United Nations

**Economic and Social Council**

E/ECA/COE/39/12[*]

Distr.: General
10 February 2020
Original: English

**Economic Commission for Africa**
**Committee of Experts of the Conference of African**
**Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**
Thirty-ninth meeting

Addis Ababa (hybrid), 17–19 March 2021
Item 6 of the provisional agenda[**]
**Statutory issues**

# Report on United Nations system support for the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme

## I.    Introduction

1.      The present report provides a summary of the support of agencies within the United Nations system working in Africa extended to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme, for the period February 2019–February 2021. It covers support for the implementation of African Union priorities at regional and subregional levels, including those set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. In that context, section II of the report presents an overview of the assistance provided through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) within the framework of the renewed United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027 from February 2019 to its abolishment in January 2020. Section II reports on the implementation of the African Union–United Nations Development Framework. Section II.G presents the interim activities of Programme 9 of the Regional Integration and NEPAD Section of the Regional Integration and Trade Division of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), together with the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), and the United Nations Department of Global Communications from February 2020 to February 2021. Finally, section V is the initial report on the establishment of the Regional Collaboration Platform (RCP) and its activities from March 2020 to February 2021.

---

* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 February 2021.

** E/ECA/COE/39/1.

## II. Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa secretariat support

### A. Analysis of the United Nations–African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027, peace and security, and the development frameworks

2. The nineteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa), held in May 2018, recommended that the Mechanism should align its work with 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. In that context, the secretariat conducted an analysis of the two frameworks in relation to the United Nations–African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027, which provides a broad framework for the work of the Mechanism.

3. The findings, presented at the retreat of RCM-Africa and at its twentieth session, indicate that the two frameworks, which feature detailed intervention areas and action points in the interlinked areas of peace and security and the development agendas, neatly complement the United Nations–African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027. Alignment with the Peace and Security Framework can be achieved principally through cluster 9 of the Mechanism, whose focus areas are governance, peace and security; and cluster 6, which focuses on humanitarian matters and disaster risk management. Alignment with the development framework can be achieved mainly through cluster 1 – sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agroprocessing, and regional integration. Other key clusters are cluster 8, which focuses on advocacy, information, communications and culture; and cluster 9, which focuses on governance, peace and security, where the humanitarian-development nexus and linkage to peace can be deepened.

### B. Retreat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

4. The joint secretariat of RCM-Africa organized a retreat for the clusters of the Mechanism and its subregional coordination mechanisms in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, from 26 February to 1 March 2019. The main objective 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.

5. At the retreat, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission communicated the priorities of the African Union to guide the work of the Mechanism in its support to the continental body. These are: (a) 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; (b) "silencing the guns"; (c) climate change; (d) gender and young people; (e) capacity-building; (f) division of labour between regional economic communities, member States and other international actors; and (g) addressing the African Union theme of the year.

6. Informed by the African Union strategic priorities and the peace and security, and development frameworks, clusters of RCM-Africa and the subregional coordination mechanisms produced joint workplans for the 2019–2020 biennium. The latter worked with the secretariats of the regional teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa, in the preparation of their workplans. Thus,

the joint subregional coordination mechanism workplans were also informed by the strategic initiatives of the regional teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, namely: (a) strategy of support to middle-income countries; (b) strategic framework to support resilient development in Africa; (c) Great Lakes regional strategic framework; (d) Sahel strategy; (e) strategy of support to small island developing States and Indian Ocean countries; (f) Horn of Africa initiative; and (g) migration mapping initiative.

## C. Twentieth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

7.      The twentieth session of RCM-Africa was held in Marrakech on 23 and 24 March 2019. The session was jointly organized by the secretariats of the Mechanism and the regional teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Eastern and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa. It was held under the theme "United Nations system support for the African Union in commemorating 2019 as the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: towards durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa".

8.      The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union Commission, representing the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission. It was attended by more than 300 participants from the African Union Commission; the African Union Development Agency; the African Peer Review Mechanism; the African Development Bank; the Arab Maghreb Union; the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); member States; non-governmental organizations; academia; the media; and United Nations entities.

9.      Deliberations were in the form of high-level panel discussions, which engendered rich exchanges on a wide range of theme-related issues, and generated pertinent recommendations for implementation by African regional and subregional organizations, as well as member States, with the collective and coherent support of the United Nations system. The session adopted the joint workplans of the clusters of RCM-Africa and their subregional coordination mechanisms.

