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CONCEPT NOTE

AU capacity-building workshop on Africa's Voluntary National Reviews for the HLPF 2022 and domestication of Agenda 2063

Venue: Abuja – Nigeria

Date: 28-29 March 2022

In partnership with UN DESA, SDG Centre for Africa, UNDP, the African Union Commission, and UNDP Regional Centre in Addis Ababa.





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Brief:

The APRM-UNDESA continental workshop on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and domestication of Agenda 2063 aims to support national capacities of AU member States in preparations for VNRs to be presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2022. It also offers a regional platform for peer-learning on best practices of the integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, domestication challenges at national and local levels alongside forging monitoring and evaluation tools to report on both agendas in tandem, as called for by the Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Addis Ababa in April 2016.¹

The meeting of the HLPF in July 2022 to be held under the auspices of the United Nations [Economic and Social Council](#) will be organized under the theme “*Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. The HLPF in 2022 will review in-depth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The forum will take into account the different and particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the goals.

In 2022, 45 countries will be presenting VNRs, with 21 African countries expected to present VNRs of which Seven countries are presenting for the first time at the HLPF². Further, the AU second continental report on Agenda 2063 progress was launched during the AU Heads of States Summit in Addis Ababa in February 2022 as the report highlighted serious challenges to implement some aspirations and goals³. Accordingly, this workshop contributes to raising awareness on progress, gaps and challenges towards an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs and discuss these issues with national focal points.

Following its successful engagement in the HLPF from 2018-2021 alongside continental workshops in Addis Ababa (2018), Kigali (2019), Djibouti (2021) as well as virtual dialogues on VNRs, the APRM remains committed to supporting African countries in VNR preparations, including countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In addition, the APRM is also committed to ensuring the success of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) around Africa and aligning international and regional efforts to promote an understanding of VNR/VLR linkages. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), are a tool with the potential to accelerate the localization of the SDGs through reporting by cities, regions and

¹ E/ECA/CM/49/3

AU/STC/FMEPI/MIN/Res/3(II)

² Seven African countries are presenting VNRs for the first time: Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia.

³ Please visit https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41480-doc-2nd_Continental_Progress_Report_on_Agenda_2063_English.pdf.



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local governments on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, is growing around the world. The APRM is committed to organizing the fourth continental workshop in Abuja under the auspices of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs. The workshop is convened in partnership with different development partners including African Development Bank (AfDB), UN entities, AU Commission and regional economic communities. The workshop will among other objectives, discuss lessons learned from the HLPF in 2021 and countries' experiences, governance enablers and recovery scenarios and proper innovative digital tools to report on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. from a COVID-19 perspective.

As highlighted in the 2021 Synthesis Report of the Voluntary National Reviews, the HLPF discussed political guidance on ensuring a resilient and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that can advance the achievement of the SDGs. It also underscored the value of multilateralism and the critical importance of global solidarity during this pandemic of historical proportions. Countries elaborated on the measures they are taking to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a blueprint for recovering better from COVID-19.⁴

Background and relevance of APRM Continental workshop to the HLPF 2022

- The adoption and launch of AU Agenda 2063 preceded the post-2015 Development Agenda, later known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was developed and negotiated at the global level. This provided an opportunity for Africa's perspectives, articulated in the Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 Development Agenda, to be considered on the global stage. As the basis for negotiations during the development of the post-2015 Development Agenda, the position the Common African Position contributed to the formulation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ and its 17 SDGs.
- Since the adoption of the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030, most countries in Africa have embarked upon a process of "domesticating" these agendas at the national and sub-national levels. States develop planning strategies that aim to achieve the targets set under each of the goals in both Agendas. Member States across the continent have been aligning their national development plans and strategies with the objectives of both Agendas. Capacities of policymakers at the national and sub-national levels are being strengthened to ensure the implementation of both Agendas is undertaken in an integrated and coherent manner as well as facilitate coordination within sectors to ensure an inclusive implementation process⁶.
- At the global level, the HLPF on Sustainable Development was established as the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and plays a central role in the

⁴ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/294382021_VNR_Synthesis_Report.pdf.

⁵ The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is based on five imperatives – Leave No One Behind – post 2015, move from reducing to ending poverty; Put Sustainable Development at the Core; Integrate social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth; Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All Forge a New Global Partnership (solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability to underpin the post-2015 agenda).

⁶ UNDG 2016, *The SDGs are Coming to Life – Stories of Country Implementation and UN Support*.



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follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the global level. The follow-up and review process encourages member States to conduct a voluntary country-led, country-driven, regular, and inclusive assessment of progress at national and sub-national levels called VNRs. These are to be undertaken universally, by both developed and developing countries.

