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Programme questions: evaluation

Evaluation of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development provided by programme 9 through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) undertook an evaluation for the period 2016–2019 of programme 9, United Nations Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is implemented by three subprogrammes: the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; the Economic Commission for Africa, through its NEPAD Unit; and the Department of Global Communications, through its Africa Section. The evaluation objective was to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in delivering its mandate.

This evaluation occurred at a time of significant reform at both the African Union and the United Nations. While the NEPAD framework was adopted by the African Union in 2001, it was subsumed under the African Union goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This connection was institutionalized with the repositioning the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, which was transformed in 2018 into the African Union Development Agency, the implementing arm of the African Union. At the same time, the United Nations was undergoing reforms to improve the coordination of its development assistance in all regions, including Africa.

Programme 9 continues to be relevant, with a unique value to United Nations coordination and support for Africa's development, and the demand for its services remains significant; however, the programme lacked a relevant implementation strategy with clear accountability mechanisms to make it fit for purpose. Accountability for the overall programme approach was unclear under the three-subprogramme implementation

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.

** E/AC.51/2021/1.



approach and the absence of joint planning and coordination hindered its ability to deliver as one. Furthermore, workplans, particularly those pertaining to advocacy, were developed in isolation from key stakeholders, limiting the connection to those whose agenda the programme seeks to amplify.

At the same time, programme 9 delivered some advocacy activities. However, the effects of these activities on increased international support for Africa's development were unclear. While the advocacy events of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa were considered positively by stakeholders, their impact on increasing support for Africa was aspirational rather than realized, as few stakeholders could identify concrete outcomes of advocacy work. This was due to limited follow-up and a lack of a coherent advocacy strategy for the programme to effectively advocate for Africa. With regard to international awareness-raising, *Africa Renewal* magazine was viewed positively by stakeholders, although it was seen as disconnected from the work of the Office of the Special Adviser and the ECA-NEPAD Unit.

With regard to its monitoring role, the Office of the Special Adviser reliably delivered mandated reports of the Secretary-General, but these had limited utility to decision makers. The Office also reported development commitments via the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development and in the biennial report on the review of the implementation of such commitments; however, there was no evidence of a mechanism to monitor commitments over time, which fell short of mandate requirements prescribed by the General Assembly in its resolution [66/293](#) and the Secretary-General in his report on strengthening the Office ([A/68/506](#)). This rendered the Office less able to provide analytical work and advice to improve the coherence of United Nations support for Africa, which was viewed by stakeholders as a significant shortcoming.

With regard to global and regional coordination mandates, programme 9 mechanisms resulted in information-sharing and limited coordination but have not brought coherence to the United Nations system in supporting Africa's development. At the global level, the Office of the Special Adviser had not fully delivered on its global coordination role. Meanwhile, at the regional level, the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa improved information-sharing and prepared joint workplans for coordinated delivery. However, the Mechanism was hindered by long-standing and systematic issues, including unclear accountability for outcomes, weak buy-in from stakeholders and limited capacity of African Union organs and agencies to guide the work of the United Nations.

OIOS makes four critical recommendations:

- (a) To resolve programme coherence and internal accountability issues by putting in place a formal process of regular consultation to internally align and coordinate the activities of the three subprogrammes of programme 9 in order to present a coherent programme that delivers as one;
- (b) To systematically engage stakeholders in strategic programme planning to ensure that a comprehensive, participatory and integrated plan is developed in support of its mandates;
- (c) To strengthen United Nations global and regional coordination mechanisms with clear leadership and involvement roles for each subprogramme so that they more deliberately inform each other and coherently coordinate United Nations support;
- (d) To fully operationalize the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development in line with General Assembly resolutions.

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I. Introduction and objective

1. The overall objective of the evaluation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through programme 9. The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper produced at the outset of the evaluation. The evaluation conforms with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system.¹ The Division last undertook an evaluation of programme 9 in 2008.²

2. Comments on the draft report were sought from the management of programme 9 and considered in the final report. Those responses are included in annexes II and III.

II. Background

A. Mandate, roles and stakeholders

3. United Nations support for NEPAD through programme 9 was developed in response to General Assembly resolution [57/7](#).

4. Three entities implement programme 9: the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (subprogramme 1); the Economic Commission for Africa, through its NEPAD Unit (subprogramme 2); and the Department of Global Communications, through its Africa Section (subprogramme 3). The three-pronged structure for programme 9 was intended to leverage comparative advantages from different parts of the Organization as follows:

(a) Coordination of global advocacy and reviewing and reporting on the activities of the United Nations system and the international community in support of Africa by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The Office has an advantage as a Secretariat entity based in New York, with proximity to the Secretary-General, representatives of Member States and the General Assembly;

(b) Regional coordination of, and support for, NEPAD by the ECA-NEPAD Unit. ECA has an advantage in leveraging its existing mandate as the designated entry point of the Secretary-General for the United Nations to African Union organs and agencies, for regional integration and international cooperation for Africa's development;

(c) Public information and awareness activities in support of NEPAD by the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications. The Department has an advantage in leveraging its broader apparatus in editorial production and its distribution centres throughout Africa.

5. The key target stakeholders for programme 9 are identified in table 1.

¹ United Nations Evaluation Group, "Norms and Standards for Evaluation" (2016).

² [E/AC.51/2009/2](#).

Table 1
Key stakeholders of programme 9

<i>Group</i>	<i>Role in Africa's development</i>
Pan-African institutions	
African Union Development Agency	Coordinating and executing projects to promote regional integration and strengthen the capacity of States members of the African Union and regional bodies towards the accelerated realization of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want
African Peer Review Mechanism	African Union agency tasked with monitoring the governance and socioeconomic development of African countries
Regional economic communities	Eight bodies tasked with the implementation of subregional strategies aligned to regional strategies of the African Union Commission
African Union Commission	Policy analysis and development of regional strategies to implement Agenda 2063
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of African Member States	Fifty-four missions that deliberate and oversee progress on the implementation of the development, peace and security priorities of Africa
United Nations Secretariat, agencies, funds and specialized programmes	Support African countries and pan-African institutions in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 at the global, regional and local levels by providing advice, capacity-building and coordination of projects, among other things

B. Main areas of work

6. Table 2 provides an overview of the main areas of work for each subprogramme and the total implemented outputs compared with those budgeted. A visual road map which summarizes the underlying programme logic – what each subprogramme is seeking to achieve, how it aims to achieve it and under what assumptions and conditions – is provided in the programme impact pathway (see annex I). The evaluation assessed the outcomes of programme 9 based on the programmed activities as shown in table 2.

Table 2
Programme 9: subprogrammes and objectives, 2016–2019

2A. Subprogramme 1: Coordination of global advocacy of and support for NEPAD

Objective: To strengthen international cooperation in support of NEPAD and achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<i>Programmed activities</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>		<i>2018–2019</i>	
	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies	20	20	20	20
Expert group meetings, publications, seminars and special events	33	37	35	24
Inter-agency meetings and coordination	6	6	6	4
Other substantive activities, databases and website	2	2	6	1
Total	61	65	67	49

2B. Subprogramme 2: Regional coordination of and support for NEPAD

Objective: To strengthen United Nations system-wide support for the African Union and its Agenda 2063 and other regional priorities, including its NEPAD programme, at the regional and subregional levels, within the context of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017–2027, as well as strategic plans and priorities of the African Union organs and institutions

<i>Programmed activities</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>		<i>2018–2019</i>	
	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies	18	18	15	12
Ad hoc expert groups, publications and technical materials	15	15	8	9
Technical cooperation	12	12	10	9
Total	45	45	33	30

2C. Subprogramme 3: Global communications and awareness-raising activities in support of NEPAD

Objective: To raise international support for the economic, political and social development of Africa, as well as for the efforts made by Africa and the international community to promote the economic growth and sustainable development of the region in pursuit of the goals of NEPAD and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda

<i>Programmed activities</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>		<i>2018–2019</i>	
	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>Africa Renewal</i> magazine	12	12	12	12
Inter-agency meetings and coordination	2	2	2	2
Press releases, promotional materials and website	6	8	6	8
Total	20	22	20	22

Source: A/71/6 (Prog. 9) and performance data reviewed by OIOS.

7. The global and regional coordination mandates of programme 9 are implemented by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the ECA-NEPAD Unit, as the secretariats of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs and the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, respectively:

(a) **Interdepartmental task force on African affairs.** The Office of the Special Adviser convenes the task force of United Nations agencies at the principal and technical levels to ensure coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa. The 2018 African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development required the task force to convene at least annually to adopt joint workplans and review implementation progress with pan-African institutions (see table 5).

(b) **Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.** The ECA-NEPAD Unit convenes the Mechanism for United Nations system-wide coordination and cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in support of the African Union and Agenda 2063. The Mechanism is organized into nine clusters aligned to African Union priorities, with each cluster co-convened by an African Union Commission department and a United Nations agency. Collaborating with the regional economic commissions at the subregional level, ECA convenes four subregional coordination mechanisms.

C. Programme structure

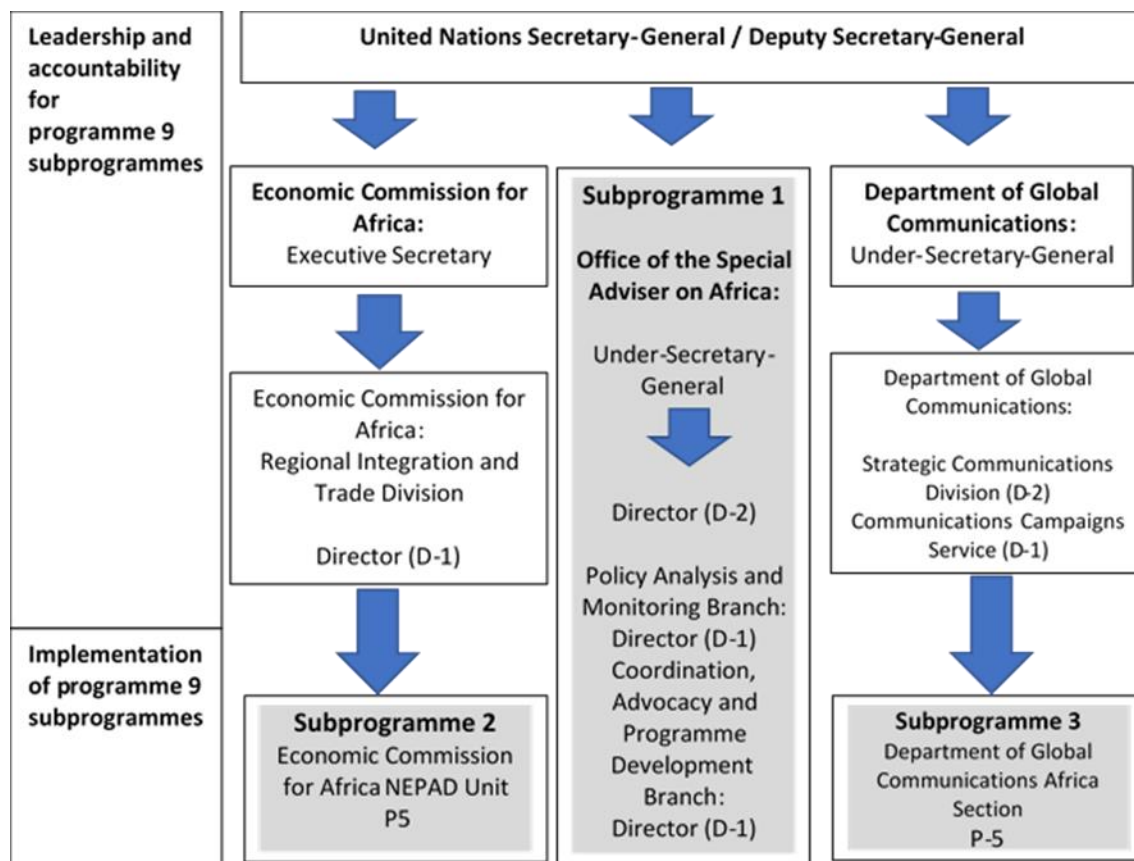
8. Subprogramme 1 (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa) is comprised of two branches: the Policy Analysis and Monitoring Branch and the Coordination, Advocacy and Programme Development Branch. The Office was headed by an Under-Secretary-General, appointed as the Special Adviser on Africa, who reports directly to the Secretary-General. During the evaluation period, the Office was managed by an acting Under-Secretary-General (2017–2018), followed by a newly appointed Under-Secretary-General from April 2018 to present.

