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Economic Commission for Africa
Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa
Twentieth session
Third Joint Meeting of the Regional Coordination
Mechanism for Africa and the regional United Nations
Sustainable Development Group

African Union

Marrakech, Morocco, 23 and 24 March 2019

Report of the clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

I. Introduction

1.   The present progress report contains a summary of the support of the United Nations system agencies working in Africa extended to the African Union and its organs in the context of the Joint United Nations-African Union Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa. It covers support for the implementation of African Union priorities at regional and subregional levels, including those articulated in Agenda 2063: The Future We Want of the African Union, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, the report contains an overview of the assistance provided within the framework of the renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda for 2017–2027; the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security; and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It presents progress made in implementation and achievements, challenges and recommendations on the way forward for the period April 2018 to February 2019.

II. Implementation progress and achievements

A. Joint Secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

1. Retreat and nineteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

2.   During the period under review, the Joint Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa secretariat organized a programming retreat of the Mechanism in Nairobi. The resulting joint cluster workplans (2018–2019), which currently guide the work of the Mechanism, were contextualized within

the framework of the partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027, informed by regional and subregional priorities. The joint secretariat, in partnership with the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group teams for Eastern and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa, agreed on the theme of the nineteenth annual session of the Mechanism: "United Nations system support to the African Union in winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation". To enhance communication within and between clusters, the secretariat has developed an electronic information sharing and collaboration platform, which is slated to be launched soon.

2. African Union and United Nations reforms, and the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

3.   Major decisions pertaining to institutional reforms of the African Union were made at the thirty-first African Union Summit on the theme, "Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation", held in Nouakchott from 25 June to 2 July 2018, and at the eleventh Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 November 2018. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General has proposed key actions and recommendations to reposition the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

4.   Regarding the African Union reforms, the following are of particular relevance to the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa: (a) reorganization of the structure and portfolios of the senior leadership of the African Union Commission; (b) approval of the mandate of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) following the decision made in January 2017 to transform the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency; (c) institutional reform of the African Peer Review Mechanism; and (d) establishment of an effective division of labour among the African Union, regional economic communities, member States and continental organizations.

5.   In May 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In the resolution, the General Assembly, under the heading "revamping the regional approach", reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level, including the regional economic commissions and the regional teams of the United Nations development system, and underlined the need to continue to make them fit for purpose in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to revamp the regional structures, recognizing that no one size fits all; and emphasized the need to address gaps and overlaps at the regional level, and endorsed a phased approach to revamping the United Nations development system at the regional level.

3. Response of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa to ongoing African Union and United Nations reforms

6.   In October 2018, the secretariat of the Mechanism commissioned two studies, one on strengthening subregional coordination in support of the African Union and NEPAD, and the other on enhancing monitoring and evaluation in respect of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa. The first study was aimed at leveraging the momentum of the African Union and United Nations reforms for support that was more coordinated and fit for purpose at the subregional level, while ensuring effective linkages with national and regional-level United Nations coordination mechanisms. The objective of the second study was to establish a framework that would allow the mechanisms to track the progress and results achieved in implementing agreed priority activities in support of the African Union and its organs. The draft study reports were presented for review at two ad hoc experts group meetings held in Nairobi in December 2018, and are now being finalized.

7.   On 10 December 2018, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held a joint meeting with the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa and the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group for West and Central Africa in Addis Ababa. The overall objective of the meeting was to reach a common understanding on the implications of the ongoing United Nations reform initiatives on the functionality of the entities and to deliberate on strategies for deepening collaboration. The meeting agreed on modalities for follow-up and implementation of the first phase of the regional optimization actions of the United Nations reforms, which informed the preparation of a joint workplan. At the meeting, it was also agreed to integrate and harmonize the strategic priorities of the African Union,[1] the seven strategic initiatives of the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group,[2] the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027, the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, and the African Union-United Nations Development Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4.   Retreat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

8.   The retreat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa was held in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, from 26 February to 1 March 2019. The retreat was organized by the joint secretariat of the Mechanism comprising staff of ECA and the African Union Commission. The main objective of the retreat was to provide a platform for participants to deliberate on key implementation issues, including revising its workplan, taking into account the reforms of the United Nations and the reforms and strategic priorities of the African Union. The retreat also helped to firm up organizational arrangements and the programme of work for the twentieth session of the Mechanism, to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 23 and 24 March 2019, on the margins of the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the Economic Commission for Africa.

