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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE AU-UN TEN YEAR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME
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INTRODUCTION

1. It would be recalled that in November, 2006, and at the behest of the AU Commission, an agreement which was termed a “Declaration” and entitled, “Enhancing UN – AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU” (TYCBP), was signed between the then UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the then Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare. The purpose of this agreement was clearly to assist the fledging Commission, which was still only a few years old, to enhance its capacity to effectively deliver on its mandate to help develop the continent. Attached to the Declaration was a Framework document in which all the Departments, Directorates and Divisions of the Commission had outlined broad frameworks, based on their respective capacity building needs, and with regard to which they intended to eventually formulate fully-fledged programmes to be submitted to the UN system for funding. For its part, the Declaration stated that the Framework would be an “evolving” one. It also specified that the new agreement between the AU and UN Heads would henceforth be the “UN overall strategic framework for co-operation with the AU”.

2. While stating that initially the peace and security sector would be accorded priority, the Declaration emphasized that efforts would be made, also, to strengthen the African Union’s capacity in five other areas. These were spelt out as follows: institution building; human resource development and financial management; human rights; political, legal and electoral matters, and social, economic and cultural and human development.

3. Worth noting also, was the fact that reference was made in the Declaration to the need for the UN to provide assistance to meet the capacity–building needs of the RECs, an important stipulation, given the role of the latter as the building blocks of the African Economic Community.

CONDUCT OF TRIENNAL REVIEW

4. In keeping with one of the provisions of the Declaration, a first triennial review was conducted by a consultant engaged under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, in the second half of 2010. The report which emanated from the review process was based on consultations with stakeholders, namely the AU Commission [with the Deputy Chairperson and a number of Commissioners and other senior officials], the NEPAD Agency, RECs as well as UN Departments and organisations and agencies; responses collated from a questionnaire survey; desk studies, and an examination of relevant documentation. During the review process, the consultant sought the views of those concerned on various aspects of the implementation of the TYCBP. He sought to know in particular, whether there was
adequate information and knowledge about the TYCBP, especially in the context of the perceived and actual responsibilities of the stakeholders; whether the implementation of the TYCBP was effective; whether its principal objectives had actually been met; what challenges and difficulties had actually been encountered, and whether the mechanisms for its implementation – namely the RCM, its clusters and sub-clusters – were functioning effectively and making the desired impact.

RESULTS OF TRIENNAL REVIEW

5. One of the important outcomes of the review, as reflected in the consultant’s report, was that the greater part of the contributions made by the UN system towards Africa’s development efforts during the period under review and related to the TYCBP, went to NEPAD, rather than the AU Commission or the RECs per se.

6. Further, according to the report, much of the system-wide support to Africa from UN organisations, agencies, departments, offices and programmes, appeared to have been given outside the context of the TYCBP and, was, therefore, not directly in response to it. Indeed, very many of the activities undertaken by the UN system in support of the continent during the period under review, were merely a continuation of initiatives already in existence before the advent of the TYCBP in November, 2006. A similar situation also existed with regard to the functioning of the RCM, its clusters and sub-clusters which, while endeavouring to mobilize the support of the international community for Africa, acted, more often than not, without reference to the TYCBP. Indeed, the consultant found that the view which was prevalent in the beneficiary institutions, including the AU Commission, was that, in spite of the tremendous potential inherent in the TYCBP, very little had been gained from it during the period under review.

7. Another critical outcome of the review, as reflected in the report of the consultant, was that there were concerns that the beneficiary institutions, including the AU Commission, were not exercising “ownership” of the implementation of the TYCBP, with the objective of ensuring that they, rather than the UN system, defined and articulated their capacity building needs, in keeping with their own strategic plans, work plans and priorities in general.

8. There appeared also to be general consensus on the need for greater coordination within the AU Commission and the RECs, as well as among the UN agencies, and, indeed, within and among the clusters. There were calls for greater overall coordination among all the stakeholder organisations and for action to be taken to address the dearth of information about the TYCBP, the effect of which was to reduce the scope for exploiting its potential.

