



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

11th Session of Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme

Welcome Remarks

by

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UN Under-Secretary-General and
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**Excellency Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and Chairperson of the Regional Coordination Mechanism;
Excellency Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
Excellency Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Office, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency;
Excellencies, Executive Heads of Regional Economic Communities;
Distinguished Colleagues of the United Nations System**

I am pleased to welcome this distinguished gathering of eminent persons to Addis Ababa the home of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and to this 11th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

We are truly delighted that Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chairperson of the RCM is here again to lead our deliberations. She continues to be a source of great inspiration for our work and we can certainly look forward to another successful meeting under her able and purposeful leadership.

This RCM meeting is significant in the sense that it is the first one to take place after the formal integration of NEPAD into African Union structures in the form of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency. I salute Africa's leadership for making this far-sighted arrangement which will improve coherence and coordination of Africa's development agenda. It also sends a strong signal about our collective determination as a continent to make the institutional arrangements that will strengthen and deepen Africa's regional integration.

I wish therefore to commend Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission for his leadership of the integration process and his demonstrated strong support for positive pan-African initiatives like the RCM. I also wish to acknowledge through him the increasingly strong ownership of the RCM process by the African Union Commission and NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, whose distinguished Chief Executive, Dr. Mayaki is also here with us. The presence of the AU leadership will undoubtedly afford us the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the integration of NPCA into AU structures.

The United Nations has a significant contribution to make in Africa because its noble ideals and objectives are congruous to our continent's aspirations for socio-economic progress. Indeed, the outcome of the recently concluded MDG Review Summit reaffirmed the role of the UN in *'advancing development and in protecting development gains, including progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals'*. In doing so, however, we must continue to bear in mind the need for greater coherence and coordination of UN support to avoid duplication of efforts, maximize synergies and avoid waste of scarce resources.

The high-level presence of colleagues from across the UN system affords us a great opportunity to take stock of what has been accomplished since we met last year including the functioning of the nine clusters and their insights on emerging issues and challenges for Africa. Equally notable in this regard is the first triennial review of the Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation especially as it pertains to the Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union. A highly accomplished consultant has prepared a credible report that will enrich our discussions especially on better articulating the Framework of the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme, ensuring adequate financial provision and strengthening the RCM.

This RCM meeting will also enable deliberations and exchange of views on this year's theme which is the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development more popularly known as the Rio+20 Conference. As other regions of the world gear up to determine desired outcomes of the Conference, it is only fitting that Africa should undertake a similar exercise. The choice of the theme is therefore particularly apt as it will enable the RCM as the key forum for coordination of activities at the regional level to kick-start the African preparatory process. We are particularly pleased to have here with us a representative of Mr. Sha, the Secretary-General of the Rio+20 Conference to brief us on the issues involved.

Our deliberations on this item will help to identify the main substantive issues for Africa especially as they pertain to the two key themes of the Rio+20 Conference which relate to the green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development. It is also an opportunity to help articulate the needs of our constituency particularly with regard to determining the various publications, meetings and training workshops that would be required to support their collective and individual participation at the Rio+20 meeting.

The agenda before us is certainly a full one but we have the right people and enough time to enable meaningful debate and ensure concrete outcomes to guide our work in support of our African constituency over the coming years. There is a positive spirit about Africa's potential which has not been seen since the early years of independence and as its leading development practitioners we must help to fast-track continental aspirations for socio-economic transformation. The work of the RCM must at all times remain guided by this noble objective.

Thank you.