9.   The issues discussed included harmonizing the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security; and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the monitoring and evaluation framework, the proposal on the working modalities of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, and an update on the guidelines on mainstreaming cross-cutting issues. The retreat reiterated the need to enhance coordination and collaboration in order to promote efficiency and effectiveness in implementation, ensuring that activities lead to visible impacts on the ground. An important outcome of the retreat was the preparation of draft joint workplans by Clusters of the Mechanism and the subregional coordination mechanisms.

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[1] As modified at the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa retreat, held in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, from 26 February to 1 March 2019: Regional integration with a focus on the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Single African Air Transport Market and free movement of persons, goods and services; silencing the guns; climate change; gender and youth; capacity-building; division of labour between regional economic communities, member States and other international actors; and addressing the African Union theme of the year.

[2] Strategy of support to middle-income countries; strategic framework to support resilient development in Africa; Great Lakes regional strategic framework; Sahel strategy; strategy of support to small island developing States and Indian Ocean countries; Horn of Africa initiative; and migration mapping initiative.

B. Progress report of the clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

1. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agroprocessing and regional integration

10. Cluster 1 endorsed 10 activities as part of the joint work plan that would be implemented in collaboration with the African Union Commission. Some of the activities were implemented and results were reported jointly. The activities that were implemented were anchored on the priorities of the African Union Commission in line with the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda. Activities reported complied with the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

11. Cognizant of the importance of aligning cluster activities and development priorities with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, seven results were reported under the first activity of cluster 1, which focused on the incorporation and alignment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with the national and regional development plans. Among the activities reported were a high-level meeting on zero hunger, held on the margins of the thirtieth Assembly of the Heads of State and Government Summit, in Addis Ababa, and a high-level meeting on engagement on the implementation of the Malabo business plan of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Programme.

12. A collaborative inter-agency initiative provided tailored policy and programme support to 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a view to strengthening their capacity to develop and implement national development plans that reflect their commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement and other regional and global frameworks. Other activities included a workshop on the harmonization of indicators of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, as well as an inter-agency collaboration on the Fourth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

13. Several activities supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area were also reported by various agencies including the second Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee of the Ministers of Trade, Industry and Mineral Resources leading to the endorsement of the Free Trade Area, and hosting of the first International Conference on Food Safety. United Nations Industrial Development Organization held a high-level event to explore innovative ways of leveraging global partnerships within the programme framework of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025), with a view to supporting industrialization, trade capacity-building and the mobilization of resources for development in Africa.

14. The membership of the clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa is available in the annex to the present document.

2. Infrastructure

15. During the reporting period, the cluster scaled up its support to member States in designing and implementing policies and programmes conducive to setting up public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects, including energy. In that regard, it delivered training on the development of a mixed energy model to Ethiopia, initiated road safety performance reviews in Cameroon and Uganda, and led campaigns and advocacy in support of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol. In addition, the cluster is supporting the development of a bioenergy development strategy and investment plans for Central and East Africa.

16. As part of the annual activities to showcase to stakeholders the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) projects of the African Union, the cluster organized the fourth "PIDA Week" in Victoria Falls,

Zimbabwe, in November 2018 on the theme, "PIDA implementation through good governance – realizing smart infrastructure for Africa's integration". Additionally, the cluster held the policy dialogue on the Programme in Addis Ababa in December 2018 to encourage stakeholder engagement and develop a consensus-building plan with member States.

17. The cluster continues to support the Single African Air Transport Market initiative. The regulatory and institutional texts of the Yamoussoukro Decision, which constitute the regulatory and management framework of the Single African Air Transport Market, were adopted on the margins of the thirtieth Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, held in Addis Ababa from 22 to 29 January 2018. The ministerial working group, set up to lead the establishment and operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market, held its fourth meeting in Lomé in May 2018. An important outcome of the meeting was the adoption of a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision, to be signed by all signatory States of the Single African Air Transport Market.