## D. Finalization of the report on strengthening regional and subregional coordination in support of the African Union

10.     The joint RCM-Africa secretariat finalized the report entitled "Strengthening regional and subregional coordination in support of the African Union". The resulting report examines issues pertaining to the effective functioning of the mechanisms, and proffers recommendations towards making them more fit for purpose, including ensuring effective linkages with national and other regional-level United Nations coordination mechanisms. The report serves as a useful baseline for the work of the RCP.

E. **Regional Coordination Mechanism Stakeholders Workshop, the Inception Meeting on Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Guidelines for the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and its Subregional Coordination Mechanisms**

11. The joint secretariat of the Regional Coordination Mechanism organized a Stakeholders Workshop and an Inception Meeting on Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Guidelines for the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and its Subregional Coordination Mechanisms on 25 and 26 September 2019, respectively. The stakeholders meeting provided a platform for information-sharing and reflections on the ongoing United Nations reforms, the implementation of transition activities, and the 2020 transition session of RCM-Africa–Regional Collaborative Platform. The Inception Meeting provided a platform for stakeholders of the Mechanism and its subregional coordination mechanisms to deliberate on the draft inception report. The meeting identified gaps, provided comments and input, and proposed recommendations to inform its finalization.

F. **Subregional Studies on the Interlinkages between the Development, Peace and Security, Human Rights and Humanitarian Pillars and Coordination with the African Union Development Agency and the Economic Commission for Africa for Priority Areas of Collaboration**

12. The Regional Integration and NEPAD Section, in conjunction with the five subregional offices of ECA, commenced work on four subregional studies entitled "The Interlinkages between the Development, Peace and Security, Human Rights and Humanitarian Pillars". The four studies cover the following regions: Eastern African, West and Central Africa, North Africa and Southern Africa. OSAA, which is working to reinforce focus on the nexus approach in Africa, is currently in the process of leading on the related study for the entire African region. These four subregional studies from ECA will feed into the OSAA regional study. These studies will aim to address the need for capacity-building for member States to consider the benefits of incorporating humanitarian and peacebuilding objectives and activities, and linkages with development in their own planning processes.

13. This year, the secretariat led efforts to renew project coordination between the African Union Development Agency and ECA for various Priority Areas of Collaboration in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. These areas include: economic integration; human and institutional development; sustainable energy and climate resilience; science, technology and innovation; knowledge management; and private sector engagement. These discussions are ongoing and ECA divisions and the African Union Development Agency divisions are working to plan jointly on the above-mentioned priority areas of collaboration in an ongoing and strategic manner.

G. **Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation of Programme 9 of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme of the African Union**

14. The joint secretariat of RCM-Africa provided substantive support to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation of Programme 9 of United Nations support to NEPAD. The evaluation aimed to determine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of support being provided

within the framework of the subprogrammes under the responsibility of OSAA, ECA and the United Nations Department of Global Communications. The findings indicate that Programme 9 has an important role to play in advocating and leveraging the different parts of the organization to support Africa. However, the Programme needs to focus again on its key core mandates, be efficient and deliver outputs that make a difference for the development of Africa in a more coherent fashion. The findings emphasize the need to reinvigorate coordination mechanisms in the context of the African Union and United Nations reforms to enhance coherence and efficiency.

## H. Special session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

15. The special session of RCM-Africa took place at the Elephant Hills Resort in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, on 24 February 2020. The event was held back-to-back with the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which took place from 25 to 27 February 2020 at the same venue. The main objective of the special session was to deliberate on accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 goals in the context of the United Nations Decade of Action. In this context, the session also provided a platform for rich exchanges on the African Union theme for 2020: "Silencing the guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa's development".

16. The session included a dialogue between the African Union and the United Nations on leveraging the decade of action in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing Agenda 2063, a plenary session on the African Union theme for the year 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals gateway, as well as a joint RCM-Africa–sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development parallel special session on young people and the decade of action. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Thomas Kwesi Quartey, co-chaired the session. It was attended by close to 400 participants from the following organizations: African Development Bank, African Peer Review Mechanism, African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, regional economic communities, member States, United Nations organizations, major groups and development partners.

## I. Coordination with African Union Development Agency and Economic Commission for Africa for Priority Areas of Collaboration

17. This year, the secretariat led efforts to renew project coordination between the African Union Development Agency and ECA for various Priority Areas of Collaboration in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. These areas include: economic integration; human and institutional development; sustainable energy and climate resilience; science, technology and innovation; knowledge management; and private sector engagement. These discussions are ongoing and the ECA divisions and the African Union Development Agency divisions are working to plan jointly on the above-mentioned priority areas of collaboration in an ongoing and strategic manner. This strategic partnership involves the revision of the memorandum of understanding between ECA and the African Union Development Agency in strengthening the collaboration between the two institutions in making it more effective, productive and results-oriented.

