

# A BLUEPRINT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF **RURAL TRANSFORMATION POLICIES IN AFRICA**

2019



AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY - NEPAD



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ISBN: 978-1-928527-13-8

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The Blueprint for the Implementation of Rural Transformation Policies in Africa is the product of combined efforts of a number of institutions and actors.

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) extends its gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Benin for hosting the inaugural edition of the Africa Rural Development Forum in 2013. It was during the first forum that AUDA-NEPAD (then NEPAD Agency) was requested by African Member States to produce a blueprint towards advancing rural transformation. Further gratitude is extended to the Republic of Cameroon for graciously hosting the second Africa Rural Development Forum in 2016 during which the blueprint was developed and subsequently endorsed as a vehicle for advancing rural transformation across Africa and accelerating the vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

We especially acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of partner institutions: the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the French Development Agency/ Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); French Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Capacity and Development Services (CAPDEV), the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

We would like to recognise the individual contributions of Mandi Rukuni, Felicity Proctor, Benoit Faivre Dupaigne and Abraham Sarfo. We extend a special thank you in memory of Samuel Nyambi and Peter Ewang.

We thank every delegate for their participation and contributions during the Africa Rural Development Forums, to inform and enhance the dialogue around issues that are reflected in the Blueprint.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>ARDF</b>	Africa Rural Development Forum
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>AUDA-NEPAD</b>	African Union Development Agency
<b>CAADP</b>	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic Health Survey
<b>EFA</b>	Education For All
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>ICTs</b>	Information and Communications Technologies
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agriculture Development
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>PIDA</b>	Programme Infrastructure Development for Africa
<b>RDP</b>	Rural Development Blueprint
<b>RDPF</b>	Rural Development Policy Framework
<b>RECs</b>	Regional Economic Communities
<b>RFP</b>	Rural Futures Programme
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals

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## FOREWORD

African Heads of State, during the January 2011 Summit, recognised challenges faced by rural communities and called for an integrated development initiative to promote rural transformation. In this light, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) is set to create a Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy and Plan for Africa. Based on information and analysis gathered through consultations from experts from all parts of the world, this blueprint, which shall serve as a country self-assessment and implementation tool, is a key milestone in the constitution of a common approach for rural development. It is the continental policy framework for rural transformation and is based on experience acquired through the Rural Futures programme launched by AUDA-NEPAD under the auspices of the AU in October 2010. The objective of the Blueprint is to set out key framing principles and orientations relevant to countries in Africa and which, if taken forward, can work towards a reduction in rural poverty and inequality and contribute to inclusive rural and indeed national economic development according to a continental vision of the achievement of such a transformation.

Rural development is necessary to tackle poverty and the AU, through its sectoral programmes and the Rural Development Blueprint (that are in line with the SDGs), hopes to provide strategic intent and a pathway to address future structural transformation. With rural populations projected to reach one billion by 2050, this will have an impact on the envisaged transformation by placing increasing demands on rural services. Policy intervention is necessary to expand employment creation via the creation of farm and non-farm jobs for the benefit of women and the youth. While each member state will be responsible for operationalising the blueprint with the necessary support from AUC/ AUDA-NEPAD, RECs and other partners, the success of the approaches proposed by the Blueprint will depend on the willingness of each state to involve a follow up of stakeholders at all levels.

Sound, creative public policies, strong leadership, proper legislation (which must combine territorial development tools and support for economic



Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

sectors, the construction of infrastructure, mediation between actors, and the reinforcement of human capital) are vital to create an enabling environment for the blueprint to be implemented. The emergence of new territorial dynamics in Africa, generated by population growth and urban expansion – with an anticipated urban population of 1.35 billion in 2050, is the greatest change of the last few decades. These changes have generally escaped public policies given the fragmented nature of the policies. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that sectoral policies, however sophisticated, will be able to meet the many challenges facing the continent, unless they are re-articulated and integrated into a global vision. A proactive territorial approach is required. Infrastructure development will play a major role in enabling these linkages and providing the necessary services including roads, energy, communications, water, and markets, etc. Agriculture and the food systems will have to play their roles, taking advantage of the potential of the African domestic, regional and export markets, since growth in agricultural income will reinforce rural demand that drives economic diversification.

Although Africa's rapid urbanisation represents an immense opportunity, not just for Africa's urban dwellers but also for rural development, rural

development issues differ greatly across Africa and a 'one size fits all' solution cannot be proposed. Economic development prospects have improved, through higher agricultural productivity. There is also scope for improving environmental management, by addressing the effects of climate change, scarcity of water and other natural resources, controlling air pollution, developing clean public transportation systems, improved waste collection and increased access to energy.

Rural development and transformation, which has at its heart poverty reduction and the reduction of inequality, may be defined as "a process of comprehensive societal change whereby rural societies diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on agriculture; become dependent on distant places to trade and to acquire goods, services, and ideas; move from dispersed villages to towns and small and medium cities; and become culturally more similar to large urban agglomerations." It requires political commitment and will, changing the rules of the game, and voice and participation. Despite these common trends, rural transformation within different countries has different outcomes in the areas of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. While global and regional forces drive this transformation, they are mediated by national and localised social structures and institutional frameworks.

Few countries in Africa articulate a rural development strategy beyond that of the agriculture sector. Governments need to embrace agendas that provide wide-ranging and quality services to broad sections of the population and this includes securing equal access to social and economic goods and services in both rural and urban areas, across rural regions and for both men and women.

A wide range of factors influence rural transformation and outcomes. The structure and dynamics of the rural economy, rural livelihoods and employment, human development, access to assets, markets, rural and urban development and rural-urban linkages, and challenges of the anticipated impacts of climate change, are some key influencing factors. There is an emerging international consensus that place-based development approaches such as those articulated through rural territorial development offer alternative approaches.

The present Blueprint proposes commitments to national and regional decision makers in 5 areas:

1. Strengthening strategic leadership and coordination for

rural development led structural transformation through the promulgation of policies and legislation that put in place coordination and mutual accountability mechanisms

2. Strengthening public administration at all levels and fostering innovation in institutional architecture that facilitates rural development policy implementation by realigning institutions for effective rural development
3. Promoting territorial approaches in terms of spatial planning, budgeting and human capacity development;
4. Transforming Africa's Rural Area through Skills Development, Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment for Africa by crafting a national rural youth empowerment agenda that takes cognisance of the fact that an additional 440 million youth will reach working age within the next 15 years;
5. Monitoring of spatially- and social class-sensitive economic, social and environmental policies mainstreaming rural development into national strategies.

As mentioned earlier, the process of operationalising the Blueprint is the responsibility of member states with implementation support from RECs, AUC/ AUDA-NEPAD Agency and related continental institutions and their partners. Each member state will be supported in designing and/or strengthening their rural transformation agenda. By engaging in this Blueprint, Member States of the AU and RECs are making a commitment to foster rural development as one of the engines of structural social and economic transformation of the continent while AUDA-NEPAD, through its Rural Futures Programme, hopes to publish a periodic outlook on the 'State of Rural Development in Africa' in order to share important lessons and experiences among member states, highlighting the prospects for growth and development as well as the challenges that lie therein.

Acting as a catalyst, AUDA-NEPAD looks forward to partnering with individual states to translate the vision of the Blueprint into real, effective, transformative initiatives that propel Africa forward.

*Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki*  
Chief Executive Officer, AUDA-NEPAD

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# SUMMARY

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## Introduction and Context

African Heads of State, during the January 2011 African Union Summit, recognised the challenges faced by rural communities and called for an integrated development initiative to promote rural transformation. Rural development is essential for a more inclusive social and economic transformation of the African continent. The AU has put in place developmental frameworks such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which go a long way towards this end. Furthermore, the Rural Development Policy Framework goes beyond individual sectors to include linkages between the agriculture and non-

agriculture economic sectors; it also makes a link with the urban-industrial sector so that overall, all development is driven by one economy, as opposed to the dual economy approach that prevails currently. The AU Agenda 2063 provides clear and strategic direction in addressing Africa's fractured process of structural transformation, and aligns it with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Africa is the only region in the world in which accelerated urbanisation is driven by rural poverty, and is not accompanied by a corresponding acceleration in urban manufacturing and industry. Urbanisation in Africa is driven by better services in cities, not by jobs. This has to change, given the fact that the rural population will continue to grow.



Africa's demographic profile is central to the structural and rural transformation debate, with the population expected to double by 2050, reaching 2.2 billion people. While the rural population is set to fall from 61% in 2010 to 42% by 2050, the total rural population will continue to grow in absolute numbers from 622 million in 2010 to a projected 927 million in 2050. Because of their population structure, African economies will continue to receive a growing number of young job seekers every year (20 million currently and almost 30 million in 2030). Two thirds of them come from rural areas. These demographics place ever-increasing demands on urban services as well as the need to create jobs and new sources of livelihood. Migration opportunities are increasingly limited. The radically changing rural Africa will therefore need to provide as many agricultural and non-agricultural jobs as possible.