18. African ministers of transport, at a meeting held in Luanda in November 2011, adopted the African Road Safety Action Plan and the Luanda Declaration. In the Declaration, the third Sunday of November, which is currently the World Remembrance Day for Road Accident Victims, was proclaimed the African Road Safety Day. The cluster has also developed a special programme dedicated to national maritime transport policy to assist member States in the inclusion of maritime and shipping matters in national development plans and policies.

3. **Human capital development, health, nutrition, science, technology and innovation**

19. The cluster organized the pan-African high-level Conference on Education in Nairobi in April 2018. The gathering allowed participants to reflect and prepare for the Global Education Meeting in December 2018 and the upcoming high-level political forum. The event was attended by 54 countries in Africa and educational partners, and resulted in the adoption of a declaration that guides the alignment of a continental education strategy for Africa with the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on the continent. In September 2018, the Human Resources Science and Technology Department of the African Union Commission joined the Global Steering Committee for Goal 4, one of the global coordination mechanisms. Additionally, the cluster supported the Department in a consultation with ministries of education on key continental initiatives for teacher development, including the Teacher Mobility Protocol, the Teacher Qualification Framework, the Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Teacher Award.

20. The cluster organized a regional workshop for countries in East Africa in Addis Ababa in October 2018 aimed at the development of a framework for monitoring both the Continental Education Strategy for Africa and the progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 at national level. Members of the cluster assisted the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in drafting a road map for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugees Education, aimed at refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and host communities in the Horn of Africa. A meeting of Ministers was held in Addis Ababa in December 2018, at which countries agreed on the call for action on the implementation of the Declaration.

21. Through the support of the cluster, the Human Resources Science and Technology Department of the African Union Commission engaged a consultancy to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa and develop a draft five-year Science, Technology and Innovation programme for implementation during the period 2019–2024, to be validated in March 2019. In Abuja in November 2018, the African Union Commission, assisted by the cluster, launched the African

Scientific, Research and Innovation Council, a pan-African platform for the mobilization of research excellence and innovation.

22.   In June 2018, the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), a platform launched by the African Union Commission, signed a cooperation arrangement with the European Commission for free data access and use of sentinel data of the Copernicus programme by all African institutions and citizens. In collaboration with Gabon, the cluster also supported the organization of the first GMES and Africa continental Forum, held in Libreville in November 2018. The Forum was attended by more than 500 stakeholders.

4.   **Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility**

23.   Cluster 4 contributed significantly to the implementation of the First Five-Year Priority Programme on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (2016–2020). In February 2018, a two-year project on social security access and portability for migrant workers was developed and launched. A study was also conducted on skills recognition and portability, in addition to the development of harmonized labour-market information tools within the framework of the implementation of the African Union Labour Market Information System Harmonization and Coordination Framework, and the development of the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security, supported by the International Labour Organization. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the cluster provided social security and social protection extension to rural workers and members of their families in four member States.

24.   Moreover, the cluster provided support in the formulation of a comprehensive ten-year action plan on eradication of child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons in Africa to accelerate progress towards the achievement of continental objectives and targets. In February 2019, a technical consultation was organized with all United Nations agencies based in Addis Ababa to enrich the draft ten-year action plan with their contribution and inputs, bringing their experience and knowledge. The draft is now ready for the April 2019 meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee. A consultation on child labour and forced labour in sub-Saharan Africa was organized by the cluster, in preparation for the Fourth Global Conference in the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour.

25.   The cluster through the Migration Working Group extended support to the African Union Commission in its efforts to review the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, which was adopted in Banjul in 2006. The African Union Commission conducted an evaluation of the Migration Policy Framework to determine the extent to which it had effectively guided member States and regional economic communities with regard to the following: managing migration; the challenges faced in its implementation; the opportunities that remained to be seized; its continued relevance; and the need for a revision of the Framework. Findings from the study led to such a revision, which reflects current and emerging migration dynamics in Africa and offers a revised strategic framework to guide member States and regional economic communities in migration management and governance. It was adopted at the thirty-first ordinary session of the African Union Summit, held in Nouakchott on 1 and 2 July 2018.