9. There was also unanimity that the Secretariat of the RCM and its clusters – now operationalized [on the basis of a recommendation by the 10th session of the RCM] as a Joint Secretariat compromising both staff of the AU Commission and the ECA – should be considerably strengthened to increase its capacity to perform its executive functions.
in support of the RCM and each of its clusters and subclusters, while providing co-
ordination and strategic leadership, all geared towards more effective implementation of
the TYCBP.

10. For its own part, the AU Commission produced its own co-ordinate response to
the consultant’s report, based on the collated views of its various Departments, and
intended as an input into the review process. While agreeing in large measure with the
content and thrust of the consultant’s report, the AU paper seized the opportunity to
underline a number of issues. These included the need for the TYCBP to be regarded
as the primary basis of engagement between the UN and AU. The Commission also
stressed that henceforth, the RCM clusters and sub-clusters should base their
programmes and activities, first and foremost, on the AU Commission’s Strategic Plan,
work plans and priorities. The AU Commission was keen that an end be put to the
preponderant practice whereby clusters and sub-clusters purport to devise programmes
and activities for the benefit of the AU Commission, without prior consultation with the
latter, thus raising issues of ownership and even relevance.

11. The AU Commission also acknowledged the need for it to set in motion, a
deliberate process to popularize the TYCBP within the ranks of the staff of the
Commission, and, indeed, to effect new arrangements within that body, in order to
facilitate ownership, and implementation of the TYCBP. This included the appointment
of a focal point for the TYCBP in the Commission – a step which had, in fact, already
been taken just prior to the commencement of the review process–and the designation
of departmental TYCBP focal points.

12. The AU also argued that within the framework of the clusters, greater co-
ordination should be effected between the UN organisations and agencies on the one
hand, and the AU Commission on the other. It was felt that that would help attenuate the
sense of marginalization or exclusion from RCM processes, felt by the latter. Indeed,
the AU Commission expressed its agreement with the observation made by the
consultant that those clusters which were doing well were those that were actually been
chaired by the AU Commission, and were, thus, operating on the basis of AU
programmes, plans and priorities.

13. The AU Commission also affirmed the need for the RCM Secretariat to be
strengthened in terms of increased financial and human resource allocations, while
noting that as matters stood, the resources provided for the running of the RCM
Secretariat from the regular budget of the UN were inadequate.

14. The AU Commission stressed that it would be necessary for the UN to consider
how the implementation of the TYCBP could be buttressed through the provision of
adequate, regular and sustained funding on its part. Indeed in that context, the AU
Commission recalled that the report of the consultant had acknowledged that the 2008
to 2009 budget, which had been adopted when the TYCBP was already two years old,
did not make provision for any specific programme support or allocations exclusively
devoted to the TYCBP.
15. The AU Commission also expressed its agreement with the observation contained in the review report on the "marginal" role that the RECs play in RCM processes, including meetings of the clusters and sub-clusters; and, further, welcomed efforts by the UN to set up a sub-regional co-ordinating mechanism which would liaise with the RECs. The AU Commission, however, pointed out the need to acknowledge a role for the AU in that context, given the fact that the RECs are the building blocks of the African Economic Community.

16. Subsequently, the above-mentioned issues, as reflected in both the report of the consultant and the AU position paper, were well received, and substantially endorsed at a meeting of experts held in Addis Ababa on 2 and 3 November, 2010. The experts were drawn from the AU Commission and RECs, as well as from UN Departments in New York and UN organisations and agencies in Addis Ababa. The outcome of the experts' meeting was then submitted to the 11th Session of the RCM, held in Addis Ababa on 14 – 15 November, 2010.

OUTCOME OF 11TH SESSION OF RCM

17. The 11th Session of the RCM was convened as a high level meeting. It was opened by Dr. Asha Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General of the UN. Also in attendance were Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the ECA, and Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Planning Agency. The session itself was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary General of the UN and the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission. Commissioners and senior representatives of the African Union Commission, NPCA, RECs, UN agencies and organisations, the AFDB and the World Bank also attended.

