

UN agencies unite in support of Africa's growth agenda

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia - Attitudes that Africa is still a "developing continent that does not know what it wants" need to change and all United Nations agencies need to rally in support of the 2030 and 2063 agendas.



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“In a turbulent and unpredictable world where multilateralism is under threat, we need stronger collaboration in support of the 2030 and 2063 agendas,” said Vera Songwe, executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Songwe urged UN agencies to rally behind ongoing continental initiatives aimed at boosting intra-Africa integration and trade and others that aim to harness the private sector and digital economy in a bid to alleviate poverty and propel structural transformation.

She made the remarks while co-chairing a meeting that brought together representatives of the ECA and the Regional UN Sustainable Development Groups (R-UNSDGs) covering southern, eastern, western and central Africa, to deliberate on strategies for deepening collaboration for greater effectiveness and efficiency at the regional level.

The one-day meeting that took place in Addis Ababa on 10 December 2018, was in line with ongoing UN reforms, which accentuate the need for a repositioning of the UN system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

This is about Africa

The discussions were co-chaired by Ahunna Eziakonwa, director of UNDP Africa and R-UNSDG chair, who urged stakeholders to ensure that their work aligns with Africa’s development priorities.

“We need to look beyond our individual agencies and see ourselves as one big organisation that is called to help Africa move forward. This is about Africa and not about us. We must not forget that. Let’s strive to align our work with the strategies and priorities of the continent through the African Union and other regional communities,” she said.



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Eziakonwa deplored the tendency whereby Africa is perceived and approached “as a developing continent that does not know what it wants,” and cautioned that such attitude needs to change.

ECA deputy executive secretary, Giovane Biha, who chaired some of the sessions at the one-day event, indicated in her closing remarks that she was pleased that, “we all are in support of the reforms”; and have agreed to implement key elements of the first phase of the reforms.

“We have agreed on the need to streamline and simplify our work to avoid overwhelming our constituents; build on existing mechanisms for better delivery; organise joint R-UNSDG meetings; ensure better inter-agency collaboration on regional initiatives such as the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), and more,” said Biha

Reforms

She praised the secretariats of RCM-Africa and R-UNSDG for working effortlessly on what she described as “ the first meeting of its kind since the SG introduced the UN reform initiative.”

Joseph Atta-Mensah, coordinator of the RCM-Africa Joint Secretariat, said he was “very satisfied with the turnout and passion with which stockholders approached the discussions”.

As implementation of the first phase of the reforms unfolds, Atta-Mensah expressed hope that this meeting “marks the beginning of a joyful journey of working together as one UN” in support of agenda 2030 and the AU’s 2063 agenda.

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