards the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)’. It also requested the African Union to “coordinate partners and regional institutions to develop programmes and initiatives aimed at implementing the New Urban Agenda through the leveraging of resources”.

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Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to collaborate with other United Nations programmes and entities, Member States, local authorities and relevant stakeholders to further develop the action framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

Furthermore, the Committee on Gender and Social Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), at its second session, requested ECA to support member States in the implementation, monitoring and review of the New Urban Agenda.2

The development of the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda further informed by continuous technical engagement and consultation with member States to define the continent’s key policy priorities derived from the global priorities of the New Urban Agenda. This policy prioritization process was also informed by Agenda 2063, the Common African Position on Habitat III, Habitat III Regional Report Africa, the UN-Habitat Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda and African national-level New Urban Agenda frameworks.

Policy priorities of Africa and means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda

Under the African Union Specialized Technical Committee, African Ministers of Housing and Urban Development adopted the six transformative policy outcomes of the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda as a means towards achieving the continental vision of an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent”. They also adopted seven means of implementation to achieve the identified transformative policy outcomes in Addis Ababa in 2018. For each of the transformative policy outcomes and effective implementation areas, a set of strategic actions and key objectives are respectively defined, linked to specific New Urban Agenda mandates and specific mandates from other agendas (most notably those set in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063). In doing so, the framework is derived wholly from existing agreements and framework, and does not introduce new commitments.

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2 E/ECA/COE/37/14.
In support of harmonized monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda in Africa, the framework provides guidance on urban data concepts, definitions, sources and methodologies. Promoting social and spatial disaggregation of data and statistics is also a key monitoring and reporting principle of the framework. Also, the importance of strong institutional settings for harmonized monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda is reiterated in the framework.

The Model Law in Africa on Housing, Urban Development and Human Settlements is specified as the legal framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa in the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda. The African Union Specialized Technical Committee mandated the development of the Law as a step towards the development of the African Charter on Urban Development, Housing and Human Settlement committed to by the Ministers of Housing and Urban Development in Brazzaville in 2014, and prescribed as a key output of the African Union.

The Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda serves as a regional guide, adaptable to member State needs and contexts at the subregional, national and subnational levels. The added value of the framework is that it allows coherence and harmonized implementation of human settlements along the urban-rural continuum, aligned with the regional priorities of Africa, and in synergy across multiple global and regional agreements and frameworks.

Actors and stakeholders

The importance of an integrated approach and various stakeholder groups at the continental, regional, national, and subnational and local levels for effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda is underscored in the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda. Accordingly, the roles of State and non-state actors and at different levels, and stakeholders in international, regional organizations and subregional bodies are outlined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continental African Union Commission (supported by ECA, UN-Habitat, African Development Bank, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa)</th>
<th>Subregional Regional economic communities and other specialized agencies and institutions</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Subnational and local</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Political guidance</td>
<td>- Subregional New Urban Agenda strategies and programmes</td>
<td>- Integration of urban and human settlements into sustainable development aspirations</td>
<td>- Lead subnational and local implementation</td>
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<td>- Definition of mandates</td>
<td>- Approaches for urban and human settlements linkages across countries in the regional economic communities</td>
<td>- Direct, guide, coordinate and regulate agenda implementation (through policies, strategies, legislation, programmes, institutions and other instruments)</td>
<td>- Supported by other stakeholders (traditional authorities, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, neighbourhood associations, higher education institutions, cultural groups, mutual assistance associations, and private sector entities)</td>
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<td>- Linkages with other continental agendas</td>
<td>- Mainstreaming of the New Urban Agenda subregional priorities in regional economic communities’ strategic plans and actions</td>
<td>- Financial and other resources for effective implementation</td>
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<td>- Advisory services and capacity strengthening</td>
<td>- Subregional monitoring of progress</td>
<td>- Supported by civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, the media and other stakeholders</td>
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<td>- Monitoring and reporting of the New Urban Agenda Resources mobilization</td>
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Way forward

- Capacity development for regional economic communities, national and local and city governments to strengthen planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes of the priorities highlighted in the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda
- Advocacy and dialogue with member States and relevant stakeholders on the regional priorities identified in the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda
- Support African regional reporting to inform the global report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda
- Strengthening coherence between the Harmonized Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework of the New Urban Agenda and the Model Law on Urban Development and Human Settlement