



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



APRM
African Peer Review
Mechanism



WORKSHOP REPORT

26-28 October 2023 | Cape Town, South Africa

Introduction

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) together with the AU African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), organized the 4th joint regional workshop entitled “Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Africa for Effective Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: Follow-up to the 2023 Summit” in Cape Town, South Africa from 26 to 28 October 2023. UN DESA and the APRM Continental Secretariat have been supporting African countries to build governance capacities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063 since 2019, guided by the [AU–UN framework for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). At the core of these capacity building activities are the principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA).

Three previous joint collaborative activities – in Pretoria in 2019 and Cape Town in 2021 and 2022 – stressed peer-learning among African countries on progress, gaps and challenges in implementing both Agendas as a key component. These workshops have become a valuable continental gathering place to share experiences and consider joint actions in support of implementation of the two Agendas, seeking to improve their means of implementation, enhance monitoring and evaluation capacities, and promote their alignment and integration into national development plans and strategies at the country and sub-national levels. Participation in the workshops has targeted senior policymakers and SDG/VNR focal points from all subregions of the continent.

Key messages

Transformative pathways to sustainable development

- Participants supported the call of the 2023 Political Declaration for fundamental, transformative and urgent change. Delivery of change at the speed and scale required by the SDGs demands more from public institutions than ever before.
- Implementation of transformative goals must remain anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063, which remain the overarching roadmaps for change. The complex problems underlying crises in a holistic manner must be addressed, ensuring that crisis management does not hinder the continuous implementation of the SDGs.
- The findings of the [2023 Global Sustainable Development Report](#), confirmed in the Evaluation of Agenda 2063’s first 10-year Implementation Plan, convey valuable insights into key transformative shifts needed across different entry points at regional and national levels. Governance and capacity building have been identified as two critical levers urgently needed to enable progress toward the SDGs.

- Implementation of integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government could be further explored and supported. A review of public sector workforce capabilities to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and of related training efforts should be seen as part of the solution.
- Over 100 countries have already presented national commitments to SDG transformation that include national benchmarks for reducing poverty and inequalities by 2027 and strengthening institutional frameworks to support SDG progress. Participants resolved to focus on the priority actions that need to be taken to equip governance systems and institutions for transformation at national and sub-national levels. Participants also called for developing and contributing to the National Commitments to SDG transformation, even in incremental ways.
- More action is needed to address financing for development in African countries. African countries may be able to regain some measure of control by optimizing the potential of the continent's one trillion dollar 'sleeping' capital and insurance funds to finance sustainable development. Many countries are constrained by high levels of debt which undermine their monetary sovereignty and limit the flexibility of government in its spending choices. Curbing illicit financial flows, strengthening budgetary and fiscal transparency, and expanding registers of beneficial ownership are some of actions countries can take to prevent funds from being lost in a string of transactions.
- Collaboration between public and private sectors is vital and the importance of linking primary, tertiary, and secondary sectors for comprehensive development to attain the SDG goals is recognised.

Lessons learned from the Voluntary National Reviews of 2023

- In the last High-level Political Forum, innovative policies and systemic changes were identified to support the SDGs, counter current global trends and promote inclusion and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Participants recognized the benefit of interdisciplinary approaches and priority pathways to accelerate actions for building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance preparedness for future shocks.
- There is limited capacity to foresee and build resilience against the diverse challenges originating from multiple shocks in many countries. Participants called for a rapid upgrade of the risk management and strategic foresight functions in government and its integration into SDG-related coordination mechanisms at the highest level.
- Multidimensional coverage of each of the 11 principles of effective governance ("CEPA principles") could provide a useful way to enhance policy analysis related to SDG 16. Indicators should be detailed enough to capture the quality of a government's response to the SDGs while addressing important analytical gaps in VNR and VLR processes.

Public sector capabilities for the future – skills, mindsets, technology, innovation

- Public sector transformation is critical to enable the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Countries must adopt a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to public sector development and improve the way people-centered public services are designed, financed, delivered and evaluated.

- Innovative steps need to be taken to bridge science, technology and innovation divides as drivers of sustainable development. Advancements in artificial intelligence, big data analytics, advanced robotics, remote sensing, financial technology and biotechnology should be applied to SDG progress in different development contexts in Africa.
- Science driven transformations are urgently needed to enable progress toward the SDGs, including identifying key interventions that have systemic effects across the SDGs, scaling up investment, mobilising the knowledge of scientists, practitioners and communities at all levels, and building the capacity needed in all countries and institutions, all while enhancing policy learning and accountability and closely monitoring the impacts of interventions.
- Participants looked forward to further development of FutureGov, the high impact initiative launched by the UN Secretary-General at the 2023 SDG Summit as an international platform for sharing knowledge and experiences on building critical public sector capabilities for the future.