## Rationale and Background

Decades of strict rural-urban duality in the economic systems of most African countries have created large populations of rural poor and urban unemployed, with inherent limitations to growth. This state of affairs now requires state intervention, especially in rural economies. On the positive side, smallholder (mostly women) farmers currently produce 80-90% of food consumed in rural towns and urban areas. Africa's real 'private sector' therefore are smallholder farmers and the non-farm intermediary groups of traders, transporters, warehousing operators etc., who are supplying the fast growing rural 'middle class' (those earning an average of US\$4 to US\$20 per day), and those in rural towns and urban centres. New opportunities for farm and non-farm jobs occur mostly through rural-urban food supply chains, which link the massive, growing and diversifying urban food market in Africa. Growing these diverse intermediaries, including the farmers, truckers and wholesalers, warehouse and cold store operators, and processors is a major role for African policymakers.

Population growth and urban expansion are the greatest challenge of the last few decades. New territories to accommodate the former have been made possible through the densification of road networks and the development of rural centres and small towns, stimulated by trade in rural areas. A proactive territorial development approach is therefore required:

consolidating urban-rural linkages; providing networks of medium-sized cities with the urban functions needed to facilitate connections to metropolitan areas. Overall, Africa may want to decongest urban areas and avoid mega-cities where possible.

In response to these challenges, AUDA-NEPAD established the Rural Futures Programme (RFP) whose principal output is the Blueprint for the Implementation of Rural Development Policies in Africa. The Blueprint contains innovative approaches to help AU member states to carry out inclusive rural transformation.

## Overall Purpose of the Blueprint

The Blueprint is a policy framework for rural development implementation, the result of approximately 3 years of wide consultation and validation, coordinated by AUDA-NEPAD. This process culminated in the Cotonou Declaration (2013) and the Yaounde Declaration and Plan of Action (2016). The Blueprint recognises overall structural transformation as the process through which Africa will transform from a predominantly agrarian to a predominantly urban, industrial society. This transition will cause cultural, social, economic, and political transformation of all key institutions in both rural and urban areas. The Blueprint offers institutional strategies for managing these transitions in member states, through inclusive and sustainable transformation. Such transformation will not occur on their own, and current disjunctures in the structural transformation process will not self-correct. The Blueprint offers every member state a number of options for rural development strategies that must be implemented beyond the agriculture sector. Economic planning for spatial elements of the economic and social sectors within national strategic plans is important. Beyond agriculture and livestock systems, other fast-growing rural sectors need to be included in rural transformation plans. These include mining and other extractive industries (with an emphasis on impact on land held by smallholders and with a focus on artisanal and small-scale miners); forestry; reserved areas; hunting and tourism; rural urbanisation and an emerging real estate sector; as well as various aspects of infrastructure development.

The provision of basic public goods between rural and urban areas remains unequal as reflected in the inequality of human development outcomes. The manner in which infrastructure is provided to and accessed by rural populations, is critical to the quality and nature of rural transformation and rural outcomes. This includes roads, safe drinking water and sanitation, electrification, telecommunications, and the social sector services of health and education. To meet the changing labour market needs, labour and employment policy and associated skills development should be adapted to rural populations to ensure that their skills are relevant to the labour market. In a number of states, there is an emerging shift of focus in rural policy: from supporting individual sectors to a holistic multi-sectoral and place-based approach, that identifies how the various components of a local economy interact.

The Blueprint has a vision of *people-centred rural transformation based on equity and inclusiveness where rural men and women can develop their potential and reach their aspirations*. This vision is in line with African values as stated in the Cotonou Declaration. These include respect and guarantees for the dignity of rural men and women; human and social welfare; cooperation and collective pursuit of common good; and strong, self-reliant and resilient families and communities as foundation of African society. The Blueprint recognises that rural development issues differ greatly across Africa and, therefore, does not propose a 'one size fits all' solution. It is not prescriptive but proposes a common platform on which each constituency will build its own policy. The success of the approach proposed by the Blueprint will depend on member states' willingness and action to involve stakeholders and to a follow-up process. The implementation of rural development policies at national level should respect different principles, including: competent public administration at all levels; complementarity, consistency and conformity; partnership; equality between men and women and non-discrimination; subsidiarity, complementarity, and solidarity.

## Theory of Change

The Blueprint envisages change as largely coming through generating political commitment and will, changing the rules of the game, as well as

acquiring and/or enhancing the voice and participation by rural citizens. A sound policy requires the following: a developmental state and political leadership; building multi-sectoral institutions for rural transformation; prioritising decentralisation to create competent public administration at all levels; getting the food and agriculture system moving; developing rural infrastructure; stimulating growth of the rural non-farm economy and strengthening rural-urban linkages; building and sustaining the rural human capital base; and preserving natural capital and drawing benefit from it.

## Value-add and Operationalisation of Blueprint

Operationalising the Blueprint is the responsibility of member states, with implementation support from Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD and related continental institutions and their partners. It is at this back that AUDA-NEPAD will develop a *Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy*. This publication will contain a set of tools for a country self-assessment and implementation exercise. Each member state will be supported in adapting these tools in order to craft and/or strengthen their rural transformation agenda. Overarching conditions for a successful implementation of the Blueprint are: strong leadership and a capable public administration at all levels of government; promulgating policy and legislation enabling coordination and mutual accountability across government departments; creating a macro-economic policy environment that is conducive to extending structural transformation through a rural transformation agenda. Member states will be supported to do the following: locate and/or re-define the importance and role of rural development in national development, and in structural transformation processes; access and use evidence-based, self-assessment instruments for rural development implemented by nationals; develop and implement rural development programmes more effectively; and strengthen the public administration of rural development at all levels, by identifying implementation capacity needs and crafting approaches to capacity development.

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# 1. RATIONALE FOR THE BLUEPRINT

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## 1.1. Political background

Rural development is essential to tackle the present challenges of poverty, unemployment and under-employment, insecurity, food insecurity and malnutrition. It acts to prevent socio-political instability, uncontrolled movements of people towards cities or generally away from rural areas, and over-exploitation of natural capital. At the same time, rural development is essential to address constraints on the future structural transformation of our continent by providing a socio-economic environment that is conducive to entrepreneurship, well-being, security and which offers an opportunity to boost wealth creation and correct inequalities between rural and urban areas.

The African Union (AU) partially addresses issues regarding the under-development of rural areas by fostering sectoral programmes such as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), which are dedicated to agriculture. It is now important to include non-

agriculture elements. These include backward and forward linkages between the agricultural and non-agricultural economic sectors on one hand and the social sectors on the other. This is in order to address issues that hamper the wellbeing of people in rural areas and hinder balanced development in African countries.

At the January 2011 African Union Summit, African Heads of State and Government recognised the challenges faced by rural communities and called for an integrated development initiative to promote rural transformation as a pathway to improve rural employment and livelihood opportunities; facilitate national economic development and sustainability; and ensure the exchange of best practices on rural development.

The Rural Development Blueprint was therefore crafted with the AU Agenda 2063 in mind. It provides a strategic focus and direction for addressing Africa's fractured process of structural transformation. The Blueprint is equally aligned with the SDGs in respect of the envisaged processes and outcomes of driving inclusive rural transformation in Africa.



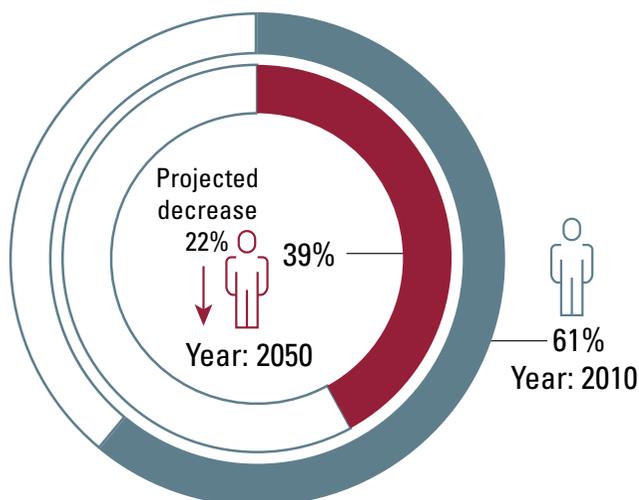
## 1.2. Rural development in the context of economic transformation

A demographic profile is central to the structural and rural transformation debate. Africa's population is expected to double by 2050, reaching 2.2 billion people, with the highest levels of growth anticipated in East and West Africa. While the rural population is set to fall from 61% in 2010 to 42% by 2050, the total rural population will continue to grow in absolute numbers from 622 million in 2010 to a projected 927 million in 2050. In addressing rural transformation therefore, both the anticipated rural-urban population shift and the rural population numbers are important. Another key economic concern are the projected figures for youth. The number of youth in rural areas is set to grow in East, Central and West Africa well into the 2030s. In Southern and Northern Africa, the total rural youth numbers have already peaked. African economies will therefore continue to have a growing number of young job seekers, from 20 million currently to almost 30 million in 2030. Two thirds of them will be from rural areas. These demographics place ever-increasing demands on rural services as well as the need to create jobs and new sources of livelihood.

