11th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of UN Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa (RCM-Africa) in Support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme

14 - 15 November 2010
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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I. Introduction

1. The 11th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism in Africa (RCM-Africa) of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union (AU) and its NEPAD Programme was held on 14 and 15 November 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The session was co-chaired by Her Excellency, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of the UN and His Excellency Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of AU Commission (AUC).

II. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by Representatives of several UN agencies and organizations, AUC, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as observers from some bilateral agencies. The full list of organisations represented at the meeting is attached to this document as Annex 1.

III. Opening ceremony

3. Her Excellency, Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, opened the meeting. H.E. Dr Jean Ping, Chairperson of AUC, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, and Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of NPCA, also made opening remarks. Mr. Tariq Banuri, Director of the Division of Sustainable Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), delivered an opening statement on the theme of this 11th Session of RCM-Africa on behalf of H.E. Mr. Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

4. Dr Migiro recalled that in 2002, the UN General Assembly mandated the entire UN system to support the AU’s NEPAD programme. This expression of support was followed in 2006 by a more ambitious declaration on a Ten-Year Capacity Building Program for the AU and the continent’s Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In 2010, the Secretary-General established a high-level liaison office at the AU. The present meeting was
therefore taking place at a period when the UN was strengthening its support to the AU.

5. She noted that the broad impact of climate change and multiple crises, including the global financial crises, continued to hamper development efforts in Africa and threatened to scale back hard-won development gains. In spite of these challenges, Africa's economic performance rebounded and had remained steadfast, with growth projected to be 4.8 percent in 2010, driven mainly by recovery in mineral exports, ODA inflows, strong government expenditure on infrastructure development, and remittances.

6. Dr Migiro said that the recently concluded MDGs Summit in New York, which gathered the world leaders, noted the remarkable achievements that had been made, especially in terms of reducing poverty and expanding education and access to clean water. She added that the leaders sent a clear message that the MDGs remained achievable by 2015, including in the least developed countries, if efforts were stepped up.

7. Dr Migiro underscored that AU, ECA and the African Development Bank (AfDB), supported by UN system agencies and development partners, have already begun to address the spectrum of issues raised at the Summit through various ways. For instance, the theme of the last Africa Development Forum (ADF) held in Addis Ababa was Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

8. Dr. Migiro noted that the Consensus Paper of ADF VII recognized not just the threat of climate change, but also the opportunities it provided in spurring the integration of climate-resilient strategies into development planning and in generating movement toward a green economy.

9. She said that beyond the Rio+20 processes, RCM-Africa should continue to play a central role in supporting Africa's effort to meet the MDGS; and should focus on more efficient strategies to meet the capacity building needs of the AUG, NPGA and REGs.

10. In his address, Mr Abdoulie Janneh said that the 11th session of RCM-Africa was momentous in the sense that it was the first one to take place after the formal integration of NEPAD into AU structures. He said the high-level presence of colleagues from across the UN system provided a great opportunity to take stock of what had been accomplished by RCM-
Africa Secretariat and its nine clusters and their insights on emerging issues and challenges for Africa. The meeting also provided a platform for deliberations and exchange of views on the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development also known as the Rio+20 Conference.

11. Mr. Janneh saluted Africa's leadership for taking advantage of Rio + 20 to improve coherence and coordination of Africa's development agenda.

12. He said that the UN had a significant contribution to make in Africa because its noble ideas and objectives were congruous to the continent's aspirations for socio-economic progress.

13. Mr. Janneh added that there was a positive spirit about Africa's potential which had not been seen since the early years of independence and noted that the work of RCM must be guided by the need to help fast-track continental aspirations for socio-economic transformation.

14. In his remarks, Dr. Mayaki stressed that the finalization of the integration of NEPAD into the structures and of the AU was an encouraging development and marked a new phase in taking forward Africa's self-designed development strategy. He pointed out that the present meeting provided an avenue to concretize UN system wide support for the AU and its NEPAD programme.

15. The CEO said the role of ECA as the strategic coordinator of RCM-Africa was very critical and expressed NPCA's satisfaction with measures taken by ECA to add value to the Mechanism.

16. On his part, Mr. Tariq Banuri reiterated the need for Rio+20 to address the "implementation deficit" and reasons behind the lack of progress on relevant issues and emphasized the importance of an integrated response to the challenges of sustainable development.

17. The AU Chairperson, Mr Jean Ping emphasized the need for a clear and precise roadmap to improve synergy, coherence and coordination within RCM-Africa. He noted that since its establishment, many high-level personalities, including the Heads of State from Mexico, China and Norway had engaged RCM-Africa to share views on Africa's position on climate change.
18. He also pointed out that the formal integration of NEPAD into AU structures in the form of a Planning and Coordination Agency was an opportunity for better synergy on the shared RCM-Africa agenda and on issues such as regional integration, resource mobilization and peace and security.