9. Subprogramme 2 (ECA-NEPAD Unit) staff are based in Addis Ababa and report to the Director of the Regional Integration and Trade Division in ECA.

10. Subprogramme 3 staff report to the Africa Section of the Strategic Communications Division of the Department of Global Communications in New York.

11. As shown in figure I, accountability for both the ECA and the Department of Global Communications subprogrammes rests with their respective Under-Secretaries-General, with no reporting lines to each other or to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

Figure I
Programme 9 organizational structure, 2018–2019



Note: Shaded boxes indicate programme 9; arrows indicate leadership and accountability lines.

D. Governance

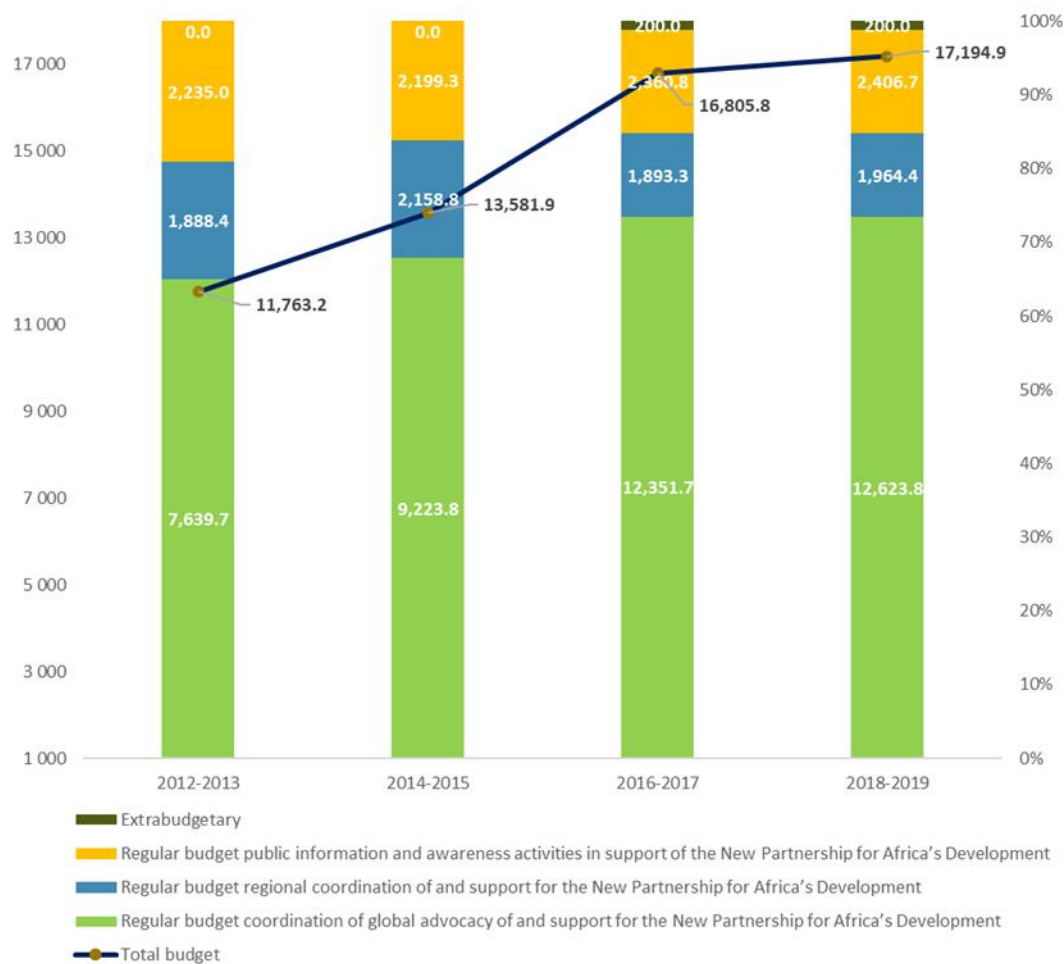
12. The Committee for Programme and Coordination is the governing body to which the mandated progress report of programme 9 on the implementation of NEPAD and the coordination of United Nations support for NEPAD, in addition to its strategic framework, is presented. Meanwhile, the progress report on the implementation of and international support for NEPAD is submitted to the General Assembly directly.

E. Resources

13. Programme 9 received 0.3 per cent of the 2018–2019 regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat. Figure II presents the proposed biennial budget estimates for the period covering 2012–2013 to 2018–2019.

Figure II
Proposed programme budgets, 2012–2019: United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

(Thousands of United States dollars)



Source: A/70/6 (Sect. 11) and A/72/6 (Sect. 11).

14. Table 3 provides the distribution and vacancy rate for each subprogramme of programme 9 in 2019.

Table 3
Budgeted compared with actual programme 9 posts, by subprogramme, 2018–2019

		Subprogramme 1		Subprogramme 2		Subprogramme	
		Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual
Professional and higher	USG	1	1	–	–	–	–
	D-2	1	1	–	–	–	–
	D-1	2	2	–	–	–	–
	P-5	4	3	1	1	1	1
	P-4/3	16	15	3	1	3	3

		<i>Subprogramme 1</i>		<i>Subprogramme 2</i>		<i>Subprogramme</i>	
		<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Actual</i>
General Service	P-2/1	1	0	–	–	–	–
	All	6	5	1	1	3	3
Total		31	27	5	3	7	7
Vacancy rate		12.9%		40%		0%	

F. Operating context

Focus on Africa

15. The United Nations has historically given special attention to the African continent, for example, with the 2002 request for the General Assembly to support NEPAD³ and at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, at which Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives recommitted to fully implement the internationally agreed commitments related to Africa's development needs.⁴

Moving to Agenda 2063

16. The NEPAD framework was developed by the African Union and adopted in 2001 as the programme for implementing the development agenda in Africa. In 2015, the African Union adopted Agenda 2063 as its overarching development framework, which effectively subsumed the NEPAD agenda.⁵

African Union reforms

17. To more efficiently deliver on the commitments of Agenda 2063, the African Union was reformed in 2018.⁶ This included bringing the African Union Development Agency (the renamed NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency) and the African Peer Review Mechanism into the African Union Commission as regular budget agencies and empowering the regional economic communities to deliver on the regional integration priorities of the African Union. This was intended to help the African Union address the systemic aspects of achieving Agenda 2063, and to focus on integrated continental approaches.⁷

United Nations reforms

18. Reform of the United Nations development pillar was aimed at improving coordination in the regions, one of the key aspects of programme 9. Chief among these reforms were: (a) a renewed Resident Coordinator system with enhanced accountability for country outcomes through the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group and United Nations country teams;⁸ (b) unified mechanisms for coordination among agencies working in each region through a regional collaborative platform that would absorb the regional coordination mechanisms and the regional

³ General Assembly resolution 57/7.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 35.

⁵ See <https://www.nepad.org/microsite/who-we-are-0>.

⁶ African Union, "Operational effectiveness and efficiency". Available from <https://au.int/AUReforms/efficiency>.

⁷ African Union Development Agency-NEPAD strategic plan: 2020–2023, p. 10.

⁸ See A/74/73-E/2019/14, para. 10.

teams of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group;⁹ and (c) enhanced and mutually reinforcing partnerships with the African Union by operationalizing United Nations-African Union partnerships described in the 2017 Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhancing Partnership on Peace and Security and the 2018 African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, including a revitalized interdepartmental task force on African affairs.¹⁰ Figure III presents a timeline of relevant events.

⁹ Ibid., para. 110.

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 157.

Figure III
Evolution of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and Agenda 2063



G. Evaluation scope and methodology

19. The evaluation assessed the activities of programme 9 from 2016 to 2019, using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

20. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach, comprising:

(a) Structured document reviews of workplans, reports of the Secretary-General (4), issues of *Africa Renewal* (11) and reports of expert group meetings (16);

(b) Case studies of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development;

(c) Direct observation of meetings and advocacy events in 2019, including meetings of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (25 and 26 September); the Africa Dialogue Series (21–23 May); selected events of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (9–19 July), including an Africa Day side event (17 July); and the daily office activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (July–August), including its internal meetings;

(d) Interviews with programme 9 staff of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Global Communications (33), as well as key stakeholders within the United Nations (including members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the interdepartmental task force on African affairs) (46), the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism and regional economic communities (30), a key African non-governmental organization (1) and the Group of African States (3);

(e) Surveys of target groups were also conducted, as shown below.

Table 4
Survey response information

<i>Stakeholder group</i>	<i>Number of survey respondents</i>	<i>Survey response rate (percentage)</i>
Programme 9 staff	36	90
United Nations stakeholders	83	83
African Union stakeholders	28	28
Permanent Representatives of African States	11	20
Total	158	–

III. Evaluation results

A. Programme 9 continues to be relevant due to its intended unique value added in facilitating United Nations support for Africa's development and the demand for its services remains significant; however, it lacked a relevant implementation strategy with clear accountability mechanisms to make it fit for purpose

Programme 9 advocacy, coordination and monitoring activities in support of Africa's development continue to be relevant and feature regularly in United Nations resolutions and agreements

21. Programme 9 was initially mandated to ensure a coherent response in coordinating United Nations activities for Africa at the global, regional and national levels.¹¹ Its unique value added was to advocate for coordinated support for Africa's development.¹² Resolutions and subsequent United Nations-African Union frameworks reaffirmed the need for a programme to facilitate a coordinated and coherent response in support of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to address the nexus between peace, security and development. Collectively, these resolutions emphasized the key role played by programme 9 in working with the African Union institutions. The major resolutions and frameworks that validate the continued relevance of programme 9 are listed in table 5.

Table 5

Major resolutions and frameworks for United Nations support for Africa

<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Element that is specific to programme 9</i>
General Assembly resolution 57/7	4 November 2002	Ensure a coherent response in coordinating United Nations activities, advocacy and public information in support of Africa's development
A/57/387 and Corr.1	9 September 2002	International and United Nations support promoted and monitored to ensure that appropriate attention is focused on Africa
General Assembly resolution 58/271 A-C endorsing the proposed budget for United Nations support for NEPAD A/58/6 (Sect. 11) , paras. 11.7 and 11.8	23 December 2003	Raise international awareness, mobilize and monitor the international community including the United Nations system for the implementation of NEPAD with a coordinated and effective response by the United Nations system in support of African development
Enhancing United Nations-African Union Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union (A/61/630 , annex)	16 November 2006	United Nations capacity-building support for African Union activities to cover a broader spectrum of work given the expanded mandate of the African Union
General Assembly resolution 67/294	15 August 2013	Requests the Secretary-General to continue to take measures to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in order to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring and reporting on progress related to meeting the special needs of Africa and

¹¹ See General Assembly resolution [57/7](#), para. 31.

¹² See [A/65/6 \(Prog. 9\)](#), para. 9.4.