26.   With regard to the Free Movement of Persons Regime, the cluster provided the technical support that led to the adoption of the Protocol for Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment at the thirtieth ordinary session of the Assembly in January 2018. The cluster with the African Union Department of Political Affairs launched a study on the benefits and challenges of free movement of persons in Africa. Highlighting the benefits of movement and refuting the perceptions and fears associated with free movement within the continent, the study serves as a tool to encourage member

States to ratify the Protocol. Furthermore, as part of the implementation road map of the Protocol, the cluster supported the workshop on the guidelines and specifications for the African Passport, organized by the African Union and the regional economic communities. The workshop resulted in a recommendation by member States for the adoption of those guidelines by the Special Technical Committee of the African Union in October 2018.

5.   Gender equality, women and youth empowerment

27.   The cluster organized several policy platforms on gender, including the high-level panel on gender equality and women's empowerment, held in Addis Ababa in June 2018. Other platforms included the African Union Gender Pre-Summit on the theme of corruption and gender, held in January 2019; high-level events on women in power on the margins of African Union Summits, hosted by the President of Rwanda; and a high-level breakfast on the ratification of the Maputo Protocol, hosted by the President of Ghana. The cluster also produced several knowledge products including the 2017 and 2018 gender scorecard. It supported the development and alignment of the African Union gender strategy with Agenda 2063, which was adopted and launched during the thirty-second Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 February 2019.

28.   With regard to young people, the cluster prepared a guide on investing in young people to realize the demographic dividend. It supported 45 countries to develop demographic dividend profiles and to implement the demographic dividend road map with a focus on specific investment areas. It also prepared a report on the state of young people. Furthermore, it undertook activities in support of the Technical Vocational Educational Training Decade. Activities for the engagement of young people included the organization of the youth day and the development of programmes for the six cooperation areas of the African Union-European Union cooperation hub. Cross-cutting activities include the development of mainstreaming guidelines, workshops and training on gender and young people.

29.   Based on the 2017 African Union theme, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth", the cluster has been working on a number of key initiatives to support the implementation of the African Union demographic dividend road map. The initiatives are the following: the publication of the State of the African Youth Report, which is based on the four pillars of the road map; and the development of a youth index, to be used to inform work on youth development in Africa and the Decade on Technical and Vocational Education and Training 2018–2027. Regarding the latter initiative, a strategy for the decade was developed and presented to member States during the Specialized Technical Committee Meeting on Youth, Culture and Sports, held in Algiers from 21 to 25 October 2018. The strategy for the decade was approved at the thirty-second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 February 2019.

30.   In addition, the cluster, in close partnership with the African Union and the Government of Angola, supported the establishment of the Pan-African Youth Network on a Culture of Peace. Regarding gender, the African Union Commission Chairperson called for the development of a comprehensive campaign on ending violence against women and children in Africa. Through a steering committee co-chaired by the African Union Commission Women, Gender and Development Department and cluster members, a broad spectrum of United Nations and other international partners have been meeting to define the scope and nature of the campaign. The African Union Chairperson is expected to launch the campaign in 2019.

6.   Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management

31.   The cluster participated in discussions to align the global compact on refugees with the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. To further efforts to manage forced displacement in Africa, it convened two sessions of the African Union Humanitarian Law and Policy Training

Programme in 2018, bringing together officials from member States in charge of forced displacement for training to exchange views on forced migration issues. The training sessions have advanced efforts to widely disseminate the African Union Model Law on the Kampala Convention. The cluster also worked with the African Union to convene the sixth African Union annual Humanitarian Symposium, which was held in Nairobi from 25 to 30 November 2018 on the theme, "Refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: towards durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa". The event kick-started the cluster's support to the African Union with the proposal of the 2019 theme.

