



**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

Republic of Kenya



**AUDA-NEPAD**  
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**Symposium on  
“Strengthening Capacities of  
Public Institutions for Transformational  
Leadership, Innovation and Inclusion  
to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable  
Development and Agenda 2063  
in East Africa”**



**16-18 October 2019  
Nairobi, Kenya**

# CONCEPT NOTE



UN Photo/Sophia Paris

## Background

In 2015, the African Union (AU) adopted the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, as “both a Vision and an Action Plan.... a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny.” It is “a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent” creating a roadmap for the continent’s pursuit for inclusive, transformative and sustainable development. In the same year, a united African voice joined world leaders at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development titled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions” (A/RES/70/1, para. 35). Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda specifically calls for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

An integrated and coordinated implementation of both strategic frameworks, Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda, offers Africa a unique opportunity to undergo a positive socio-economic transformation while preserving the environment. Sustainable development is at the heart of both strategic plans and in the 2030 Agenda. It is defined as the pursuit of “five Ps”: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships to effectively address the biggest two challenges of poverty eradication and climate change.

Good practices, lessons and challenges in East Africa are already emerging. These have been presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) where six East African countries presented their VNRs, such as Rwanda and Tanzania in 2019, Ethiopia and Kenya in 2017, Madagascar and Uganda in 2016. For instance, in its 2019 Voluntary National Review, Rwanda notes that “1. Visionary leadership, effective governance, and accountability are critical for the achievement of the SDGs, 2. Home-Grown Solutions rooted in the Rwandan culture are resource-efficient and play a major role in enhancing ownership and accelerating development outcomes. 3. A full integration of SDGs in the national planning and monitoring framework is critical for effective implementation.”<sup>1</sup> During the 2020 HLPF, East African countries such as Mozambique will be presenting their Voluntary National Reviews where SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 9, SDG 14 and SDG 17 will all be reviewed for a second time since 2017.

Against this backdrop, UN DESA’s Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, with support from its Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) and in collaboration with the

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<sup>1</sup> Rwanda 2019 Voluntary National Review. Accessed at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23069Rwanda\\_Main\\_Messages\\_VNR\\_Rwanda\\_Revised\\_with\\_word\\_limit.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23069Rwanda_Main_Messages_VNR_Rwanda_Revised_with_word_limit.pdf)

Government of Kenya and the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA - NEPAD), is organizing a Symposium to enhance public servants' capacities in East Africa.

## Objective

The main objective of the Symposium is to strengthen the capacities of government officials in East Africa to transform their own public institutions and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The Symposium aims to reflect on how best to mobilize, organize and equip institutions to effectively promote sustainable development by taking stock of progress made in the implementation of both agendas.

It will also provide an opportunity to discuss how to promote government innovation for social inclusion of vulnerable groups, with a focus on youth, gender and persons with disabilities. It will engage with the task force of schools of public administration from East Africa under the Global Initiative of Schools of Public Administration to Implement the SDGs. The aim will be to develop and update public service training curricula and public service performance management frameworks, integrating key competencies and skills needed for public servants to implement the 2030 Agenda.

## Thematic Focus

The 2063 Agenda and the 2030 Agenda will not be realized unless public institutions in Africa become more effective, accountable and inclusive and unless services are delivered in a more equitable manner, considering the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Africa has recorded sustained and impressive economic growth. However, Africa's growth needs to be more inclusive and translated into jobs and improved well-being for all, with a particular focus on sustainability. Despite encouraging progress, poverty and inequality remain two of the major challenges across the continent.

The SDGs, as an integrated framework, call for a whole-of-society approach, and many countries have been moving in this direction. National mainstreaming of the SDGs through a whole-of-government approach that ensures policy coherence and coordination across government is critical to foster national ownership and to address the inter-linkages among the SDGs and their targets.

While countries in East Africa have registered great progress in establishing democratic governance systems, including by regularly holding elections, significant efforts and country-level commitments are needed to consolidate good governance and build lasting peace. East African countries highlighted, through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) they presented at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 that: "weak multi-sectoral implementation planning" and national to local "community engagement" are still major challenges. Countries also noted that policy coordination with public-private stakeholders is a

challenge. This will require governance transformation and public administration innovation at all levels.

