



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

**Pre-event for Major Groups and other
Stakeholders during the 2016 Africa Regional
Forum on Sustainable Development**

Statement

by

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**Ms. Federica Pietracci, Senior Economic Affairs
Officer, representing the Division for
Sustainable Development of the UN
Department of Economic and Social Affairs;**

**Distinguished Representatives of Major Groups and
Other Stakeholders; Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of Mr. Carlos Lopes, the UN Under-Secretary-General, and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), it is both an honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to this pre-event for Major Groups and other Stakeholders in the Africa region. This workshop is intended to serve as a dress rehearsal for the 2016 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and the outcome will feed into the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable

Development (HLPF) that will be held in New York from 11 to 20 July 2016, under the theme "***Ensuring that no one is left behind***". We will be debating matters related to integration, implementation and follow up of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and Agenda 2063.

As you will recall, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was instituted in 2015 and it is mandated to review progress towards sustainable development in our region and articulate Africa's collective input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Ministers of Planning and Finance reinforced this mandate of the Forum during their ninth joint meeting hosted last month by the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa.

Also, in January this year, countries all over the world embarked on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is an Agenda adopted by our Heads of State and Government and other high-level representatives in September 2015 as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals.

The Agenda is transformative and sets in motion action for people, the planet, and prosperity, which are the triple wins for sustainable development. An ingrained priority of this Agenda is also to cultivate peaceful, more equal and inclusive societies to underpin sustainable development.

We are grateful for the support and collaborative effort of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the co-organizer of our workshop, for the ongoing technical

and financial assistance provided to reinforce the capability of Africa's Major Groups and other Stakeholders in achieving sustainable development.

I would also like to thank you for representing various categories of Major Groups and other stakeholders from Africa, thank you for coming.

Thank you also for your active interest in these matters and for your steadfastness in pushing forward these agendas from your respective fronts.

This year's Forum is hoping to address matters related to integration, implementation, monitoring and review of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. I would like to offer two reasons why the theme of this year's Forum is important.

First, it underlines the importance of both agendas to the structural transformation and overall sustainable development in the region, and affords Africa the opportunity to continue to critically reflect on, articulate and adopt effective approaches for the integrated implementation of the two agendas.

Second, our theme serves to send a strong message both region-wide and to the international community and to mobilize their support to implement and follow-up the two Agendas in an integrated manner.

At the heart of the discussions, remains the issue of poverty and the need to ensure that no one is left behind. We are profoundly aware of the fact that this issue of taking everyone through the trajectory of growth

and development is something that cannot be done without the major groups acting as caretakers of an inclusive development.

We are also not able to align agenda 2030 and 2063 based on pure abstract and logic. The blueprint for how these come together can be properly done at national level and it is national processes that will constitute anchor points for action with major groups acting as support mechanisms and providing the relevant checks and balances to the process.

How do we give weight to the 4 "Is" that will enable the process of implementation

I for inclusion which will allow for a process that does not leave one third of the population on the outside looking

in, and how can we work towards positioning ourselves within a world economy that is not only growth-driven but one that links growth to inclusion and shared prosperity.

I for integration – Integration is the formula towards increasing the proximity, complementarity and convergence of the two agendas. The litmus test towards implementation is through the understanding of how the two agendas are related as development and constitutional frameworks rather than seeing them as dissimilar and disconnected. Integration is important because it is about enabling a strategy that will lead to a planning process that is coherent, effective and enabling, irrespective of the prevailing national contexts and conditions to drive implementation.

I for investments – Investing in the process and the means of implementation. The focus of this meeting is not about the logic of making more explicit the historical and geographical specificities of Africa as embodied in agenda 2063; it is not just about the need to domesticate both agendas in our planning process and the preconditions that will create a fast lane for countries that are ready – this is essentially about investing in a route map that will support planning, integration and follow up process. It is about a new set of investments that will enable all the means of implementation to come together, finance, capacity development, and technology.

I for institutions – the convergence, implementation and follow up of the two agendas is rooted in effective public sector co-ordination but, equally, opening up the space that will increase private sector participation and a

process of transformation that will make institutions fit for purpose, resilient, supportive and enablers of the process of structural transformation. The process of convergence and implementation is one in which our institutions do not simply observe the process – they shape, influence, design and accelerate the pace, rate and quality of change.

Ladies and gentlemen.

African countries are fully committed to implementing this Agenda, the design of which was significantly shaped by the Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda crafted by African Heads of State and Government themselves.

In the case of Africa, unlike other regions of the world, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda starts only one year into the adoption by African countries of our regional agenda, Agenda 2063. Although the two Agendas may diverge in some areas, they also converge on many fronts and are mutually reinforcing. Effective implementation of both Agendas presents Africa with the best option to achieve sustainable development.

The question is therefore not whether, but rather how best Africa can integrate and implement the two agendas together.

As we deliberate on the issues that will shape Africa's participation, you as major groups and other stakeholders have crucial roles to play.

First, your active engagement in the design of both Agendas and now in the dialogue will make room for implementation and follow-up of the two Agendas in an integrated fashion, but can also serve as a bridge to build a critical pool of stakeholders ready for on-the-ground action.

Second, you constitute critical conduits and leverage points to deepen and widen the reach of the message on the need to support integrated approaches in the implementation and follow-up of the two agendas.

Third, you have an important role in ensuring accountability at all levels on the ideals of integrated implementation and follow-up of these to mutually important agendas. You represent the moral conscience of the process and have the potential role of playing

important checks and balances to ensuring that 'leaving no one behind' is not just a mantra but a principle that triggers our collective action and enlightened self interest.

Ladies and gentlemen, The Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission has just concluded discussions on convergence and implementation of the two agendas culminating in a set of resolutions that speak to the imperative for an inclusive growth and transformation plan, the essence of a well thought through, coherent and co-ordinated framework and the relevance for anchoring a development blueprint that will result in a robust and qualitative metric system.

We are all here as agents of the “how” pitch – we want to better understand how we can join the dots and how we may reduce the gaps, and the possible tension points that help or hinder the transformation of our development trajectories, but we, especially, want to see how the major groups could act as frontrunners of the integration process and test the readiness of countries in terms of a route map on how we achieve greater convergence. We are confident that major groups will, through the course of these deliberations, set the scene for a people-centred transformation – one that will trigger a long term strategy and major overhaul in terms of coalition thinking that will bring into focus an inclusive and transformative development.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your kind attention.