<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Element that is specific to programme 9</i>
Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027	March 2015	<p>coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, to ensure a coherent and integrated approach for United Nations support for Africa (para. 54)</p> <p>The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa will continue its global advocacy and policy advisory activities on behalf of the African Union, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the regional economic communities</p> <p>The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa will be responsible for the delivery of programmes of support through the activities of its clusters and sub-clusters</p>
Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, Sect. IV.A	19 April 2017	<p>The Secretariat and the Commission will:</p> <p>Hold periodic joint discussions, involving relevant experts and practitioners, on the root causes of conflict in Africa and how to address them</p> <p>Share and discuss early warning analysis, including emerging human rights issues, from all relevant sources</p> <p>Hold annual United Nations-African Union meetings with the participation of the African Union, the United Nations, the regional economic communities and regional coordination mechanisms to discuss country-specific situations and collaborate in preventing and resolving conflict</p>
African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	27 January 2018	<p>Hold annual meetings of the African Union and the United Nations and other relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system that are members of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs to adopt joint workplans and review the implementation of previous ones</p>

22. In 2019, the United Nations system spent \$20 billion (40 per cent) of its \$50 billion funding in Africa, signalling that Africa is a significant priority for the deployment of peace, security and development support.¹³ Interviews with programme 9 stakeholders indicated that a coherent response and a coordinated approach to United Nations activities in the region were more important than ever in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Furthermore, they noted the need for a continued and enhanced advocacy role and public information activities in support of Africa's development. They also highlighted the strategic location of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa as a key link to global deliberations at United Nations Headquarters and the point of entry to the United Nations system for the African Union institutions, particularly the African Union Development Agency.

23. A review of documents showed that there are no other United Nations programmes with a specific focus on the peace, security and development nexus in Africa. Interviewed staff confirmed that programme 9 was the only programme with

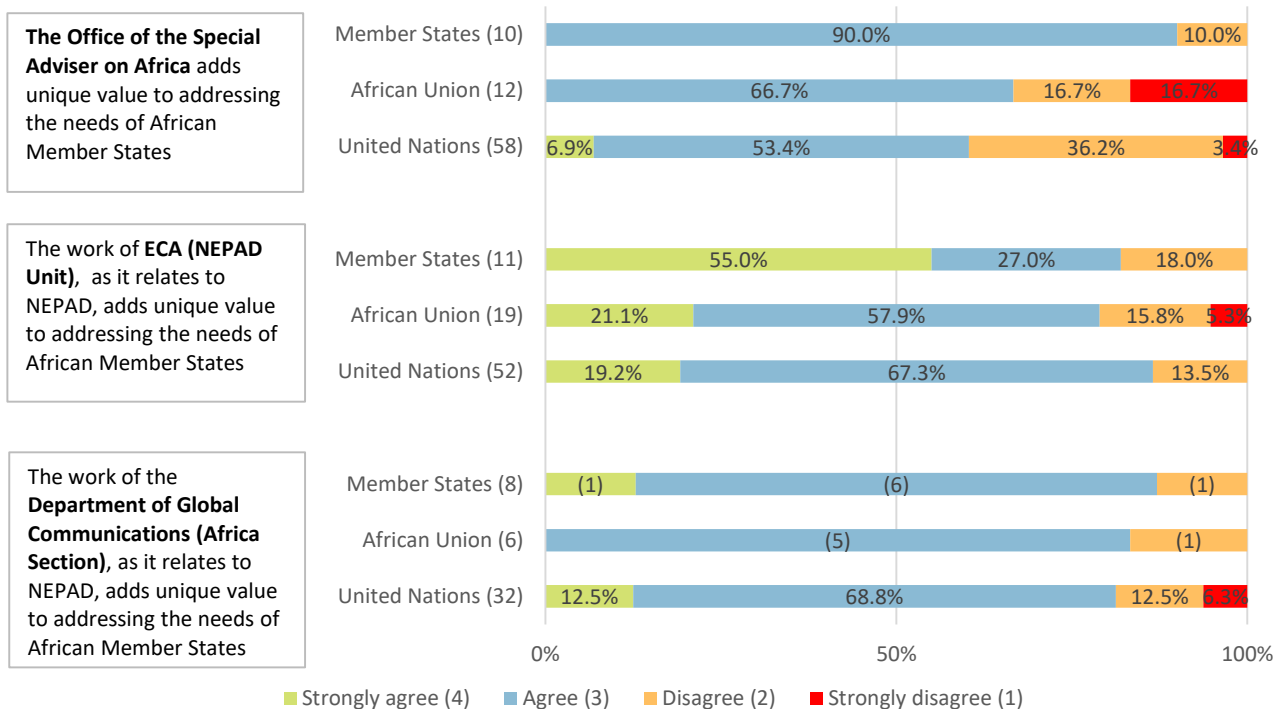
¹³ A/75/1, chap. II.C.

a mandate and potential to bring the United Nations system together through integrated perspectives and coherent support for Africa.

24. As shown in figure IV, surveyed Member State, African Union and United Nations stakeholders agreed that its three subprogrammes added unique value to addressing the needs of African Member States.

Figure IV

Stakeholder assessment of the value added by programme 9 to Africa's development



Source: Surveys of African Member States, African Union and United Nations stakeholders.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

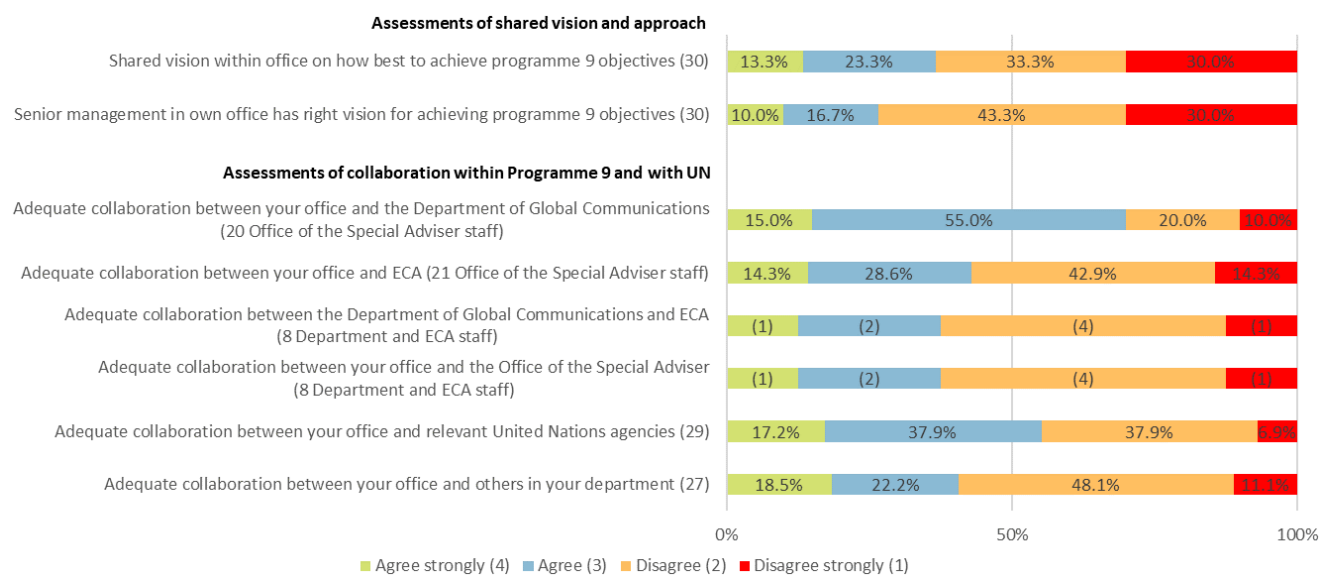
25. Interviews and results from surveys of stakeholders confirmed that United Nations support for Africa's development continues to be an important component in facilitating the achievement of the continent's development agenda. The majority of both African Union and programme 9 staff surveyed (52.2 and 72.4 per cent, respectively) indicated that the mandate was highly relevant. Conversely, 38.2 per cent of United Nations stakeholders indicated that the mandate was only somewhat relevant, and 21 per cent indicated that it was not relevant.

Programme 9 lacked a relevant implementation strategy with clear accountability mechanisms to guide the three-pronged structure

26. While the three-pronged structure of programme 9 situated the various activities of the programme within the United Nations departments that are best placed to deliver them, it also presented challenges in terms of programme governance and coordination. Review of planning documents and staff and stakeholder interviews confirmed that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Global Communications continued to operate in silos and delivered subprogramme

activities in a fragmented manner. The strategic frameworks and budgets of the subprogrammes were developed in isolation from each other, with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa then consolidating and presenting them for approval. There was no institutionalized joint strategic planning, nor was there a coordinated and focused programme of work or joint strategy based on the priorities of the African Union for Africa's development. Figure V illustrates this challenge, including the fact that two thirds of staff reported a lack of coherence and shared vision among the three subprogrammes.

Figure V
Programme 9 staff assessment of vision and collaboration

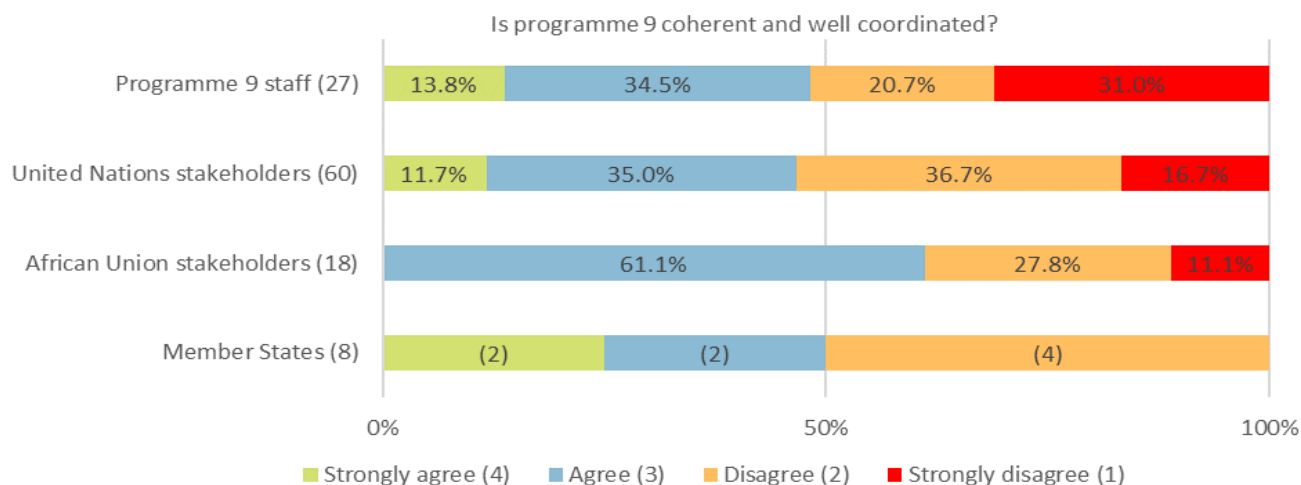


Source: Staff survey.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

27. Most staff and stakeholders experienced a disconnected programme with limited coherence across the subprogrammes led by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the ECA-NEPAD Unit and the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications. Only 48.3 per cent of surveyed staff and less than 50 per cent of most stakeholder groups agreed or strongly agreed that the programme 9 approach was coherent and well coordinated (see figure VI). Staff and stakeholders suggested that closer collaboration and better alignment across subprogrammes to ensure that activities were complimentary was needed to add further value.

Figure VI
Stakeholder and staff assessment of programme 9 coherence and coordination



Source: Surveys of staff, the United Nations, the African Union and African Member States.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

28. Surveyed representatives of African Member States, pan-African institution stakeholders, United Nations stakeholders and programme 9 staff indicated that basic priorities and needs were responded to in terms of covering relevant subject matters, producing reports and holding meetings. However, most interviewees saw opportunities to significantly improve the achievement of results through closer collaboration on development priorities. This was particularly true of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as stakeholders could not see a clear benefit to Africa's development agenda arising from the Office's advocacy work.

Programme 9 was unable to keep pace with new developments and reforms

29. Review of the workplans and communication planning documents of the Office of the Special Adviser indicated that these were developed in isolation from key stakeholders in the African Union Development Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Union Commission, United Nations partner agencies and African Member States, resulting in the inability of the programme to keep pace with new developments and reforms. This rendered them less strategic and inadequately focused on results, as the programme focused on activities without articulating outcomes and did not assign responsibility or resources. These stakeholders suggested that programme 9 was not sufficiently strategic in consulting with them to advocate effectively.

