



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism - SRCM-North Africa
Consultative Regional Meeting to Support the Achievement of SDGs and
Strengthen Partnerships in North Africa
Rabat (Morocco), 18-19 June 2019

Meeting report

I- Objectives of the meeting

1. The 6th Annual Consultative Meeting of the Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism SRCM-North Africa was held in Rabat, Morocco, on 18 and 19 June 2019, at the initiative of the ECA Office for North Africa and in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).
2. The purpose of the meeting was to:
 - Review progress and challenges in implementing the regional roadmap adopted in 2018;
 - Review the roadmap for the period 2019-2020 with view to integrating the African Union's strategic priorities relevant for the sub-region as well as the UN-AU development framework for a harmonized implementation and monitoring of the two Agendas 2030 and 2063;
 - Discuss and adopt working arrangements and a monitoring and reporting framework.

II- Participation

3. The following institutions took part in the meeting: the AMU General Secretariat, ECA, the Resident Coordinators of the United Nations System of Algeria and Morocco, United Nations agencies (FAO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, ILO, ESCWA), regional organizations (ISESCO, AOAD, AIDMO) and international institutions (IDB, AfDB). The list of participants is attached as an appendix.

III- Opening session

4. Two statements were made at the opening of the meeting, respectively by Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, Director of ECA Office for North Africa, and H.E. Mr. Taïeb Baccouche, Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).
5. Ms. Lilia Naas began by thanking all partners for attending. She then highlighted the specific context in which the meeting was taking place, in relation to the ongoing reform of the United Nations system at the regional level, which is likely to lead to major changes in existing regional coordination mechanisms, including those led by the United Nations regional commissions (RCMs and SRCMs) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's regional teams. This could lead to the creation of a single regional coordination platform in each region. This reform is expected to improve collaboration on sustainable development issues, facilitate the sharing of existing capacities and expertise at the regional level and strengthen links between the global, regional and national levels.
6. Ms. Naas went on to say that progress towards achieving SDGs remains slow with shortcomings in terms of ownership, integration, governance, monitoring and financing. Indeed, knowledge and ownership of SDGs remains limited despite some marginal initiatives launched by companies, local authorities, civil society and parliamentarians. Several countries have yet to adopt a comprehensive strategy for SDG implementation that defines priority targets/indicators, shared by all stakeholders. The integration of SDGs at sectoral, territorial and budgetary level is still in its infancy. There is also a lack of governance mechanisms to guide and coordinate the implementation and monitoring of SDGs and to formalize the engagement of non-state actors. Information systems capacities need to be enhanced and strategic and innovative partnerships developed at all levels.

7. She subsequently presented the meeting's objectives and indicated that reviewing the roadmap and adopting appropriate working modalities and a monitoring framework are important but not sufficient steps. Ms. Naas stressed the collective responsibility of partners and the need to deepen their commitment to a joint ownership and implementation of the roadmap.

8. Addressing the meeting, the Secretary-General of AMU, Mr. Taieb Baccouche, began by paying tribute to all the institutions that are continuously contributing to the achievement of regional integration in the Maghreb and expressed his thanks to ECA for its support and assistance to AMU and for the efforts made to ensure that the meeting is a success.

9. Mr. Baccouche stressed that this meeting aims to be a forum for exchange, reflection and proposals with a view to setting up a framework for concerted action to strengthen and coordinate support for the main REC in the region - the Arab Maghreb Union. It is also an opportunity for exchanges on the initiatives led and planned by the AMU General Secretariat in connection with the implementation of SDGs in the Maghreb. He mentioned partnerships with ECA, FAO and AfDB which have supported the integration of sustainable development objectives and those of the African Union's Agenda 2063 into AMU programs related to food security, youth employment, natural resource management and conservation, and equal opportunities.

10. He recalled that the relaunch of the AMU integration process is required, in order to achieve more sustained growth and strengthen countries' resilience to external shocks. It would make it possible to capitalize on North Africa's optimal strategic positioning on the map of economic groupings being built in Africa and around the world.

11. Given the AMU's limited (financial and human) resources, Mr. Baccouche recommended that the roadmap be reviewed to take into account possible synergies and existing funding capacities, in order to improve the effectiveness of partners' efforts.

IV- Meeting proceedings

Session 1: The continental framework for the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063

This session was moderated by Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, Director of ECA Office for North Africa.

