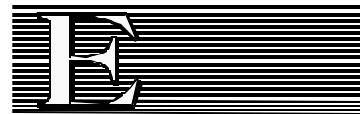




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**Fifth Meeting of the Africa Committee on
Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)/Regional Implementation Meeting
(RIM) for CSD-16
Addis Ababa
22-25 October 2007**

**Theme: Transforming African Agriculture and Rural Economy on
Sustainable Development**

**Follow-up on implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on
Sustainable Development (WSSD)**

Scope and organization of the report

1. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), and in particular its chapter eight, entitled “Sustainable Development of Africa”, guides the “regional review report on Africa”, of which this paper is a summary. The paper provides an overview of concrete actions taken and progress made, challenges and constraints, lessons learned and the way forward on key sustainable development issues in Africa. The overall themes are: sustainable development governance in Africa; poverty eradication and socially sustainable development; sustainable consumption and production; the natural resource base of economic and social development; means of implementation; and harnessing the interlinkages.

Concrete actions taken and progress made

Sustainable development governance in Africa

2. The JPOI recognizes the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as providing a framework for sustainable development on the continent. The Plan also recognizes that achieving sustainable development requires actions at all levels to create an enabling environment at the regional, subregional, national and local levels for sustained economic growth and development. NEPAD’s objectives accord fully with the international commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sustainable development framework

3. The African Union (AU) provides leadership for the continental development vision. The NEPAD Secretariat coordinates projects and programmes being implemented by the regional economic communities (RECs) and member States. At the national level, many African countries have taken steps to create NEPAD focal points for coordination, monitoring and integration of NEPAD programmes into national development plans. Some countries have designated ministers or set up ministries as focal points for NEPAD. The notion of partnership embedded in NEPAD is one of the strengths of the initiative, and has elicited significant international support for Africa. NEPAD attaches great importance to partnership between African governments and their development partners, and between the Governments and their peoples, including the private sector and civil society.

4. The Constitutive Act of the AU not only recognizes the key role that women have played in development, but also urges the AU to reward the contribution of African women by adopting a gender parity principle. Furthermore, in 2004, the NEPAD Secretariat established the Gender and Civil Society Organization (CSO) Unit, to facilitate the active involvement of CSOs in the NEPAD implementation process. The gender and CSO Unit has commenced gender mainstreaming and CSO mobilization at the regional level through RECS, and at the national level, through National NEPAD chapters. Several chapters of the NEPAD Business Group (NBG) have been or are being formed in countries.

5. At the level of the United Nations, the mechanism for coordination in support of NEPAD is the Regional Consultation Meetings (RCMs) of United Nations agencies working in Africa, coordinated by ECA. The seventh RCM decided that clusters should undertake a clear and traceable

alignment of programmes and resources with AU and NEPAD priorities. The Meeting expanded the mechanism to include the African Union Commission (AU Commission) and called for discussions on the needs of RECs for greater impact at the subregional level.

Peace and security

6. While prospects for peace in a number of countries improved during 2006, some situations have worsened, despite considerable efforts by African countries, regional organizations and the international community. Nevertheless, the AU aims to achieve a conflict-free Africa by 2010. The AU Peace and Security Council has been established and AU's capacity to intervene and mediate in conflicts has been strengthened by the establishment of the African Peace Facility, funded initially by the European Union. In addition to EU contributions, the Group of Eight (G-8) countries supports AU and certain RECs in their conflict-prevention and crisis-management efforts. The operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the establishment of the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force, the Continental Early Warning System (EWS), and the early finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and RECs have received full support. Furthermore, the AU Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) was adopted in Banjul in July 2006. In the context of the UN-AU Framework for the 10-year Capacity Building Programme, UN will assist AU in the establishment of effective early-warning and crisis response systems.

Human rights

7. African leaders have affirmed commitments to human rights and the rule of law through the Constitutive Act of the AU, NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), among others. Among AU's guiding principles is the respect for democratic principles, human rights, rule of law, and good governance. The Constitutive Act of the AU declares one objective of the Union to be promoting and protecting human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant international instruments. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Protocol to the African Charter Related to the Rights of Women in Africa, complete the African human rights framework.