## III.  Selected activities of the clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

### A.  Cluster 1: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agroprocessing, and regional integration

18.    The African Union Commission, ECA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) carried out an assessment of the harmonization of the Sustainable Development Goals reporting framework and their commitment under the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. This resulted in the creation of a tripartite working team on the harmonization of methodologies and data sources of the Malabo Declaration scorecard indicators and the Sustainable Development Goals indicators. This will feed into the second biennial review report on progress towards realizing the Malabo commitment, as part of the Mutual Accountability Framework. In May, the three institutions also designed and implemented a capacity development training programme on mainstreaming sustainable food and agriculture in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the Malabo Declaration. Harmonized indicators have been prepared, and the first and second biennium reports produced and presented to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. The institutions have jointly prepared the 2019 and 2020 "Africa regional overview on food security and nutrition" reports.

19.    As part of the global and regional movement to build strong partnerships against hunger and malnutrition, FAO – in collaboration with the African Union Commission, IGAD and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with support from the World Food Programme (WFP) – collaborated to enhance evidence-based advocacy, political commitment and legislative frameworks to improve food and nutrition security in Eastern Africa. In this context, FAO – in collaboration with the African Union Commission, EAC and IGAD – initiated a number of technical cooperation programmes to support the establishment and mentoring of the Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. FAO and the World Food Programme supported the African Union Commission in promoting school feeding programmes in Africa. Additionally, ECA, FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) partnered with the African Union Commission to organize a conference in Kigali on youth in agriculture as a solid solution to ending hunger and poverty in Africa. Stakeholders shared experiences, knowledge and best practices on the interfaces between agriculture, youth employment, entrepreneurship, and information and communications technology (ICT) innovations. Furthermore, the African Union Commission, FAO and UNIDO launched a joint flagship initiative, the Youth Employment Strategy in Africa, during the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama, Japan, in October 2019. FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC–IG) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed and implemented "The Executive-level Capacity Development Programme: Strengthening the use of Analysis and Planning to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 in Eastern Africa". Preparations for online training targeting 21 government executives/senior government staff from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda had been concluded at the time of reporting.

20.    FAO and the African Union Commission launched a technical cooperation programme on "Support for Boosting Intra-African Trade in

Agricultural Commodities to Advance Implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area". The programme seeks to harness market and trade opportunities at local, regional and international levels, by creating and enhancing appropriate systems, policies and institutional frameworks, with the aim of increasing the volume of intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services by 2025. ECA supported the African Union Commission and member States on the African Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other technical partners. This included the publication of results from its economic modelling on the likely impact of an African Continental Free Trade Area on key economic variables. ECA – in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and UNCTAD – published *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa*: *Next Steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area*.[1] The publication provides an overview of the issues to be discussed in the second round of the African Continental Free Trade Area negotiations – namely, intellectual property rights, competition policy and investment. Draft protocols have been prepared, which member States can use as the basis for text-based negotiations on second round issues. ECA, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank jointly published the *Africa Regional Integration Index Report 2019*, which provides an overview of regional integration on the continent and assesses the performance of the regional economic communities and member States on key regional integration dimensions. In collaboration with the African Union Commission and the International Trade Centre, ECA assisted 14 African countries to prepare national implementation strategies relevant to the African Continental Free Trade Area process.

## B.   Cluster 2: Infrastructure development

21.    In August, the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, ECA and the UNDP–United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation organized a stakeholders meeting on African strategic infrastructure partnerships in Pretoria. The outcome of the meeting was presented at the stakeholders meeting on the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Priority Action Plan 2 process in Kigali in August 2019, and the second PIDA dialogue was held in Malabo later that month. Key elements of the proposed Common African Strategy emerged from the discussions at these meetings. In this context, ECA – in collaboration with the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency – organized a side event, the Common African Strategy for infrastructure partnerships with non-African countries and organizations, during the November 2019 PIDA week held in Cairo. The focus of the event was on the emerging Common African Strategy and inputs for its improvement. ECA and other members of the Steering Committee of PIDA (the African Development Bank, the African Union Development Agency and the regional economic communities), worked closely with the African Union Commission in preparation for the second phase of the programme (PIDA 2), to be implemented between 2021 and 2030.

22.    ECA collaborated with the African Union Commission to operationalize Working Groups on the Trans-African Highways, and African SMART Corridors.[2] On road safety, ECA and the African Union Commission jointly organized the fourth African Road Safety Conference on 31 August and 1 September 2019, during which the post-2020 strategic directions of the continent for road safety, jointly prepared by ECA and the African Union

---

[1] Also referred to as *ARIA IX* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.K.3).

