

# The Future of Development in Africa within the Framework of UN Policy and the 2030 Agenda

AKINLOLU O. AKANMU & OLUBUKOLA O. BABALOLA\*

Food Security and Safety Focus Area, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, North-West University, Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho, South Africa

\*Email: Olubukola.babalola@nwu.ac.za

## Abstract

As a geographical formation, Africa includes the most extraordinary and significant territories enriched with colossal resources and opportunities. Despite this, the continent still struggles to address challenges predetermining its economic, social, and political developmental model. The rise of Africa's development significantly relies on adequate implementation of the broad statecraft maps of the set goals. The prospects for developments in Africa within the UN policy and the 2030 Agenda are rather promising. They can be achieved through the engagement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, which includes economic diversification, infrastructure development, good governance, human capital investment, environment conservation, regional integration, and technological advancement. African leadership and private enterprises' coordination with civil society and international actors will positively transform the continent based on the vision provided by the 2030 Agenda.

**Keywords:** Africa Agenda 2063, food security, poverty eradication, UN 2030 agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Introduction

Africa stands as a continent of rich diversity which was shaped by a complex history, and distinct cultural identities (Raji et al., 2024). It is a continent positioned to play a key role in global development, considering its abundant natural resources, youthful population, huge agricultural capacity, and the prospects for renewable energy to bolster its global

importance. However, since its early phase of colonization at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Africa has been practically in a state of upheaval with considerable stress situation (Polte, 2023). Africa presents a unique developmental crisis; not only does the continent hold the status of being the poorest region in the world, but it was also reported as the only major developing region experiencing a decline in income per capita from 1980 to 2000 (Sachs et al., 2004). Africa contends with a high poverty incidence, with a substantial segment of its populace residing below the poverty threshold. Despite Africa being home to only 10% of the world's population, about 30% of the world's poor people are Africans, living on less than US\$1.90 per day (Bruckner et al., 2022; Le Pere and Ikome, 2009). Therefore, an array of economic, social, and political hurdles has been reported as profoundly influencing the development trajectory in Africa (Grinin and Korotayev, 2023; Miller, 1999).

A prominent hurdle that Africa grapples with is the issue of governance and political stability. Many African nations struggle with corruption, opacity in government, and frail institutions which pose barriers to effective governance and sustainable development (Prince et al., 2023). More so, political unrest, internal conflicts, and reluctance to enact transformative reforms further complicate efforts toward progressive advancements (Muma, 2018). Furthermore, limited access to quality education, healthcare, and essential services impedes overall developmental strides (Kanayo et al., 2013). In addition, the deficiency in infrastructure development stands out as a critical impediment facing Africa, as inadequate infrastructure, such as good roads, energy facilities, water supply systems, and telecommunication networks, curtail economic expansion and hinder connectivity both within and between African nations, thereby hampering the service delivery, obstructing trade flows, and stifling investment opportunities (Arimah, 2017). Coupled with this condition are the effects of environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and desertification, which also compound the developmental hurdles in Africa. The adverse effects of these are felt on agriculture, food security, and threats to the livelihoods of millions across the continent, thereby further heightening the susceptibility of Africans to natural disasters and other climate-related risks (Chirwa and Adeyemi, 2020). To overcome the challenges impeding advancement in Africa, the hurdles must be addressed with a comprehensive strategy that is deeply rooted in supportive policies and frameworks (Odeyemi et al., 2024). In light of this context, the initiatives of the United Nations (UN) Policy

framework and the 2030 agenda pivot on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offered a comprehensive policy blueprint for all nations to achieve economic prosperity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance by the year 2030 (Weiland et al., 2021). In furtherance to this, the African Agenda 2063 was adopted in 2013, and it constitutes the development framework and the roadmap to inclusive growth in Africa. The agenda emphasizes economic transformation, poverty eradication, and regional development to reduce reliance on external aid and establish African solutions to African challenges. It emphasizes that African economic transformation by 2053 is desirable to achieve balanced economic growth, decent employment, and a safe work environment (Ketu and Wirajing, 2024). This structural transition is important to address issues like unemployment and urban development, aiming to create cities as centres of economic and cultural activities with modern infrastructure and green economies. Discussions on structural transformation and green economy are essential for Africa's economic development and addressing contemporary challenges (Baek, 2019).

