Africa Week 2015

In the Context of the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations

“Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Moving from Aspirations to Reality”

Consolidated Report of Proceedings

12 - 16 October 2015
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Africa Week is an annual week-long event that is jointly organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Department of Public Information (DPI), the African Union (AU), the New partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Coordinating Agency, and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly Debate on the Development of Africa.

Africa Week celebrates and showcases Africa’s continuous advancements and achievements with respect to social, economic, peace and security, environmental and cultural development. The Week also brings to the fore awareness on the new and emerging challenges confronting the continent, with an aim to mobilize international support at the global level for Africa’s development priorities and its inclusive transformative agenda.

Since its launch in 2010, Africa Week has evolved to focus on the wide range of Africa’s development priorities, covering the areas of peace, security, governance, human rights, socio-economic and environmental development. Participation in the Week has also increased, as it now features the active involvement of the African Regional Economic Communities, as well as representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia youth, African Diaspora and the media.

Each year, Africa Week features a series of high-level events to engage Member States and a number of African and development partners and stakeholders on an overarching theme that addresses current priorities on the continent. This year, Africa Week is momentous because 2015 is historic for Africa and the International Community for various reasons. At the continental level, the African Union adopted its 50-year transformative plan - Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan; and also declared 2015 the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”. At the international level, under the auspices of the United Nations, and in the context of the commemoration of its 70th year of existence, the international community reached a historic ground-breaking agreement in July 2015 on Financing for Development - the Addis Ababa Action Agenda - which provided the foundation of a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development that will leave no one behind. This global framework is vital for financing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was also adopted in September 2015. In December, the Member States of the United Nations met in Paris for the United Nations Climate Conference (COP21) and adopted an agreement for safeguarding our environment and ensuring the sustainability of our planet.

Against this continental and international background, Africa Week 2015 was celebrated in the context of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations under the theme, “Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Moving from Aspirations to Reality”. The Week, inter alia, further popularized Africa’s new transformative agenda and signalled the international community to galvanise support for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan, in ways that ensure synergies and complementarities with the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All through the Week, thorough and well-informed discussions and vibrant debates focused on the commonalities between Africa’s Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which among others put people first by placing poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities at the centre of development efforts, as well as reinforce the important nexus between peace, security, human rights and development. Discussions throughout the Week also considered
various approaches that are pertinent for translating the aspirations, goals and targets in both agendas into concrete and meaningful results that would effect positive change and improve lives for the coming generations.

Among the highlights were high-level discussions and debates on two flagship projects of Agenda 2063’s First Ten-Year Implementation Plan: the first was the Continental Free Trade Area which is expected to be operational by 2017; and the second was the role of African Regional Economic Communities, as implementing agencies of Africa’s Agenda 2063, in actualizing Agenda 2063’s flagship project to “silence all guns in Africa by 2020”.

There was a crucial dialogue on the United Nations-AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA) - a framework that was jointly developed by the United Nations and African Union under the auspices of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and is proposed to succeed the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme to the AU upon its expiration in 2016. Participants underlined the need to provide programmatic and financial support for PAIDA, which is anchored on Agenda 2063; and noted the expectation from the AU for the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a resolution, with accompanying resources, to support the full implementation of PAIDA.

In commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, there was a vibrant discussion on “15 Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa”, which drew tremendous response from Members States and civil society. Participants underlined the need for African Member States and African Regional Economic Communities to develop action plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

Africa Week 2015 featured a very lively intergenerational debate on Africa’s youth demographics. Africa is the youngest continent in the world with 70 percent of its population under the age of 30, but with 60 percent of the continent’s youth unemployed. As such, this event focused on issues pertaining to youth unemployment in Africa, with specific focus on the proposed African Continental Framework on Youth Development that is being jointly developed by the African Union and its NEPAD Agency. The proposed Framework is expected to assist African Member States to define national employment policy schemes with an operational action plan, in line with the objectives of inclusive growth and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs.

This report is an account of the proceedings, findings and recommendations of Africa Week 2015. It captures the key discussions and debates, as well as the essence of the African spirit and partnerships that permeated the Week, while also highlighting priority issues for Africa, which the international community is called upon to support.
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Africa Week 2015 was celebrated in the context of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations under the theme “Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Moving from Aspirations to Reality.”

The Week, which took place from 12 to 16 October 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, featured seven high-level substantive events, two media events, and a lecture by the New Partnership for African’s Development (NEPAD) Coordinating Agency at the Yale University. As is the tradition, the Week culminated in the 70th United Nations General Assembly Debate on the Development of Africa.

A. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

I. Further popularise and mobilize international support for Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan;

II. Highlight the synergies between Agenda 2063, its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

III. Discuss the role of the NEPAD in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan;

IV. Identify specific support the United Nations can extend to the AU, NEPAD and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in their capacity as implementing agencies for Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, with particular emphasis on UN/AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA); and

V. Enhance strategic partnerships between African regional and sub-regional organizations, the United Nations and the international community in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including within the context of PAIDA.

B. SUMMARY OF THE WEEK’S EVENTS

I. Monday, 12 October 2015, 9:30am: High-Level Event: “Role of African Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in achieving Regional Integration:
the Continental Free Trade Area within the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063”. This high-level event, which served as the formal opening of Africa Week 2015, focused on the importance of African regional and sub-regional organizations in achieving integration for Africa’s development. The event highlighted progress made towards regional integration, next steps, and the role of the international community in supporting Africa’s integration efforts. The event particularly highlighted the 10 June 2015 launch of the Tripartite Free Trade Area as the first step towards the achievement of the Continental Free Trade Area envisaged by Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

II. Monday, 12 October 2015, 1:30pm: Media Roundtable with the RECs. This event provided a platform for New York based journalists to interact with the Chief Executive Officers of the African RECs on Agenda 2063’s flagship project on ‘Silencing all Guns in Africa by 2020’.

III. Monday, 12 October 2015, 3:00pm: Annual briefing by African RECs to UN Member States and UN system entities on “Silencing the Guns in Africa: the Nexus between Peace, Security, Governance and Development”. This annual briefing, which marked a new approach of engaging the RECs in the Africa Week, focused on the African Union’s Silencing the Guns agenda – a theme that was agreed with the RECs in January 2015. The overall thrust of the briefing was anchored on Agenda 2063’s First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, as ‘Silencing the Guns’ constitutes one of its flagship projects. The briefing specifically focused on the role of the RECs as implementing agencies in addressing the four interrelated dimensions of the agenda. It also highlighted persistent challenges confronting the RECs and the role of the international community in supporting them.

IV. Tuesday, 13 October 2015, 3:00pm: High-Level United Nations Interdepartmental Taskforce on African Affairs (IDTFA) meeting on “Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan in the Context of the UN-AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA)”. This meeting raised awareness of PAIDA and highlighted the next steps in developing the PAIDA action plans as well as the role of UN system entities in this process. The meeting also provided insights on the process of reconfiguring the RCM-Africa cluster system to enhance its effectiveness in delivering UN system support to Africa in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

V. Wednesday, 14 October 2015, 9:00am: High-Level Event: 15 Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa: Stocktaking & Perspectives. This high-level event was organized in the context of the African Union 2015 “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063” and the 15-year review of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The event provided an opportune moment for key stakeholders from Africa to share her experiences in implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. It also created an opportunity for reflection on ways to accelerate implementation of Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions in the face of new and emerging threats to women, peace and security in Africa, such as terrorism and violent extremism, and climate change. In addition, it provided an opportunity to strategize on transformative actions to address women’s peace and security in a comprehensive and integrated manner in implementing the remaining years of the African Women’s Decade, Africa’s Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The event culminated in the launch of a booklet on Africa & UNSCR 1325.

VI. Wednesday, 14 October 2015, 12:15pm: Joint press conference on Agenda 2063 Action Points by OSAA, AU, NEPAD and APRM. This press conference focused on the overall theme of Africa Week 2015. The press conference was moderated by Ms. Habiba Mejri-Cheick, Director of the Directorate of Information and Communications at the Africa Union Commission. It featured high-level speakers from OSAA, the Africa Union Commission, NEPAD Agency and RECs.
VII. Wednesday, 14 October 2015, 3:00pm: High-Level Event: “African Continental Framework on Youth Development: Mainstream into Agenda 2063”. This high-level event focused on the forthcoming African Continental Framework on Youth Development, which aims to assist African Member States to define national employment policy schemes with operational action plans in line with the objectives of inclusive growth and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs. In this context, the event also highlighted progress and challenges in the implementation of the African Youth Charter (2006) as well as the important role of youth employment in accelerating achievement of the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The event addressed the role of global, regional, sub-regional and national actors in youth development on the continent, including the role of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in forging partnerships between stakeholders and in mobilizing public and private sector support for youth development.

VIII. Thursday, 15 October 2015, 10:00am: Annual briefing to Member States and UN system entities on the two reports of the Secretary-General: “New Partnership for Africa’s Development: thirteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support”; and “Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa”. This annual briefing was structured in two parts. The first part featured presentations on the above-listed reports of the UN Secretary-General. The second part featured two thematic presentations on “The Key Role of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development in Implementing Agenda 2063” and “The Role of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

IX. Friday, 16 October 2015: 70th UN General Assembly Debate on Development of Africa based on the Secretary-General’s Reports on: New Partnership for Africa’s Development: 13th consolidated progress report on implementation and international support; and the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

C. PARTICIPANTS

Participants to Africa Week 2015 were drawn from: UN Member States; UN system entities; African institutions and the international development community, including African stakeholders, the private sector, civil society organizations including youth and women groups, the African Diaspora, the academic community, think tanks and research institutions focusing on Africa-related issues.

D. MAIN SPONSORING PARTNERS

I. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
II. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
III. Department of Public Information
IV. African Union
V. The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Agency
VI. The African Peer Review Mechanism
VII. The Regional Economic Communities (CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC)
VIII. The United Nations Interdepartmental Taskforce on African Affairs, comprising all United Nations Secretariat Departments and Offices, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies.
Regional integration has been a core element of African countries’ development strategies. The genesis of a concerted effort to integrate the African continent economically can be traced directly to the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), and to the OAU Charter. This effort resulted in the adoption of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty) in June 1991, which entered into force on 12 May 1994. The Abuja Treaty’s integration strategy sets out a programme that reflects what is commonly described as the market integration model. This programme is to be effected over a lengthy transitional phase which, however, is not to exceed a cumulative period of 40 years. In January 2012, the AU Summit adopted a decision and a declaration that reflected the strong political commitment of the African leaders to accelerate and deepen the continent’s market integration, and agreed on a roadmap for establishing the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by the indicative date of 2017.

INAUGURAL OPENING OF AFRICA WEEK 2015

Africa Week 2015 was inaugurated by both H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and H. E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly both noted that the week was timely for raising awareness at the global level on the synergies and complementarities between the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan.

In his welcome address, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, placed Africa Week 2015 in context by describing it as the “defining moment” in Africa and the world’s quest for inclusive growth and sustainable development and referred to the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the upcoming universal agreement on
climate change in Paris in December 2015. Accordingly, he pointed out that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in July 2015 was an important milestone as it provided a strong foundation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As Africa embarks on the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063, Mr. Abdelaziz commended both the 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063 for putting people first by placing poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities at the centre of development efforts. The development priorities contained in Agenda 2063 are also integrated in the global Agenda 2030, providing ample synergies and complementarities between the two agendas, which are mutually reinforcing for implementation. Given the crucial importance of implementation, Mr. Abdelaziz took the opportunity to commend the President of the United Nations General Assembly for selecting the theme “the implementation of commitments relating to sustainable development, climate change, and financing” for the first high-level thematic debate during the 70th Session and to commend the United Nations Secretary-General for energizing the entire United Nations system to support Member States’ efforts to implement these commitments.

Underlining the importance of regional integration as a catalyst for economic and social progress in Africa, Mr. Abdelaziz commended the decision of the AU Summit in June 2015 to launch negotiations on the CFTA and reminded the participants
that the implementation of NEPAD sectoral frameworks and the projects identified in the Dakar Agenda for Action would enhance infrastructure development and connectivity among African countries. Mr. Abdelaziz also emphasized the crucial role of the RECs as the building blocks for Africa’s integration and commended the recent agreement on the SADC-EAC-COMESA Tripartite Free Trade Area.

