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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**  
Fourth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Marrakech, Morocco  
April 16-18, 2019

**Fifth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

**FINAL REPORT**

## I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), together with The Kingdom of Morocco and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, convened the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Marrakech from 16 to 18 April 2019, in preparation for the 2019 high-level political forum ( HLPF) on sustainable development, to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2019.

2. The Regional Forum is an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platform to review progress, share experiences and lessons learned and build a consensus on recommendations in the form of key messages to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals contained in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. These messages serve as Africa's collective regional input to the annual high-level political forum.

3. The forum was preceded by a number of pre-events including (i) Major groups and other stakeholder's capacity building and preparatory meeting for the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development; and (ii) workshop on strengthening Integrated and Voluntary national review and Reporting of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and (iii) Science and technology forum.

4. The overall objective of the 2019 ARFSD was to undertake regional follow-up and review and facilitate learning including sharing experiences and lessons learned to advance implementation of the 2030 agenda and Agenda 2063 with a particular focus on the selected SDGs for the 2019 HLPF and the corresponding goals of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, the specific objectives of the Forum were to carry out regional follow-up and review, deliberate on progress and address challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the two agendas; provide a platform for peer learning and to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned to accelerate implementation of the two agendas; and deliberate on and agree on Africa's priorities and recommendation in form of key messages as the region's collective input to the 2018 HLPF session.

5. The fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum was held under the theme of the 2018 HLPF, namely: "*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.*" The Forum will carry out an in-depth review of selected<sup>1</sup> SDGs for 2018 HLPF along with SDG 17 and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063, under the following subthemes: (i) Quality education; (ii) Decent Work and Economic Growth; (iii) Reduce inequalities; (iv) Climate Action; (v) Peace Justice and Strong Institutions; and (vi) Strengthening the means of implementation and the partnership for sustainable development.

6. The selected Goals call attention to critical areas where Africa has witnessed persistent challenges that have held back development in the region. Thus, progress towards achieving these goals would

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<sup>1</sup> The 2018 selected SDGs are 4, 8,10,13,16. The Forum reviews SDG 17 every year.

underpin and drive success of Africa in realizing a sustainable economic structural transformation and sustainable development

7. The present report sets out the proceedings of the Africa Regional Forum.

## **II. Attendance:**

8. The 5<sup>th</sup> Session of Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development ( ARFSD) was attended by 827 representatives of 45 member States, namely: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Congo, The Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, France, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rep. Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, United Republic Of, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

9. Observers from the following Member States of the United Nations were present: France, Italy, Sweden and USA

10. Observers from the following funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system were present: the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), , the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa ( OSAA), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs ( DESA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

11. The complete list of participants is attached and can also be accessed from [www.uneca.org/arfsd2019](http://www.uneca.org/arfsd2019)

## **III. Opening of the session (agenda item 1)**

### **Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the fourth session of the Regional Forum, Representative of Senegal**

12. The opening session was moderated by Oliver Chiganya, Director of Africa Center of Statistics and OIC of Technology, Climate change and natural resources Division of ECA.

13. The outgoing Bureau Chair, **Mr. Amadou Lamine Guisse**, expressed his appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco for the warm welcome, exceptional organization, and hosting of the event. He also thanked the ECA, for the on-going support of African countries in the implementation of the of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He also thanked the AfDB and the UN system as a whole for its support. He noted that last year's event which was held in Dakar, Senegal in May 2018 provided the opportunity for a very active regional participation during the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the United Nations in 2018. He indicated that exceptional mobilization of African countries has enabled to deliver key messages and conclusions of ARFSD 4. He recalled that some of the messages included: (i) the strengthening of means of implementation and of partnerships for sustainable development; (ii)the

improvement of statistics and their disaggregation; (iii) the efficiency of planning and executing projects and programs in Africa; (iv) the strengthening of partnership with the support of the private sector, in the area of science, technological innovation; (v) the Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) and their negative consequences. He indicated that the main conclusions of the 2018 report on sustainable development highlighted the significant challenges related to the implementation of the goals. He underscored the importance of accelerating the rhythm in implementation of the goals and stressed the necessity of a global and holistic approach. He further indicated that the SDGs are being implemented in synergy with Agenda 2063 around the continent. He concluded by affirming that the Forum was a powerful mechanism to identify the strengths and weaknesses for the coordination and the formulation of recommendations aimed at improving global implementation and the monitoring of the objectives.

