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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
Fifth session

Marrakech, Morocco, 16-18 April 2019

Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level panel on empowering people and ensuring  
inclusiveness and equality: stepping up action to  
deliver the commitments contained in the 2030  
Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa**

## **Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality**

### **Draft concept note**

#### **I. Introduction to the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

1. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (the Regional Forum), convened by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with regional organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, is intended to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals set out in Africa's Agenda 2063. The Regional Forum provides a multi-stakeholder platform for follow-up and review of progress and challenges in the implementation of the goals, while strengthening learning and advocating effective policy measures and actions. The Regional Forum makes important contributions to bolstering multi-stakeholder engagement and synergies and promoting concerted efforts to implement and achieve the development goals of the two mutually reinforcing agendas. Four sessions of the Forum have been held since 2015.

2. The fifth session of the Regional Forum (2019) will be held under the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". It will carry out in-depth reviews of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 10 (reduced inequalities), Goal 13 (climate action) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), alongside the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063.<sup>1</sup> The Regional Forum will also undertake an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goal 17 (partnerships for the goals) to tackle challenges and strengthen partnerships to develop capacity, harness science and technologies, and mobilize and scale up finance to implement the Goals.

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\* ECA/RFSD/2019/1.

<sup>1</sup> See annex I.

3. The outcomes of the fifth session will be fed into the 2019 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, which will be held in July 2019, focusing on the same theme and selected Sustainable Development Goals. The outcomes will also be used for policy advocacy, formulation and implementation at regional and national levels. Moreover, 2019 is of special significance given that for the first time the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly (Sustainable Development Goal or Leaders' Summit), will be held in September 2019. The Regional Forum therefore offers the opportunity for Africa to articulate its inputs to the Leaders' Summit as well. Such inputs will include specific challenges for Africa in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the gaps and levers of change to accelerate implementation.

## **II. Theme and selected Sustainable Development Goals in the context of Africa's priorities for inclusive and sustainable structural transformation and development**

4. The year 2019 marks the fourth year of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and midterm in the implementation of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) of Agenda 2063. Time is of the essence and the need for urgency to significantly increase the pace and scale of implementation is increasingly evident. The Regional Forum is therefore an important mechanism in helping to examine what works and does not work and catalyse reviews and adjustments in policies, programmes and arrangements to invigorate the implementation and monitoring of the goals.

5. The theme of the Regional Forum brings to the fore the commitment to leave no one behind, which has been agreed on by all member States in the 2030 Agenda. Empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and combating inequality are powerful ways of operationalizing that principle. The theme also resonates with the aspirations of Agenda 2063, in particular that of "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; and an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."

6. In addition, the theme and selected Sustainable Development Goals bode well with important strategies for the structural transformation of Africa. Among these strategies is stimulating and sustaining high, inclusive and job-creating economic growth in the face of the expanding impacts of climate change to which the region is highly vulnerable. Progress towards the realization of the focus theme and goals, synergistically with that in other Sustainable Development Goals is therefore clearly crucial for the region.

7. **Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.** Quality education is a determinant of peoples' empowerment, inclusion, employment status and other aspects of development. That is why, for example, one of the targets of Goal 4 is to substantially increase the number of young people and adults who have the relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. The work of ECA,<sup>2</sup> however, highlights that major challenges remain despite the gains in the education sector. In the ECA Africa Social Development Report 2018, it mentions that most children in Africa leave school with low levels of learning achievement that are inadequate to meet the requirements of the labour market. Furthermore, in 14 of the 17

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<sup>2</sup> ECA, *African Social Development Report – Informality and Inequality in Africa: exploring the linkages* (Addis Ababa, 2018).