8. African countries have overwhelmingly subscribed to most international and regional human rights norms and standards, ratified numerous key human rights treaties and enshrined these norms and standards in their constitutions and national legislation. Some progress has been made on human rights, and the principle of rule of law is generally respected in most countries, along with a fair level of commitment to the respect for human rights. In many countries, constitutional provisions for the protection of political and civil rights and liberties are adequate. Almost all African constitutions prohibit discrimination based on gender. In terms of social rights, the rights of marginalized groups such as children and disabled people are increasingly being recognized and provided for. But economic and material social rights are only assured on the basis of resource availability. Furthermore, the application of human rights standards lags behind the substantial efforts made in ratifying treaties, conventions and public statements and rhetoric of African leaders on human rights.

Political governance and administration

9. The AU and NEPAD are defining new parameters for governance and providing benchmarks for a new governance culture in Africa. The APRM has been adopted to promote policies, standards and best practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and economic integration. To date, 25 countries have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism and three countries, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda, have completed their reviews. The Constitutive Act of the AU binds member States to uphold a number of democratic principles. There is a draft charter on democracy, elections and governance, which is intended to reinforce the commitment of AU member States to democracy, development and peace. NEPAD's Democracy and Political Governance Initiative aims at contributing to strengthening the political and administrative framework of participating countries. African Ministers of Public Service have formulated and adopted a NEPAD Governance and Public Administration Programme.

10. Democratic politics and practices have taken a significant leap in Africa in the last two decades. Competitive multiparty democracy has been installed in many African countries. The political space has been gradually liberalized, and CSOs have been contributing to the development process and influencing policies in various aspects of public life. Furthermore, electoral institutions are gaining more credibility and legitimacy with the move to relatively free and fair elections in many countries. Overall, a new social pact with the institutions of the State and the processes of governance is gradually being reconstructed to promote democracy and good governance.

11. There is a relative decline of executive dominance in Africa. Many African countries have adopted constitutional measures and put in place administrative mechanisms to strengthen checks and balances. The executive has undergone major reforms in some countries, and has also taken some measures to reinforce horizontal and vertical checks and balances in the governance system. The legislature has also been the subject of substantial reforms to enhance its capabilities to check and balance the executive and to ensure the observance of accountability and transparency by the government and its agencies. While on the whole, the performance of the judiciary is improving, its effectiveness in many African countries is still restricted. Most countries have created watchdog institutions, such as the ombudsman, human rights commission, auditor general, inspector of governance or minister for good governance, and some are trying to build effective anticorruption commissions.

Economic and corporate governance and private sector development

12. The objective of the NEPAD Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative is to promote programmes aimed at enhancing the quality of economic and public financial management, as well as corporate governance. The NEPAD Secretariat has been working closely with key donors to support programmes aimed at strengthening public finance management. Training programmes for middle and senior level staff from the Ministries of Finance and the Board of Auditors, as well as parliamentarians involved in public finance management, have been designed. The Ministries of Finance and Central Banks have been tasked with reviewing economic and corporate governance practices and to make recommendations to the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), with high priority given to public financial management. The Secretariat has commenced working with the Committee of Central Bank Governors (CCBG) to examine ways in which to improve banking and financial standards. NEPAD and the CCBG have engaged with

central bankers to identify policies, processes, and procedures that need to be put in place in the region to allow Central Banks to fulfill their anti money-laundering obligations.

13. Several African countries have made progress in economic governance, public financial management and accountability and the integrity of the monetary and financial systems. As a result, the situation in Africa today is better than it was a decade or so ago. However, a great deal remains to be done. In the area of corporate governance, countries have made efforts to promote private-sector-led growth and development, including granting a range of fiscal incentives to investors, establishing special institutions to facilitate and promote private investment, especially FDI, and supporting the private sector in general, especially pushing the informal sector to become part of the formal sector. In addition, African governments have continued efforts to expand and develop physical infrastructure, in order to attract private investment and make it more profitable and efficient.

Poverty eradication and socially sustainable development

14. The JPOI states that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries. The Plan recognizes the key role of national policies and development strategies and calls for concerted and concrete measures at all levels to enable developing countries to achieve their sustainable-development goals. The Plan also recognizes the importance of gender equality, education, health, human settlements, water and sanitation to achieving sustainable-development goals.