30. Interviewees noted that, while they were occasionally consulted on specific events (e.g. Africa Week), such consultation had decreased over 2018 and 2019 and there was never consultation for input during the programme's strategic planning. To compound that, stakeholders and programme 9 staff expressed concerns that the programme's mandate on United Nations support for NEPAD was interpreted too narrowly as specific support to the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency itself, rather than the overall Africa development framework, and might not have kept current with the reforms at the African Union and the ensuing transformations. Indeed, the current mandate did not fully reflect the evolution of Africa's development priorities through Agenda 2063 as the overarching development framework, and the associated change to the African Union Development Agency.

B. Programme 9 mostly delivered on planned advocacy activities; however, results in terms of increased international support for Africa’s development were unclear owing to a lack of strategy

The effectiveness of the advocacy activities of the Office of the Special Adviser was limited by weak follow-up and the lack of an advocacy strategy

31. Review of workplans showed that subprogrammes mostly delivered on their planned activities. However, as seen in table 2, the number of advocacy outputs delivered by the Office of the Special Adviser, the subprogramme lead for advocacy, declined substantially during the 2018–2019 period.

32. Review of planning documents and stakeholder interviews indicated that the themes of key Office advocacy events were aligned well with broad themes of the African Union, the African Union Development Agency and Agenda 2063. Stakeholders often noted that events were well organized in terms of logistics, travel, programme and agenda. However, stakeholders and staff provided numerous examples of well-organized events that were not explicitly connected to a strategy for results. For example, as co-organizer of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Office provided comments on plenary documents and advice in meetings, attended Conference sessions and planning meetings and helped with reaching consensus. However, pan-African institutional stakeholders were unsure what outcomes were pursued by the Office on their behalf in participating in the Conference.

33. In addition, review of documents related to the Office’s major activities, as well as interviews with stakeholders and staff, showed limited follow-up after the events. Stakeholders and staff noted the absence of a deliberate strategy developed in consultation with stakeholders, which was a critical component to guide events planning and follow-through in order to better support Africa’s development.

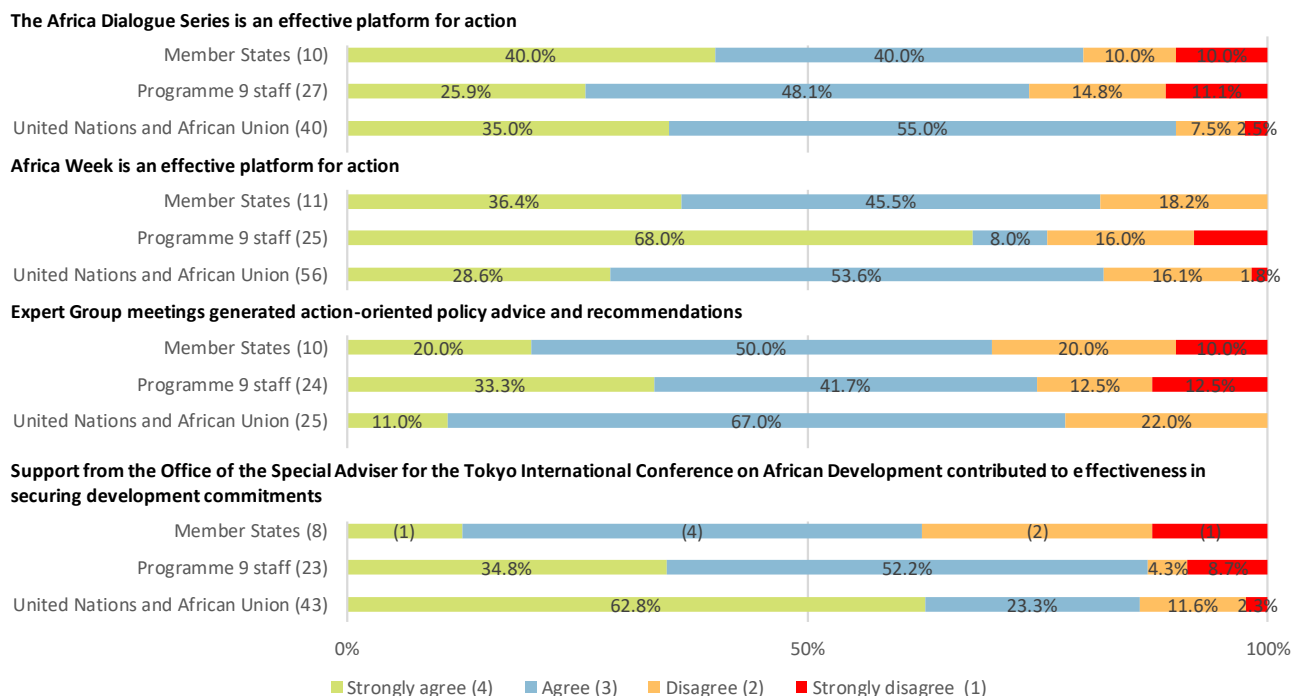
34. Document review also showed that Africa Week and the Africa Dialogue Series were supported with communications strategies from the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications and, along with expert group meetings, had concept notes that articulated meeting goals, most with outcome documents. However, none of those events demonstrated follow-up on recommendations made, and no communications strategies were created for the results of expert group meetings. Outcome documents showed that most policy recommendations were written with unspecific language that did not identify implementing actors or time frames to achieve the intended results. When recommendations identified actors, they were almost always at a very high level. Moreover, expert group meetings in which the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa had control over actions to be taken were not always followed up. Surveyed stakeholders aware of, or that had participated in, the Office’s events and staff involved in planning indicated that follow-up and transmittal of outcome documents was inconsistently done.

Advocacy activities were seen positively by stakeholders, but had limited expectations, visibility and outcomes

35. The main advocacy events delivered by the Office – Africa Week, the Africa Dialogue Series, expert group meetings and co-sponsorship of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development – were considered by most stakeholders to be effective platforms for advocating development, peace and security issues. Surveyed stakeholders (see figure VII) provided mainly positive assessments of these platforms, although interviews revealed that expectations were generally low. The most frequently mentioned advocacy outcome by stakeholders was the connection of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in discussions with United Nations agencies and

at intergovernmental bodies. Others expressed appreciation for the opportunities to engage with African Union and United Nations stakeholders on relevant issues. That said, the value of these events was frequently described as potential rather than realized, with few stakeholders being able to identify specific outcomes resulting from the Office's advocacy work.

Figure VII
Stakeholder and staff assessments of the main advocacy activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa



Source: Surveys of staff, the United Nations, the African Union and African Member States.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

***Africa Renewal* magazine was viewed positively by its audience and stakeholders, but seen as disconnected from a programme advocacy strategy**

36. *Africa Renewal* magazine, produced by the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications (subprogramme 3), was intended to raise international awareness of development issues in Africa among the magazine's audience. Respondents to a November 2019 survey of online subscribers by the Africa Section described the magazine as credible (74 per cent) and reported it contributed to actions such as seeking more information (55 per cent) and sharing articles with others (42 per cent).

37. Article reprint data from the Africa Section showed that the reach of the magazine went beyond the initial publication of its issues (see table 6).

Table 6
Africa Renewal magazine article reprints, 2016–2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Number of republications</i>	<i>Number of media outlets</i>	<i>Number of countries</i>
2016	49	558	247	28
2017	131	1 307	526	55
2018	86	1 158	455	49
2019	95	904	346	40
Total	361	3 927	1 574	172

Source: Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications.

38. Review of the magazine's content (see table 7) showed that it was broadly relevant to the institutional priorities of the African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency framework and increasingly focused on youth and gender issues. In terms of geographical coverage, articles were largely focused on Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Table 7
Review of *Africa Renewal* magazine content against priority areas of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development

<i>Year</i>	<i>Cross-cutting issues</i>		<i>African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development framework priorities</i>			
	<i>Youth</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Human capital development (other skills development)</i>	<i>Regional integration, infrastructure and trade</i>	<i>Natural resource governance and food security</i>	<i>Industrial, science, technology and innovation</i>
2016	4	7	6	5	7	3
2017	8	14	1	9	11	10
2018	4	9	3	3	6	5
2019	11	13	3	10	8	3
Total	27	43	13	27	32	21

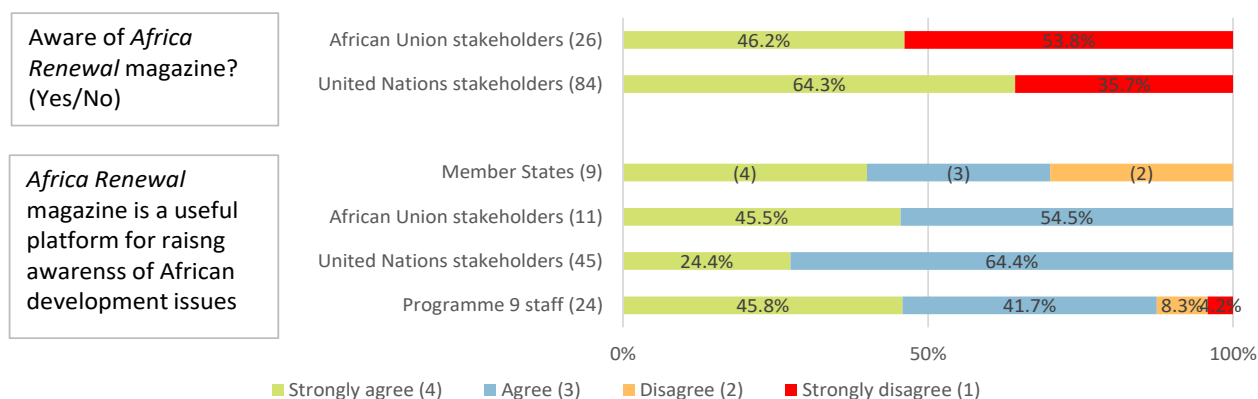
Source: Articles reviewed by OIOS, August 2019.

Note: 2019 figures are through August of that year.

39. Its broad alignment to NEPAD priorities notwithstanding, *Africa Renewal* content was not connected to a broader programme 9 advocacy strategy, and engagement by the Africa Section with key programme 9 stakeholders was insufficient to realize its full potential. Nearly all indicated that it was not clear how the content of *Africa Renewal* was supporting the goals of programme 9. Most stakeholders were unaware that it was connected to the work of its key stakeholder, NEPAD (and, later, the African Union Development Agency), or the other subprogrammes. Interviewed staff confirmed that connections to similar priorities between the three subprogrammes were ad hoc.

40. Overall, *Africa Renewal* was seen positively by stakeholders in terms of story quality and relevance to development issues. Majorities of surveyed and interviewed United Nations and pan-African institution stakeholders who were aware of the magazine assessed it as a useful platform for advocacy (see figure VIII), although only 46.2 per cent of surveyed African Union stakeholders were aware of the magazine.

Figure VIII
Stakeholder and staff assessments of *Africa Renewal*



Source: Surveys of staff, the United Nations, the African Union and African Member States.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

C. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa reliably delivered mandated reports of the Secretary-General, but their limited utility, the lack of a mechanism to monitor commitments to Africa over time and a weak capacity to provide advice fell short of expectations

Reports of the Secretary-General were produced on time and facilitated Member State deliberations, but with mixed results

41. The Office of the Special Adviser produced its mandated reports of the Secretary-General in support of Member State deliberations on Africa's development, peace and security and to track United Nations, international and African Member State support for NEPAD. During the evaluation period, all 14 reports were submitted and issued on time. Surveyed stakeholders considered these reports to be broadly useful to their work (see figure IX). However, follow-up interviews and further document review confirmed a more limited utility of these reports.

