Concept Note

“The Africa We Want in 2030, 2063 and Beyond”

High Level Forum:

“Early Action and Results on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Africa’s Transformative Agenda 2063: Opportunities and Challenges”

Venue: Conference Room 2 - UNHQ
New York, USA

Date: Wednesday 20 April 2016
I. Background and Overview

2015 marked the adoption of historic agendas for Africa at both the continental and global levels. At the continental level, African countries have adopted Agenda 2063, the 50 year Transformative Agenda for Africa, and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan. At the global level, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both frameworks seek to achieve inclusive growth, sustainable development and peace and security for the continent.

In order to achieve the goals set out in these frameworks, early action is required from all stakeholders. In this context, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), the Government of Sweden and the African Union Commission (AUC) are organising a high-level forum on the theme “Early Action and Results on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Africa’s Transformative Agenda 2063: Opportunities and Challenges”. Under this overarching theme, the Forum will highlight the synergies and complementarities between the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa’s Agenda 2063, while focusing on the implementation of both agendas.

II. Objective

The overall objective of the Forum is to raise global awareness of the synergies and complementarities between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa’s Agenda 2063 and its Ten Year Implementation Plan, all of which place people at the centre. The Forum will provide insight to how effective implementation of both agendas has to be undertaken in an integrated manner.

The event will build on the outcomes of the 26th African Union Summit of January 2016 and the 2016 Conference of Ministers of Economic Development, Finance, Planning and Regional Integration in Addis Ababa from the 30th of March to the 5th of April, on the theme “Towards an Integrated and Coherent Approach to Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs”.

III. Thematic Focus

The forum will delve into three thematic areas:

a. Towards Transformative Economic Growth and Regional Integration in Africa;

b. Empowering African Women: Gender as the Agenda; and

c. Consolidating Peace and Security in Africa

The Forum will also address cross-cutting issues under SDG 17 “Revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development”, as well as Goal 19 of Agenda 2063 “Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence”, with particular emphasis on three key issues of implementation: (1) partnerships; (2) capacity building; and (3) financing (domestic resource mobilisation and Official Development Assistance). These issues could be
viewed as critical ‘enablers’ for successful early action and results in the above thematic areas.

The event will also dedicate specific attention to the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, particularly through its peace and security, and good governance work, as well as to the UN/AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agendas 2017-2027 (PAIDA), the successor programme to the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme (TYCBP) for the African Union.

A: Towards Transformative Economic Growth and Regional Integration in Africa

❖ **2030 Agenda:**
  o SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

❖ **Agenda 2063: Aspiration 1: A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development**
  o Goal 1: A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Wellbeing for all Citizens
  o Goal 4: Transformed Economies and Jobs

❖ **2030 Agenda:**
  o SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

❖ **Agenda 2063: Aspiration 2: An Integrated Continent, Politically United and Based on the Ideals of Pan Africanism and the Vision of African Renaissance**
  o Goal 10: World Class Infrastructure Criss-crosses Africa

Inclusive economic growth and structural economic transformation have been priority development areas in Agenda 2063 and in the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth is a key driver for realizing virtually all of the continent’s development objectives, including, *inter alia*, poverty eradication, health, education, food security and nutrition, sustainable urbanization, social protection and peace and security.

Both agendas highlight the need for inclusive and people-centered development, with an emphasis on sustainable industrialization, industrial diversification, creating high value added and decent jobs for all. To achieve the economic transformation envisioned by both agendas, a high premium has also been placed on deepening regional economic integration through infrastructure development, and regional trade. Agenda 2063 specifically aims to establish a Continental Free Trade Area, underpinned by world-class land, water and air transport infrastructure crisscrossing Africa; information and communications technology; and clean water, sanitation, and renewable energy. Achievement of these ambitious goals will require leveraging multi-stakeholder resources, both domestically and internationally, through partnerships with a wide range of actors, including African Governments, international development partners, and the domestic and global private sector.
Guiding questions:
1. Since the First 10 Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 includes concrete objectives and targets for economic transformation; how can the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development support this implementation plan?
2. How can the UN 2030 Agenda and Africa’s Agenda 2063 work in synergy to galvanize the creation of sustainable and decent work in Africa, particularly for African youth?
3. How can the international community and the UN best support Africa’s efforts towards sustainable industrialisation and infrastructure development?
4. What are the main constraints for African countries in their efforts to accelerate sustainable development and structural transformation of their economies?

B: Empowering African Women: Gender as the Agenda

- Agenda 2030:
  - SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Agenda 2063: Aspiration 6: An Africa whose Development is People-Driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially Women and Youth and caring for children
  - Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life

African governments recognize women’s rights to equal access to opportunities and services, and in this context have adopted gender policies and various initiatives such as declaring 2010-2020 as the African Women’s Decade; 2015 as the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”; and 2016 as the “African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women”. Nevertheless, the continent still scores lower than other regions in the world on the Gender Parity Index, and particularly in wage parity and access to economic empowerment and social protection. Despite the continent’s ambitious policy frameworks and instruments, implementation has been slow.

The Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 is committed to achieve full gender equality and significantly empower African women by 2023 at the national, regional and continental levels, which echoes the global objective of SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Moving forward on implementation it will be important to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed across both entire agendas.

Guiding questions:
1. What are the biggest barriers to African women’s economic empowerment and how can they be addressed through Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda?
2. What are the promising success stories on gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa and how can we build upon them through Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
3. How can national, regional and global efforts be linked to empower African women?

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1. UN Women, 2014 Gender Gap statistics for MDGs
C: Consolidating Peace and Security in Africa

- **2030 Agenda:**
  - SDG 16: Peace, Justice and strong institutions

- **Agenda 2063: Aspiration 3: An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law**
  - Goal 11: Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched
  - Goal 12: Capable institutions and transformative leadership in place

- **Agenda 2063: Aspiration 4: A Peaceful and Secure Africa**
  - Goal 13: Peace, Security and Stability is Preserved
  - Goal 14: A Stable and Peaceful Africa
  - Goal 15: A Fully functional and operational APSA

Conflict is one of the most destructive forces undermining sustainable development on the continent and the African Union remains committed to its goal of silencing all guns by 2020, as support for Africa’s peace and security priorities will remain crucial for early action and results on implementation of both agendas.

The interlinkages between democratic governance, peace and development are fully recognized by both agendas, which seek to address multiple triggers or drivers of fragility and armed conflicts in Africa, including the youth bulge and unemployment, poverty, inequality and exclusion, organized crime, terrorism and violent extremism, and increased migration from the continent, amongst others. On the continent, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is striving to support effective governance and to contribute towards silencing the guns by 2020 while the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations will also play a crucial role in achieving peace and security priorities under both agendas. Furthermore, the role of the private sector and civil society, as well as Africa’s development partners remains vital.

In addition, gender equality and women’s empowerment are strongly related to peace and security efforts on the continent, as African women are both victims of violence and conflict as well as agents of peace and reconciliation. The role of women in peace and security has been an utmost priority for the continent, as well as for the international community. In this respect, Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2242 provide a framework that draws attention to the inextricable link between gender equality and international peace and security and aims to integrate women, peace and security concerns across all country-specific situations on its agenda. Approximately 16 of the 48 countries that have adopted national action plans for resolution 1325 are in Africa. In addition, three African sub-regional organizations, namely the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have adopted action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325.

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2 Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda
Guiding questions:
1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 link the issue of peace and security to the wider development agenda, how can this translate to more integrated programmes on the ground in Africa?
2. What lessons has the international community learned regarding how best to support Africa’s peace and security efforts, and how can those lessons be applied in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda?
3. How can Africa working together with its development partners, address the internal and external causes of conflict on the continent?
4. What measures can be taken to increase women’s participation in the efforts of achieving and consolidating peace and security?

IV. Format of the Forum

The Forum will be highly interactive, with each of its sessions moderated by an engaging media personality in order to ensure lively discussion between the various high-level speakers and other participants.

There are will be four main sessions, as follows:
(a) The High-Level opening session that will set the stage for the debates under the three thematic areas and feature prominent speakers who will provide their perspectives on the overall themes of the Forum.
(b) The second session addresses the synergies between SDGs 8 and 9 of 2030 Agenda and the Aspirations 1 and 2 of the Agenda 2063 under the theme: “Towards transformative economic growth and regional integration in Africa.”
(c) The third session will address the synergies between SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda and Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 under the theme: “Empowering African Women: Gender as the Agenda.”
(d) The fourth session will address the synergies between SDG 16 of the 2030 Agenda and Aspirations 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063 under the theme: “Consolidating Peace and Security in Africa”

V. Outcome

The key messages of the event will be published and communications materials will be developed to highlight the synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

VI. Participants

Participants in the event will include a wide range of key, high-level stakeholders, including Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Government officials, and senior officials of United Nations system entities, private sector, civil society, academia, and the Diaspora.
VII. Co-organisers and partners

For this event, OSAA, the African Union Commission, and the Government of Sweden aim to collaborate with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) and the United Nations Industrial Organisation (UNIDO) to bring leaders and other key actors for Africa’s implementation of both agendas together.

VIII. Venue & Date

The Forum will take place on 20 April 2016, from 10am-1pm and from 3pm-6pm in Conference Room 2 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The event will be held at a strategic time, just after the 2016 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group in Washington D.C. which will take place from 15 to 17 April; and a day before the General Assembly’s High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, due to take place on 21 April. Also, the High-Level Signing Ceremony for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will take place on 22 April at the UNHQ in New York, presided over by the United Nations Secretary-General.

IX. Contact information

For more information about the High Level Forum, kindly contact:

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