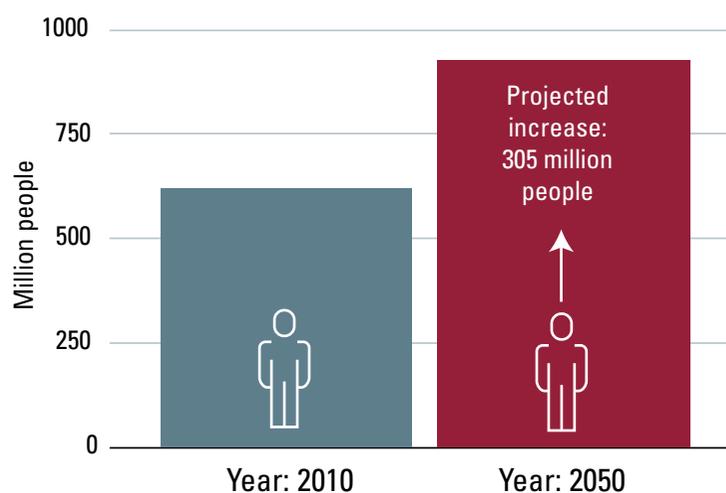
With unemployment and under-employment already a major policy issue for the continent, agriculture will have to continue and expand its role in the security of livelihoods and the generation of employment. Industry and modern services currently only provide a small proportion of employment, these jobs being mainly in urban areas. The informal sector, often in the non-agricultural economy, is central to the livelihoods of many rural households. Migration opportunities are increasingly limited. The radically changing rural Africa will therefore need to provide as many agricultural and non-agricultural jobs as possible. The current and anticipated future levels of unemployment and under-employment is unlikely to reduce without policy intervention.

Most African countries have, for decades, experienced a duality in the economic system, with a large proportion of the population in rural poverty and urban unemployment. Inherent structural limitations to growth now require state intervention in the market, especially in rural economies, where there is a search for new growth with employment. Africa's emerging agriculture-driven rural and structural transformation is quite unique, in that Africa is the only developing region where the accelerating urbanisation is not driven by manufacturing. Rather Africa's rapid

Projected Rural Population Percentage



Projected Absolute Rural Population Numbers



urbanisation is driven by services. Positively, however, smallholder (mostly women) farmers produce 80%–90% of food consumed in rural towns and urban areas. Africa's real 'private sector' therefore are smallholder farmers and the intermediary groups of traders, transporters, warehousing operators, and so on, who are supplying the fast-growing rural towns and urban centres. New opportunities for farm and non-farm jobs come about through rural-urban food supply chains, linking the massive and growing and diversifying urban food market in Africa. A major role for African policymakers is growing the diversity of these intermediaries who include farmers, truckers and wholesalers, warehouse and cold store operators, and processors. Thus, the food supply system offers a major development opportunity in particular for the benefit of women and youth.

The emergence of new territorial dynamics in Africa, generated by population growth and urban expansion, is the greatest change of the last few decades.

These new territories have come about as a result of the densification of road networks and the development of rural centres and small towns, which in turn have been stimulated by trade in the largely rural hinterlands. These changes – which should not overshadow the fact that some parts of Africa are still made up of remote villages where isolation reinforces extreme rural poverty – reduce travel time, progressively build convergence between rural and urban areas, and contribute to the concrete invention of new territorial configurations. These changes have also generally escaped public policies, notably because of the fragmentation of these policies. By abandoning some of these policies several decades ago, medium and long-term development strategies have often resulted in a combination of sectoral approaches and in public action shifting away from any territorial perspective. It is unlikely that sectoral policies, however sophisticated, will be able to meet the many challenges facing the continent, unless they are re-articulated and integrated into a global vision.

A proactive territorial approach is required. This includes consolidating

urban-rural linkages and providing networks of medium-sized cities with the urban functions needed to foster local dynamics and to facilitate connections to metropolitan areas. Infrastructure development will play a major role in enabling these linkages and providing the necessary services, including roads, energy, communications, water, and markets, etc. Agriculture and food systems will have to play their role, taking advantage of the potential of the African domestic, regional and export markets. Growth in income from agriculture will reinforce rural demand, which in turn will drive economic diversification. It will have to encourage an increase in agricultural production and income, while maintaining the multi-functionality of rural activities which are necessary to help to guarantee resilience in the face of climate variability. In so doing it will preserve and protect environmental capital and biodiversity, and support the development of non-agricultural jobs. These all require creative public policies, which must combine territorial development tools and support for economic sectors, the construction of infrastructure, mediation between actors, and the reinforcement of human capital. Such policies must be consolidated or generated in order to enhance the new rural realities and make these emerging territories the foundation for genuine development.

Envisaging rural development within the overall context of structural transformation resonates with the strategic orientation of other global players. The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), for instance, confirms that rural transformation does not happen in isolation, but as part of a broader process of structural transformation shaped by the interlinkages between agriculture, the rural non-farm economy, manufacturing and services. Moreover, inclusive rural transformation must be made to happen; it will not happen automatically. Rural development strategies for inclusive rural transformation are therefore context-specific, and rapid rural or structural transformation, while necessary, do not automatically lead to a rapid reduction in rural poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Africa's rapid urbanisation represents an immense opportunity, not just for Africa's urban dwellers but also for rural development.<sup>2</sup> Prospects have improved for economic development, through higher agricultural

1 IFAD (2016) Rural Development Report 2016: Rome. IFAD

2 AfDB, OECD, UNDP 2016 African Economic Outlook 19

productivity. There is also scope for improving environmental management, through mitigating the effects of climate change, reducing the scarcity of water and other natural resources, controlling air pollution, developing clean public transportation systems, improving waste collection and increasing access to energy. Despite a slowdown in recent years, Africa's economic growth performance since 2000 has been positive. The *African Economic Outlook 2016 (ibid)* shows that the continent is performing well with regard to economic, social and governance issues. Africa's economic growth remained resilient in 2015 amid a weak global economy, lower commodity prices and adverse weather conditions in some parts of the continent. Governments generally continue to adhere to prudent fiscal policies, limiting spending and improving tax collection. African countries have steadily progressed in enlarging people's choices in education and health and in improving living standards. Despite all this, the pace is slow. It is held back by a lack of opportunities for the youth, weak structural transformation, especially in sectors dominated by marginalised groups (including agriculture and informal sectors). Africa's urbanisation contributes to human development gains but not for everyone, especially rural citizens.

### 1.3. The development process and scope of the Blueprint

This Blueprint is the continental policy framework for rural transformation and is based on experience acquired through the 'Rural Futures' programme launched by AU-NEPAD under the auspices of the AU in October 2010. It relies on information and analysis gathered through consultations on the continent and abroad, in particular with experiences shared with Latin America and contributions from experts from all parts of the world. The first Forum on rural development in Africa was held in Cotonou from 3 to 5 May 2013 and was a key milestone in the constitution of a common approach of rural development. In their final statement – the Cotonou Declaration – participants called for the elaboration of a Blueprint to be submitted to African Heads of State and Government which would pave the way for a shared commitment to implement action at country and regional level towards the revitalisation of rural areas. The Second Forum was held in Yaounde on 9 and 10 September 2016. This session consolidated the Blueprint and provided ways towards implementation through the Yaounde Declaration and Plan of Action.



## 2. STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA

### 2.1. Main goal

Rural transformation may be defined as *“a process of comprehensive societal change whereby rural societies diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on agriculture; become dependent on distant places to trade and to acquire goods, services, and ideas; move from dispersed villages to towns and small and medium cities; and become culturally more similar to large urban agglomerations”*. Despite these common trends, rural transformation within different countries has different outcomes in terms of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. While global and regional forces drive this transformation, they are mediated by national and localised social structures and institutional frameworks.

Africa’s transformation process differs from others’ notably because a large proportion of the population, some 61% across Africa as a whole, still live in rural areas; and 50% remain dependent on relatively low-productivity agriculture.

