Closing Remarks by Mrs. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, CEPA Chair

H.E. Mr. Senzo Mchunu, Minister of Public Service and Administration, South Africa
H.E. Mr. Khayar Oumar Defallah, APRM Minister of Chad and Chairperson of APRM Focal Points
Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Adviser
Ms. Lindiwe Khumalo, Advisor on Strategic Relations with AU Policy Organs and Agencies, Bureau of the Chairperson, African Union Commission
Mr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, African Governance Architecture Secretariat and Participants.

As we conclude our meeting on Friday, 1 November 2019, I would like to draw on the recent ADDRESS OF THE PATRON OF THE Thabo Mbeki Foundation, President THABO MBeki, AT THE “INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES”: UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, in KAMPALA, UGANDA on 22 OCTOBER, 2019.”

“...Agenda 2063 with its first ten-year implementation plan, the Document and Declaration of Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals with their Targets and Indicators ..., in principle, they describe large parts of what would by now be in our various National Development Plans.

The AU understood that there might be some concern about matters of compatibility and reconciliation between the two Agendas 2063 and 2030. It has therefore said:

“It should be pointed out from the outset that global Agenda 2030 and its SDGs were heavily influenced by the African Union’s ‘Common African Position on Post 2015 development Agenda’ (CAP), with Africa being the only region to submit a well-articulated position in writing…”

“That is why the seventeen SDGs fit neatly into the twenty goals of Agenda 2063. They are all encapsulated in the 20 goals of Agenda 2063. SDGs scope is confined to social, economic and environmental dimensions. Agenda 2063 is broader in scope…Hence by implementing Agenda 2063 Member States will ipso facto be meeting their global obligations under the SDGs.”

To indicate the seriousness of the challenge our countries face in this context, I will now mention a few of the Targets which the African Union said must be achieved by 2023, the end of the first decade of Agenda 2063.

The AU says that by 2023 each of our countries should have:

➢ achieved annual GDP growth rates of at least 7%;
➢ increased the 2013 per capita income by at least 30%;
➢ reduced the 2013 unemployment rate by at least 25%;
➢ reduced the 2013 levels of poverty by at least 30%;
➢ reduced the 2013 levels of income inequality by at least 20%;
➢ increased access and use of electricity and the internet by at least 50% of the 2013 levels;
➢ increased the 2013 levels of access to basic quality health care and services by at least 40%;
➢ ensured that at least 70% of the people believe that they are empowered and are holding their leaders accountable; and,
➢ ensured that at least 70% of the public acknowledge the public service to be professional, efficient, responsive, accountable, impartial and corruption free.

I would like to believe that all of us will agree that these are indeed ambitious targets. Nevertheless, I also believe that we should understand the thinking behind them because necessarily our continental organisation, the African Union, has every reason to be impatient for the achievement of the required changes to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment on our Continent”.

These remarks are pertinent for the African regional workshop organized by the United Nations and APRM with the objective of supporting countries in their gap assessment towards the application of the Principles of effective governance for sustainable development. The Principles were endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2018 and they aim to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in harmony with the Agenda 2063. Important message: Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 is important - and in that context the Principles - African countries and regional institutions have policies, systems, processes in place through which we absorb SDGs and Agenda 2063.

The workshop was attended by about 80 participants from all parts of the continent in addition to representatives from the European Union, Ecuador, Committee of Experts on Public Administration, civil society and academia. 40 speakers and moderators covered ten related topics of understanding, operationalizing the principles and their integration into sustainable development programming at all levels of administration and in different developmental and governance contexts.

Find below a summary of each one of the ten sessions of the workshop followed by its main conclusions.

Session 1: Aligning institution-building efforts related to the 2030 Agenda with Agenda 2063
This session addressed collaboration among AUC, APRM and AUDA-NEPAD towards the harmonious implementation of both Agendas. Going over the institutional arrangements and best practices for aligning them towards strengthened institutional coherence, the session put emphasis on the role of APRM and the universal ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Some issues covered were the need for (i) raising awareness and training on SDGs and accountability; (ii) institutionalizing planning as competence in policy design, implementation and adaption not just at the center of government, but also at the micro level, including localisation of developmental efforts and national-local design standardization through coordination ; (iii) learning how to work with civil society and strengthening partnerships with it and the private sector.

Among the recommendations were the need for (i) emphasizing capacity building at the continental level, (ii) encouraging universal accession to the APRM in line with the 2063 commitment; (iii) institutionalizing planning as a discipline, and not as a mere box-ticking exercise; and (iv) directing
evaluation towards effective governance, all towards improving the well-being (not limited to the economic needs) of all Africans and leaving no one behind.