countries with comparable data, less than 2 per cent of those that enrol at the primary stage complete the full cycle of school education. Africa lags in teacher training, which plays an important role in the levels of learning achievements. For example, in 2016, only 61 per cent of primary school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa were trained, compared with 85 per cent worldwide.<sup>3</sup> Equally concerning is the high rates of education exclusion in Africa. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),<sup>4</sup> of all the regions in the world, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. The Organization states that “over a fifth of children between the ages of 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by a third of youth between the ages of 12 and 14. Almost 60 per cent of youths between ages 5 and 17 are not in school.”<sup>5</sup> Girls face higher rates of education exclusion compared with boys in sub-Saharan Africa. Nine million girls between the ages of 6 and 11 will never go to school at all, compared with 6 million boys. Moreover, access to basic services such as drinking water, electricity and the Internet is low and a challenge to improved learning. In 2016, only 49 per cent of upper secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa had access to basic drinking water. While over 90 per cent of all schools in North Africa had access to electricity in 2016, the rates for the rest of the continent were only 37 per cent at the primary level, 52 per cent at the lower secondary level and 55 per cent at the upper secondary level. These few examples underline the need for concerted and stronger actions to be taken to ensure the timely implementation of the targets set under Goal 4. The work of the Regional Forum in informing what works, the areas lagging, the barriers to be cleared and the policy measures and actions needed to scale up implementation, is vital in that endeavour.

**8. Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.** A large body of literature, including the work of ECA, has consistently demonstrated the importance of policies geared to generate inclusive and employment-focused economic growth.<sup>6</sup> The need for employment and employment-friendly policies is greater now given that the economic growth witnessed since the turn of the century failed to create an adequate amount of jobs. The jobs created have not been enough to absorb the more than 10 million young people that join the labour force each year. Therefore, the window of opportunity for a demographic dividend is not fully exploited given the high level of unemployment among young people (12.4 per cent). In addition, 29 per cent of young people are not employed, in education or in training, up from 20 per cent in 2010.<sup>7</sup> The need for emphasis on decent jobs is also evident. Estimated at 66 per cent (about 290 million workers), Africa is host to the highest rate of vulnerable employment globally. Projections are that the number of workers in vulnerable employment will go up by nearly 9 million in 2018. The largest increase is expected to occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Equally concerning is that approximately 250 million workers in Africa live in extreme or moderate poverty and this number is projected to rise at an average of 4 million annually due to the continued rapid growth in the working-age population and insufficient improvements in working poverty rates.<sup>8</sup> In most countries, women

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018* (New York, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, *One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth is Out of School*. Fact Sheet No. 48 (February 2018). Available at <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs48-one-five-children-adolescents-youth-out-school-2018-en.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, *263 million children and youth are out of school from primary to upper secondary*. Available at [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/263\\_million\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_are\\_out\\_of\\_school\\_from\\_primar/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/263_million_children_and_youth_are_out_of_school_from_primar/).

<sup>6</sup> ECA, *Economic Report on Africa 2010. Promoting high-level sustainable growth to reduce unemployment in Africa* (Addis Ababa, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> ECA, *2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report*. Summary paper for presentation at the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Addis Ababa, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> International Labour Office, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018* (Geneva, 2018).

earn less than men, and women working in agriculture experience income gaps of up to 30 per cent compared with those in other sectors.<sup>9</sup> Africa therefore needs new and innovative policies and approaches to foster inclusive and decent job-creating growth. If adequate measures are not taken, Africa could miss the target set for the year 2020 – to substantially reduce the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training. Sustaining economic growth and decent jobs will require supportive sectoral policies.

