

AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION

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“Prioritising Capacity Development in Africa for Social and Economic Transformation”

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

From the outset let me thank the organizers of this august gathering for inviting me. I very much look forward to listening and learning from you participants. It is a distinct honour and special privilege. It is also a real pleasure to be back home in Zimbabwe where I lived for eight years. I have nothing but fond memories. May I thank you all for coming to actively participate in this important ACBF forum.

Social, economic and political transformation required to attain the “Africa We Want” calls for, among other things, capacity. Capacity is a necessary ingredient. Building requisite capacity is a key issue that must be adequately addressed. What can be a better timing than to do so on the 25th anniversary of the sterling work done by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). ACBF has an enormous challenge of striving to build capacity needed to realize the African vision enshrined in the African Agenda 2063.

Accelerated, inclusive, transformative real growth with equity, is no longer an option but an imperative for Africa in order to, in a significant way, create jobs, tackle poverty and gain rapid, resilient, inclusive and sustainable socio – economic development. All relevant stakeholders are agreed that this should be the way forward.

African stakeholders and leadership started developing transformative strategies in 2011/12 when formulation of Common African Position on Post 2015 Development Agenda (CAP) commenced and in 2013 when 50 years of achievement by the OAU/AU was celebrated and the decision to develop a vision and strategic framework for the next 50 was taken. Africa has thus been ahead of the curve in this regard. This was well before another wave of commodities prices collapse.

It has once again been demonstrated that heavy dependence on a narrow band of commodities exports opens economies to violent external shocks. Boom and bust or “yo – yo” economics has remained to haunt us. This time the situation was exacerbated by severe and prolonged drought and destructive floods in Southern Africa, parts of East, North and Sahel sub - regions. Drought led to a drastic drop in agricultural production and to hydro-power generation disruptions. Floods

resulted in infrastructure destruction, displacement of people and a rise in water borne diseases. The adverse ripples of these developments in the economic, financial and social system have become common knowledge. Over and above these volatility in the international financial markets, especially the rise of interest rates in USA, led to the increase in dollar denominated debt and higher prices of imports thus giving rise to inflationary pressures. The response has been humanitarian interventions, activation of social safety nets and call for skillful macro – economic and financial management in the immediate term and then resort to social and economic transformation in the medium to long term.

The African Agenda 2063, the African blue print for transformative growth, is the answer in place at this moment of need. Diversification and value addition would result in an accelerated, inclusive, job creating growth and economies that are more resilient to external and, indeed even internal, shocks.

A number of African countries are already busy transforming their economies having domesticated Agenda 2063 (A2063) and SDGs with either technical support or on their own. Domestication involves assimilation or infusion of the relevant contents of A2063 and SDGs into the national strategic and action plans. The same is being done at Regional Economic Community (RECs) level. In addition domestication exercise involves popularization and consolidation of ownership of A2063 by the stakeholders in the public, private sector and civil society domains.

Mapping exercise clearly shows that all 17 SDGs which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in Sept. 2015, are embedded in the 20 goals of A2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP). There is remarkable compatibility between the two. This is because the source is essentially the same, namely, the African stakeholders.

African stakeholders under the leadership of H E President Johnson Sirleaf and nine of her colleagues in the African Union's High Level Committee (HLC) steered the formulation of the Common African Position on Post 2015 Development Agenda (CAP) which heavily influenced the work, and therefore the outcome documents, of the Open Working Group (OWG) and of the formal intergovernmental negotiations process. Thus CAP impacted substantially on the outcome document which is Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. CAP was adopted by the AU Summit in January 2014 and validated in Ndjamena, Chad in February 2014.

On the global front the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) pursued over 15 years with mixed results have been succeeded by the 17 SDGs, referred to earlier, with 169 targets and about 231+ indicators at the last count.

African Agenda 2063 (A2063), on its part, encompasses existing Pan - African instruments, frameworks, high level declarations, initiatives, programmes; inputs by the public on the interactive website, written submissions, review of 35 national and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) strategic and action plans. Situational analysis and study of mega trends, as well as extensive African stakeholders consultations, were conducted. A2063 is a people's document/framework (*vox populi vox Dei*). Out of it came the African Vision, the 7 African aspirations, 20 goals and about 39 priority areas. African Statisticians are refining targets and

indicators. Strategic Framework was adopted by Heads of State and Government in January 2015 and the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) in June 2015. As part of the FTYIP there are also 12 fast track (flagship) projects. Work has already commenced on each project. Through A2063 Africa has a clear and well articulated roadmap with coherence and alignment ensured.

Agenda 2063 anticipated virtually all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015, the key elements of Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the outcome document of the July 2015 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3), which was the successor of Monterrey and Doha; and Agenda 2063 turned out to be compatible with the provisions of the Paris COP21 of December 2015. This is so even though all of them were only adopted after Agenda 2063. This clearly demonstrates that Africa has been ahead of the curve in pointing the way forward and Africa participated actively in all these major international **fora**.

Agenda 2063 is broader in scope than SDGs. SDGs cover social, economic and sustainability dimensions. A2063 adds Political, Cultural and other Africa specific developmental interests..

Clearly SDGs are a subset of A2063. By implementing A2063 the SDGs will *ipso facto* be taken care of. Domestication is also being done for both at the same time. That is, simultaneously incorporating the elements of both into national and RECs plans at the same time.