14. The moderator called upon The Representative of the UN Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. **Vera Songwe**. On behalf of Mrs. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mrs. **Giovanni Biha**, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, welcomed participants and highlighted the unique opportunities that the forum provides as a peer learning exercise offering concrete steps for the implementation of the SDGs. She acknowledged the early involvement of the Kingdom of Morocco since last year's session and thanked the national authorities for hosting this event. In addition, she thanked the Major Groups, partner regional organizations, the United Nations system partners and other partners who have consistently supported the Forum. She stressed that achieving this objective requires our collective efforts as member States, UN entities, regional organizations, development partners, civil society and the private sector.

15. Ms. Biha reminded that we are barely 11 years away from 2030 and at already the fourth forum since the approval of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (*leave no one behind*) and six years from the launch in 2013 of the African Union's Agenda 2063 (*the Africa we want*); therefore, she invited participants to pause to reflect on where we are coming from, where we are heading to, and how we could get there faster and more effectively. She regretted that progress in the implementation of the SDGs in many African countries is still slow and warned that at the prevailing level of ambition and pace and scale of implementation of the SDGs, Africa will not attain the goals by 2030; apart from a few countries in North Africa, all African countries are off-track on reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty, and that in a number of countries, the number of people living in such dire conditions will actually increase.

16. She informed that the average economic growth levels for African countries of 3.2 per cent in 2018, is below what is needed to achieve the SDGs on the continent. To get on track to meet the SDGs, the per capita GDP growth rate of 0.6% needs to more than triple. She warned that we are running out of time and need urgent action and innovations to take people out of poverty in Africa.

17. In terms of the sub-themes the Forum is reviewing this year, she outlined that there are equally alarming concerns. Nonetheless, Mrs. Biha noted that the continent has seen progress in a number of areas and the positive impacts of the HLPF processes" in education, primary school completion rates have improved in a number of countries, and gender parity in primary to lower secondary schools has increased in recent years; On scaling up climate action, all African countries have signed the Paris Agreement and, as of March 2019, 48 of them have already ratified the agreement with ambitious nationally determined contributions to climate action; On peace, justice and strong institutions, we see that overall, governance in Africa is improving, with progress being made with rule of law, broader participation in the democratic space, human rights, and transparency and accountability. Furthermore, she stated that since 2016 the number of voluntary

national reviews (VNRs) globally and in Africa have been increasing every year – rising from 22 in 2016 to 50 in 2019. In 2016, 6 of the 22 VNR countries were from Africa.

18. Mrs. Biha welcomed the fact that it demonstrates growing confidence that countries are having with driving the development agenda but she regretted that we still have 18 countries that have not yet participated in process.

19. Regarding the impacts of the HLPF process, she noted good progress globally in the number of countries aligning their SDGs with national policies and development plans, but in Africa she informed that we still have a challenge in this area, particularly with limited alignment of national development plans with the SDGs and the goals of Agenda 2063! The goals of the two agendas need to be fully integrated by countries into their policies and plans, national budgets, approaches to investment and private sector engagement and development.

20. She highlighted that ECA is leading the development of an integrated planning and reporting toolkit that will align the two Agendas and facilitate their integration into national development plans. She informed participants that the ECA is looking forward to supporting member States with this tool, particularly in the VNR process.

