

## **Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Africa for Effective Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: Follow-up to the 2023 SDG Summit**

Cape Town, South Africa, 26-28 October 2023

### **Background**

The 2023 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) regional workshop on *Strengthening Institutional capacities in Africa for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: Follow-up to the 2023 Summit* is the fourth in a series jointly organized in support of building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions in Africa at all levels. The capacity building workshop expands on efforts to implement recommendations reached in previous joint events, in which there has been a clear call to build on the productive synergies forged between the APRM and UN DESA to assist countries with operationalization of the [UN principles of effective governance for sustainable development](#), developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in 2018.

UN DESA and AU/APRM have been supporting countries in development of governance capacities since 2019, using the principles of effective governance for sustainable development as a foundation for action. As a result of the joint collaborative activity, including three previous workshops held in South Africa (in Pretoria in [2019](#) and Cape Town in [2021](#) and [2022](#)), an [African Baseline Study on the CEPA principles](#) was produced, and work is underway on specific African toolkits to support the application of the principles in line with national priorities and contexts.

Many African countries have expressed a strong interest in applying the CEPA principles to make much-needed shifts in governance, urgently strengthen institutions and policy coherence, and move as quickly as possible from SDG planning to implementation, leaving no one behind. The African Baseline Study analysed African countries' experiences in this respect, finding that the principles were used extensively in Africa, but that more was required to systematically introduce and integrate the principles into national planning systems and raise advocacy on strategies to implement the principles coherently. Preparations for a follow-up continental study in 2024 are underway.

Further, peer-learning among African countries on progress, gaps and challenges in implementing both Agendas has been a key component of APRM governance reviews. This work is complemented by critical support to the African region in the preparation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of implementation of the 2030 Agenda presented at the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), including seven reviews by African countries in 2023.<sup>1</sup> These efforts are being complemented by promoting SDG localization through voluntary local reviews (VLRs).

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<sup>1</sup> Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia

These capacity building and peer learning events have become a valuable continental gathering place to share experiences and consider joint actions in support of implementation of the two Agendas. They seek to improve the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, enhance monitoring and evaluation capacities, and promote alignment and integration of follow-up to the two Agendas into national development plans and strategies at the country level as called for by the AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of January 2018.

## Global and regional context

The workshop takes place against the backdrop of a world in peril. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, heads of State and Government express alarm that progress on most of the SDGs is either moving much too slowly or has regressed below the 2015 baseline. The Political Declaration to be adopted at the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023 (2023 SDG Summit), warns that “[o]ur world is currently facing numerous crises. Years of sustainable development gains are being reversed. Millions of people have fallen into poverty, hunger and malnutrition are becoming more prevalent, humanitarian needs are rising, and the impacts of climate change more pronounced. This has led to increased inequality exacerbated by weakened international solidarity and a shortfall of trust to jointly overcome these crises.” Africa has been particularly hard-hit by the multiple interlinked crises that are pushing the world to the brink. Halfway towards 2030, it has been estimated that most African countries are struggling to meet most SDG targets.

The 2023 SDG Summit represents a vital opportunity to change course. Member States call for bold, ambitious, accelerated and transformative actions, and the promotion of a systemic shift towards a more inclusive, just, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world for people and planet, for present and future generations. This includes good governance at all levels and transparent, effective and accountable institutions to help address these challenges. Calls for effective governance also resonates in the current assessment of the first-ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 as overall progress towards good governance remains inadequate.

The SDG Progress Report, issued at the mid-way point towards 2030, notes that the delivery of change at the speed and scale required by the SDGs demands more from public institutions than ever before, and highlights governance and institutions as the first priority of countries, world leaders and the UN system.<sup>2</sup> To that end, twelve high impact initiatives are being undertaken at the global level, including in the development of public sector capabilities, to demonstrate that transformative SDG progress is possible.<sup>3</sup>

## Workshop objectives

This latest workshop aims to support African countries in identifying transformative actions that contribute to building strong institutions and strengthening public service delivery for implementation of both Agendas, including through empowering subnational governments in their efforts to localise the SDGs and goals of Agenda 2063. The workshop aims to explore bold and innovative strategies that respond to the [Political Declaration of the 2023 SDG Summit](#), and urgently address some of the key gaps and challenges identified by the United Nations Secretary-General in the [rescue plan for people and planet](#) at the midpoint towards 2030 and by the African Union in its 2<sup>nd</sup> ten-year implementation

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<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/UN%20SDG%20Summit%202023%20High%20Impact%20Initiatives\\_0.pdf](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/UN%20SDG%20Summit%202023%20High%20Impact%20Initiatives_0.pdf)

plan for Agenda 2063. The workshop will also be informed by the [2023 Global Sustainable Development Report](#), which identifies governance and capacity building as two critical levers of transformation while highlighting specific interventions that can help countries overcome challenges and accelerate SDG action.

In the spirit of the 2023 SDG Summit, the workshop will be forward-looking while examining critical governance interventions that can make a substantial contribution to the achievement of national sustainable development priorities. Maximum interaction among peers in areas of mutual concern will be encouraged. Specifically, participants will:

- Take stock of progress towards the UN SDGs and goals of Agenda 2063 and identify transformative pathways to sustainable development;
- Explore ways of applying the principles of effective governance to national follow-up and review of sustainable development commitments, including through VNRs and VLRs;
- Learn how to leverage the high impact initiatives of the UN development system to accelerate SDG progress at a time of rapid technological change;
- Exchange lessons learned on governance and institution building for peaceful, just and inclusive societies in Africa with an emphasis on principles of inclusiveness and accountability;
- Identify entry points for strengthening subnational institutions and multilevel governance for SDG implementation;
- Engage with regional actors in sound policymaking for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and
- Consider plans of action to address important public sector capability gaps across the whole of government.

## **Participants**

Government officials from 30 African countries will be invited to participate and will be joined by representatives from UN entities, experts from AU organs, civil society groups, youth representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

## **Expected outcomes**

This workshop will, through an exchange of experiences and peer learning, support the development of institution building frameworks that can contribute to transformative changes in governance and development of plans of action for institutional reform. At the conclusion of workshop, participating officials should have a solid understanding of:

- The links and gaps between institutional capacities and national sustainable development priorities;
- Recommendations, lessons learned and good practices from selected VNR and VLR presentations by African countries in 2023;
- The application of selected governance principles to implementation of the SDGs to be reviewed in depth at the 2024 HLPF (SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16, 17);
- Assessment and comparison of levels of awareness, knowledge and implementation of the principles of effective governance in Africa;
- Institutional priorities for participating countries in follow-up to the Political Declaration of the United Nations 2023 SDG Summit;
- Possible plans of action to take the workshop's key messages forward.

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