#### **The synergies between the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The future of development in Africa within the policy of the United Nations and the 2030 agenda entails a comprehensive and transformative approach aimed at addressing key challenges and driving sustainable development on the continent (Dobrescu, 2017; Machin and Liu, 2024). Such development is grounded on the 17 SDGs of the 2030 agenda for enhanced global development. These goals cover diverse fields such as the provision of employment opportunities, elimination of poverty, strengthening of health and education, gender equality, and boosting of economic development, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the environment, among others (Salvia et al., 2019). It consists of a set of adopted goals aimed at ending poverty, protecting the environment, and promoting the welfare of citizens worldwide. The Agenda 2030 can also be described as a vision and ambitious strategy for international development. Its holistic approach to the 5Ps – people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership responds to the development objectives in an unprecedented manner. This framework encourages collaborative action to tackle shared challenges, with all countries expected to assess how the SDGs can be integrated into their national strategies (Oladele, 2022).

To Africa, this agenda is very relevant as it outlines development goals appropriate for the continent. The prospects of Africa's development, considering the UN policies and agendas of the 2030 vision, focus on the priorities and participation of different actors in the development process. One such focal area is economic development and diversification, which is important to developing Africa's economy (Sparks, 2016). The SDGs focus on economic growth to achieve development in line with the 2030 Agenda. It stimulates African countries to look inward for the development of other sources of income. The Agenda 2063 fosters this through the promotion of trade and market access, such as the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which could turn the African continent into a very competitive player in the global economy (Jonker et al., 2018). Strategic investment in infrastructure is another important prerequisite to support and boost the growth and development process and realize the sustainable development goals and objectives (SDGs). The idea of proper development is covered in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, where the focus is on Infrastructure, Industrialization, and Innovation. This entails the acquisition of transportation and energy and the development of water and other digital structures while channeling funds toward the development of new partnerships between public and private organizations through regional auspices across the continent (Brodny and Tutak, 2023). In furtherance to the above, sustainable development is contingent on good governance and institutional strengthening.

The UN speaks of peace, justice, and strong institutions as preconditions of the 2030 Agenda. However, African countries still need to develop sound governance structures, increase accountability, and fight corruption to improve the economy. UN-funded capacity-building programs can help strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks as well as human rights and the rule of law (Hancock, 2023). The UN 17 SDGs with the year 2030 targets consider quality education and computed healthcare service to be important for sustainable development. In essence, African nations need to invest in better educational performance and the provision of efficient and effective care. The UN's support is commendable with the programs that mainly address the issues of education, vocational training, and upgrading the health care facilities. Education does not only increase productivity in a country's growth and development but also brings about the well-being of citizens and reduces disparities (Aarts et al., 2020). Environmental sustainability is another considerable issue affecting Africa due to climate change, which has major implications for the

continent's development. The development agenda for this century is provided by the 2030 Agenda. This means African countries must embrace sustainable practices, especially in agriculture, energy and resource utilization. The UN supports the putting in place of green technologies and avails financial cooperation to conserve biological diversity and encourage the use of renewable energy (Obaisi et al., 2022)

### **Africa's progress towards the SDGs 2 to date**

The second SDG aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (Saravanakumar et al., 2020). Despite some progress made, attaining this goal by the set year 2030 remains a daunting task for many African countries. However, the major factors leading to hunger in Africa include poverty, high post and pre-harvest losses due to pests and diseases, unemployment, civil unrest, wars, insurgencies, unfavourable climate, and corruption (Gyimah et al., 2023). To propel the achievement of SDG 2 in Africa before the year 2030, there is a need to embrace a multi-sectoral approach such as financial, capital management, risk management and adaptation of farming systems to society's demand in mitigating the constraints experienced (Alemaw and Simatele, 2020). This therefore calls for governments to budget at least 10% of the national budget on agriculture for the continuous provision of necessary infrastructure such as roads and irrigation systems, while private sector engagement has to be encouraged by reducing barriers to entry and sourcing for financing for agribusinesses (Borsellino, 2020). Farmers will be able to borrow, invest and manage climate risks through credit, mobile loans and micro-insurance (Borsellino, 2020).