- The VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned, to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda while at the same time providing a platform for partnerships. The VNRs also seek to strengthen governments' policies and institutions and mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs⁷.
- Committed to deliver on the designated expanded mandate to play a role in monitoring and evaluation of both agendas, the APRM organized three capacity-building continental workshops on VNRs and good governance in Addis Ababa, Kigali, Djibouti from 2018-2021 for more than 30 African countries. Member States emphasized the significance of APRM workshops as a continental mechanism to offer such as a regional platform to share countries' experiences and challenges for the VNR preparations and overall SDG implementation. Some of the issues identified are **1)** the persistent distinction and misalignment of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at national level in some countries; **2)** data gaps to report on key indicators especially with responses to the COVID-19 crisis; **3)** impact of the pandemic on SDG reprioritizations and institutional arrangements at the national level for realization of the SDGs; **4)** lack of multi-stakeholders approach to engage different actors including parliaments, civil society and youth to play an active role in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 at sub-national and local levels and **5)** lack of digital tools to track both Agendas and APRM tools.
- Given the acknowledged context, the APRM workshop remains imperative to bring African countries together to discuss the issues highlighted above and engage in peer-learning. Twenty-two African countries will be presenting their VNRs at the HLPF in 2022. Amongst 7 countries for the first time, 14 for the second time (Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Sudan) and one for the fourth time – Togo. The APRM intends to engage these countries and others like South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, Uganda

HLPF 2022: SDGs in focus

The HLPF 2021 will be organised from 11-15 July 2022 and will focus on the following goals: SDGs: 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The Forum will also consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs.

⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.



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and Sierra Leone to share experiences on VNRs alongside rolling-out Agenda 2063 reporting framework.

Objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop

The key objectives of the APRM -UNDESA workshop are underlined as follows:

- ✓ Encouraging peer-learning between African countries on VNR preparations and means of implementations of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, especially those presenting VNRs in the HLPF 2022 and countries in political transition.
- ✓ Addressing key trends of SDGs progress in Africa; achievements, bottlenecks, and implications especially goals under focus in 2022 alongside SDG 16.
- ✓ Raising awareness on Agenda 2063 domestication and reporting tools.
- ✓ Deliberating on the current regional and national efforts to foster financing for Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 alongside with cross-cutting issues such as civil society, youth, gender, and refugees.
- ✓ Enhancing knowledge of VLR guidelines for Africa alongside VNR guidelines
- ✓ Innovative tools for Implementation of the Principles of Effective Government for Sustainable Development developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

Themes of discussion

- ✓ Stocktaking of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, especially within the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ VNR/VLR process: preparations and consultations at the national levels, country experiences, and lessons learned from HLPF 2019-2021 (*institutional coherence for the SDGs, VNR institutional mechanisms and means of implementation of SDGs besides monitoring and evaluation tools*);
- ✓ Cross-cutting issues: gender equality, youth, and civil society empowerment in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- ✓ Digitalization and innovative tools to enhance reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063
- ✓ The regional dimension of the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Agenda 2063; the role of regional economic communities (RECs) and AUC (Agenda 2063 framework)
- ✓ Partnerships and financing gaps for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063
- ✓ Preparations for HLPF 2022

Expected participants:

The following participants are expected to take part in the workshop actively:

- ✓ The AU Member States undertaking VNRs in 2022



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- ✓ Representatives of the AU Member States that presented VNRs during the period 2017 to 2021.
- ✓ Representatives of civil society organs (CSOs), business groups, academia, and research institutions.
- ✓ AU Commission and AU Sister organs ;
- ✓ Regional Economic Communities (to allow for the development of coordinated strategies to achieve targets for Agenda 2030 and 2063
- ✓ Financial and development institutions; SIDA, AfDB, IsDB;
- ✓ UN organs; UNDP, UN Global Compact, UN ECA, and UN DESA.

Working Languages

The meeting will be conducted in English, French, with simultaneous interpretation into French.

Dates and Venue

The APRM Continental workshop on VNRs will be taken place in Abuja, Nigeria - ***from 28-29 March 2022 at Fraser Suites – Central Business District***

Contacts

Inquiries on the organization of the workshop and logistics should be directed to:

Sara Hamouda	Ms. Saras Jagwanth	Rutendo Nazare
Agenda 2063/SDGs Unit - officer in charge , APRM	Inter-regional Adviser, Division, UN DESA	Agenda 2063 Researcher, APRM
Sara.hamouda@aprm-au.org	jagwanth@un.org .	Rutendo.Nazare@aprm-au.org .