



Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063: A Sharing of Experiences and the Way Forward Post-Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development and Voluntary National Reviews

Side Event during the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) at the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations

CONCEPT NOTE

16 July 2018, 10:30 –14:30



INTRODUCTION

During the preparatory workshops on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) – held respectively in January 2018 in New York, in March 2018 in Dakar and at the 4th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) in May 2018 in Dakar, Senegal – African Member States requested the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Union Commission (AUC) to organize a side event on Africa during the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as well as in future years, with a view to providing a larger platform to discuss African priorities during the Forum. This request arose from the fact that the official plenary sessions of the HLPF tend to be carried out under strict time constraints which prevents extended in-depth and potentially useful and constructive interactions between Member States from taking place.

As a follow-up to the 4th ARFSD and the ECA Conference of Ministers that approved its outcome, OSAA, ECA, IDEP, UNDP and the AUC are planning to organize a side event during the 2018 HLPF on “Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063: A Sharing of Experiences and the Way Forward Post-ARFSD and VNRs.”

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In the three years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, African countries have made progress but have encountered unique challenges as well as opportunities in to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2018 HLPF presents an opportunity to advocate for Africa’s priorities, including national and regional policies and international support measures to ensure accelerated implementation of the two Agendas. In that regard, it is an excellent opportunity for African Member States, including those that have undertaken VNRs in the past three years, to share experiences, lessons learned as well as good practices. Member States may wish to highlight, for example, innovative processes, stakeholders’ engagement, coordination mechanisms, localization and the integration of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national development plans, as well as roadblocks, gaps and challenges to implementation. Furthermore, issues related to monitoring (focusing on data challenges including disaggregation and national monitoring and evaluation systems) will also be highlighted. Member States will be able to discuss the way forward in implementing the outcomes of the VNR processes.



During the 4th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, African countries adopted key messages to support the implementation of the SDGs and the goals of Agenda 2063 across the continent, to be disseminated during the 2018 HLPF. The key messages are intended to be used for policy dialogue, policymaking and implementation at the national, regional and global levels towards the realization of the goals set out in both agendas. In addition, African Member States identified challenges that have impeded the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 at the national and local levels. These challenges relate to, among others, national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the development agendas; engagement and partnerships with all stakeholders; development of capacity requirements in terms of statistics, data collection and reporting; in transitioning to green, blue and digital economy; in monitoring and evaluation; in mainstreaming the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into national development plans; and in promoting science, technology and innovation for sustainable development.



Cognizant of these challenges, a number of development partners have been active in supporting member States achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063. In this context they have developed and deployed a variety of tools to facilitate implementation of both Agendas. However, member States are often not aware of the full range of such tools or their relative merits and relevance to their specific circumstances. Providing a platform for partners to showcase their instruments of support and share their experiences will not only promote stronger coordination among partners but better position member states to make more informed decisions about the support they need from their development partners.



This type of open information sharing may, furthermore, encourage additional African Member States to undertake VNRs and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. To date, Africa has had the smallest percentage of its Member States undertake a VNR.



OBJECTIVES OF THE SIDE EVENT

The side event will provide an opportunity to:

- disseminate and advocate for the implementation of policy recommendations outlined in the key messages agreed upon by the 4th session of the ARFSD;
- create a platform for South-South networking, and encourage the sharing of good practices and challenges as well as the promotion of engagement with all stakeholders;
- create a platform for development partners to communicate their ongoing interventions and tools to support member States achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063
- highlight challenges, in terms of vertical and horizontal coordination, faced by the national coordination mechanisms in the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 as well as the preparation of the VNRs;
- facilitate lessons learning and sharing of experiences and best practices on the joint and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 including related key challenges and innovative and creative solutions;
- strengthen VNR presentations at HLPF and encourage increased participation of African Member States in the VNR process; and
- identify training and capacity gaps that need to be addressed to achieve those objectives.





EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The event is expected to lead to:

- Enhanced appreciation, by Member States and development partners, of the challenges, opportunities and good practices in the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063;
- Enhanced appreciation by African countries of the menu of resources, tools and support systems available to them from development partners;
- Strengthened coordination by development partners in their support to African member States;
- Enhanced capacity of Member States to participate in VNRs and to design and implement policies and strategies to accelerate the pace of implementation and ensure effective follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and
- Strengthened, integrated and scaled-up implementation and follow-up of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- The main output of the meeting will be a report, compiling policy recommendations and capacity needs on how to overcome the challenges faced by Member States and optimize the opportunities and scale up good practices to strengthen national mechanisms for coordination and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.
- Joint UN-AU platform for coordinated efforts to support African countries to better implement the global and continental Agendas.



FORMAT

The event will be organized around the following segments:

- Welcome and Opening
- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: Lessons Learned from Voluntary National Reviews by African Countries
- Knowledge Tools and Capacity Needs for Implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063
- Way Forward Post 2018 - ARFSD and VNRs



PARTICIPANTS

All participants in the HLPF, all United Nations Member States, African senior Government officials, African representatives from the civil society, the private sector, the academia, the media, representatives from African regional institutions and representatives from the UN system.





Co-organizers:

OSAA, AUC, ECA, UNDP, IDEP



List of Speakers:

- Minister of Senegal, Chair of the 4th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
- Ministers from Togo, Lesotho, Uganda and other VNR reporting countries
- Amb. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN in New York
- Ms. Vera Songwe, USG and Executive Secretary of ECA
- Ms. Bience Gawanas, USG and Special Adviser on Africa
- Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, ASG and Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP



List of African VNR Countries in 2016:

Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda

List of African VNR Countries in 2017:

Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Togo, Zimbabwe



List of African VNR Countries in 2018:

Benin, Cabo Verde, Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Togo