42. Review of Secretary-General reports and associated resolutions revealed the following issues that may have affected the utility of the reports and their potential to add value for Africa's development:

- (a) Weak calls to action in recommendations:
 - (i) There was little evidence of recommendations being used by any United Nations entities. Stakeholders corroborated this;
 - (ii) Reports of the Secretary-General had language that was not actionable;
 - (iii) Recommendations were very high-level and general, and they addressed wide thematic areas.
- (b) Repetition:
 - (i) Data were repeated in reports on consolidated implementation of and international support for NEPAD and on the thematic areas selected for the reports on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development;

(ii) There was approximately 33 per cent repetition between the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which was drafted by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and the report on the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (S/2019/759), which was drafted by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, mostly on references to peacekeeping missions, regional offices and United Nations Office to the African Union;

(iii) Reports of the Secretary-General contained several recommendations that were repeated from year to year.

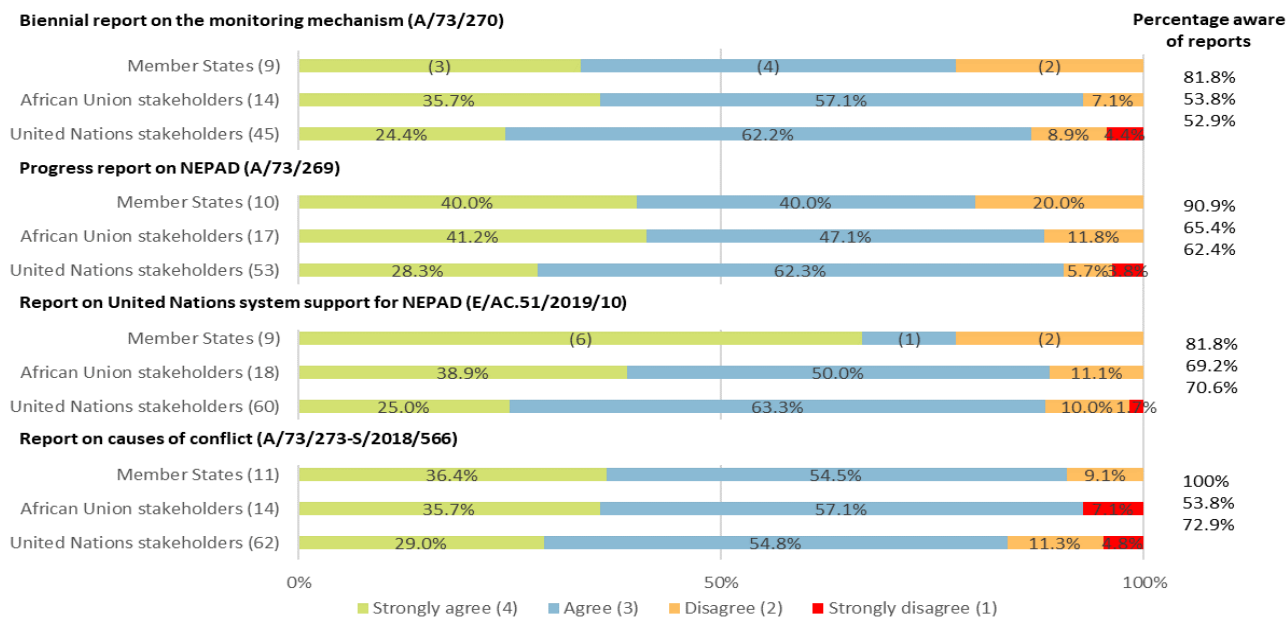
(c) Aggregation of information and some analysis, but not connected to strategy:

(i) The Office of the Special Adviser acted as an aggregator of information from different sources and aligned this information to themes selected based on the African Union theme of the year. However, beyond that, the comparative advantage of the Office writing the reports on the causes of conflict and on the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development remained unclear, as the Office did not have a strategy for advocating on the issues identified in the reports;

(ii) Stakeholders, including Member States, and some staff suggested that there was no clear strategy on how to enhance the utility of those reports.

43. As noted, while the reports were generally well received among surveyed stakeholders (see figure IX), it was clear from interviews that no higher-level outcomes had resulted from them, as expectations for outcomes were low. Interviews with these stakeholders confirmed that the reports had limited utility to them other than the recognition that they had been prepared and facilitated the discussion around those issues. Among the concerns cited were perceptions that consultations were too narrow and that the reports did not influence any follow-up action beyond the discussion and decisions taken through the intergovernmental process.

Figure IX
Stakeholder assessment of the utility of the reports of the Secretary-General



Source: Surveys of staff, the United Nations, the African Union and African Member States.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

The Office of the Special Adviser reported development commitments via the biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development; however, no mechanisms were in place to systematically track all commitments

44. In its resolution 66/293, the General Assembly decided to establish a United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments towards Africa's development, and to conduct a biennial review. The objective was to have a mechanism that helped to mobilize resources and ensure accountability for results from both donors and African countries.¹⁴ The specified requirements were: (a) to show the impact of commitments using reliable and timely data, (b) to build on existing mechanisms and to focus on commitments of development partners and African countries and (c) to focus on the implementation of multilateral commitments, thereby improving the development effectiveness for Africa.¹⁵

45. In response to its mandate, the Office of the Special Adviser produced three reports on the mechanism.¹⁶ In the first report, the Office attempted to document the establishment and operationalization of the mechanism. However, the report did not provide salient details on the methods and the methodology to operationalize the mechanism.¹⁷ The Office decided to monitor development commitments for Africa by assessing a few themes in each report. The three reports focused on four thematic areas (see table 8). However, the mechanism fell short of the mandate requirements and expectations to provide systematic monitoring.¹⁸ No mechanism was established to systematically track all commitments made to Africa's development. As such, the

¹⁴ See A/65/165, paras. 18–21.

¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 66/293, paras. 1–6.

¹⁶ A/69/163, A/71/203 and A/73/270.

¹⁷ See A/69/163, sect. II.

¹⁸ Prescribed in A/68/506 and General Assembly resolution 66/293.

mechanism did not result in the establishment of a system for continuous tracking of commitments, nor did it serve as a catalyst to strengthen other functions of the Office, such as identifying new and emerging issues and trends or producing analytical reports in support of its advisory role.

Table 8
Thematic areas for the biennial reports

<i>2014</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2018</i>
Agriculture, food security and nutrition	Infrastructure development	Inclusive and sustainable industrialization and regional integration
Financing for development	Gender and women's empowerment	Health and water and sanitation
Environmental sustainability and climate change	Trade	Climate change
Good governance	Achieving a conflict-free Africa	Finance and partnerships

46. Review of the biennial reports showed the following challenges to the effective delivery of the Office's monitoring mandate:

(a) **Selection of monitoring themes.** While biennial report topics were aligned to African Union themes and discussed with the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, members of the task force and African Union stakeholders raised concerns about the topic selection process. The Office of the Special Adviser could not show that a systematic procedure was followed covering all topics and emerging issues before selection of the final thematic areas;

(b) **Review of existing monitoring mechanisms.** There was no evidence that a comprehensive review of existing mechanisms that tracked commitments made to Africa had been used to provide reliable and timely data for the reports on the monitoring mechanism. The 2018 report did not list any existing mechanisms, while the 2014 and 2016 reports listed some;

(c) **Unclear data sources in reports.** Reports on the monitoring mechanism identified commitments; however, it was unclear what the data sources for those commitments were, which called into question the reliability and timeliness of the data. While the Office held consultations with stakeholders and the task force and referred to reliable sources throughout some parts of the reports, review of these consultations could not be linked to specific commitments identified in the reports, nor was it clear which data came from which sources. Additionally, many of the commitments reported were unclear on where and when these commitments had been made or how they would be operationalized. Staff of the Office indicated that they in some cases had relied on online searches for information, calling into question its verification and reliability;

(d) **Accountability for commitments.** The current approach did not actively monitor commitments to enforce the accountability of development partners or lead to follow-up actions. Report recommendations resulted in little or no call to action by Member States, with no evidence of the recommendations having an impact on Member State decision-making;

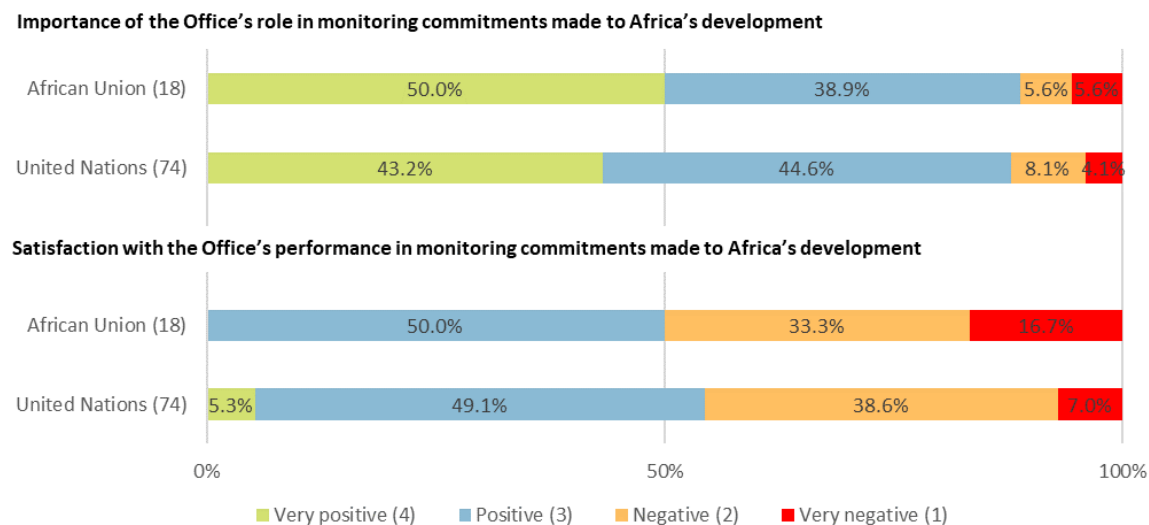
(e) **Unclear use of the monitoring mechanism.** To implement the monitoring mechanism, the Office received nine posts in 2014. The Office could not substantiate

that the staff hired to strengthen the monitoring mandate were fully utilized in the production of the biennial reports on the monitoring mechanism. For example, the Office continued to hire consultants to conduct consultations with stakeholders and to write the 2014 and 2016 reports. For the 2016 and 2018 reports, the Office incurred costs totalling \$493,336, including \$228,605 for consultant fees and travel.¹⁹

47. While all stakeholders surveyed saw the importance of monitoring commitments made to Africa, they were less positive on the performance of the Office with regard to monitoring these commitments (see figure X).

Figure X

Stakeholder assessment of the role of the Office of the Special Adviser with regard to monitoring commitments



Source: Surveys of United Nations and African Union stakeholders.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded.

The Office of the Special Adviser was unable to reach its full potential in its consultative and advisory role

48. The mandate of the Office required analytical work and publications on Africa, which other United Nations agencies can use to develop joint programming or advocacy work.²⁰ Evidence from interviews showed that this was further emphasized and that information was requested by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in meetings with the Office of the Special Adviser in 2018. The review of Office talking points for meeting with the Secretary-General indicated that such high-level updates and information were provided, but no analysis and advice. Members of the Office of the Special Adviser met with members of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General when requested, although the Office of the Special Adviser noted that no specific analytical or policy development requests were made in those meetings. The Office produced very little analytical work and advice on Africa's development.