Rural development transformation, which has at its heart poverty reduction and the reduction of inequality, requires political commitment and will; changing the rules of the game; and voice and participation. It requires states that are both developmental and redistributive. Furthermore the structure of formal institutions of public administration and the processes of decentralisation impact on how a spatially-based and people-centred development agenda is taken forward.

Few countries in Africa articulate a rural development strategy beyond that of the agriculture sector. Spatial elements within national strategic plans and thus spatial economic and social sector resource allocations are

rarely articulated. Governments need to embrace agendas that provide wide-ranging and quality services to broad sections of the population. This includes securing equal access to social and economic goods and services in both rural and urban areas, across rural regions and for both men and women. Beyond agriculture and livestock systems, the other fast growing rural sectors include: mining and other extractive industries, with an emphasis on the impact of these industries on land held by smallholders, and with focus on artisanal and small-scale miners; forestry, reserved areas, hunting and tourism; rural urbanisation and an emerging real estate sector; and various aspects of infrastructure development.

The provision of basic public goods between rural and urban areas remains unequal, not least as reflected in the inequality of human development outcomes. The manner in which infrastructure including roads, safe drinking water and sanitation, electrification, telecommunications, health, education and other social sector services are provided and accessed by rural men and women, is critical to the quality and nature of rural transformation and rural outcomes. To meet the changing labour market needs, labour and employment policy and associated skills development should be seen through a rural lens to ensure that rural men and women have the necessary skills for the labour market and are not disadvantaged.

There is an emerging shift of focus of rural policy from supporting sectors, towards a holistic **multi-sectoral** and **place-based** approach that identifies how the various components of a local economy interact and seeks to support them.

**Innovation** in realigning the activities of the economic and social sector ministries for efficient and effective rural and territorial service delivery, and on policy and investment coherence at the different levels of government, national, regional and local (municipal) levels, should now be developed in countries and RECs for better rural development.

## 2.2. Objectives of the Blueprint

The objective of the Blueprint is to set out key framing principles and orientations that are relevant to countries in Africa. These policies, if taken forward, can work towards a reduction in rural poverty and inequality, contribute to inclusive rural and national economic development. This will be in keeping with a continental vision which can be defined as *people-centred rural transformation based on equity and inclusiveness where rural men and women can develop their potential and reach their aspirations including income security whilst securing environmental sustainability and where all territories in a country can express their development potential and none of them is persistently marginalised.*

This vision is in line with the African values as stated in the Cotonou Declaration for underlying frameworks within which the sustainable rural transformation agenda should be pursued:



The Blueprint recognises that rural development issues differ greatly across Africa and therefore does not propose any 'one size fits all' solution. It is not prescriptive but proposes a common platform on which each constituency would build its own policy.

It emphasises key themes which were considered as central for rural development: the political economy of rural transformation; the territorial planning; the multi-sectorality and institutional concerns, assuming that they are key factors for promoting job creation; the resolution of social mobility; and environmental sustainability issues.



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## 3. PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

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### 3.1. Principles of implementation

The success of the approach proposed by the Blueprint will depend on member states' willingness and action to involve stakeholders and to have follow-up activities.

The implementation of rural development policies at national level should respect different principles – apart from those of good public governance – that are specific due to the fact that they intervene at different levels and with different kinds of stakeholders.

#### Complementarity, consistency and conformity

Rural development policy should articulate national, regional and local actions contributing to the AU's priorities. Specific actions in rural development policy should be consistent with the activities, policies and priorities of the country and of the RECs it belongs to. This consistency is provided in several instruments: the AU framework referred to in the section "Strategy" of the AU Agenda 2063; the Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa made in Maputo (Assembly/ AU/ Decl. 7 (II)); the Malabo Declaration on CAADP and commitment to accelerate the Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (Assembly/ AU/ 2 (XXIII)); the Decision on the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of AUDA-NEPAD (Assembly/ AU/ 8 (II)); and the AUDA-NEPAD Action Plan for the Development of African Fisheries and Aquaculture adopted in Abuja in 2005 during the AU/ AUDA-NEPAD Fish For All Summit.

In accordance with their respective responsibilities, the AU Commission, the RECs and the Member States should ensure the coordination between the interventions from different funds, interventions from the African Development Bank and other financial instruments.

#### Partnership

Interventions in the framework of rural development policies should be implemented through close consultations – partnerships – between the authorities and bodies in charge of implementation or beneficiaries, including:

- a) the competent regional, local authorities and other public authorities;
- b) the economic and social partners;
- c) any other appropriate body representing civil society, non-governmental organisations, including environmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women.

The member state should create the conditions for a broad and effective involvement of all appropriate bodies, in accordance with national rules and practices, taking into account the need to promote equality between men and women and sustainable development through integration of environmental protection and improvement requirements.

The partnership will be conducted with due regard for the respective institutional, legal and financial responsibilities of each category of partner.

The partnership will be involved in the preparation and monitoring of the national strategy and in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the rural development programmes. Member States will involve all appropriate partners at the various programming stages.

#### Equality between men and women and non-discrimination

Member States and the Commission will promote equality between men and women and will ensure that any discrimination based on sex, racial

or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation is prevented during the various stages of rural development policies implementation. This includes during the stages of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### Subsidiarity, complementarity, solidarity

The Commission of the African Union and AUDA-NEPAD will act vis-à-vis RECs, and RECs vis-à-vis their member states for action implementation aimed at rural transformation according to classic governance principles:

- a) By respecting subsidiarity i.e. by intervening to the extent that problems cannot be treated better at the lower level and based on regionality i.e. by intervening when issues concern at least two entities of geographically lower level. Action by the AU Commission and AUDA-NEPAD should be complementary to that carried out by the RECs and Member States or seek to contribute to it. The partnership should be strengthened through arrangements for the participation of various types of partners with full regard for the institutional competences of the RECs and Member States;
- b) By promoting complementarity so as to benefit from the comparative advantages of different geographical areas, and to

give rural development policies a regional and continental scale, in particular by directing transnational investments and funding towards achieving the objectives of rural transformation;

- c) By progressing towards the establishment of solidarity as an essential part of the march towards cohesion and integration, and by pooling financial, human and institutional resources that reduce disparities and promote convergence.

### 3.2. Assumptions for change levers: elements for a Theory of Change

It is assumed that a wide range of factors influence rural transformation and outcomes. These have, at their centre, political commitment and will, changing the rules of the game, and voice and participation. Some key influencing factors include the structure and dynamics of the rural economy, rural livelihoods and employment, human development, access to assets, markets, rural and urban development and rural-urban linkages, and challenges of the anticipated impacts of climate change. The structure of formal institutions of public administration and the processes of decentralisation play a central role in taking forward a spatially-based and people-centred development agenda.



## The political economy of rural transformation: strengths and constraints

Reducing unequal access to opportunities and increasing capabilities are pre-requisites for sustainable transformation and growth, as shown by the experience of emerging countries. In turn, rural transformation will change the political and socio-economic equilibrium because it attaches greater importance to rural areas in the process of structural change. From being marginalised, rural areas will become key contributors and drivers of structural change. This paradigm shift will change the economic relationship: the rural population will cease to be only a provider of labour for industry and urban services. It will create value in the countryside and also supply goods containing higher added value to the urban centres, regional and global markets.

Natural resources should not only serve the interests of oligopolies, or be a source of rents whose value is not reinvested to increase wealth in rural areas. Pricing policies and taxation should not only promote access to raw materials and food at low prices, without taking into account the imbalances it creates (income disparity and the incentive to emigrate) or harness the natural capital by eroding it. And even if the rules pertaining to access to assets, exchange terms and property are made more favourable for rural actors, redistributive policy interventions will be needed. Power balances might be modified, and gains and losses might be redistributed. This will happen in a general context that would be beneficial to the majority and globally positive in terms of well-being and prosperity. These shifts should be accepted as consequences of any rural development policy whose political implications should be anticipated, and that would motivate decision-makers to build political coalitions and strengthen resource mobilisation capacities for the improvement of policy.

## A sound policy requires a developmental state and political leadership

Economic transformation in Africa requires the state to play a central role in planning, articulating and implementing policies aimed at ensuring efficient allocation of resources. Crucially, a state must have the legitimacy to mobilise all stakeholders around a nationally-owned development

framework. Transformation in Africa requires a developmental state. Sustained progress in combating poverty and addressing inequality requires states that are both developmental and redistributive. Countries that have successfully reduced poverty – which is often disproportionately prevalent in rural areas – in relatively short periods of time had purposeful, growth-oriented and welfare-enhancing political systems and built and maintained competent bureaucracies. Enforcement capacity can be enhanced when citizens participate in monitoring resource use. States with a broad power base, well-organised ruling parties, competent bureaucracies and an activist citizenry have effectively implemented redistributive policies and tackled poverty. It is up to the state to foster the role that it should play in shaping how gains from economic development are distributed and on economic and societal outcomes.