[2] The term "SMART" in this context refers to safety, mobility, automated, real-time traffic management.

Commission, were validated. These strategic directions were endorsed by the Ministers' meeting of the Bureau of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism, held in Cairo in November 2019. In the area of air transport, ECA, in its capacity as secretariat of the Monitoring Body of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalization of air transport in Africa – comprising the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, African Civil Aviation Commission and other African Airlines – are supporting the African Union Commission to prepare the dispute settlement mechanism for the Yamoussoukro Decision. ECA also collaborated with the African Union Commission to publish a new edition of the Yamoussoukro Decision that includes key institutional and regulatory texts of the Decision adopted at the thirtieth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in January 2018. The Monitoring Body of the Yamoussoukro Decision is at the forefront of efforts to implement the Single African Air Transport Market.

23.      ECA and ILO collaborated with the African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency on the virtual PIDA Week meeting, which took place 18–22 January 2021, having been postponed from November 2020. During the meeting, ECA led the session discussions on the Luxembourg Rail Protocol: A new rail rolling stock financing tool, and on Mainstreaming PIDA in Strategic Infrastructure Partnerships: A Common African Position. ECA also participated in the discussions on the role of infrastructure in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, under the session titled "The African Continental Free Trade Area, Infrastructure and Economic Transformation in Africa". ILO continued to present its work on the PIDA Jobs Outlook: Shining the spotlight on job creation through corridor development, following the jobs tool presented at the 2019 PIDA week.

## C.  Cluster 3: Human capital development, health, nutrition, science, technology and innovation

24.      The African Union Commission – in partnership with UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – hosted the first African Union Continental Teacher Prize Award ceremony in October 2019. The ceremony honoured teachers for their outstanding performance and contribution to Africa's development by imparting knowledge to students. In August, the Government of Botswana – in partnership with the African Union Commission, UNESCO and UNICEF – hosted an education event on the theme "Harness the capacity of ICT to ensure inclusion, quality and impact in education and training in Africa". The event recognized the need to take advantage of the digital revolution to make education more accessible. It recommended the creation of facilities that promote girls' and women's education at all levels, focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and providing career guidance to create jobs for women in the applied sciences. It called for strengthened ICT integration in school curricula to prepare young people for the digital world and the fourth industrial revolution.

25.      Within the framework of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, a United Nations inter-agency task team was formed with more than 30 United Nations organizations. The task team – which is co-led by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Bank, UNCTAD and UNESCO – focuses on the development of science, technology and innovation (STI) for Sustainable Development Goals road maps, as policy and planning tools. In this context, the team prepared a guidebook on the preparation of STI road maps, and launched the first phase of the Global Pilot Programme on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development Goals Roadmaps during the United Nations high-level political forum, held in New

York in July 2019. The first phase targets an initial group of five pilot countries, including three in Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya. The first results of the pilot programme will be presented during the annual multi-stakeholders STI Forum, to be held in New York in May 2020.

26.    UNESCO and UNICEF supported the African Union Commission Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology to organize the World Congress for Freedom of Scientific Research, held from 25 to 26 February 2020. The event was organized in close coordination with the Science for Democracy and the Associazione Luca Coscioni. Additionally, UNESCO, ECA and the African Ministers' Council on Water, an African Union affiliate body, organized an online webinar to popularize the United Nations World Water Development Report 2020 on Water and Climate Change.

27.    The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), together with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, was working on providing strategic data on health and HIV, entailing the establishment and follow-up of health situation rooms in nine countries. Nine countries had been supported to strengthen their national health systems to ensure timely provision of accurate and quality strategic data for evidence-based decision-making and policymaking on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health rights.

## D.    Cluster 4: Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility

28.    Within the framework of the Joint Labour Migration Programme – which includes the African Union Commission, ECA, ILO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – IOM is managing a $9 million project on priority implementation actions. Through the project, support was provided to the African Union Commission, regional economic communities and member States to enhance their capacities and leadership on labour migration management and the protection of labour migrants. This included the development of a labour migration training and capacity-building programme for Africa; organization of a capacity-building training workshop on administrative data for labour, immigration and statistics officers in ECCAS; and technical and financial support to EAC to review its e-immigration policy.

