



## Economic and Social Council

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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Preparatory and capacity development workshop for  
major groups and other stakeholders in the Africa region  
for the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum  
on Sustainable Development**

Marrakech, Morocco, 16 April 2019

### Concept note

#### I. Introduction and rationale

1. Major groups and other stakeholders<sup>1</sup> play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development. It is well known, for instance, that they contribute significantly to efforts aimed at enhancing inclusion by representing the voiceless, marginalized and vulnerable populations; engaging in capacity-building activities; and strengthening participation in and ownership of development processes by diverse communities, in particular at the national, subnational and local levels. Clearly, major groups bring to bear key aspects essential to enhancing the reach, effectiveness and durability of development initiatives and outcomes.

2. In its resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the General Assembly recognized the need for major groups and other relevant stakeholders to be involved in the implementation of the Agenda, including the follow-up and review processes. In that regard, Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors were called upon in the context of an enhanced Global Partnership to deliver on the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals and targets, which are at the core of the Agenda. Moreover, in the Agenda, a high-level political forum, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, was stipulated to carry out regular reviews in line with General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2012, and that the reviews should provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. In addition, major groups and other relevant stakeholders were called upon to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. Also of note, citizens of African countries, civil society organizations and all other identifiable groups are being engaged with respect to the design,

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<sup>1</sup> References to major groups and other stakeholders is aligned with General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In the resolution, the General Assembly, as indicated in paragraph 16, referred to nine categories of major groups as those identified in Agenda 21 (business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous peoples, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the scientific and technological communities, women, workers and trade unions) and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development. Diversity and plurality are prevalent within societies and several forms of organization for citizens’ participation exist, which should be promoted at different levels of engagement. More information on major groups and other stakeholders is available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/aboutmajorgroups.html>.

implementation, monitoring and evaluation under Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which is being implemented coherently with the 2030 Agenda.

3. Accordingly, the effective implementation of the two agendas requires various actors to work together and strengthen their collaborative and integrated approaches with major groups and other stakeholders. For the contributions of major groups and stakeholders to be full and effective towards the successful implementation of the agendas, capacity development is required to enhance their knowledge on the processes and procedures for engagement. These groups need access to information to better understand their roles and platforms to engage more effectively with each other, Governments and other development actors. In that regard, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, has been organizing workshops since 2015 to strengthen the capacity of these groups to participate and articulate inputs to the follow-up and review of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at regional and global levels.

4. Through the capacity development workshops, African major groups and other stakeholder have been actively engaged in the work of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which is one of the mechanisms providing inputs to the follow-up and review at the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

5. In a consolidated statement presented at the fourth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Dakar from 2 to 4 May 2018, African major groups and other stakeholders highlighted their important roles in ensuring effective, inclusive and integrated implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In that statement, they pointed out their meaningful participation in decision-making processes and the provision of accurate, evidence-based, disaggregated, qualitative and quantitative data, which are required for monitoring progress and identifying gaps with a stronger focus on domestic financing sources. The recommendations made by the major groups and other stakeholder to the Forum were the following:

(a) Governments should invest, as a priority, in the formulation, generation and analysis of sex- and gender-disaggregated data and commit to collecting and reporting on efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into the voluntary national reviews;

(b) Countries providing funds and technical support to enhance the capacity for the collection of statistical data for countries in Africa should ensure that this support builds capacity for better statistical data in the collection of sex-disaggregated data;

(c) Subscribe to the future database of best practice guidance and case studies, covering issues such as policy and legislation, education and awareness, and capacity-building, as well as programmes related to the Sustainable Development Goals, across a diversity of contexts with a focus on gender mainstreaming;

(d) Support and comprehensive protection should be given to defenders of gender equality, human rights and the environmental, at all levels, to enable them to do their work free from violence, fear of imprisonment, or other human rights abuses;

(e) Global partnerships to curb illicit financial flows should showcase their positive impacts on vulnerable groups, such as women, people with disabilities, older persons, young people and indigenous peoples;

(f) Pan-African institutions should work to develop more effective coordination, collaboration and partnerships among African major groups.

6. Against this backdrop, ECA, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, is organizing a preparatory

and capacity development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa to help countries in Africa prepare for the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2019. The workshop is scheduled to take place during the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, which will be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019, on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

## II. Objectives of the workshop

7. The workshop, which will be held on 16 April 2019 on the eve of the main sessions of the Regional Forum, is intended to achieve the following objectives:

(a) Brief major groups and other stakeholders on the follow-up and review process related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the light of the selected Sustainable Development Goals approach from 2017 to 2019;

(b) Promote mutual learning through exchange of experiences, lessons learned and promising approaches and practices in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and tracking of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, with a special emphasis on the selected Goals that are particularly relevant to the 2019 high-level political forum;

(c) Promote dialogue and consensus among the major groups and other stakeholders on their perspectives to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

## III. Format of the workshop

8. The workshop will comprise an opening session to be run by ECA and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and a plenary session during which presentations will be given and discussed. The presentations will focus on the follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, with a special emphasis on the selected Goals that are particularly relevant to the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development. An interactive panel session will follow to give representatives of major groups and other stakeholders the opportunity to share and discuss experiences, lessons learned and promising approaches and practices in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and tracking progress towards achieving the Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The participants will then be divided into breakout groups to articulate their perspectives on advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa. In the concluding plenary, the groups will be requested to consolidate and reach consensus on a joint statement to be delivered during the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development; and to identify opportunities for more effective involvement in the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

## IV. Expected outcome

9. The workshop is expected to lead to the following outcomes:

(a) Increased understanding and capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to design and implement approaches and practices to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and follow-up on and review progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

(b) Articulation of and consensus on the perspectives of major groups and other stakeholders to enhance implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and follow-up on and review progress in achieving the Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

(c) Strengthened capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to actively and effectively engage in follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(d) Enhanced cooperation among major groups and other stakeholders and between them and other stakeholders, including national, subregional and regional policymakers, practitioners and experts, and the United Nations entities.

## V. Expected outputs

10. The workshop will generate the following outputs, which will be disseminated widely:

(a) A joint statement of the major groups and other stakeholders to be delivered during the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) A communique by the major groups and other stakeholders on the workshop and the fifth session of the Regional Forum;

(c) Summary report of the workshop.

## VI. Key documents

11. The documents for the workshop include the following:

(a) The present concept note;

(b) Concept note, agenda and programme of work for the fifth session of the Forum;

(c) Regional report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(d) Background papers on the sub-themes of the fifth session of the Forum:

(i) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Sustainable Development Goal 4);

(ii) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8);

(iii) Reduce inequality within and among countries (Goal 10);

(iv) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (Goal 13);

(v) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16);

(vi) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (Goal 17).

## **VII. Participation**

12. The workshop will be attended by representatives of the nine categories of major groups and the following stakeholder groups: educational and academic entities; persons with disabilities; volunteer groups; and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development.

## **VIII. Working languages**

13. The meeting will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous interpretation in the two languages.

## **IX. Venue and date**

14. The workshop will be held on 16 April 2019 in Marrakech, Morocco.

## **X. Contact**

Enquiries on the organization of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development should be directed to:

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