## Building multi-sectoral institutions for rural transformation

There is need to support and provide political space and voice to various rural organisations and groups including farmers, women and youth organisations and groups. Given the multi-sectoral nature of rural transformation, the following should be given the highest attention: strengthening horizontal inter-ministerial coordination (across social and economic sectors) for mainstreaming rural development into national strategies and plans and ensuring coherence and synergies in policies (including for example urban policies) and interventions. The capacity of institutions needs to be enhanced to deepen decentralisation of development governance. In addition, supporting the decentralisation of governance through vertical coordination between the different levels of government (national, regional and local) is important.

## The importance of quality processes of decentralisation

In practically all countries across the continent, there has been a broadening and intensification of both democracy and movements towards decentralisation. The election of local authorities by popular vote and the growing responsibilities of municipal level governments are becoming

more frequent as a condition for influencing decision-making at local level in both rural and urban municipalities. Although national government has a key role to play in setting explicit local development objectives, building robust multi-level governance systems and providing 'exogenous' intervention (through conditional grants and incentives, for example) are critical to 'unlocking' a particular constraint or opportunity. Thus, local governments can assume increased responsibilities to foster place-based rural and territorial development and accelerate progress towards growth and poverty reduction. Local government can have a strong comparative advantage to deliver rural development objectives, specifically the delivery of rural services in key areas such as primary education, basic health services, access to potable water, agricultural extension, roads and local economic infrastructure, and in fostering local and territorial economic development.

### Getting the food and agriculture system moving

Agriculture is the basis of livelihood and main source of income and employment for rural people, and food and nutrition security remains one of the most daunting challenges in both rural and urban Africa. There is need to plan for the food and agriculture systems beyond production and to plan and act along the value chain to realise both the backward and forward inter-sectoral linkages (between farm and non-farm activities), and to exploit the strong multiplier effects.

There is need to continue and further strengthen investment to increase productivity and resilience of agricultural production systems. The CAADP framework provides the necessary platform for investing in agriculture. Sustainable land and water management, including comprehensive land policies, have the potential to provide for equitable and secure access and tenure, efficiency, and sustainability in land use. Public support for agricultural research and development, focusing on both production and post-harvest technologies, and mainstreaming adaptation to climate change is also catalytic. The same can be said of policies that support the development of effective agricultural input delivery and support services that include credit and insurance. The effectiveness of public-private partnerships for infrastructure development, in production and market infrastructure, cannot be over-emphasised.

### Develop rural infrastructure

The importance of investment in infrastructure for Africa's sustainable growth and development cannot be over-emphasised. Africa's infrastructure stock stands at only 39% compared to other regions of the developing world. It is estimated that the continent will require an investment of US\$48 billion annually for the foreseeable future to close the gap, even if drastic improvements in efficiency are made. If Africa is to become competitive in the world market and enjoy sustained economic growth, the region has to make serious efforts at increasing its transportation systems including road, rail, air and water infrastructure. Rural farm-to-



market roads, to lower transaction costs, are vital for rural transformation. Critical infrastructure requirements include: irrigation and water resources infrastructure; farm-to-market and regional transport infrastructure; sustainable and renewable rural energy systems (hydro, solar, bio-fuel); as well as effective ICTs and agricultural market information systems to provide farmers and 'value-chain actors' with access to technical and market information.

### Stimulating growth of the rural non-farm economy and strengthening rural-urban linkages

Strengthening of the rural non-farm economy as well as enabling rural-urban linkages promotes an integrated, multi-level, spatial (territorial) approach to rural transformation, linking rural hinterlands to major urban centres through intermediate cities and rural towns. This creates a conducive environment for the development of small and medium enterprises including in agro-industry and agribusiness services, and for the exchange of goods and services between the rural and urban areas. Encouraging the development and formalisation of informal, rural non-farm enterprises requires the removal of legal, financial and regulatory barriers. Intermediate cities and rural towns have a special role in subnational economic growth and rural development.

**African countries need rural economic transformation models that understand this important link between intermediate cities and rural towns and rural areas.**

That is the energy on which most African economies are now growing. Africa, however, is characterised by significant inequality in spatial economic activity. There is a central need to leverage urbanisation and diet diversification to promote rural-urban supply chains and rural growth as solutions to rural poverty – given the well-known problems that rural Africa faces including formidable problems of poverty and malnutrition, inadequate farm yields, low use of fertilisers, certified seed, and irrigation, and often poor roads and other infrastructure. Rural suppliers need to sell to sources of dynamic, growing demand: typically, rural purchasing power is too limited to propel a rural area out of poverty on its own. In other

words, public policy should aim to promote convergence in output between rural areas, intermediate cities and rural towns, as well as between cities and towns.

### Building and sustaining the rural human capital base

The human capital base is built and sustained through investment for improving access to education (including formal education and technical and vocational training); health; water and sanitation; energy, especially electricity from renewable energy sources; and, complementary social support and social protection (safety net) schemes. Policy makers should put the youth bulge issue in perspective. It requires investment in the appropriate skills for a future workforce configuration in Africa that recognises the shift from farm to non-farm jobs for Africa's youth. Coupled with low levels of labour-saving technologies used in African agriculture and artisanal sectors, youth have shown a declining interest in rural trades and are actively seeking innovations that increase productivity and save labour.

### Preserving natural capital and drawing benefit from it

Today, there is no question also that mounting degradation of ecosystem services – from land and soil degradation to deforestation, from water scarcity to climate change – will negatively affect future rural economic activity, with negative consequences disproportionately affecting livelihood, well-being and health of rural populations across Africa. This in combination with continuing inadequate reinvestments in rural growth sectors. From the use and extraction of these resources and the process of urbanisation, including land and environmental footprint, rural areas could be left in an even worse state of continuing stagnation, poor production, low incomes and increasing vulnerability to environmental changes. With the growing concern about the limitations of recent growth models – often unsustainable, resource-inefficient, and inequitable in their distribution of benefits and costs – come new prospects for placing rural transformation in the context of green economy and new approaches for sustainable

and more inclusive development. Policy and institutional reforms, as well as renewed approaches, technologies and standards for advancing sustainable production and natural resource management are becoming a greater part of the rural development discourse across Africa.

### 3.3. Assumptions for sound rural development policies

The development paradigm for rural areas in Africa has moved back and forth from the sole focus on the support to the modernisation of agriculture – an African green revolution – as the primary vehicle for rural development intervention, to the more integrated approaches embedded in farming systems and sustainable livelihoods approaches as well as the piloting of innovations which are multi-sectoral and place-based.

There is an emerging international consensus that place-based development approaches such as those articulated through rural territorial development offer an alternative approach, and one which addresses some of the concerns listed above. Such an approach includes a more nuanced and location-specific attention to social and economic aspects of development does several things: it builds on local economic drivers fostering diversification and market and economic integration between rural and urban areas, enhances decentralisation of governance and the

expansion of civil society organisations, and potentially increases the demands for environmental services.

Therefore, the implementation of rural development policies should be done under the following considerations:

- The need to take into account the high degree of heterogeneity that is characteristic of rural societies, dominated by poverty, small-scale agriculture and small rural non-agricultural enterprises. Specifically, the heterogeneity of smallholders and the diversity of their household livelihood strategies;
- The need for differentiated policies and interventions which acknowledge the differences between largely rural and urban areas, and the diversity within and between rural regions and between households including in both the economic and social sectors;
- The capacity for and need to adapt centrally-formulated strategic policies or proposals to the specific potentials and restrictions within rural and local areas;
- The need to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of rural poverty and not attempt to tackle it with ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions, which capture neither the complexity of the issue, nor its causes.



## 4. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

The present Blueprint proposes commitments of national and regional decision makers towards 5 outcomes:

- Strengthening strategic leadership and coordination for rural development-led structural transformation;
- Strengthening public administration at all levels and fostering innovation in institutional architecture that facilitates rural development policy implementation;
- Promoting territorial approaches in terms of spatial planning, budgeting and human capacity development;
- Transforming Africa's Rural Area through Skills Development, Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment for Africa;
- Monitoring of spatially – and social class-sensitive economic, social and environmental policies.

### 4.1. Strengthening strategic leadership and coordination for rural development-led structural transformation



**4.1.1. Action:** *Promulgation of policies and legislation ensuring coordination and mutual accountability mechanisms*

Rural development and transformation, including agriculture, land reform and rural non-farm activities, offer the greatest prospects for renewed structural transformation and economic growth for Africa. All this requires putting in place and guaranteeing the role played by strong leadership and a capable public administration at all levels of government; across government agencies and non-state actors; and creating a macro-economic policy environment that is conducive to extending structural

transformation through a rural transformation agenda. Structural factors leading to slow growth and high unemployment in Africa are not temporary and are not self-correcting. There is need for strong intervention by the state, and this requires the promulgation of policies and legislation that ensure coordination and mutual accountability mechanisms.