49. Furthermore, correspondence of the Office of the Special Adviser with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on Africa did not include analysis on Africa and the volume of such analysis produced declined over the evaluation period, from 11 in 2016, to 9 in 2017, 4 in 2018 and 2 in 2019. Review of the subjects of

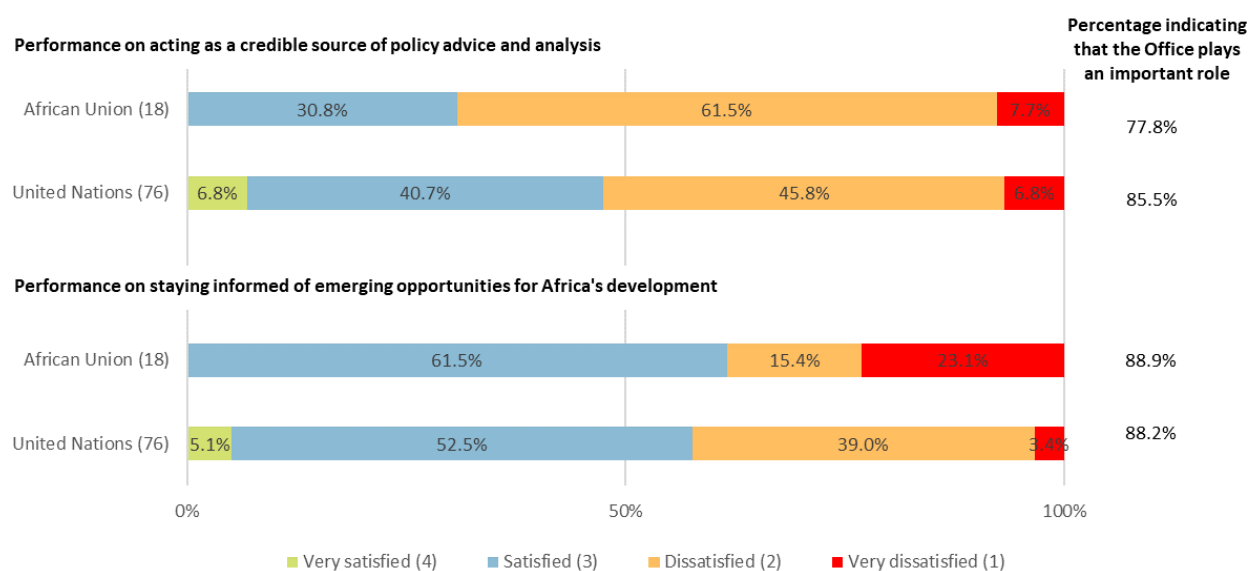
¹⁹ Umoja data for 2016 and 2018.

²⁰ General Assembly resolution 57/300, para. 25 (a).

correspondence between the Office of the Special Adviser and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General almost exclusively focused on announcing reports of the Secretary-General or invitations to events.

50. Interviewed and surveyed stakeholders indicated that the function of providing analysis and advice was important, as the Office of the Special Adviser was the United Nations office with a unique focus on Africa and at the nexus between peace, security and development at the global level (see figure XI). However, they also indicated that at present they were unsatisfied with the Office's performance in that role. African Union institutions and United Nations stakeholders, including members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, indicated that they were mostly unaware of the Office's advisory role and its work on publications.

Figure XI
Stakeholder assessment of the analysis and advisory role of the Office of the Special Adviser



Source: Surveys of United Nations and African Union stakeholders.

D. Programme 9 global and regional coordination mechanisms have facilitated information-sharing and limited coordination, but have not brought coherence to United Nations system support for Africa's development

The Office of the Special Adviser has not implemented the mandate of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs as a global coordination mechanism for the United Nations system in support of Africa's development

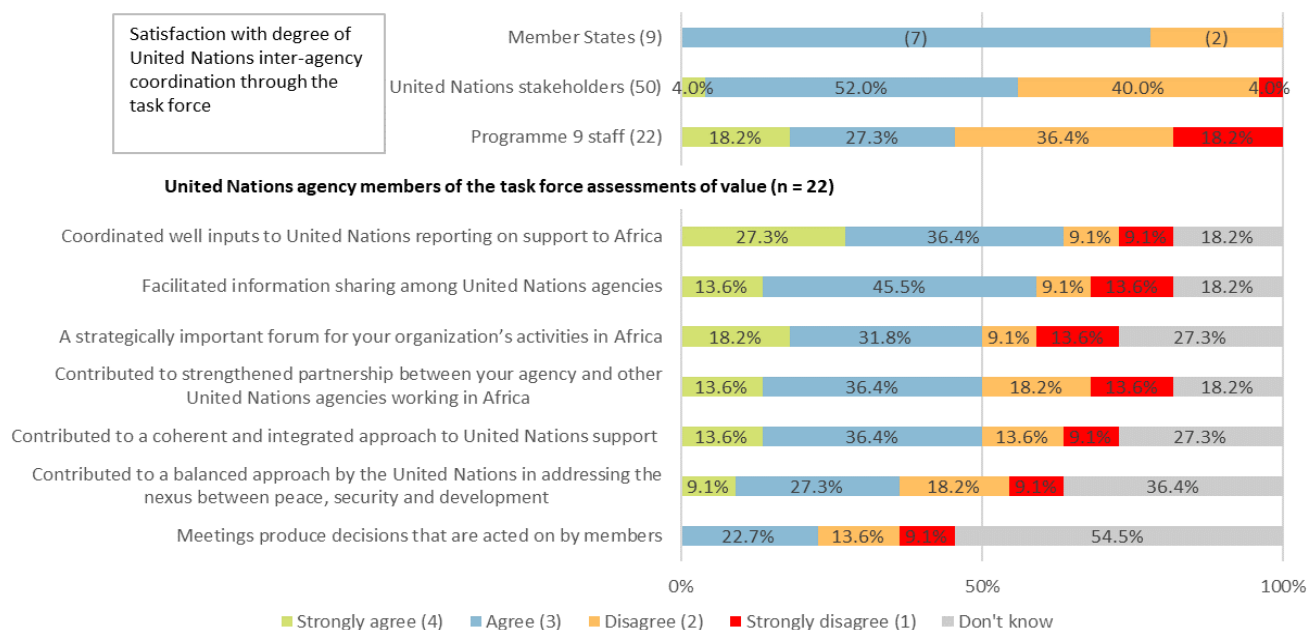
51. A key mandate assigned to the Office of the Special Adviser was to coordinate the task force. This facilitation role was strengthened in the 2018 African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see table 5). Interviewed stakeholders (United Nations and African Union officials and representatives of Member States) consistently identified a need for global coordination at the highest level by United Nations principals, by which strategic support to Africa could be decided. They noted the importance of supporting African Union goals articulated in Agenda 2063. African

Union officials added that such coordination was important to link global coordination to the regional mechanism to ensure that regional-level strategies supporting both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 were implemented.

52. Review of the minutes and agendas of meetings of the task force from 2016 to 2019, supported by interviews with attending United Nations agencies and staff of the Office of the Special Adviser, showed that the Office did not focus meetings of the task force on United Nations global coordination. Review of minutes showed that the task force met mainly to coordinate input into reports of the Secretary-General (four meetings; see result C in sect. V) and to receive briefings on other issues (three meetings), but not as a coordinating mechanism to identify the compatibility of interventions or the potential for joint activities that would make United Nations support for Africa more coherent. (No meetings focused on coordination within the United Nations system.)

53. Surveyed members of the task force were more positive about the task force as an information-gathering tool for reports than as a coordination mechanism. Agreement was weakest on statements pertaining to coordination and coherence (see figure XII), and most members were unsure if meetings produced decisions that were followed up (54.5 per cent indicated that they did not know.) Staff and stakeholders of the Office believed that the task force had unfulfilled potential to improve the coherence of United Nations system support for Africa. For example, it was suggested that, in order to align the efforts of United Nations agencies, the task force should meet regularly, have a dedicated secretariat function and convene around specific issues rather than reports of the Secretary-General. Proposals by the Office to revitalize the task force, in line with its mandate to provide advice and analysis and drive a more coordinated United Nations approach to Africa, had not been implemented. Stakeholders and staff agreed that, once implemented, those would strengthen the ability of the task force to deliver on its mandate.

Figure XII
Assessment of stakeholders and staff of the effectiveness of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs



Source: Surveys of staff, United Nations stakeholders and African Member States.

Note: Responses of "I don't know" have been excluded, except for questions asked only to members of the task force.

The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa has improved information-sharing among United Nations agencies; however, it has not brought regional coherence to United Nations support for Africa’s development priorities.

54. The ability to connect United Nations regional efforts with the priorities of the African Union is a unique advantage of the Mechanism compared with similar coordination mechanisms in other regions. The Mechanism improved the preparation of joint workplans between United Nations cluster members and the African Union. Review of the Mechanism’s workplans indicated that they were increasingly aligned with African Union priorities articulated in Agenda 2063, which was also noted in an earlier review.

55. Previous assessments of mechanisms²¹ and interviews with current African Union and United Nations members identified the following long-standing structural factors hindering coordination and coherence of the United Nations system at the regional and subregional levels:

(a) **United Nations funding arrangements for agencies.** Such arrangements privilege projects identified through agencies’ own funding streams over commitments made in cluster workplans of the Mechanism;

(b) **Unclear accountability.** Accountability for implementing commitments under the Mechanism that have been identified by both United Nations and African Union stakeholders is unclear. Progress on implementation of the Mechanism is reported only by ECA. The 2019 report by Cepei on regional coordination in the United Nations also noted that generally there was low accountability for regional commitments;

(c) **Weak buy-in from United Nations and African Union cluster members.** This was particularly the case among African Union and United Nations cluster coordinators tasked with coordinating the workplans of United Nations agencies without sufficient commitment at the global (headquarters) level to implementing regional priorities;

(d) **Limited capacity of the African Union to identify priority work for United Nations agencies.** An essential component of the Mechanism’s value was that the African Union Commission provided input, but this capacity varied across clusters. The Commission had been working to improve its engagement through the creation of a co-secretariat to the Mechanism in 2019. The African Union Development Agency attended sessions of the Mechanism only as an observer, making it disengaged from decision-making;

(e) **The resources and capacity of the Mechanism’s secretariat were not fully used.** Challenges with resourcing the Mechanism’s secretariat, the ECA-NEPAD Unit, have hindered its ability to fully facilitate coordination of United Nations efforts, including by providing analytical capabilities to align workplans across clusters and follow up and administer the Mechanism’s online portal. As of 2019, only three of five posts were encumbered (see table 3).

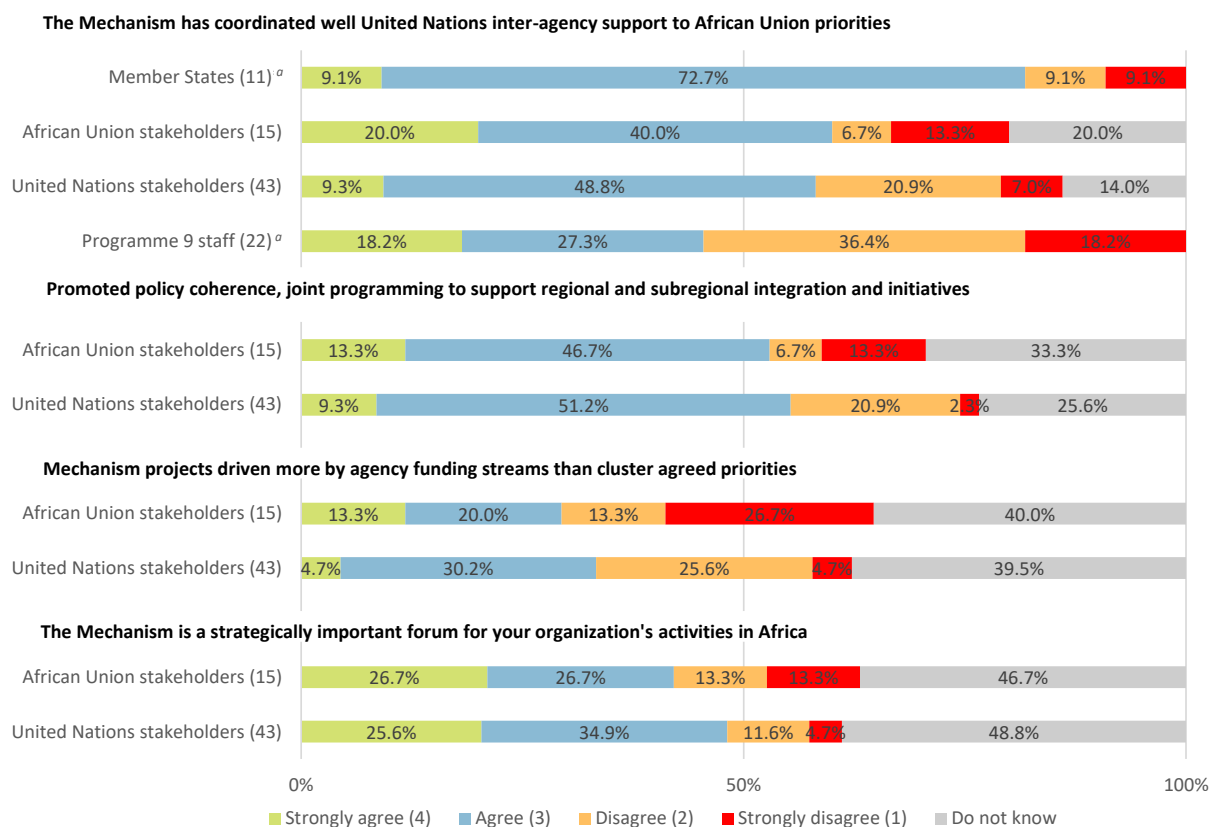
56. While majorities of surveyed United Nations, African Union and Mechanism members either agreed or strongly agreed that the Mechanism was administered well by the ECA-NEPAD Unit (52.8 per cent), a smaller percentage agreed that decisions taken at Mechanism meetings were followed-up by action (37.5 per cent) and that the

²¹ Cepei, “A Sustainable Regional UN” (April 2019); African Centre for Institutional Development, “Strengthening regional and subregional coordination” (2019), and the final review of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union (2006–2016) (2017).

cluster system had resulted in coordinated support for the priorities of the African Union and the African Union Development Agency (43.3 per cent).