32. The cluster continued to extend capacity and technical expertise support for a broad range of humanitarian and disaster risk management initiatives to enhance the predictive, preventive, response and adaptive capabilities of the African Union within the framework of the 2016 Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness. To support countries in reporting on the Sendai Framework Monitor, the cluster organized four regional training courses and one training course in Ethiopia, involving the following organizations: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and Southern African Development Community (SADC). At the subregional level, ECCAS and ECOWAS have aligned their disaster risk reduction plans of action with the Sendai Framework, while other regional economic communities are in the process of doing so. The cluster supported the African Union Commission in developing a monitoring and reporting framework for the programme of action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa.

7. Environment, urbanization and population

33. During the reporting period, the cluster supported the African Union Commission in the finalization of the sustainable forest management framework for Africa, which is expected to be adopted by member States of the African Union in April 2019. It has continued to provide support to the African Union Commission in the implementation of the African Wildlife Strategy, and to the Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles with regard to biodiversity conservation and in nominating biosphere reserves, and to the Great Green Wall of the Sahara together with the Sahel Initiative, which recently has been extended to the SADC region. The cluster, together with the African Union Commission, organized the Africa Day event on the margins of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, from 2 to 14 November 2018.

34. Other areas of work include the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, meteorology and hydrology, maritime, groundwater management, rainwater harvesting, and developing innovative approaches for sustainable natural resource management. The celebration of Wangari Maathai Environment Day in Niamey on 4 March 2018 offered an opportunity for environmental awareness building and advocacy on key environmental events to strengthen the role of women and young people in environmental management.

35. The cluster was a key collaborating partner in the organization of the seventh Africa Water Week event, held in Libreville from 29 October to 2 November 2018. The cluster developed a $14 million proposal on strengthening adaptive capacities for smallholder farmers in water-stressed river basins in Southern Africa in consultation with five SADC countries. This climate change project affirmed the need for joint action by United Nations agencies in providing long-term solutions to the extreme weather conditions.

36. The cluster developed the Harmonized Regional Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa. The framework will help countries articulate the critical role of urbanization at the regional, national and subnational levels. It was endorsed by representatives

of housing and urban development ministries of Africa during the third ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization, held in Addis Ababa in December 2018.

37. Cluster members were instrumental in organizing the five-year review of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Accra in October 2018. This was the first substantive review of the Declaration, which resulted from the 20-year review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development held in 2013. The continental report, which included a summary of trends, major lessons learned and recommendations, informed the review meeting in Accra and the final outcome, which will feed into global-level discussions. The global discussions will take place in April 2019, as part of the Commission on Population and Development. The date of the discussion is timed to mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action.

8. Advocacy, information, communications and culture

38. The cluster implemented a joint project on the promotion of human rights, specifically focusing on the right of journalists to safety and access to information. The project was designed to help strengthen the National Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms for the Safety of Journalists in Africa and was aimed at the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.10.1 and aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063. The agreed actions have been carried over to the biennium 2019–2020, with a special focus on establishment of an African coordination mechanism for the safety of journalists at the regional, subregional and national levels.

39. Other joint activities included the provision of support to media capacity-building and developmental journalism in Africa in order to monitor and report on progress with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, as well as the promotion of access to information in Africa. This support has also informed planned activities for the period 2019–2020 to support a standardized training curriculum for journalism education institutions in Africa. It also informed the ongoing support to countries in Africa to put in place access to information laws that are aligned to the African Union model law for African States on access to information.

40. The cluster continues to support the implementation of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and the revision of the Plan of Action for Cultural and Creative Industries in the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063 (2013–2023). Cooperation has been strengthened with INTERPOL, its SADC regional bureau and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization in preventing and combating illicit traffic of cultural property. The fifth Pan-African Cultural Congress, held in Addis Ababa in September 2018, endorsed its framework for action. It also called for the review of the African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries to include contemporary approaches for the development of the African creative sector.

41. Within the framework of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, at its thirteenth session, held in Port Louis from 26 November to 1 December 2018, added four inscriptions to the global lists of intangible cultural heritage from Africa. As a result, the total number of intangible cultural heritage elements in Africa is 59. Meanwhile, the inscription of two additional sites in African countries at the forty-second session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Manama from 24 June to 4 July 2018, brought the total number of African World Heritage Sites to 131.