IV. Adoption of Agenda

19. The meeting adopted the following agenda items:

a) Opening ceremony;
b) Progress Report of RCM-Africa;
c) Progress Report of the Sub-regional Coordination Mechanism;
d) Rio+20: Progress, challenges and regional preparations;
e) The Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU: Where we are and way forward;
f) Main Issues and Recommendations of the Meeting; and
g) Way Forward and Closing session.

V. Progress Report of the RCM-Africa

20. RCM-Africa Secretariat presented a report summarizing the progress and achievements of the nine clusters during the period November 2009 – November 2010 and identified challenges confronting the clusters.

21. The meeting observed that despite the importance of statistics in formulating informed-measures and in monitoring and evaluating these measures, none of the clusters and sub-clusters of RCM-Africa had adequately integrated the use of statistics in their work. It also observed that RCM-Africa continued to be focused on issues of process and activities in general rather than results and impact. This was well illustrated in cluster reports, which contained few tangible deliverables.

22. Proposals were made for a number of themes to be considered more seriously in the work of RCM-Africa, possibly through the creation of new clusters, including emergency preparedness, maritime security,
regional integration, humanitarian response and economic policies/management.

23. The meeting acknowledged that AUC and NPCA were achieving concrete results from their integration including joint planning in key programmatic areas such as infrastructure, through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA); agriculture, through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); and environment through implementation of the Environment Action Plan.

24. Participants noted that the Communication and Advocacy Cluster had scaled up efforts aimed at information gathering and dissemination and had focal points in all other RCM-Africa clusters. These efforts were deployed as means of enhancing the effectiveness of communication and advocacy activities.

25. The meeting expressed concerns over the alignment of SRCM with the priorities of RECs as well as the multiplicity of sub-regional coordination mechanisms and their relationship to one another. It also acknowledged that more could be done to enhance coordination of some AUC Departments in relation to cluster issues that are of mutual interest. Human resource development was cited as an example. Furthermore, the meeting stressed that resources constraint was limiting the work of clusters.

VI. Progress Report of the Sub-regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM)

26. The 11th Session of RCM-Africa was informed of the establishment of a Sub-regional Coordination Mechanism (SRCM) in Central Africa as well as in Eastern and Southern Africa. A brief account of activities carried out so far to operationalize the SRCMs was provided along with options for the way forward.

27. The meeting welcomed the outcome statement of the High-Level meeting on the establishment of a SRCM in Eastern and Southern Africa, held on 19 and 20 March 2010, in Kigali, Rwanda, which called for
a speedy establishment of a SRCM to support the regional integration agenda of the RECs and IGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa.

28. The meeting also took note of the report of the inaugural meeting of the Task Force of UN agencies and organizations to operationalize the SRCM, held in Kigali, Rwanda, on 25 and 26 October 2010, which identified five thematic areas for the SRCM and outlined the working modalities and the way forward for the mechanism.

29. The 11th Session of RCM-Africa directed the Task Force to initiate discussions with the RECs and IGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to ensuring that a coordinated UN support to the regional integration agenda of the two subregions commenced in 2011.

30. The 11th Session of RCM-Africa emphasized the need to focus on programmes where UN agencies and organizations, based on their comparative advantage, can add value to the work of the RECs and IGOs in the two subregions. The meeting also requested that ECOWAS be approached to establish a SRCM in West Africa.

VII. Rio+20: Progress, challenges and regional preparations

31. This session on the theme of RCM 11 was introduced by Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, the AUC Commissioner for Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture in her capacity as the Co-moderator of the session. She emphasized the importance to Africa to effectively prepare for Rio+20. She highlighted AUC related work including in the areas of climate change, combating desertification and biodiversity conservation.

32. This was followed by four presentations. The Division of Sustainable Development in UNDESA made the first presentation on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development commonly known as Rio+20, which is scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in May 2012. This presentation provided the mandate and rationale for the holding of the conference, its focus, expected outcome and preparations
at global level including planned support to regional and national preparatory process.

33. The next three presentations highlighted activities planned by RCM-Africa Environment, Population and Environment cluster, as part of regional preparations for Rio+20. These presentations served to inform the RCM-Africa and call for collaboration and support of the RCM-Africa clusters in Africa's regional preparations for Rio+20.