9. **Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.** Tackling inequalities is central to economic growth and poverty eradication. In Africa, even with the major strides made in education and health and the sustained high economic growth enjoyed by African countries in recent years, income inequality still remains high. The United Nations Development Programme (2017) reports that amid the steady reduction in its unweighted Gini coefficient from 0.47 to 0.43 between 1991 and 2011, sub-Saharan Africa remained one of the most unequal regions in the world with 10 of its countries listed among 19 of the most unequal in the world.<sup>10</sup> The report also shows that a highly dualistic economic structure in which high income sectors, such as multinational companies and the extractive sector, offer limited capacity to generate employment and most of the workforce earns far lower incomes, has contributed largely to inequality. This has been occurring against the backdrop of major challenges to social inclusion. Among them are the limited opportunities for young people and women that are driven by many factors, such as the rapid increase in the youth population, violence and insecurity, forced displacement and protracted conflicts in some parts of the region.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in 2013, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (under \$1.90 per day) in Africa remained very high, at about 34.8 per cent. In Central Africa, that proportion was estimated to be 54 per cent, compared with 43.3 per cent in West Africa, 41 per cent in East Africa, 17.7 per cent in Southern Africa and only 2.7 per cent in North Africa. The poverty gap – a measure of how far incomes fall below the poverty line – was estimated at 13.5 per cent in 2013.<sup>12</sup> These examples illustrate the importance of making rapid and wide-scale progress in the implementation of Goal 10. This goal is intended, among others, to progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average; empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of status; and ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard. In line with the objectives of this goal, ECA and partners have developed the African Social Development Index. This index serves as a tool to help Governments to assess progress in the reduction of human exclusion and to promote more inclusive and equitable policies.<sup>13</sup> Other targets set in Goal 10 that are pertinent to Africa include: to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people; and to tackle disparities among countries.

10. **Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.** Climate change impacts are expanding, and Africa bears a disproportionate burden of these impacts. For example, 2017 was one of the three warmest years on record and was 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-

<sup>9</sup> 2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report. Summary paper for presentation.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences* (New York, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, *Social Inclusion in Africa*. Available at [www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/brief/social-inclusion-in-africa](http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/brief/social-inclusion-in-africa).

<sup>12</sup> 2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report. Summary paper for presentation.

<sup>13</sup> ECA, *Policy Brief: Is Africa moving towards a more inclusive development path?* Available at [www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/asdi\\_policy\\_brief\\_fin\\_20170502eng.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/asdi_policy_brief_fin_20170502eng.pdf).

industrial period.<sup>14</sup> Climate change-related disasters are growing in frequency and intensity with severe consequences on livelihoods and economic growth. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>15</sup> there has been a dramatic rise of 151 per cent in direct economic losses from climate-related disasters during the past 20 years. In their 2018 report, they stated that disaster-hit countries reported direct economic losses totalling approximately \$3 billion between 1998 and 2017. Climate-related disasters accounted for 77 per cent of the losses. Furthermore, disaster events have a disproportionate impact on low and middle-income countries, thus further fuelling disparities between countries. With higher levels of vulnerability and limited adaptive capacity, disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as the poor, women, children, young people and the elderly, suffer most from the impacts of climate change. Climate change constricts their means of living and income generation, consequently aggravating poverty and inequality. Climate change also has linkages with displacement and migration, and therefore also with peace and security. In its recently released report on global warming,<sup>16</sup> the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presents the serious impacts of global warming and the need for an unprecedented rise in the pace and scale of action to be taken for it to remain within the 1.5°C rise of global warming above pre-industrial levels. For example, “climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C, and countries in the tropics and Southern Hemisphere subtropics are projected to experience the largest impacts on economic growth due to climate change should global warming increase from 1.5°C to 2 °C”. Africa and the world should therefore heed the calls for action. The same report posits that increased adaptation and mitigation investments, policy instruments, and acceleration of technological innovation and behaviour changes will be needed to limit the risks from global warming of 1.5°C in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. This implies the need for stepped-up policy actions and investment to implement Goal 13. African countries will therefore need wide-scale integrated actions to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as for disaster risk reduction in the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. In addition, they will need to revise and ensure effective integration of nationally determined contributions, adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction interventions as integral priorities, into national and subnational development policies, plans and programmes. Given the interlinkages among them, there is also a need to ensure more synergy, integration and coordination in the formulation and implementation of the nationally determined contributions, national plans for adaptation, disaster risk reduction strategies and national frameworks for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