Poverty eradication

15. The progress of poverty eradication has been very slow in Africa. According to the MDG Report 2007, the number of extremely poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has levelled off, as their proportion of the total population declined from 46.8 per cent in 1990 to 41.1 per cent in 2004. The poverty gap ratio declined from 19.5 to 17.5 per cent in SSA during the same period. However, this ratio is the highest in the world, indicating that the poor people in SSA are the most economically disadvantaged in the world. In Northern Africa, the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day declined from 2.6 percent in 1990 to 1.4 percent in 2004, and the poverty gap declined from 0.5 to 0.2 for the same years. While poverty in Africa is on the verge of diminishing, it has been accompanied by very high-income inequality. The poor people in SSA share only 3.4 per cent of the national income, compared to 63 per cent for North Africa. The growth rate has increased, but is still not enough to address poverty and achieve the MDGs. In all, 41 African countries have started preparing national development strategies aligned with the MDGs. ECA has established a knowledge-sharing network, mainly for the purpose of enhancing knowledge-sharing between countries on poverty and national development strategies.

Gender equality for sustainable development

16. In addition to the AU and NEPAD initiatives on gender equality and equity mentioned above, RECs have adopted gender policies, declarations and guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. ECA has developed the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) and has set up an African Women Rights Observatory to monitor the status of women and women's rights at the regional level.

17. African countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), signed the Optional Protocol, and have in some cases, aligned their national legislation to the provisions of the Convention. Furthermore, countries have signed and have begun ratifying the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. Some governments have enacted or amended legislation on women's human rights and some have adopted constitutions that take on board gender equality. On the political front, several countries have significantly increased the level of women's representation in parliament. Women have also been elected and/or appointed into powerful decision-making positions in the civil and public services. African governments have established various mechanisms at different levels, including national machineries to mainstream gender in the formulation of policies, plans and programmes; and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of international, regional and national commitments.

18. Between 1995-2005, 48 African countries' poverty-reduction strategies (PRSs) and action plans included gender concerns. Some countries have strategies for supporting women's entrepreneurship through micro-credit schemes and capacity-building in enterprise management. The consideration of gender in some countries' budgets has triggered more transparent processes for gender responsiveness in public expenditures. Some countries have managed to reduce gender differentials in education through affirmative action and gender-aware policies aimed at improving enrolment, retention and quality of education for girls. Increasingly, countries are prioritizing women's health as an area of concern, which has resulted in more attention being given to the reproductive health and rights of women.

Education for sustainable development

19. The Conference of African Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) adopted the Plan of Action of the First Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006). However, an evaluation of the Decade revealed that member States did not achieve most of the goals set out in the Decade Plan of Action. In this regard, the Sixth AU Summit, held in September 2006, adopted a resolution to launch a Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015), and endorsed the Framework for Action earlier adopted by the Second Conference of African Ministers of Education. In order to enable African countries to achieve the MDG of universal primary education, and to promote centres of excellence, a detailed Action Plan has been formulated under the auspices of NEPAD. The NEPAD Secretariat is making progress in advancing various projects, which are at different stages of implementation.

20. African countries have subscribed to the goal of achieving education for all (EFA) by 2015, and many have undertaken education-sector reforms. Countries have adopted system-wide, top-down reforms that integrate management improvements, decentralization, and finance reform. Other interventions include successful implementation of health and nutrition programmes in schools, early childhood development programmes, shifting to low-cost school construction methods for schools and using contract teachers to make the costs of expanding coverage more fiscally sustainable.

21. The overall EFA picture in sub-Saharan Africa is mixed. Enrolment in primary education has increased since Dakar, but the number of out-of-school children remains much too high (38 million in 2004). School progression and completion are still major concerns. With many countries in SSA

promoting the universalization of basic education – which combines primary with lower secondary – pressures to expand secondary education and participation are mounting rapidly. Despite countries' commitment to basic education for all, universal participation is still a distant prospect. The average GER¹ in basic education was 73 per cent in 2004 in SSA, compared to 90 per cent or above in other regions, though the ratio did increase by ten percentage points between 1999 and 2004. The rest of the EFA agenda is lagging, in particular with regard to gender parity, education quality and adult literacy.

