

APRM – Continental perspective on the principle of Leaving no one behind

Reflections on the paper:

- First, I would like to commend the CEPA Secretariat for sharing this timely, informative and action-oriented paper on pathways to mainstream the principle of Leaving no one behind (LNOB) into national planning and civil service. The paper is quite comprehensive in conceptualising the principle of LNOB. It explains the causes and challenges in terms of supporting those who are left behind within different social and economic contexts. Also, it articulates best practices and recommendations to foster LNOB operationalisation across different countries, particularly in Africa.
- LNOB is one of the most significant guiding principles for accelerating sustainable development by enhancing the conditions of the least advantaged groups, and eradicating poverty and societal discrimination. Our recent research in Africa concluded that while African countries have been trying to adopt LNOB frameworks, operationalisation of LNOB suffers impediments in several countries on the continent.

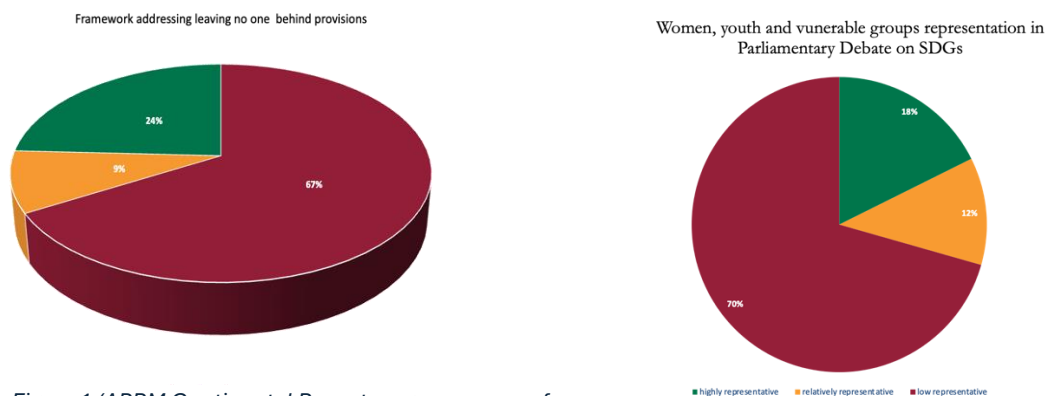


Figure 1 (APRM Continental Report on governance of SDGs, 2023)

- We acknowledge the Paper's reference to Agenda 2063 and how LNOB is incorporated into Aspiration 1- economic prosperity and reducing poverty. However, the recent assessment of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of the said agenda indicates that minor progress has been made on poverty and unemployment reduction in most African countries. Therefore, innovative solutions should be proposed to address these issues.
- Further, the APRM's 2023 Africa Governance Report encouraged member-states to invest in addressing the structural root causes of social and political unrest that lead to unconstitutional changes of government by rebuilding public trust in governments, fostering accountability of state institutions, inclusive development and livelihood provision, quality and sustainable service delivery and effective participation and inclusion of citizens in decision-making.
- In this regard, allow me to inform you that the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) of Agenda 2063 is designed to deliver on 7 moonshots, of which moonshot 3 aims to *entrench democratic principles and inclusive institutions*. To achieve moonshot 3, catalytical interventions are incorporated in the STYIP framework including i) Respect for rule of law; ii) Nurture transformative leadership; iii) Responsive democratic institutions.
- In pursuance of these catalytical interventions, two new priority areas are suggested to realise the LNOB principle. First, effective institutions and transformative leadership. And second, participatory development and local governance. Indicative strategies to implement these priority areas are in full alignment with CEPA principles especially those pertinent to participation, accountability, and effectiveness of civil service delivery.



| Prosperous | Integrated | Democratic | Peaceful | Cultured | People-Driven | Partnerships |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrialization and Value Addition Agricultural productivity & Production Social protection measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure development & energy security Trade in goods and services Connectivity- Internet, IT, AI, roads & air | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect for rule of law Nurture transformative leadership Responsive democratic institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social cohesion and respect for diversity Mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution Effective standby force | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate and advocate for Africa values. Buttress development on African values. Foster consensus on Africa's common language(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transform education and health systems Nurture resourceful citizens Nurture digital citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Data and Statistics Systems Africa representation Governance of international institutions |

→ The paper provides **insights** into "who is left behind", the rationale and myriad reasons behind it as well as recommendations to address LNOB. In spite of the proposed preventive measures to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, Africa remains one of the continents that is severely impacted by poverty and the number of Least Developed Countries is high. The multi-dimensional aspects of poverty in some countries i.e. Chad, Sudan, and Congo are quite alarming. Hence, affirmative actions are necessary to reach those farthest behind first. In addition to the paper's recommendations, a few affirmative actions are suggested:

→ **First**, the application of a multi-dimensional poverty assessment as part of the regular reporting on the National Development Plan especially in the mid-term. Efforts deployed by the United Nations Development Program and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) to use the multi-dimensional poverty index (MDPI) in Africa are commendable. Yet, to date only 20 countries have been committed to this endeavour including South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria.