**11. 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.** This Sustainable Development Goal encapsulates key milestones of pathways to empower people, ensure inclusiveness and equality and to realize sustainable development in general. Experiences from advanced and emerging countries show that stable, predictable, transparent and accountable leaderships as well as sound and open governance structures (institutions and mechanisms) have enabled economic growth, infrastructure efficiency, business development,

<sup>14</sup> United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018* (New York, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Economic losses, poverty and disasters: 1998-2017* (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Global warming of 1.5 °C. Summary for Policymakers* (Geneva, 2018). Available at [http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf).

employment creation and equitable income distribution.<sup>17</sup> African countries therefore need to fulfil the commitments under Goal 16, including to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all; significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime; substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms; and develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. Moreover, countries need to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels; broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance; and promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

12. **Goal 17: Partnership for the goals.** Full and effective implementation of the goals is predicated on the realization of the means of implementation embodied in Goal 17. To mobilize the means of implementation, a number of trends and developments in the region are noteworthy. African countries have been strengthening their effort in domestic resource mobilization, including through public and private partnerships, and are making significant strides to harness science, technology and innovation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. Furthermore, there is continued focus on combating illicit financial flows from Africa. The region has stepped up actions to tackle corruption. One of the recent major developments in the region is the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which has a huge potential to spur inclusive growth and generate revenue for development. The Regional Forum will provide an opportunity to critically examine these trends to identify strategies and measures to scale up financing, human and institutional capacity development, and innovation and diffusion of science and technology to increase the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. In addition, the Regional Forum will address the persistent challenge to produce, disseminate and use accurate and timely data and statistics to facilitate evidence-based policymaking, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

13. **Integrated implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals.** Implementing the goals selected for 2019, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, will require investments and actions to realize not only the selected goals, but many other Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. This implies adopting measures and scaling up investments to implement the other goals. In addition, it clearly demonstrates the importance of coherent and integrated policies and actions in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. This is particularly important given that the year 2019 concludes the first round of reviews of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Fortunately, the actions that need be taken have already surfaced from previous reviews of other goals. Such actions, some of which are highlighted below, deserve attention to achieve meaningful inclusiveness and equality.

14. In 2017, Governments and other stakeholders at the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development asserted that growth that overlooks or worsens gender inequality cannot be inclusive or sustainable. As such, appropriate measures and stronger action must be taken in tandem to reflect the issues relating to gender and to women, including those relevant to girls and young women, in the national integrated plans and budgets that countries are developing to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In addition, special attention should be given to the economic empowerment of

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<sup>17</sup> ECA, *Governance for Sustained Development and Conflict Management Inputs to Sahel Study*. Note by the ECA Governance and Public-Sector Management Section of the Macro-economic Policy Division (Addis Ababa, 2018).

women by harnessing their entrepreneurial talent and opportunities and guaranteeing full enjoyment of productive employment and decent work for all women, especially those in vulnerable situations.

15. To be consistent with the current theme and to implement the selected Sustainable Development Goals for 2019, action will be required to eradicate poverty, end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition; achieve sustainable agriculture; and increase the productivity, incomes and resilience of small-scale and other producers. To this end, targeted investments in infrastructure, food systems that are capable of delivering safe, sustainable and nutritious food to urban markets, and in expanding economic opportunity for rural and peri-urban populations along the supply chain, are needed. In addition, ending hunger and achieving food security is also vital for good health and well-being, which are the cornerstones for a productive labour force. Public financing will therefore be needed to build universal and equitable health services coverage.

16. Investment to build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization is central to the efforts of African countries to stimulate and increase shared and job-creating growth. Such investments will bridge the infrastructure gap, including the development of modern, clean and low-carbon energy to harness the transformative and job-creating potential of industrialization. More than 75 per cent of the African population is without electricity and 81 per cent depend on solid traditional biomass fuels for cooking. Only about 25 per cent of the population in Africa (other than in North Africa) has access to electricity, compared with approximately 50 per cent in South Asia and more than 80 per cent in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa.