**4.1.2. Action:** *Drive rural development through the entire economy and public expenditure architectures need corresponding reforms*

Rural development has to be driven by the entire economy, as opposed to current strategies that seek solutions which are based on the structural disconnectedness of the dual economy of the colonial era. Public policies and investments across all sectors should promote the convergence of the rural economy with the urban industrial economy. There is, therefore, a need to align public expenditure with the rural transformation agenda. There is also a need to prioritise public investment in physical and biological infrastructure. Physical infrastructure includes basic municipal services, water, roads, power, ICT, cold-chain etc.; biological infrastructure includes plantations, improved planting materials and improved breeds of animals, genetic diversity etc. Infrastructure improves the social and economic competitiveness of rural areas: it reduces the basic needs gap between cities and rural areas and contributes to a better perception of rural life.



**4.1.3. Action:** *Place people at the centre of rural development planning and implementation*

Rural development is about direct investment in people and their communities to enhance their competencies and competitiveness to build their futures. In addition, priority is also needed to promulgate a rights-based labour policy to promote 'full employment' in rural areas. This

should start with a requirement for all public programmes to prioritise and promote labour-intensive investments and grants to rural areas, and broaden types of employment; promote decent work for family and wage workers through the progressive development of labour regulation, including the improvement of working conditions, the enforcement of an agricultural or rural minimum wage, skills acquisition, support to entrepreneurship and social protection.

## 4.2. Strengthening public administration at all levels and fostering innovation in institutional architecture that facilitates rural development policy implementation



### 4.2.1. Action: *Realign institutions for effective rural development*

Rural policy is understood as an extensive and comprehensive activity that cuts across all government policies: agriculture, forestry and natural resources, education, health, culture and know-how, transport and communications, tax and budget, labour and employment, and urban policies. This 'broad' rural policy has no specific geographic focus, but seeks to maintain an adequate level of attention to the impact that sectoral nation-wide policies can have on rural and territorial development.

Horizontal inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral structures and processes are therefore necessary for the co-ordination of cross-sectoral linkages to enable coherent planning and resource allocation for rural and territorial development. This implies moving beyond the prevailing 'silo' structures of key sectoral line ministries. Many of these are active in rural areas but are hampered by limited spatial coherence in planning of delivery of goods and services. Further, vertical coordination of rural development policy and intervention between the different levels of government i.e. national, regional and local (municipal) government, is also required.

Capacity shortcomings, including in particular local and meso level structures, need to be addressed. Efforts should include building

institutional capacity for decentralised government institutions serving rural communities (this may include mechanisms to link multiple rural and urban municipalities covering a territory); and strengthening rural institutions and associations such as business groups and rural financial organisations, etc.



### 4.2.2. Action: *Build inclusive consultative bodies on rural development*

Mechanisms should be put in place to enable a broad base of actors, including the private sector and civil society, to shape future strategy and priority actions. Beyond that, and at local and territorial levels, it is recognised that the presence of transformative social coalitions play a key role in enabling territories to achieve economic growth along with social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Engaging local actors, building social capital, creating space for local problem-solving and facilitating collective action should be central pillars of the rural transformation agenda.

Structures should be in place that enable civil society organisations to participate effectively at grassroots level in the fiscal as well as commercial aspects of economic activity, and that also builds capacity at grassroots level to enable rural populations to set their own priorities and to access support that is relevant to their needs.



### 4.2.3. Action: *Develop a rural development framework that embraces cross-sectoral issues*

A renewed rural development strategy needs to address and support the social, institutional, and policy conditions necessary to enable the different forms of economic growth in the different local/territorial contexts to be stimulated and to reduce poverty and socio-economic inequalities.

Growth in the productive sectors of rural areas is largely dependent on natural resource assets based on economic activities associated with agriculture, forestry, fisheries or tourism and, in some areas, mineral extractive industries. The leading economic activities of a rural area offer local multiplier effects into the rural non-farm sector. In general the level and type of activity in the rural non-farm sector reflects the dynamism

and the distributional impacts of the lead sector. For instance, agriculture should not be seen in isolation from the wider rural and local economy of non-farm activities. Efforts that could promote non-farm development include: enabling inter-sectoral linkages between farm and non-farm activities within the household and within the local economy; fostering a variety of business and small and medium-scale enterprise, including the removal of operational barriers; creating local productive clusters for enhanced livelihood, employment and job creation within a dynamic rural business environment; fostering rural-urban linkages; and developing the necessary human technical and vocational skills necessary to respond to the changing labour markets and enterprise opportunity within the rural area or territory, which may include local towns and intermediate cities.

Plans should also seek to address social and economic inequalities between rural and urban areas and between rural regions. In so doing, attention should be given to social sector services, specifically: health and education, infrastructure including water, electricity, housing, roads and communication and the removal of barriers to economic development, employment and livelihood enhancement.



#### 4.2.4. Action: Address governance of land and natural resource issues.

Good management of natural resources is a precondition for the development of potential in a sustainable and equitable way. In particular, equitable and secure access to land and water for productive opportunities is central to the rural transformation agenda.

With land tenure and governance, there is an Africa-wide commitment on land policy, the Land Policy Initiative (AUC-ECA-AfDB Consortium, 2010). This agenda must, as a priority, be taken forward to full implementation as a central pillar of rural transformation. In that regard one step forward would be to translate into concrete measures the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, which were adopted by UN member states in the framework of the Committee for World Food Security.

The Natural Resources Charter is a framework that sets out principles for the good governance of natural resources. It also gives orientation for harnessing the potential offered by natural capital in a sustainable and profitable manner for the benefit of the largest extent of the population.



### 4.3. Promoting territorial approaches

It is now accepted that territorial approaches are a necessary step to rural development. Provincial and municipal governments have often taken the lead in adopting this approach, as they assume new responsibilities for economic and social development, and environmental management, spurred by decentralisation policies. However central government should, at national level, consider the strengths and weaknesses of the various components of the territory between rural and urban areas as well as between rural areas, by promoting territorial balance. Rural development programmes can make a vital contribution to the attractiveness of rural areas. They can also help ensure that in a competitive, knowledge-based economy, a sustainable balance between urban and rural areas is maintained. In combination with other interventions, land management measures can make a positive contribution to the spatial distribution of economic activity and territorial cohesion.

Such an approach is complementary with efforts to realign sectoral line ministries towards a more coherent rural development agenda and efforts to build coherence between the different levels of government: national, regional and municipality. Strategic territorial projects incorporating funding for multiple sectoral components and territorial public goods can be designed and supported.



#### 4.3.1. Action: *Refine the issues and opportunities of the rural-urban linkages*

In order to promote territorial approaches, governments should refine the term 'rural' to include the integration of economic, social and cultural spaces as well as the linkages between rural areas, rural towns and intermediate

cities. The term 'rural' should be defined by a territorial typology as well as population density. This acknowledges, yet builds on the administrative definitions of 'rural' which are presently defined at national level and are commonly limited to population density and/ or population size within an administrative unit such as a municipality. A renewed approach of the relationship between urban and rural areas should be explored by defining typologies that would make interventions more coherent, according to some features such as: share of agricultural activities, manufacturing and services and mining, importance of the natural capital for potential job creating activities (tourism, forests, energy, etc.), connection with market and consumer centres, and demographic dynamics.



#### 4.3.2. Action: *Apply a spatial focus to public policy and investment*

Much economic and social sector policy and investment is not designed to target specific places. It is national in scope and thus claims to be space-neutral. However, many space-neutral policies actually have implicit spatial biases and can have potentially differential impacts on rural and urban areas and their populations, and between different rural areas or territories (from remote rural to highly-connected rural). Additionally, given the economic and social inequalities between rural and urban areas and the heterogeneity between rural regions and territories in most countries, new tools and instruments need to be developed to test key policies and sectoral investments using a 'spatial lens'. The overall aim is to secure more equitable access to public goods and services, to incorporate measures to mitigate unintended consequences of apparently space-neutral policies and interventions, and/ or to compensate for negative impacts through place-based policies or interventions.



