



Global, Continental, and Regional Development Agendas

What Does It Mean to Domesticate or Localise These?

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Abstract

The domestication of regional, continental and global development agendas can be confusing, leading to one concluding that these are either an addition to or a replacing of, a country's national development plan. What do these various development agendas mean for a country like South Africa versus the country's domestic development focus as espoused in the National Development Plan (NDP)? What does domestication of the various agendas mean? The key idea to note here is that

domestication is not about replacing a country's development agenda with a regional or continental or global development agenda. What is important is to ensure that there is alignment of the domestic plan (objectives, priorities) with those of the rest of the world, the continent and the region. Global, continental and regional agendas are not separate programmes. They are part of the National Development Plan. South Africa's implementation of its own development plan indirectly implements other development agendas.

Introduction

A continuous confusion persists around whether the agreed global, continental, and regional development agendas – such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)), African Union Agenda 2063, and SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) – are meant to replace or complement individual countries' development plans. After these development agendas were adopted (2030 Agenda in 2015 and Agenda 2063 in 2013), countries were meant to domesticate or localise the agreed goals. This is where the dilemma seems to still exist, with contrasting views in both the public and private arenas. Occasionally, one hears questions about when will South Africa do something or implement either the AU Agenda 2063 or the UN Agenda 2030. Clarity is needed as to what these development agendas mean for a country like South Africa, versus the country's domestic development focus, as espoused in the National Development Plan (NDP). This brief aims to provide some clarity, linkage, and understanding of the various sustainable development plans – global, continental, and regional.

The Origins of Global Sustainable Development

The focus on global sustainable development by the United Nations can be traced back to 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development was tasked by the UN General Assembly to come up with a global agenda for change. The task entailed the following:

- A proposal on long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond;
- Recommendations for greater co-operation among developing countries, and between countries at different stages of economic and social development, for the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives that take account of the interrelationships between people, resources, environment, and development;
- Ways in which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental concerns; and
- Definitions of shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues and the appropriate efforts

needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment, a long-term agenda for action during the coming decades, and aspirational goals for the world community.

The basis was that 'the earth is one but the world is not'. We all depend on the same biosphere, but individual communities and countries strive for survival and prosperity with little regard of their impact on others. Some consume the Earth's resources at a rate that would leave little for future generations. Others, many more in number, consume far too little and live with the prospect of hunger, squalor, disease, and early death.

The next key defining moment for change was in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Agenda 21). This conference recognised that 'humanity stands at a defining moment in history'. Global nations began to realise that they were confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations; a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health, and illiteracy; and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which nations depend for their wellbeing. This was the beginning of a global partnership for dealing with environmental and developmental challenges. Worth noting during this shift in global development was the global consensus reached that the 'successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans, policies and processes are crucial in achieving global development. The role of international cooperation is to support and supplement national efforts.'

In 2000, the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted, with eight goals to be reached by 2015 – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs demonstrated a greater focus on development compared to prior discussions. Only one goal, number 7, placed a focus on environmental issues. In 2002, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development assessed progress since Rio and delivered three key outcomes: a political declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and a range of partnership initiatives. Key commitments

included those on sustainable consumption and production, water and sanitation, and energy. In 2012, in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), discussion on a new global agenda to replace the MDGs began. The basis of the negotiation was that ‘poverty is the greatest global challenge’. In September 2015, the UN adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which traverse various socio-economic issues and bring environmental issues to the centre of development. In all these development processes, it is worth noting that development work happens at the local and national level, and further, in collaborations among countries.

What Does the Domestication of Regional, Continental, and Global Development Agendas Mean?

Is it about replacing a country’s development plans? Or is it about mapping the two to see if they converge? Where there is non-convergence, strategies must be devised to close the gap. The issue is not about replacing a country’s development agenda with a regional or continental or global development agenda. What is important is to ensure that there is alignment of the domestic plan (objectives, priorities) with those of the rest of the world, continent, or region. The process of domesticating global, continental, and regional development plans starts with finding areas of convergence. Once this is done, it is easier to translate the global targets into programmes and actions that can be implemented locally. Moreover, the process presents an opportunity to identify areas

where there are gaps and strategies that could be utilised to close the gaps.