17. In the previous Regional Forum, stakeholders agreed that achieving long-term sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Africa would depend on the sustainable and optimal management of its natural capital. They called for a significant scaling up of funding, capacity development and technology support linked to achieving on-the-ground outcomes, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, land degradation neutrality targets, and national plans and programmes for sustainable forest management.

18. In sum, it is evident from the above that the selected Goals deal with core prerequisites for Africa to launch into a trajectory of a people-centred and inclusive employment-generating growth that is climate resilient. It also emerges that focusing interventions on the selected goals alone is not enough, but rather it is essential to realize progress in other goals if the desired outcomes consistent with the theme are to be achieved.

19. Accordingly, the Regional Forum is designed to reflect not only on progress and share and advocate specific approaches, policies and programmes to implement the selected Sustainable Development Goals, but also other goals. Furthermore, it will pay attention to common and transboundary challenges, opportunities and approaches to effectively implement the goals. To catalyse rich and productive dialogue, the Regional Forum will be informed by analytical reports on the theme and sub-themes. These reports will provide concise analyses on the progress of implementation of the selected Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063; linkages with other Sustainable Development Goals; challenges and opportunities, including provision of the means of implementation; and good practices, promising approaches and policy measures to scale up the implementation of the goals.

### **III. Objective and sub-themes of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

20. The fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be convened jointly by ECA and Morocco in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other entities of the United Nations system.

#### **A. Objective**

21. The overall objective of the 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is to conduct a regional follow-up and review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals and facilitate learning, including sharing approaches, experiences and lessons learned to advance their implementation.

22. With a particular focus on the selected Sustainable Development Goals for the 2019 High-level Political Forum and the corresponding goals of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, the specific objectives of the Regional Forum are to:

(a) Carry out a regional follow-up to, and review of, the implementation of the goals, identify and tackle the gaps, lagging areas, challenges and opportunities associated with their implementation;

(b) Provide a platform for peer learning and sharing experiences, approaches, good practices and lessons learned to accelerate the implementation of the two agendas;

(c) Deliberate and agree on the priorities and recommendations of Africa in the form of key messages as the region's collective input to the 2019 High-level Political Forum.

#### **B. Sub-themes**

23. The activities of the Regional Forum, which have been crafted around the Sustainable Development Goals and Goal 17, will be conducted on the following sub-themes:

(a) Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education;

(b) Promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth;

(c) Ensuring reduced inequalities;

(d) Scaling up climate action;

(e) Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions;

(f) Revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

24. A concise analytical report will inform deliberations on each of the sub-themes. Such analysis will encompass the corresponding goals of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. Among the critical issues to be covered under each sub-theme are the major trends and progress in the implementation of the goals, including early results and promising approaches and practices that could be scaled up and out scaled to achieve set targets; gaps; emerging issues, challenges and opportunities to enhance implementation; delivering on the means of implementation; and the role and status of data and statistics for evidence-based planning, implementation and reporting. The analytical report and deliberations on each sub-theme will highlight key recommendations and measures to accelerate the implementation of the goals.

## IV. Format of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

25. The Regional Forum will comprise the following pre-Regional Forum meetings and main sessions:

### A. Pre-Regional Forum meetings and events

26. The Regional Forum will be preceded by meetings to bring diverse stakeholder perspectives and exchange cutting edge ideas, tools, experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, as well as provide inputs to the Leaders' Summit in September 2019. In addition, similar meetings will be organized in the margins of the Regional Forum. The outcomes of these meetings will be fed into the deliberations during the Regional Forum. It is therefore expected that pre-forum meetings and events in the following areas will be held:

