

Beacons to steer Africa's development along the right pathways

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice, and the UN will continue to assist member States in their quest to align national development plans with the sustainable development goals to ensure their successful implementation.



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Speaking at the end of a three-day workshop on mainstreaming and implementing the water-energy nexus for sustainable development in the African region, Jong Soo Yoon, head of the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNSOD), said his office and other UN agencies will continue to engage the continent for a successful implementation of the SDGs.

“We would like to continually engage with the continent for a successful implementation of the SDGs and be part of a solution through enhancing the continent’s capacity, and bridging the knowledge gap, building partnerships and alliances,” he said.

The SDGs are a universal blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Since the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the UNSOD Chief said, his office has undertaken many activities for the successful implementation of the SDGs, including looking into water and energy issues.

Issues affecting the continent

Jong said the partners were happy that the workshop had discussed various issues affecting the continent in particular the importance of data, capacity building, finance, partnerships and alliances needed for the successful implementation of the nexus approach to sustainable development in Africa.

For his part, Frehiwot Weidehanna, a State Minister in Ethiopia's Water, Irrigation and Electricity Ministry, said the workshop was a success as it focused on finding solutions and the way forward regarding Africa's water and energy challenges.

"The challenge of the 'silo' approach to planning and implementation of shared and interlinked resources such as water and energy still persists; the enormous capacity and training needs for understanding and successful implementation of nexus approach remain a challenge," he said, adding Ethiopia had put the three key development enablers – water, energy and agriculture – under one ministry in line with the nexus modeling concept.

"Knowledge sharing workshops are vital to the continent for facilitating mainstreaming and effective implementation of the water and energy nexus approach and SDGs to our national goals. Support from UN agencies in linking the SDGs to our national goals and targets is critical at this early stage of mainstreaming to ensure successful implementation of the SDGs," said Weidehanna.

Africa's Agenda 2063

For his part, Linus Mofor, a senior environmental affairs officer in the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa's Agenda 2063 were beacons to steer Africa's development along the right pathways to ensure that no-one is left behind by development. The United Nations will continue to assist member States in their quest to align national development plans with the sustainable development goals to ensure their successful implementation.

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