Health for sustainable development

22. The AU/NEPAD Health Strategy, which was adopted in 2003, offers a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing disease. The African Ministers of Health have also adopted the Africa Health Strategy 2007-2015. The strategy calls for strengthening the health systems with the goal of reducing the disease burden through improved resources, systems, policies and management. The NEPAD secretariat has collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in addressing the “human resources for health” crisis. This partnership effort has seen the launch of the Global Health Workforce Alliance. In 2006, AU adopted the Brazzaville Commitment, which sets the direction for HIV and AIDS policy and defines the universal access targets for Africa until 2010. In the same year, the Union adopted the Abuja Call for Accelerated Action Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa. HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into all NEPAD programmes, and the provision of antiretroviral treatment on the continent is expanding. The NEPAD “Fight Against AIDS” plan provides an overarching framework to address HIV/AIDS and its impact on the continent.

23. In SSA, the under-five mortality rate in 2002 was almost double the average for developing countries. As regards maternal mortality, SSA has dramatically higher maternal mortality ratios than any other part of the world. SSA is the worst affected region with the AIDS epidemic, with 24.5 million people living with HIV in 2005. Two million of them are children below age 15. Women comprise 59 per cent of all adults living with HIV. The number of orphaned children was estimated at about 12 million in 2005. None the less, the prevalence in SSA is leveling off. African countries are successfully responding to the HIV epidemic. Political support and willingness to address HIV/AIDS and its repercussions is now a reality in many countries. More than 90 per cent of the world's malaria burden is in Africa. At least 20 per cent of all childhood deaths in SSA can be attributed to the disease. However, progress has been registered in some countries. As regards TB cases, the number has increased up to fourfold in the past decade, mainly as a result of the HIV epidemic. TB treatment, DOTS, has proven remarkably effective. However, at present, up to 70 per cent of African people with HIV lack access to functioning DOTS programmes.

Sustainable human settlements

24. NEPAD aims to address urbanization and its consequences, to make African cities more attractive for investment through its NEPAD City Programme. In order to achieve the goal of the Habitat Agenda, UN-Habitat launched global urban management programmes such as the Safer

¹ Gross enrolment ratio [GER]. Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry or/and repetition.

Cities, Good Urban Governance, and Secure Tenure programmes and campaigns. Many cities are beginning to adopt the ideals, principles and norms of good urban governance. The campaigns will also promote improvement of the living standards of the poor by providing them with affordable housing, employment and sustainable livelihoods.

25. The responses to the challenges of urbanization vary from city to city. Most have tended to respond on an ad hoc basis, by employing both sectoral and top-down approaches. Initiatives undertaken by countries to meet the human-settlements target include review of national housing policies; introducing programmes on the provision of basic urban services; introducing legislation and policy on housing rights; access to land and secure tenure; and developing specific slum upgrading and prevention policies, as an integral part of their national poverty reduction policies and strategies. Other countries have shown growing political support for slum upgrading and prevention. However, in many cases, policies and actions are at variance. With the exception of a few countries, efforts made have not had much of an impact on housing provision, slum upgrading and poverty reduction.

Water supply and sanitation

26. The African Minister's Council on Water is already actively engaged in policy coordination and advocacy. In the same vein the African Water Vision 2025 has been developed, the Africa Water Development Report Water/Africa has been launched, and the African Water Facility is operational. The NEPAD Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) on infrastructure, which includes projects on water supply and sanitation (WSS), is under implementation. Many countries have developed and/or updated national strategies and action plans on WSS within the context of PRSs and have embarked or undertaken policy and institutional reforms on WSS. Some countries have substantially increased funding to the water sector as part of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Development partners have played an instrumental role in funding and providing technical assistance to the WSS sector in many countries in the region. As regards progress, subSaharan Africa lags behind the rest of the world on progress to meet the drinking water target. In contrast, Northern Africa is classified among the regions that have achieved coverage levels of close to 90 per cent or more, and are on track to meeting the target on drinking water. With respect to adequate sanitation in the region, North Africa is on track to halve the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015. SSA on the other hand, is clustered among the regions which have not made sufficient progress towards this target.

