

# MDGs to Agenda 2063/SDGs Transition Report 2016

Towards an integrated and coherent approach to  
sustainable development in Africa





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sustainable development in Africa



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# 1. Introduction

The year 2016 marked a transition period from the Millennium Development Goals to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. African countries are also transitioning from the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to Agenda 2063, a development framework that seeks to expedite the transformation of the continent. This year's report reviews the continent's performance on the MDGs and assesses the opportunities and challenges associated with the transition to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since 1990 at the start of tracking the MDGs, Africa has made important strides in designing mechanisms for implementing and reporting on the MDGs. Significant progress has been recorded on at least five of the eight MDGs: MDG2 – primary school enrolment; MDG3 – gender equality and empowerment of women; MDG4 – reducing child mortality; MDG6 – combating the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and MDG7 – ensuring environmental sustainability. However, progress on the eradication

of extreme hunger and poverty (MDG 1) has been slow with reversals in some countries; maternal deaths have declined precipitously (MDG5) but the levels remain unacceptably high across the continent; and unmet Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) commitments and the persistently low share of Africa in global trade suggests that developing a global partnership for development (MDG8) remains a work in progress.

The lessons learned and momentum gained in implementing and tracking the MDGs will inform the implementation and measurement of progress on the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The broader coverage of the SDGs, greater buy-in by national governments and readiness by the African countries to subscribe to them provides stronger potential for their full integration into national development plans. The SDGs are closely linked to Africa's Agenda 2063 for inclusive and sustainable development and transformation of the continent.

## 2. Methodology

This MDGs-SDGs Transition Report 2016 is a joint product of the African Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) of the United Nations, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Development Programme–Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP-RBA). The report uses the latest updated and harmonized data from the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the official data repository for assessing transition progress from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. It also uses complementary data from United Nations agencies, including the World Bank, and from statistical databases of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). International sources are also used to ensure data comparability on MDG and SDG

indicators across Africa. Irregularity of surveys and censuses, definitions and methods for producing the indicators explain the lag between the reporting year and the data year. Paucity of data, especially for recent years and from some countries that do not produce data regularly, is another challenge.

To mitigate such shortcomings, United Nations agencies compile data from countries using standardized questionnaires and through other agreed mechanisms. Submitted questionnaires are validated through peer reviews. The agencies provide estimates, update data, fill in data gaps by estimating missing values, and make adjustments if needed to ensure cross-country comparability.



## 3. Progress on MDGs 1 to 8

### MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Africa has made steady, albeit slow, progress in reducing poverty since 1990, with significant variation across countries and regions. Special attention to poverty reduction efforts through the MDGs combined with favourable economic conditions and strong economic growth averaging 5 per cent between 2005 and 2014 (IMF, 2015) accounted for most of the progress over the last decade. This reinforces the call for focused action on poverty eradication in the new global development framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Given the less supportive external and internal economic environments resulting in lower GDP growth rates of 3.75 per cent in 2015 and a projected 4.25 per cent growth rate in 2016<sup>1</sup>, the structural transformation agenda in Africa as contained in both the SDGs and Agenda 2063 is more urgent than ever to reduce poverty and susceptibility to shocks.

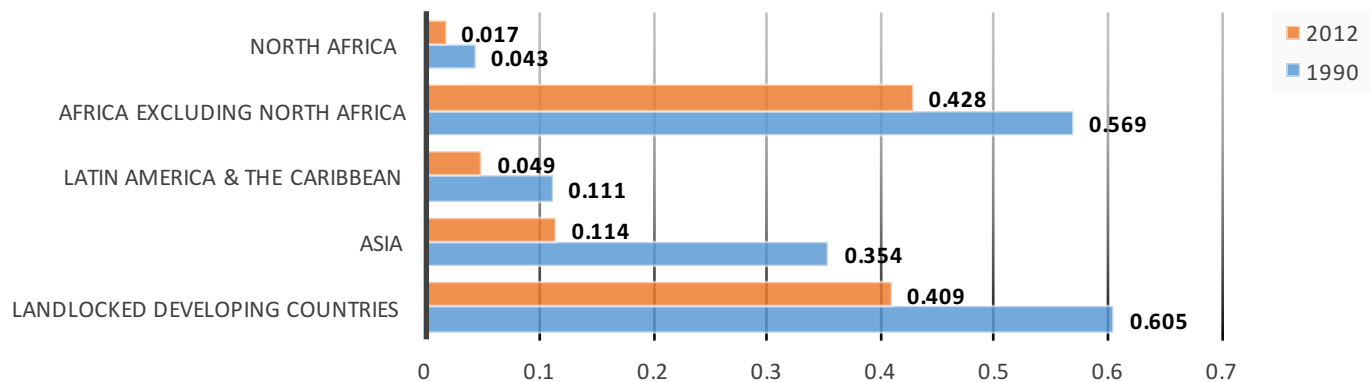
*Poverty in Africa excluding North Africa declined from 56.9 per cent in 1990 to 42.8 per cent<sup>2</sup> in 2012 (Fig.1).* North Africa recorded a 60 per cent reduction in poverty rates (UN Statistics, 2014). However, progress remains below the desirable 28.45 per cent MDG end target with mixed achievements at country level. With the latest data available at the publication of this report, 7 countries had met the poverty target, 12 were close to the target while 11 other countries had seen reversals in their poverty reduction efforts. Africa remains the region in the world with the largest share of poor people. In many countries, rapid poverty reduction is hampered by overreliance on a few sectors for growth, high unemployment rates particularly for youth and women and a lack of industries to absorb the continent's existing large labour supply. Africa's rapid population growth means that there are now close to 110 million more poor people in Africa excluding North Africa than there were in 1990.

