INSTITUTIONAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INTEGRATING THE THREE PillARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Rio +20 Side Event Brief

Lead Organizer: United Nations Commission on Africa (UNECA)

Sponsoring Partners: AfDB, AUC, UNDP, UNEP

Date: 17 June 2012  Time: 15:30 - 17:00  Venue: RioCentro
1. **Context / Background**

- Effective and well-coordinated institutions and strategies are essential to achieving a balanced integration of economic, social and environmental interests, central to accelerating progress towards sustainable development. In this regard, it is pertinent that Africa is adequately prepared to articulate its vision for a reformed global institutional framework that would support institutions at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, to effectively implement sustainable development agreements and strategies. Such an institutional framework should ensure effective linkages and enhance implementation synergies at all levels.

- This side event will provide Africa and its partners with a platform to deliberate on institutional frameworks - at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels - that are responsive to the requirements of sustainable development, as well as on the model for a global level institutional architecture that could support the development and implementation activities of such institutions and associated strategies. It will also serve as an initiation platform for further consultations on the functioning and implementation of institutions and strategies in Africa, post Rio+20.

2. **AfDB’s Participation**

- As Africa’s premier finance institution, the Bank (in collaboration with AUC, UNEP and UNDP) will support UNECA to facilitate:
  - Enhanced understanding and appreciation of institutional strategies for sustainable development that would promote a balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and enhance implementation progress.
  - Suggestions on the global institutional architecture for sustainable development that could enhance linkages and synergies and support Africa’s aspirations on integrating the three pillars, and accelerating implementation.
  - Enhanced understanding and appreciation of Africa’s concerns and priorities, with a view to facilitating negotiations on these.
  - Recommendations on further consultations for the functioning and implementation of institutions and strategies for sustainable development in Africa.

- Strengthened institutions at national, sub-regional and regional level on the continent would mean that the Bank can more effectively work with individual countries and regional groupings to provide development support in the economic, social and environmental spheres.

3. **Key Issues/Questions under Discussion**

- **What institutional arrangement at the regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels would best respond to the need for a balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, thus accelerating progress towards sustainable development?**
  - On question of NEPAD as a framework for sustainable development in Africa: NEPAD could be enhanced but not in isolation – the institutions at lower levels must also be strengthened.
  - There is a need to enhance and strengthen National Councils on Sustainable Development.
  - Institutions at the local level are strong driving forces for implementing national sustainable development strategies. Sustainable development strategies or their equivalent must reflect the needs and aspirations of the local people; and at the same time be fully backed by adequate commitment at the local level for their implementation.
What kind of institutional arrangement for sustainable development at the global level could best support sustainable development institutions at the regional, sub-regional, national and local level to achieve balanced integration and enhance implementation?

- Rather than create new institutions, those that exist need to be strengthened with complementarities between them enhanced. For example under the environment pillar, UNEP should be further enhanced.
- The UN system coherence and coordination for the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environment) should be improved upon.

Recommendations on further consultations for the functioning and implementation of institutions and strategies for sustainable development in Africa.

- Good governance should be the foundation of all proposed interventions.
- Key stakeholder at all levels should be involved in the formulation of sustainable development governance structures.

4. Key thoughts

- Rather than creating new institutions, measures for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the current institutional infrastructure need to be considered. Such measures could include actions towards rationalization, enhanced complementarities and strengthened cooperation.
- There is a need to enhance institutional reforms and streamline present structures at all levels.
- The regional dimension of development is a crucial link between the global and national levels. It is important that existing regional governance institutions coordinate among themselves and integrate effectively the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their operations.
- Urgent need for enhanced coordination and cooperation among all international organizations, agencies, conventions and environmental agreements that deal with sustainable development, in order to ensure the implementation of the commitments made in different forums; promote synergies among all of them; and also allow the participation of the private sector and the civil society, including the scientific community.
- Upgrade UNEP: Governments need to engage in negotiations for the up-grading of UNEP to a specialized UN agency, along the lines of the World Health Organization (WHO) or the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- The Banks is supportive of Chapter 11 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation text on Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.