



Report on sustainable development goals for the Eastern Africa subregion

Key messages



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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 the global, regional, national and local 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 (AfDB) 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 the 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 backdrop that the report on sustainable development goals for the eastern Africa subregion was prepared. It is one of five subregional reports prepared 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. The report together with those of the other four subregions, informed the Africa regional report on SDGs. All the six reports were presented at the African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals organized by ECA, AUC and AfDB 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.

The following constitute the key messages:

B. Key sustainable development issues and priorities for the Eastern Africa subregion

Human development

5. Although eastern African countries have achieved impressive economic growth in recent years – with a growth rate averaging about 5 per cent between 2010 and 2012, this has not translated into comparable human development or improved levels of per capita income. In 2012, nearly all the countries of the subregion except for Seychelles did not score well on the human development index, with scores of between 0.316 and 0.773. A number of economic, social and environmental constraints will need to be overcome to realize sustainable development in the subregion.

Agriculture

6. The subregion still depends heavily on agriculture, with the sector's contribution to gross domestic product exceeding 25 per cent in most countries, and accounting for up to 40 per cent in some. It is also the major livelihood for over 70 per cent of the population, largely in rural areas. Improved performance of the sector is, therefore, key to achieving sustainable development. Agricultural productivity needs to be improved as it is essential for increasing overall economic growth and meeting the millennium development goals related to reducing poverty and hunger. While progress has been made in adopting sustainable agricultural practices through innovation and technology application, more effort is required to enhance productivity and promote value addition.

Employment

7. Employment creation and equity in income distribution remain major challenges for countries in eastern Africa. There are mixed trends in income distribution owing to limited employment opportunities, particularly for young people. There are also significant disparities in employment and income between countries in the subregion, gender groups, age groups and other categories. Nevertheless, there has been significant progress in addressing these disparities, especially gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Education

8. Eastern African countries have recorded some progress in human resource development, which is crucial for addressing the challenges that the subregion faces and harnessing opportunities for wealth creation and social sustenance. Although the situation varies from country to country, there have been major improvements in education throughout eastern Africa, including higher rates of enrolment and completion of primary and secondary education, university enrolment and adult literacy, and improved gender parity. The quality of education and adult literacy, however, remain causes for concern. Countries should adopt appropriate policies to streamline the education sector and equip the population with the skills required for transformation, with a view to moving further towards sustainability.

Energy

9. Ensuring sustainable energy development and access to renewable energy sources that are affordable, clean, reliable and safe continues to be a major challenge. Although the subregion has considerable potential regarding both renewable and non-renewable energy sources, this remains untapped owing to low domestic and foreign investment and inadequate adoption and implementation of policies to support energy development. As a result, eastern Africa remains a net importer of oil and gas. The subregion could, however, become an energy hub with improvements in natural resources exploitation and the introduction of energy-efficient technologies.

Health

10. Health concerns, including diseases and child and maternal mortality rates, remain a burden in eastern Africa. There has been significant progress in reducing child mortality and maternal mortality rates but the rate of improvement is slow and remains a concern for many countries. Equally, remarkable progress has been made in combating HIV/AIDS but more needs to be done. In certain countries, programmes such as health insurance schemes have reduced health concerns, but the prevalence of non-communicable diseases remains high.

Environment

11. On the environmental front, the subregion faces challenges related to climate change, land degradation, deforestation and pollution. Efforts have been made to develop and promote environmentally friendly policy frameworks that address specific environmental challenges, but more needs to be done to decouple economic and social transformation from environmental degradation. Increased volumes of funds should be mobilized and allocated for environmental goals, including climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Peace and security

12. Ensuring a stable subregion through peace building and security between countries is fundamental to achieving sustainability. Eastern African countries still face insecurity, which hinders the productivity of populations, the sustainable use of natural resource endowments and steady progress towards sustainable development. In order to combat insecurity and build peace, countries need to tackle human trafficking, illicit drugs and piracy, and promote good governance, rule of law and democracy.

Financing for sustainable development

13. Financing for sustainable development in the eastern Africa subregion remains a challenge, despite a considerable rise in funding levels. There is an increasing reliance on domestic resources but more effort is needed to sustain this trend by, among other things, enabling local and foreign direct investment using appropriate policies and addressing governance and security challenges. Domestic resources should be deployed to implement sustainability initiatives, complemented by external resources such as foreign direct investment and official development assistance.