Furthermore, practicing sustainable agriculture, using resistant crop varieties, and ensuring proper soil management can help increase production while reducing losses incurred during farming (Brodt et al., 2011). Also, embracing the recent technological advancements in agriculture such as practicing precision farming systems which entails the use of drones, satellite imagery, big data and other smart agricultural technologies helps enhance farming efficiency, estimating agricultural yields, and creating data-based policies (Al-Mallahi, 2024). This therefore calls for policy review, particularly on land and resource rights for women, and support for innovation and training for youths in agricultural activities. African governments are therefore encouraged to focus on comprehensive

food security strategies including partnerships with international organizations and public-private partnerships for sustainable food systems.

### **Importance of the UN SDGs in African Development**

The SDGs have had considerable transformations and expansions to provide a holistic approach to tackling these global concerns. One of the changes is the overall multiple objectives to end extreme poverty and hunger and change it to the general goal of 'End poverty in all its dimensions' (Sachs et al., 2019). The change is a broad approach that factors in the different dimensions of poverty other than extreme poverty. Furthermore, SDG 2 has a shift of emphasis from hunger to a greater level of energy since the provision of food security is an essential factor for sustainable development (Banik, 2019). The SDGs also have broadened their aims on advocating education for all on a lifetime basis to encourage lifelong learning so that people can continue learning as they learn new things and develop themselves for the benefit of society (Benavot et al., 2022). Parity or equity and non-discriminant targets have become more overt and integral within and across nations as SDG guiding principles. This may point to the ultimate aim of promoting social justice in the global sphere to achieve equal opportunities and triumphs for all (Sharma and Tripathi, 2021) (Table 1).

Further goals of SDGs are focused on meeting the essential global challenges of providing universal access to energy (SDG 7) and eradicating youth unemployment (SDG 8) (Rahman, 2020; Tucho and Kumsa, 2020). Regional integration and collaboration are essential to attaining the SDGs in Africa as a continent. United Nations' framework has multilevel partnerships embracing the local, national, regional as well as international levels. Hence, the SDGs also emphasize the importance of a 'Global Partnership for Sustainable Development' with changes in focus towards finance, investment promotion regimes, and multi-stakeholder partnerships involving various entities like multinational enterprises and international capital. The UN 2030 Agenda signifies a shift towards a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to sustainable development, addressing a wide range of global challenges and aiming for transformative changes by 2030 (Cruz, 2023) (Table 1).

**Table 1: Relevance of UN Policy and the 2030 Agenda in African Development**

Category	Relevance	Examples	References
<b>Holistic Development Framework</b>	Provides comprehensive development across multiple sectors	Ethiopia’s Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)	(Ybabe, 2019)
<b>Economic Growth</b>	Promotes sustainable economic growth, industrialization, and innovation	Rwanda’s Vision 2020	(Ansoms and Rostagno, 2012; Mushimiyimana and Buheji, 2024)
<b>Poverty Eradication</b>	Aims to lift millions out of poverty and reduce inequality	Ghana’s LEAP program	(Amofa et al., 2023)
<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	Addresses environmental challenges and promotes sustainability	Kenya’s Green Belt Movement	(Mwanzu et al., 2023)
<b>Peace and Security</b>	Essential for stability and development	UN-AU peace and security partnership	(Khorram-Manesh, 2023; Kirby and Shepherd, 2021)
<b>Global Partnerships</b>	Ensures international support and resource mobilization	The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)	(Unya and Okorie, 2024)
<b>Health and Well-being</b>	Improves health services and reduces mortality rates	Uganda’s National Health Policy	(Bhangyi et al., 2024)
<b>Education and Skill Development</b>	Empowers youth with skills and education for future opportunities	Nigeria’s free primary education program	(Ajaude, 2024)
<b>Inclusivity and Equality</b>	Reduces inequalities and empowers marginalized communities	South Africa’s Commission for Gender Equality	(Lwamba et al., 2022)

All these goals represent the changing trends in the country's infrastructure, urbanization, and some dimensions of sustainability within contexts of different areas of development; they also help in satisfying the needs of people around the world to establish sustainable solutions in society. The SDGs seek to ensure that sustainable development is achieved

without causing any detrimental effects on the economy, society, as well as the natural environment (Almulhim et al., 2022).

### Conclusion

Taken together, the future of development in Africa within the policy of the United Nations and the 2030 agenda envisions a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for the continent, with a focus on addressing key challenges, promoting equity, and driving progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

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