



THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS
CENTER FOR
AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS CENTER
CONFERENCE

EXPEDITING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AFRICA'S 2030 AGENDA

Radisson Blu Hotel and Convention Centre
27 January 2017
Kigali, Rwanda

The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) held the first ever conference *Expediting the Implementation of Africa's 2030 Agenda* that concluded in Kigali, Rwanda on 27 January anchored the unprecedented move of Africa to chart its own path on global issues, through establishing its own capacity towards accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda across Africa.

“We’re at a unique time in history where Africa is starting to be recognized as a real force after a period of impressive growth and accomplishments, congratulations to our visionary leaders. This African collaboration was exactly the reason for opening the SDGC/A as one of the homegrown solutions for Africa. If we are to meet the SDGs, we need to share stories about what works and what doesn’t, develop creative ways to finance projects that will aid in development, and combine our knowledge in order to multiply it. We have so much on this continent, and if we’re able to properly harness it I have no doubts that we will achieve our goals.” – The SDGC/A Director General, Dr. Belay Begashaw said during the opening plenary session of the conference.

The SDGC/A Conference is the first major conference for the Center this year with over 200 government officials, businesses, civil society, academia and experts both international and from all over Africa to the official launch of the SDGC/A; the presentation of the Africa Report 2030 - serving as a blueprint for how Africa can achieve the SDGs by 2030 - and discussing the major themes relevant to SDG implementation in Africa. In addition, the conference included thematic group sessions of the SDGC/A's current initiatives, building monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems for monitoring the progress of African countries



towards the SDGs, development financing for SDGs platforms, a cooperative agreement with the Indian government for the development of an IT supported Unique Identification System that could enhance African integration efforts.

“Our mission at the Center is to support governments, civil society, businesses and academic institutions to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. We will accomplish this through engaging in research, policy and technical work among others. It would be impossible for one organization to accomplish everything on its own, it is the Center’s goal to bring together ideas and experts. We are therefore constantly looking for strategic partnerships. To build its capacity and coverage, the Center has acquired land in this great city of Kigali and is optimistic that it will soon build its own facilities that will be used for offices, training and SDGs solutions demonstration purposes. It is also looking forward to open regional centers to represent and appreciate the immense differences in the agro-ecology, socio-cultural and geo-political aspects of the regions,” Director General Dr. Begashaw said.

With the extensive network of academics through the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN) and under the governance of an extremely accomplished board, the SDGC/A recognizes that citizen understanding and engagement with SDGs is crucial to the development of countries and will ensure inclusiveness and bring about real community life solutions for development. The development of indices that are simplified for easy comprehension will be used to communicate progress and get feedback from community members at grassroots level. Additionally, one other group that is not singled out enough as crucial for development is Africa’s intellectuals. Academics are able to influence every area of life, and we count on them to develop new technologies, warn us about and prevent calamities, conduct life-saving research. Therefore, the SDGC/A will create a network of African intellectuals to increase collaboration on crucial issues.

Dr. Begashaw stressed the need for continued private sector engagement, as they hold enormous experience and capital which if invested in a responsible manner will bring about the transformation that Africa needs. Furthermore, business and investment forums will be established to bring together



Government, Business and Universities to forge new partnerships for SDGs in order for the business voice and perspectives to be heard and thus allowing governments to create enabling policy environment. The SDGC/A also intends to utilize existing knowledge relevant to the SDGs through operating a knowledge hub that filters existing or new information, packaging it to suit end users and sharing it through various appropriate means.

“I would like to share a word that I recently learned in Kinyarwanda [official language of Rwanda], *agaciro*. *Agaciro* means dignity or self-respect, and I want this Center to embody this word in all of our work. Our work is not to “give aid to beneficiaries” or even to develop countries because this implies countries are unable to do it themselves. Instead, we aim to create platforms to share knowledge across the continent and empower countries and individuals,” Director General Begashaw concluded.

A final compilation of initiatives and the report ‘Africa 2030: How Africa Can Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals’ will be posted on the SDGC/A website, as will the development financing paper ‘SDG Financing for Africa: Key Propositions and Areas of Engagement’.

The one-day conference was attended by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, 2 Foreign Ministers, 5 Ministers, 1 Minister of State. Some 200 business and civil society representatives, including local and international academia and experts, along with representatives of diplomatic missions and UN entities participated in the event.

SDGC/A website: <https://www.sdgcafrica.org>