*Africa has a large share of the working poor, with relatively high income inequalities.* Unemployment

1 IMF, Regional Economic Outlook, 2015.

2 People living on less than \$1.90 a day. The World Bank Adjusted the poverty measure from \$1.25/day to \$1.90/day (PPP) in 2011.

**Figure 1** Proportion of population living below \$1.25 (PPP) per day (1990 - 2012)



**Source:** UNSD, 2014.

rates in Africa remain high, especially for youth, with some notable variations across regions. Africa's overall unemployment rate was 12 per cent, ranging from 8.2 per cent in Central Africa, 9.1 per cent in West Africa, 10.7 per cent in East Africa, to 13.9 per cent in North Africa and 18.0 per cent in Southern Africa. Youth unemployment rates are much higher, averaging 21.1 per cent. Unemployment rates for female youth are also significantly higher than those for males highlighting the gender dimensions of inequality and poverty dynamics that need to be addressed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

**Indicators of food and nutrition security continue to improve from the 1990 acute rates, but challenges remain.** Africa as a whole has moved from “extremely alarming” levels of hunger and malnutrition of over 50 points according to the Global Hunger Index measure (GHI)<sup>3</sup>, to “serious” levels of hunger in aggregate, with

the worst hunger indicators in 2015 being in the Sahel (33.5), the Horn of Africa (29.7), the Great Lakes region (27.7), Southern Africa (27.5), and West Africa (26). Country variations exist, with a few countries still recording alarming levels of hunger and under-nutrition.

A strategic balance in implementing the SDGs is needed towards meeting the food security goal (SDG 2) through increased agricultural productivity and land use (SDG 15) while mitigating adverse effects on climate change (SDG 13) and biodiversity (SDG 14). The success of the SDG Agenda will depend on the careful implementation of individual goals with due attention to the interactions between and across

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and nutrition situation. To reflect the multidimensional nature of hunger, it combines four component indicators – undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality – into one Index. This ranks countries on a 100-point scale, with 0 being the best score (no hunger) and 100 being the worst, although neither of these extremes occurs in practice. IFPRI, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is used to describe countries' hunger

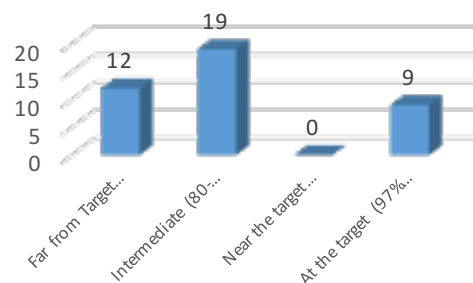
goals resulting from the integrated nature of the sustainable development agenda.

## MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

Africa has made significant progress in achieving MDG 2, but progress has been uneven among countries. In 2013, 9 out of 40 countries (22.5 per cent) with data achieved the target, 19 other countries were close to achieving the target i.e., with an 80-94 per cent annual net enrolment rate (Fig. 2). Six countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Tanzania, Mozambique, Chad and Niger) increased net enrolment ratios by over 30 percentage points. Except for Morocco, where the net enrolment rate increased from 55.3 per cent in 1990 and 75.6 per cent in 2000 to 98.7 per cent in 2013, North African countries experienced marginal to moderate progress because they started from high baselines in 1990 and 2000.

Progress in primary school enrolment was supported by substantial public investments in primary education, the implementation of policy frameworks that promote access to education opportunities especially for underprivileged girls and children, and the mobilization of civil society and the international donor community. Specifically, investments in education road infrastructure (reduction of the distance to school) has had the largest impacts on education access. On the demand side, school meal programmes, scholarships for girls, the abolition of school fees, cash transfers to poor households, and curricula reforms to cope with the special needs of particular communities contributed largely to the expansion of access to education.

**Figure 2: Progress towards Net Enrolment targets, 2013**



Source UNECSO 2015

**Education attainment in emergency situations remains a priority.** Disasters and persistent conflicts obstruct the path to prosperity in Africa, generating negative impacts, especially in the education sector. Ongoing conflicts in Central Africa and unfavourable weather conditions such as droughts and flooding in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa continue to exert pressure on food security and nutrition.