Sustainable consumption and production

27. The JPOI states that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. The Plan calls for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns by all countries, with developed countries taking the lead, while ensuring that all countries benefit from the process.

The Marrakech process

28. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in close consultation with the Secretariats of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Roundtable on Sustainable

Consumption and Production (ARSCP), facilitated the development of the African 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production (African 10-YFP). In 2005, AMCEN, through its Dakar declaration, approved the Programme and called upon development partners to provide concrete support to follow-up activities and programmes. In response to this call, Germany took the lead in the 'Task Force on Cooperation with Africa'. This provided the basis for the establishment of the Regional Steering Committee for the African 10-YFP. Members of the Committee are AMCEN, ARSCP, AU Commission, ECA, UNEP, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Federal Ministry of Environment, Germany. In 2006, The African 10-YFP was launched at a high-level session presided by Girma Woldegiorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

29. An eco-labelling project is being implemented within the framework of the Programme. In June 2007, an expert group meeting was organized to review two draft study reports on eco-labelling. The conclusions of the meeting were that the development of an African eco-labelling scheme would make significant contributions to expanding market access to African products in a global market, which has increasingly become conscious of environmental considerations, while also enhancing the region's ability to achieve the MDGs. As a follow-up to the meeting, discussions and consultations were held between the AU Commission, ECA, UNEP and the Task Force. Agreements were reached on securing political endorsement, substantive development, coordination and mobilizing resources. The findings of the consultations will be presented as an information note to the Council of African Ministers of Industries in September 2007, and a ministerial decision on the proposed regional eco-labeling programme will be sought from the Council of African Ministers of Trade to be held before the end of 2007.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

30. NEPAD sets the tone for corporate sustainability in Africa. It highlights the need to create conditions for private-sector growth in order to generate social development benefits. The APRM is an important instrument that can effectively promote corporate social responsibility. The African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) is a non-governmental organization committed to promoting the role of business in building sustainable communities, as a centre of excellence in Africa. The Institute has established various forums and centres aimed at ensuring the adoption of sustainable practices by African and foreign companies operating in Africa. The Africa Corporate Sustainability Forum, which is linked to the AICC, is a member of the NEPAD Business Group.

31. The practice and concept of CSR is relatively recent in many African countries. Emerging CSR organizations complement many other civil society groups working on certain aspects of CSR. These include trade unions, business support agencies, community-development NGOs and human rights and environmental organizations. Although these organizations are firmly rooted in their national contexts, and tend to focus their efforts on sensitizing local stakeholders to CSR, they also have some links to international CSR debates. Given its developmental context, the application of CSR in Africa mainly contributes to addressing issues affecting the daily lives of Africans, including health, education and training, agriculture and food security. CSR is also an increasingly prominent discourse in Southern Africa, particularly among mining companies.

32. In related areas, the Global Reporting Initiative of the Equator Principles is one of the most widely recognized and important initiatives for CSR. African business associations, and several

stakeholders from civil society and academia, are participating in the Global Compact Initiatives, as well as the UNEP Financial Initiative, while an African Task Force was launched in 2002 to support and expand sustainable financial practice in Africa, with AICC as its secretariat. South Africa is a leading country in terms of its companies' sustainability reporting. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development has member companies in South Africa and partner organizations in Algeria, Egypt, Mozambique, Nigeria, and South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Sustainable tourism development

33. NEPAD has identified tourism as an important vehicle to address the current development challenges facing Africa. In 2004, its Tourism Action Plan was approved. A main objective of the Plan is to provide an engine for growth and integration, and to contribute to poverty eradication. Most African governments have now included tourism in their national development strategies. Realizing the benefits of sustainable and pro-poor tourism, countries have started adopting policies that unlock opportunities for the poor within tourism. This is an important niche market that contributes to poverty reduction; is relevant to the environment and cultural heritage; and benefits the most disadvantaged populations. Countries have also adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and are periodically reporting on implementation.

Sustainable industrial development

34. In July 2004, the Assembly of the AU endorsed the Africa Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI) as the NEPAD sustainable industrial development strategy. UNIDO is providing technical assistance through the APCI, which aims to increase manufacturing valued added (MVA) in selected industrial sectors identified in Africa's five subregions. The African Productive Capacity Facility (APCF) has been established as a financial mechanism to support the APCI.