12. The session began with a presentation by Ms. Marieme Bekaye, economist, in charge of sustainable development at the ECA Office for North Africa, on the African Union (AU)-United Nations (UN) Partnership Framework for the implementation and monitoring of the Agendas 2030 and 2063. This presentation provided an overview of the objectives and 7 areas of action of the Framework that focus on: (i) Advocacy and awareness raising for the implementation of both Agenda 2030 and 2063; (ii) coherent integration of Agendas 2030 and 2063 into national planning frameworks; (iii) strengthening analytical and research capacities; (iv) improving data ecosystems in member countries and regional economic communities; (v) integrated financing mechanisms; (vi) trade and regional integration; and (vii) promoting Africa's voice on the international scene.

13. She then presented a few joint initiatives that have been undertaken to implement the Partnership Framework. These include, in particular:

- The adoption of an integrated planning and monitoring and evaluation framework developed by the AU Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an African group of statistical experts, ECA and AfDB. This framework includes a set of indicators for monitoring the 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 and an integrated planning and reporting tool developed by ECA;

- The preparation of the annual report on sustainable development in Africa, published by ECA, AUC, UNDP and other UN agencies. This report analyses progress and challenges related to the implementation of both Agendas 2030 and 2063. It is presented by ECA at the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

14. Ms Bekaye concluded by noting that the lack of financial resources, data and limited capacity of Member States and regional economic communities are major challenges to the implementation of the Development Framework.

15. The second paper, presented by Ms. Nozipho Freya, ECA economist, first recalled the architecture and mandate of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM)-Africa and the SRCM¹ as well as the results achieved to date. She subsequently presented the recommendations of the 20th session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) on improving the functioning of the RCM and SCRM mechanisms in the context of United Nations and AU reform. These include strengthening relations between the RCM-Africa, the SRCM and the United Nations Country Teams to accelerate implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063, as well as greater engagement of partners in coordination mechanisms.

16. Ms. Nozipho also referred to the various constraints that have hindered the work of the RCM and SCRM mechanisms to date, including a lack of dedicated human and financial resources, as well as the limited commitment and involvement of some partners. She indicated that over time the commitment of the AU and the United Nations within the framework of the RCM had been strengthened.

17. Ms. Nozipho also provided an overview of United Nations reform at the regional level, which could lead to the establishment of a single coordination platform in each region, with the Development Coordination Office acting as the secretariat.

18. Mr. Mounir Thabet, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), who attended the meeting by Skype, pointed out that in the context of United Nations reform, it was crucial to strengthen coordination between ECA and ESCWA in a spirit of complementarity. He mentioned a number of successful collaborative initiatives between the two institutions, notably in Tunisia and Morocco, and called for joint missions to countries

Session 2: Progress in SDG implementation at the sub-regional and national levels

19. This session was moderated by Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, Director of ECA Office for North Africa.

20. Ms. Bekaye presented the report on the implementation of the regional roadmap. She reviewed progress made and highlighted key challenges related to a lack of ownership of the roadmap by partners, the lack of appropriate working modalities to ensure implementation and regular monitoring of the roadmap, and a shortage of human and financial resources dedicated to SRCM activities which is not included in partners' annual or multi-year programs and budgets. She stressed the need to discuss opportunities to pool existing resources at project / program and partner initiative level in order to support activities to be included in the action plans of thematic groups.

21. Mr. Philippe Poinot, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Morocco, recalled that UNDAF is the United Nations system's contribution to Agenda 2030 at the country level and indicated that the regional roadmap could provide a framework for regional

¹ The objective of the SRCM is to promote joint planning and strengthen coordination/cooperation of support from the United Nations system, the AU and its entities, and other development partners to implement sub-regional, regional and global priorities.

reporting on the United Nations system's actions in the selected areas. He further outlined the outcomes achieved by the country team, including joint achievements in connection with the roadmap areas of: (i) awareness-raising around SDGs, (ii) support for public policy coherence, (iii) statistical and monitoring and evaluation capacity building and (iv) South-South cooperation.

22. Mr. Poinot stressed that more needs to be done to raise awareness and foster ownership of SDGs. He mentioned in particular the contribution of the United Nations System to the second national consultation on SDGs in Morocco, the emergence of a local network of the Global Compact in cooperation with the CGEM, capacity building in governance and public policy evaluation (training of 60 people), the development of social protection program reform scenarios, statistical analysis capacity building for monitoring SDGs in the context of advanced regionalization and the development of a joint program on youth. With regard to the issue of employment, he noted that while the United Nations System does not appear to be an obvious partner in this regard, various United Nations agencies, such as UNIDO, ILO and ECA, provide their expertise to national authorities in specific niches. Lastly, Mr. Poinot called for a clear definition of the added value of the SRCM as compared to other existing mechanisms.

