

Opening Remarks for APRM

By **Mr. Ferdinand Katendeko**, Chief of Staff

Occasion: **APRM-UN DESA webinar Policy coherence in Africa in response to COVID-19: Regional Webinars in Africa: Resilience and Recovery from COVID-19 through Sound Policymaking**

Monday 17 January 2021 time: 3-5 PM -South Africa time

Madam. Geraldine Moleketi, Chairperson of Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

Ms. Adriana Alberti, Chief of Capacity Development Unit, Public Institutions and Digital Government Division, UN DESA

Mr. Måns Nilsson, Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute

Dear experts and practitioners from Africa and across the world,

Good afternoon from Johannesburg

- Allow me to start by wishing you a happy new year and express my appreciation to UN DESA and the Public Institutions Division for organising these joint virtual webinars on Resilience and Recovery from COVID-19 through CEPA principles. This kind of dialogue and policy assessment is imperative to enhance governments' responsiveness and preparedness, not only for health crises, i.e., COVID-19, but also for other uncertain future shocks.
- The APRM appreciates the value-adding partnership with UN DESA colleagues to speed up implementing both Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and Agenda 2063 '*Africa we want*'. Since 2018, the APRM- under the expanded mandate delegated by AU Assembly- has been committed to assist African countries in monitoring and evaluating governance indicators of both agendas, particularly SDG 16 – which focuses on efficient, public institutions and peaceful societies.

- The APRM established strong collaboration with the UN Committee of Experts to share insights from the continent concerning challenges for SDGs implementation and monitoring, but most important to provide a platform for peer-learning on voluntary national reporting and CEPA principles. As an observer in CEPA, we began regional exercise at the continental annually with the capacity building division at UN DESA to stock take the implementation of these principles and overall advocacy and awareness about it amongst African experts.
- APRM collaboration with UNDESA is another example of multilateral initiatives between the African union and UN, guided by the AU-UN Framework for implementing both development agendas, to unpack African experiences at national level as regard national responses to COVID-19 through CEPA strategies.
- Today's dialogue on Policy Coherence as one of APRM strategies for sound policy making is highly demanding. Our baseline study across 17 African countries concluded that further coherent strategies shall be adopted at the national level to address multifaceted challenge i.e., health, education, and environment issues. Further, knowledge of CEPA principles, and its applicability varies from a country to another based on national African priorities and needs. For instance, countries which are going through political transition, like Sudan, need further efforts pertinent to policy collaboration amongst stakeholders, integrity of public sector and regard inclusiveness of policy making and women empowerment.
- The APRM study also acknowledged that necessity of aligning strategic efforts to assist African countries in the adoption of some principles and policies to enhance public service delivery and increase trust between Africa government and their citizenry. Further, COVID-19 offered a silver line opportunity to boost collaboration amongst government bodies, especially through digital platforms and the adoption of virtual tools to track COVID-19 cases and enhance communication with citizens for agile responses.

- Needless to emphasise that strong political ownership is needed to incorporate CEPA principles and associated strategies into national development planning and policies. Countries like Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Egypt, and Ghana have been quite advancing in operationalizing of the associated CEPA principles at the local level. Yet, more efforts shall be exerted to support other countries, especially those with low-income economies and least developed countries in the continent.
- To take our study's recommendations into actions, APRM intends to act at three different levels:
 - ✓ First, engaging the AU bodies and organs in promoting CEPA principles at continental and national level. A consensus already exists on the necessity of producing a manual for Africa on CEPA principles, which may focus on specific strategies as recommended by APRM baseline study. We can collaborate with UN DESA to incorporate the UN DESA toolkits on these principles as part of Africa's manual on CEPA principles. This can be further discussed on the margins of CEPA annual session in April 2022.
 - ✓ Second, intensifying capacity building on CEPA principles across the continent, in partnership with national and regional knowledge & executives centres.
 - ✓ Third. forging partnerships with UN and other development partners to support policy dialogue and institutional scanning on policy coherence issues at national level. Under the APRM-OECD partnership framework, we are developing a proposal to boost policy coherence for SDGs and Agenda 2063 governance on the continent. We invite our partners from UN, especially DESA, to join this initiative so we can maximise benefits and impact of collaboration between our organs for advancing public sector capabilities and promoting these principles on the African continent.

I wish to thank you all for this opportunity and I wish you fruitful deliberations.