Notes for the Media

Since the year 2000, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which form part of the Millennium Summit Declaration, have been a key yardstick through which global development initiatives have been measured. Though 2015 is the target year for the achievement of the MDGs, the progress and transformation that has been achieved has been overshadowed by recent economic and security setbacks in various parts of the world, as well as conflicts occurring in parts of Africa.

Fifteen years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, many African countries are still battling to put in place strategies that will address the MDGs targets which will go a long way in alleviating the plight and living conditions of the people. One of the key problems constraining Africa from achieving these goals is the way in which African governance and institutions, at various levels are constituted, structured and managed. This inhibits the ability of these structures to mobilise Africa's human resources. For instance there is a view that the African Union (AU) is an elitist and statist framework whose roles and functions as a development institution that has articulated a 50 year 'Africa we want' agenda needs to be re-thought.

In the build-up to 2015, the High Level Panel (HLP) set up by the United Nations Secretary General released its report entitled 'A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development'. In the report, the HLP sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world. The Panel calls for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformative shifts which include: (1) Leave No One Behind (2) Put Sustainable Development at the Core (3) Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth (4) Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All and (5) Forge a New Global Partnership.

This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. The over-riding objective is for such partnerships to be centered on people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. Mobilising Africa's human capital will require partnerships that include civil society organisations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, organised labour, individual leaders and private enterprises.

The fundamental question is how any new global and continental coalition will help the AU achieve the objectives and goals articulated in Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is premised on the following seven aspirations:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united, and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism;
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics;

6. An Africa where development is people-driven, relying particularly on the potential of women and youth; and
7. Africa as a strong and influential global player and partner.

A critical challenge is the dovetailing of the AU's aspirations with the five big transformative shifts articulated by the UN High Level Panel for the post 2015 agenda.

The 2014 report on the MDGs reaffirms that the MDGs have made a profound difference in people's lives. Global poverty has been halved five years ahead of the 2015 timeframe, although this achievement has been unevenly accomplished. Ninety percent of children in developing regions now enjoy primary education, and disparities between boys and girls in enrolment have narrowed. Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, along with improvements in most health indicators. These concerted efforts of national governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector have helped expand hope and opportunity for people around the world. But more needs to be done to accelerate progress and African governments in particular still need to redouble their efforts in order to ensure that the post-2015 agenda addresses the fundamental challenges of health, governance, security, and unemployment.

On the whole, emphasis should be on the entire Millennium Declaration and not just on the MDGs. In order to have a holistic approach in the post-2015 framework, three important issues need to be assessed:

1. The adoption of appropriate and effective principles and processes (human rights and good governance) in order to enable achievement of desired outcomes;
2. Addressing all aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability; and
3. Ensuring that aggregate indicators are decentralised to the appropriate level, so that for instance urban areas can be distinguished from rural and peripheral areas.

The 5th African Unity for Renaissance conference entitled **"2015 and Beyond: Engaging Agenda 2063**" aims to engage with these policies from the UN, the IMF and World Bank and the African Union by using research-based scholarly reflection to contribute to policy evaluation, recommendation and learning. The conference organisers invited paper abstracts and panel proposals on pertinent aspects of the post-2015 global development agenda that speak to the seven aspirations in the African Union's Agenda 2063. The conference programme has been organised around the following sub-themes:

1. Pan-Africanism, culture, identity, values and ethics;
2. Communicating Africa better to the world;
3. Institutions, Governance, human rights, the rule of law and peace-building;
4. Creativity, Venture Creation, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for African Development;
5. Youth Unemployment, Poverty and Inequality in Africa.
6. Gender, agriculture and leadership.
7. Civil society in the public sphere.
8. Science, Technology and Innovation: Policies, Institutions, and Research and Development agenda for Africa

9. Africa's unity Delayed or Realised: Contestations and Mobilizations around Agenda 2063.
10. Research Management and Research Funding Agencies in Africa
11. Climate Change and Sustainable Development in Africa.

These abstracts were assessed against the criteria of originality, quality, relevance and potential impact. In order to enable adequate space for discussions, engagements and networking, only a limited number of abstracts have been selected for presentation.

Africa Day Expo

Africa Day Expo is an educational support project initiated as a platform for presenting tangible access to relevant information about the entire continent.

The day also presents ordinary members of the African community with the networking opportunity with various African embassies, influential government departments as well as African artists and cultural groups. Included will be African art exhibition, African food tasting and live cultural performances.

The Expo which forms part of the Annual African Unity for Renaissance conference is celebrated annually on May 25th to mark the commemoration of the 1963 founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), represented since 2002 by the African Union (AU).