Leveraging the principles of leaving no one behind and accountability

- Participants reiterated their support for the eleven [principles of effective government for sustainable development](#), developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, which have been widely developed and adopted in many countries on the African continent, as indicated in part through an [APRM Baseline Study](#) conducted in 2021 and other continental reports.
- Countries continue to implement various institutional and policy reforms to combat corruption, enhance transparency and integrity of public institutions. Such initiatives involved embracing open data initiatives and enforcing access to information laws that guarantee citizens' right to access government information, while also ensuring necessary exceptions for national security and privacy.
- The new manual developed by APRM to promote key strategies of CEPA principles including social equity toolkit is welcomed. African countries are highly encouraged to use the referred manual in identifying civil service needs and track implementation of CEPA principles including leaving no one behind.

Strengthening subnational institutions and multilevel governance for SDG implementation

- The importance of transformation from the ground-up was reiterated, with holistic, inclusive and effective approaches for achieving sustainability, tailored to the unique conditions of each context.
- Voluntary local reviews (VLRs) and the APRM national governance reviews have been increasingly used as an entry point for strengthening sub-national governments and breaking down siloes. The key recommendations of APRM African Governance Report and Governance Mechanisms for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 Report must continue to be applied to strengthen citizen-government trust for a resilient social contract.

Regional support to sound policymaking for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

- Support for [sound policymaking](#) for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 was reiterated, as was the implementation and strengthening of policy coherence for sustainable development in Africa.
- Civil society plays a vital role in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa and are involved in advocacy, awareness raising, and promoting transparency and accountability in the policymaking process. Collaborative efforts with civil society can help bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation, ensuring that the voices and needs of marginalized communities are considered.
- Peer review and learning, leveraging the role of CSOs and strengthening the role of institutions such as AU ECOSOCC, Good Governance Africa (GGA), and the Africa Prosperity Fund were suggested. Better coordination between AU organs, UN agencies and African countries is imperative to improve reporting on both agendas during the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan.

Integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government

- Achieving sustainable development and strengthening resilience require a long-term perspective in public policymaking, together with institution-building at all levels, based on effective governance for sustainable development, as well as a steadfast commitment to promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- Institutional capabilities for integrated solutions to sustainable development across the whole of government were supported, and transformative actions show the most promise in building strong institutions and strengthening public service delivery for national implementation of both Agendas.

Summary of proceedings

Opening session

The workshop was opened by Professor Eddy Maloka, CEO of the APRM Continental Secretariat; Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs; Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chairperson of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA); Ms. Kefiloe Masiteng, Head of Office, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, South Africa; and Mr. Somadoda Fikeni, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission, South Africa.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Eddy Maloka noted that the purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the ways in which African countries could implement some of the recommendations contained in the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration, especially the call to advance concrete, integrated and targeted policies and actions to fulfil the vision of the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He reflected on the APRM's recent efforts to institutionalize the CEPA principles of effective governance for sustainable development including production of a manual comprising four toolkits – on principles of competence, inclusiveness and effectiveness – that were contributing to improving public service delivery and enhancing trust in government in African countries. He equally acknowledged the efforts of UN DESA and the Chair of CEPA to sustain the UN-APRM partnership over the past four years.

Under-Secretary-General Li, in a pre-recorded video message, noted that the workshop presented a dynamic opportunity to strengthen national institutional capacities and to consider practical ways of incorporating continental lessons into national sustainable development planning. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions and the climate catastrophe, he noted that the 2023 SDG Summit and the Political Declaration represented a vital opportunity to change course. A call for bold, ambitious, accelerated and transformative actions included effective governance at all levels and transparent, effective and accountable institutions. He pointed out that one of the 12 high-impact initiatives launched at the Summit included Future-Gov, which would focus on skillsets, mindsets and innovation as critical components of strengthening public institutions. He noted that technical guidance notes for operationalising the CEPA principles of effective governance for sustainable development continue to provide conceptual and practical advice on building strong institutions for the SDGs and embody the knowledge and experience of committed expert practitioners and academics from around the world. He observed that the workshops reflected a strong partnership between the UN and the African Union in support of Africa's inclusive sustainable development, and that DESA stands ready to support countries to build the capacities they need to ensure that their public institutions are fit for purpose.

Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi stated that Governments are urged to address the complex problems underlying the multiple global crises in a holistic manner, highlighting that more integrated solutions to achieve the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 were called for, including a capable State at all levels. This included the design and implementation of integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government. Regular and systematic reviews of public sector workforce capabilities to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and of related training efforts should be seen as part of the solution. On indicators, she noted that multidimensional

coverage of each of the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development could provide a useful way to enhance policy analysis related to SDG 16. She urged countries to focus on the priority actions needed to equip governance systems and institutions for transformation at all levels for the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration to become a reality and encouraged further national commitments to SDG transformations.

Ms. Kefiloe Masiteng delivered a message of support on behalf of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa, observing the commitment of the RCO/UNCT to provide technical support to ensure the achievement of the SDGs. African countries needed to maximize the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, with functional government, and strong and engaged leadership being key. The implementation of the 11 CEPA principles was crucial to ensuring a capable state. Further, she emphasized 5 principles which were important in the African context, viz; competent sound policymaking; collaboration; leaving no one behind; and non-discrimination. The whole-of-government approach and inter-governmental collaboration was at the heart of the SDGs, with SDG localization and a bottom-up approach to governance being key.