35. In 1999 and 2000, African governments reaffirmed their comparative advantages as a keystone to diversification of their economies. UNIDO has assisted many countries in Africa in developing and implementing programmes aimed at improving the competitiveness of selected industries and, wherever possible, identifying new market opportunities, thus further opening up to the global economy. UNIDO and UNEP, supported by UNDP and other bilateral donors, are the agencies most actively promoting cleaner production in Africa, including the establishment of 10 National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs). Projects to strengthen metrology, standards and testing institutions are under way in several countries. Countries have also established agro-processing ventures and medium-sized and micro enterprises (MSMEs), and are gradually accessing finance, technology transfer and capacity building for growth-oriented and competitive MSMEs, with an increased focus on women.

Energy for sustainable development

36. A multi-donor NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility has been established at the African Development Bank (AfDB). The facility has provided funding for the preparation of several regional projects, including oil pipeline, gas pipeline, hydroelectric power and power interconnection. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in partnership with the NEPAD Secretariat, the African Energy Commission (AFREC) and UNIDO, have launched a project in energy assessment, which aims to support members of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement

for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) in elaborating national energy strategies and strengthening institutional capability for energy planning. Within the framework of UN-Energy/Africa, ECA and IAEA are contributing to building the capacities of energy planners to effectively use integrated resource planning for mainstreaming sustainable development in the planning of investments in the electricity supply industry at the national and regional levels. Other initiatives include energy access and efficiency projects, including renewable energy which is being implemented by UN-Habitat, ECA, UNIDO, UNEP and the United Nations Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

37. Rural energy access scale-up initiatives led to the design of new energy supply schemes integrating energy services into the development of productive and income generating activities, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of indigenous energy resources. In many countries, national capabilities on forestry services, and energy agencies for wood energy planning and policy development, have been enhanced. Various network initiatives (e.g. the Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, and the Global Village Energy Partnership) have contributed to enhancing knowledge and capacity in many countries on cleaner energy technology options for energy production.

Chemicals management

38. Many African countries have ratified major chemicals-related conventions, including Rotterdam and Stockholm. Africa played a major role in the process of development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which was adopted in 2006. African governments have committed themselves to promote synergies and coordination among regulatory instruments and agencies on chemicals. Subsequent to the adoption of SAICM, AMCEN at its eleventh regular session, in May 2006, adopted a decision on the implementation of SAICM in the African region, in recognition of the essential role of sound chemicals management in promoting environmental sustainability and protecting human health.

39. African countries have completed and endorsed a regional action plan for the implementation of SAICM. African countries have demonstrated commitment to SAICM implementation through inter alia, the contribution to the SAICM Quick Start Programme in 2006, by the governments of Nigeria and South Africa. A number of chemicals management projects are currently being undertaken in the region. A project is under way in English-speaking African countries to establish key baseline data on national chemicals and wastes. African countries are also benefiting from training and capacity-building projects to support their implementation of the globally harmonized system of classification and labelling (GHS) for the classification and labelling of chemicals.

Hazardous-waste management

40. African countries have ratified the Basle Convention and its Amendment. Additionally, all but one of the countries that have ratified the Basle Protocol on Liability and Compensation are African countries. Countries have also ratified the Bamako Convention on ban of the import into Africa and the control of transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes within Africa, but the first COP is yet to be held. Other regional agreements include the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) and the European Union (EU) Treaty on hazardous wastes. Similarly,

ECOWAS has adopted a resolution calling for specific penalties for those involved in dumping toxic wastes in member countries. With the support of development partners, African countries have established three subregional centres to address specific regional or subregional needs, with one coordinating centre for the whole region. Countries are adopting policies and legislation on wastes, including hazardous-waste management, and are implementing a range of activities on environmentally-sound management of hazardous wastes. The Africa Stockpiles Programme (ASP) has been established to clean up stockpiled obsolete pesticides, catalyse development of prevention measures and build capacity for addressing chemicals-related issues.