23. Mr. Eric Overvest, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Algeria, reported that the Algerian government has set up an inter-ministerial committee to monitor SDGs that is operational, which facilitates UNS collaboration with the country. He subsequently presented an overview of activities implemented in Algeria by the country team (as part of the joint programme) in connection with the roadmap adopted in 2018, including support by the United Nations system for media, civil society, parliamentarians and academics outreach activities and for the government's preparation of the 2019 voluntary national report. Several capacity-building workshops were organized and a national report on South-South cooperation was prepared. A strategic review on food security should be launched in 2019 and workshops on SDG 6 and SDG 8 were organized (ILO Lead) as well as a workshop on the role of public policy evaluation.

24. Opening the discussion, Ms. Naas stressed that one of the added values of the sub-regional coordination mechanism is to promote information sharing necessary to ensure coherence of efforts and to foster joint activities at the regional level. The discussions focused on the following points:

25. The AMU informed participants of the activities carried out in partnership with some members of the mechanism, in particular with FAO in the areas of aquaculture, non-conventional waters for irrigation, and combating transboundary diseases, including both plant and animal diseases. AMU is currently preparing its second cooperation framework with FAO. The institution highlighted its closer relations with the AU and stressed the need to strengthen South-South cooperation between Maghreb countries (particularly in the field of statistics) as well as in the economic and trade area. Peace and security continue to be important issues for the sub-region.

26. Reference was made to the role of the private sector in development in general and in the implementation of SDGs in particular. Several institutions are working on this matter but with little coordination.

27. Participants reiterated the importance and relevance of the coordination mechanism and its annual meetings for improving information sharing and creating a space for coordination. They lamented the absence of some agencies and Resident Coordinators of the United Nations system from other countries. The major challenge facing the mechanism is strengthening partner ownership for more effective implementation of the roadmap. The leadership role of the AMU General Secretariat in mobilizing current and potential partners continues to be fundamental. ECA also pointed out that it is incumbent upon all its members to operationalize the mechanism, in addition to the central Secretariat role played by ECA and AMU team. The

SRCM should also contribute to strengthening relations between the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

28. It was suggested that actions (in addition to the cross-cutting themes) should be focused on specific SDGs.

29. The ECA highlighted its work on the continental free trade area and ongoing discussions with AMU for the organization of a regional workshop in 2019.

Session 3: Review of the regional roadmap

30. This session was moderated by Mr Zahr Eddine Belbachir, economist at the Economic and Financial Directorate of the AMU Secretariat.

31. The session began with a presentation of the RCM-Africa Consolidated Plan of Action (2019-2020) by Ms. Nozipho Freya Simelane, ECA. First, she outlined the continental priorities identified by the AU² and the various existing strategic frameworks at global and regional level. She then presented the working modalities of the RCM-Africa which includes 9 thematic clusters whose programs are aligned with the AU's strategic priorities. The Work Plan's various joint activities are also linked to the existing strategic frameworks at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels. The consolidated action plan of the SRCM-North Africa, once finalized, will be integrated into the action plan of the RCM-Africa.

32. Ms. Bekaye presented a proposed revised roadmap for North Africa, which integrates the African Union's strategic priorities relevant to the sub-region and the AU-UN partnership framework for the integrated implementation and monitoring of Agendas 2030 and 2063. This proposal includes the following 7 thematic areas:

1. Increase awareness and ownership of SDGs and Agenda 2063
2. Statistical capacity building, monitoring and reporting
3. Support for the development of integrated and coherent public policies
4. Employment,
5. Food Security
6. Climate Change
7. Regional Integration (AfCFTA).

33. Participants agreed on the importance of the areas selected, but concerns were expressed regarding the ability to implement this roadmap given the limited results achieved so far and the absence of several key partners at the meeting. At the end of the discussions it was agreed to merge areas 1 and 2 and to delete area 3. The new roadmap will therefore include 5 thematic areas. Women and youth issues will be taken into account in a cross-cutting manner in all areas. The interrelationships between the different themes would also be interesting to analyze. The AMU intends to continue the exercise of preparing a sub-regional report on SDGs and has requested that this activity be included in the action plan of the thematic group on awareness raising, monitoring and reporting.