57. Interviewed and surveyed members of the Mechanism identified the main benefits as reduced duplication in the United Nations system through information-sharing and creating relationships through cluster meetings, and to a lesser degree joint and cluster prioritization. Meanwhile, influence on the agreed priorities and strategic importance of the forum received the lowest scores. Member States tended to be less critical of the Mechanism than programme 9 staff members themselves (see figure XIII).

Figure XIII
Stakeholder assessment of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa outcomes



Source: Surveys of African Union and United Nations members of the Mechanism, programme 9 staff and African Member States.
^a Responses of “I don’t know” have been excluded, except for questions asked only to members of the Mechanism.

Uncertainty over United Nations reforms and unclear relationships further hampered the effectiveness of the Mechanism

58. Uncertainty with regard to United Nations reforms and lack of clarity on how they will affect the Mechanism stalled its 2019 activities and further hampered its effectiveness. The United Nations reform of the sustainable development system identified several reforms that had a direct impact on the Mechanism’s operations. Interviewed stakeholders reported that it was not yet clear how the Mechanism would change and how it would relate to the resident coordinator system and at what levels. A 2019 analysis of stakeholders in ECA noted a lack of coordination between the

United Nations Sustainable Development Group and the Mechanism.²² While the Group had been co-meeting with the Mechanism since 2016, interviewees and just 35.6 per cent of surveyed United Nations and African Union members of the Mechanism agreed that roles and responsibilities were clear between the Mechanism and United Nations country teams. In addition, while 68.8 per cent of United Nations members of the Mechanism believed that they were adequately consulted on reforms, just 45.5 per cent of African Union members held this view.

The ECA-NEPAD Unit effectively facilitated delivery by ECA of African Union programmes on regional integration; however, this support diminished

59. The ECA-NEPAD Unit effectively facilitated the delivery by ECA of African Union programmes on regional integration with technical assistance and advice in context of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda 2017–2027 (and its predecessor agreement, the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union) to African Union institutions. Previously conducted reviews of the Mechanism and the Programme concluded that capacity had been built. Nearly all surveyed African Union (100 per cent) and United Nations stakeholders (96.9 per cent) knowledgeable on this support were satisfied with the degree to which ECA contributed, through the Mechanism, to enhancing the capacity of pan-African institutions.

60. Stakeholders and staff interviewed indicated that the ECA-NEPAD Unit facilitated technical assistance in context of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda 2017–2027 and identified examples of technical assistance provided through mostly bilateral relationships between United Nations and African Union agencies. However, interviews with members of the African Union Development Agency and the African Peer Review Mechanism indicated that this support diminished during the 2018–2019 period. Review of workplans of the ECA-NEPAD Unit showed fewer technical assistance projects facilitated by the programme (see table 2). Interviews indicated that the transfer of the Unit from the Capacity Development Division to the Regional Integration and Trade Division in 2018 may have had an unintended impact on its ability to provide technical assistance to the African Union institutions. Previously, under the Capacity Development Division, the office had links to resources of the regular programme of technical cooperation that had been allocated to the Division for technical assistance and to substantive capacity development units through a director-level relationship, which no longer existed under the Regional Integration and Trade Division. At present, the only regular programme of technical cooperation resources allocated to the ECA-NEPAD Unit were for organization of the sessions of the Mechanism.

IV. Conclusion

61. In the context of the United Nations development reform, the role of programme 9 to advocate for Africa's development needs and to globally raise awareness, monitor commitments, provide analysis and coordinate support for these priorities is as important and relevant as ever. However, the programme has not been able to achieve its full potential due to weak internal programme management arrangements between the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the ECA-NEPAD Unit and the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications and lack of involvement of key stakeholders in developing and implementing its strategic plans. Programme 9 continues to struggle to effectively deliver on its mandates in the face of evolving

²² Cepei, "A Sustainable Regional UN", p. 28.

relationships between the African Union and the United Nations. As such, attempts to reposition the work of the Office of the Special Adviser and ECA-NEPAD Unit needs to be supported by strong follow-up in response to the evolving requirements, including through the development of joint strategies to deliver as one, such as a joint advocacy strategy.

62. While programme 9 has lost visibility with its stakeholders as it has not been able to fully achieve expected results, the current reform environment presents an opportunity for the concerned subprogrammes and units to reorganize around the programme's advocacy, monitoring and coordination mandates, so that global and regional coherence of United Nations system support for Africa's development can be fully realized.

V. Recommendations

63. The OIOS Independent Evaluation Division makes four critical recommendations to programme 9 managers, all of which have been accepted.²³

Recommendation 1 (critical)

Address programme coherence and internal management practices (result A)

64. To resolve programme coherence and internal accountability issues, and ensure the programme delivers as one, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in collaboration with ECA and Department of Global Communications, should put in place a formal process of regular consultation to internally align and coordinate the activities of the three subprogrammes at all stages of the delivery process. This should include:

(a) Terms of reference articulating roles and responsibilities, including regular consultation and reporting lines that facilitate delivery of a programme strategy for which the Special Adviser has overall accountability (revised Secretary-General's bulletin);

(b) Joint planning, monitoring and performance review with all three subprogrammes;

(c) Clear identification of the linkages between activities of the subprogrammes to ensure coordination and collaboration on relevant aspects of each other's workplan;

(d) Regular structured strategic discussions at least, but not limited to, annually at the principals' level, and quarterly at the level of subprogramme leads;

(e) A technical-level coordination arrangement that communicates on an ongoing basis, and meets as necessary, including to prepare the principals-level discussions.

Indicators of achievement: joint programme 9 strategic planning; regular meetings and structured engagement across programme 9, at both the principals and technical levels for work planning, monitoring and performance review; revised Secretary-General's bulletin and/or terms of reference on programme 9 roles and responsibilities.

²³ Note that similar issues were identified in the 2008 OIOS evaluation ([E/AC.51/2009/2](#)).

Recommendation 2 (critical)
Systematically engage stakeholders in strategic planning and workplan development (results A, B, C and D)

65. Programme 9, led by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa with close collaboration from ECA and the Department of Global Communications, should engage in a strategic planning process with key stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive, participatory and integrated plan, including an advocacy strategy, is developed in support of its mandates. This should be:

(a) Informed by analysis and advice on current priorities and needs, prepared with input from key stakeholders (e.g., Executive Office of the Secretary-General, African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, African Peer Review Mechanism, regional economic communities and United Nations agencies working in Africa), and regularly updated;

(b) Focused on developing an outcome framework identifying key priorities, with clear objectives and strategies to realize them, including the synergies and coordination arrangements within its subprogrammes;

(c) Guided by clear measures of success (connecting activities to intended outcomes and impacts) with follow-up measurement and stocktaking;

(d) Informed by the content, focus and recommendations made through its consultations.

Indicators of achievement: a revised programme 9 logframe articulating the logic of programme interventions and their relationship to desired impacts; programme 9 workplans aligned to specific stakeholder priorities and needs; evidence of stakeholder consultations; evidence of analytical work and advice informing workplans; detailed strategic workplan issued and informing the preparation of the 2021/2022 budget process; and an issued advocacy strategy.

Recommendation 3 (critical)
Strengthen United Nations global and regional coordination mechanisms (result D)

66. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the ECA-NEPAD Unit should strengthen the global and regional coordination mechanisms to which they are secretariat to more deliberately inform, actively involve all three subprogrammes, with clear leadership and involvement roles for each, and coordinate action in support to African Union goals articulated in Agenda 2063 and in supporting regional strategies.

67. Strengthening the interdepartmental task force on African affairs should include:

(a) A dedicated secretariat function to guide the mechanism, provide analysis and provide two-way coordination with the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa;

(b) Convening of the mechanism regularly at the technical and principal levels;

(c) Based on analysis and consultation with stakeholders, convening around agendas to achieve specific goals for supporting Africa;

(d) Encouragement of agencies to promulgate decisions to work together throughout their organizations;

(e) Active involvement of ECA-NEPAD Unit in the task force.

68. Strengthening the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (in whichever format it ultimately takes under the reforms of the United Nations development system)²⁴ should include:

(a) Increasing secretariat capacity for analysis on alignment of activities to African Union strategies and follow-up on agreed workplans and ensure the ECA-NEPAD Unit is positioned to leverage technical assistance from ECA as required in its mandate;

(b) Embedding stronger accountability for follow-through on commitments from both the African Union and United Nations partners, including coordination with the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, and reporting on progress to the African Union;

(c) Revisiting the cluster system to ensure optimal alignment and efficient support to African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency priorities;

(d) Actively involving the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Africa Section of the Department of Global Communications in the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa clusters.

Indicators of achievement: revised interdepartmental task force on African affairs terms of reference, regularly occurring meetings and agendas; revised Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa terms of reference, active participation of subprogrammes in the interdepartmental task force on African affairs and the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.

Recommendation 4 (critical)

Operationalize the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development (result C)

69. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should fully operationalize the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development in line with goals articulated by the General Assembly so that the mechanism reliably and systematically tracks commitments over time, and provides a basis for advocacy and follow-up.

70. A fully operational United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development should include:

(a) Systematic data analysis of key commitments in line with General Assembly resolution 66/293 (para. 6) that can monitor and track progress over time as well as be used for advice, rather than be exclusively reported in reports of the Secretary-General (i.e. system or database for tracking commitments that can inform, but not be limited to, reports of the Secretary-General);

(b) A clearly articulated methodology and replicable process for collecting data;

(c) Full utilization of resources already provided to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for this purpose;

(d) Full accountability for commitments made by proposing a dedicated intergovernmental mechanism for periodic review of analyses from the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development to hold stakeholders accountable.

