



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



African Union

RCM Africa Retreat on Joint Programming

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A. Introduction and context

1. The year 2017 marked the transition to a successor framework for a renewed United Nations partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda. The adoption of the agenda has taken place as the African Union implements the First Ten Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023 of Agenda 2063, the continent's long-term socio-economic and integrative transformation framework. The Plan serves as the guiding framework in the preparation of the medium term plan of the African Union Commission and to which the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa also seeks to align its activities.

2. Under the auspices of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, annual meetings between the United Nations and the African Union are held to review and take stock of the achievements of the mechanism's cluster groups and deliberate on challenges and best practices. The eighteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa was held at the King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar on 25 and 26 March 2017 under the theme "UN system support to harnessing Demographic Dividend through investments in the Youth." Some of the key recommendations emanating from the session are as follows:

(a) The joint secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa should finalize the joint programmes of work for the clusters for 2017-2018 based on the priorities aligned with Agendas 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(b) The United Nations should support the African Union Commission in its effort to incorporate Agenda 2063 in the national development plans of African Union member States and in the ongoing work to set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

(c) The United Nations and the African Union should support in the joint effort of the African Development Bank, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, and the United Nations Development Programme to create a platform for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda with the view to track progress made by African countries in advancing the development agenda of the continent.

3. Moreover, the expert group meeting that conducted the final review and appraisal of the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union highlighted that while programmes and activities of the United Nations within the Regional Coordination for Africa should be of relevance to the expressed needs of Africa, each United Nations agency or entity has its own set of priorities for Africa, which might not have been endorsed or embraced by the African Union nor be in sync with the priorities and needs of the continent. This means that despite the efforts to coordinate actions by United Nations entities operating in Africa to "deliver as one" in supporting the implementation of African Union Priority programmes, cluster activities have not been fully aligned with the aspirations of the African Union and accordingly have lacked the requisite buy-in to sustain progress.

4. As a result, a key recommendation of the expert group meeting was that the major African Union sectoral programmes, frameworks and strategic plans, particularly its medium-term plan, should be taken into consideration in setting priorities and drawing up business and work plans for the clusters of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa. Accordingly, in accordance with that recommendation, clusters would be required to review their business and work plans to ensure that they adequately reflect the priorities of the medium-term plan and

inherent aspirations of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. These harmonized work plans would also serve as tools for monitoring progress and improved effectiveness to foster accountability for the African Union and the United Nations. Also, highlighted as a key recommendation was the need for each United Nations organization and agency to leverage their existing structures and allocate resources to strengthen the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.

5. Subsequent to the expert group meeting, two new frameworks were introduced: the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the United Nations-African Union Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and other mechanisms, to avoid duplication and overlap, there is a need to discuss how those frameworks can be harmonized and operationalized effectively in alignment with the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/254.

6. While the partners of Regional Africa Coordination Mechanism for Africa remain committed and continue to implement those and other recommendations with some notable achievements at the cluster and subcluster level, the joint secretariat notes recurring challenges hinder the full realization of the goals of the mechanism. Some of those challenges are weak joint planning and programming between the African Union and the United Nations, limited information sharing and collaboration across the entire mechanism, the absence of dedicated resources to implement cluster activities and the lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation framework.

7. It is in the above context that the secretariat of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa is organizing a joint programming retreat to prepare a programme of work that is based on the medium-term plan of the African Union Commission covering the period 2018-2022 for the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa and the existing United Nations-African Union frameworks.

B. Objective of the joint programming retreat

8. The main objective of the programming retreat the first one to be held by the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa – is to provide a platform for stakeholders to identify the strategic priority areas of the African Union Commission and formulate an effective action plan and programme of work that has shared responsibilities and resource windows, and includes a time frame for implementing it. The retreat will certainly help the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa deal with the major concerns of the region by securing an agreement on joint planning and programming modalities. It will enhance the mechanism's ability to capitalize on synergies and exploit comparative advantages.

9. To assist the joint programming exercise, the secretariat of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa has been holding consultations with the mechanism's clusters from which a number of strategic programmes have been identified by the United Nations and the African Union Commission to be implemented. Subsequently, the clusters have selected their priority programmes, which will be reviewed at the retreat.

10. In addition, a handbook prepared by the joint secretariat of the mechanism, which provides programming tools to improve development results, will be used as a key resource for the retreat.

C. Expected outcomes and outputs

11. The following outcomes and outputs are expected to emanate from the retreat:

(a) Better informed participants and greater awareness and knowledge on the vision, aspirations, objectives and priority areas of the African Union Commission, as articulated in its medium-term plan, the First Ten Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023 and Agenda 2063.

(b) A joint programme of work for 2017-2019, which will clearly indicate the role of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa in helping the African Union Commission address the agreed priority areas in the short term (up to the end of 2019) and in the medium term, the processes for appraising and monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects and the responsibilities and specific indicators related to gender mainstreaming.

(c) Report of the retreat.

D. Dates and venue of the retreat

12. The RCM-Africa Retreat for Joint Programming is scheduled to take place at the Hilton Hotel, in Nairobi from 24 to 27 April 2018.

E. Provisional agenda

(a) Opening remarks.

(b) Presentation on the United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2025 as the focus framework for Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa.

(c) Presentation and discussions on the medium-term plan for implementing Agenda 2063.

(d) Presentation and discussion on monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(e) Presentation and discussion on the United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

(f) Presentation and discussion on the United Nations-African Union Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(g) Presentation on cluster alignment and the current draft programme.

(h) Presentation of the proposed ISP.

(i) Presentation of work carried out by clusters in 2017.

- (j) Breakaway cluster sessions (5).
- (k) Breakaway cluster sessions (4).
- (l) Reports of the breakway cluster sessions.
- (m) Presentation of the consolidated matrix.
- (n) Planning session for the nineteenth session of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Africa.
- (o) Other matters.
- (p) Presentation of the outcome report.
- (q) Closing remarks.

F. Participants

14. The target group for the retreat includes programming and coordination experts from the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism and United Nations system agencies and organizations working at regional and subregional levels. Gender representation is considered to be an important contributor in ensuring that gender implications are reflected in all aspects of the retreat.

G. Partnerships

15. The retreat is being organized jointly by the African Union Commission and United Nations system agencies and organizations.

H. Contact names and addresses

16. For further information about the retreat, please contact:

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