34. ECA made a presentation on the overall Africa regional preparations for Rio+20 which are planned to entail subregional reviews and consultations, preparation of background regional reports on the themes of the conference and a regional synthesis report. The regional preparations are planned to culminate in an Africa regional statement adopted at the level of AU Summit, to be submitted to Rio+20.

35. A presentation on consultations and preparation of a regional background paper on A Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication was made by UNEP. The objective of the report to be prepared under the leadership of UNEP is to enhance understanding and appreciation of the prospects, challenges and opportunities for Africa towards the transformation to a green economy to contribute to the realization of its sustainable development and poverty eradication goals.

36. A presentation on the Workshop on Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development was also made by ECA. The workshop was being organized within the framework of regional preparations for Rio+20 and its outputs would inform the Africa report to Rio+20 on Institutional Frameworks for Sustainable Development. The objectives, format, expected outcomes, outputs and participants at the workshop planned for 14 to 16 February 2011 were highlighted. This workshop would contribute to among others, improved appreciation of the importance of effective institutions at the regional, sub regional and national levels; and consensus on the institutional frameworks for sustainable development at the different levels.

37. In the ensuing discussion, the Eleventh session of RCM-Africa welcomed the planned regional preparations for Rio+20 and underscored the importance of effective preparations in order to ensure that Africa's
concerns and priorities are reflected and well articulated in the Rio+20 outcomes. It was stressed that the preparations constituted a big ticket item that would demand effective intra and inter-cluster collaboration to deliver as one UN, with active participation of regional and sub regional entities and other partners in the region.

VIII. The Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU: Where we are and way forward

38. The report of the review of the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU (TYCBP-AU) which was presented under this agenda item highlighted the following: (a) the review process; (b) the historical UN support for African Development and the African Union; (c) AU and NEPAD economic development results framework; (d) TYCBP and AU Capacity Building; (e) Positioning RCM as the implementation tool for TYCBP; and (f) Recommendations and way forward.

39. The meeting commended the Consultant for the excellent quality and comprehensiveness of the report and for the important recommendations made in the document, and adopted the report with its recommendations as well as the definition of "capacity building" provided in the document.

40. The meeting also noted the fact that whereas resources have been allocated to support the implementation of NEPAD this was not the case with the TYCBP.

41. The meeting further noted as follows:

a) The NPCA is now fully integrated in AU structures and processes and this fact should be taken into consideration by UN agencies in their support to AUC and NPCA;

b) The programming and planning cycles of AUC, NPCA, and RECs should be synergised with those of the UN system in planning cluster and sub-cluster activities, to enable UN organisations identify, incorporate and implement activities in line with their yearly programme implementation plans; and

c) Information sharing within and among certain clusters and sub-clus-
ters was inadequate, and should be improved.

42. The meeting also identified the following needs:

a) To develop a well defined capacity building programme of work based on AUC’s strategic plan and priorities to guide implementation of the TYCBP-AU;

b) To align TYCBP-AU with the Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF) of AU;

c) To involve RECs in developing the capacity building programme, noting that

d) RECs are the building blocks of the AU;

e) To mobilise resources to support the effective participation of RECs in the RCM process;

f) To utilise the definition of “capacity building” provided in the document in
g) developing the scope of the capacity building work programme to be formulated by the clusters;

h) To present an annual progress report of RCM-Africa and in particular TYCBP to the AU Heads of State summits;

i) To seek additional resources beyond the existing regular budget of the UN Secretariat to support TYCBP-AU.

IX. Summary of Main Issues and Recommendations of the Meeting

43. There was consensus that the RCM-Africa reporting process should strive to be more results, impact and outcome-oriented than has hitherto been the case, while also being less activity-based, process-driven and meeting-focused. A greater impact of the RCM would require that clusters concentrate on a few and tangible projects with concrete deliverables that could make a significant difference. In particular, developing 1-3 joint inter-cluster projects with high impact potential would be one way to go.

44. Cluster reports should be supported with evidence of activities occurring at the sub-regional level.
45. Given the relatively high number of clusters and in order to minimize the risks of losing focus and of overstretching the remit and scope of the work of RCM, the meeting suggested that proposed themes such as statistics, emergency and preparedness, maritime security, regional integration, humanitarian response and economic policies/management be included as sub-clusters.

46. Facilitating coordination in programming meetings and other activities requires the establishment of an e-calendar of AU, RECs and cluster meetings to be shared between all stakeholders.

47. Participants reiterated that the sub-regional RCM should learn from the regional mechanism in that the RECs, not the UN, should drive the process of SRCM.

48. AUC Departments should work more together on issues that cross departmental boundaries in order to tap into potential synergies and reduce inefficiencies linked to duplications.