**Equity remains a challenge and alternative models to effectively reach vulnerable and marginalized groups are required.** Implementation of policy frameworks under the MDGs contributed to increasing access but did not succeed in equally providing quality education to all children regardless of their social situation. Many national plans and poverty reduction strategies did not have equity-based targets, and were not accompanied by sufficient allocation of resources, covering education for nomadic groups, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children in emergencies, working children, disabled children and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Primary school completion rates have improved in most countries, but overall progress was insufficient to meet the MDG target.** In 2013, 21.4 per cent

of countries with data achieved the target of full completion in primary education<sup>4</sup>; 11.9 per cent were at intermediate level<sup>5</sup> (progress of at least 40 per cent) and 66.6 per cent were far from the target<sup>6</sup> (below 40 per cent). However, this global picture masks important disparities in both the distance to the MDG target and the achievement since 1990.

***But poor education quality in a number of African countries is a challenge to learning and skills acquisition.***

For instance, African countries perform poorly in the international assessment for student's learning assessment. In 2011, Tunisia and Morocco participated in the TMISS in mathematics at fourth grade level and ranked 49<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> out of 52 participant countries respectively. At one handbook for three pupils in 2012, the average pupil-text book ratio is particularly low in Africa excluding North Africa (PAESEC-2012). Similarly a survey conducted in 2012 by UNESCO ISU estimated the median availability of textbooks in reading and mathematics at about 1.4 pupils per textbook for both subjects.

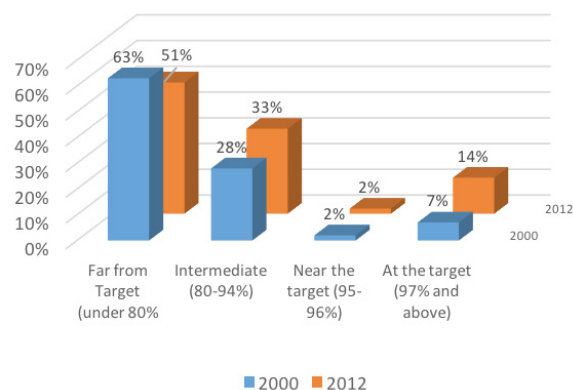
***Progress towards reducing illiteracy remained relatively slow.*** Higher rates of literacy are critical to poverty alleviation. People with higher literacy skills have a lower probability of early death or a higher probability of migration (UNESCO 2015). Possession of reading and writing skills is increasingly a prerequisite even for jobs demanding relatively low qualifications, and it remains a key lever for self-empowerment given the rapidly expanding communication technologies. The

4 Algeria, Botswana, and Egypt Ghana, Mauritius, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and Tunisia.

5 Benin, Morocco, Malawi, Mauritania, and Togo.

6 Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger and Rwanda.

**Figure 3: Slow but steady increase in literacy rates**



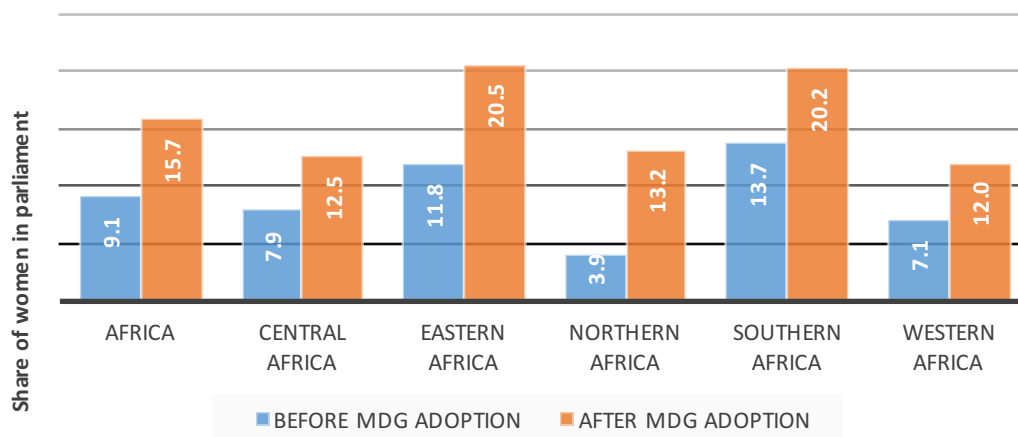
Source UNESCO 2015

share of countries with a youth literacy rate under 50 per cent reduced over the period from 11 per cent in 2000 to nine per cent in 2012. By 2012, 14 per cent of the 49 African countries with data had achieved universal literacy, compared with only 7 per cent in 2000. The percentage of countries at the intermediate level (80-94 per cent literacy) had increased from 28 per cent in 2000 to 33 per cent by 2012. However, 51 per cent of countries are still far from target (Fig. 3).

## MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

***Progress in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women is strong.*** Gender gaps in net primary enrolment and completion rates have narrowed in many countries and women's representation in parliaments increased. The goal on gender equality and empowerment of women provided governments with the opportunity to devise mechanisms for bridging gaps in gender parity, and governments

**Figure 4:** Women's representation in National Parliaments (%)



**Source:** UNSD 2015

acknowledge the dividends of gender equality. This has paid off. Achieving this goal has spillover benefits to other MDGs, such as those related to poverty, health and child welfare. Mechanisms to enhance gender equality, mainly in education, political spaces and the economy, have been established.