29.    Through the project, the African Union Commission was supported to engage in a State-led policy dialogue with Middle Eastern countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference on labour migration, and to replicate initiatives similar to the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. Support was also provided to the African Union Commission in the operationalization of the African Union Labour Migration Advisory Committee. The Committee fielded missions to COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and the Arab Maghreb Union to better understand subregional labour migration dynamics. Key recommendations were: (a) enhanced cooperation within regional economic communities to promote free movement of persons and labour; (b) capacity support for labour migration data and statistics; (c) promotion of engagement with social partners, the recruitment industry and civil society on labour migration management; and (d) resource mobilization for expansion of the Joint Labour Migration Programme to adequately support all regional economic communities. Support was also extended to the African Union Commission to capacitate social workers and employers to engage in dialogue on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration and the African Union Protocol on Free Movement.

30.    Cluster members finalized the Joint Labour Migration Priority Project priority communication strategy. Visibility items have been produced and used during events, as well as disseminated to partners and beneficiaries. The documents have also been uploaded online to the African Union Commission,

ILO and IOM websites for broader visibility. The African Union Commission, in collaboration with IOM and ILO, developed draft guidelines for member States on development of bilateral labour migration agreements to further support member States with tools to engage among countries of origin and destination, and to develop gender-responsive policies for labour migrants.

## E. Cluster 5: Gender equality, women and youth empowerment

31.    Goal 1 of the cluster is "gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life". Members continued to support the operationalization of the African Union Gender Strategy, whose implementation has resulted in three key outcomes: the action plan, the results framework, and the regional economic communities harmonization document. Members worked closely with the African Union Commission on campaigns to end child marriage and female genital mutilation. They engaged in advocacy campaigns on accelerating the ratification, implementation and incorporation into national policy of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). They supported the African Union Commission Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to convene and conduct a continental review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as part of the 25-year anniversary commemoration. Agreement was reached on a common position to the 2020 Commission on the Status of Women. Furthermore, ECA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) prepared the Beijing+25 Report for Africa with the support of UNAIDS, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The report covers issues of gender, adolescent health, access and rights.

32.    Goal 2 of the cluster is on "youth empowerment through harnessing the demographic dividend". Several members supported the 2019 edition of the African Union Youth Volunteer Programme and the creation of a youth desk at the African Union Commission focusing on youth, peace and security. They were involved in the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for implementation of the demographic dividend road map, which informed the preparation of the State of African Youth Report. The African Union Commission was supported to finalize the Plan of Action for the African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment (2019–2028). Members also supported the development and implementation of the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2019–2023 for operationalizing the African Youth Charter. Several members provided technical and financial support towards the organization of the second Pan-African Youth Forum in April, during which the "1 Million by 2021 Initiative" was launched.

## F. Cluster 6: Humanitarian issues and disaster risk management

33.    The main activity of the cluster in 2019 was the implementation of the African Union road map for the implementation of the African Union theme for 2019: "The year of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: towards durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa". Implementation of the road map culminated in the Continental Consultation on the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention); Africa Governance Architecture High-Level Dialogue on the Theme of the Year, of the African Union; and the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Kampala Convention, in December 2019.

34.     Members actively participated in the 2019 Africa Dialogue Series convened by OSAA and held in New York in May 2019, on the 2019 African Union theme. The cluster organized a side event on the theme "Towards enhanced partnership and solidarity to support forcibly displaced persons in Africa" in August 2019 on the margins of the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in Yokohama, Japan. The cluster supported the organization of the high-level commemorative ceremony and continental commemorative meeting on the implementation and supervision of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, in Addis Ababa, at the African Union headquarters, in June 2019. The ceremony was aimed at marking the fiftieth anniversary of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention and promoting political will towards its effective implementation, and its ratification by the nine African Union member States that are not currently members.

35.     The cluster continued to be instrumental in the resettlement of Africans displaced in Libya. IOM, UNHCR and the African Union Tripartite Committee transferred hundreds of displaced people from Libya to the Niger and Rwanda. The African Union–European Union–United Nations Task Force on Libya undertook a mission to Niamey in July 2019. The objective was to facilitate experience-sharing between the Governments of the Niger and Rwanda on the operationalization of the Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism. Members supported the organization of the African Women Leaders Network Inter-Generational Retreat in Leadership in Africa, held in Nairobi in August 2019. Members also supported the twelfth IGAD Regional Consultative meeting on a regional exchange of experience in supporting resilience and durable solutions to internal displacement in Addis Ababa in October 2019. The African Union Commission, UNHCR, UN Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) conducted a study titled "Assessing the Status of Women's Rights in Refugee and Internal Displacement Settings in the context of African Governance Architecture and African Peace and Security Architecture". The study, which was to be published in June, provides a contextual analysis of the forced displacement of women and girls, and maps out the relevant legal and policy frameworks. Additionally, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR, other African Union and United Nations entities advocated for the mainstreaming forced displacement into the African Union 2020 theme of the year, "Silencing the Guns", building on progress from the 2019 African Union theme of the year on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. These included engagements with member States to accede to the 2009 Kampala Convention.