9. Governance, peace and security

42. During the reporting period, several activities were carried out to support the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. Under the area "preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace", the cluster collaborated closely with the African Union and subregional organizations in organizing preventive diplomacy and inclusive mediation activities. The cluster also worked with the Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide to extend support to the African Union initiative to integrate indicators of atrocities into early warning systems of regional economic communities.

43. Under the area "responding to conflict", the cluster participated in activities aimed at enhancing the African Union operational response capacity, including reviews of operational policy documents, planning trainings and field exercises; development of African standby capacity rosters for civilians and police; and improving operational planning, and accountability mechanisms. To assist in the implementation of the gender, women, peace and security agenda, the cluster provided assistance in drafting policies on conduct and discipline, and sexual exploitation and abuse. It also continued to work with the African Union in mine actions for African Union-led assessment missions to African Union member States. The United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) continued to strengthen the standby capacities of the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms to make their operations consistent with implementation of the Africa Standby Force Maputo Strategic Five-year Work Plan (2016–2020).

44. Regarding the area "root causes and promoting resilience and development", the cluster extended support to the Lake Chad Basin Commission, through the African Union, in developing the Regional Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin Commission, which includes the reintegration of former combatants. Collaboration with the African Union also entailed support to the initiatives for entrenching alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in African Union preventive measures, as part of the measures for silencing the guns by 2020. Also, African Union-United Nations consultations on strategies for addressing peace, security and development requirement in the Sahel region are ongoing.

III. Challenges

45. The work of the clusters presented the following challenges:

- Absence of dedicated focal points, the optional nature of participation and high turnover rate of representatives at cluster meetings, attributed to staff transitions both at the African Union Commission and United Nations agencies. This makes coordination extremely difficult and undermines the effectiveness of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.

- Most agencies continue to engage with the African Union Commission on a bilateral basis, thereby affecting collaboration that would deliver common results.

- Some clusters lack clear terms of reference to guide their working modalities and joint delivery.

- Cluster workplans include too many activities that stretch delivery capacities in terms of human and financial resources, thereby undermining effective implementation. The absence of a joint resource mobilization strategy is a further hindrance.

46. Lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa hampers results-based reporting.

IV. Recommendations on the way forward

A. Joint planning

47.   The joint workplans of the Mechanism should be informed by or aligned with key global and regional frameworks, priorities and implementation frameworks. These frameworks include the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the seven strategic priorities of the African Union. The analysis carried out by the secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa provides a very good basis for alignment, in particular with respect to the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, and the joint frameworks on development and peace and security of the United Nations and the African Union.

B. Monitoring and evaluation framework

48.   An effective and living framework remains an urgent need to help the Mechanism assess progress towards achieving concrete results. As such, the ongoing study on the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework is crucial. Accordingly, the study and the development of the framework should be concluded in a timely manner. The framework should build on the monitoring and evaluation framework for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

C. Strengthened Joint Secretariat

49.   The Joint Secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa should be strengthened in terms of human and financial resources. There needs to be clearly defined roles and responsibilities, as well as clear division of labour. Joint resource mobilization among entities of the Mechanism should be supported and strengthened to ensure effective and timely implementation of joint workplans of the clusters of the Mechanism. In this regard, the Joint Secretariat should table the matter of the strengthening of the Mechanism and its subregional coordination mechanisms at the twentieth session of the Mechanism and then at the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of ECA, in order to seek a resolution from the latter for the consideration of the General Assembly. The submission to the Assembly should be supported by United Nations agencies participating in the Mechanism, as well as the African Union Commission through their Office and the African Group in New York. In relation to raising extrabudgetary funds, the Joint Secretariat will prepare a resource mobilization strategy to be implemented with the support of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

D. Collaboration and communication

50.   There is a need to explore approaches to enhance commitment and develop stronger collaboration and cooperation among United Nations entities under the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, with a view to delivering strong and coherent support to the African Union and its organs. Collaboration among the clusters and participating entities of the Mechanism and the subregional coordination mechanisms can be enhanced through effective communication.

