JOINT MEDIA ADVISORY

Seventeenth Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for Africa

INVITATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

WHEN:　　　　　**2 and 3 April 2016**

WHERE:　　　　Conference Center of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

WHO:　　　　　Jointly organised by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

WHY:　　　　　The sessions of RCM-Africa are an important forum for dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union on issues pertinent to the development agenda of Africa. That is why the theme for the seventeenth session is: *AU-UN Partnership for the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. The session will accord the agencies of the United Nations system opportunity to contribute to finding a common strategy for the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Objective:　　　The main objective of the seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa is to chart the way forward on the roles and responsibilities of each agency in the implementation of the SDGs and the Agenda 2063, particularly its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

Specific Objectives:　　In addition to the reflections on the theme, participants at the seventeenth session will also deliberate on the mechanism for implementing the framework on United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda (PAIDA) as the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union expires at the end of 2016.

The session will consider the alignment of the RCM-Africa clusters to the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. The need for alignment comes from the decision of 16th Session of the RCM-Africa that "RCM-Africa should maintain the status quo of the clusters until the June 2015 Assembly of the African Union and should hold a meeting after that

Assembly to align the clusters with the 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063."

Following the AU Summit Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 565(XXIV) in June 2015, the Secretariat of the RCM-Africa will make proposals to the seventeenth session for reconfiguration and alignment of the RCM-Africa Clusters to the AU Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

The seventeenth session will also consider other matters aimed at strengthening the RCM-Africa.

Expected outcomes: The session is expected to result in the following outcomes:

a) Consensus on the United Nations support to the African Union in the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063;
b) Consensus on a mechanism for implementing the framework on United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda (PAIDA); and
c) Consensus on the alignment/reconfiguration of the RCM-Africa to the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs and its operational modalities to effectively implement the goals, targets and priority areas.

Participants: Participants will include:

- African Union Commission.
- African Development Bank.
- NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency.
- African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat.
- Economic Community of West African States.
- Economic Community of Central African States.
- East African Community.
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.
- Southern African Development Community.
- Community of Sahel-Saharan States.
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development.
- Arab Maghreb Union.
- All agencies and organizations of the United Nations system working in support of Africa, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
- Partners and friends of RCM-Africa, including bilateral organizations.

Background:

1.   The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through its resolution 1998/46, makes the holding of regular inter-agency meetings an imperative for all regions. Accordingly, regional coordination mechanisms (RCMs) were initiated in 2002 as frameworks for consultations among agencies, programmes, organizations, funds and offices of the United Nations working at the regional level. In the case of Africa, the RCM-Africa has evolved from serving as a consultative mechanism into holding formal, annual

sessions at which organizations and agencies of the United Nations system operating in Africa share information on their respective activities and agree to coordinate their strategies for programme delivery in support of the African Union programmes.

2.   Furthermore and based on the mandate derived from UNGA resolution 57/7, the United Nations system in Africa was called to coordinate its activities through the RCM-Africa, in line with NEPAD adopted as the overarching development framework for Africa and other priorities of the African Union and its organs and regional and subregional organizations. RCM-Africa serves as a vehicle for enhancing coordination and coherence by engaging, more and more, in the joint planning and programming of United Nations activities in order to deliver as one in response to the needs and priorities of the African Union and other regional and subregional partners.

3.   The annual RCM-Africa sessions have become a forum for assessing effectiveness of cooperation, collaboration and coordination between the United Nations and the African Union organs and other regional and subregional organizations, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations support for Africa's development. It is in the spirit of past sessions that the United Nations system working in Africa have chosen for the theme of the seventeenth session of RCM-Africa to be: *AU-UN Partnership for the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals.*

4.   Africa's economic performance over last decade has been very robust, growing in the last two years around 4 percent which is higher than the global average of 2.5 percent. Africa has also registered remarkable progress on several socioeconomic indicators despite low initial conditions. Despite the positive performance, much more needs to be done to increase employment for the youth, reduce poverty and improve access to health and education services.