Session 2: Applying UN CEPA Principles of effective governance for sustainable development to the challenges of building strong institutions

This session introduced the Principles of effective governance developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and endorsed by ECOSOC in July 2018. Going over progress and challenges of institution-building towards the implementation of 2030 Agenda and 2063 Agenda, it stressed the entry points from which Principles could make headway into (sub)national development plans and a shared vision for people and planet as embodied in both Agendas. Some questions addressed were the need for (i) balancing long-term growth with fair distribution and equity concerns taking into account the inadequate workings of the so-called “trickle-down” effect; (ii) eliminating anachronistic layers of institutions while reforming others given the necessary resources and budget; (iii) bringing administrative and political leadership together within a larger people-centered architecture based on community engagement, participatory governance and national development and action plans, all backed up by constitutional requirements.

Among the recommendations included the need for (i) inter-institutional communication, collaboration and cooperation towards preventing duplication and ensuring productivity; (ii) integration of principles in sustainable development policy-making through short-, medium- and long-term planning; and (iii) bridging the developmental and democratic state, both fuelled by adequate autonomy and capabilities on the one hand, and innovation and adaptability, on the other.

Session 3: From principles to practice in building strong institutions for the SDGs

This session delved into the operationalization of the Principles of effective governance through commonly used strategies. Reviewing the wealth of tools and approaches towards realizing the Principles, it examined the technical guidelines that can be helpful to national and regional governance practitioners and knowledge-sharing mechanisms to achieve the SDGs and related objectives.

Some topics under scrutiny included the need (i) to manage synergies and trade-offs in SDGs while appropriately exploiting institutional frameworks for this same purpose and based on adequate resources, expertise and tools; (ii) not to reinvent the wheel, and effectively using existing institutions such as AU Commission and ECOSOC framework to mobilise other stakeholders in the region, including the Pan-African Parliament; and (iii) to modify and prioritize indicators in line with country needs and aspirations.

Among the recommendations were the need to (i) pay particular attention to better coordination and coherence to avoid high transactions costs; and to (ii) harmonise the agendas & strategies (peace and security agreements; Agenda 2063, SDGs, National Development Plans) to ensure coherent implementation and horizontal and vertical integration.

Session 4: SDG16 monitoring and evaluation: an African perspective

This session discussed the possible integration of UN CEPA Principles into AU/APRM tool for monitoring and evaluation of SDG16 in Africa. Going over the main criteria and possible features of such a tool and its potential use by countries of the region, it assessed the state of SDG16 implementation and reporting in the continent with particular emphasis on the linkages with Aspirations 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063. In fact, the contribution of the APRM to measure governance has been significant given that the United Nations Statistics Commission (UNSC) had been reluctant to adopt governance measurement in 2005. But with the emergence of the need for measurement of governance in Africa through the APRM, it became much easier for governance indicators to be a central piece to the SDGs unlike its MDG predecessor. The establishment of The
**Praia city group on statistics on governance at the 2015 UNSC was an acknowledgement of APRM’s contribution.**

Some topics of discussion comprised (i) the convergence of APRM principles with the SDG indicators and the Principles of effective governance; (ii) coordination, capacity and inclusion challenges in addition to the gap between value statements and outcome-based indicators for impact measurement; (iii) importance of national statistical institutes and national statistical reports in SDG16 monitoring and evaluation as a basis for VNR presentation preparation and other (academic) studies; and (iv) g7+’s fragility assessment and indicators and their relation to SDG16 targets and indicators, particularly with respect to linkages between governance, peace and justice. An important aspect of this is how citizens experience governance and mechanisms have to be implemented.

Among the **recommendations** were the need to accentuate (i) process evaluation recognizing its many actors and context-driven peculiarities; (ii) qualitative citizen reviews of public services separate from and in addition to quantitative indices such as sustained citizen satisfaction surveys are crucial as a means of public participation indicators; and (iii) using various UN reports, such as that of UNCAC with SDG16 monitoring and evaluation so as not to overburden countries with overlapping reporting exigencies.

**Session 5: Data and statistics**

This session centered on data requirements related to the achievement of 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Reviewing the main tenets of the ongoing work by the Praia Group on Governance Statistics on the elaboration of governance indicators as well as AU’s Strategy for the harmonization of statistics in Africa (SHaSA), it considered the prospects for the use of new data sources, emerging technologies and partnerships with non-formal actors and sources of data. Some elements of focus involved (i) technical and human capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination; (ii) difficulties of collecting local data and reconciling it with national data; (iii) challenges associated with periodicity and comparability of data across collectivities and through time; and (iv) public’s low understanding of the value of statistical work including data collection through household surveys.