34. At the end of the first day, Ms. Bekaye summarized the debates and decisions adopted.

² The 7 strategic priorities selected by the AU are: (i) regional integration and AfCFTA, (ii) silencing weapons, (iii) climate change, (iv) gender and youth, (v) capacity building, (vi) division of labor between regional economic communities, Member States and international actors and, (vii) support to the annual theme of the African Union.

Session 4: Implementation, monitoring and reporting of the roadmap

35. The session was moderated by Mr Zahr Eddine Belbachir, economist at the Economic and Financial Directorate of the WBU Secretariat. Its purpose was to define practical working modalities to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the roadmap and to strengthen inter-agency collaboration.

36. Ms. Bekaye proposed a planning, monitoring and reporting framework that includes:

- Designating a Lead institution for each selected thematic group, which will be responsible for coordinating the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the action plan, in collaboration with the group's member institutions;
- Designating a focal point by each SRCM partner institution;
- The development of a consolidated action plan (2019-2020) based on the action plans of the thematic groups, according to a single agreed format that was presented;
- Regular meetings of the thematic groups to ensure the implementation and follow-up of action plans;
- Preparation by each thematic group of a quarterly monitoring report and an annual report to be forwarded to the SRCM Secretariat

37. Participants adopted these proposals except for the monitoring report, which will be prepared on a semi-annual rather than quarterly basis.

38. The UN Agencies and institutions present indicated their areas of preference, taking into account their comparative advantages and areas of expertise. The following table summarizes the commitment of partners present to work in the different thematic groups:

Thematic groups	Lead institution	Partners
Awareness-raising, monitoring and reporting- SDG/ Agenda 2063	UNFPA	ECA, AMU, UNESCO
Employment (SDG 8)	ECA	AMU, ILO, RCO-Algeria
Food security (SDG 2)	FAO (To be confirmed)	AMU, AOAD, UNIDO
Climate Change	UNESCO (confirmed on 28/6/2019)	ECA, AOAD, AMU, AIDMO, UNIDO
Regional integration (implementation of the AfCFTA) - SDG 17	ECA	AMU, AIDMO

39. The Resident Coordinators of the United Nations System in attendance (Algeria and Morocco) indicated that their mandate was to ensure coordination at the national level and therefore did not wish to take the lead on one of the thematic groups. However, they intend to remain involved in roadmap activities, given the importance of connecting the national level (UNDAF) with the regional level.

Session 5: Resource Mobilization

39. The session was moderated by Ms. Marieme Bekaye, ECA. By way of introduction, she recalled the added value of the SRCM in sharing information and good practices, strengthening links between the national, sub-regional and regional levels and finally, optimizing existing human and financial resources to carry out joint regional activities, in line with the selected priorities.

40. Participants shared their experiences in resource mobilization, including with the private sector, the BADEA, the Arab Funds and the World Bank. The AOAD has thus mobilized funds from the private sector and the BADEA for the same project, each institution covering a specific area of the project, according to its requirements (thematic/intervention area, geographical area of intervention, country priorities, etc.). The ECA highlighted the example of the process of preparing Mauritania's voluntary national report, jointly funded by UNDP, UNICEF and ECA. The agencies have funded, individually or jointly, the activities included in the roadmap. The AMU proposed to define a mechanism to mobilize the necessary funds for the implementation of the regional roadmap and referred to its experience in the tripartite financial arrangement (AMU/AfDB/AU). The ILO shared its experience in pooling resources through joint projects that benefit from inter-agency complementarity. The ILO indicated that it has regional staff dedicated to resource mobilization and stressed the importance of aligning projects with national priorities. Taking migration as an example, the ILO pointed out that funding existed but that this area was not really a priority for the countries of the sub-region.

41. Participants agreed that efforts should first be directed towards optimizing existing resources for partners' programs and projects, with particular emphasis on complementarities. The thematic groups will be responsible for studying various funding options. A suggestion was made for the development of a donor mapping in the sub-region (ILO). Funds are available, but the difficulty lies in preparing eligible projects according to the areas of intervention and donor criteria.

V- Closing

42. At the close of the meeting, Ms. Bekaye, on behalf of the Director of ECA Office for North Africa, thanked the participants for their valuable contributions to the meeting's proceedings. She indicated that the draft report of the meeting would be available within 15 days and shared with all participants. Presentations will also be shared.

43. The AMU representative, Mr. Zahr Eddine Belbachir, thanked the ECA for organizing this crucial meeting and the participants for their valuable contributions. He called for greater commitment from partners in order to make up for the delay in implementing Agenda 2030. He also stressed the need for the AMU to broaden and sustain its partnerships.