Mr. Abdelaziz reiterated the importance of partnerships in implementing both the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, including for resource mobilization, technology transfer and capacity building. He acknowledged the growing partnership between the United Nations, the AU and the RECs in the implementation of both regional and global agendas. Mr. Abdelaziz also observed that this partnership is poised to reach new levels, including through the implementation of the Framework for a Renewed United Nations/AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA) as well as the innovative ways and means reflected in the recommendations that the United Nations Secretary-General has put forward in his report on the future of peace operations to institutionalize and further expand the United Nations-AU partnership, and pledged his office’s commitment to mobilizing international and regional support and in advocating for Africa’s development priorities at the global and regional levels.
In his address, the President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA), H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft noted 2015 is an unprecedented opportunity for Africa to reduce poverty, foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth and integrate into the global economy. He referred to the adoption of the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan as a holistic and coherent framework for Africa’s development which will bring together priorities from global, continental, regional and national plans.

Against this backdrop, the President of the General Assembly said that a critical success factor for both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 would be regional integration in Africa and welcomed the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government at the African Union Assembly to launch negotiations on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) Agreement as a milestone for regional integration, spanning 26 African countries, and accounting for more than half of Africa’s population and gross domestic product.

Mr. Lykketoft encouraged African nations to use these initiatives as an important pillar in the continent’s strategy for structural economic transformation with a focus on harmonizing policies, enhancing infrastructure development and promoting public-private partnerships. All of these measures, the President of the General Assembly continued, should be anchored in the well-being of the African people and should enhance the skills and capabilities of Africa’s labour force, especially, those of the youth and women.

The President of the General Assembly also announced his plans to encourage Member States to make early progress towards sustainable development including through the High-level Thematic Debate that he will host in April 2016 to highlight early successes and to advance a coherent response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the climate agreement that was adopted in Paris in December 2015. Noting that African countries and regions must be at the heart of these discussions, the PGA invited all participants of Africa Week to actively participate in those discussions as well.

The United Nations Secretary-General commended the choice of the theme for Africa Week, as it not only marked moving from aspirations to actions, but also provided a timely focus on integration and unlocking the full potential of trade. The Secretary-General remarked that operationalizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union will be the key to ensuring a life of dignity for all and to unlocking the untapped potential of Africa through quality education, health care, decent jobs, a clean environment and tolerant, inclusive and democratic societies. The Secretary-General emphasized that the peoples of Africa demand and deserve a future where guns are silenced throughout the continent and poverty and hunger have no place. He reassured the participants of the commitment of the United Nations system to supporting the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the Agenda 2063, including the efforts of the RECs as they strive towards further integration.

Noting that the Agenda 2030 is a transformational agenda and that realizing it will require a transformation in the way the United Nations system approaches development and supports countries on their own development path, the Secretary-General said that operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an opportunity to foster greater coordination among international organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations, and governments. The Secretary-General also highlighted the role of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as an innovative solution to harness synergies between the United Nations and AU agendas.
Noting that the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has grown stronger over time, the Secretary-General highlighted results achieved through cooperation in key areas, such as conflict prevention; peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building; humanitarian assistance; the promotion of democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance; and inclusive development and equitable growth. As concrete examples of the support of the United Nations to the AU, the Secretary-General highlighted the joint efforts in the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the consolidation of the African Governance Architecture and noted that through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa), United Nations agencies are working to enhance system-wide coordination at the regional and sub-regional levels in support of the AU and NEPAD.

The Secretary-General highlighted the fact that in order to address peace and security challenges in Africa, he had recently convened, in close cooperation with the AU and key sub-regional organizations, high-level meetings on the situation in the Central African Republic, Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan and encouraged all stakeholders to work together to resolve the pressing refugee and migration crisis.

Leveraging the fact that the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the AU’s Agenda 2063 together constitute a strong global and continental consensus and a clear roadmap, the Secretary-General expressed his full faith that the challenges could be transformed into opportunities in partnership with the AU and the RECs and urged all Member States to keep the momentum strong by securing an equally transformative climate change agreement in Paris in December.

H.E. Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations and Chair of the African Group for the Month of October emphasized the fact that the “Africa we want”, referring to the slogan of AU’s Agenda 2063 could only be delivered by the “Africa we have”. Acknowledging that great challenges and difficulties lay ahead, Mr. Minah said it would take engagement and commitment from all stakeholders to bring about transformation in Africa. The only way forward to make the “Africa we want” a reality would be to work in partnership with the United Nations around the keywords of partnership, integration, commitment, passion and most of all the youth of the continent. Mr. Minah concluded his remarks by saying that passion for Africa means passion for implementation.

**HIGH-LEVEL SUBSTANTIVE SEGMENT**

Mr. Minah further emphasized the role of regional and sub-regional organizations and put the aspirations for establishing CFTA within the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of African Union’s Agenda 2063. In this context, he spoke about the dream of one Africa united by one FTA and referred to the decision taken during the 18th ordinary session of the African Union in January 2015 on boosting inter-African trade and to the declaration by Heads of State and Government to establish CFTA by 2017 to deepen market integration of Africa. Mr. Minah also referred to the establishment on 10 June 2015 of the SADC-EAC-COMESA Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) comprising 26 African states, and added that the way to convert African structural transformation into more inter-African trade would depend on the establishment of the CFTA.

H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and Interim CEO of the APRM Secretariat provided a historical perspective on how the concept of integration had always been pivotal to any global role that Africa had considered for itself. Accordingly, the concept of multinational states and moving towards political integration has always been part of the thought process in independence movements in Africa, yet African leaders were caught in a double bind between
nation state and further integration. Now, 50 years on, the continent has sound instruments, broadly defined by the Abuja
Treaty (African Economic Community 1984) and more precisely with the recent launch of the CFTA process in 2012, he noted.

Dr. Mayaki identified fragmentation, non-tariff barriers and incipient industrialization as major challenges, whereas the
need to become competitive within the RECs and to implement institutional changes at the national level as part of the
global response to these challenges. Accordingly, to achieve these objectives, he suggested developing an economic
model where agricultural transformation leads to manufacturing and industrialization; and a new governance model, led
by the APRM at the regional level. Similar governance models could be set at the national level to harmonize strategies
and correct the deviations from the objectives agreed upon globally. He also listed specific measures to meet some of
the challenges such as ensuring CFTA was also about services, skills transfer across Africa, and more importantly, about
industrialization and modernization in Africa. He said efforts should be made to enhance functionality and credibility in
national and regional financial markets to encourage investments by Africans in Africa; and RECs should be critical brokers
in securing negotiated political action and commitments to reduce tariffs between African states and on ensuring access
to quality analytics and data. He also noted that robust agreements on rules of origin to govern tariff concessions will be
a critical factor in underpinning the success of the entire CFTA. The African Commodity Strategy should be finalized to
enable African states to add value and extract higher rents from commodities, which will in turn boost their productivity
and competitiveness. Any value chain approach should inform optimal entry points for African producers and exporters
to benefit from unhindered access to domestic and regional markets. Dr. Mayaki said initiatives such as the Accelerated
Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), Africa Mining Vision (AMV) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development
Programme (CAADP) should help in the upscaling and value addition in Africa. Besides the TFTA and CFTA alike, should
first and foremost support livelihoods and prosperity.

Mr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), noted that historically,
Africa has moved faster in trade integration than any other continent. Besides, Africa is the only continent attempting to
put in place a free trade agreement that is geographically contiguous. The efforts not only showcase the scale of ambition,
but also have far reaching implications at the political level, not least as a tool towards pan-Africanism. He observed
that none of the former African colonies had experienced an industrial revolution, as the colonial model ensured that
the value addition took place at the urban centres of the colonial empires. Despite the efforts to industrialize, Africa has
lagged behind as the colonial model has been retained, with Africa continuing to export raw materials with the continent’s
trading partners benefiting from the value creation outside the continent.

Mr. Lopes underlined that the negative perception about trade within Africa reflected often by the widely cited intra-African
trade statistics, namely that only 11 per cent of African trade is accounted for by the intra-African trade was unwarranted
as it only projected a part of the reality on the ground. This was because official statistics lacked the capacity to take into
account the informal economy or complex transactions, such as the ones processed through pan-African banks and the
roaming agreements of the telecommunications sector cutting across 17 countries.

Mr. Lopes emphasized the fact that the CFTA was very important for Africa since expanding the intra-African market
creates opportunity for value addition and industrialization. He noted Africa constituted a one billion people-strong market
projected to reach a population of two billion in 2050 with a middle-class population of over 300 million, which is 1.5
times the population of Brazil. Mr. Lopes left the audience with three pertinent points to reflect on:
1. Africa imports about 83 per cent of the processed food it consumes, which meant that the potential of industrialization through agribusiness was considerable.

2. Africa exports raw materials with little or no value addition. If Africa could add at least 10-15 per cent of value to its exported primary commodities, particularly in extractive industries, this would create seven million jobs a year.

3. Africa could step into the global value chain by providing an alternative to some Asian countries facing labour cost problems and follow an export-led industrialization in the low value addition segment of the global production. This would mean that African economies could easily replace countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam and Malaysia, and that these countries should be prepared for competition from Africa in the near future.

In his address, H.E. Mr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission, noted that Agenda 2063 is to be implemented at the regional, sub-regional and national level in the public, private and civil society sectors with the RECs playing a pivotal role. Mr. Maruping also highlighted that the domestication of the Agenda at the national level has commenced in earnest and he expected the exercise to have been covered by 30 countries by the January 2016 AU Summit. At the regional level, Mr. Maruping observed that the translation of the Agenda 2063 goals and targets into action will take place largely through the acceleration of ongoing initiatives, such as CAADP, PIDA and AIDA as well as through the CFTA.

Mr. Maruping noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had captured the essence of the Common African Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP). He argued that since Agenda 2063 had also been derived from in-depth consultations with an even wider array of African stakeholders, the SDGs were in essence a subset of Agenda 2063’s 20 goals. Thus, by implementing Agenda 2063, Africa will already be meeting its international obligations regarding SDGs.

Mr. Maruping spoke at length on the CFTA, which he described as one of the 12 fast track flagship projects of Agenda 2063, the first nine of which would reinforce realization of CFTA, namely:

1. Integrated High Speed Train Network;
2. E-Network;
3. Impetus to achieving open aviation skies (Yamoussoukro Decision 2002);
4. Grand Inga Dam implementation;
5. Free Intra-Africa people movement culminating in African passports;
6. Silencing the guns by 2020;
7. Commodities strategy (value addition and diversification);
8. High level Africa Stakeholders forum;
9. Accelerated establishment of continental financial institutions.
Mr. Maruping emphasized the importance of inclusion, especially of women, youth and people living with disabilities to unlock the full potential of Africa’s human resources. Against this background, Mr. Maruping made the point that the CFTA is part of a bouquet of policy measures and should not be looked at in isolation. By contrast, he highlighted the symbiotic relationship among policy measures. The CFTA negotiations were launched in June 2015 in Sandton, South Africa. Mr. Maruping explained that the Phase 1 of the negotiations will deal with trade in goods and services and the Phase 2 will address investments, intellectual property and competition policy. The AUC is expected to organize an inaugural CFTA Negotiating Forum during 2015 with a deadline of completing the negotiations in 2015. The AUC expects to hold periodic meetings with the political heads of RECs to monitor progress and ensure that momentum is maintained at a high level. Semi-annual coordination meetings of AUC, AfDB, NPCA, APRM, RECs, UNECA and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) will also oversee progress at the technical level.

H.E. Mr. Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya, Secretary-General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), underlined the critical and catalytic role of the RECs as the delivery vehicles of Agenda 2063 to ensure a holistic developmental integration process. Mr. Ngwenya also recognized that peace and security was the prerequisite for the
success of Agenda 2063 and urged the international community to work with the AU to address the root causes of inter and intra-state conflicts. Accordingly, the AU has for the first time set a target for ‘Silencing the guns by 2020’, which in his view would prove the adage that it “looks impossible until it is done”.

Mr. Ngwenya highlighted the fact that the TFTA comprised 26 states (almost half the membership of the AU) with a combined population of 625 million people and a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of US$1.3 trillion. These FTAs would encourage investments in manufacturing and services in contrast to typical Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows that are resource extractive with limited backward and forward linkages. The TFTA and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) combined will cover 920 million people with a GDP of US$ 2.1 trillion (equivalent to 88 per cent of the population and 93 per cent of the GDP of the continent), and would constitute the first steps to the achievement of the CFTA by 2017. Mr. Ngwenya observed that current trade between these regions is dominated by intermediate goods and manufactured products and that more could be achieved with value added agricultural produce (tea, coffee, cocoa), which are currently being traded through third parties after value addition elsewhere.
In her address, Ms. Moono Mupotola, Director for NEPAD, Regional Integration and Trade Department at the African Development Bank (AfDB), pointed out that in spite of the global recession, Africa’s GDP had reached US$1.7 trillion, its middle class had risen to over 375 million people (up from 126 million in 1980), and its consumer spending – now estimated at over US$700 million - was set to pass the US$1 trillion mark by 2020. As this burgeoning middle class will increase the demand for consumer goods, she observed that the continent will need to implement the CFTA fully to unlock the potential of African trade.