18. In deliberating, inter alia, on the TYCBP (other items on the agenda included Rio + 20, and progress reports the RCM and the sub-regional co-ordination mechanism), the 11th RCM session noted, inter alia, that the NPCA was now fully integrated into AU structures and processes, a fact which should be taken into consideration by the UN agencies and organisations in providing support to the AU Commission and NPCA.

19. The 11th session also stressed the need to develop a well-defined capacity building programme of work for the AU, based on the Strategic Plan and priorities of the AU Commission, as a basis for the implementation of the TYCBP. It further recommended that the RCM Joint Secretariat should lead the process of developing the proposed comprehensive programme, with clearly defined activities, expected outcomes, timelines, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and resources for its implementation; and that the RCM Joint Secretariat should do this in collaboration with the clusters, while aligning the resulting work programme with the African Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CSDF).
20. On the RCM Joint Secretariat, it recommended that the UN system should strengthen it with the requisite financial and human resources to enable it function effectively. It recommended, further, that efforts by the UN system to mobilise resources for the RCM Joint Secretariat and the implementation of the TYCBP, should focus on seeking additional resources, rather than dismantling the existing UN regular resource allocation; and that UN funds and programmes should provide more resources to support the AU and NPCA in the context of the TYCBP. In addition, the former should work closely with partners in mobilizing resources to support the AU Commission and RECs in delivering their Joint Programmes.

21. Regarding the RCM clusters and sub-clusters, the 11th Session recommended that the former should take into account the programming and planning cycles of the AU Commission and RECs, in planning their capacity building activities.

22. It was also recommended that the AU Commission should chair or co-chair all the clusters. Further, regarding the proposal made by some members of the RCM for the creation of new clusters on such matters as emergency preparedness, prevention and management, statistics, and maritime security, the session recommended that the issue should be examined within the framework of the TYCBP, and that the concerned agencies should consult with the RCM Joint Secretariat on the best way forward.

23. It was further recommended that the RCM Joint Secretariat and clusters should strengthen their advocacy and communication activities.

24. On the RECs, the 11th Session underlined that they should be involved in developing the proposed capacity building programme, given that they constitute the building blocks of the African Economic Community. The UN system, was also requested to mobilize resources, through the RCM Joint Secretariat; and the RECs were also requested to designate Focal Points for the RCM, in order to enhance their active participation in RCM activities.

25. Of importance also, and indeed, in keeping with the trend towards increased ownership by the AU, it was recommended by the 11th Session that an annual progress TYCBP be presented by the Chairperson of the AU Commission to the AU Assembly. This would be in parallel with the established practice whereby the UN Secretary General presents an annual report on the RCM/TYCBP to the UN General Assembly. Of significance also, especially in terms of the trend within the RCM to re-focus on the TYCBP, was the decision that “capacity – building” would be the theme of the next session (12th) of the RCM, scheduled to be held in November, 2011.

26. The new RCM Joint Secretariat, now comprising AU staff as well, has been working towards the implementation of these recommendations, including launching the process for the work on the proposed UN capacity building programme for the AU. This is to be produced by a team of consultants who will engage the Commission in the context of a capacity needs-assessment exercise, based on the latter’s Strategic Plan, work plans and priorities. It will also take into account all existing capacity programmes and processes of the AU Commission.
CONCLUSION

27. Finally, it is important to report that at the 11th Session, there was a sense of optimism that a turning point may have been reached, in terms of the way that the TYCBP, was henceforth going to be implemented. Indeed it was hoped that its largely unexploited potential would henceforth be better harnessed. It was noted in that context, that there was a stronger manifestation by the African Union Commission to own the TYCBP, as exemplified not only by the increased participation of representatives of the Commission, but also by the fact that the AU Commission was now represented in the RCM Joint Secretariat; and that these developments were taking place against the background of a successful review of the TYCBP.

28. It is in this spirit, and in accordance with the request made by the RCM that the AU Commission’s Chairperson submits a report on the TYCBP to the AU Assembly, that the present report has been produced.