→ **Second**, the significance of constitutional provisions and legislation in enforcing LNOB in certain policies i.e. education, gender equality and health. In a recent survey developed by the APRM Continental Secretariat and the National Institute of Governance and Sustainable Development to measure social equity – which is one of the common strategies to achieve LNOB- respondents affirmed the crucial role of

national laws and policies in improving LNOB alongside holding the government accountable with respect to enforcing laws, especially for gender sensitive budgeting.

- **Third**, civil society and local community actors bear the dual responsibility of being the voice of citizens and assisting government with data collection on most vulnerable groups. Identifying priorities and corrective actions to improve LNOB at the local level cannot be pursued without Civil Society Organisations. Town-hall discussions, for example, are an effective mechanism of listening to popular grievances and gathering inputs on ways to expand service delivery.
- **Fourth**, providing the means of implementation and putting in place an ecosystem for access to the justice system would accelerate the realisation of LNOB at the national level. The authors of the LNOB paper should be praised for highlighting this issue. In the African context, more efforts should be deployed to translate SDG 16.3 and 16.7 (equal access to justice and effective and transparent institutions) into action. Currently, Morocco, Rwanda, and Cote d'Ivoire are the pioneers in the use of digitalisation to enhance equal access to justice (submission of citizens' legal complains to courts on digital platforms).
- **Fifth**, the human rights-based approach to ensure LNOB should also be aligned with raising awareness amongst civil servants and public institutions regarding CEPA strategies to operationalise LNOB and its indicative strategies. Therefore, the APRM - as a voluntary self-assessment tool- has facilitated various multi-stakeholder engagements at national and continental levels to assess the extent of operationalising LNOB under the framework of CEPA principles and its associated strategies including social equity.
- According to recent APRM reviews and continental platforms, **Zambia, Senegal, Egypt, South Africa, Rwanda, and Kenya** made noticeable progress on poverty reduction and LNOB. Most of the reforms implemented aimed to promote inclusive fiscal policies,

social protection programmes and digital finance and youth inclusion alongside gender-sensitive budgeting practices.

- It is critical to emphasise the **regional dimension** in cascading LNOB down to the national and sub-national levels. The influence of Regional Economic Communities including the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the East African Community and the Economic Community of West African States is paramount in ensuring that national governments adhere to domestication guidelines of Agendas 2030 and 2063. SADC for instance developed a regional framework for democratic practices and empowering youth across southern African in compliance with AU standards and codes.
- What is more, the APRM has been working closely with a **continental Taskforce on CEPA principles in Africa** to promote awareness, knowledge, and monitoring of the LNOB principle through the suggested CEPA strategies including social equity.
- The newly launched [APRM manual of CEPA toolkits](#) aims to support African countries on mainstreaming critical CEPA principles including leaving no one behind, competence and sound policy making amongst national civil service in Africa. The toolkit of social equity has been consolidated, in partnership with the National Institute of Management in Egypt and has been validated by different groups in 15 countries such as Namibia, Sierra Leone and Equatorial Guinea¹. The results of the toolkit demonstrated notable progress on promoting LNOB especially in the health sector. This has been strongly aligned with national policies and affirmative legislative laws to provide further health coverage programmes especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (see the results of the survey below).

¹ The 13 countries are South Sudan, Zambia, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon, Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea

→ In closing, the APRM appreciates the efforts made by the UN CEPA Secretariat in promoting LNOB in Africa and looks forward to continuing its collaboration with it to enhance operationalisation of LNOB, good governance on the continent and devise ways of sharing this knowledge with Africa’s partners in the global South.

8 respondents (22%) answered **Law** for this question.



10. Are there any legal frameworks to support social equity mainstreaming by which your organization is guided?

| | |
|-------|----|
| ● Yes | 37 |
| ● No | 18 |



12. Are there any measurable goals and indicators for social equity in your organization?

| | |
|-------|----|
| ● Yes | 40 |
| ● No | 15 |