Mr. Somadoda Fikeni observed that the Minister of Public Service and Administration of South Africa was fully committed to the objectives of the workshop. He noted the South African government's commitment to good governance and highlighted how it had embarked on rebuilding a capable and ethical state with a strong implementation framework. He reiterated the importance of a whole-of-government approach in implementation of the SDGs, noting that fragmentation in government structures resulted in siloed decision-making, waste of resources and inefficiencies. Further, he noted the importance of meaningful dialogue between generations and the importance of engaging youth. He observed that accountability and an effective oversight ecosystem were key to ensuring that implementation plans were kept in place, observing the importance of the cycle of learning, unlearning and relearning.

Session 1

The **first session** of the workshop focused on 'Accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: moving towards transformative pathways to sustainable development'. The session examined bold, ambitious, accelerated, just and transformative actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The session also explored some tipping points for action that African countries have taken and can take towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, which can facilitate country-specific strategies, investments, and policies to support SDG implementation, budgeting and costing, and monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Countries' presentations Ghana, Lesotho and Malawi alluded that the current reality on the ground may not make the achievement of the SDGs possible, creating a need for re-examining national priorities. The crucial role of public policies in attaining the SDGs through the improvement of institutional quality, governance systems, economic freedom, and the promotion of education and the innovation ecosystem was highlighted by the speakers. Like many other African countries, Ghana possessed the necessary resources and capacity required for funding the SDGs. However, there was a need for the restructuring of the financial system to leave no one behind and to enhance and promote economic growth. It was observed that 60% of government resources were wasted through overlaps, duplication and working in siloes, and the importance of institutional coordination was stressed. A whole of government approach

to policymaking and implementation was also necessary. The representative from Lesotho noted that mobilizing commitment among stakeholders, fostering accountability and strengthening institutional capacity is crucial for national sustainable development. Key areas of focus also include gender equality and women's empowerment; support for small and medium enterprises and private-public sector partnerships. The representative from Malawi stressed the need to have a holistic approach to evaluating and implementing both Agendas, focusing on both results and understanding the underlying processes. The inter-linkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are of crucial importance in ensuring that the goals of both Agendas are realized. In that regard, it was important to link national budgets with action plans for effective delivery of the SDGs.

During the discussion session, participants noted the low tax to GDP ratio in many African countries and observed that transformative actions were needed to take place, including leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), promoting opportunities for investment and restructuring the financial system in Africa. Countries needed to optimize available assets and utilize domestic resources for positive change and development. Participants also noted that inequality threatens long term social and economic development and exacerbates poverty, leading to unsustainable levels of growth and higher levels of social instability and conflict. Collaboration between public and private sectors is vital and participants recognized the importance of linking primary, tertiary, and secondary sectors for comprehensive development to attain the SDGs. Youth in Africa are one of the continent's greatest resources, and education and training programmes and investment in young people therefore remains crucial.

Session 2

The **second session** examined lessons learned from the Voluntary National Reviews that were presented at the 2023 high level political forum (HLPF). Participants were informed that discussions at the 2023 HLPF included a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which enabled countries to examine effective and inclusive recovery measures and to explore actionable policy guidance for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The challenges presented by COVID-19, as well as high unemployment, rising debt, decreased industrial activity, disrupted supply chains, inadequate policy coherence, climate action, monitoring and capacity building, as well as persistent gaps in SDG financing, data collection and disaggregation continue to compound the challenges faced by countries and public institutions.

Some suggested solutions to improve the institutional set-up included promoting integrated policymaking, increased participation and involvement of various institutions at the national and local levels, increasing alignment of SDGs with national development plans and processes, and utilizing the VNR as a living document to provide feedback to policy development. Innovative policies and systemic changes were identified to support the SDGs, counter current global trends, and promote inclusion and multi-stakeholder consultations and collaboration. The session also noted that the SDG Summit Political Declaration had recognized that the VNRs “have generated valuable lessons learned and have helped countries monitor progress and integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national plans and policies”. The session highlighted how various African countries had aligned their institutional frameworks with the SDGs and areas where integration could be deepened and further strengthened.

Session 3

The third session examined public sector capabilities for the future – skills, mindsets, technology and innovation. The session underscored that public sector transformation is critical to the achievement of the SDGs. The session also examined how countries could adopt a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to public sector development and improve the way people-centered public services are designed, financed, delivered and evaluated.

African countries need to build public sector skillsets for resilient institutions, shift mindsets towards systems thinking and foresight, and facilitate policy innovation for results. Agile government skills were also needed, including collaboration with various stakeholders for co-identification and co-ownership of problems and solutions. There is also a need to focus on training, in particular on skills in creativity, innovation, data literacy and data visualization. The Future-Gov initiative, launched at the 2023 SDG Summit as one of the 12 High Impact Initiatives of the United Nations, focuses on three elements of public sector transformation, namely skillsets; mindsets and innovation. The initiative is designed to build public sector skillsets for adaptable and resilient institutions through a shared toolbox; shift mindsets towards systems thinking and foresight for effective governance and inclusive service delivery, including through digital and data tools; and enable broader and more impactful policy innovation in public sectors, supported by the requisite enabling environment.