**By 2013, eight African countries had over 100 girls enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys, surpassing the gender parity ratio,** and two countries had reached a parity index of 100. On average there were 96 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary schools in 2013, up from 86 in the early 1990s. Gender parity at the secondary and tertiary levels however remains a challenge, owing to the high dropout rates for girls due to many factors, not least cultural norms that favour the advancement of boys over girls.

**Women's representation in national parliaments is on the rise.** The representation of women in the political

sphere, including parliaments, cabinet positions and presidency is increasing. By 2015 women's representation in national parliaments averaged 15.1 per cent, up from 9.1 per cent in 1990. Nevertheless, the continent clearly remains below the 30 per cent target (Fig. 4 below).

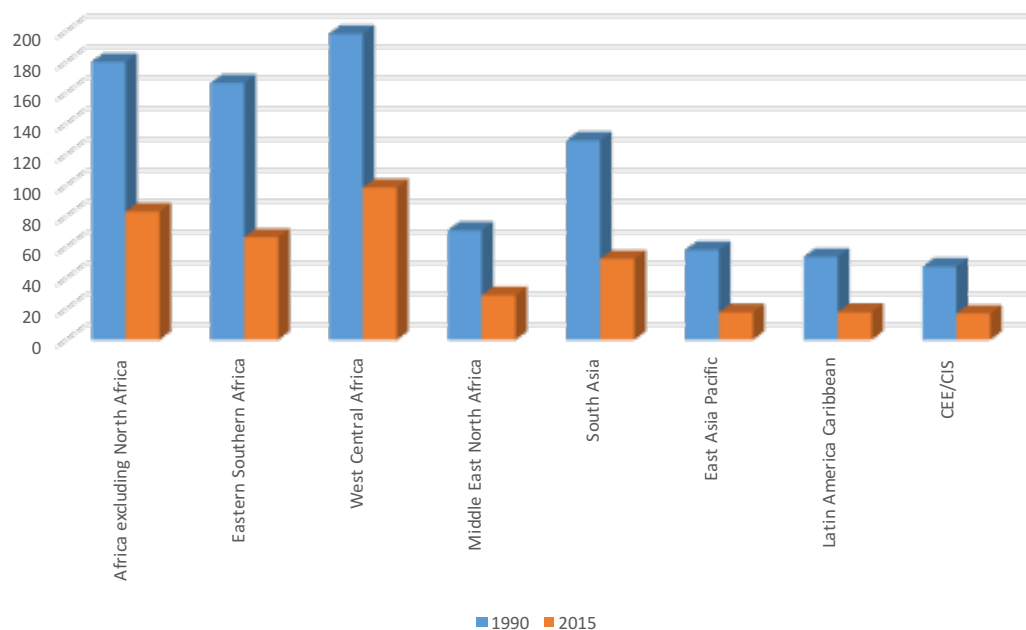
For most countries, the shift in numbers and percentage of women's representation coincided with rigorous implementation of gender-sensitive constitutional quotas (e.g. Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda). In others like Seychelles high representation of women resulted from its history of openness, with women traditionally playing a key role in public affairs. Improvements in educational attainment of women is also contributing to women's empowerment. The literacy gap between men and women declined from 10 percentage points in 2000 to 6 percentage points in 2012.

## MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

*During the MDG period, Africa witnessed unprecedented declines in child mortality.* By 2015, under-five mortality in Africa excluding North Africa was estimated as 83 deaths per 1,000 children born alive, down from 180/1,000 in 1990. The pace of decline in child mortality increased in 34 African countries between the periods 2000–2010 and 1990–2000 (Rajaratnam 2010). Under-five mortality declined even more rapidly in North Africa, from 73 per 1,000 in 1990 to 24 per 1,000 in 2015 (Fig. 5). Similarly, infant mortality rates showed steep reductions in both North Africa and Africa excluding North Africa over the same period.

*Immunization and declining malaria deaths have been key to reducing child mortality.* The biggest contributors to gains in child survival in Africa include increased immunization coverage, addressing malaria and other causes of child deaths (diarrhoea, pneumonia, etc.), even in countries with weak health systems. Between 2000 and 2006, the coverage of the first-dose measles vaccine increased from 56 to 73 per cent, leading to a 91 per cent reduction in measles deaths. Reductions in malaria-related deaths accounted for 20 per cent of the decline in child mortality. Treatments for acute respiratory infections and diarrhea, two of the biggest childhood killer diseases, improved considerably. Deployment of community health workers to provide primary health care in rural areas in countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania has greatly contributed

**Figure 5:** Child Mortality Rates by Region



Source: UNSD 2015

to increased access to basic health care including vaccination, especially in rural communities.

More effort is needed to avert the deaths of millions of children from preventable causes. Reducing child (and maternal) mortality remains a global priority for the SDGs and the momentum garnered during the MDG period must be sustained. In the coming years, as Africa's share of births increases, so will its share of the global burden of child mortality, predicted to rise to 60 per cent of the global deaths among under-five children.