The national and regional development strategies of African countries have put emphasis on transformation in alignment with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Based on DPIDG's research, 25 out of 54 African countries have "transformation" as a primary objective in their national development strategies. In addition, most of these countries highlight in their strategies the need for good governance, innovation and digital government and effective human resources development. The principles of effective governance for sustainable development highlight the need for pragmatic and ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to reach the SDGs, through the focus on effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Promoting Transformational Leadership and Strengthening Public Servants' Capacities to Realize the SDGs***

It is widely recognized among African government officials that transformational leadership can spearhead the implementation and steer development. Leadership matters for engaging stakeholders in development priorities and policy actions, developing plans and policies in line with the SDGs, coordinating implementation and monitoring progress.

Transformational leadership for achieving sustainable development begins with good governance. Implementation requires a sustained, exemplary leadership that is transparent, inclusive and attentive to people's needs. In fact, implementation should be framed based on the needs voiced directly by the people. Transformational leadership is key to transforming government institutions and internalizing new values and behaviors to achieve the SDGs. Indeed, to achieve the SDGs and the principle of leaving no one behind, public servants must change their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to align them with the new and/or revamped institutions being set up to spearhead SDG implementation.

The 2030 Agenda depends on reversing low levels of motivation, commitment and job satisfaction in the public service as organizations are made up of people and the state of public service motivation enables government capacity to deliver the SDGs (UN, 2016). Many African countries have started to reshape civil service with a series of reforms that are aimed at integrating sustainable development into public administration. Strengthening the capacities of public servants is key to the success of any institutional reform. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) defines capacity as "the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully," and capacity development as "the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time" to achieve their own development objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8, para. 31

Governance transformation and public sector innovation cannot happen without competent and motivated public servants. It is necessary to equip public servants with the capacities to bolster cooperation between levels of government and across government departments.

### ***Promoting Governance Transformation, Public Sector Innovation, and Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Service Delivery***

There is a need to take stock of what lessons have emerged in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions and to deepen the understanding and knowledge of what it takes to promote transformation, innovation and leadership in the public sector to realize the SDGs. The transformation that will lead Africa to achieve sustainable development will depend on several factors. These include transforming institutions, organizations, and mindsets to embrace the values and principles that are embedded in the 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda, such as equity, integration, leaving no one behind, innovation, collaboration, among others.

Good governance, strong and effective institutions, availability of financial resources, the right policy mix, the efficient use of resources, access to environmentally-friendly technology and innovations, human and institutional capacity development as well as strengthened and sustained international partnerships will together help ensure that East Africa will transform effectively and achieve sustainable development.

Strengthening public institutions for transformation must be coupled with public sector innovation. The latter is required to respond to increasing demands from people for quality public services while developing and maintaining trust in government.

### ***Inclusive Service Delivery – the Critical Role of Gender Equality, Youth and Persons with Disabilities***

Achieving the global Agenda on sustainable development is unlikely to occur if vulnerable groups are not part of the process of change. Women and vulnerable groups, such as youth and persons with disabilities, can contribute significantly to advancing sustainable development if they are fully included in decision-making processes and service delivery. It is, therefore, important to identify practical and tangible solutions for ensuring the inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities in public service delivery.

***Gender Equality.*** Women's rights are hampered by limited access to social services along with "entrenched gender discrimination" especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Gender equality is recognized as not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Women have a right to equality in all areas. The 2030 Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063 will be within reach only when women's political participation and leadership and economic empowerment are advanced. The Africa's Agenda 2063 aspires to achieve full gender parity, with women occupying at least 50 per cent of elected public offices at all levels, and half of managerial positions in the public and private sectors. At the 24th Session of the African Union (AU) Heads of States' Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 – 31

January 2015, which focused on the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”, it was decided that the first decade of AU 2063 should focus on the important role of women on the continent<sup>3</sup>.