51.   The communication and advocacy strategy of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa needs to be operationalized. In this regard, cluster 8 should review the existing strategy to decide on modalities for its operationalization. Communication-related activities should be factored into joint cluster workplans and budgets and cluster 8 should ensure representation in the other clusters. The recently developed electronic information-sharing and collaboration platform should henceforth constitute the main channel of communication for the Mechanism. The platform should be used by clusters, subregional coordination mechanisms and the regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group teams to exchange information and ideas in real time with a view to enhancing collaboration. The platform could also feature the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Department of Global Communications responsible for global advocacy and support for AUDA-NEPAD, thus strengthening collaboration with the two entities.

Other recommendations

- There is a need to rationalize the number of activities included in joint workplans. This should take into account the African Union priorities and available human and financial resources.

- There is a need for cohesive reporting within the framework of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa. Only joint activities carried out by more than two agencies together with the African Union Commission should be reported and single agency activities should not be included in cluster reports.

- Clusters should develop a strong joint resource mobilization strategy to ensure adequate, predictable resources for the implementation of joint workplans.

- Opportunities for inter-cluster information and experience sharing on joint implementation should be explored for good practices and lessons.

- United Nations agencies and the African Union Commission should designate technical officers to serve as focal points for all correspondence pertaining to cluster activities.

- ECA should ensure that it is represented in all clusters. In this regard, the Commission should designate focal points for those clusters where it is not represented.

- There is a need for further rationalization of the clusters taking into account the priorities of the African Union and the joint frameworks of the United Nations and the African Union.

Annex

Cluster membership of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

Clusters	Clusters titles	Members – United Nations agencies, African Union Commission and regional economic communities
Cluster 1	Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agroprocessing and regional integration	**United Nations** ECA, FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP **African Union Commission** Trade and Industry, Economic Affairs, Rural Economy and Agriculture, Social Affairs, Human Resources, Science and Technology, African Union Commission Office of Legal Counsel, Finance, Office of the DCP
Cluster 2	Infrastructure development	**United Nations** ECA, FAO, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNOPS **African Union Commission** Infrastructure and Energy, Human Resources, Science and Technology, Trade and Industry, Rural Economy and Agriculture, Office of Legal Counsel
Cluster 3	Human capital development, health, nutrition, science, technology and innovation	**United Nations** ECA, FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP, WHO **African Union Commission** Human Resources, Science and Technology, Social Affairs, Infrastructure and Energy
Cluster 4	Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility	**United Nations** ECA, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-Women **African Union Commission** Social Affairs, Political Affairs, Women and Gender, Economic Affairs
Cluster 5	Gender equality, women and youth empowerment	**United Nations** United Nations Office to the African Union, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOV, UN-Women, WFP **African Union Commission** Women and Gender, Human Resources, Science and Technology, Social Affairs
Cluster 6	Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management	**United Nations** United Nations Office to the African Union, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, ECA, FAO, ILO, IMO, UNAIDS, UNDP-RSCA, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOV, WFP

Clusters	Clusters titles	Members – United Nations agencies, African Union Commission and regional economic communities
		African Union Commission Political Affairs, Rural Economic and Agriculture, Economic Affairs, Social Affairs, and Peace and Security Regional economic communities: COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC Associates: AACC, AHA, ICRC-AU, ICVA, IFRC-AU, LPI, NRC-AU, OXFAM-AU
Cluster 7	Environment, urbanization and population	**United Nations** ECA, ILO, IMO, IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO **African Union Commission** Infrastructure and Energy, Social Affairs, Trade and Industry, Human Resources, Science and Technology
Cluster 8	Advocacy, information, communications and culture	**United Nations** Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA, ILO, IMO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN-Women **African Union Commission** Information and Communication, Social Affairs, Strategic Planning, Infrastructure and Energy
Cluster 9	Governance, peace and security	**United Nations** United Nations Office to the African Union, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-Women **African Union Commission** Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Social Affairs, Gender Directorate, Human Resources and Strategic Planning, Office of Legal Affairs, African Peer Review Mechanism

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