(a) *Strengthening the capacity of multi-stakeholders, including civil society, academia and private sectors' engagement in the follow-up and review of the two agendas*: A workshop will be held to strengthen knowledge and engagement of major groups and other stakeholders in the follow-up and review process of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063; and promote mutual learning through exchange of experiences, lessons learned and promising approaches and practices in the implementation and tracking of the Goals focusing on the selected Sustainable Development Goals for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In addition, the workshop will provide a platform for dialogue and building consensus among major groups and other stakeholders on their perspectives to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(b) *Strengthening voluntary national reviews (VNRs)*: ECA and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will convene a regional workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of the African countries participating in VNRs in 2019, to undertake integrated reviews and reporting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The workshop will facilitate peer learning and sharing of experiences, including on implementation progress, main challenges and lessons emerging from the VNR processes; promote the integrated implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and enhance understanding of policies and institutions to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) *Science, technology and innovation*: The first Africa Regional Forum on Science Technology will be held. This forum is mandated by the ECA Conference of Ministers on the recommendation of the fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The forum is intended to identify Africa's priorities and ensure that science, technology and innovation plays its rightful role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(d) Expert workshops and other thematic meetings aligned with the theme and sub-themes of the Regional Forum.

### B. Main session of the Regional Forum

27. The meeting will comprise the following main sessions:

(a) *Opening of the Regional Forum*: A representative of Senegal, the Chair of the 2018 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, will

deliver short remarks and preside over the opening of the event. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa will deliver the welcome statement on behalf of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, followed by statements from high-level representatives of the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission. An official representative of the host country will officially open the 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) *High-level panel on the theme of the Regional Forum:* This session will feature interactive discussions by a high-level panel comprised of ministers and other senior dignitaries. Among the panellists will be ministers of the 2019 and past High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development voluntary national review countries. The representation will take into account sectors relating to the focus goals for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the sub-themes of the meeting. While setting the scene for subsequent deliberations by the Regional Forum, this segment of the meeting is also intended to generate and catalyse debate on transformative accelerators of overall implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) *Overview of the progress report on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063:* This session will include a presentation of the summary of the 2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report prepared by ECA and partners. With emphasis on the 2019 High-level Political Forum, Sustainable Development Goals and related Agenda 2063 goals, the presentation will include a snapshot of progress in the implementation of the two agendas, existing and emerging challenges and policy recommendations to increase the pace, scale and quality of the outcomes. During this session, highlights will be provided on the support extended by ECA and the African Union Commission to the implementation of the two agendas;

(d) *Round-table panel for peer learning and experience sharing:* The panel will comprise selected senior policymakers and experts from the 2019 and past High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development voluntary national review countries, alongside countries that are front-runners in implementing Agenda 2063, major groups and representatives of the donor community. The round table will highlight approaches and tools, good practices, experiences, lessons learned, gaps, recommendations for an effective voluntary national review and overall implementation of the two agendas. Outcomes of the various pre-forum meetings will be highlighted during the panel sessions;

(e) *Parallel peer-learning and dialogue sessions on the sub-themes of the Regional Forum:* Under this session, there will be six parallel peer-learning and dialogue sessions based on the sub-themes of the Regional Forum. Panel members shall include representatives of ECA and other organizations of the United Nations system, the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, countries and major groups according to their areas of interest and comparative advantage. These sessions will provide a platform for an in-depth review of progress on the implementation of Goals of each sub-theme and sharing of approaches, good practices and gaps in implementation. Each session will also agree on key messages on the respective sub-themes to be presented to the plenary;

(f) *Report back to plenary from the breakout groups:* The parallel peer-learning and dialogue sessions will report back to the plenary. The presentations will highlight the key messages from the respective panel sessions;

(g) *Consideration and adoption of key messages:* During this session, the Regional Forum will consider, refine and adopt the key messages to be submitted to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as the regional inputs of Africa.