Ms. Mupotola noted that following the launch of the COMESA FTA in 2000, intra-regional trade had risen from US$3 billion in 2000 to US$20.9 billion in 2014. The TFTA launched earlier this year would also consolidate a US$630 billion market with a population of over 527 million spread over 26 countries. This would account for 57 per cent of the AU population and just over 58 per cent in terms of contribution to the AU’s GDP making it a vital component of the envisaged African Economic Community and the CFTA. She highlighted that the AfDB’s role is to translate these aspirations into reality. She further identified some of the major challenges that the continent was facing, such as infrastructure, and provided examples of the how the Bank was helping to address them. For instance, in order to promote regional integration and infrastructure development, AfDB approved around 232 projects totaling worth more than US$7 billion last year. Among the projects funded was the Trans-Saharan Highway connecting landlocked Niger, Chad and Mali to growth centres in West and North Africa. The effective implementation of the CFTA, Ms. Mupotola said, would require addressing weak institutional frameworks, low technical and administrative capacities, and in some cases, the absence of political will. Ms. Mupotola also emphasized the need to facilitate free movement of people to unlock the potential of particularly young people across Africa to help make regional integration a reality. She noted that free movement was often not ratified by governments. To that effect, she also announced that AfDB would launch a Visa Openness Index in January 2016 together with the AUC on the sidelines of the AU Summit to track progress on this issue.

Ms. Mupotola observed that a sharp fall in oil prices and the economic slowdown in China would have ripple effects on the continent reducing Africa’s projected GDP growth to 3.7 per cent in 2015 (down from 4.7 per cent on 2014) and encouraged African Member States to use this dip in commodity prices as an opportunity to structurally transform African economies so as to reduce dependence on commodities through industrialization.

**INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Mustapha Mekideche, the Chairperson of the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons highlighted the importance of the APRM, which after 13 years of existence had evolved into an institution with autonomy and a long-term vision, addressing social, political and economic governance in Africa. He called for the inclusion of the APRM in the implementation of Agenda 2063, noting that beyond conducting evaluation, diagnosis and assessments, the APRM will also be developing national action plans on economic governance, trade and industrial development. He however stated that the APRM is financially constrained and called on the AfDB and other international partners to support the APRM. He also called for the strengthening of the APRM, welcoming the steps already taken by Kenyan President, Uhuru Kenyatta, in this regard.

Mr. Ibrahim Bocar Ba, the Commissioner for Macro-economic Policy and Economic Research at ECOWAS highlighted progress in integration within ECOWAS, such as the introduction of biometric identification cards and the free movement of goods and people within the region. He noted though that challenges remained, including constraints in free movement.
Mr. Ibrahim Sani Abani, Executive Secretary, Community of Sahel and Saharan States (CEN-SAD) noted the need to accelerate the establishment of the African Common Market. He listed some of the obstacles causing the delays such as the lack of political will within states, infrastructure deficits, the permeability of markets due to trade barriers and financial regulations, the lack of acceptance of specialization and inter-dependence in trade, the existence of multiple currencies, and issues related to market access on the continent.

Mr. Richard Nduhuura, the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations, inquired if the 2017 deadline for establishing the CFTA was feasible. He proposed the need for establishing clear timelines, and addressing bottlenecks as a first step. For instance, he suggested addressing problems around infrastructure and tariffs, which hamper interaction between some states, such as Uganda and the Central African Republic. He commended the launch of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area, which if successful could be rolled-out to serve as the model free trade area, to be emulated by other regions. Mr. Nduhuura underscored the critical importance of concrete measures for financing and resource mobilization for Agenda 2063, including the CFTA and other continental programmes.

Queen Mother Ms. Delois Blakely, Community Mayor of Harlem, representing civil society inquired how the 55 million 1 Africans in the United States could participate in trade on the continent. Her point was buttressed by Mr. Joseph Tsang Mang Kin, a member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons who underlined the problems faced by the “lost, forgotten children” or people of African origin, who still face marginalization. He called for their full inclusion in Africa’s development plans in the context of Agenda 2063.

Mr. Babajide Sodipo, Regional Trade Advisor in the Department of Trade and Industry at the African Union Commission reported on recent global developments, which presented challenges to the negotiations towards launching the CFTA. He noted that the first development was the lack of progress in the World Trade Organization’s negotiation process. The second is marked by the existence of mega regional trade agreements, including the recent trans-Pacific partnership between the United States and a number of states. In addition, he noted that as of 2014, most African countries had concluded Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union. Yet another challenging development was the indication from the United States that it will not reauthorize the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), at its expiration. The cumulative impact of these developments is the shrinking of market access space for African exporters, particularly in traditional markets because of the preference arising from mega regional trade arrangements. Under the EPAs, Europe, for instance, enjoys better access to countries in West Africa than African countries, and as such the window to achieve significant benefit from integrating the African market is shrinking rapidly. He indicated that a recent UNECA study had concluded that EPAs would have a negative impact, except if Africa fast-tracks the establishment of the CFTAs. As such maintaining the status quo would erode benefits from integration. With respect to the deadline, he noted that the AU has put in place two critical mechanisms, including the High Level Advisory Trade Committee comprising of the heads of the RECs, which will meet every six months to track progress in time for reporting to the AU summit. He noted there was significant political will to meet the 2017 deadline.

H.E. Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations noted that

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1 The African American population in the US according to the 2014 survey is around 40 million. US Census: actfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_S0201&prodType=table
Southeast Asia shared the same challenges as Africa in addressing regional integration, and was interested in sharing experiences and learning from each other on solutions that have worked, in particular through South-South cooperation. He noted that within the past few years, his country has moved from being a regular recipient of aid to being a provider of humanitarian assistance. He noted that during the Ebola virus outbreak in 2014 Kazakhstan mobilized and provided support to the United Nations voluntary Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

H.E. Mr. Yoshifumi Okamura, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations noted the importance of consistent, inclusive, resilient, persistent and qualitative economic growth in Africa, which called for economic support and a strong role by the private sector as well as for investment. He noted Japan has been helping build capacity for service trade in Africa; and was also providing support to regulatory authorities and the establishment of One-Stop Border posts for the facilitation of customs and border control. In addition, Japan was robustly promoting regional infrastructure development and other African efforts aimed at connecting various regions through transport corridors to accelerate the process of regional integration, including through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V).

Mrs. Marie Chantal Mfoula, the Political and Diplomatic Adviser at the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) highlighted a number of obstacles to regional integration such as lack of political will, tariff barriers, increasing crime and terrorism, which had resulted in the closing of borders between countries. She noted that trade remained weak even within ECCAS, though the region was receiving support in infrastructure development. She hoped that ECCAS would establish a free trade area with ECOWAS.

The representative of the European Union noted that the EU is a living proof of regional integration. He deplored the fact that trade within Africa remained a low 12 per cent compared to 72 per cent intra-EU trade. He cited a World Bank study, which had shown that with liberalization, African farmers could produce enough food to feed the continent and attract US$20 billion every year in export earnings, if obstacles to regional trade were eliminated. He noted that the EU was supporting the CFTA process with projects worth €7.5 million and that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with Africa and the Caribbean were indeed designed to support regional integration, including serving as building blocks for CFTA. EPA negotiations were a learning process and a step in that direction. EU-Africa trade he said was growing impressively and increased by almost 45 per cent between 2007 and 2012. He noted that the EU was already a major investor in Africa, accounting for more than half of the FDI stock in the region, and investments were likely to grow more with EPAs which would be an important step for African growth and development.

CONCLUSION

A number of points emerged from the closing remarks of the panelists. Ms. Mupotola highlighted the importance of the role of the private sector especially for industrialization, notwithstanding weaknesses in the definition of the private sector, and its relatively low investment in research and development, as well as the need for public-private partnerships. She also underlined the need to create conducive ecosystems for private sector involvement, trading in components, the identification and priority areas of trade. She elaborated on the AfDB’s efforts to go beyond infrastructure corridors to extend the value chain, as well as to strengthen the linkage and enhance trade between North Africa and the rest of the continent, and with Europe.

Mr. Lopes noted the need for sequencing beginning with intra-African arrangement to enhance African industrialization. He noted the importance for Africa to take advantage of the WTO Ministerial Meeting to highlight the issue of sequencing
and social indicators. Regarding the 2017 deadline, he indicated the need for flexibility to launch the common markets with those countries that would be ready, given the high rewards it would engender. He called on Africa to follow the incremental approach of the EU and others on integration. He noted that Africa could raise its own financing through tax revenues and did not need to depend on Official Development Assistance. Diaspora remittances, pension and sovereign funds are other potential sources of financing.

APRM, noting the role of energy in various sectors as far-reaching such as education, the economy and efforts to eradicate poverty, underlined the importance of tapping into green sources of energy such as solar and thermal, which could be found in abundant supply in Africa. APRM observed that already solar energy was widely used in the Maghreb, and consolidated efforts to tap into thermal energy by countries such as Niger, Nigeria and Chad could have tremendous benefits. The representative of Egypt reiterated the importance of energy which served as the impetus for integration, and noted that the AU had mandated the preparation of a project on renewable energy as a priority in Agenda 2063.

The representative of Rwanda inquired about how the resources mentioned could be leveraged, and underscored the importance of facilitating free movement of people, especially women in cross-border trade. In buttressing the need to focus on people, H.E. Mr. Usman Sarki, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, drew attention to the importance of a highly skilled workforce for integration in both the public and private sectors, and of addressing corruption and the illicit flow of capital from the continent. He underscored the need for strengthening the link between the private sector and the informal sector, as well as the importance of the full involvement of the Diaspora in order to tap into its resources and know-how.

Mr. Maruping underlined the importance of the private sector and the need to mobilize the human resources of the continent. He noted that the Diaspora had been fully involved in the formulation of Agenda 2063. He noted the AUC was also developing a communication strategy as well as accountability framework for Agenda 2063.

Dr. Mayaki pointed out four main issues. First, meeting energy needs required regional solutions. Regional planning must therefore be prioritized. Second, in an average African country of about 20 million people, 70 percent of Africans are under the age of 25, and 60 per cent live in rural areas. This implied that about 300,000 Africans enter the market every year, and all of them are not absorbed by the public or private sector; therefore transformation of rural areas, agriculture and industrialization needs to be prioritized. Third, he underlined the need to cede sovereignty to some extent to allow for integration. Lastly, he urged the continent to drive integration more robustly for it to be successful.

Mr. Ngwenya, noted the need to capacitate farmers with knowledge, information and communication technology which could help them integrate into markets. He noted the need to recognize and build on successes in the energy sector; noting the growth of energy regulators had improved the investment environment in Africa. Mr. Ngwenya reported that skilled and intermediate artisans were in high demand for Africa’s development and integration as in many other parts of the world. On corruption, he noted the commitment and decisive action of leaders to tackle corruption was critical.

Mr. Minah, the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, closed the session by reaffirming that Africa’s destiny was in the hands of Africans, underscoring the need for the CFTA to be inclusive, particularly in respect of women and the diaspora. He stressed the need for Africa to be self-reliant and called on all to join in forming the constituency for Africa with continued passion and commitment in the engagement taking place in the continent and beyond.
The African Union and its Member States as well as its regional and sub-regional organizations, with the support of the international community, continues to accelerate actions to achieve a conflict-free Africa and end all wars in Africa by 2020. In order to realise this vision and objective, the African Union further adopted the historic Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) that collectively outline a set of aspirations, goals, priority areas, milestones and targets for, inter alia, “Silencing the Guns by 2020”. With only five remaining years to 2020, the African Union has accelerated efforts at particularly the continental and regional levels to address priority issues and concerns for the realization of this target to silence the guns in Africa by 2020. Given their proximity to the ground, the RECs have a crucial role to play in ensuring concerted and coordinated efforts and actions at especially regional, sub-regional and national levels towards realising the goal of silencing the guns by 2020.

OPENING SESSION

In his opening remarks, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa situated the AU’s initiative on ‘Silencing the guns’ in the wider context of new global and regional agendas, notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the AU’s Agenda 2063 and the reviews of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, the United Nations Peace Operations and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. He noted the important synergies and complementarities that exist between the various processes and their potential to foster greater coherence and coordination.