**Youth.** The share of Africa’s youth in the world is forecasted to increase to 42 per cent by 2030 and is expected to continue to grow throughout the remainder of the 21st century, more than doubling from current levels by 2055<sup>4</sup>. The Africa continent’s youthful population presents a powerful opportunity for accelerated economic growth and innovation. Yet this demographic trend also presents economic and social challenges, as well as implications for peace and security. According to the 8th Annual Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum 2019, failure to foster youth development in an inclusive manner or fulfil young people’s rights can lead to inequalities with long-term economic and social consequences<sup>5</sup>. The creation of decent jobs through multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, is critical to empowering the youth and promoting inclusion and engagement of the youth in Africa. Critical to the success of the 2030 Agenda and Africa’s Agenda 2063 are the role of youth in engaging with local and national governments in delivering on policies and programmes.

**Persons with Disabilities.** Disability inclusion is not only a fundamental human right, it is “central to the promise” of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development<sup>6</sup>. In Africa, an estimated 60-80 million people are living with disabilities today. Persons with disability are estimated at 10 per cent of the general African population, but possibly as high as 20 per cent in the poorer regions<sup>7</sup>. Main barriers to disability inclusion entail discrimination and stigma on the ground of disability, lack of accessibility to physical and virtual environments, lack of access to assistive technology, essential services, rehabilitation and support for independent living that are critical for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities as agents of change and beneficiaries of development.

## Structure and Methodology

The Regional Symposium will include plenary sessions and group discussions where participants will identify next steps to strengthen capacities to transform governance, innovate public administration and integrate institutional approaches for accelerated implementation of the SDGs. The Symposium will build on UNDESA/DPIDG’s current consultations and capacity development activities with SDG focal points and Institutes of Public Administration (IPAs) in East Africa. These activities have led to the inclusion of transformational leadership, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national training programs for public service in some countries in the region. Advances have been made in countries such as Rwanda, Uganda and more, especially through partnerships with the African

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dirco.gov.za/department/agenda2063/au\\_agenda\\_2063\\_report.pdf](http://www.dirco.gov.za/department/agenda2063/au_agenda_2063_report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/peace/youth.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2019doc/yf2019-BackgroundNote.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the 2019 annual conference on the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.disabled-world.com/news/africa/>

Association of Public Administration, United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), UN agencies and other key institutions.

The Regional Symposium will consist of four plenary sessions and parallel training working groups on special thematic issues and one Study Visit. The thematic issues focus on the expressed challenges of East African countries in previous Voluntary National Reviews regarding the implementation of the SDGs and the areas of transformational leadership and institutional strengthening.

Plenary Session I will provide an overview of the progress of Agenda 2063 and SDG implementation at the regional level and the crosscutting roles of public institutions and transformational leadership. Plenary Session II will examine how to leave no one behind through inclusive governance and transformational leadership. Plenary Session III will share and examine innovations in public service delivery to realize the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Finally, Plenary Session IV will focus on partnership-building and follow-up actions.

In addition to the plenary sessions, there will be two parallel working groups. The first one will consider issues related to inclusive service delivery with a focus on vulnerable groups, whereas the second one will address the topic of transformational leadership. The working groups will enable participants to examine challenges and strategies. Recommendations from the working groups will be shared in various plenary sessions.

The Symposium will be conducted in English.

## Target Audience and Beneficiaries

The Symposium will bring together participants from 15 countries in the East Africa region.

Participants will include mixed delegations of government officials of senior rank from target countries, in particular SDG focal points, Ministries or other entities in charge of public administration and/or overseeing public service management; and schools of public administration or institutes of public management.

The ultimate beneficiaries are the people of the East African region. They will benefit from a more competent public service and transformational leadership needed to accelerate SDG implementation and to achieve Agenda 2063.



List of East African countries expected to attend the conference:

Burundi		Comoros		Djibouti	
Eritrea		Ethiopia		Madagascar	
Malawi		Mozambique		Rwanda	
Somalia		South Sudan		Tanzania	
Uganda		Zambia		Kenya	

## Expected Outcomes

It is expected that by the end of the Symposium, participants will have:

- Enhanced understanding of the role of public institutions and transformational leadership to accelerate SDG implementation in target countries;
- Enhanced government officials' skills to mainstream transformational leadership, the principles of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in their public sector performance policies, and strategies;
- Developed follow up actions to promote institutional coordination and innovation for accelerated implementation of the SDGs;
- Assessed current training and other capacity development programmes and their effectiveness in changing public service values and behaviors in line with the 2030 Agenda;
- Increased number of partnerships and networks developed to strengthen the capacities of public institutions to implement the SDGs in an integrated, effective, transparent and accountable way;
- Expression of interest to transfer and adopt innovative cases and good practices among participating Member States in designing, delivering and implementing policies and programmes for realizing the SDGs;

A brief Report documenting the key discussions and outcomes of the proceedings will be produced and shared online with Symposium participants, stakeholders, and the wider public.