The initiative, led by DESA and UNDP, will help countries mainstream innovation by helping them make better use of accelerator platforms and innovation labs, apply behavioral insights to improve the efficacy of public policy, and design new interfaces for public engagement and democratized innovation. The later encompasses interactions between innovation activities that occur within public spaces such as community science labs and their broader socioeconomic contexts. The work of Future-Gov is unfolding, but it is envisaged to be a hybrid digital platform for member States, the United Nations and other partners to share strategies, policies, tools and methodologies and to facilitate knowledge management, learning and in-country technical assistance.

Country presentations were made on the experience of Botswana, Mauritius and Rwanda, with speakers highlighting innovative steps to bridge science, technology and innovation divides as drivers of sustainable development. In Botswana these included digitization of data collection during the population and housing census of 2022 through use of tablets for ease of data transfer to the command centre and to reduce the cost of data entry, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, advanced robotics, remote sensing, financial technology and biotechnology applied to SDG implementation. Closing digital divides through hybrid models of public service delivery was also highlighted. In Mauritius, the importance of renewable energy, sustainable finance frameworks and rainwater harvesting schemes was highlighted. A citizen support portal, online revenue collection, SDG investor map, e-procurement system and an app on domestic violence were amongst the efforts being made to deliver public services. Rwanda, which aspires to become an upper middle-income country by 2035, has put in place institutions and partnerships that promote public capacity building, including through the Rwanda Convention Bureau to establish South-South cooperation with other countries learning from each other and sharing good practices. Rwanda noted the use of ICT in recruitment, remuneration and performance systems, Government Business Information System (GBIS) dashboard, the Digital Ambassador Programme for increasing digital literacy and the Rwanda Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems.

Interactive discussions focused on the sustainability of actions to achieve the SDGs in the face of political change and instability, worsening inequalities that are linked to technology and the digital divide, and the challenges of lack of sufficient resources to invest in technology that many African countries continue to grapple with. Good practices were shared amongst participants, including evolution in planning from policymaking through budgeting and costing of plans, and long-term, depoliticized planning.

Session 4

The fourth session dealt with building peaceful and inclusive societies in Africa. The session underscored that eleven UN CEPA principles of effective governance for sustainable development support the development of effective, accountable and inclusive public institutions. The session focused on two principles, namely leaving no one behind and accountability, and examined national policies and initiatives to strengthen them. The session also examined the main tools and guiding frameworks for inclusive societies, combatting corruption and other accountability measures at the national level, and opportunities for collaboration that can lead to more African success stories in these priority areas.

Presentations were made by Sierra Leone, Angola, Morocco and Comoros. Each speaker highlighted national efforts to leave no one behind, including by promoting gender equality and scaling up poverty reduction programmes, access to education and health care, and programmes for youth and persons with disabilities. Such measures, if successfully implemented can enhance the economic and social inclusion of people living in poverty, women and youth, and groups in vulnerable situations. Participants also noted their efforts in combatting corruption. Examples shared include the ongoing efforts being implemented by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of Sierra Leone and the National Directorate for the Prevention and Combat of Corruption (DNAPC) of Angola. Speakers observed legal reforms and oversight mechanisms that are required to promote transparency and accountability, including regulations for public procurement and financial transparency and the efforts to promote proactive disclosure of information through government websites and other platforms.

The importance of access to information, public awareness campaigns on the consequences of corruption and the utilization of platforms such as the APRM to share experiences and good practices in combating corruption were also raised. The government of Comoros also highlighted its partnership with international organizations such as the United Nations to implement projects that address the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Challenges such as the lack of data and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of public policies to ensure accountability were raised.

Interactive discussions focused on the resources needed to implement programmes that address leaving no one behind. Participants noted that Africa has sufficient human and natural resources for its own sustainable development but did not enjoy the benefits because of several factors that include lack of adequate transparency in the natural resource sector, illicit financial flows, undeveloped financial markets, ineffective resource management, corruption, and abuse of power. It was pointed out that in some countries, only 3% of profits from the mining sector goes to government, depriving them of critical resources for sustainable development. Multi-pronged approaches were necessary to reverse the trend, including reforming the international financial architecture, technological transfers, capacity building, building reliable policy and regulatory frameworks and strengthening public institutions.

Poverty remains an issue for most African countries, compounded by conflict and political challenges for peaceful transitions, hence the importance of timely disaggregated data in understanding structural inequalities to address poverty eradication was raised. It was suggested that the APRM be reorganized to focus in the next 5 years on public service reforms in Africa based on standards adapted to varying national contexts and to build a pool of expertise in Africa.

Session 5

The **fifth session** focused on strengthening subnational institutions and multi-level governance for SDG implementation in African countries. Initiatives led by local governments, including local communities offer holistic, inclusive and effective approaches for achieving sustainability, tailored to the unique conditions of each context. It examined how African Governments can transform from the ground up and assessed how voluntary local reviews (VLRs) and the APRM national governance reviews can be used as an entry point for strengthening sub-national governments and to foster SDGs localization. It also examined how the CEPA principle of subsidiarity, and the available UN DESA strategy guidance notes, can be used in the process of SDGs localization.