C. Sustainable development goals for the Eastern Africa subregion

14. Seven sustainable development goals, and corresponding targets, that take into account eastern Africa's development priorities have been put forward, with a view to pursuing development in a sustainable, focused and coherent manner. The goals and targets can be found in the annex to the present report.

D. Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

15. Although eastern Africa's economic growth has been impressive over recent years, many challenges remain, including poverty, inequality, large and growing populations, food insecurity, low levels of infrastructure development, health challenges and environmental degradation and depletion. Addressing these challenges requires focused attention if countries in the subregion are to attain sustainable development. In the light of these challenges, achieving sustainable inclusive growth and economic transformation is the leading priority in eastern Africa. It is also vital to nurture a healthy and productive population, ensure the efficient use of natural resources, and reverse environmental degradation.

Recommendations

16. More resources need to be mobilized and allocated for the implementation of sustainable development goals. Eastern African countries need to commit themselves to allocating an increased share of public financial resources to sustainable development.
17. The sustainable development goals should be effectively mainstreamed into national and subregional development policies, strategies and programmes. Institutions at all levels should be strengthened, and collaboration and coordination enhanced to harmonize the work being carried out and foster the exchange of best practices.
18. Mechanisms should be strengthened to enable effective participation in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Policies and incentive schemes should be introduced to enable the active participation of the private sector, local communities, and national and subregional actors.
19. Formal and informal education and awareness on sustainable development should be enhanced. Countries should establish sustainable development centres and platforms, including training institutes, where different actors can exchange knowledge and skills.

Annex

Goals	Targets
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty	Target 1: Eradicate extreme poverty, that is people living on less than \$1.25 a day or living below the national poverty line, by 2030
Goal 2: Ensure food security and adequate nutrition	Target 2: Reduce food imports by 50 per cent by the year 2030 Target 3: Eradicate hunger by 2030 Target 4: Reduce the number of people who have unbalanced diets by 80 per cent by 2030
Goal 3: Reduce the rate of unemployment	Target 5: Increase private investments by 5 per cent by the year 2030 to stimulate employment opportunities Target 6: Increase quality employment by 10 per cent by 2030 Target 7: Increase diversification to more technical, skills-based employment by 10 per cent by 2030 Target 8: Reduce the unemployment rate among young people and graduates by more than half by 2030 Target 9: Improve social protection accessibility and benefits by more than 30 per cent by 2030
Goal 4: Increase and improve existing infrastructure	Target 10: Improve national and subregional infrastructure (roads, railways, airports and energy) by 20 per cent by 2030 Target 11: Reduce the number of people without access to electricity by 20 per cent by 2030 Target 12: Attain full access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation Target 13: Increase investments in water to improve access to clean water by 10 per cent by 2030
Goal 5: Improve access to health facilities	Target 14: Achieve universal access to quality health care and reduce by half the incidence of malaria-related infections and diseases by 2030 Target 15: Reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS infections by half by 2030 Target 16: Increase access to antiretroviral medicines by 20 per cent by 2030 Target 17: Reduce child mortality rates by half by 2030 Target 18: Reduce maternal mortality rates by three quarters by 2030 Target 19: Achieve universal access to reproductive health and reduce unmet family planning need to less than 10 per cent by 2030
Goal 6: Improve education facilities	Target 20: Provide universal secondary education by 2030 to both girls and boys and increase enrolment by 20 per cent Target 21: Increase the number of educational facilities by 20 per cent by 2030 Target 22: Increase technical and vocational training schools by 10 per cent by 2030
Goal 7: Promote efficient use of natural resources and reverse environmental degradation	Target 23: Ensure that sustainable development principles are integrated into national development policies, strategies and plans Target 24: Reduce deforestation and forest degradation by half between 2015 and 2030 Target 25: Reduce water pollution by half and ensure sustainable land management by 2030 Target 26: Reduce air pollution by half by 2030 Target 27: Increase access to renewable energy sources by 10 per cent by 2030 Target 28: By 2030, natural resources are managed and exploited sustainably, legally and through ecosystem based approaches Target 29: Reduce gas emissions by 10 per cent by 2030 Target 30: Enhance resilience to climate change by 2030 through mainstreaming of adaptation and mitigation measures into development policies, programmes and investment projects