Mr. Abdelaziz stressed that ‘Silencing the guns in Africa by 2020’ is a momentous task which needs to be addressed at various levels and across the nexus of peace,
security, governance, human rights and development. He underscored that a more holistic and integrated approach, with greater policy coherence and more sustainable and reliable financing, was required to address this nexus successfully. He emphasized that Africa has built a comprehensive continental architecture in the pursuit of peace, governance and development, with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as building blocks. He also called for the continued support of this infrastructure, including through the United Nations/AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA), and for strengthening partnerships between the United Nations, the AU and the RECs.

Recalling previous initiatives to rid Africa of conflict, Mr. Abdelaziz emphasized that any renewed effort to end conflict should be accompanied by a candid examination of the causes of conflicts and why conflicts persist despite previous efforts and commitments to combat them. In addition, he stressed the need to further strengthen and support key mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture.

This notwithstanding, Mr. Abdelaziz stressed that the best way to ‘silence the guns’ sustainably and successfully is to build durable peace by creating societies in which all citizens, especially women and the youth, can fully participate - societies that respect diversity, combat all forms of exclusion and that safeguard and promote the rights of their citizens while protecting them from harm; by building institutions that are legitimate, transparent and just and which effectively deliver public goods to citizens; and by voting in leaders that end the dominance of the “winner-takes-all” mind-set, but instead place the well-being of their country ahead of their personal interests. Mr. Abdelaziz also emphasized that Africa needs to find ways to harness its natural resources for the benefit of its people and encourage investments in jobs, education, infrastructure, agriculture, trade and energy, among others. This would provide young people with employment and sustainable livelihoods and steer them away from migration, crime and conflict. Acknowledging that not all of these factors can be successfully tackled in the next five years, Mr. Abdelaziz stated that ‘silencing the guns by 2020’ will require clear prioritization, a strong focus on addressing proximate sources of conflicts and time-bound tasks that assign clear responsibilities. He further observed that in light of their proximity to realities on the ground, the RECs are the first line of response in crisis situations and the most immediately affected by violent conflict and its repercussions. As such, there is a need to strengthen the role of the RECs.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Ambassador Fatoumata Sidibe Kaba, Permanent Representative of Guinea to the AU in Addis Ababa and Chair of the African Union Peace and Security Council for November reported that the AU was assiduously working towards a conflict-free Africa, noting that the prevalence of conflict had impeded Africa from achieving its full potential and had also negatively impacted regional integration. This, she noted, was a major reason why Africa sought to ‘silence the guns by 2020’. Ms. Kaba highlighted that conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Cote d’Ivoire, were reason for slower economic progress in these countries, notwithstanding the determined efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to secure a more peaceful and stable region. She stated that African countries, endowed with a wealth of natural resources should manage these resources better for inclusive and sustainable growth and development, rather than allowing them to become a liability which inevitably leads to conflict.

On the burgeoning youth population on the continent, Ms. Kaba stated that the youth are a great asset and dynamic source of manpower which could be used to facilitate economic growth and development on the continent. She added that in light of Africa’s fast population growth, it was important for the continent to have commensurate and sustained inclusive
economic growth which creates jobs, and provides adequate health care and education opportunities, particularly for the youth, who could otherwise be absorbed into criminal activity and even conflict.

Ms. Kaba called for greater investment in conflict prevention and mediation efforts and the need to effectively address the deeper causes of conflict on the African continent. She further called on Member States to come up with innovative measures and accede to and ratify normative judicial frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa. Towards this end, she called for the naming and shaming of countries which continued to allow the proliferation of illicit small arms and weapons. Ms. Kaba also informed the meeting that AU Member States had adopted decision Assembly/AU/Dec.501(XXII), declaring the period 2014-2024 as the “Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa” and in this regard, called on the AU Commission to take appropriate measures to promote reconciliation as a means of securing peace, stability and development in Africa.

BRIEFING SESSION: THE RECs AND THE AGENDA ON SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA BY 2020

In his remarks, H.E. Ambassador Mahamat Zene Cherif, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to the United Nations, noted that conflict and security threats affect almost all regions on the African continent. In addition to the more traditional types of conflict, Africa is witnessing increasingly violent attacks carried out by armed militias and terrorist groups that often possess sophisticated weapons and seek to destabilize states. Mr. Cherif added that these attacks have killed thousands of Africans and forced even more to seek refuge elsewhere. He expressed concern about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that fuels conflicts and violence in Africa. He informed the meeting that more than 50 per cent of small arms and light weapons in Africa are being used illicitly not only by rebels and insurgents but also by criminals and terrorists. In this respect, he called for support for ongoing efforts of the AU and the RECs to prevent conflict as ‘silencing the guns’ is key to attaining sustainable development in Africa. He also called for greater synergy between the AU’s integration and development architectures and stressed the need for the strong and active participation of RECs in this process.

Recalling that the meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council on 24 April 2014 agreed on the urgent need to develop a roadmap to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa by 2020, Mr. Cherif emphasized that the RECs briefing is very timely and can help participants to examine the causes of conflict in Africa while considering collective action that can promote peace and sustainable development. In this regard, he reminded participants that the United Nations Security Council, in a presidential statement (S/PRST/2014/27), welcomed the pledge by African leaders to end all wars in Africa by 2020 and called on all United Nations entities to consider defining a concrete five-year action plan in support of this goal.

In his intervention, H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Sani Abani, Executive Secretary of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), stated that CEN-SAD had contributed to peace initiatives in Mali and the Central African Republic as well as towards efforts to combat Boko Haram in Central Africa. He added that there could not be peace or security without tackling the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons, which had a devastating effect on the continent, especially on women and children. Mr. Abani informed the meeting that CEN-SAD was concerned about the proliferation of terrorist acts in the region. Meanwhile, he stated that Member States should not speak with ambiguity or sideline efforts to put an end to terrorism. He noted that it was critical that terror groups are neutralized across the continent, while also increasing efforts to strengthen state authority through good governance, including at the local level, and through the
strengthening of defence and security forces. He also called for increased dialogue with all stakeholders of peace, including with traditional chiefs, religious leaders, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations, including youth and women groups.

In his presentation, H.E. Mr. Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya, Secretary-General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), noted poor governance practices, in all its aspects, are often the main cause of conflicts in Africa. He stressed that Africa has the necessary institutions and tools to prevent and respond to conflicts, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture, but what is lacking is effective implementation and sufficient resources. Mr. Ngwenya informed the meeting that, too often, a decision to deploy troops cannot be implemented due to a lack of funds, making it critical to secure appropriate and timely financing.

With respect to COMESA’s peace and security activities, Mr. Ngwenya stated that, while COMESA had developed programmes to respond to the entire spectrum of the conflict life cycle, it had carved out a niche around addressing structural factors leading to conflict. COMESA has established a conflict early warning system which focuses on structural vulnerability assessments, supports the resolution of existing conflicts through peace-making initiatives of its Committee of Elders and enhances trade and development in border areas to help prevent conflict. COMESA has also been fostering regional maritime security, including by combatting money laundering, and is supporting democratic governance by carrying out election observation.

Mr. Ngwenya emphasized that ‘silencing the guns by 2020’ would require more domestic, regional and international investment in the structural prevention of conflict, increased engagement of non-traditional stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, and greater coordination between the UN, the AU and the RECs as well as within the UN System. In this regard, COMESA has commenced an accreditation process to incorporate civil society organizations into its decision-making process. Mr. Ngwenya stressed that there is also a need to increase the effectiveness of assistance by the United Nations and international partners and called on this assistance to be aligned with Africa’s priorities. He further indicated that the United Nations can play an important role in mapping and coordinating the multiplicity of actors and programmes in conflict prevention and economic development, noting that this would make it possible to exploit synergies for greater impact.

In his intervention, Mr. Charles Njoroge, Deputy Secretary-General of the East African Community (EAC), stated that the EAC’s own security assessment revealed that governance challenges remain the key source of grievances and conflict in the region, leading to underdevelopment as manifested in high levels of youth unemployment. He added that to respond to this challenge, the EAC was in its final stages of adopting the EAC Good Governance Protocol, as well as implementing a multidimensional strategy on youth empowerment and an Action Plan on Social Development. Mr. Njoroge informed the meeting that the EAC had established an early warning mechanism and a Panel of Eminent Persons to
promote preventive diplomacy. He added that the EAC was now implementing programmes for strengthening defence cooperation to reduce tension and build confidence among the partner states. Mr. Njoroge stated that EAC was also developing regional best practices aimed at restoring confidence of the population in the security agencies and enhancing accountability and oversight.

Mr. Njoroge stated that to make security structures deliver in the region, it was critical to implement peace and security instruments, exchange good practices and collectively build capacity amongst the RECs, while also establishing reciprocal organs at the sub-regional level that could work closely within the AU Peace and Security Council on regional security issues. He stated that it was important to empower the RECs to ensure they are able to take on greater responsibility in addressing security challenges within their respective regions. On the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Mr. Njoroge noted that this issue was one of the most important factors exacerbating violence on the continent. He noted that the proliferation of SALW undermined legitimate governments, the rule of law and human rights across the continent. Mr. Njoroge stressed the need to resolutely adopt and implement collective measures that render the proliferation of SALW inactive. He underscored that as negative forces cooperate and coordinate their efforts, it was also important for the United Nations, AU and its RECs, among other actors, to coordinate and harmonize their efforts at the highest level, through information sharing, and joint pre-emptive and reactive actions. Mr. Njoroge stressed that Africa had to increase its funding of security initiatives and ensure that financial pledges made by partners are fulfilled on time. He recommended that the next briefing session by the RECs look into the outcomes of the ongoing OSAA-led evaluation of commitments made towards Africa, and the practical ways to move this process forward, particularly in the area of securing peace and stability on the continent.

In his briefing, Mr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), informed the meeting that the link between development and security is at the heart of SADC’s programme of integration. As political integration is a condition for economic development, SADC has both a programme for economic integration and one for political integration. He stated that while there is sustainable peace in SADC, weak institutions and electoral disputes have the potential to create pockets of instability. To address this challenge, SADC has established electoral norms and guidelines which are strictly enforced and adhered to. Mr. Mhlongo also pointed out that SADC can deploy or support mediators and facilitators, if required, as was done in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar. He stressed that RECs should increase their collaboration with one another, particularly on cross-border issues that affect more than one region. For instance, SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region have been working effectively together on the implementation and follow-up to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Great Lakes Region. He informed the meeting that all SADC member states contribute to the peace and security budget, complemented by some donor assistance, in order to ensure sustainability of peace and
security efforts in the SADC region. He concluded by noting that the dedication of SADC member states to peace and security in the region is evidenced by the fact that no country in the SADC region is currently at war.

In his intervention, H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Bocar Ba, Commissioner for Macroeconomic Policy and Economic Research of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), stated that terrorism in all its forms has become a priority for all ECOWAS states. He noted that ECOWAS was tackling a number of emerging issues such as piracy and maritime security, small arms and light weapons, cross-border threats, among others. Mr. Ba informed the meeting that ECOWAS had developed and contributed to several instruments, including a strategic conflict prevention framework, a convention on small arms and light weapons which was legally binding for member states in the region, an integrated maritime strategy, a counter-terrorism strategy and the Sahel strategy with its action plan. Specifically, he noted that on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, ECOWAS was working on joint policies and strategies across the region. In addition, ECOWAS member states had set up national commissions to deal with SALW including a database on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Mr. Ba stated that in 2014, ECOWAS commissioned a pilot project to collect illicit weapons in the Mano River Union (MRU) and the Sahel region. On conflict preventive measures, Mr. Ba stated that ECOWAS was adhering to strict border control measures with respect to SALW.

Mr. Ba reiterated the need for political will by African leaders to end conflict on the continent and to ‘silence the guns by 2020’. He also appealed for adequate resources to ensure that the RECs could build the necessary human and institutional capacity to respond swiftly to simmering crises and to be able to analyse root causes of conflict in their respective regions. Furthermore, he noted that ECOWAS member states were working to enhance their respective national capacities to be able to quickly deal with potential conflicts. On UN-AU-REC cooperation, Mr. Ba called on the UN system to continue to improve and strengthen its working methods, and increase synergy, coordination and coherence in its partnership with the AU and its RECs, among all other relevant stakeholders.

