Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of this African regional workshop on effective governance for sustainable development. I am truly impressed by your commitment to effective governance for sustainable development. I am equally encouraged by the generous spirit of collaboration with which you have shared your knowledge and experience over the past three days.

What I have heard this week reassures me that we are, indeed, on the right track to put principles into practice, and to move forward. A sincere thanks for your active participation and readiness to join hands as we advance towards the SDGs and aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Let me go over some of the more salient points that I will take home with me:

First, there is no one perfect institutional model. Nor is there a clearly delineated and easily observed end point in building strong institutions. Africa is complex and solutions to the challenges of governance on the continent must be responsive to the diverse contexts of African societies in equal measure, if they are to have legitimacy and credibility. Yet we are in accord when it comes to the basic principles of effective governance for sustainable development – the foundation of our exchange this week.

Second, building strong institutions for implementation of the SDGs is not a matter for governments alone. It calls for the active engagement of all stakeholders in countries at all levels of development, often in a whole-of-society approach that is at the same time highly localized. The idea is not new. It is embedded in the 2030 Agenda. But it is a keen reminder of the need to bring everyone on board and avoid over-simplification even as we move toward a shared vision of sustainable development for all.

Third, there is a rich toolbox of instruments and the variety of policies to adopt, and the strategies to consider, can be dazzling. If we are to accelerate action to tackle the enormous problems we face – such as inequalities, poverty, conflict, displacement and
environmental degradation – we must take further steps to harmonize our efforts at the international and regional levels.

Fourth, there is no one, perfect indicator framework or data system. Capacities of institutions and aspirations of countries make it imperative to consider all types of data collection and statistical analysis. We must choose the ones that are most appropriate for our specific needs. Where indicators are concerned, we must keep our sights set on the governance and sustainable development outcomes that African countries intend to achieve.

Fifth, follow-up and review are crucial. We will explore ways of reflecting the principles in the relevant follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda. An African initiative to monitor and evaluate progress towards SDG 16 based on the UN CEPA principles framework can make an important contribution and we look forward to it.

Together we have seized this moment to think deeply about how to equip institutions to implement Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Moving from principles to practice calls for concrete – and accelerated – action along many dimensions. We look forward to continuing our engagement with the African Union, APRM and Member States, and to the follow-up actions in the realization of our shared objectives.

The principles of effective governance for sustainable development can support us in our unique journeys to surmount the challenges we face. They can guide us in institutionalizing pathways to sustainable development. The United Nations is here to help.

Thank you, South Africa and our esteemed partners – the African Peer Review Mechanism, African Union and United Nations Development Programme – and each and every participant for making this event a success. Thank you, Madame Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, for having initiated the workshop and the tireless effort that has gone into it in the service of Africa and the United Nations.

I wish you all a safe journey home.

*******