

Sustainable development key to Africa's socio-economic challenges – Migiro



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

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Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro today stressed that sustainable development is key to addressing Africa's economic, social and environmental challenges, noting that the continent has the capacity to transition to a green economy without the adverse effects that have accompanied growth in other regions.

“For the most part, Africa has avoided many destructive aspects of unsustainable development,” Ms. Migiro [said](#) at the meeting of the regional coordination mechanism of United Nations agencies and other organizations working in the continent in support of the African Union (AU).

“And let us not lose sight of Africa’s own wealth and advantages. Countries here can leapfrog straight to green technology. Many are in a strong position to move quickly,” Ms. Migiro told the meeting in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, where both the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the AU are based.

She said that the UN and AU are strengthening cooperation as the world body strives to deliver services as a one unified entity.

Africa is also showing impressive economic growth, she said, pointing out that the continent is home to six of the world’s 10 fastest growing economies. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the few regions in the world showing resilience in the face of the global economic crisis, she added.

“But we know that Africa, as a whole, is still faced with daunting yet not unsurpassable challenges. From water and sanitation, child and maternal health to job creation, and from the food crisis and famine – as currently seen in the Horn of Africa – to stemming armed conflicts where they persist. In addition, climate change and natural disasters threaten to reverse hard-won development gains,” she said.

The integrated approach embodied in sustainable development is Africa’s most promising way forward, Ms. Migiro said, urging the continent to actively engage in preparations for next year’s UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Brazil.

“The Conference is a major opportunity to produce plans for greater economic dynamism, social protection, and the creation of jobs, especially for youth – all while protecting our natural resources.

“With concrete plans and political will, we can make the most of Rio+20 and get the best possible outcome. The benefits will spread across the African continent,” she added.

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