Summary of key decisions:

- Participants adopted the new regional roadmap (2019-2020) which includes 5 thematic areas, consistent with the AU-UN Development Framework for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063;
- Each institution will send the name of its focal point to ECA within 15 days;
- ECA will formally contact FAO to confirm their commitment to provide the Lead for the Food Security thematic group and prepare the related action plan (2019-2020), based on the model provided by ECA;
- ECA will lead the two thematic groups on employment and regional integration;
- ECA will formally contact UNESCO to verify their interest in leading the thematic group on climate change;
- Lead institutions agreed to prepare a draft action plan for the thematic group (2019-2020) within one month, in close collaboration with the partner institutions for each thematic group. This draft will be shared with the ECA and the AMU before being finalized;

- The monitoring and reporting framework were adopted and includes regular meetings of the thematic groups to ensure the development, implementation and monitoring of action plans. The frequency of meetings is left to the discretion of thematic groups. NICTs can be used to facilitate exchanges between group members. Each thematic group will prepare a twice-yearly monitoring report and an annual report to be forwarded to the SRCM Secretariat;
- A biannual mid-term meeting of the focal points of different thematic groups could be organized. It would allow for a sharing of information and good practices. The format of this meeting remains to be determined.

Annex I

Regional Roadmap Thematic Groups for the Implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063 in North Africa (2019-2020)

Thematic groups	Links with the AU-UN Partnership Framework	Links with the 7 AU priorities	Links with AMU priorities and sub-regional programs
1- Awareness raising, monitoring and reporting-SDGs/ Agenda 2063	X	X	X
2-Employment		X	X
3-Food security			X
4-Climate change		X	X
5-Regional Integration (AfCFTA)	X	X	X

Annex II: Work programme

Tuesday, June 18

08h30-09h00	Registration of participants
09h00-09h30	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Address by Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, Director of ECA Office for North Africa and presentation of the objectives of the meeting and the work programme (ECA-NA) – Address by Mr. Taieb Baccouche, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)
09h30-10h30	Session 1: Continental framework for the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The AU-UN Framework Agreement for the Implementation and Monitoring of Agendas 2030 and 2063: Overview and Status (Ms. Marieme Bekaye, ECA) – Recommendations of the 20th session of the RCM-Africa on improving the functioning of the RCM and SCRM mechanisms in the context of United Nations and AU reform (Ms. Nozipho Freya, ECA) – Discussions
10h30-11h00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11h00-13h00	Session 2: Progress in the implementation of SDGs at the sub-regional and national levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation of the report on the implementation of the regional roadmap: progress and challenges (Ms. Marieme Bekaye, ECA) – Presentations of key projects and initiatives related to the areas and themes of the regional roadmap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resident Coordinators UNS: Algeria, Morocco – Discussions
13h00-14h30	<i>Lunch</i>
14h30-16h00	Session 3: Review of the regional roadmap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation of the RCM-Africa's consolidated work plan-2019-2020 (Ms. Nozipho Freya Simelane, ECA) Presentation of a proposal for a revised roadmap for North Africa which integrates the African Union's strategic priorities relevant to the sub-region and the UN-AU development framework for the integrated implementation and monitoring of Agendas 2030 and 2063 (Mme Marieme Bekaye, ECA) – Discussions
16h00-16h30	<i>Coffee break</i>

16h30-18h00

Session 4: Implementation, monitoring and reporting of the roadmap

The purpose of this session is to define working arrangements to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the roadmap and to strengthen inter-agency collaboration.

- The first step will be to organize partners into the thematic working groups selected in the revised roadmap (a Lead institution will chair a multi-agency working group and will be in charge of preparing an action plan for the implementation and monitoring of activities);
- The next step will be to agree on the monitoring and reporting framework: presentation and adoption of a single format for the development of the action plan, in order to facilitate the monitoring and reporting of activities/projects that will be identified by each working group. A quarterly monitoring report and an annual report could be prepared by each group and submitted to the RSCM Secretariat.
- Each Lead institution will have to designate a focal point and an alternate.

Wednesday June 19th

09h00-10h30

Session 5: Resource Mobilization

The purpose of this session is to discuss ways to pool existing resources across partner projects/programs and initiatives in support of thematic group activities.

10h30- 11h00

Coffee break

11h00-12h00

Session 6: Summary and closing session

12h00-14h00

Lunch

Annex III: List of participants**General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)**

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