***Inequities in the reduction in child mortality have persisted over time.*** Reducing wealth and geographical disparities in the coverage of high-impact health interventions will help countries reduce child mortality rates more equitably and rapidly. Multipronged approaches are needed to upgrade human resources for health, improve the quality of clinical care and expand community outreach services for child health. Interventions such as family planning for birth spacing, appropriate nutrition, hand-washing, etc. are highly effective in averting child (and maternal) deaths. These need to be applied more widely in Africa.

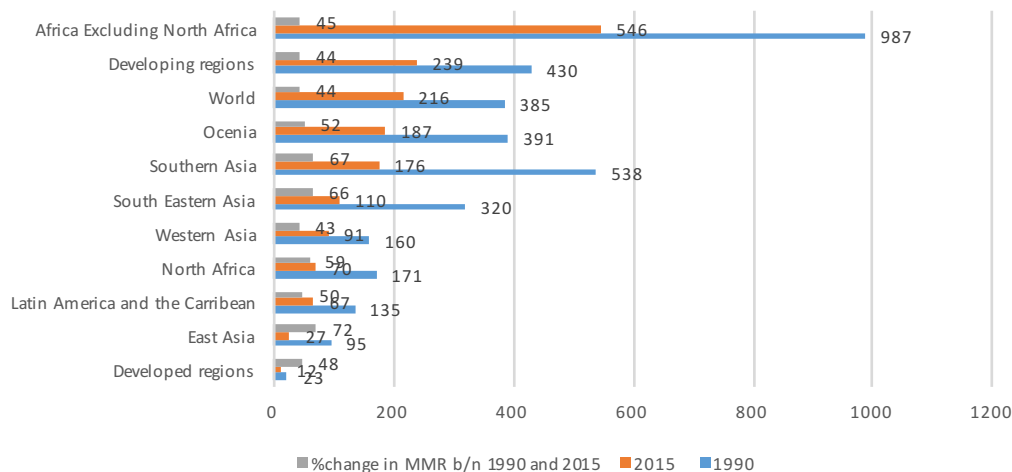
## MDG 5: Improve Maternal Mortality

***Large reductions in maternal mortality were recorded globally, but the target was not met.*** The magnitude of the reduction differed substantially between regions during 1990-2015 (Fig. 6) and no region achieved the target of reducing maternal mortality by three quarters from the 1990 levels. Between 1990 and 2015, Africa excluding North Africa recorded a 45 per cent reduction in maternal mortality, but still accounts for two-thirds of all maternal deaths

per year worldwide. North Africa recorded a 59 per cent reduction in maternal deaths over the same period (WHO, 2015). Cabo Verde, Rwanda and Libya achieved the target of reducing maternal mortality ratio by three quarters, and except for Zimbabwe and South Africa, the rest of Africa recorded reductions in MMR. The rates of decline differ by country however; at 1,360 per 100,000 live births, Sierra Leone has the highest MMR globally based on 2015 figures, and 19 other African countries have MMR above 500 deaths.

***Access to skilled health workers, contraceptives and antenatal care reduces maternal deaths.*** Declines in maternal mortality rates between 1990 and 2015 can be attributed in part to improvements in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, in contraceptive prevalence rates and in antenatal care coverage. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel in Africa increased from 45 per cent to 71 per cent between 1990 and 2014, even though this is relatively low by global standards. Africa also increased the contraceptive prevalence rate from 28 per cent in 1990 to 43.6 per cent in 2013. This figure is only higher than the rate in Oceania. Antenatal care coverage with at least one visit also improved in all regions of Africa between 1990 and 2014.

***Contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) among African countries increased to 43.6 per cent in 2013 (56 percentage point increase on the 1990 level),*** but is still high by global standards. Africa has the highest level of unmet family planning needs, at 18 per cent. Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit) in all regions of Africa continued to improve, and by 2014, rates ranged from 72 per cent in Central and West Africa to 89 per cent in the East and North and 95 per cent in Southern Africa. Adolescent birth rates

**Figure 6: Trends in Maternal Mortality by region**

**Source:** UNSD 2015

remain highest in Africa excluding North Africa, at 118 births per 1,000 adolescents; eight countries have adolescent births rates exceeding 150/1,000. Thus Africa needs to invest considerable efforts to improve access to contraceptives, which is critical for child spacing and avoiding unwanted pregnancies. Universal access to education and health services for adolescents will help to ensure that vulnerable people live to their full potential and contribute to economic growth.

## MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

**Steep decline in HIV/AIDS has been recorded in recent years.** HIV incidence and prevalence rates in Africa declined faster over the one-year period 2012-2013 than over the 11-year period 2001-2012 combined. In Africa excluding North Africa HIV/AIDS incidence

rates declined by 6.45 per cent in the period 2012-2013 as against a 4.95 per cent decline over the 2001-2012 period. The corresponding figures for HIV/AIDS prevalence rates were 2.22 per cent versus 1.91 per cent respectively. For North Africa, no change was recorded, the incidence and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS remained low and constant at 0.01 per cent and 0.1 per cent respectively over the same period.