#### 4.4. Transforming Africa's Rural Areas through Skills Development, Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment for Africa



##### 4.4.1. Action: *Craft a national rural youth empowerment agenda*

One main outcome of the 2nd ARDF was the unpacking and clarification of a rural youth empowerment agenda. Several elements go into this agenda. Recognising that public finance and support, including smart subsidies, is critical for handholding young entrepreneurs, government should promulgate policy interventions that pull private investment into youth-owned businesses. There is a need to promote youth empowerment (education, skills and knowledge and access to land and other factors of production) as critical ingredients of success by youth as entrepreneurs. The green economy presents enormous potential and opportunity for accelerated job creation and skills development. Therefore, research and development aimed at connecting the youth to job creation opportunities on the green economy should be accelerated.

African governments should make a conscious effort to provide public sector financing support to green economy initiatives while simultaneously building internal capacity to access global financial resources dedicated to the environment, climate change and related areas including the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Equal emphasis must be put on formal and non-formal skills development (vocational and technical education), to create opportunity in the informal sectors of the economy. There is also the need to support the integration of decent work indicators on youth employment programmes across Africa. It is important to build on the comparative advantage of youth by investing in hard and soft rural infrastructure, including ICT, to build the capacity of youth to influence the rural-urban nexus. Improved access to information and ICT, as well as enhanced knowledge and learning opportunities for youth are crucial. It is clear that there is a need for the social marketing of rural life, changing the status of agriculture and rural life in politics, the media, schools and society as a whole, which requires the dissemination of positive messages and the enhancement of the rural side of a nation.

#### 4.5. Monitoring of spatially – and social class-sensitive economic, social and environmental policies



##### 4.5.1. Action: *Mainstream rural development into national strategies*

National planning processes should seek to address the prevailing social and economic inequalities persisting between urban and rural populations, between regions in a given country, between rural men and women, and between the ethnic majority and minorities who often live in rural areas. These include inequalities inherited from past policy decisions and social structures, but also the new poverties, gaps and inequalities being created by the process of rapid change and transformation itself.

The aim of such an orientation is to implement mechanisms to strengthen coherence of sectoral policies through ex ante ministerial assessment and review ('policy mainstreaming'); or to evaluate the impact of different ministries' policy decisions on rural areas through ex post assessment and review ('rural-proofing') by a specific agency. The overall goal is to draw attention to the specific needs of rural areas and integrate these into central government decision-making in different sectors. Finding the means to develop and or test economic, social and environmental policies for their spatial sensitivity – or 'rural-proofing' – is an approach that would rely on ex-ante instruments set-up by the mapping of rural-urban issues.

Experiences in other contexts show that benchmarking should be a central part of the mainstream policy process. It should therefore be managed and administered through a central and independent policy unit. This will ensure that rural areas and their populations are not marginalised and that, where necessary, policies are adapted to meet spatially differentiated needs and thus not be seen as a mechanism to place rural areas in a secondary position.

Experience has also shown that it is crucial to carry out a cross-ministerial examination early in the policy process, hence the importance of consistent, innovative institutional arrangements as mentioned earlier. The need for indicators on progress to judge the success and the recognition of the

heterogeneity of rural regions have to be embedded in any rural-proofing process.

The rural development planning processes at national level should also align with and reinforce ongoing AU-wide initiatives which impact significantly on rural areas. These include national sustainable development processes; building climate resilience; enabling a 'green' agenda; social sector initiatives such as the Education For All(EFA); initiatives of the agriculture sector (within the CAADP framework where applicable); and cross-cutting initiatives of AUDA-NEPAD including gender equality, capacity development, and information and communication technologies (ICTs).



#### 4.5.2. Action: *Develop information on rural transformation indicators*

To accompany the debate and planning process in support of rural development and transformation, there is a critical need to strengthen the evidence base. This includes: spatially disaggregated analysis of growth; analysis of poverty and inequality; covering both monetary and non-monetary dimensions; data on the spatial pattern of production and employment; wage rates and population movements; and trends in public revenue over the period; as well as patterns of public spending (current and capital) disaggregated by sector and by region.

The quality and availability of data varies between countries. In most cases, however, even where data is available it has not been presented

spatially. Household surveys, as well as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), offer relevant sources of some spatially disaggregated data but in general spatially disaggregated data is limited.

Given the central importance of smallhold agriculture for the livelihoods of men and women, there is a critical need to put in place effective monitoring for the changes taking place including changes in household profile, farm size, and on- and off-farm economic activity.

Revisiting rural development implies engagement with and reinvesting in national statistical systems and the associated development of a relevant monitoring and evaluation framework for rural development and transformation, which should include indicators which map the processes of change, include societal change.

A national, local and sectoral levels feedback mechanisms where evidence on what works and what does not work can feed into the planning processes, should be encouraged.

Rural transformation in Africa needs both better statistics but also more pure and applied social and economic research. The gaps in knowledge and evidence are large. Further there are significant gaps in research capacity of national and regional centres in relevant fields. These gaps need to be filled both for better evidence to inform the debate but most particularly for national researchers to play a central role in the policy debate. Relevant lesson-sharing and learning from other regions of the world need to be put in place.



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## 5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND MODALITIES

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In supporting African member states, the *'Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy and Plan for Africa'* will be implemented as follows:

**1. Locate and/or re-define the importance and role of rural development in national development and in structural transformation processes:**

- a. How rural development is encompassed and driven by the entire economy
- b. Estimate pace and inclusiveness of rural transformation
- c. Mainstream rural development into national strategies, and examine options for using multi-sectoral approaches to rural transformation including AU programmes such as CAADP, PIDA etc.

**2. Access and use evidence-based self-assessment instruments for rural development implemented by nationals to review:**

- a. Rural development policy practice and governance
- b. Institutional, rationalisation, integration, coordination and implementation modalities for rural development
- c. Public expenditure architecture, political will, and resource mobilisation

**3. Develop and implement rural development programmes more effectively using:**

- a. Territorial development planning and implementation manuals, placing people at centre of rural development planning and implementation

- b. Economic convergence interventions between farm and non-farm and between rural and urban
- c. Rural Development Blueprint Results Framework, including impact services and M&E
- d. Approaches and options for driving full employment and expansion of domestic markets by expanding the 'rural middle class'

**4. Strengthening public administration of rural development at all levels by identifying implementation capacity needs and crafting approaches to capacity development by:**

- a. Applying a rural development capacity needs assessment toolkit
- b. Adopting rural development capacity development programmes
- c. Administering special strategic leadership strengthening programmes for rural development-led structural transformation
- d. Designing and implementing rural development skills development programmes for youth economic empowerment and job creation, crafted within a national rural youth empowerment agenda
- e. Adopting and promoting approaches and options for protecting the rural economy from unfair business and trade practices/ agreements, and addressing the failure of markets, institutions and policies

## 6. CONCLUSION

The process of operationalising the Blueprint is the responsibility of member states with implementation support from RECs, AUC/AUDA-NEPAD and related continental institutions and partners. AUDA-NEPAD will lead the process to develop self-assessment and self-directed tools for country level implementation. AUDA-NEPAD will therefore develop a *'Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy and Plan for Africa'*. Each member state will be supported in crafting and/ or strengthening their rural transformation agenda using such tools. The Blueprint for rural development policy implementation was developed through a consultation processes, including from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Rural Development Forums. The operational and implementation strategy and plan will similarly be completed consultatively based on key overarching principles that have emerged in the Blueprint.

Overarching conditions for successful implementation of the Blueprint are: putting in place and guaranteeing the role played by strong leadership and a capable public administration at all levels of government; and promulgation of policy and legislation ensuring coordination and mutual accountability mechanisms across government, creating a macro-economic policy environment that is conducive to extending structural transformation through a rural transformation agenda.

In order to achieve this, AU Member States and RECs can rely on the support of the Rural Futures Programme of AUDA-NEPAD, which will continue mobilising multi-level partnerships in order to promote the rural development and transformation agenda. By engaging with this Blueprint,

AU Member States and RECs commit to foster rural areas as one of the engines of structural social and economic transformation of the continent. In particular, the Rural Futures Programme is developing and implementing the *'Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy and Plan for Africa'* as well as mechanisms to monitor the impact of rural transformation initiatives. These include instruments to document and share important lessons and experiences among member states. In this regard, AUDA-NEPAD is committed to publishing a periodic outlook on the 'State of Rural Development in Africa' highlighting the prospects for growth and development as well as the challenges therein.

The urgency that accompanies the Blueprint, for its transformative effect on rural life in Africa, is matched only by its complex and manifold components as well as its reliance on a motley crowd of actors to operationalise it. At the heart of this social web of partners stand member states, whose political good will, efficient public administration and strong leadership will determine the lifespan and overall success of the Blueprint. The domestication of the Blueprint in national development plans cannot be underestimated in achieving the goals of poverty reduction and removing the stark duality of rural-urban inequality. The Blueprint is not the silver bullet that will engineer rural transformation in its entirety; but it is a detailed, well thought out road map, carefully crafted by member states themselves, which can be wielded as a weapon against poverty and inequality and for rural development and, ultimately, for the emancipation of lives across Africa.