49. It was reaffirmed that an effective communication and advocacy strategy requires that the cluster responsible for the theme liaise with and relate to other clusters. In this respect, participants urged agencies that have not yet designated their focal points to the Communication and Advocacy Cluster to do so. Further, information from line-clusters should emphasize success stories and good practices to ensure a greater outreach impact.

50. A greater alignment of the work of SRCM with the priorities of RECs will constitute an important step toward enhancing the contribution of SRCM to addressing sub-regional and country-specific challenges.

51. Clusters must align their work plans with those of the AU. The same hold true for business plans which should also be in accordance with AU priorities.

52. An improved TYCBP should not build capacity for more meetings but rather to effectively formulate interventions and activities that address the development challenges of African member states.

53. Other key recommendations made by the eleventh session of RCM-Africa include:
RCM-Africa clusters should play an active and substantive role in the regional preparations for Rio+20. In this regard clusters should designate representatives to be members of the multi-stakeholder steering committee to be formed to oversee and work out mechanisms for an effective regional preparatory process. In addition continental institutions including the AUC, RECs and AfDB should be effectively engaged in the preparations;

b) The key drivers of sustainable development should be identified and addressed in a holistic manner, reflecting Africa's legitimate needs and priorities for sustainable development. In this connection, a human face should be brought into preparations and issues to be addressed at Rion+20, and as such education as a fundamental driver of sustainable development should be included among the key drivers to be addressed;

c) As part of the preparation of the review and background thematic reports for Rio+20, practical good practices to achieve sustainable development should be documented and disseminated to enable their adaptation and replication by African countries;

d) The preparations and inputs to Rio+20 should be based on a bottom up process so as to enable the conference to reflect on and address challenges and opportunities for sustainable development at the operational level; and

e) Rio+20 should include adequate articulation of how to achieve sustainable development to complement what needs to be done, which was a major thrust of previous summits on sustainable development.
X. Way Forward and Closing

54. The meeting adopted the Outcome Document subject to comments agreed upon by the participants.

55. The Deputy Secretary-General in her closing remarks said that she was very impressed by the openness of the deliberations and the genuine desire expressed by all participants to improve the effectiveness of UN support to AUC and its NEPAD programme and as well to RECs.

56. She underscored that the strong presence of AUC at the meeting, from Chairperson Jean Ping, to several Commissioners and Directors, as well as focal points of Clusters was a clear indication of the Commission's preparedness to lead and own RCM-Africa. She also expressed her satisfaction with the participation of NPCA and RECs at the meeting, adding that this was encouraging as these institutions were best placed to articulate their own organisational needs.

57. She congratulated the RCM-Africa Secretariat for the excellent manner in which this 11th session of RCM was organized. She also congratulated the RCM-Africa Secretariat and the clusters for their efforts in implementing the recommendations of previous sessions of the mechanism.

58. The Deputy Secretary-General highlighted a number of positive messages from the meeting, notably that RCM had come of age and had been transformed into a credible mechanism for strong and coordinated support to Africa's development; and that the operationalization of SR-RCMs would strengthen coordination of efforts by the UN system at the sub-regional level.

59. She concluded by calling upon participants to reflect on and seriously address the challenges highlighted in the meeting with the view to achieving greater concrete results.

60. Next, the CEO of NPCA, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, commended the RCM-Africa Secretariat, clusters and sub-clusters for the achievements recorded over the past year. He also commended participants for the frank manner in which they had deliberated on the challenges facing the mechanism and the way forward. He concluded by saying that irrespec-
tive of the institution they represented, all participants were working towards the same objective, which was to promote Africa's development.

61. In his closing remarks, ECA Executive Secretary, Mr. Abdoulié Janneh, thanked all participants for their enthusiasm in RCM-Africa, which he said had become a better mechanism. He stressed that the active involvement of all participants in the discussions illustrated the common desire for the mechanism to succeed. Mr. Janneh concluded by saying that he was delighted with the increasing leadership of AUC in RCM-Africa as well as with the participation of RECs who are vital in Africa's integration architecture.

62. Finally, the Deputy Chairperson of AUC, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, noted that there had been improvements in the present RCM-Africa session compared to the last session and congratulated the RCM-Africa Secretariat and all participants for their contributions to those improvements. He said he was convinced that next year's meeting would be even better. He congratulated Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson, the consultant who undertook the review of the TYCBP-AU for the good quality of his work, noting that implementation of the Programme would contribute towards achieving a higher standard of living in Africa.
Annex 1: List of Participants of the 11th Session of Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM-Africa)
14-15 November 2010
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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