21. Mrs Biha invited participants to ensure that Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development serves as a catalyst for specific action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. She hopes that it will also serve as a mechanism for peer learning on experiences with implementation of the two agendas, and to develop strategies, informed by empirical and analytical policy research, for solutions and actionable roadmap to support countries with implementation of their development agenda, particularly those countries intending to conduct VNRs. This way, she concluded, we can ensure that the whole process results in accelerated progress year-on-year towards attainment of the development agenda of Africa.

22. After her intervention, the moderator called upon the Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**.

23. The Director of Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization, the African Union Commission, **Mr. Mesfin Tessema**, welcomed participants on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat. He expressed his appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco for having dedicated resources to attend the Forum, which is indicative of their commitment for the development of the continent and the realization of the “Africa we want” as elaborated in the Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. He also thanked the Government and people of Morocco for their warm welcome and hospitality. He underscored that the Year 2019 marked the mid-term in the implementation of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) of Agenda 2063 and that it was the first time that HLPF will meet under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. He further noted that the AU theme for 2019 was “Refugees, Returnees and internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa”, and stressed the importance of leaving no one behind.

24. He further expressed his desire that the joint mechanisms of AU and UN collaboration are inbuilt in the existing systems of leveraging each other comparative advantages and expertise. He added that the AFRSD would be instrumental in cementing and concretizing the joint implementation, monitoring, reviews, reporting and resource mobilization processes for both Agendas.

25. He concluded by calling upon everyone, and especially member States to work towards the implementation of the two agendas.

26. The moderator called upon the **Secretary of State in charge of Sustainable Development**. In her remarks, **Ms, Nezha El Ouafi**, the Secretary of State for Sustainable Development of

Morocco said that the forum featured the participation of several African Ministers and Senior Officials in charge of environment and sustainable development. It also brought together policymakers and experts from governments and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society. She underlined that the 5th Session of the Regional Forum, was timely given the need to act quickly to combat the consequences of global warming by limiting the rise of temperature to not more than 1.5 ° C in line with the latest IPCC report.

27. She noted that the current session of the regional forum is a key step in preparing the African continent for the 2019 High-level Political Forum, which will be held in New York from 9 to 18 July, under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council, and will constitute an opportunity for participants to discuss at regional level the Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding objectives of Agenda 2063 (Quality of Education, Reducing Inequalities, Decent Work and Inclusive Economic Growth; climate action, peace, justice and institution building and means of implementation and partnership for sustainable development).

28. She pointed out that Africa being the most vulnerable continent to the impacts of climate change, suffered the direct economic, social and environmental consequences, thus amplifying the migratory phenomena and political instability at the regional level. The purpose of this forum is to discuss sustainable and low-carbon development options in Africa and to preserve its resources in a sustainable and responsible manner in accordance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She noted that by organizing the Forum, Morocco, a land of hospitality and fraternity, demonstrated once again and in accordance with the Directions of His Majesty the King that God was assisting him, in the commitment and determination to pursue a path towards sustainable development and inclusiveness in Africa. As such it was important for the forum to be a decisive event to ensure a resilient continent, with all its human capital, cultural diversity and unique ancestral know-how committed to sustainability.

29. The moderator then, called upon **H.E. S. El Othmani, Prime Minister and Head of the Government of Morocco**. In his Address, the Head of Government of Morocco pointed out that 2030 was not far and as such it was imperative to accelerate the pace of implementation of the SDGs in African. In that regard, he challenged the Forum to critically examine and diagnose challenges and provided practical and concrete recommendations to tackle the challenges so as to attain the SDGs in a timely manner. Failure to achieve the SDGs, he cautioned, would have serious observable impacts in mid to long term. He invited all African Member States to collaborate in that regard and informed that the Kingdom of Morocco had adopted measures to foster sustainable development. Among those measures were the 2011 article in the Constitution stipulating that each citizen was entitled to sustainable development. In addition to the latter, a national strategy on sustainable development was adopted in 2017.