## G.    Cluster 7: Environment, urbanization and population

36.     UNESCO – in collaboration with ECA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Ministerial Conference on Water – developed two mobile applications, "Rainwater Harvesting" and "Know Water", to foster large-scale adoption of rainwater harvesting and improve knowledge on water use among high school students. ECA, UNESCO and United Nations Water organized a side event on access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, on the margins of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in April 2019. The International Fund for Agricultural Development – in collaboration with the Alliance for a Green Revolution, Biodiversity International, Conservation International, FAO, World Agroforestry, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank – supported the implementation of the Resilient Food System. FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UNEP established a science policy interface

platform to support decision-making through awareness-raising and capacity-building in evidence-based decision-making.

37. UNEP and the United Nations Development Coordination Office organized a dialogue with United Nations Resident Coordinators of 54 African member States on United Nations country support to integrated action on environment and climate change challenges in Africa. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) – in collaboration with ECA and United Nations Resident Coordinators of countries in Eastern, Central and West Africa – conducted regional workshops on mainstreaming the maritime sector into the programme cycle of the United Nations Cooperation Framework in Africa.

38. The African Union Commission, ECA, OSAA, UNDP and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs conducted a capacity development workshop on strengthening integrated and voluntary national review and reporting of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, in April 2019. The workshop focused on capacity strengthening in the context of 17 African voluntary national review countries, with the aim of assisting in the preparation and presentation of their voluntary national reviews at high-level political forums. The African Union Commission, ECA, OSAA and UNDP organized Africa Day on 17 July 2019 on the margins of the 2019 high-level political forum. The theme was on "strengthening partnerships to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 in Africa".

39. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) – in collaboration with the African Union Commission and ECA – conducted two capacity-building workshops for West and Central African countries in Dakar, and for Eastern and Southern African countries in Lusaka on monitoring and reporting on implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda in Africa. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the United Nations Population Fund, together with the African Union Commission and ECA, organized a global summit in Nairobi to provide a platform for various stakeholders, including member States, to renew their commitment to the Programme of Action.

## H. Cluster 8: Advocacy, information, communications and culture

40. ECA, OHCHR, UNESCO, the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and UNDP, in partnership with the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia, organized the 2019 World Press Freedom Day Global Conference in Addis Ababa, on the theme "Media for democracy: journalism and elections in times of disinformation". This helped to strengthen partnerships among several United Nations and African Union institutions to raise awareness in African Union member States and globally, on the importance of the media, press freedom and journalists' safety in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The outcome of this joint action was the identification of strategic projects with the African Union Commission, partner United Nations agencies and other members of the 2019 World Press Freedom Day Steering Committee. The five proposed joint projects focused on: (a) capacity-building for journalists on democracy and election reporting; (b) promotion of freedom of the media, access to information and the safety of journalists in Africa; (c) media and information education in Africa; (d) empowerment of young African women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Africa; and (e) promotion of freedom and dialogue in Africa through cultural and artistic expression.

## I. Cluster 9: Governance, peace and security

41. A key achievement of the cluster in 2019 was the effective participation of an increased number of United Nations offices, agencies and programmes at the twelfth United Nations–African Union Consultative Meeting on the Prevention and Management of Conflicts (referred to as "desk-to-desk"), held on 11 and 12 March 2019. The annual desk-to-desk meeting brings together representatives of the United Nations and the African Union, and representatives from regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, to enhance relations at the working level and to identify joint programmes. The meetings are convened under the auspices of the Joint United Nations–African Union Framework for Enhanced Peace and Security. In March 2019, the African Union Peace and Security Department, UNDP, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the Embassy of Sweden to the African Union organized a two-week photo exhibition entitled "Stories of Survivors". This was part of the strategy to prevent and respond to violent extremism through a development lens, and to shed light on and amplify the voices of survivors of violent extremism in five African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Uganda.