Natural resource base of economic and social development

41. The JPOI recognizes that human-induced factors are having an increasing impact on the integrity of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and economic activities. It notes that to effectively reverse the current trend in natural-resource degradation, it will be necessary to implement a range of strategies, which should include targets adopted at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels to protect ecosystems and to achieve integrated management of land, water and living resources. Agriculture for sustainable development, sustainable land management and drought and desertification would normally have been dealt with in this section. However, as these thematic issues are also under review, reference is invited to the regional review reports on the same.

Sustainable mineral resources development

42. In March 2002, African Ministers responsible for mineral resources development established the African Mining Partnership (AMP) as a platform to implement the mining chapter of NEPAD. The AMP, as a high-level ministerial forum, aims at influencing the agenda of mining in Africa with a view to achieving sustainable development. The AMP currently runs projects on beneficiation; artisanal and small-scale mining; environment; human resource development; promotion of foreign investment; and indigenous/local participation in mining ventures. Furthermore, the AMP has evolved into a forum for African countries to discuss and take common positions on emerging issues of importance to Africa.

43. Other initiatives include the establishment of the Communities and Small-scale Mining-Africa in 2005; the Africa Mining Network (officially launched in 2005); the Spatial Development Programme (SDP) being championed by the NEPAD Secretariat; the Southern and Eastern Africa Minerals Centre, which has now opened up its membership to all African countries and to other stakeholders, including the private sector. At the subregional level, there have been efforts to improve harmonization of mineral policies, standards, and regulatory and legislative environments, namely by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). Efforts to modify production and consumption patterns have been circumscribed mainly by countries in Southern Africa. A key event on efforts to build consensus on emerging issues at continental level was the 2007 Big Table on “Managing Africa's Natural Resources for Growth and Poverty Reduction” organized jointly by ECA and AfDB.

Freshwater resources

44. The Africa Ministerial Council on Water and the Africa Water Task Force were established to enhance cooperation and coordination and promote the development and implementation of

coherent policies and strategies for water resources management. Additionally, the African Water Vision 2025 has been developed and launched. A Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) has been prepared under the auspices of NEPAD. The implementation of the water resources management component of the STAP is focused on seven water basins, namely, Niger and Senegal in West Africa; Congo and Lake Chad in Central Africa; the Nile in its East African section, and Zambezi and Okavango in Southern Africa. At the subregional level, the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), have been developed and are operational. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) has made significant contributions in the area of agriculture, fisheries and livestock. An increasing number of countries are developing new policies, strategies and laws for water resource development and management, based on the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM). Countries carrying out water sector reforms are also restructuring their institutional and legal frameworks. The international community continues to support Africa's efforts in water resources management.

Coastal and marine resources

45. Most coastal countries in Africa are signatories to one or more multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) that deal with marine and coastal management issues. These MEAs include the Barcelona Convention, the Jeddah Convention, the Nairobi Convention and the Abidjan Convention, as well as the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. These Conventions lay the foundations for coastal states to develop legislation and management plans relating to their coastal and marine environments, integrating the various sectoral policies and, increasingly, taking account of river catchments that discharge to those environments. Furthermore, many African governments have realized the benefits of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), and have established policies and legislation to put its principles into effect.

46. Other regional-level initiatives include the adoption of the African Action Plan and Strategy for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in SSA, otherwise known as the "African Process". The Coastal and Marine Resources Programme of NEPAD aims to support the implementation of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, to contribute to the implementation of the African Process, and to assist African countries to implement the relevant provisions of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities. Additionally, initiatives for improving resource management and related capacity-building are in place through many bilateral, and multilateral development agencies, including United Nations agencies. Initiatives in the fisheries sector include the adoption of the Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa; the establishment of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission; the participation of 25 countries in West and Central Africa in the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme; the designation of nationally protected marine areas, as well as the regulation of beach seines and development of alternative activities to improve the livelihoods of fishermen.