**Recommendations** dealt with different approaches to tackling the challenges such as (i) using technology like GPS effectively to align and connect different policy frameworks; (ii) establishing the legal frameworks and promulgating the necessary laws to legitimize and support statistical work; (iii) drawing on non-official data sources such as the national human right reports and assessments; and (iv) creating space around contextualizing and localizing indicators such as those evaluating access to informal institutions of justice by g7+.

**Session 6: Linking the UN CEPA principles to governance indicators**

This session focused on national perspectives linking governance indicators with the Principles of effective governance. Drawing on the work of Praia Group and others, it concentrated on the challenges associated with SDG16 and governance measurement, monitoring and evaluation, and audit. Some concrete considerations encompassed matters related to the (i) complexity of deciphering the multifarious concept of governance entailing factors like transparency, independent oversight, quality public service delivery, public consultation, local governance, trust, and environments conducive to business operations and investment; (ii) accountability of State institutions, including the crucial role of parliaments, tax authorities, audit institutions and national statistical institutes in indicator development and linking them with the Principles; and the (iii) fallacy of using averages in assessing country realities related to sustainable development, particularly with regard to the principle of leaving no one behind.

**Recommendations** included the need to (i) treat the Principles, not as recipes, but as helpful guidelines while ensuring that their adoption is based on multi-stakeholder approaches, needs and data gap assessments in different thematic areas and in line with national realities and developmental
priorities; (ii) stress corruption-fighting while also going beyond to address xenophobia, violent crime, racism and intolerance, among other things; (iii) integrate auditing SDGs into audit plans, particularly in the African Union, and through the adequate use and empowerment of State Audit Institutions; and to (iv) emphasize communication and collaboration on SDG16 and governance measurement and follow-up.

Session 7: Sound policymaking: Institutional arrangements and tools for promoting policy coherence

This session investigated different institutional frameworks of policy coherence for SDG implementation. Examining the different modalities of engagement of institutions and actors and their distinct roles and responsibilities, it weighed the distinct features of a variety of operational integration models bringing the three dimensions of sustainable development together. Some questions that were posed included whether (i) the integration of Agendas 2030 and 2063 in National Development Plans is a panacea to all challenges; (ii) informal or formal arrangements for engaging civil society and governments are preferable for policy coherence; (iii) government is more responsible for vertical or horizontal integration or both; and whether (iv) a centralized model is best for promoting policy coherence. Other issues included competition between ministries, function overlaps, and incentive mechanisms of rechannelling them towards productive use.

Among the main recommendations to build effective and cohesive institutional frameworks for sound policymaking were (i) review of centralized structures and devolution of power; (ii) emphasis on stronger coordination and coherence among various ministries, departments and agencies across various layers and spheres of governance [formation and strengthening of strategic centres in the government, and outside, including in the form of think-tanks]; and (iii) co-production models for effective engagement building on wide networks like the Africa Evidence Network. An advisory matrix on how to achieve policy coherence was also proposed.

Session 8: Collaboration and whole-of-society approaches to the SDGs

This session analyzed the partnership arrangements, financing modalities and leadership qualities needed to engage different stakeholders holistically and as part of a whole-of-society approach. Elucidating the different mechanisms and platforms of engagement of governance actors and entities, it shed light on the institutional arrangements, public administration practices and budgetary procedures to promote collaborative approaches to SDG implementation. Thematic discussions revolved around (i) the importance of ensuring that inter-ministerial task forces are not driven by government alone but together with its societal partners; (ii) the need for an integrated national development framework which reports on more than just ODA, extending to innovative and inclusive financing, including blended finance, guarantees and additionalities; and (iii) the appreciation of the changing understanding of responsible leadership in multisectoral partnership arrangements.

Principal recommendations pointed to the need for (i) integrated approaches to SDGs, going beyond one ministry and embracing all stakeholders, particularly the private sector; (ii) responsible leadership going beyond management [and repudiating “green/rainbow washing” in sustainability]; (iii) visionary development plans for Africa without excessive influence by external forces; and (iv) drawing on the power of youth as future leaders.

Session 9: SDG awareness raising and training

This session put the accent on the role of SDG training and advocacy in the public sector. Teasing out the principal modalities and forms of awareness raising and teaching on SDGs for the public sector workforce, it brought together perspectives from as diverse sectors of planning and strategic management, justice, national education systems and subnational initiatives of peer-to-peer exchange.
Some of the factors under consideration were the role of technology and data in training and SDG awareness raising, the innovative ways in which to use social media and big data for trend analysis and promoting SDG awareness through partnerships, open platforms, linkages with the national and regional development agendas and translating laws and other relative policies into indigenous languages while also showing how initiatives relate to the daily lives of citizens who are engaged in the design, implementation and monitoring. This is particularly true and important for conflict, risk-conflict and post-conflict countries and the linking of the peace and justice components of SDG16 with its governance and institutional dimensions.