In essence, all development agendas have similar core objectives which aim to tackle the urgency of addressing economic, social, and environmental issues in order to improve people’s lives. The plans seek to accelerate the implementation of initiatives for growth and sustainable development, deal with unemployment, eliminate poverty, and reduce inequality. Hence, it is important to find synergies between domestic, regional, continental, and global development agendas. Commitments to global, continental, or regional development plans do not necessarily indicate a replacement of the domestic plan. Just imagine a situation where a country, such as South Africa, which has adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012 and is already in the process of implementation, has to change gears and focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063, which were approved later. A country must deduce the extent of alignment of the domestic plan with the regional, continental, and global plans. Areas of convergence and gaps must be identified, and where there are gaps, a country needs to devise strategies for how to tackle these. The process of alignment also helps when it comes to reporting on the various agendas.

In the case of South Africa, this alignment process has been done with various agendas, such as the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Below is a snap shot of how the three development agendas (Agenda 2063, SDGs and NDP) align with one another.

| Agenda 2063 (2023 Goals) | Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | National Development Plan (NDP) |
|---|--|--|
| Goal 1: A high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing for all. | Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere in the world Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages | Chapter 11: Social protection |
| Goal 2: Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation | Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | Chapter 9: Improving education, training and innovation |

| Agenda 2063 (2023 Goals) | Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | National Development Plan (NDP) |
|--|--|---|
| Goal 3: Healthy and well-nourished citizens | <p>Goal 2: End hunger; achieve food security and improved nutrition; promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages</p> | Chapter 10: Promoting health |
| Goal 4: Transformed economies and job creation | Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all | Chapter 3: Economy and employment |
| Goal 5: Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production | <p>Goal 2: End hunger; achieve food security and improved nutrition; promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> | Chapter 6: An integrated and inclusive rural economy |
| Goal 6: Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth | Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development | |
| Goal 7: Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities | <p>Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p> <p>Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p> <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> <p>Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> <p>Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p> | <p>Chapter 5: Environmental sustainability – An equitable transition to a low-carbon economy</p> <p>Chapter 8: Transforming human settlement and the national space economy</p> |
| Goal 8: United Africa (Federal or Confederate) | Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development | Chapter 15: Transforming society and uniting the country |

| <p>Agenda 2063 (2023 Goals)</p> | <p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</p> | <p>National Development Plan (NDP)</p> |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Goal 9: Key Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions established and functional</p> | <p>Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p> | <p>Chapter 7: Positioning SA in the world</p> |
| <p>Goal 10: World Class Infrastructure crisscrosses Africa</p> | <p>Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p> | <p>Chapter 4: Economy infrastructure – The foundation of social and economic development</p> |
| <p>Goal 11: Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched</p> | <p>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> | <p>Chapter 13: Building a capable and developmental state Chapter 14: Fighting corruption</p> |
| <p>Goal 12: Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</p> | <p>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> | <p>Chapter 13: Building a capable and developmental state</p> |
| <p>Goal 13: Peace, Security and Stability are Preserved</p> | <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> | <p>Chapter 11: Social protection Chapter 12: Building safer communities</p> |
| <p>Goal 14: A Stable and Peaceful Africa</p> | <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> | <p>Chapter 11: Social protection Chapter 14: Fighting corruption</p> |
| <p>Goal 15: A Fully Functional and Operational African Peace and Security Architecture</p> | <p>Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p> | <p>Chapter 11: Social protection Chapter 14: Fighting corruption</p> |
| <p>Goal 16: African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent</p> | | |

| Agenda 2063 (2023 Goals) | Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | National Development Plan (NDP) |
|---|--|---|
| Goal 17: Full Gender Equality in All Spheres of Life | Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls | Chapter 15: Transforming society and uniting the country |
| Goal 18: Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children | Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries | Chapter 9: Improving education, training and innovation |
| Goal 19: Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence | Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development | Chapter 7: Positioning SA in the world |
| Goal 20: Africa takes full responsibility for financing its development | Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development | Chapter 7: Positioning SA in the world |

Conclusion

The domestication of regional, continental, and global development agendas does not mean replacing domestic development plans. Rather, the process requires alignment, identifying gaps, and strategizing around these gaps. It is about mainstreaming the global, regional, and continental agendas into national development plans. Global, continental, and regional agendas are not separate programmes. They are all part of the National Development Plan. The effective implementation of the National Development Plan means the effective implementation of the global, continental, and regional agendas. The goals and objectives of the global, continental, and regional agendas are reflected in the National Development Plan. The effective implementation of the National Development Plan will make it easier for the country to meet reporting commitments (progress) in all development agendas. Therefore, it all begins with the country’s National Development Plan and its implementation.