Speakers included South Africa, Zimbabwe and Gambia, with all three countries having participated in UN DESA workshops on the VLRs and their linkages to Voluntary National Review processes. South Africa noted the importance of intergovernmental collaboration and observed that lack of coordination in the past has led to inadequate services and was detrimental to development efforts. It was noted that South Africa is in the process of implementing the district development model (DDM) that is linked to the national development strategy at district and municipal levels as a roadmap to guide implementation of SDGs.

In Zimbabwe, every province was required to set up their own development plan, on the understanding that local authorities shape and implement policy. Gambia noted that collaboration between the central government and local councils to implement the SDGs was well established. The public finance management strategy 2021-2025 that is being implemented within the context of local government reforms stresses aligning resources with plans. Fiscal discipline was based on reforms in budget, procurement, internal audit, financial management and accounting and reporting and revenue generation. The Gambian Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA) is advocating for councils to include VLRs in their annual budgets. The principle of subsidiarity, including the guidance notes, have provided support into translating the principle into practical reality on the ground in both South Africa and the Gambia.

For multi-level governance to succeed, it was noted that SDG and Agenda 2063 governance structures at local level needed to be established. This included adequate financial and technical support, co-production of data and statistics, alignment of strategies at national and subnational levels and formal cooperation agreements between national and subnational governments.

A major challenge to the process of localizing SDGs was a lack of promotion of horizontal policy coherence and failure to manage trade-offs across policy domains. It was noted that many African countries have not incorporated local plans into national frameworks, resulting in poor coordination and duplication of efforts. Local legal frameworks and policy documents also need to be reviewed to reflect development needs and aspirations and be aligned to international agendas. It was noted that central governments

should empower subnational and local councils and ensure fiscal, political and administrative decentralization and build capacities and gaps of local government.

Session 6

The **sixth session** examined the regional/continental support available for sound policymaking for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The session examined the main challenges and good practices in the implementation and strengthening of policy coherence for sustainable development in Africa, the development of an M&E framework to report on both Agendas, and ways in which the African Union and UN partners can support countries address data and statistics deficits that undermined efforts to track progress on the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

The OECD shared its framework for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, which can serve as a reference for countries in Africa. PCSD aims to align national policies with sustainable development objectives and provides a structured approach for assessing coherence. Engaging civil society organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders in the policy development and implementation process can lead to more effective, context-specific solutions. The OECD conducts peer reviews and benchmarking exercises, where member countries can learn from each other's experiences. In the context of supporting the African Union, the UN system and civil society organizations in tracking progress on the SDGs and Agenda 2063, the lessons learned from the OECD can inform the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and promote the use of data and evidence-based decision-making.

Civil society organizations also participated in this session and underscored the vital role they can play in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa through advocacy, awareness raising, and promotion of transparency and accountability in the policymaking process. Collaborative efforts with civil society can help bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation, ensuring that the voices and needs of marginalized communities are considered. The AU ECOSOCC and the Africa Prosperity Fund are also contributing towards the achievement of the SDGs and the aspirations of Agenda 2063 in the context of regional support to sound policymaking for their effective implementation. The Africa Prosperity Fund provides financial support to initiatives and projects aligned with SDGs and Agenda 2063. The Fund can support capacity-building efforts in African countries, helping them strengthen their ability to design, implement, and monitor policies that support the SDGs and Agenda 2063. They can facilitate partnerships among governments, the UN system, civil society organizations and the private sector, contributing to a collaborative mode of interaction that can accelerate progress toward the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

The African Union continental support to African countries regarding the monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 was also shared. The AU Commission led the coordination among all organs and UN partners to conduct the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063. Amongst the key findings were that financial resources were inadequate to realize the expected results and the factors that contributed to the low implementation of these projects include low levels of ratifications, low funding for capital intensive projects and inadequate skills and capacities. Highlights were made on the ongoing preparations of the second ten-year implementation plan and key enablers including

coordination, domestication, financing, partnerships, and monitoring, evaluation, data, accountability and learning.

Discussions focused on the critical role of institutions and funds in supporting sound policymaking, policy coherence, and progress in monitoring both the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa. Challenges in developing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks were acknowledged, emphasizing the need for more work in this area. Challenges related to strengthening policy coherence were acknowledged to be complex, including institutional capacity gaps, policy fragmentation, and the need for more inclusive and participatory policy processes, involving both governments and non-state actors. Accurate and timely data were emphasized as crucial for tracking progress, but many African countries face significant statistics deficits. Collaboration, capacity-building, and resource mobilization were needed to address these deficits, while investments in data infrastructure and technology were essential to ensure reliable data for monitoring and evaluation.

These discussions underscore the importance of comprehensive and integrated approaches, stakeholder engagement, and learning from international experiences in advancing sustainable development in Africa. Peer review and learning, leveraging the role of CSOs and strengthening the role of institutions such as AU ECOSOCC and the Africa Prosperity Fund were suggested. Better coordination between AU organs, UN agencies and African countries is imperative to improve reporting on both agendas during the STYIP.