In her intervention, Ms. Marie Chantal Mfoula, Political and Diplomatic Adviser at the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), noted that despite recent progress, Africa continues to face serious security threats, governance challenges, electoral conflicts and radicalization of youth. To address these challenges and foster peace and stability in the region, ECCAS had adopted a number of legal instruments, such as a non-aggression pact, a pact of mutual assistance between ECCAS member states, and the Protocol to the Council of Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), among others. Ms. Mfoula added that ECCAS had also deployed the Peace Consolidation Mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) which helped stabilize the situation in the country before arrival of the African Union-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). She informed the meeting that ECCAS was one of the first RECs to adopt a maritime security strategy, and is combatting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the basis of the “Kinshasa Convention”, which was adopted on 30 April 2010.

Ms. Mfoula informed the meeting that ECCAS was also working on other thematic policies aimed at the structural prevention of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable peace, including the provision of support to member states engaged in electoral processes, which are one of the main sources of conflict; the reform of the security sector; the implementation of the ECCAS Border Programme; the fight against human trafficking; the promotion of human rights; media training and support; and the cooperation of intelligence services. Ms. Mfoula noted that achieving a “conflict-free Africa” would
require effective action in the area of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management, peace consolidation, human rights, and security sector reform, among others, as well as stronger institutional cooperation between the UN, the AU and the RECs. She concluded by calling on the international community to tackle illicit financial flows and to provide support in combating the proliferation of weapons and terrorism.

In his intervention, Mr. Daniel Yifrue Sentayehu, Senior Peace and Security Adviser at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), stated the RECs were best placed and most effective in finding solutions to conflicts within their respective regions, especially in situations where all member states were united in their resolve to end the conflict. He added that due to lack of resources and institutional capacity, IGAD’s peace-making efforts often exhibited certain weaknesses due to their ad-hoc nature. He informed the meeting that IGAD had therefore established a Conflict Early Warning Mechanism (CEWARN) as well as a mediation support unit which provided institutional support for IGAD’s peace-making and peacebuilding missions. IGAD had also begun developing a comprehensive five-year peace and security strategy (2016-2020) which would be adopted before the end of the year. The strategy was envisaged to outline clear guidelines and implementation modalities for the region to achieve continental and global targets related to peace and security. He added that in order to create synergy and collaboration, IGAD, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) had jointly developed a Framework Agreement that was expected to be signed at the conclusion of the UN High Level Dialogue scheduled to be held in Djibouti in November 2015. Mr. Sentayehu informed the meeting that the High Level Dialogue aimed to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations on peace and security and to consolidate partnership modalities in conflict prevention and peacemaking.

Mr. Sentayehu stated that through its political programme, and working in close collaboration with African Union, IGAD had developed a Protocol on Democracy, Governance and Election. He added that the Protocol is awaiting the signature and ratification by Member States and once that is secured, Member States would have at their disposal a yardstick to compare their own respective performance against regionally accepted principles, procedures and norms.
ENHANCING UN-AU-RECs COOPERATION TOWARDS SILENCING THE GUNS BY 2020 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIRST TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF AGENDA 2063

In his intervention, Mr. Abdel-Fatau Musah, Deputy Head of Office and Director of Political Affairs of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), stated that cooperation between the United Nations and the AU is shifting from a step-by-step to a joint approach. He noted that this new approach spans from conflict prevention to peacekeeping, allowing the United Nations to work jointly with various departments of the AU Commission throughout the entire conflict cycle.

Mr. Musah further emphasized that throughout this joint cooperation, it was important to perform joint vulnerability and horizon scanning of potential conflict zones, perform joint assessments on the underlying causes of conflict and clearly identify the best-placed actor with the comparative advantage to lead the engagement. This he stressed would help reduce the time lag between interventions and help address the issues of subsidiarity and complementarity. He noted that much progress was dependent on ensuring increased funding and resources for the RECs. He added that as RECs did not have sufficient access to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations Security Council, it was important to ensure that their views were adequately reflected in these organs.

In her remarks, Ms. Kaba noted that the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan identifies specific priority areas, goals and proposals, and describes the institutional arrangements and guidelines for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan and highlights potential funding sources, capacity requirements and communications strategies to ensure African ownership and effective implementation of Agenda 2063. She cautioned that there are risks that could threaten to undermine the aspirations of Agenda 2063, including conflicts, instability and insecurity; social and economic inequalities; organized crime and illicit financial flows; poor management of diversity, religion, and ethnicity; failure to address demographic realities; the escalation of the diseases; climate risks and external shocks. She added that all of these challenges can be overcome if there is a collective effort by all stakeholders. Ambassador Kaba stressed that the key task for the African Union and its member states is to ensure the implementation of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, including through its domestication in AU member states and the continued implementation of the flagship projects.

Mr. Louis Gnagbe, Adviser to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the RECs, briefly stressed the need to work upstream to prevent conflict and make better use of existing tools, including existing research on peace and security.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative from Sweden and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) noted that a conflict-free Africa by 2020 was timely as it not only addressed the imperative to end conflict in itself, but it also the devastating developmental setbacks for individual countries and regions experiencing violence and conflict. He stated that as such, the implementation of this agenda was crucial for Africa’s Agenda 2063, and for the new Sustainable Development Goals. He informed the meeting that as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission this year, the Commission had on several occasions witnessed the crucial role played by the RECs not only in helping to ‘silence the guns’, but also to make sure guns remain silent, or even more importantly, are never heard again. Mr Skoog stated that moving forward, the imminent target of ending conflicts in Africa in five years would require the RECs to not only contribute to ending ongoing conflict and but to remain active through the early warning process and detect potential lapses or relapses into conflict.
Mr. Skoog noted that the PBC would welcome meaningful engagement with the RECs on areas of potential collaboration and on how to leverage and add value to reinforce peacebuilding efforts in their respective regions. Lastly, he informed the meeting that the reviews of peace operations currently underway at the United Nations provided further impetus to look closely at how stronger partnerships on peacebuilding and conflict prevention could be built, noting that this would entail institutionalizing cooperation, defining burden-sharing and ensuring predictable financing of regional organizations to respond to conflicts.

The representative from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Adeyinka Adeyemi, informed the meeting that in line with the African Union’s Agenda 2063 to ‘silence the guns by 2020’, the UNECA had commissioned three studies on the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, respectively, to examine why conflict had been persistent in these regions. He stated that the recurring themes across the three studies touched on political and security issues; mismanagement of natural resources; poverty, exclusion and the growing youth bulge; weak institutions and poor governance practices, and the geopolitical arena.

A civil society representative, Ms. Delois Blakely, the Community Mayor of Harlem also known as “Queen Mother” noted that the theme of the meeting was timely as a million young people, including from Africa, had come together at Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. recently to discuss gun violence among other issues. She also stressed that it is critical to find a way to help youth regain trust in society and its institutions amid gun violence.

Ms. Bineta Diop, the Special Envoy of the AU Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security, highlighted that while it is possible to ‘silence the guns’, the challenge lies in how to coordinate different stakeholders to make this goal a reality. She pointed out that while women and children would be primary beneficiaries of ‘silencing the guns’, greater efforts are required to enable them to contribute to the implementation of the task as the SDGs and Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved without them.

Mr. Mustapha Mekideche, Chairperson of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, informed the meeting that through its review exercises, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) can often anticipate social and ethnic crises which are a key source of armed conflict in Africa. He further noted that peer reviews seek to identify sources of potential conflicts and consider possible solutions in subsequent action plans so as to help prevent conflict.
The United Nations Interdepartmental Taskforce on African Affairs deliberated on the recently adopted PAIDA, its implications for the United Nations system, as well as the next steps in developing the proposed PAIDA action plans that will be aligned to Agenda 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan. The discussions also focused on the process of reconfiguring the RCM-Africa cluster system to enhance its effectiveness in delivering UN system support to Africa in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

**Enhancing Institutional Cooperation Between the United Nations and the African Union in the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and PAIDA**

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, opened the session pointing out that PAIDA is anchored on Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, and it underscores the need to ensure there are synergies between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Adopted by the African Union in June 2015, PAIDA is proposed as the successor to the United Nation Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the AU, which expires at the end of 2016.

Mr. Abdelaziz noted that PAIDA addresses three important gaps. Namely the:

1. Role of Africa in defining and driving its own development agenda, in recognition of the new era of a more assertive Africa.
2. Important need for results-based programming and actions that are assured by appropriate international support for Africa’s development needs and priorities. In this respect, the AU’s summit decision on PAIDA appeals to the United Nations to make appropriate allocations for the effective implementation of PAIDA.

3. Need to promote active and systematic engagement with African regional and sub-regional organizations, including with the NEPAD Agency, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the RECs.

Mr. Abdelaziz further noted that PAIDA outlines seven core principles that should guide the United Nation-AU partnership in the implementation of Agenda 2063’s First Ten-Year Implementation Plan. Namely:

1. Ownership and leadership by AU
2. Respect for Africa’s policy space
3. Faithfulness to commitments made
4. Consultation and coordination
5. Accountability
6. Strategic partnerships at all levels
7. Engagement at all levels

Mr. Joseph Atta-Mensah from ECA provided a detailed description of the background and purpose of PAIDA, as well as the role of the RCM in this regard. He stressed the importance of PAIDA as a homegrown document that is African-owned and developed conjointly by the AU and the United Nations. He expressed the need to provide programmatic support for PAIDA and Agenda 2063; noting that the expectation from the AU is that the United Nations General Assembly will adopt a resolution, with accompanying resources, to support the full implementation of PAIDA.

H.E. Ms. Fatoumata Sidibe Kaba commented on the peace and security components of PAIDA and underscored the need to examine past successes and failures when discussing the prospects for PAIDA. She also highlighted the critical role of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in this regard. On his part, H.E. Mr. Anthony Mothae Maruping who commented on the economic component of PAIDA stressed that Agenda 2063 inter alia aims to ensure strong ownership and commitment from African stakeholders in the public, private and civil society sectors; therefore the implementation of PAIDA should reflect African ownership.

STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN AFRICAN REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE UN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2063 AND PAIDA

H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki stated that the NEPAD Agency is the custodian of the implementation of continental development frameworks that are vertically under implementation and horizontally integrated with Agenda 2063. The NEPAD Agency has invested in an integrated monitoring and evaluation system that is designed to build a continental
network to visualize key developmental results of the continent including global commitments on the sustainable development goals. The System is driven innovatively through its technological products, services, processes, interaction and partnerships. The system recognizes the low impacts of traditional monitoring and evaluation processes and provides faster and flexible tools. Currently the demonstration or test phase of the system is being undertaken in nine countries and within a year continental coverage will take place. The NEPAD Agency recognizes that a single method is not sufficient and is exploring other ancillary systems to enhance spatial based decision making and policy formulation. In this respect, he noted that PAIDA is an important framework for enhancing UN-AU-NEPAD Agency cooperation to strengthen regional capacities for monitoring and evaluation of commitments made to Africa’s development. He explained that with PAIDA, Africa has put its house in order as PAIDA is the strategic framework for cooperation between the United Nations and the AU that is anchored on Agenda 2063. He emphasized the important need for strengthening cooperation between African regional and sub-regional organizations and the UN system in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and PAIDA. He also underlined the necessitating of enhancing institutional cooperation between the UN and the AUC/NEPAD to address the challenges of horizontal sector integration, slow and fragmented reporting, and ownership and skills, as well as limited Information-sharing, and raising demand for accountability. He further noted that Africa stands ready to receive support and enhance its collaboration and partnership with the United Nations, as long there is coherence and alignment. Finally, he called on the United Nations Member States to support PAIDA in order to ensure coherence.

H.E. Mr. Mustapha Mekideche reaffirmed the need to systematically engage and support the APRM, including by strengthening its institutional capacity and ensuring predictable resources for implementation of its mandate.

Ms. Moono Mupotola noted that the African Development Bank views its partnership with regional and sub-regional organizations as important for complementing its work on the ground. She underscored PAIDA is a useful tool for ensuring coherence and reaffirmed the commitment of the Bank to sustaining its work with the AU and RECs.

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Sani Abani, in his capacity as Convener of the Consultative Roundtables for Chief Executives of the RECs for the year 2014, underscored the need for all institutions and organizations to work in partnerships and in a coherent manner, including in the context of PAIDA.