## Follow up Actions

- Expression of commitment to integrate strategies, lessons learned and methodologies into policies, programmes and legislative/ institutional frameworks;
- Increased number of domestic capacity development training activities, policy initiatives and actions inspired by the Symposium to support the SDG implementation; and
- Number of partnerships between participating countries through South-South cooperation.
- Follow-up trainings and advisory services, facilitated by the UN and partners, on government innovation for social inclusion and other courses, upon request of government officials.

An evaluation of the Symposium will be carried out in accordance with the co-organizers' monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will help to determine the impact that participating in such an event had on the participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

## Co-organizers

The following is a list of the organizers of this event:

- The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs



- The Government of the Republic of Kenya



- The African Union Development Agency - NEPAD Directorate of Knowledge Management Programme Evaluation and Centres of Excellence (AUDA - NEPAD)



The co-organizers will use materials produced by the United Nations and other associates to support the conference and provide beneficiaries with cutting-edge information from all over the world in a coherent manner, using the most appropriate combination of learning methodologies.

## United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Based at UN Headquarters in New York, UN DESA holds up the development pillar of the UN Secretariat. Its Divisions and Offices work together towards a common goal to promote the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. UN DESA collaborates closely with its partners at regional and country levels in helping countries to translate policies

into formulation and implementation of national sustainable development strategies and preparation of roadmaps for national implementation.

UN DESA's work promotes and supports international cooperation for sustainable development. It addresses a range of cross-cutting issues that affect peoples' lives and livelihoods, especially the most vulnerable. We are fundamentally concerned, not only with global prosperity today, but also tomorrow, having as a foundation the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) supported by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

In providing a broad range of top-quality analytical products, policy advice and technical assistance, UN DESA effectively translates global commitments in the economic, social and environmental spheres into national policies and actions and plays a key role in monitoring progress towards the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway.

UN DESA's mission, to promote development for all, underscores the need for all stakeholders – governments, UN and other international organizations, civil society and the private sector – to do their part to improve economic and social well-being and prevent environmental degradation and leave no one behind.

## The Government of the Republic of Kenya

The Kenya School of Government is an ISO 9001:2015 certified institution that provides capacity development programmes for the public service through training, research, consultancy and policy advisory services.

Specifically, the school affords opportunity for development of leadership, managerial and other skills and competencies required in policy making and service delivery; inculcation of public service doctrine, ethics and values; and familiarity with emerging knowledge in all spheres of society that impinge on the public service.

## The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD

### Directorate of Knowledge Management Programme Evaluation and Centres of Excellence (AUDA - NEPAD)

At the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in Nouakchott, Mauritania, July-2018, a decision was officially adopted to transform the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) into the African Union Development Agency (AUDA - NEPAD).

The establishment of AUDA - NEPAD is part of the overall institutional reforms of the African Union (AU). The Report on the proposed recommendations for the institutional reforms of the AU by HE President Paul Kagame, January-2018, clearly articulates the major strategic issues that

AU needs to address to deliver the promises of the Founding Fathers. The Assembly approved the establishment of AUDA - NEPAD as the technical executive agency and development anchor of the continent with its distinct legal identity defined by its own statute, to deliver against the development priorities articulated by the AU.

AUDA - NEPAD's vision is to harness knowledge to realize the Africa we want, and its mission is to foster the development of the continent through effective and integrated planning, coordination, and implementation of Agenda 2063 with Member States and Regional Economic Communities by leveraging partnerships and technical cooperation. Its mandate includes to i) provide knowledge-based advisory support to African Union Member States and regional economic communities to strengthen their capacity, ii) act as the continent's technical interface on policy development recommendation and implementation with partners and stakeholders, iii) coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards the accelerated realization of Agenda 2063, iv) undertake the full range of resource mobilization.