Session 7

The **seventh session** examined how countries can strengthen institutional capabilities for integrated solutions to sustainable development across the whole of government, and where transformative actions show the most promise in building strong institutions and strengthening public service delivery for national implementation of both Agendas. The focus of the session was on initiatives taken by national governments to build interconnected and integrated institutional frameworks for achievement of development objectives; and how the AU APRM/NEPAD national structures and UN entities could assist countries in identifying and addressing important capability gaps to help bring SDG progress to scale.

Speakers from Ethiopia, Liberia and Mozambique recognized that the institutional set-up of a country is key, and that delivery of basic services depends on it. Speakers noted their attempts to make institutions more dynamic and responsive. It was observed that partnerships bring different perspectives because sectors prepare their policies in accordance with cooperation guidelines.

Ethiopia had reorganized its government structure, reflecting digitalization in its development plan and higher standards of performance. It was important to work on integrated policy development which considers the sustainability of policy impacts. Liberia illustrated some of its critical capacity challenges, which apply to countries across the continent, such as limited domestic resource mobilization efforts, inadequate public-private partnerships, poor international/development cooperation management, untapped diaspora resources, limited innovative financing mechanisms and fiscal management, and building resilience and sustainability in national development initiatives. Strategic capacity improvement in government included alignment at all levels, building capacities, balancing authority, and mentoring and coaching to get the job done with a focus on deliverables. Financing, collaboration, data and reporting were key factors in delivery of development plans. It was also important to mainstream and build capacity in institutions to avoid loss of skills.

Mozambique noted the need to strengthen oversight and public financial management, which would strengthen the 2030 Agenda. International support to the country to build the national statistical institute has enabled use of integrated data by sectoral institutions. A planning and budgeting module developed to track public expenditure dedicated to SDGs had been developed, with all ministries participating in loading SDG indicators.

Discussions focused on the role of local governments and empowerment of local actors and whether they are being brought on board, resource mobilization strategies and techniques, and resilience to disasters. The decisions also highlighted the role of data in facilitating decision-making. The question of political patronage in Africa, whether it can ever be a positive force in government and the ways in which it affects public service motivation and performance was discussed.

Closing session

During the **closing session**, the Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration commended the joint collaborative workshops between UN DESA and the APRM, which have generated positive and constructive debates, with crucial peer learning experiences for countries.

She highlighted the multiple crises and global uncertainty facing many countries, which requires countries to reform national institutions to make them robust, resilient and responsive to the changes that people want to see in Africa. The SDG Summit and its Political Declaration reaffirmed that ‘effective rule of law and good governance at all levels’ and ‘transparent, effective and accountable institutions’ are needed to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. She noted that the CEPA principles provide countries with the framework and strategies to build resilient institutions which are forward looking and able to effectively manage risk.

The CEPA Chair also emphasized the issue of reforming the international financial architecture through development cooperation and SDG investments and to find ways to support payment suspensions, and debt restructuring with an expansion of support and eligibility to vulnerable countries in need. She highlighted issues of localization of the 2030 Agenda; the need for the VNRs to provide feedback into evidence-based policy development and reform; and the importance of VLRs and the APRM national governance reviews to continue to be used as an entry point for strengthening sub-national governments and SDG localization, breaking down siloes and boosting multi-level governance. She noted that throughout the workshop, there were calls for greater institutional coordination and policy coherence, and that governments can foster synergies, minimize trade-offs, and balance domestic and international priorities. She called for countries to design and implement integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government. Technology was also identified as a major enabler of better governance and institutions.

She concluded by noting that the SDGs and Agenda 2063 must consistently be considered as blueprints for recovery and transformation, and called for building forward looking African institutions that reflect the values and aspirations of the African people. The results of the workshop must focus on priority actions that need to be taken to equip governance systems and institutions for transformation at national and sub-national levels.

The Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs of Sierra Leone and Chair of the APRM Focal Points, H. E. Amara Kallon, delivered closing remarks. He underscored that governance is about our public institutions and how building the capacities of civil services across the continent was a key aspect to delivering the SDGs and Agenda 2063. He further noted that countries need a pragmatic and harmonized approach to public service delivery, including through partnerships and collaboration with civil society organizations.

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

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

| Day 1 – Thursday, 26 October | |
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| 08:30 – 9:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 9:30 | <p>Setting the scene</p> <p><i>Welcome by Prof. Eddy Maloka</i>, Chief Executive Officer, African Peer Review Mechanism</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p>Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (video message)</p> <p>Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chair, United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration and Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University</p> <p>Ms. Kefiloe Masiteng, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa</p> <p>Mr. Somadoda Fikeni, Chair of the Public Service Commission, South Africa</p> |
| 09:30 – 11:15 | <p>Session 1: Towards transformative pathways to sustainable development</p> <p>The Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly in October 2023 noted that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is in peril, and committed to bold, ambitious, accelerated, just and transformative actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report highlights that transformations are possible and inevitable and provides a synthesis</p> |