Chief Executives of the AU Co-ordination Meeting (AUC, NPCA, UNECA, AfDB, ACBF and the RECs) have agreed and Ministers of Finance, Development Planning and Integration have concurred that (a) an integrated and coherent approach to implementing, monitoring and evaluation of A2063 and SDGs be assumed. This means that infusing elements of both A2063 and SDGs into national and RECs plans will be done simultaneously.

(b) One instrument for monitoring and evaluation of both A2063 and SDGs is in the final stages of design.

(c) It has also been agreed to produce a single (=combined) periodic, progress/performance (M&E) report for both A2063 and SDGs.

Reporting channels have been, or are being set up:

- (1) On the African Union side the technical team will report to the AU Co-ordination Meeting of CEOs. That forum will report to the AU A2063 Ministerial Follow up Committee. That in turn will report to the AU Executive Council and then to the AU Summit. This has been in operation in the last two years.
- (2) On the global side the technical team will report to CEOs (co-ordination meeting); then to a platform that is in the process of being formed in the form of “Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development”. That will report to the UN ECOSOC and UN DESA High Level Political Panel and then to the UN General Assembly.

There is a much higher chance of A2063 being more of a success than previous frameworks. The process has been meticulously executed every step of the way. No stone has been left unturned. Every necessary corrective measure to avoid repeat of slippages of the past has been amply addressed. For instance:

- a. Formulation of A2063 has been a bottom up process with greater ownership and commitment.
- b. It involved public, private and civil society sectors in its formulation and is including the same in its implementation and is therefore inclusive and broad based. In addition usually marginalized social groups such as women, youth people living with disability have been, and will continue to be, fully engaged.
- c. Domestication process (i.e. weaving A2063 into national and RECs plans and programmes) enhances chances of implementation.
- d. Results based approach with clear goals, targets and indicators and the development of accountability and follow – up mechanism will prove helpful in the implementation process.
- e. Required capacity was assessed by ACBF (at the request of AU) and strategy for filling in the gaps is being devised. This forum should hopefully be making some further inputs in this regard.
- f. Risk was analysed and risk management strategy developed (again by the ACBF at the request of AU).
- g. Means of implementation addressed even before FFD3’s AAAA.
- h. Communications strategy has been considered and some strategies devised.

Addressing all these considerations has rendered A2063 and SDGs more likely to succeed than previous African initiatives.

Accelerated, inclusive and transformative growth will entail building productive capacities, strengthened productivity, high investment rate, diversification and value addition in all sectors, accelerated integration and substantially increased intra-regional and global trade. This will require infrastructure improvement and closing of the energy gap, adoption of higher productivity and climate change smart agriculture, investment in science, technology and innovation, as well as in human capital with emphasis on skills development, accelerated industrialization and the expansion and deepening of the services sector.

All these will happen assuming that pre – and co – requisites are met. They are:

- a. Peace, security and stability;
- b. Competent and efficient governance;
- c. Transparency and accountability;
- d. Functional institutions;
- e. Rule of law;
- f. Human rights and management of diversity; and others

and all of them require appropriate capacity in order to be achieved.

Social and economic as well as political transformation within the context of A2063 and SDGs will certainly require capacity that is adequate in quantity and also measures up in quality on all facets in order to be realized. Currently the capacity deficit in Africa, as ACBF was to find out, is enormous for purposes of achieving objectives and goals of A2063. In addition whatever capacity that is being built is not sufficiently synchronized or aligned with the needs for

transformation. Whatever capacity has been built should also be retained. Better still as much as possible focus should be on building capacity that builds further capacity in order to avoid erosion and ensure sustainability.

ACBF, under the auspices of the AU, engaged in the assessment of capacity needed for realizing the African vision, that unfolds into 7 African aspirations and roll out into 20 goals and about 39 priority areas. Out of that work a capacity development plan framework document is being produced. Identification and projection of critical technical and sector specific skills for A2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan is being conducted. In the meantime where possible required capacity can be outsourced , especially from among the diaspora.

ACBF classified needed capacity into four sets, namely:

- a. Four aspects of operational capacity for organizations,
- b. Change and transformative capacities,
- c. Composite capacities, and
- d. Critical technical and sector specific skills.

The first set includes institutional/organizational capacity, human capacity (covering both soft and hard skills), systems and work processes and information access and knowledge. The second set describes capacities needed to initiate, facilitate and manage change, as well as drive transformation. The third set refers to capacities and abilities which involve linking and using knowledge and information in a multidisciplinary, multifaceted settings. This entails combined skills across formal qualifications that transcend specificities of one's formal educational qualifications. The last set addresses specific technical or specialist subject – matter knowledge and skills – sets.

Clearly capacity building challenges for achieving the objectives and goals of Agenda 2063 are enormous. ACBF is Africa's premier institution to address these challenges. It should be enabled and supported to adequately carry out its mandate. Meantime all human resources at the disposal of Africa should be utilized. This means accelerating full empowerment of women, active engagement of youth in all aspects of life and inclusion of people living with disabilities. Social, economic and political transformation towards "the Africa We Want" must proceed full throttle. Capacity can be outsourced in the meantime, especially from among the diaspora, while busy building own sustainable capacity needed for achieving and sustaining the African vision enshrined in Agenda 2063.

I thank you for your kind attention