

**APRM -UNDESA Continental Workshop**

**“Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Africa for Effective  
Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and  
AU Agenda 2063: Follow up on the 2024 HLPF and Summit of the  
Future”**

**Cape Town**

**24-26 October 2024**

**Opening Remarks**

**By**

**H.E. AMB. MARIE-ANTOINETTE ROSE QUATRE,**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,**

**APRM Continental Secretariat**

- **Your Excellency, Mr Li Junhua, Under-Secretary General for the United Nations** Economic and Social Affairs,
- **Your Excellency, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Chairperson of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration and Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University,
- **Ms. Yoliswa Makhasi**, Director General, Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa
- **Distinguished Representatives of African countries, African Union organisations and UN Agencies,**
- **Esteemed participants, and Colleagues,.**

1. It is a great honour to welcome you to the beautiful city of Cape Town, where we gather annually to support senior experts from African countries in strengthening institutional capacities for the **effective implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063: “The Africa We Want.”** I am particularly honoured to acknowledge our long-standing collaboration between the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), which began in 2019 since jointly conceptualised this programme.
2. The partnership with UNDESA has played a crucial role in bridging gaps in governance and institutional capacities across Africa, leading to significant progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 2063. This collaboration has contributed to strengthening the development of national monitoring and evaluation

frameworks, aligned global and regional development agendas with national priorities, and promoted the principles of good governance and inclusive institutions in Member States, as endorsed by the UN ECOSOC.

3. Our presence here today reflects our shared commitment to accelerating progress through collective action and innovation. Over the past five years, this partnership has been invaluable, enabling us to share experiences, build institutional resilience, and advance our collective efforts toward sustainable development across the African continent by strengthening the capacities of 400 civil servants from over 40 African countries. This platform has also facilitated effective participation from civil society, including women and youth representatives, fostering engagement in continental dialogue and generating nationally-led programmes focused on the principles for effective governance of the SDGs.

4. I would like to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to our distinguished speakers who will join me to deliver opening remarks in this session:

- ◆ **Mr. Li Junhua**, Under-Secretary-General of UNDESA, whose inspiring leadership continues to drive our collaborative efforts in supporting countries to implement effective governance for sustainable development.
- ◆ **Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, who has been instrumental in advocating for

public sector reforms essential for achieving our development goals.

◆ **The Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa**, which has been a steadfast partner in fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and excellence in public services in South Africa.

5. As we gather today, it is important to reflect on the outcomes of the recent UN General Assembly Session and the Summit of the Future, which highlighted the need for stronger global partnerships to tackle the complex challenges we face.
6. The commitments made at these crucial events are not just about charting a path forward; they also lay the groundwork for a more inclusive, equitable future and intergenerational solidarity. The collaboration between the African Union and the United Nations is essential for accelerating progress toward the SDGs and Agenda 2063: “The Africa We Want.”
7. The **Pact for the Future** included Fifty Six (**56**) Actions that will help countries to address different developmental issues. Most of these issues are highly relevant to the current African context, bearing in mind the stagnant progress towards most SDGs, particularly SDG 16, which aims to build effective institutions and peaceful societies.
8. On the other hand, the implementation of our continental Agenda – “The Africa We Want” – has also achieved some progress during its first decade of Action. The AU Heads of States adopted the Second

Ten-Year Implementation Plan this year with a bold commitment to promoting economic prosperity, addressing conflicts across the continent and boosting Africa's position in the reformed financial architecture and the global South.

9. The **2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report and the report** on the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 highlight modest progress in poverty reduction, offset by multiple crises in recent years. In 2022, 60% of Africa's population experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, up from 45.5% in 2015. Additionally, **80% of the population** was unable to afford healthy food, and an estimated 145 million children under the age of five faced food poverty.
10. Africa's unemployment rate among the poor stands at **31.09%**, significantly higher than the global average of just 6.38%. Additionally, more than 110 million people have been directly affected by climate, weather, and water-related hazards, resulting in **estimated economic damages of 8.5 billion US dollars**, according to the 2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report statistics. The real figures are likely to be even higher, as many losses go unreported.
11. Our discussions over the next three days will draw on insights from key global and continental frameworks, including the Pact for the Future and the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) of Agenda 2063.

12. These frameworks reinforce our collective aspiration to achieve “The Africa We Want” by accelerating nationally led efforts to address the challenges we face and ensuring that no one is left behind. Public institutions and service delivery are central to these efforts, as they strengthen citizens’ trust in their governments and foster a cohesive social contract.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

13. Through its national structures, the APRM has played a crucial role in translating the knowledge gained from these peer-learning workshops into actionable policies and practices at both national and local levels. By integrating these insights into civil service reforms, APRM Member States have effectively connected the lessons learned from the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with practical applications on the ground.

14. This is vital for advancing Agenda 2063 and aligning our efforts with SDG 16 on the importance of addressing illicit financial flows, and human trafficking, upholding the rule of law, combating corruption, and promoting digitalization and access to information. In this regard, I would like to commend the APRM national structures in Egypt, Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Namibia, and Comoros for leveraging the UN CEPA Principles and associated strategies in their public sector reforms.

15. Statistical evidence from APRM Reviews and impact study demonstrates a positive impact of these efforts, showing measurable improvements in the competence of civil service across several African countries, reflected in enhanced service delivery and reduced levels of corruption.
16. For instance, countries that have adopted APRM's governance baseline assessments have reported significant progress in implementing anti-corruption measures and improving public sector efficiency. This progress would not have been possible without our collective commitment to continuous capacity building and peer learning.
17. The topics and discussions of our workshop will also focus on how Africa can enhance resilience to global shocks and drive digital transformation, ensuring that the principles of inclusivity and "leaving no one behind" are central to all our policies and programs.
18. The concept of "Leaving No One Behind" is especially relevant to the APRM-DESA Programme. It serves as a reminder that our development efforts must include all segments of society, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized.
19. I encourage you to read the latest APRM Policy Brief on **Forging 'Leave No One Behind' Principle in Africa: Female Executives' perception on Social Equity Strategy**, which is guided by an innovative toolkit co-crafted by UN CEPA Experts, and the APRM

Continental Secretariat, to track one aspect of “Leave no one behind” principle in Africa.

20. This principle is also pertinent to our long-lasting commitment to foster democratic governance, upholding human rights, and ensuring that everyone benefits from development gains.

21. Finally, as we embark on this workshop, I urge all participants to share their insights, experiences, and innovations with a view toward actionable outcomes. Let us leverage this platform to deepen our understanding of the governance challenges we face and identify solutions that will enable us to deliver on the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda.

22. Once again, I extend my gratitude to UNDESA for its unwavering support, to the APRM national focal points for their dedication to driving transformative change, and to all participants for your commitment to making governance work for sustainable development. Together, we can build the capable institutions that will secure a prosperous, peaceful, and resilient Africa.

**Thank you, and I wish us all a productive and insightful workshop.**