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| | <p>of key transformative shifts needed across different entry points (human wellbeing and capabilities, sustainable and just economies, food systems and healthy nutrition, energy decarbonization with universal access, urban and peri-urban development, and global environmental commons). Similar findings are equally alluded to in the evaluation of agenda 2063 first-ten-year implementation plan. This session will explore some of the tipping points for action that African countries have taken/can take towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some emerging tipping points for accelerated action towards SDG and Agenda 2063 achievement? • How have countries strengthened links between institutional capacity development and interventions to deliver on national sustainable development objectives? • What priority actions need to be taken to equip governance systems for transformation at national and subnational levels? • What can be done to enhance the focus on SDGs and goals of Agenda 2063 in national planning and oversight mechanisms? <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Mr. Amson Sibanda, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p>Prof. Kodjo Mensah-Abrampa, Director General, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana</p> <p>Ms. Malefu Khanyapa, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Lesotho</p> <p>Mr. Martin Mwale, Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Malawi</p> |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Tea and group photo |
| 11:30 – 12:45 | <p>Session 2: Sharing experiences and lessons learned from the Voluntary National Reviews of 2023</p> <p>Discussion at the 2023 HLPF focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled countries to examine effective and inclusive recovery measures and to explore actionable policy guidance for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Innovative policies and systemic changes were identified to support the SDGs, counter current global trends and promote inclusion and multi-stakeholder</p> |

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| | <p>collaboration. This session will examine some of these findings, including the key messages and concrete actions from the 2023 HLPF that African countries can take or have taken forward. Seven African countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in 2023. Good practices, challenges and opportunities will be shared through a peer learning dialogue. The relevance of the 2023 VNRs to governance that may be relevant to the second -ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 will also be discussed.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the world grappling with multiple crises, escalating inequalities, debt and climate change, what key messages and concrete actions from the 2023 HLPF can African countries best take forward? • What interdisciplinary approaches and priority pathways have been developed to accelerate actions for building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance preparedness for future shocks? • What do the 2023 VNRs/VLRs tell us about governance that may be relevant to the 2nd 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063? <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Ms. Habani Munyungano, Director, National Planning Commission, Namibia</p> <p><i>Speaker</i></p> <p>Ms. Maame Agyeben, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs</p> |
| <p>12:45 – 13:15</p> | <p>Official launch of APRM continental report on Governance Mechanisms for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Ms. Sara Tawfik Hamouda, Agenda 2063 & SDGs Expert, African Peer Review Mechanism</p> <p><i>Presenters</i></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Amara Kallon, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Sierra Leone and Chair of APRM Focal Points</p> <p>Prof. Eddy Maloka, Chief Executive Officer, African Peer Review Mechanism</p> |
| <p>13:15 – 14:30</p> | <p>Lunch</p> |

14:30 – 16:30

Session 3: Enhancing public sector capabilities for the future – skills, mindsets, technology, innovation

Public sector transformation is critical to enable the achievement of the SDGs. Countries must adopt a renewed sense of purpose and urgency to public sector development and improve the way people-centered public services are designed, financed, delivered and evaluated. This session will focus on building and transforming public sector capabilities, including how countries can benefit from FutureGov, the high impact initiative launched at the 2023 SDG Summit, to develop critical public sector capabilities for the future.

Guiding questions

- What innovative steps have been taken to bridge science, technology and innovation divides as drivers of sustainable development?
- How are advancements in artificial intelligence, big data analytics, advanced robotics, remote sensing, financial technology and biotechnology being applied to SDG progress in different development contexts in Africa?
- What efforts are being made to bridge digital divides through hybrid – digital together with analogue – models of public service delivery?
- How can countries benefit from FutureGov, the high impact initiative launched at the 2023 SDG Summit, to develop critical public sector capabilities for the future?

Moderator

Mr. Thatayamodimo Rammupudi, Director- Programmes and Projects, National Planning Commission, Botswana

Speakers

Mr. Rogers Dhliwayo, Senior Economist, UNDP South Africa

Ms. Modiegi Ngakane, Interim Assistant Commissioner General, National Planning Commission, Botswana

Mr. Jean Bosco Ndayisenga, Director General, National Programmes and Projects Monitoring, Rwanda (remote)

Mr. Ashveen Bochowa, Senior Analyst, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Mauritius

Day 2 – Friday, 27 October

09:00 – 11:00

Session 4: Building peaceful and inclusive societies in Africa: leveraging the principles of leaving no one behind and accountability.

The eleven [principles of effective government for sustainable development](#), developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, are designed to support the development of effective, accountable and inclusive public institutions. They have been widely developed in many countries on the African continent, as indicated in part through an [APRM Baseline Study](#) conducted in 2021 and other continental reports. This session will focus on two principles, leaving no one behind and accountability, and will focus on national policies and initiatives to strengthen them. The session will examine the main tools and guiding frameworks for inclusive societies, combatting corruption and other accountability measures at the national level. It will delve into opportunities for collaboration that can lead to more African success stories in these priority areas.

Guiding questions

- From your country's perspective, what are the main policies adopted to strengthen the leaving no one behind principle, guided by the CEPA guidance notes and other initiatives?
- What are the main tools and guiding frameworks for combatting corruption at the national level? How can APRM processes be useful in this respect? What is the reality?
- How can countries best ensure transparency, including through access to information policies and proactive disclosure of information? What are some African success stories?