H.E. Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, observed that PAIDA is an effort to correct the imbalance in partnerships. He recommended a shift from reactive strategies to strategies that produce results on the ground; specifically highlighting the need to ensure: (i) adequate budgetary resources for AU priorities in PAIDA, (ii) that the AU/UN partnership is strategic, and (iii) coherence and alignment, including through the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). Mr. António then discussed the briefing held with the African Group on the need to take up PAIDA as one of the topics for the 70th anniversary, noting there is a need to raise awareness on PAIDA among member states.
INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

Mr. Abdelaziz posed a question on whether endorsement for Agenda 2063 would be sought from the United Nations General Assembly in the form of a resolution, which would then allow his Office to seek funds from the General Assembly. He noted that NEPAD’s adoption had been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, which led to the creation of OSAA.

Mr. Atta-Mensah stated that the need for a United Nations General Assembly resolution has been recognized by African Member States, and suggested the AU Member States could table such a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly to determine how the United Nations will engage on Agenda 2063.

Mr. Abdelaziz further pointed out that NEPAD, PAIDA and Agenda 2063 represent three levels of commitments. Therefore how should these be prioritized in terms of providing support?

In response, H.E. Mr. Michel Tommo Monthe, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the UN, said the budgetary cycles for the various programmes dictate priorities. Acknowledging that NEPAD has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which enabled OSAA to advocate for it, he said similar action needed to be taken with PAIDA and Agenda 2063 to enhance OSAA's mandate to be able to provide adequate support. A representative of Niger re-echoed the comments of Mr. Monthe and maintained that there is no contradiction between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Maruping also emphasized that all the programmes were “harmonious” and were being pursued by NEPAD. He stated that in addition to the communication strategy, “all of the programmes are been clearly defined as to ensure it is all leading us in the same direction towards 2063”.

Dr. Mayaki noted Africa has one agenda, Agenda 2063. He stated “there are 11 strategic frameworks, which are part of Agenda 2063, and the mandate of the NEPAD Agency is to implement these programmes at regional and international level”. He noted that being the technical arm of the AUC, NEPAD is present in 52 countries through various programmes
and that PAIDA is an important vehicle that will boost the support of the United Nations for this one agenda – Agenda 2063. As such, for him, PAIDA is a call to the United Nations to better support Africa’s priorities as contained in Agenda 2063.

Ms. Aileen Marshall from the World Bank also stated that there is coherence between Agenda 2063 and the SDGs; and the World Bank and IMF have a comparative advantage in generating data and statistics and supporting domestic resource mobilization.

CONCLUSION

In closing the session, Mr. Abdelaziz reaffirmed OSAA’s commitment to working closely with the African Group and to supporting the initiatives taken by the African Group. He restated the key points of the discussions, which were:

I. PAIDA underscores the need for the United Nations to fully engage Africa’s regional and sub-regional organizations, in aligning their support with Africa’s priorities.

II. PAIDA is strongly linked to the sustainable development goals, as it is anchored on Agenda 2063 and its first Ten-Year Implementation Plan. The sustainable development goals emanate from Agenda 2063. In fulfilling Agenda 2063, Africa will not only achieve a continental goal; it will also meet a global goal.

III. In order to realize the continental and global goals set forth in both Agenda 2063 and the sustainable development goals, participants strongly supported the idea of a General Assembly resolution on Agenda 2063, as the developmental framework for Africa.

IV. Coherence and alignment were highlighted as the key ingredients for achieving Agenda 2063.

V. PAIDA provides a new starting point that is based on the lessons learned from its predecessor, the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union. At same time, PAIDA needs to be formally and adequately mainstreamed into the United Nations’ framework. It was also stressed that the United Nations needs to improve synergies among all stakeholders, and the RCM clusters should also harmonize their programmes accordingly.
The African Union declared 2015 as the “African Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”. This comes at a historic moment when there is convergence of stock-taking and examination of a number of continental and global instruments that seek to promote the role of women in conflict prevention, peace building and security processes. Key among these policy instruments is the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions that have been hailed as the foundation for the women, peace and security agenda across the world and in Africa in particular. Regional consultations on the subject has provided stakeholders with an opportunity to examine the status of implementation of the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Africa, and highlighted good practices, gaps and challenges.

HIGH-LEVEL SUBSTANTIVE SEGMENT

H.E. Mr. Usman Sarki, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, in his capacity as the chair of the meeting, provided a brief background on Africa’s efforts in the area of women, peace and security, including the appointment of an AU Special Envoy on Women and Peace and Security.

Ms. Bineta Diop, the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, explained the importance and relevance of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Africa in light of the fact that the continent is one of the most-affected by violent conflicts which continue to take an immense toll on African women and children. She noted that Resolution 1325 had been domesticated by the AU and observed that there were sufficient instruments in Africa to advance women empowerment, peace and security. She underscored the urgent need to move beyond the rhetoric towards implementation and concrete action. She cited Rwanda as an example where policy was being translated into action including through initiatives such as Isange One Stop Center where victims of gender-based violence and child abuse could receive psychological, legal and comprehensive medical support.
Similarly, Ms. Diop noted the high demand for comprehensive health and psychological support by African women in various countries notably in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

She observed that the AU has been providing training to women on peace, security and mediation issues to generate a critical mass of women that could be deployed in the field, notably as election monitors and as gender advisors. The AU has also taken a clear stand on sexual exploitation and abuse by adopting a zero-tolerance policy. As a result, the AU has deployed female police officers and military personnel as part of peacekeeping operations, including in Somalia. Despite the progress, much remains to be done. Ms. Diop stressed that communities were key in effecting tangible changes and highlighted the capacity of women to foster changes and contribute to peace.

On the way forward, Ms. Diop noted more Member States need to develop their action plans on the implementation of Resolution 1325. Similarly, the RECs need to develop and implement regional action plans on Resolution 1325, including by allocating resources for implementation. She noted Member States need to provide adequate resources for the women, peace and security agenda and noted the need to engage African parliaments so that women, peace and security issues are mainstreamed and provided appropriate funding. This would increase ownership and accountability at the national level. She also highlighted the continental results framework in Africa, which the AUC was developing with support from UN-Women and OSAA, to monitor and assess as well as support reporting on the women, peace and security agenda in Africa.

In her address, H.E. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia noted that the women, peace and security agenda is part of Namibia’s national development plan. The Government of Namibia has developed a gender policy with a target of mainstreaming the women, peace and security agenda by 2020. Efforts to implement the agenda in Namibia’s defense force are already underway with its commitment to build a critical mass of women in the defense forces. This is one of the reasons why Namibia did not hesitate to co-sponsor the latest resolution of the UN Security Council on this issue on 13 October 2015. Namibia’s parliament is now comprised of 47 per cent women since last year’s elections. At the sub-regional level, Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) protocol on gender and women empowerment has also been calling for greater equality.

Ms. Nandi-Ndaitwah stated that although only 16 countries have developed national plans of action on Resolution 1325, African governments have in one way or the other developed some gender policies to be mainstreamed into national plans. She noted, however, the continued lack of resources for the implementation of Resolution 1325, and the absence of a monitoring framework. She concluded by observing that the women, peace and security agenda has to be pursued in conjunction with development and in an inclusive manner.
H.E. Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, acknowledged the leading role of Namibia in the preparation and adoption of Resolution 1325 during Namibia’s Presidency of the UN Security Council in 2000. She underlined the role of women in promoting sustainable peace, noting that women are the main victims of armed conflicts, yet participate in only 10 per cent of the negotiations. She underscored the need to hold perpetrators of crimes against women accountable along with measures to improve the quality of life of women by providing reparations and reconciliation, land ownership and the custody of children for women. She also provided useful insights on the recommendations of the Global Study on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, noted that it is important to enhance protection for women in conflict, in the face of violent extremism and terrorism, and in the context of post-conflict reconstruction. The Common African Position on the review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture should be strengthened by including elements from Resolution 1325 and by drawing on the experience on the process of the Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda. He observed that there should be more consultation with women by the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council to ensure that their views are considered in peacekeeping operations and mediation processes. He also maintained that sustainable, reliable and innovative financing should be made available to promote gender equality and support gender-sensitive projects.

Ms. Pravina Makan-Lakha, General Manager of Operations and Business Development at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Dispute (ACCORD), noted that the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) has been paramount in developing the women, peace and security agenda. CSOs have pushed the agenda from the beginning, some 15 years ago. Some of the significant roles of CSOs include providing humanitarian support in conflict, mobilization of the grassroots, participation on preparation of national action plans, and monitoring of the implementation of action plans. The importance of including women in peace and security is embedded in the need for collaboration. Observing that at the current pace of implementation of Resolution 1325 it will take about 161 years to ensure that each of the 54 African countries develop an action plan, she called for new strategies to ensure implementation.

H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, former Defense Minister of Finland and member of the UN Advisory Committee on Women, Peace and Security, acknowledged the African origins of Resolution 1325 and underlined the importance of having women in all leadership positions, including in cabinet positions dealing with foreign affairs or defense, and in all peace and security structures.

**SUPPORT FOR THE WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA**

Mrs. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, the Special Envoy on Gender at the African Development Bank (AfDB) underlined the need to secure funds to ensure the protection of women during a security crisis. She noted that every crisis was different
and that money was part of the solution. She emphasized the importance of peace to foster development and mentioned the different facilities available at the AfDB for initiatives for women, including the AfDB’s US$1.5 billion Transition Support Facility for post-conflict countries. She noted it is important to have women’s perspectives represented at every level of decision-making, including in negotiating natural resources contracts and in efforts aimed at mitigating illicit financial flows. She further stated it is imperative to have predictable and sustainable financing for the implementation of Resolution 1325, noting that out of the US$ 1.9 billion of ODA from OECD DAC only US$ 500,000 is designated for women and gender issues. According to Mrs. Fraser-Moleketi, only two per cent of the Official Development Assistance to fragile states for peace and security-related programmes targets women. She noted that it is crucial to support UN Women in increasing the percentage allocated for women-related programmes and called for an open declaration to be made towards the increase of this target.

Mr. Symerre Grey-Johnson, representing the NEPAD Agency, noted that the Agency had been advancing gender equity and women empowerment in Africa through two key projects: the NEPAD Spanish fund (20 million Euros) for women empowerment, and the gender climate change project. He observed that 175 cooperatives had been created through the NEPAD Spanish fund, which had led to job creation, enhanced access to land titles, and income generation for women.

**LAUNCH OF BOOKLET ON “15 YEARS OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA: STOCKTAKING AND PERSPECTIVE”**

H.E. Mr. Tete Antonio, the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, launched the booklet, which highlights good practices in Africa on implementing the women, peace and security agenda. In doing so, he highlighted Namibia’s achievements on enhancing women’s representation in Parliament, noted some of the remaining challenges and invited the international community to support the implementation of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Africa.
INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

Mr. Mustapha Mekideche, Chairperson of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, emphasized APRM’s role in promoting gender equality and women empowerment in Africa. He explained that gender and women empowerment is a key component of the peer review assessment on governance in African countries. The APRM assessment report requires governments to take into account gender questions. For instance, the national governance commission requires the inclusion of women from political and business communities. He cited Algeria as an example where the APRM was able to help increase the number of women represented in the parliament through a direct recommendation to the President.

CONCLUSION

In closing, Mrs. Diop thanked the Chair and the co-organizers of the event for providing such a platform to advocate for women, peace and security. She acknowledged the participants and the panelists with a particular attention to the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia who has had a key leading role as a freedom fighter and women advocate in Beijing, at the African Union, and in the development of gender policy frameworks for her country. She emphasized and praised the eminent women of Africa who have contributed to Agenda 2063 and the SDGs which emanate from Agenda 2063.

She reiterated the need for sustainable and predictable financing for the women, peace and security agenda and pointed to the need to access AfDB funds in that regard. She also welcomed the offer to collaborate with the APRM in advancing the women, peace and security agenda and requested that the outcome of this meeting be transmitted to the AU Peace and Security Council. She expressed gratitude to OSAA and UNWOMEN for support to the AU and the implementation of the Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Africa.
Young Africans are the key to an African renaissance and will remain players in, and advocates of social transformation and development in many spheres. The enormous benefits young people can contribute are realized when investment is made in young people’s education, employment, health care, empowerment and effective civil participation. In order to maximise this demographic dividends, the African Union is developing a Continental Framework on Youth Development to assist African member states to define national employment policy scheme with operational action plans, taking into account the African youth Charter, national and sub-regional development plans, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable development goals.

OPENING SEGMENT

In his welcoming remarks, the Chair, H.E. Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, noted that youths along with women constituted the majority of the population in Africa. He recalled the decision of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) of NEPAD which requested the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency to develop the Continental Framework on Youth Employment in Africa, in collaboration with the AUC, UNECA, UNDP, and submit to the HSGOC in due course for consideration. In this regard, he noted that “The Africa we want” envisions an Africa in which youth unemployment is eliminated and this was the main objective of the African Continental Framework on Youth Employment. He stated that the African Union Commission was working with African Member States to define national employment policy schemes with an operational action plan, in line with the objectives of inclusive growth taking into account the African Youth Charter, national and sub-regional development plans, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. He also alluded to some challenges involved in this process, including the fact that Africa had a very high rate of urban unemployment, among other challenges.

Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, noted the year 2016 would mark the 10th anniversary of the African Youth Charter, adopted by the
African Union Heads of State and Government in 2006. Mr. Abdelaziz added that the African Heads of State and Governments viewed African youth as “Africa’s greatest resource whose active and full participation would help the continent surmount the difficulties that lay ahead.” He stated that within the context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both of which support Africa’s transformation, the youth would be essential to drive the implementation of both agendas. He reminded the meeting that the youth had historically been the drivers of transformational change in the continent, citing Nelson Mandela, who at 26 years of age, helped launch the African National Congress Youth League, and at the age of 31, became the League President. He also cited Kwame Nkrumah, who at 37 years of age co-organized the Fifth Pan African Congress in 1945, together with Jomo Kenyatta and other young political activists, calling for national liberation and regional integration.

Mr. Abdelaziz stated that one of the greatest challenges facing the continent was youth unemployment. He added that as the youngest continent in the world with 70 percent of its population under the age of 30, but with 60 percent of the continent’s youth unemployed, it was clear that this was a key challenge for the continent. He underlined the need to recognize the youth as an incredible reservoir of human capital that could be harnessed and channeled to generate economic and social development across a variety of sectors in the continent. He also highlighted the expressed call in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, wherein 15 per cent of all new businesses should come from the ingenuity and talent of the youth, particularly to drive science, technology and innovation on the continent. Similarly, Agenda 2063 calls for the reduction in the number of unemployed youth in Africa by at least 25 per cent by 2023, whereas Agenda 2030 called for “substantially reducing” the rate of youth unemployment worldwide by 2020.

Mr. Abdelaziz informed the meeting that to fulfill the youth unemployment targets called for in both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, focus should be placed on the agricultural sector which currently employs over 60 per
cent of Africa's population and generates over one-third of its total value-addition. Moreover, he added that the agriculture sector would greatly reduce youth unemployment and increase agricultural yields on the continent thereby helping to end poverty and hunger, and transform Africa into a net exporter of agricultural products. Mr. Abdelaziz emphasized that both agendas also stressed the importance of industrialization to reduce poverty, generate employment, improve productive capacity, enhance value addition, increase wages, and generate much needed jobs for the youth in Africa.

Mr. Abdelaziz informed the meeting that the United Nations remained deeply committed to supporting youth development on the African continent, as evidenced by the Secretary-General's priorities in his five-year plan, which seeks to deepen the youth focus in United Nations programmes on employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship, protection of rights and education. He added that the United Nations' work on youth had been further reinforced with the appointment of the first-ever United Nations Youth Envoy.

H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO, NEPAD Agency and Interim CEO of the APRM Secretariat, noted the average age of most Boko Haram fighters is about 16 years and they were paid approximately US$3 per day. Several African countries were now currently increasing their defense budget to deal with the Boko Haram situation when the same resources could have been used to create jobs for the youth likely to be recruited by militia, armed and terrorist groups.

Dr. Mayaki noted that Africa already had some 300 million African youth currently looking for employment, and the numbers would continue to rise over the next 15 years. Of the youth aged between 15 and 24 in Africa, 37.5 per cent were of working age; however, 60 per cent of the youth were unemployed. He noted that high unemployment rates had a huge
impact on national governance and policy designs. It is largely for this reason that Agenda 2063, prioritizes women, youth and employment, and the need to create an enabling and peaceful continent for the youth to flourish and to be productive.

Dr. Mayaki called for more investments in civic education and healthcare facilities within African countries, to equip the youth to become more productive and contribute economically to the development of their respective countries. He noted that efforts to deal with the high unemployment rates in Africa should be dealt with both from the supply and demand side. Towards this end, he informed the meeting that the AU and the NEPAD Agency are designing a Continental Framework on Youth Development that would assist African Member States to define national employment policy schemes with an operational action plan, in line with the objectives of inclusive growth and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs. The formulation of the African Continental Framework on Youth Development would entail mapping youth unemployment through data collection; assessing economic opportunities for the youth through policy analysis; monitoring and reporting through reviews and impact analysis of youth employment initiatives, and finally designing multi-country and multi-stakeholder strategies spearheaded by governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and the youth. He also stressed the importance of industrialization in Africa to create decent jobs using Agenda 2063 as a blueprint.

Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, underscored the challenges faced by youths in Africa, based on his 15 visits to the continent. He noted despite adopting the impressive Africa Youth Charter, youth participation and coordination in Africa remained weak, with the median age of participation being 21 years for youths and 61 years among African politicians. Mr. Alhendawi emphasized the need for enhanced job creation in Africa, as recommended in a recent International Labour Organization (ILO) report, ‘Youth Employment Interventions in Africa: A Mapping Report of the Employment and Labour’. He also alluded to the limited budget for Ministers of Youth, citing a US$ 1.5 million budget for a certain country with youth comprising 76 per cent of its population.

Mr. Alhendawi called for support to reclaim the excessive association of youths with terrorism and extremism. He called for: (i) more support for youths as an investment to boost GDP, (ii) investment in the health of its young women and girls who faced high levels of teenage pregnancies in some African countries, (iii) financing of policies and institutions responsible for youths, such as youth ministries, and (iv) structured dialogue with youths as espoused in Agenda 2063.

**HIGH LEVEL INTERACTIVE DEBATE**

Mr. Joseph Atta-Mensah of ECA observed that youths were an integral ingredient for integration within the African continent. He added that an integrated and prosperous Africa could not occur without the youths, as they are the current and future leaders of Africa. He alluded to the pioneers of the OAU/AU who were young visionaries. He further observed that the number of youths in Africa will increase by 42 per cent to some 321 million by 2030, the target year of the sustainable development agenda. The increase in the youth population will be accompanied by an increase in the unemployment rate, which has to be dealt with now. He added that in line with Agenda 2063, which takes into account these increases in youth population, it was critical to devise innovative strategies to tap into the huge potential of youths in the development process in their respective countries. He called for the involvement of youths in the AU’s industrialization scheme, noting that incentives should be afforded to the youth to engage them in the development process, particularly in areas where they can add value – for instance through providing youths access to finance and credit with low interest rates. He also suggested that as a priority, African Governments should allow for free movement of people across borders, particularly the
Mr. Aeneas Chapinga Chuma, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa at the International Labour Organization (ILO) noted that generating decent jobs for the African youth is one of the most pressing post-2015 challenges in the African region, noting that sub-Saharan Africa is projected to have the fastest growing working population in the world by 2030. He added that half of the region’s population today is about 25 years of age, and that from 2015 to 2030, one million new jobs would need to be created every year to keep up with the growing labour force. He expressed concern that opportunities for African youths would not materialize automatically unless bold actions were taken in the coming years, failing which the youth bulge could be a recipe for social and political instability in the respective African regions. He stated the ILO’s belief in creating opportunities for the youth through the creation of decent jobs and employment opportunities to facilitate peace, greater social stability and economic progress.

Mr. Chuma noted the challenge is not only about the quantity of jobs but transformation of bad jobs into productive safe remunerated decent jobs for our young women and men. Better quality jobs, he noted, are a prerequisite for better productivity and inclusive economic growth, which would require investment in skills development, technical and vocational training and human development. The launch of the ILO 2015 Report on Global Employment trends, he noted, availed the opportunity to assess the situation on the brink of the inception of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which acknowledges the importance of productive employment. He emphasized the need for a holistic approach to unemployment,
given its structural nature, and to embrace technology in promoting structural transformation and sustained growth. He further stressed the importance of improving the livelihood of youths, including through entrepreneurship, the expansion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and finance.

Ms. Moono Mupotola, Director of NEPAD, Trade & Regional Integration Department at the AfDB focused her comments on key projects and programmes within the Bank’s portfolio that focus on the youth. She informed the participants that the Bank has a human development portfolio, which mostly focuses on youth development. Currently, there are 77 projects within this portfolio worth US$ 1.8 billion, noting that in 2014 the Bank had approved US$ 572 million in loans and grants for 47 projects that aimed to support skills and youth development in the region. The Bank had funded a US$ 78 million Skills, Employability and Entrepreneurship Program (SEEP II) in Rwanda and a US$ 53 million Technical Vocational Educational, Training and Teacher Education Project in Tanzania, both with a goal to support policy reform efforts that promote skills development, entrepreneurship and employment.

Ms. Mupotola added that the AfDB recently piloted a Youth Innovation Weekend (9-11 October, 2015) in Abidjan with a goal to find technology-led solutions from West Africa to better the lives of women and youths. The result of this initiative
was the selection of four winners; which included PayFree, a multiplex platform for payments; La Ruche, a marketplace for artisans to sell their wares; Coliba, a mobile platform for managing urban waste; and BioPRO, an intervention seeking to help rural people get access to energy and electricity.

Ms. Angela Lusigi, Strategic Adviser, UNDP/RBA, stated that the time was right for the development of the African Continental Framework on Youth Development because of three big opportunities, namely: (i) a new big, bold, agenda – the SDGs and Agenda 2063 – for economic and social transformation; (ii) the urgency to address emerging issues on the continent with respect to internal conflict, radicalization and migration; and (iii) technology with respect to the changing technology landscape. She stated that UNDP was pleased to be collaborating with the NEPAD Agency, AUC, ECA and OSAA on this Africa Continental Framework for Youth Development.

Ms. Lusigi informed the meeting that UNDP’s regional programme on Africa was addressing youth priorities in five main areas; namely: (i) inclusive growth and sustainable development – inclusive business, access to energy, harnessing extractives, social protection; (ii) citizens’ voice, participation and democratic governance; (iii) reducing conflict and risks from natural disasters and climate change; (iv) development debates and actions that address poverty, inequality and exclusion; and (v) gender equality and women’s empowerment. She stated based on UNDP’s experience, it was imperative that the continental framework addressed four main areas in order to empower youths to lead and transform Africa. This included strategies for: (i) economic and social empowerment, including in entrepreneurship, skills development, technology, social protection and safety nets; (ii) voice and participation in governance issues, particularly in elections, representation, civic participation; (iii) policies and implementation frameworks in planning, budgeting, and monitoring; and (iv) building resilience through peace building, reconciliation, reconstruction, and risk reduction.

She contrasted previous plans and strategic frameworks for the youth with the bold new framework to be launched by the AU next year. She stated that the old frameworks were elaborate and detailed, but the process was not inclusive and did not engage diverse stakeholders at all levels, that is, diverse youth constituencies (including by location, sector, gender), politicians, parliamentarians, civil society (including religious leaders), technocrats (planners, sector specialists), and local leaders. Ms. Lusigi added that the old frameworks were not well understood, not adequately resourced, and only partially implemented. She called for the new framework to have a vision that was far reaching and that provided clear direction to sub-regional, national and local stakeholders. She also noted that the new framework should also guide the continent in ensuring consistent quality in programme implementation through strong accountability and monitoring frameworks, sharing lessons learnt, pooling resources and building stronger public-private partnerships, as well as South-South and triangular cooperation.

Ms. Vivian Onano, Youth Adviser for the United Nations-Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group and Women Deliver Young Leader, recalled her experience in facing unemployment and job challenges upon graduation from college. She welcomed the meeting as timely, given that youth unemployment was a cross-cutting issue in both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, she underscored the importance of accessing opportunities for the youth, given the wide-age gaps between the current leadership in various sectors and the youth. Ms. Onano underscored the importance of what she called the three “Es” in addressing youth unemployment, namely:
(1) education, both formal and vocational as well as access to technology (2) entrepreneurship, and (3) empowerment of young people. She decried the system of unpaid internships at the United Nations as incompatible with the goals of decent work and productive employment. She also raised concern about the free movement of youths in Africa, which was hampered by the barriers among African countries resulting in forced illegal migration by the youth to Europe.

PRESENTATION OF “PROJECT GENERATION”

Ms. Mona Mourshed, Director, McKinsey & Company’s Global Education Practice, stated the McKinsey Social Initiative, ‘Generation’ was built upon a McKinsey & Company study of 150 employment programmes in 25 countries, and surveys of over 15,000 employers, educators and young people. She informed the meeting that Generation sought to help create jobs for the youth both to maintain a supply and to meet demands.