**Increased access to ARTs contributed to HIV/AIDS decline.** Between 2009 and 2011, access to ARTs (antiretroviral therapies) in 14 African countries increased by at least 50 per cent, of which five<sup>7</sup> had an increase of over 100 per cent. In absolute terms, based on 2011 data at least 22 African countries had an **ART coverage exceeding** 50 per cent. Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland and Zambia are the best

<sup>7</sup> Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Egypt, Gambia, Liberia, Mauritius, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, and Zimbabwe.



performers in this category with coverage above 80 per cent.

**Mixed progress in combating malaria and tuberculosis (TB) was recorded.** Overall, the incidence of malaria declined by 6 per cent during 2000-2013, but there was a slight increase of 1.3 per cent during 2013-2015, reflecting a slackening in efforts against the diseases. More positively, malaria-related deaths declined by almost 30 per cent during 2013-2015 (27 per cent decline in landlocked countries). Unfortunately, the gains in TB also reversed in recent years. The incidence, prevalence and death rate associated with TB increased by 10.6 per cent, 0.3 per cent and 59.3 per cent, respectively, during 2012-2013, a reversal from the declines of 26.3 per cent, 20.0 per cent and 54.2 per cent respectively witnessed during 2002-2012.

## MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

**Carbon dioxide emissions in Africa are low but rising in most countries.** Africa's carbon dioxide emissions are negligible compared to the rest of the world, and Libya and Gabon have substantially decreased their emissions. But over half of African countries experienced an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Equatorial Guinea recorded the largest increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 9 metric tons per capita. The majority of the CO<sub>2</sub> emanates from changes in land use.

**A decreasing trend of consumption of ozone-depleting substances is noted in Africa.** African countries have been successful in reducing their consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances and complying with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete

the Ozone Layer. With the notable exception of Botswana, Gabon, Madagascar and Mauritania, all other African countries decreased their use of ozone-depleting substances between 2000 and 2013.

**Slow progress in improving access to safe drinking water in Africa.** The global MDG target for access to safe drinking water was met five years ahead of schedule and exceeded the 2015 Millennium Development Goal Target of 88 per cent (UN, 2015). However, even though all African countries except Algeria have shown improvements in this indicator during the period 1990-2015, the continent did not achieve the target.

**Slow increase in access to improved sanitation.** The only developing regions that met the sanitation target were the Caucasus and Central Asia, East Asia, North Africa and West Asia (UNICEF, WHO, 2015). Africa excluding North Africa missed the target. The proportion of Africans with access to sanitation facilities increased marginally from 24 per cent in 1990 to 30 per cent in 2015. Only five African countries, namely Seychelles, Libya, Egypt, Mauritius and Tunisia, record over 90 per cent access to improved sanitation facilities in 2015. Out of 51 African countries with data available for 2015, 36 countries record below 50 per cent coverage in improved sanitation facilities.

**Africa experienced a decrease in slum dwellers among the urban population.** With the exception of West Asia, the proportion of the urban population living in slums decreased within the developing regions. In Africa, the percentage of slum dwellers decreased from 70 per cent in 1990 to 65 per cent in 2000 and subsequently to 55.2 per cent in 2014. However,

globally Africa excluding North Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of slums.

## MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

***Africa's share of global trade is declining.*** The share of Africa's exports in global merchandise exports declined from 3.3 per cent in 2013 to 3.0 per cent in 2014<sup>8</sup>. This decline is mainly due to the unfavourable movement in global commodity prices. Especially from the second half of 2014, commodity prices have fallen by more than 60 per cent, and even below the level in the 2008 global financial crisis.

***Unfulfilled ODA commitments to Africa.*** Most DAC countries have not fulfilled their ODA commitments to provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) to developing countries. In 2014, only five countries, namely Sweden (1.1 per cent), Luxembourg (1.07 per cent), Norway (0.99 per cent), Denmark

(0.85 per cent) and the United Kingdom (0.71 per cent) continued to meet the ODA target. This number is unchanged from 2013. Total ODA reached only 0.29 per cent of the combined GNI, leaving a gap of 0.41 per cent, on top of similar delivery gaps in previous years.

***African LDCs share of total ODA is declining.*** As a proportion of the total, ODA disbursements to African LDCs decreased from 79.5 per cent in 1990 to 73.5 per cent in 2000 and subsequently to 63.8 per cent in 2014. The ODA disbursements to African SIDS have actually not increased over the period 1990-2014. ODA to African SIDs in 1990 was \$321.3 million and in 2014 was \$333.8 million in current prices.

Although the overall ODA to Africa is likely to remain at its current levels over the period 2015-2018, LDCs and other low-income countries will benefit most from the future ODA, whose levels are expected to grow by 5.7 per cent in real terms.

## 4. Transitioning to the new Global and Regional Initiatives - Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063: Looking ahead and looking beyond

As it prepared for the transition to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, Africa's performance on five of the eight MDGs was impressive but progress remained weak on three. The two landmark events signal a two-pronged transition: a global level transition from the MDGs to Agenda 2030 and a continental transition to Agenda 2063. Thus, a common framework for Member States to integrate the two Agendas into their national development plans and monitoring processes is needed.