Moderator

Ms. Kadra Hassan, Head, APRM National Secretariat, Djibouti

Speakers

Mr. Suleiman Phoray-Musa, Director, Public Sector Reforms Unit, Sierra Leone

Mr. Deodato Inacio, Sub Attorney General, National Directorate for Preventing and Combatting Corruption, Office of the Attorney General, Angola

Mr. Moulay Abdeljebbar Salim, Head of Monitoring and Integrated Programmes Division, High Commission for Planning, Morocco

Mr. Youssouf Ali Mamadi, Economic Programme Chief and VNR National Focal Point, General Commissariat of Planning, Comoros

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| 11:00 – 11:15 | Break |
| 11:15 – 13:15 | <p>Session 5: Strengthening subnational institutions and multilevel governance for SDG implementation</p> <p>Local action is key to delivering on both Agendas. Initiatives led by local communities offer holistic, inclusive and effective approaches for achieving sustainability, tailored to the unique conditions of each context. This session will examine how African governments can transform from the ground up. It will assess how voluntary local reviews (VLRs) and the APRM national governance reviews can be used as an entry point for strengthening sub-national governments. It will also examine how the CEPA principle of subsidiarity, and the available UN DESA strategy guidance notes, can be used in the process of localisation.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are African governments improving intergovernmental collaboration to better address the SDGs and break down siloes? • How can the principle of subsidiarity, and the available UN DESA guidance notes, be used in the process of localisation? • How can VLRs and APRM national governance reviews be used as an entry point for strengthening sub-national governments? • How have key recommendations of APRM African Governance Report been applied to strengthen citizen-government trust for a resilient social contract been applied in practice? <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Ms. Christelle Ngangue, Member of Committee in-charge of preparations of the VNR, National Planning Commission, Cameroon</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p>Mr. Lusanda Batala, Senior Expert, Regional Integration, National Planning Commission, South Africa</p> <p>Ms. Sylocious Chaturuka, Deputy Director, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe</p> <p>Ms. Adama Bojang, Director, Planning and Development of Brikama Area Council, Gambia</p> <p>Mr. Amson Sibanda and Ms. Saras Jagwanth, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs</p> |

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| 13:15 – 14:30 | Lunch break |
| 14:30 – 16:30 | <p>Session 6: Regional support to sound policymaking for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063</p> <p>This session will examine regional/ continental support in sound policymaking for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It will examine main challenges and good practices in the implementation and strengthening of policy coherence for sustainable development in Africa; the development of the M&E framework to report on Agenda 2030 and 2063, and ways in which the African Union and UN partners can support statistics deficits in tracking progress on the SDGs and Agenda 2063.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far have the AU organs collaborated to develop M&E framework to report on Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063? • What are the main challenges to strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development • How can the African Union and UN partners support statistics deficits in tracking SDGs and Agenda 2063 progress? <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Mr. Nawa Muyangana Kutoma, Principal Planner, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p>Ms. Carina Lindberg, Policy Advisor, Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Unit, OECD Public Governance Directorate</p> <p>Ms. Chrissy Dube, Head, Governance Insights and Analytics, Good Governance Africa</p> <p>Ms. Yaveneshaa Madurai, Founder, African Prosperity Fund and representative of AU ECOSOCC</p> <p>Ms. Sara Tawfik Hamouda, Expert, Agenda 2063&SDGs, African Peer Review Mechanism</p> |

Day 3 – Saturday, 28 October

09:00 – 11:00

Session 7: Towards integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government

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. This session will examine how countries can strengthen institutional capabilities for integrated solutions to sustainable development across the whole of government, and where transformative actions show the most promise in building strong institutions and strengthening public service delivery for national implementation of both Agendas. The session will also examine initiatives taken by national governments to build interconnected and integrated institutional frameworks for achievement of development objectives; how the AU, APRM/NEPAD national structures and UN agencies could assist countries in identifying and addressing important capability gaps to help bring SDG progress to scale.

Guiding questions

- How can countries strengthen institutional capabilities for integrated solutions to sustainable development across the whole of government?
- How could the AU, APRM/NEPAD national structures and UN agencies assist countries in assessing important capability gaps?
- How can implementation of the CEPA principles be leveraged in high impact initiatives as endorsed in the proposed 2023 Political Declaration?
- What transformative actions show the most promise in building strong institutions and strengthening public service delivery for implementation of both Agendas in each country context?
- How can countries concretely apply some of the strategies discussed, for example with revised policies, laws or national plans?

Moderator

Mr. Patrick Sokhela, Chief Director: International Cooperation and Stakeholder Relations, Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa

Speakers

Mr. Habtamu Takele, Focal point on Agenda 2063 and member of VNR team, National Planning Commission, Ethiopia

Mr. Augustus J. Flomo, Deputy Minister, Economic Affairs, Liberia

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| | <p>Mr. Momade Saide, Director General, APRM National Secretariat, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Mozambique</p> |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | <p>Closing</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p>Mr. Patrick Spearing, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p>Mr. Patrick Sokhela, Chief Director: International Cooperation and Stakeholder Relations, Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa</p> <p>Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chair, United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration and Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Amara Kallon, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Sierra Leone and Chair of APRM Focal Points</p> |