She explained that Generation has six components, namely: (i) jobs and direct employer engagement from the start; (ii) recruit students based on effort and employment standards for the targeted professions; (iii) provide 8-12 weeks of
technical, behavioral, mindset & professional presence skill training (a stipend is provided for, as well as child care services so students can concentrate); (iv) provide social support services and mentorship throughout the process; (v) create a community follows graduates into the workplace via social media such as Twitter and Facebook; and (vi) demonstrate a return on investment for employers, students and society, besides a commitment to track the graduates of Generation for up to 15 years. She noted Generation aims to be fully sustainable and self-financing by the end of 2016.

**INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION**

A representative from UNICEF stated that greater efforts should be made to ensure that the youth, particularly interns at the United Nations are recruited into the system. The representative cautioned that the retirement age of 65 made it more difficult for youths to enter the system, as positions were not readily available.

A representative from the APRM stated youths were not too familiar with the work of APRM, noting that its work centred on ensuring good governance in Africa. He called on youths to be aware of their respective national governance committees and to participate in the APRM national governance reviews upon invitation by their respective governments. In reference to the “Project Generation” presentation, the representative stated that they scale of youth unemployment in Africa was not only about skills shortage, but also as a result of a lack of financial resources for innovative youth entrepreneurs.

A representative from ECOWAS stressed the importance of prioritizing vocational training programmes for the youth, particularly in the area of education. He further noted it is almost impossible for young entrepreneurs to succeed in the region due to the extremely high interest loan rates, peaking at some 12 per cent, and suggested targeting youth entrepreneurs with preferential loan rates.

A youth leader from Cameroon highlighted the youth’s potential to raise enormous amounts of resources and illustrated his point with the amount of money the youths in his country spend on cell phones. He said of the about 10 million people with cell phones in Cameroon, six million were youth. He observed that on average, youths collectively spent about US$1 million per day on cell phone, totalling US$30 million per month. He noted if youths could save 10 per cent of the US$30 million, they could collect US$3 million a month or US$36 million annually. As such, he stressed that youths could mobilize their own resources and do not require handouts from the government. Rather what youths require is for their voices to be heard, in decision making processes that affect their lives.

A representative from the EAC informed the meeting that Kenya had a youth fund which allocated some 30 per cent of its resources to start-up businesses for the youth, at close to zero per cent interest rates. He noted it is critical for governments to develop vocational training centres and implement appropriate policies to increase job opportunities for the youth.

A youth representative from the African Leadership Foundation echoed the frustration of many youths in finding employment in their countries. She pointed out that educated youths found it extremely challenging to get well-paying jobs, hence their desire to move to western countries and settle for low-income jobs. She lauded “Project Generation”, adding that if governments adopted and invested in such initiatives, it may help address the issue of youth migration and brain drain.
Another youth representative from Djibouti asked the representative from CEN-SAD whether cultural impediments were the root causes of the lack of opportunities for the youth. She asked whether the political climate in some African countries was also to blame for the high youth unemployment rates. In response, the representative from CEN-SAD stated that all African governments had a ministerial portfolio assigned to deal with matters related to the youth, with accompanying budgets to support youth development programmes. He stressed, however, that there should be a shared responsibility between the youth and the governments in creating jobs.

Yet another youth representative from Rutgers University stated that the political climate in some African countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), does not allow for active engagement of the youth in community and development projects. He noted youths were seen more as a destabilizing force than as assets to the development process, and stressed the need for public policy to ensure the role of youths in development processes in their respective countries. He further cautioned on the context-based education system currently practiced in the DRC, wherein students are often taught western history, rather than their own indigenous history. He added that this resulted in a lack of patriotism and ownership of community, local and national development processes.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Mayaki stated the main issue to address regarding the youth bordered on economic governance. He noted Africa has many good best practices and success stories to learn from and emphasized the need to listen to the youth and adjust public policy to cater to their needs. He supported the “Project Generation” approach being used by Mckinsey & Company to enhance skills and find jobs for the youth in Africa; and called for its replication across the continent.
Mr. Abdelaziz observed that there was no one size fits all solution to the youth unemployment challenges confronting Africa. He noted the need for good governance, human rights and inclusive development consideration in addressing unemployment challenges facing youths in Africa. He called on the youth to increase their skills and competitiveness based on the demands in the workforce, as well as encouraged the RECs to engage youths in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

Mr. Alhendawi stated that the continuous ‘blame game’ had to stop. He added that what was required now was to educate the youth, ensure commitment by governments to strengthening and building the capacity of the youth, and encouraging employers to hire and engage youths. He also supported the McKinsey initiative of “Project Generation”, adding that scaling-up and replicating such proven models would help create jobs for the youth. Mr. Alhendawi further informed the meeting that the ILO would soon launch the “Decent Jobs for Youth” partnership with various stakeholders to help spur employment creation for the youth, particularly in Africa. He stated that the initiative would aim to harmonize international actions on youths among a variety of different actors and stakeholders.

Mr. Chuma recalled African countries had experienced growth in the last 10-15 years but this growth has not generated necessary jobs. He stressed the need for: (i) financing and for promotion of investment in entrepreneurship development in various areas, (ii) the promotion of instruments for financing, and (iii) creating the condition in which young entrepreneurs can strive. Secondly, he underscored the need to address migration; given that up to 10 million Africans were working in other countries other than their countries of origin. He called for the promotion of migration for development and for the free movement of people and services in the context of integration, including through the standardization of qualifications in order to facilitate employment for professionals and skilled workers between African countries.

Mr. Atta-Mensah underscored the importance of the private sector in youth employment efforts and the empowerment of youth. He noted that the growth of the African middle class was spurred by youth demands, and Africa was moving forward. He also reiterated the importance of free movement on the continent to facilitate job creation.

Ms. Mupotola underscored the need to approach youth employment from a structural standpoint, and within the context of a regional approach to facilitate the movement of labour and job seekers. She noted the importance of governments in providing the enabling environment, citing the case of Small Business Administration in the United States, which provided initial support to companies such as Yahoo.

Ms. Vivian Onano stressed the importance of focusing on women and youths in the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, and to ensure adequate representation of youths in processes for the development of the African Continental Framework on Youth Development. She noted that talent was universal but opportunities were not, and called for collective action in building the “Africa We Want.”

To conclude, Ambassador Antonio noted the growing momentum around youth empowerment, and cautioned that earlier mistakes which excluded African women and youths should not be repeated. He recalled the youthful ages of African leaders such as Nkwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela, and stressed the importance of shared responsibilities between youths and elders in addressing Africa’s peace and development challenges.
The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations and Ms. Christina Gallach, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

BRIEFING ON TWO REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa presented the Secretary General’s reports on “New Partnership for Africa’s Development: thirteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support”; and “Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa”. He highlighted the significant contribution of NEPAD to Africa’s economic and social development which provides a strong foundation for the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He provided some examples on the progress made on NEPAD’s implementation in the six key theme areas, particularly in infrastructure development, agriculture and food security, health, gender equality and women empowerment. He also identified key obstacles in the implementation of NEPAD programmes, such as the lack of adequate funding and weak institutional capacity in some African countries, which underscored the need for an enhanced engagement from Africa’s development partners including the United Nations system to support progress on the continental and global development agendas.

Mr. Abdelaziz further outlined the main peace and security developments in Africa and highlighted efforts by African governments, regional and sub-regional organizations to improve governance, prevent and resolve conflicts, combat terrorism and violent extremism, and prevent and mitigate election related-violence. He noted ongoing efforts to promote a closer partnership between the United Nations and AU, including
the recent adoption of the framework for a renewed UN-AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA) as well as the ongoing reviews of United Nations Peace Operations, the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which are collectively expected to lead to the further strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations.

THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of NEPAD Agency and Interim CEO of the APRM Secretariat, spoke on “The Key Role of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development in Implementing Agenda 2063. He noted though the continent had faced tremendous challenges and obstacles, Africa had also made positive gains, decreased poverty and increased the middle class. To illustrate his point that Africa can take ownership of its agenda, Dr. Mayaki said a one per cent increase in tax collection in the region would result in approximately US$ 20 billion per annum increase to the region’s revenue stream that could be utilized to finance implementation of the continent’s development agenda. The eradication of illicit flows of funds from the region could stand to contribute an additional US$ 50 billion per annum.

Mr. Mustapha Mekideche, Chairperson of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, spoke on “The Role of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. He highlighted the value of inclusiveness and participation of all national stakeholders, which continue to characterise the conduct of national reviews by APRM, including through the establishment of national commissions of governance at the beginning of the review processes.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

The discussion focused on ways and means of improving the peace and security situation in the continent, including through improved funding for the Africa Peace and Security Architecture and closer partnership and coordination between the AU, the RECs and the United Nations. It also addressed efforts to enhance domestic resource mobilization, particularly through broadening the tax base and combatting illicit financial flows.

The representative of Sweden, in his capacity as the current Chair of the United Nations Peace Building Commission, said his country supports the initiative to ‘Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020’; and called for enhanced coordination between the RECs and the United Nations in general, and the Peace Building Commission in particular, on this issue.

The representative of Nigeria recognized that security reforms were very important in strengthening policing and the judiciary, and called for accelerated implementation of the African Union’s Continental Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform. He also noted the African Peace and Security Architecture, in particular the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability requires additional resources to ensure its full operationalization, and called for international support to the AU in this respect.

The representative of the ECA commended the recommendations of the reports and noted that the findings of the report on the causes of conflict are similar to the result of three studies conducted by the ECA on the underlying causes of conflict in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. The ECA underlined the importance of partnerships
in delivering on commitments made towards Africa’s peace and development priorities. Likewise, H.E. Mrs. Fatoumata Kaba, the Permanent Representative of Guinea to the AU in Addis Ababa commended the recommendations in the report on the Causes of Conflict and Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa and further noted that sanction regimes in the region need to be strengthened.

The representative of Niger emphasized the need for promoting synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU’s Agenda 2063, recognizing the central role of agricultural development, industrialization and respect for human rights in the African agenda and called for enhanced international support to Africa in these areas.

The representative of the EAC noted the important role religious leaders could play in conflict prevention. He also underscored the need for demilitarization and reintegration for former combatants into society.

The representative of Poland commended Africa’s commitment to governance over the past two decades and the APRM’s contributions to strengthening governance in the region. She noted this continued commitment to governance and women’s empowerment is clearly illustrated by the fact that Africa currently has the highest representation of females in parliament in the world.

A representative from the APRM said Africa should consider putting in place budgetary regulations and reforms in which domestic resource mobilization from regional markets and other local and regional instruments could contribute to debt reduction. Similarly, a representative of ECOWAS in noting that approximately 20 to 30 per cent of the countries in the ECOWAS region are facing increasing national budget deficits, recognized that a one to two per cent increase in taxes will resolve the region’s deficits.

Ms. Habiba Mejri Cheick, the Director for Information and Communication at the AUC stressed the importance of communication for the success of the African development agenda. She noted that as part of an integrated communication approach, the AUC and OSAA websites have been updated and are linked to each other.

**CONCLUSION**

H.E. Mr. Antonio concluded the meeting by placing the responsibility on the African Group of Member States to the United Nations in New York to take the necessary action towards facilitating the adoption of a United Nations General Assembly resolution to support implementation of Agenda 2063 in general and PAIDA in particular.
As part of Africa Week 2015 the Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency, H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, conducted a commemorative lecture at the Yale University in New Port, Connecticut. He addressed an enthusiastic public audience comprising under-graduate and post-graduate students, African-US cognoscenti, policy makers, researchers and development practitioners on the theme: “Implementing the African Union’s 50-Year Vision: NEPAD’s role in Agenda 2063”.

The lecture opened the new Africa Speakers Series of the Yale School of Management’s Africa Business and Society Club. Yale World Fellow Taz Chaponda, a development economist with extensive experience across sub-Saharan Africa, moderated the discussion with Dr. Mayaki that explored Africa’s most pressing development challenges, as well as its great promise and rich business opportunities.

Key messages from the lecture included an emphasis on: (i) the mandate of NEPAD as a blueprint for social and economic transformation and regional integration in Africa, (ii) the important role of the private sector, as partners and investors, in supporting Africa’s development, and (iii) the new opportunities for development in Africa that contained in Agenda 2063.

Africa Week 2015 ended on 16 October with the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Debate on the Development of Africa, during which H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki delivered a statement on behalf of the African Union.

Speakers at the UNGA debate acknowledged the African Union’s ambitious 50-year “Agenda 2063”, together with its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a holistic and coherent framework for advancing and following up on Africa’s development.