**Financing Development at the Regional Level**

**(A Case Study of the African Continent)**

**Submitted by**: Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights which is in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 2016

**Submitted to**: Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

**Preamble**

Six years following the adoption of the sustainable development goals and 10 years prior to the deadline of achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in general and in the African continent in particular, it is necessary to assess the ability of African countries to achieve the sustainable development goals, and determine whether African countries are on track to achieve development. And also identify the suitability of international and domestic financing for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Africa, especially after the evolution of the global development finance landscape and its shift from a model centered on official development assistance and the coverage of remaining financing needs through external debt, to a framework with greater emphasis on the mobilization of domestic resources. Especially in light of the statement made by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, if Africa couldn’t achieve the sustainable development goals, the world will not achieve them either.[[1]](#footnote-1) **Financing Development Challenges in Africa**

The 2019 Africa SDG Index ranks 52 African countries based on 97 indicators across all 17 goals. The index ranks "Tunisia" as the best African country to achieve the SDGs as it is 66% of the way towards achieving the SDGs, followed by (Mauritius, Algeria, Morocco, and the Republic of Cape Verde). The index also pointed out that poorly performing countries are states characterized by high levels of poverty and internal conflicts. South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Chad were the lowest scoring countries on the index, with points 29.2, 36.7 and 38.7, respectively. The index concluded that the African continent as a whole is barely halfway to achieving the SDGs.[[2]](#footnote-2)

After reviewing the United Nations report on the achievement of 2019 SDGs in Africa, it became clear that extreme poverty rates are persistently high, especially in the politically unstable and conflict-affected area of Sub-Saharan Africa, where 413 million people live on less than US$1.90 a day in 2015, which is more than all the other regions combined. The absolute number of undernourished people has actually increased in recent years, from 784 million in 2015 to 821 million in 2017, with 237 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa only. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the rates of HIV infections among people aged 15–49 years decreased by 37% between 2010 and 2017, and there was an increase of about 305 million cases of malaria in African countries in 2017 compared to 2016. More than half of the schools in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to clean drinking water, handwashing facilities, computers and the Internet. At least 200 million girls and women are believed to have been subjected to female genital mutilation, half of them in West Africa. The report also addressed the poor funding that Sub-Saharan Africa receives, as only 23% of Africa’s plans were fully funded, compared to 94% for Europe and North America.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Given the adoption of the SDGs in the last three years, the progress achieved by African countries is still very slow and insufficient to attract foreign investments to the areas supporting the implementation of SDGs. Most African countries are still lagging behind in SDGs finance, whether from public sources that includes domestic revenue, which is the main source of financing SDGs, or private sources, and there is also a consensus that African countries' plans lack financing.[[4]](#footnote-4)

During the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, participants unanimously agreed that Africa still needs international financing and training to overcome development challenges, and that African countries need to increase their GDP by 11% annually over the next ten years in order to bridge the financing gap, and that African countries have already started working on this through establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, with a population of approximately 1.2 billion and a combined GDP of $2.5 trillion.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In view of the level of growth, achieving the SDGs becomes a challenge for the African continent in light of the available financial resources and the global economic conditions, in addition to the evolution of the global development finance scene of and its shift from a model centered on official development assistance and the coverage of remaining financing needs through external debt, to a framework with greater emphasis on the mobilization of domestic resources, as evident from the Final Document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa warned that African countries are still suffering from a large deficit in financing the implementation of the SDGs by the year 2030, despite tax reforms that raised the rate of revenue by more than 15% during the period between 2000 and 2017.[[7]](#footnote-7)

According to the above, African countries need to raise the volume of domestic resource mobilization by 5% of its GDP, which is a large amount for African countries that have not, on average, reached this amount so far.[[8]](#footnote-8)

This was also discussed by the United Nations Secretary-General, "Antonio Guterres", during a joint press conference with the President of the African Union, "Moussa Faki". As he warned that a common battle is looming unless a quantum leap in the available financing to development is taken, particularly in the African continent, where development, as stated, is a fundamental precondition for more equilibrium, for more peace in the world, and so it in the interests of the whole international community to substantially increase the financing for development available for African countries.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Good Practices to Guarantee the Right to Development**