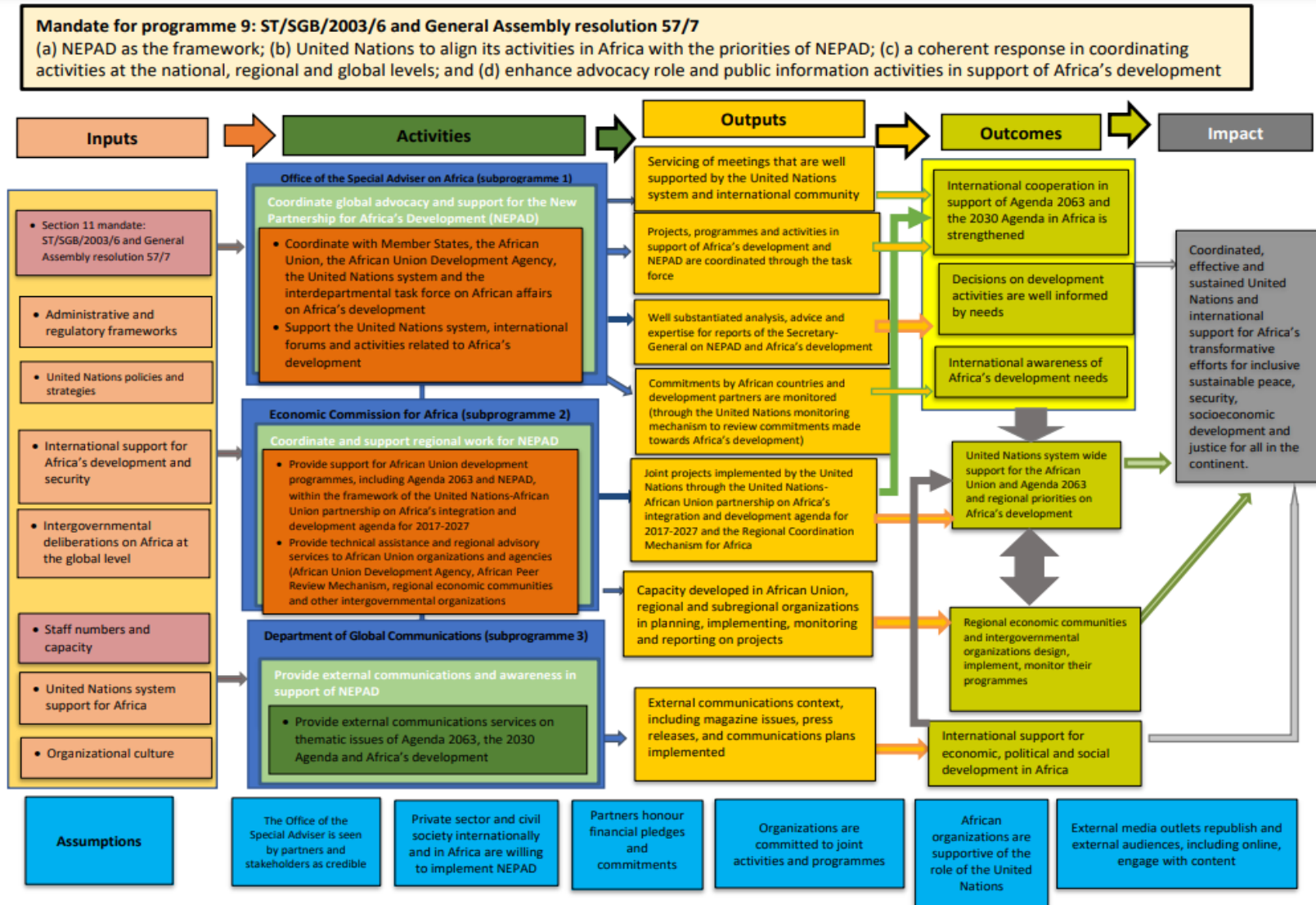
²⁴ At the time of writing, the functioning of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa was being revisited through the internal review team of the Secretariat.

Indicators of achievement: revised United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development process, system for tracking and monitoring commitments, technical reports on gaps and challenges; list of existing mechanisms used as sources; proposal for a dedicated periodic review mechanism submitted to Member States.

(Signed) Fatoumata **Ndiaye**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2021

Annex I

Programme impact pathway of programme 9



Annex II***Comments received from the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa and the Director of Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results of the Economic Commission for Africa****Comments received from the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa**

Reference is made to your memo of 6 March 2020 (OIOS-2020-00274) transmitting the draft report of OIOS on the evaluation of United Nations support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa/Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)/Department of Global Communications programme 9.

My Office (the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa) has reviewed the draft report and, after exchanges with the Inspection and Evaluation Division and internal discussion, I am pleased to inform you that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa accepts all the recommendations of OIOS set forth in the draft report.

I am pleased that the evaluation results have confirmed the relevance of programme 9, due to its intended unique value added in facilitating United Nations support for Africa's development and the continued demand for its services.

I take note of the challenge represented by the lack of strategy in the implementation of the programme, which has hampered its impact despite it having complied in delivering its planned activities and reports. Upon taking office, I launched several initiatives to assess the impact of my Office's activities, the efficiency of spending and the added value provided. To this end, an independent assessment was commissioned by me. Based on its findings, we started activities to streamline our work and reviewing the way we do our work, including planning, report writing and the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development, among others. We also welcomed the decision by the Secretary-General, who requested the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to conduct a functional review of my Office. In this regard, the recommendations included in this report would serve as a tool that will reinforce ongoing efforts to increase my Office's efficiency, its impact and the coherent planning of activities within the programme and of programme entities with our main stakeholders.

I wish also to thank the Inspection and Evaluation Division for the advisory memorandum on culture, change management and results-based management that was submitted to my Office in relation to the results of the evaluation. The analysis of its results and implementation of its suggested action will also be instrumental to improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of my Office's contribution to the programme.

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services sets out the full text of comments received from the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development provided by programme 9 through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 1

Regarding recommendation 1, my Office will collaborate with ECA and the Department of Global Communications to resolve the identified programme coherence and internal accountability issues. In that regard, I am pleased to highlight that, as a first result of the programme evaluation, all three entities increased their coordination in the preparation of the 2021 programme budget proposal and five common areas of action for the programme. Efforts will continue to formalize such cooperation in line with the recommendation. Notwithstanding, it needs to be noted that some of the specific proposals, such as the revised Secretary-General's bulletin or the approval of terms of reference for the programme, beyond what is already in the programme budget proposal, may require the action of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the approval of the respective intergovernmental bodies. It also needs to be taken into account that my Office is responsible for providing overall guidance to the programme but should not be made accountable for the other entities' performance unless clear functional reporting lines are established. Finally, the joint planning, monitoring and performance review of all three subprogrammes should lead to a joint framework and joint principles but, to avoid a cumbersome process and mechanism, it should not necessarily require all three entities to take action with regards to activities that involve only one of them.

Recommendation 2

Regarding recommendation 2, my Office has increased in the last months its engagement of key stakeholders for the development of the workplan. For example, the focus of the 2020 report on the review of the implementation of commitments made toward Africa's development was selected in close consultation with the African Union Commission as the most relevant stakeholder for the selection of priority areas. Likewise, the 2020 Africa Dialogue Series, which is the main advocacy and policy discussion event organized by my Office, is being prepared in close consultation with key United Nations entities and external stakeholders. In line with the recommendation, my Office will extend such practice to the planning process, engaging stakeholders through consultations in coordination with the ECA and the Department of Global Communications. It is worth noting that the recommended indicators might need to be adapted to the new structure of the annual programme budget.

Recommendation 3

Regarding recommendation 3, the strengthening of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs is closely linked to the repositioning of my Office and to the restructuring of the mechanisms for regional coordination in the field in Africa. A meeting was convened with members of the task force, which led to the development of terms of reference and a new way of working for the task force. Unfortunately, the terms of reference have not yet been implemented. Building on the results of both processes, my Office will seek the establishment of a two-way coordination between the task force and the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, in whichever format it ultimately takes, as recommended. In that regard, it is of utmost importance that my Office be involved in the ongoing discussions and that it is invited to join the future regional coordination structure in a position of equal membership to the other United Nations entities.

Recommendation 4

Regarding recommendation 4, an external assessment was commissioned last year to review the methodology of the United Nations monitoring mechanism. As a

result, a proposal for a new methodology is being prepared, taking also into account the recommendations of this report. In line with the previous recommendation, stakeholders will be engaged with a view to streamlining the proposal ahead of its implementation. In the meantime, my Office has already started to introduce changes in order to address some of the recommendations. In particular, coordination and consultation with strategic partners has been enhanced, as pointed out above. Furthermore, in the framework of the new guidance for budget management and accountability, my Office has decided to undertake in 2020 a self-evaluation of its reporting responsibilities. Such self-evaluation will build on the analysis of evaluation result C and address the identified challenges that go beyond recommendation 4, since they involve reports of the Secretary-General not necessarily related to the United Nations monitoring mechanism.

An action plan for the implementation of the recommendations will be sent to OIOS in due course and after consultation with the other involved United Nations entities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Juan Carlos Peña, Ms. Cheryl Clarke, Mr. Nicholas Kowbel and Ms. Sonjuhi Singh for their professionalism, commitment and teamwork. My Office and I are very appreciative of the time invested and their efforts to contribute to the strengthening and better functioning of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

Comments received from the Director of Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results of the Economic Commission for Africa

Reference is made to the interoffice memo (Ref: OIOS-2020-00274) dated 6 March 2020 on the evaluation of the United Nations Support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa/Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)/Department of Global Communications programme 9.

I am pleased that the evaluation findings have confirmed the continued relevance of programme 9, especially in the light of the evolving policy and institutional landscape of Africa and the significance of the African Union and United Nations reforms in that regard. This is particularly relevant for delivery on subprogramme 2 given ECA's standing as the regional arm of the United Nations in Africa, and its entry point to the African Union on development matters in the region.

ECA accepts the recommendations relevant to subprogramme 2, while recognizing the need for continuous consultation and effective collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Department of Global Communications in regard to their implementation.

I take note of the long-standing structural challenges pertaining to the functioning of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa identified in the report, which requires a collective response on the part of all participating entities of the United Nations and the African Union. In that context, I would like to underline the following developments towards improving delivery efficiency and effectiveness:

(a) Co-leadership of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa with the African Union Commission, including the ECA-African Union Commission joint secretariat, and co-ordination arrangement of the nine Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa clusters between the African Union Commission and United Nations agencies;

(b) Convening of Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa sessions jointly with the regional United Nations sustainable development teams for East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa, since 2017;

(c) Coordination of the subregional coordination mechanisms with the meaningful involvement of the regional economic communities of the African Union, in consultation with the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group teams;

(d) The commissioning of the report on strengthening regional and subregional coordination in support of the African Union;

(e) The preparation of results-based joint workplans by the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa clusters and subregional coordination mechanisms informed by the African Union priorities and relevant United Nations-African Union cooperation frameworks.

Going forward, the structure, functions and governance of the regional collaborative platforms expected to be established in the context of the United Nations reforms while already noting that ECA is designated as the main facilitator and/or coordinator of the development work of United Nations agencies and structures at the regional and sub-regional level. Notwithstanding, as rightly pointed out by your report, strengthening institutional arrangements within ECA to effectively support regional coordination and collaboration will be crucial for any future role of the Commission.

With regard to the recommendations, it is understood that ECA is required to respond to the first three.

(a) **Recommendation 1.** While it is noted that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has the lead responsibility to implement this recommendation, it is to be noted that the 2021 work programme of subprogramme 2 places a particular focus on the interlinkages between development, peace and security and human rights within the framework of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Focus is also placed on coherence with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and Department of Global Communications. ECA looks forward to working with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and Department of Global Communications on the implementation of the recommendation;

(b) **Recommendation 2.** It should be pointed out that the 2021 work programme has already been prepared. ECA provided inputs to the statement and overall implementation strategy prepared under the leadership of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The preparation of the 2022 work programme provides the opportunity to launch the implementation of the recommendation. However, this should take into account the time requirements for wide stakeholder consultation and will require guidance from, and the support of, the Programme Planning and Budget Division in New York;

(c) **Recommendation 3.** The implementation of the recommendation or otherwise on the part of ECA will be informed by the outcomes of the United Nations reforms, particularly in relation to a future United Nations coordination/collaboration structure and governance arrangements at the regional level.

ECA undertakes to effectively contribute to the preparation of the action plan for the implementation of the recommendations under the leadership of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Juan Carlos Peña and his team, including, Ms. Cheryl Clarke, Mr. Nicholas Kowbel and Ms. Sonjuhi Singh for their professionalism, teamwork and tireless effort throughout the evaluation process.

Thank you.