## V. Expected outputs

28. The meeting will generate the following outputs, which will be disseminated widely:

- (a) Policy papers on the sub-themes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;
- (b) The agreed collective inputs of Africa to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, including policy options in the form of key messages on the theme and sub-themes of the 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;
- (c) Africa's contribution to the Leader's Summit;
- (d) A report on the deliberations of the participants, including on salient issues and priorities and recommendations pertaining to the theme of the 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

## VI. Expected outcomes

29. The 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is expected to:

- (a) Contribute to strengthen the capacity of the 2019 voluntary national review countries to undertake their reviews and present the review reports at the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- (b) Increased knowledge and capacity of member States, major groups and other stakeholders in designing and implementing policies and strategies to accelerate the pace of implementation and ensure effective follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (c) A clear articulation of, and an agreement on the collective inputs of Africa in the form of key messages to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The key messages will include regional priorities, policy options and recommendations pertaining to the theme and sub-themes of the Regional Forum.

## VII. Documentation

30. The documents for the meeting include:

### *Pre-session documentation:*

- (a) This concept note;
- (b) Africa regional report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (c) Report on ECA and African Union support to the implementation, follow-up and review of the two agendas;
- (d) Concise analytical reports covering the sub-themes of the meeting;
- (e) Reports and outcome documents of relevant past meetings and events.

### *In-session documentation:*

- (a) Summary and key messages of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

*Post-session documentation:*

(a) Agreed key messages of the 2019 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) Final report on the meeting deliberations, including on salient issues, priorities and recommendations pertaining to the theme of the 2019 Regional Forum.

## **VIII. Participants**

31. The meeting will be attended by representatives of:

(a) All 54 member States of ECA (high-level policymakers and experts from ministries and agencies in charge of economic planning, finance, environment and social affairs, mining and mineral resources, science and technology and statistics);

(b) Major groups and other stakeholders, including civil society, business and industry organizations, academia and research institutions;

(c) The African Union Commission;

(d) The African Development Bank;

(e) The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency;

(f) Regional economic communities;

(g) Agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and other international agencies and organizations;

(h) Development partners.

## **IX. Working languages**

32. The meeting will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous interpretation in both languages.

## **X. Dates and venue**

33. The fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019.

## **XI. Contacts**

34. Enquiries on the organization of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development should be directed to:

Mr. Oliver Chinganya

Officer-in-Charge

Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division  
(TCND)

Economic Commission for Africa

Email: [chinganya@un.org](mailto:chinganya@un.org)

## Annex I

### Alignment of the 2019 selected Sustainable Development Goals with Agenda 2063 goals<sup>18</sup>

| 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals                                                                                                | Agenda 2063 goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</b></p>                         | <p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all</p> <p>2. Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation</p> <p>16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent</p> <p>17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p> <p>18. Engaged and empowered youth and children</p>                                  |
|  <p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b></p>           | <p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all</p> <p>2. Transformed economies and job creation</p> <p>12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</p> <p>16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent</p> <p>17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p> <p>18. Engaged and empowered young people and children</p> |
|  <p><b>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b></p>                    | <p>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all</p> <p>8. United Africa (federal or confederate)</p> <p>16. African cultural renaissance is pre-eminent</p> <p>20. Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development</p>                                                                                                                           |
|  <p><b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b></p>                         | <p>5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production</p> <p>7. Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities</p> <p>12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</p>                                                                                                                                              |
|  <p><b>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</b></p> | <p>11. Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched</p> <p>12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</p> <p>13. Peace, security and stability are preserved</p> <p>17. Full gender equality in all spheres of life</p> <p>18. Engaged and empowered young people and children</p>        |

<sup>18</sup> Adapted from: Economic Commission for Africa; United Nations Development Programme; African Development Bank and African Union, *2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report: Tracking Progress on Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Addis Ababa, 2017).

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div data-bbox="288 203 483 264"> <p><b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS<br/>FOR THE GOALS</p> </div> <div data-bbox="330 286 456 412">  </div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all</li> <li>4. Transformed economies and job creation</li> <li>10. World class infrastructure criss-crosses Africa</li> <li>12. Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels</li> <li>19. Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence</li> <li>20. Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development</li> </ul> |
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