42. In June, UNAIDS, in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union, held a joint consultative meeting with the African Union Commission Department of Peace and Security, on the theme "Strengthening partnership on ending HIV/AIDS and sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and humanitarian settings". The meeting deliberated on multi-stakeholder strategies for ending HIV/AIDS in conflict. In October, the Deputy Secretary-General and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security led a joint United Nations–African Union solidarity mission on the role and leadership of women in peace, security and the nexus between peace and development in the Horn of Africa. As part of this mission, on 24 October 2019, the Deputy Secretary-General launched the Blue Heart Campaign in Addis Ababa. This was an initiative of ECA, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Women, the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia, the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union, implemented in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia. The initiative supports the Office of the African Union Special Envoy towards addressing human trafficking and its impact on women and girls. During the same mission, the African Women Leaders Network was launched.

43. UNOAU – in close coordination with OCHA, UNHCR and the African Union Commission – prepared a strategy on support to the implementation of the African Union Roadmap on the African Union 2020 theme of "Silencing the guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa's development".

## IV. The subregional coordination mechanisms

### A. Subregional coordination mechanism for Central Africa

44. RCM-Africa brought together 17 United Nations entities to work with regional economic communities to identify projects relevant to the sustainable development and transformation of the subregion. Of the 24 projects identified, 15 were selected, and 7 were presented to donors based on their importance, potential impact and implementation readiness. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is a key initiative being implemented by the United Nations and the African Union systems in Central Africa. The implementation of the strategy is expected to lead to a new positive narrative on the Sahel region, particularly in the light of opportunities for the sustainable development of the natural resource potential of the region. RCM-Africa has been supporting

countries of the subregion in the development and implementation of economic diversification strategies for inclusive and sustainable structural transformation.

## B.   Subregional coordination mechanism for Eastern and Southern Africa

45.   RCM-Africa has been assisting the African Union Commission in formulating a continental tourism strategy and establishing the African tourism organization. The main activities supporting the realization of the two initiatives are guided by the tourism action plan, which was approved by African Union Ministers during the first Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Intraregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism, held in Lomé in 2017. In accordance with the ministerial declaration, the Mechanism has started formulating the continental strategy and drafting of statutes for the African Tourism Organization. In the context of the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015–2063), and the Action Plan for Implementation (2015–2030), RCM-Africa conducted a study and held various consultations on the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the industrialization process in Southern Africa. It also developed policy tools to assist SADC in its plans to improve the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises, within the context of the regional industrialization agenda.

## C.   Subregional coordination mechanism for North Africa

46.   RCM-Africa focuses its effort on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the subregion. For that purpose, a regional road map was adopted for the period 2018–2019, which includes four cross-cutting areas: (a) understanding and ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) public policy integration and harmonization; (c) building national statistical, monitoring and reporting capacities; and (d) leveraging South–South cooperation. RCM-Africa has also used various platforms to advocate for the implementation of Agenda 2063, and demonstrated its links with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in several countries. Through the mechanisms, United Nations system entities worked closely with countries to support the voluntary national review process and the application of the mainstreaming, acceleration policy support and the rapid integrated analysis tool.

## D.   Subregional coordination mechanism for West Africa

47.   RCM-Africa has been pursuing efforts to support regional economic communities to mobilize United Nations institutions around common interests, such as monitoring progress in implementing the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, through the achievements of its core group and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. RCM-Africa is also involved in the Sahel 2043 prospective study. The findings of the High-Level Regional Consultation on the Regional Prospective for the Sahel are being used to inform the process.

# V.   Challenges and lessons learned

48.   The present report was prepared against the backdrop of the United Nations reforms, particularly as they relate to longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets. In that regard, the uncertainties that surrounded the reforms had a negative impact on activities of RCM-Africa and the responsible ECA subprogramme. There was a need to ensure smooth

transition from RCM-Africa to the RCP. RCM-Africa should have continued to be operational pending the establishment of the RCP. The abrupt manner in which RCM-Africa ceased to be operational affected programmed activities and planned results, and was a missed opportunity in terms of experience-sharing between the two mechanisms. The subregional coordination mechanisms also experienced challenges. For example, sessions of the Central and West Africa subregional coordination mechanisms that were scheduled to take place in December 2019 had to be cancelled owing to the dynamics associated with the impending establishment of the RCP. Beyond the reforms, the experiences of the regional and the subregional coordination mechanisms, and their secretariats, could, going forward, serve as "lessons learned" for the operationalization of the RCP in Africa. However, it should be noted that no channels have been created.

49.     The main challenge related to systemic issues and lack of strategic leadership of RCM-Africa on the part of all participating entities. This gave rise to other challenges, such as weak implementation of joint workplans, absence of an operational results-based monitoring and evaluation framework, lack of dedicated resources for effective implementation – both human and financial – and weak information-sharing coordination and collaboration within and across the mechanisms. With regard to the joint secretariat of RCM-Africa, the need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a clear division of labour were considered crucial.