Agenda 2063 is a long-term development framework that aims to materialize the vision of: *an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the world*. It is anchored by seven aspirations that are supported by corresponding goals, priority areas, targets, and strategies. There are currently twenty goals that apply to the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (AUC, 2015). The framework consolidates new and existing regional initiatives such as NEPAD into a forward-looking transformational framework for Africa.

The priority areas of Agenda 2063 span the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental, which are integrated into the 17 goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators of the initiative (UN 2015a). Structural transformation underpinned by industrialization is at the heart of the goals and targets relating to economic development. The social development priorities focus on health, education, water and sanitation, gender and social inclusion. The environmental priorities focus on measures to address climate change, as well as to preserve and harness marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

There is convergence of the two agendas particularly at the level of the goals. Convergence is a result of the fact that Agenda 2030 was informed by Africa's priorities for the Post-2015 Development Agenda as encapsulated in the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP). CAP underpinned the negotiating position of the African Group in their negotiations of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In turn, Agenda 2063 builds on the elements and priorities of CAP, hence several of the priorities in Agenda 2030 are also reflected in Agenda 2063.

## Challenges in the transition to the SDGs

A key implementation challenge for African Member States will be the integration of both agendas in their national planning frameworks. Coherent implementation, monitoring and evaluation of both frameworks requires an integrated set of goals, targets and indicators and a harmonized review and reporting platform. In the integration process, three categories of indicators emerge: indicators that overlap or are common to both Agendas; indicators that are exclusive to Agenda 2063 and not 2030; and indicators that are exclusive to Agenda 2030 and not 2063. The challenge is how to address the set of non-converging indicators. One possible option for the design of an integrated framework would be to aggregate core indicators from each of the three indicator categories described above. To address these concerns the AUC and ECA are developing a core set of regional indicators that all RECs and AU Member States will be required to report on. A draft common reporting template has been designed for this purpose.

**Stronger institutional arrangements needed.** Successful implementation of both Agendas will require an effective institutional architecture. Sustainable development requires an integrated and coordinated approach to problem solving and policy-making. The role of planning agencies will be paramount in ensuring that the economic, social and environmental sectors of the economy work closely together to ensure that the three dimensions are reflected in all aspects of programme and project execution.

**Aligning national planning cycles with Agendas 2063 and 2030 needed for implementation and effective reporting.** The different timelines of Agendas 2063 and 2030 raises questions about the operational compatibility between the two. Furthermore, the planning cycles of national long-term visions and medium-term frameworks are rarely aligned with regional and global frameworks. In some cases this could potentially delay implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. While Agenda 2063 is a 50-year vision statement, it is operationalized through a series of 10-year implementation plans. The first **ten-year plan** of Agenda 2063 ends in 2023 and the second in 2033. Thus the first two implementation plans of Agenda 2063 are closely aligned to Agenda 2030.

The more significant challenge is at the national level where there is considerable variation between national planning and regional and global cycles. In general, countries whose medium-term plans coincide with the commencement of the SDGs are better placed to align their new plans to the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Nevertheless, countries in the process of implementing existing plans should review such plans in the light of the new global and continental frameworks.

**Follow-up and periodic review needed to remain on track.** Effective follow-up of both agendas requires multi-tiered architecture of arrangements spanning continental, national and sub-national jurisdictions. The burden of reporting will be substantial if countries have to report on one set of regional indicators for Agenda 2063 and another set for the SDGs. Adopting

a single harmonized follow-up architecture for Agendas 2030 and 2063 is therefore an imperative.

The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is a plausible option as a platform for follow-up and review of both Agendas in Africa.

In March 2015 the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was mandated to follow up on Agenda 2030 by a resolution adopted during the joint ECA AUC Conference of Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning. In May 2016 ECA convened the first meeting of the AFRSD since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The conference deliberated on pertinent issues of how countries can harmonize frameworks and establish common mechanisms of implementation and follow-up to achieve Africa's collective goals of sustainable development and structural transformation.

***Data challenges must be addressed.*** Access to data will be vital for effective follow up. The global indicators for Agenda 2030 have been classified into three categories: those for which data exist and there is an accepted methodology for data collection; those that have a commonly accepted methodology but no reliable sources of data, and those for which no accepted methodology exists and also lack reliable data. Similar challenges exist for the Agenda 2063 indicators even though they have not been classified as such. Addressing the data challenges will require a phased approach. One can conceive of a situation where only indicators for which a methodology for data collection exists and for which data is available will be monitored during the initial stages of implementation. In the interim however, National Statistics Offices will require support in designing new methodologies, developing baseline estimates and compiling data where none exists.

## 5. Country experiences in the transition to Agenda 2030/2063

African countries are at different stages of the process of integrating the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in their national development planning frameworks. In most countries, increased awareness of both Agenda 2030 and 2063 beyond the central planning authorities, key ministries and the national statistics offices is needed. Awareness of Agenda 2063 is particularly low at the sub-national levels. Some countries such as Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda, whose planning cycle coincided with the commencement of the SDGs, are at a more advanced stage of the integration process. Others like Kenya and Mali are establishing mechanisms for smooth integration and transition to the new global agenda.