Climate change

47. A programme on climate change has been developed as part of the NEPAD environment initiative. This climate-change programme will support African countries to meet their commitments and priorities regarding the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. Capacity-building for monitoring, prediction

and timely early warning in the region is being supported by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-funded Drought Monitoring Centre located in Nairobi, Kenya and sub-centres in Niamey, Niger and Harare, Zimbabwe. African countries have ratified and are implementing the UNFCCC and are at various stages of identifying possible climate-change impacts and adaptation strategies. With support provided mainly through UNEP, several African countries have completed their first communication and have begun their second. Through the Least Developed Countries Fund, African countries are also at different stages of preparing their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). Forty-six countries have ratified or acceded to the Kyoto Protocol and are engaged in its implementation. The World Bank and UNEP are supporting countries in developing projects for funding within the framework of the Clean Development Mechanism. Countries are also developing and deploying new, innovative and other technologies and methods to deal with challenges brought about by climate variability and changing climate.

Sustainable forest management

48. A forest programme was developed as part of the NEPAD Environment Initiative, with support from UNEP and Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding. Regional and sub-regional agreements, partnerships and programmes to promote sustainable forestry management (SFM) have been established. These include the Convergence Plan of the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Forests in Central Africa and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. Regional eco-certification schemes on timber production have also been initiated as part of the strategies to promote SFM in the region. Furthermore, the African Timber Organization principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable forest management of African natural tropical forests, developed with the support of the International Tropical Timber Organization, provide an important basis for aligning forest management practices in the region.

49. Countries have undertaken a wide range of measures and actions aimed at mitigating and reversing the trend of forest loss. Substantial effort has been made, mostly by North African countries, to establish planted forests. With funding from FAO, two thirds of African countries have developed and are at different stages of implementing national forest programmes. A majority of countries in Africa have adopted new forest policies and forest laws, and efforts are being made in many countries to improve law enforcement. Countries are also making progress in integrating forestry issues into poverty-reduction strategies. Integrated forest monitoring systems are also being established.

Biodiversity

50. In July 2003, the AU adopted the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. This Convention replaces the original one adopted in Algiers in 1968. The Convention commits African countries to development that is based on the achievement of ecologically rational, economically sound, and socially acceptable policies and programmes, which recognize the human right to a satisfactory environment as well as the right to development. In addition, the NEPAD Environment Initiative encompasses programmes, and on conserving wetlands; preventing, controlling and managing invasive alien species; and cross-border conservation and management of natural resources, including forests and biodiversity.

51. African countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species. With funding from GEF and assistance from UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, countries are translating CBD provisions into action through the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. UNEP is also assisting countries to undertake studies on access to benefit-sharing and to develop national biosafety frameworks. Accordingly, countries are intensifying efforts on species reintroduction, ex-situ plant propagation, tightening controls on importation of products of animal or plant origin. Participation of indigenous peoples in biodiversity conservation is being assured through increased efforts to understand indigenous knowledge systems and to promote their continued application. Countries have designated forests to be managed primarily for conservation of biological diversity. However, only six countries have more than the international target of 10 per cent of their land under protection. Progress is being made in creating cross-border conservation areas.

Natural-disaster risk reduction

52. In response to growing risks, notable efforts have been made at the regional, subregional, and national levels to reduce vulnerability. At the regional level, the AU Commission, together with the NEPAD Secretariat, has developed the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and a Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Strategy. Implementation of the Strategy rests with the subregional and national levels. In 2005, the First African Ministerial Conference on DRR adopted the Programme of Action. In 2006, AMCEN incorporated the Africa DRR strategy into its five-year programme. Various RECs have DRR policies and strategies and have established subregional centres for DRR.

53. SSA countries have made significant progress in DRR and a number of policies, institutions, and organizations have been set up to mainstream DRR. Similarly, various national disaster management organizations have been established, a number of legislative and policy mechanisms have been put in place both in disaster and non-disaster periods, and political commitment towards DRR has been gradually increasing. In addition, countries have incorporated aspects of natural disasters in their poverty-reduction strategies.

54. Arrangements within most Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries exist for emergency management and are organized and coordinated at a national level. As such, these arrangements do not deal with DRR holistically. Hence the conclusion that DRR in the region is under-developed and is not supported either by a robust institutional base or by effective and contemporary practice in risk assessment, mitigation and linkage with development activity. However, the capacity is there which can be built upon towards achieving a holistic approach in support of these efforts to integrate risk reduction strategies into development strategies for good governance, sustainable economic growth, and poverty reduction. To that end, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the World Bank and UNDP have developed a number of initiatives in the region.