

Propelling African growth

Development in Africa

Construction workers build the Nyamlel Bridge in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, South Sudan, an infrastructure project supported by the United Nations.

(Northern Bahr el-Ghazal; September 2023) © UNOPS/Kenyi Moses

What we do

- Coordination of global advocacy and support for African Union development initiatives
- Regional coordination of and support for African Union development initiatives
- Public information and awareness activities for African Union development initiatives
- Regional cooperation for economic and social development in Africa

Our team

- Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
- Economic Commission for Africa

United Nations personnel meet with a recipient of a cash transfer programme at a market in Bangui, Central African Republic.

(Bangui, May 2023) © UNOPS/Tchaya Zigoto



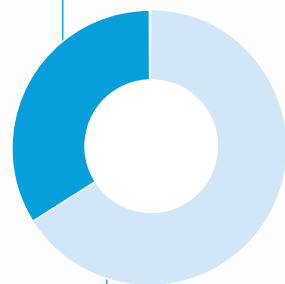
The United Nations is invested in Africa

73,000 uniformed personnel serve in Africa

35% of Secretariat staff are from Africa

Share of United Nations system total expenditures in 2022 (including peace operations)

Africa **34%** (\$24B)



Others **66%**

Context

At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, **Africa is advancing towards the achievement of 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals**, but the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve the Goals by 2030. To accelerate that pace, it is **now essential to address debt distress and scale up national investment** in sustainable development and public institutions.

Our goals

The United Nations supports sustainable development and peace in Africa through the 2030 Agenda and through Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, in partnership with the African Union. We focus on **the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development** and their interlinkages with peace, security and human rights. We also support **intra-regional cooperation**, including with a view to unlocking the potential of technology for the Sustainable Development Goals and furthering demands for a Goal stimulus to finance sustainable development.

Our achievements

This year we strengthened coordination with the African Union through our high-level meetings and dialogues, to **help us to deliver as one**. We supported African States in accelerating the six critical Sustainable Development Goal transitions, including through our advocacy of a \$500 billion stimulus package. We also supported innovative financing approaches, such as **debt swaps for development**, and promoted **national resource mobilization as the cornerstone for sustainable financing**. For example, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund is working with Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe to assess potential debt swaps for development.

Together with our partners, we identified key bottlenecks impeding the transition to stronger food systems, which are crucial for sustainable development. In global summits and coalitions, we championed the need for **more homegrown African solutions**. For instance, the United Nations system collaborated with various stakeholders to transform school feeding programmes into exemplary public service models. Those homegrown initiatives now **benefit over 66 million children in 54 African countries**, with 84 per cent of funding sourced from national budgets.



“Beyond mere participation, African countries must be at the leadership table in critical intergovernmental processes, an essential ingredient for the future of multilateralism.”

Cristina Isabel Lopes da Silva Monteiro Duarte,
Special Adviser on Africa

Current state of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal achievement in the 54 African countries

Over half of African countries have either met, or are on track to meet, the targets for Goals 12, on responsible consumption and production, and 13, on climate action. However, none of the African countries have met or are currently on track to meet 11 of the 17 Goals beyond the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda.

6 Goals have been achieved, or are currently on track to being met, in one or more of the 54 African countries:



All 54 African countries face challenges in making progress on the remaining **11** Goals.



“Africa’s journey towards building inclusive green economies and advancing economic prosperity should not be merely anecdotes but pressing imperatives that demand concerted action, partnerships and concreteness on scalable and replicable solutions that work.”

Claver Gatete,
Executive Secretary,
Economic Commission
for Africa



A teacher delivers a class in a new science lab constructed with support from the United Nations at Wambaa Secondary School in Pemba, Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania.

(Pemba; November 2023)
© UNOPS/Moshi J. Lukindo

In our advocacy, we highlighted the growing risk to peace and stability due to a lack of sufficient employment opportunities in Africa. Through the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, we supported African countries in designing job creation initiatives, especially in science and technology fields. Our joint focus is on **unlocking the full potential of women and girls**.

In response to urgent regional challenges in Africa, we brought the United Nations system together around stronger joint strategies to leverage the reformed, more cohesive United Nations country teams. For example, we launched the African Union-United Nations high-level strategic dialogue on sustainable development and the “college-to-college” structure to promote strategic alignment with the African Union. In country situations, we focused our engagement through the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, for better coherence, integration and coordination with partners in the region, such as in Chad, through the Regional Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad and the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development.

We also created new platforms for civil society to contribute to African and global policy debates. Our first Academic Conference on Africa brought together policymakers and African academics to address State fragility. Our new youth network, **Africa’s Youth Voices**, provided a stage for young people to engage in global discussions, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. The Global Africa Business Initiative continued to mobilize the private sector to support economic transformation in Africa.

Overview of the African Union-United Nations partnership

The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has been pivotal in addressing key challenges across Africa. This collaboration – across conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – was re-enforced by an agreed strategic direction between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union and guidance from their deputies. That alignment enhances United Nations actions to support African Union priorities, integrating feedback from field operations.

Coordination is promoted at the country level through the resident coordinator system, which implements programmes and reflects African Union priorities. The Regional Coordination Platform for Africa further integrates joint African Union-United Nations strategic priorities. Through this partnership, we have supported constitutional frameworks for national elections, promoted dialogues in conflict regions and responded to unconstitutional government changes. The United Nations has also backed African Union-led initiatives for peace in countries across the continent and supported regional disarmament campaigns. In addition, efforts to integrate human rights into early warning systems and capacity-building for peace operations have been strengthened.

To foster a prosperous and more integrated African economy, we brought policymakers, experts and key stakeholders together through the Africa Dialogue Series. Focused on the African Continental Free Trade Area initiative, we supported progress on better trade regulations, increasing intra-African trade and harnessing the power of women entrepreneurs.



Participants convene in Ethiopia at the Africa Youth Future Consultative Forum on the Summit of the Future.

(Addis Ababa; April 2024) © UNDP Africa