**Recommendations** included (i) improving capacity building through public-private-people partnerships and public engagement at the community level; (ii) creating one-stop-shops that provide seamless services to citizens by an efficient and inclusive public sector workforce trained in SDGs; (iii) upholding community-based adaptation of SDGs and their localization while also integrating them into national development processes and systems, including through the use of ICTs.

**Session 10: Connecting research agendas to country needs**

This session dwelled on research agendas of African universities based on institution-building for SDGs. Assessing issue areas such as entrepreneurship, social impact and innovation, it linked science and policy concerns and consideration towards evidence-based policy-making for implementing 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Questions posed included - research outputs and GDP; can we consider moving towards research outputs and SDGs; census in Africa - force the process that national data are put together in a continental data base; there are fundamental principles that statisticians have to work on and ‘politicians cannot dabble in that space’ as carried in the African Charter; without the fundamental data set what kind of responses can be expected by governments;

*Being deliberate in identifying value creation and sustaining its appropriation*

*Creating metrics that establish cause and effect;*

Among the recommendations were: (i) better linking of African research and policies to contribute to national development frameworks, visions and strategies; (ii) funding and capacity development should be prioritized; and (iii) quality databases, including at continental level, housed by the APRM (for example, the APRM setting up an Africa Governance Hub to house data) should be emphasized to ensure that research contributes to products and services that directly feed into sustainable and equitable growth.

**Conclusions:**

Request the APRM, working together the AGA platform members and with CEPA, to *produce a baseline study focusing on (a) the status quo of the CEPA principles across the African continent; (b) best practices to be highlighted and promoted; and (c) gaps and challenges plus recommendations. - complete this report in 2020*;

1—Innovations and adaptability—Being open to different ways of doing things, measuring progress and collaborative arrangements are at the core of both 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Clinging to old systems is as damaging as are ineffective initiatives of reinventing the wheel.

2—Communications and collaboration—Inter-institutional communication should be based on carefully crafted incentive mechanisms as well as normative values based on leaving no one behind. Multisectoral partnerships, whole of society approaches, horizontal and vertical integration in sound policymaking are at the driver seat of realization of our collective goals and the achievement of our shared responsibilities.
3—Research and training for data-driven development models (including use of tools that deliver value faster).—Formal and quantitative approaches based on statistical analysis should be complemented with informal and qualitative approaches to measuring, monitoring and evaluating progress towards the achievement of development objectives.

4—Responsible leadership for inclusive finance and sustainable development—Linking and harmonizing normative and logical templates of decision-making is about commitment to making the world a better place. New leadership modalities are emerging to guide the innovative applications of development agendas.

5—Peace and security are at the core of effective governance and vice-versa. Developmental and democratic states are not mutually exclusive; they are the two complementary sides of the same coin. They both depend on people-centered and human-rights based frameworks to effective governance and development.

6—Guiding Principles for harmonious implementation of agendas of development—Principles are not a recipe but guidelines for effective, accountable and inclusive institution-building for achieving development agendas. They must be operationalized to move to measurable outcomes and impactful practices.

A striking fact is that many of our countries not only reflect the principles for effective governance of sustainable development, they are also applying many of the strategies that have been cited as good practices.

And yet, by many indices, the level of impact and quality of outcomes in addressing our development challenges are not what they should be. We are simply not making the impacts we aspire to achieve.

This begs the question: what is going wrong? And how can we accelerate? And more to the point, how can we better use the CEPA platform to become more effective & contribute to creating greater impact?

If we move from the premise that most of our challenges reside in how our public institutions are organized and behave, then CEPA is very well placed to make meaningful impacts. A few practical thoughts:

1. Contributing to building knowledge in practical ways: the facts sheets which will be launched & facilitating knowledge engagements (on-line and otherwise) to look at what’s working & what’s not. At the heart of this, could be engagements by senior policy makers on what’s working & what’s not;

2. Continue to directly engage with regional governance processes: The partnership of this workshop is a good example of this - (UNDESA/ CEPA/ APRM/AUC cooperation. But the critical focus must be on how best we ensure that we retain focus on enabling countries to effectively use regional governance instruments (like the APRM). In other words, we must support countries to respond to the obstacles that we know disable our public institutions to fully apply the principles of effective governance.

The right convergences are required, for example, the Kigali meeting last week and the links that could be made between it and this African Regional Workshop.

I would like to thank all participants for your constructive engagement with this important agenda ... let’s make the required convergence a reality.

Thank you for your attention.