5.   Studies in ECA show that the relatively high level of poverty is linked to the structure of most African economies. African countries are largely dependent on commodities which are exported with little or no value added and therefore not much employment is generated. That is why Africa needs to embark on commodity-based industrialization and through that create decent job opportunities, which in tend will lead to substantial reductions in poverty and the minimization of income and wealth inequalities.

Agenda 2063 and the 10-year Implementation Plan

6.   The Agenda 2063, a plan for Africa's structural transformation, was agreed upon by African Heads of State at the African Union Golden Jubilee Summit of May 2013. Based on the Solemn Declaration, the Summit pledged to develop and pursue a transformational Agenda through eight key areas: (a) African identity and renaissance; (b) the struggle against colonialism and the right to self-determination of people still under colonial rule; (c) an integration agenda; (d) an agenda for social and economic development; (e) an agenda for peace and security; (f) democratic governance; (g) determining Africa's destiny; and (h) Africa's place in the world.

7.   The Agenda is founded on the AU vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena." The Agenda also builds on the AU Constitutive Act and Regional frameworks. In addition, the process takes cognizance of and reviewed national, regional and existing and past continental frameworks such as PIDA, CAADP and MIP, including the Monrovia Declaration, the Lagos Plan of Action, and the Abuja Treaty among others.

8.   The Agenda is also anchored on the AU vision and is based on the seven aspirations derived from the wide consultations, namely:

1. A Prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An Integrated Continent, Politically United, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the Vision of Africa's Renaissance;
3. An Africa of Good Governance, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law;
4. A Peaceful and Secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Values and Ethics;
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth; and
7. Africa as a Strong, Resilient and Influential Global Player and Partner.

9.   The aspirations reflect the desire of Africans for prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, with freedom from conflict and improved human security. They also project an Africa of strong identity, culture and values, as well as a strong and influential partner on the global stage making equal contribution to human progress and welfare – in short a different and better Africa. There are transitions to the aspirations and each milestone of the transition provides a step towards the attainment of the end goal of the aspirations by 2063.

10.   The aspirations embed a strong desire to see a continent where women and the youth have guarantees of their fundamental freedoms and where they assume a leading role in the development of African societies. They are based on the conviction that Africa has the potential and capability to converge and catch up with other regions of the world and thus take her rightful place in the world community.

11.   The Agenda 2063 is expected to be implemented in phases of ten years. The first phase of ten years has been crafted to cover the period 2013-2023 and addresses the following:

i.   Sustainable inclusive economic growth.

ii.   Human capital development.

iii.   Employment creation.

iv.   Social protection.

v.   Gender/women development and youth empowerment.

vi.   Good governance and capable institutions.

vii.   Infrastructural development.

viii.   Science, technology and innovation.

ix.   Peace and security.

x.   Culture, arts and sports.

12.   The First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 (FTYIP) calls on African countries to fast track the implementation of flagship programmes identified to have

immediate positive impact on growth: the integrated high-speed train network; the Great Inga Dam project; the single aviation market; the outer space programme; the Pan-African e-Network; an annual African consultative platform; the virtual university; the African passport and the free movement of persons; the Continental Free Trade Area; silencing the guns by 2020; the development of a commodity strategy; and the establishment of the continental financial institutions, including the African Central Bank by 2030.

13.   In addition, the implementation strategy of Agenda 2063 spells out 20 goals and 34 priority areas. The goals and priorities include: poverty reduction; the expansion of education at all levels; improved maternal and child health, water and sanitation facilities; industrialization of the African economy; greater resilience to the effects of climate change and prioritized adaptation; modernized farming methods for increased production, productivity and value-addition; better and more sustainable management of natural resources, including mineral and agricultural resources; the establishment of a continental free trade and a significantly developed intra-African trade; and a well-developed infrastructure network.