For example, Botswana's new long term vision (***Vision Beyond 2016***) and the 11th National Development Plan (NDP11, covering the period 2017-2023) have adopted an incremental approach to sustainable development, first focusing on affordable "low-hanging fruits" and then moving on to more complex interventions. Sustainable development will be aligned with the medium-term National Development Plans (NDP11-NDP14) which go up to 2041. The NDP11

will focus on reorienting and transitioning the country's development policies and frameworks to sustainable development. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2011-2015* seeks to achieve sustainable development by 2030 by mainstreaming sustainability in all public policies. Ethiopia has taken steps to integrate Agenda 2030 and the Common African Position in its second growth and transformation plan (GTP-II) (2015-2019). The country is also integrating environmental sustainability which was originally captured separately in its *Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGE)* in the new GTP-II. In Ghana, the central planning agency - the National Development Planning Commission - is ensuring alignment with the SDGs through directives and guidelines to inform line ministries' development plans. The SDGs will be streamlined at both national and sub-national levels. Kenya whose current second medium term plan ends in 2017 is committed to ensuring that Agendas 2030 and 2063 are reflected in the new plan. Rwanda has elaborated a national and subnational coordination/oversight mechanism to facilitate the integration of the SDGs into its new planning framework and long term vision, with Parliament and the Senate providing

overall oversight and the Cabinet providing strategic orientation and approving funding for SDG priorities. The annual leadership retreats (*Umushyikirano*), chaired by the President, will monitor progress in implementation and reporting. At the district level, coordination is achieved through district councils

and Joint Action Development Forums (Sekamondo, 2016). Awareness-raising and sensitization about the SDGs through consultation and translating the SDGs into the national language, Kinyarwanda, are at the heart of the integration process.

## 6. Conclusions

**Promising start for the SDGs.** This year's MDGs-SDGs Transition Report 2016 provides an end-term review of the continent's performance on the MDGs and an assessment of the opportunities and challenges of transitioning to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adoption of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 is an opportunity for African countries to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs. However the broad scope of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 coupled with the task of integrating both agendas for coherent implementation poses both a challenge and an opportunity for African countries.

**Both Agenda 2030 and 2063 provide important prototypes for Member States to develop and strengthen their national long-term development visions.** Integrating the two Agendas into a common framework, and furthermore ensuring that national development plans are adopted to them, provides opportunities for promoting policy coherence and minimizing duplication and reporting burden on policymakers. This will also orient development partners to supporting one coherent set of development priorities. Development partners need to support Member States through devising the

coherent framework that integrates both Agendas in a balanced way. Successful transition will require: clarity about the relationship between the global and continental agendas, integrated and coordinated institutional arrangements for implementation, strengthened capacities for data collection and analysis; and a monitoring and evaluation system that is horizontally (sectoral) and vertically (national versus sub-national) integrated.

**Africa's dual transition to the SDGs and Agenda 2063 requires an integrated results framework.** Adoption of the two Agendas signals a two-pronged transition: a global-level transition from the MDGs to Agenda 2030 and a continent-level transition from NEPAD to Agenda 2063. Both Agendas are comprehensive, underpinned by an extensive consultation process, and share common aspirations of structural transformation and sustainable development. However, the two Agendas are not identical. Implementing them will require effective messaging about their content, coherent integration of both into national planning frameworks and an integrated results framework for follow-up.



***Institutional arrangements for implementation must be anchored by strong coordination mechanisms.*** In the past, African governments have taken a sequential approach to sustainable development, adopting a “develop first and address sustainability issues later” philosophy. However, Rio+20 reiterated that sustainable development goals require an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses economic,

social and environmental dimensions of sustainability in a balanced way. An integrated approach to implementation implies breaking institutional silos and strengthening sectoral (horizontal) and subnational (vertical) coordination across implementing entities. The institutional arrangements of the eight case-study countries in this report provide important lessons for other African countries.

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Africa has made important strides in implementing the MDGs. Significant progress has been recorded on at least five of the eight MDGs: MDG2 – primary school enrolment; MDG3 – gender equality and empowerment of women; MDG4 – reducing child mortality; MDG6 – combating the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and MDG7 – ensuring environmental sustainability.

On the other hand, the partial fulfillment of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) commitments coupled with Africa's persistently low share of Africa global trade suggests that developing a global partnership for development (MDG8) remains a work in progress. Moreover, even though maternal deaths have declined precipitously (MDG5) the levels remain unacceptably high across the continent. Meanwhile, progress on the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty (MDG 1) has been slow with reversals in some countries.

Consolidating and sustaining the progress made so far therefore remains a critical challenge for Africa. In this context, the adoption of Africa's Agenda 2063 in January 2015 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September of the same year was both timely and appropriate because both agendas reaffirm the centrality of sustainability to the development discourse.

African countries have already started the hard work of implementing Agenda 2063 and 2030. However, success will require among others, strengthened capacities for integration of both agendas in national planning frameworks, effective institutional coordination and strong statistical systems to support evidenced based policymaking and follow-up.



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