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## ANNEX 1

### The Cotonou Declaration on Rural Futures, 2–4 May 2013, Cotonou, Benin

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1. The Inaugural *Africa Rural Development Forum (ARDF)*, which was organised under the theme *Sustainable Rural Transformation Agenda for Africa* by AUDA-NEPAD and hosted by the Republic of Benin, was held from 2 to 4 May, 2013.
2. There was a recognition that the theme of the Forum is consistent with the rural transformation vision of AUDA-NEPAD which includes i) accelerated and diversified economic growth in rural (including small towns in rural settings) areas including an expansion of employment and livelihood opportunities, ii) an enhanced pace of reduction in rural poverty and in inequality both between rural and urban areas (the cities) and between and within rural territories, and iii) enhanced environmental sustainability. The translation of this vision is expected to build on the foundation of successes and lessons from such AU initiatives as the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)* and the *Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA)*.
3. Considering that Africa has had growth without transformation, we agreed on the need to achieve **sustainable rural development** to deal with the challenges of high population growth, rural unemployment and underemployment especially of youth, growing demand for food and escalating food prices, climate change and variability, regional food insecurity, agriculture yield gap, and weak rural-urban linkages and lack of synergies between activities undertaken within the rural landscape.
4. Mindful of the importance of inclusive political dialogue and participatory processes in the formulation and design of public policies as key prerequisites for effective rural transformation, we agreed to promote broad-based national consensus on rural development and transformation as well as place rural development at the centre of national development plans, strategies and budgets.
5. Noting that Africa is on the threshold of a new technological age driven by rapid advances in information technology and communications systems, we resolve to put science, innovation, and technology at the service of rural transformation.
6. Considering that rural transformation has to be a multi-actor and multi-sectoral agenda, we agreed the following elements to be critical perspectives for its implementation: Political Economy of Rural Transformation; Territorial Development and Multi-sectorality; Livelihoods, Employment, and Job Creation; Rural Infrastructure Development; and Environmental Management and Sustainability.
7. We agree the need for the following **African values** to provide the underlying framework within which the sustainable rural transformation agenda be pursued:
  - i. Respect, dignity, human and social welfare
  - ii. Cooperation, collective responsibility and group solidarity on issues of common interest
  - iii. Strong family values and strong communities as foundation of rural society
8. We agree on the following **key principles** to guide rural transformation:
  - i. **Principle 1:** Redefine the understanding of 'rural' to focus primarily on people, traditions and culture as well as recognizing links between rural and small urban centres;
  - ii. **Principle 2:** Strengthen a multi-sectoral approach and align institutions and policies in mainstreaming rural

- development into national strategies and long term development planning;
- iii. **Principle 3:** Apply a spatial focus to public policy and investment and support place-based territorial model for rural development;
  - iv. **Principle 4:** Build a broader understanding of, and support to, the productive sectors in the rural areas, including addressing land reform and agrarian structure as well as linkages between farm and non-farm economies;
  - v. **Principle 5:** Recognise both formal and informal social and economic actors and institutions in building local and national level consensus on rural transformation strategy;
  - vi. **Principle 6:** Strengthen the evidence base to inform context-specific rural policy and investment planning.
9. We believe the following to be key success factors for sustainable rural transformation in Africa:
- i. The vision has to be one of a people-centred rural transformation
  - ii. Strong African ownership and committed leadership at all levels of the transformation agenda
  - iii. Building social, economic, political and environmental resilience and their inter-linkages
  - iv. Agriculture and agricultural transformation is essential both for economic growth and human well-being
  - v. Strong partnerships and coalitions are needed at all levels, including those at local levels, to steer and bring about rural transformation
  - vi. Quality public goods, particularly infrastructure, are crucial for rural transformation
  - vii. Knowledge and learning is a catalyst for transformation
10. We urge AUDA-NEPAD to continue taking leadership in mobilising multi-level partnerships in order to implement the rural development and transformation agenda forward.
- i. That the ARDF continues to provide a platform to debate on various perspectives on policy options and strategic thinking and action on rural transformation in Africa. A priority for the Forum is facilitating dialogue in policy and institutional innovations and reforms;
  - ii. That Rural Futures build strategic partnerships for joint implementation of flagship programmes for rural transformation. Priority will be given to investments in innovative projects with potential high pay-off, and scope for scaling-up within and across countries and regions;
  - iii. That a periodic outlook be developed by AUDA-NEPAD on the 'State of Rural Development in Africa' highlighting the prospects for growth and development as well as the challenges therein;
  - iv. That Rural Futures establish an Outreach Programme for the exchange of information and best practices on rural development from within Africa and from other parts of the world; and in particular generation and sharing of policy analyses;
  - v. That a blueprint for rural transformation be developed for the attention of AU decision-making processes;
  - vi. That Rural Futures establish a Learning and Knowledge platform to promote and strengthen learning partnerships among key regional and national organizations involved in rural development;
  - vii. That the Rural Futures Programme develops and implements mechanisms to monitor the impact of rural transformation initiatives as well as comes up with instruments to document and share important lessons and experiences to the diverse stakeholders of the Rural Futures Programme, including policy messages to Ministerial and other AU forums.

## ANNEX 2

### The Yaounde Declaration and Action Plan, 8–10 September 2016, Yaounde, Cameroon

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Africa Rural Development Forum (ARDF)*, organised from 8-10 September 2016 under the theme *Transforming Africa's Rural Area through Skills Development, Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment for Africa* by AUDA-NEPAD and hosted by the Government of Cameroon sought to build on the outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> ARDF.
2. The main outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> ARDF was the adoption of the *"Cotonou Declaration on Rural Futures"* to support the structural transformation of the continent in order to promote inclusive growth and empowerment of rural areas through people-centred development.
3. Within the context of the Cotonou Declaration action points **A Blueprint to Implement Rural Development Policies in Africa** was developed and subsequently endorsed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Rural Development Forum as a vehicle for advancing rural transformation across Africa and accelerating pace towards the visions of the African Union's Agenda 2063.
4. The Blueprint will support member states and regional players towards an integrated, cross-sectoral, and coherent set of actions based on local realities, priorities and a shared African vision and narrative.
5. The Second Edition of the Atlas was launched under the theme *"A new Emerging Rural World: An Overview of rural Change in Africa"* providing information and analysis on cross-sectoral factors and dynamics to inform public policy debates and decisions on rural transformation.
6. Among the key thematic issues, the Forum highlighted:
  - a. Youth Economic Empowerment and skills Development
  - b. Rural Development – Policies and Institutions
  - c. Rural Infrastructure and ICT
  - d. Green Economy and job creation in advancing Rural Development in Africa
7. The Forum adopted the overarching strategy for rural transformation to include:
  - a. Rural transformation has to be driven by the whole economy as overarching approach to graduating from the structural limits of dualism
  - b. Growing the domestic market base through land and agrarian reforms and agriculture-led rural industrialisation
  - c. The role of the State is crucial especially in policy reforms and legislation that reforms the public expenditure architecture towards rural transformation investment priorities.



## PLAN OF ACTION

- Operationalise the Blueprint including adoption by Heads of State and Government and implementation by member states
- Establish a support network for expanded use of the Atlas across all regions
- Examine and consider support to strengthen local capacity for generating quality data on rural development
- Consolidate the following recommendations:
  - Support member states to internalise territorial planning, multi-sectoralism and placed-based policies in national development strategies;
  - Recognising that public finance and support is critical for handholding of young entrepreneurs including smart subsidies, government should promulgate policy interventions that leverage private investment into youth's businesses;
  - Promote youth empowerment (education, skills and knowledge and access to land and other factors of production) as critical ingredients of success by youth as entrepreneurs;
  - The green economy presents an enormous potential and opportunity for accelerated job creation and skills development. Therefore, research and development aimed at connecting the youth to job creation opportunities on the green economy should be accelerated;
  - African Governments should make a conscious effort to provide public sector financing support to green economy initiatives whilst at the same time building internal capacity to access global financial resources dedicated to environment, climate change and related areas including the Green Climate Fund;
  - Equal emphasis must be put on Formal and Non-Formal skills development (vocational and technical education), to create opportunity in the informal sectors of the economy;
  - Build on the comparative advantage of youth by investing in hard and soft rural infrastructure, including ICT to build the capacity of youth to leverage on the rural-urban nexus;
  - Support the integration of decent work indicators on youth employment programmes across Africa.
- Develop an Implementation and Performance Management Framework for the Yaoundé Declaration and Plan of Action and generate evidence-based indicators of the envisioned rural transformation based on mapping and scenario planning based on of Agenda 2063.