14.   Furthermore, the observance of good governance, the rule of law and human rights, and the cessation of all intercountry and intracountry conflicts on the continent are also goals to be attained by 2023. Also to be achieved are goals in the realm of culture – full engagement with the African diaspora, the development and wider use of African languages, and the growth of the creative arts and cultural industries. The greater empowerment of women and young people is also an important goal to be pursued as is the need to increase Africa's presence and voice in global affairs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

15.   The UN General Assembly has adopted sustainable development goals (SDGs). The SDGs come at a time when billions of people are living in poverty and inequalities within and among countries are on the ascendance as well as enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power. There is also recognition of the challenge of gender inequality, rising unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, threats to global health, conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people. Natural resource depletion and climate change, especially increases in global temperature, sea level rise, and their impact on coastal areas and low-lying coastal countries, including many least developed countries and small island developing States, are among the list of challenges that continue to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.

16.   The SDGs are made up of 17 goals and 169 associated targets. The goals were globally agreed upon through an inclusive process of intergovernmental negotiations and takes account of different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. The targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.

17.   Africa's input into the development of the SDGs was through the Common African Position (CAP). The CAP, which has the same tenants of the Agenda 2063, is Africa's consensus on the continent's challenges, priorities and aspirations, and the strategies for dealing with them. It is the view of the African Union that the Agenda 2063 is in sync with

the SDGs because most of the recommendations of the CAP were taken on board by the UNGA and therefore there is an alignment between the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Need for a common approach to the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs

18. African countries have committed to the implementation of the SDGs as well as the Agenda 2063. The countries also have their own development plans and strategies. It is therefore important to have a common strategy for the implementation of both framework so as to achieve the goals and targets and minimize the challenges associated with implementing both agendas.

19. Most of the SDGs are in congruence with the goals of Agenda 2063. For example, Goal 1 of the Agenda 2063 aims at: *"A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All Citizens."* The achievements of SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere), SDG 2 (end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture), SDG 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), SDG 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries), and SDG 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) is clearly consistent in achieving Goal 1 of the Agenda 2063. The alignment between most of the goals of the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs provide an opportunity to implement both within a single framework without unduly burdening policymakers with multiple development frameworks.

20. Equally important is a need for better coordination to ensure effective implementation and follow-up, addressing areas of convergence as well as those unique to Africa. That is why a coherent and common framework that integrates both Agenda 2063 and the SDGs into national planning framework is needed. The SDGs attempts to respond to the global dimensions of Africa's development challenges while Agenda 2063 responds to the regional dimension. Implementation of both will therefore require: advocacy and sensitization about the details of both frameworks; strengthened capacities to integrate in a coherent fashion, such initiatives in national planning frameworks; and research to support evidence-based policymaking.

21. Accompanying a common framework for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs should be a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools. These tools will reinforce the culture of managing for results with regards to the implementation of the common framework. An M&E framework, by setting targets / milestones, will also ensure that all parties involved work towards achieving the development goals. It also ensures that the causes of non-performance are identified and addressed through evaluation processes.

JOURNALISTS ARE INVITED TO COVER THE 17TH RCM-AFRICA ON 2nd AND 3rd APRIL 2016 AT THE UNECA CONFERENCE CENTER.

Contact names and addresses

For further information about the meeting, please contact:

    Ms. Adwoa Coleman
    Office of the Deputy Chairperson

African Union Commission
Tel: +251 11 551 7700, Fax: +251 11 551 7844
E-mail: nyekye45@gmail.com

Mr. Joseph Atta-Mensah
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Capacity Development Division
P. O. Box 3005, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251-11-5445379
Mobile: 251-9-11-201817
Fax: 251-11-5514461
email: jattamensah@uneca.org or atta-mensahj@un.org
twitter: @jattamensah
website: http://www.uneca.org

Ms. Rawda Omar-Clinton
Programme Officer
AU/NEPAD Support Team
Capacity Development Division
Economic Commission for Africa
Tel: +251 11 544 3363, Fax: +251 11 544 9900
E-mail: romar-clinton@uneca.org