Despite the slow progress of African countries in achieving sustainable development, there are some good practices aiming to achieve development in the African continent, for example:

* The affirmation made by the representative of the Russian Federation during the 74th session of the General Assembly that his government supports African countries in facing disasters and the Ebola virus outbreak, adding that African debts amounting to US$20 billion have been canceled.[[10]](#footnote-10)
* The representative of India clarified the importance of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the ensuing economic and trade cooperation between the two parties. He also announced that India's partnership with the African continent in the field of development includes the implementation of 181 credit lines, in more than 41 African country for a total of US$11 billion.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* The representative of Kenya expressed his country's gratitude to its international partners, especially the partnership between NEPAD Agency and the Spanish government through the Spanish Agency for Development and International Cooperation in the field of women's empowerment and gender equality, where 11 projects were implemented, benefiting about 7073 women in Kenya.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* The World Bank and its role in promoting the achievement of SDGs in the African continent through providing financing, exchanging knowledge and working with the public and private sectors, as the World Bank decided to provide loans worth $ 15 billion in the fiscal year of 2019. The World Bank also seeks to focus on private areas concerned with: strengthening human capital, empowering women, promoting regional integration, expanding the digital economy, and adapting to climate change. It also announced investments worth $ 25 billion until 2030 to support digital transformation in the African continent. Among its contributions to the African continent is the establishment of six regional water supply and sanitation services in Angola from 2015-2019, and the delivery of water supply networks to 107.000 families.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* As for UNICEF, it has established a partnership with the State of Kenya and Nokia company, which started in January 2018 and ends in December 2019, and this partnership aims to provide Nokia with technical and in-kind support to improve Internet connectivity in offline schools so that children can access personalized digital curriculum that is easily accessible and gender-sensitive, and will be coordinated and hosted by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, in addition to preparing children for life in a digital world.[[14]](#footnote-14)
* The partnership between the African Development Bank and the International Labor Organization, which aims to promote economic growth through a program aimed at building young people capacities, as the International Labor Organization is currently implementing 5 projects in different regions of Africa with financial support from the African Development Bank, with a total value of more than $ 12.4 million.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**The Republic of Rwanda as an Example of Successful Regional Cooperation to Ensure the Right to Development**:

Rwanda is also one of the successful experiences among the African countries in achieving the fastest rates and indicators of development in the African continent, increasing employment opportunities, diversifying the economy, and strengthening the sources of individual and national income. In the light of Rwanda's genocide wars in the 1990s, which killed almost a million people, it was, however, able to achieve economic progress and promote sustainable development, after it was viewed by the media as a country known only for its epidemics and bloody civil wars.[[16]](#footnote-16) UNICEF is one of the most leading organizations working to achieve development in Rwanda since 1986, and is currently working in Rwanda through a new program 2018-2023, aiming to protect the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, in addition to guaranteeing other priorities that are: Ensuring good health for all, improving the quality of education, eliminating malnutrition, eliminating poverty, and moving towards modern Rwandan society.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Focusing on improving and developing the education sector in Rwanda, we find that UNICEF is working with the government of Rwanda to implement its strategic plan for the education sector, focusing on three main areas: increasing access of vulnerable groups to education, quality of education, and increasing access to quality pre-primary education. There is also a constant focus on ensuring gender equality and the inclusion of women in all activities, which has resulted in improved education participation, as evidenced by increased access to pre-school education and lower dropout rates.

In 2017, with the support of UNICEF, more than 20,000 refugee children, children with disabilities, and out-of-school children had access to quality education in a comprehensive environment, and more than 25.000 teachers were supported in competency-based curricula, enhancing the capacity to deliver quality education, in addition to supporting the newly developed National Communication Strategy for Gender Equality to address negative social norms.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Recommendations**:

**After studying the current situation, Maat for Peace and Development would like to make the following recommendations for promoting the right to development in the African continent:**

* The need to highlight the importance of civil society, empower youth and integrate them into the future development plans of the continent.
* Full participation of women in all areas of development.
* Improve statistical capacity to implement and track progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.
* Address the international community to reduce Africa's debt, which contributes to improving its ability to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063.
* Increase educational missions to transfer experiences and information so that the capacity of African people could be raised.

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