50.     In response, the matter of strengthening the secretariats was tabled at the fifty-second session of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and a resolution was adopted to that end. Furthermore, the joint secretariat of RCM-Africa had prepared a concept note on the development of a framework and guidelines on administrative and operational procedures for RCM-Africa and its subregional coordination mechanisms. The framework design would include an institutional efficiency monitoring framework and a sustainable financing mechanism.

51.     The joint secretariat had launched the development of a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework, and guidelines for RCM-Africa and its subregional coordination mechanisms, to permit effective tracking and reporting on progress, result and impact. In order to enhance information-sharing, coordination and collaboration, the secretariat intensified work on the operationalization of the online information sharing and collaboration portal and platform. Additionally, the secretariat had prepared a concept note on a framework and guidelines for mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in the work of the mechanisms. Work on these and other programmed activities had to be suspended owing to the reforms.

52.     Further to the responses highlighted above, an important recommendation pertains to the need to rationalize the clusters. In addition, activities featured in joint workplans should take into account the African Union priorities and available human and financial resources. The issue-based coalitions being discussed in the context of the United Nations reforms provide an opportunity for addressing systemic issues and strategic leadership, for more targeted and effective support. While the reform process created delivery challenges for the mechanisms, they are expected to reinvigorate commitment to United Nations system-wide support for the African Union, and strengthen partnerships and linkages from regional to national levels, with a focus on result and impact.

# Annex

## Membership of clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

| Regional Coordination Mechanism cluster membership | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Clusters* | *Clusters titles* | *Members – United Nations organizations and 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**<br><br>FAO, WFP, UNHCR, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, ECA, UN WOMEN, IOM, UNIDO, UNICEF, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNEP, ITU, UN-Habitat<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br><br>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 Deputy Chairperson |
| **Cluster 2** | Infrastructure development | **United Nations**<br><br>ECA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNOPS, IOM, ILO, FAO, ITU, IMO, UN-Habitat<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br><br>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**<br><br>UNICEF, UNESCO–International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa, WHO, UNFPA, WFP, FAO, ECA, UNIDO, UNAIDS, UNEP, ILO, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, UNESCO, UN WOMEN, ITU, OHCHR, UNOPS<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br><br>Human Resources Science and Technology, Social Affairs, Infrastructure and Energy |
| **Cluster 4** | Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility | **United Nations**<br><br>IOM, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, ECA, UNDP, UN WOMEN, UNESCO<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br><br>Social Affairs, Political Affairs, Women and Gender, Economic Affairs |
| **Cluster 5** | Gender equality, women and youth empowerment | **United Nations**<br><br>UN WOMEN, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, United Nations Volunteers, UNESCO–International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa, FAO, UNAIDS, ILO, UNOAU<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br><br>Women and Gender, Human Resources Science and Technology, Social Affairs |

| Regional Coordination Mechanism cluster membership | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Clusters* | *Clusters titles* | *Members – United Nations organizations and agencies, African Union Commission and regional economic communities* |
| **Cluster 6** | Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management | **United Nations**<br>OCHA, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, WFP, UNICEF, United Nations Volunteers, FAO, UNEP, UNHCR, ECA, UNOAU, UNAIDS, ILO, IMO<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br>Political Affairs, Rural Economic and Agriculture, Economic Affairs, Social Affairs, and Peace and Security<br><br>Regional economic communities:<br>ECOWAS, COMESA, IGAD, EAC, SADC<br><br>Associates:<br>Norwegian Refugee Council African Union Liaison Office, International Committee of the Red Cross–African Union, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam, Africa Humanitarian Action, the All-Africa Conference of Churches, the Land Policy Initiative, International Council of Voluntary Agencies |
| **Cluster 7** | Environment, urbanization and population | **United Nations**<br>UNEP, UNFPA, ECA, UNESCO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, IMO<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br>Infrastructure and Energy, Social Affairs, Trade and Industry, Human Resources, Science and Technology |
| **Cluster 8** | Advocacy, information, communications and culture | **United Nations**<br>UNESCO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, ECA, UNEP, UNHCR, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, OSAA, IMO, UNIDO<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br>Information and Communication, Social Affairs, Strategic Planning, Infrastructure and Energy |
| **Cluster 9** | Governance, peace and security | **United Nations**<br>UNOAU, UNDP, UN Women, UNESCO, UNICEF, OCHA, OHCHR, UNHCR<br><br>**African Union Commission**<br>Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Social Affairs, Gender Directorate, Human Resources and Strategic Planning, Office of Legal Affairs, African Peer Review Mechanism |

_____