30. The article also addressed among others, the need for renewable energy, water and waste management, and the tackling of land issues. He also pointed other initiatives including addressing climate change particularly following COP 22, which was launched by His Majesty the King of Morocco; and South-south cooperation. He concluded by stressing the crucial role of knowledge, leadership and the youth while trying to achieve the SDGs.

#### **IV) 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**

31. The session was chaired by **Ms, Nezha El Ouafi**, Secretary of State in charge of Sustainable Development, Morocco. Mr. Jenerali Ulimwengu moderated the session which discussed actions to stepping up and delivering commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Ms. Ouafi gave the floor to the moderator of the session, **Mr. Jenerali Ulimwengu**, who thanked the Kingdom of Morocco for the excellent facilitation and hosting of the Forum. He introduced the theme of the panel, and the Ministers.

#### **Summary of the Presentation**

32. **Mr. Oliver Chinganya**, speaking on behalf Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of ECA, opened his remarks by stating that albeit the continuous economic growth rates in the continent, they have not been very effective to create enough jobs. Inclusive growth is thus critical for job creation and structural transformation. Growth rates have not been high enough to ensure effective poverty eradication and quality job creations. By 2055, youth population will be more than double and the working age population is projected to increase to around 1 billion by 2030 which results in growing demand for decent jobs. As employment elasticity to growth has remained around 0.41, Africa has to double its efforts to improve quality and inclusive growth. Africa's heavy reliance on primary commodities are still common and negative productivity growth in some sectors are observed. Africa has to move towards more productive economic activities with rich diversification and high value-added economies to ensure sustained economic growth. SDGs realization requires big private sector involvement. Therefore, the high cost of doing business in the continent has to be constantly reduced. A better business environment shall lead to more creations of decent jobs in the formal sector that bring along better job security and stability.

33. **Mr Batio Bassiere**, Minister of Environment of Burkina Faso, talked about climate change actions. The 6 SDGs that are the subject of this year's forum are linked to all other objectives. He refers to ministries in charge of green economy, environment and climate change. African countries need to intensify actions to address climate change. Climate change issues is a cross-cutting issue. Strategic plan for climate change is important, Africa needs to put their efforts by sharing good practices together especially at the global level. It is important now to have resource mobilization for Africa's climate change issues.

34. **Ms. Moumina Houmed Hassan**, Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare of Djibouti, emphasized the importance of management of demographic issues. Second, development policies and strategies need to be realistic as currently many of them are too ambitious. Third, investments in both traditional capital and human capital are extremely important, especially investments in children. Djibouti has invested a lot in education and health care. In 2014, Government of Djibouti launched social security card scheme with gives access to primary health care to everyone. Djibouti also has policies in social policies such as public housing and shelters for everyone and family allowance provided by government. Another example of policy initiative is the national policy on gender. Maternity leave in Djibouti is 6 months to ensure women's and

children's welfare especially in early formative periods. There is also an initiative launched in 2017 and in a pilot phase, on local development that directly involve communities.

35. **Mr. Afework Kassu Gizaw**, State Minister of Science and Higher Education of Ethiopia posited that STI is key to bring results in development. Science is closely related to knowledge generation. Africa has International Science Council, for instance that should address STI issues matter to the continent. The question now is that have we optimally used Africa scientists? The answer is not yet. Science can give solutions to societal and economic problems. On technology, the know-how aspect is critical for development such as assisting in identifying different ways of doing things. Africa needs to reckon the technology they need through well-planned technology road maps. Technologies are essential to add values in the economy so that Africa can move away from basic production activities. On innovations, Africa has good practices examples such as the Kigali Innovation City and multiple innovation-hubs in South Africa. The youth has to be given ample opportunities in these innovation-hubs. The success story of Kigali and South Africa should be useful for other countries to follow. Ethiopia has STI policies addressing 11 critical issues that are related to SDGs talking about technology transfers, education transformation, and quality infrastructure, for example. Ethiopia also has Growth and transformation agenda that also allign STI's various dimensions in the bigger picture. In summary, to harness the STI tools, we have to understand better what they are first.

36. **Mr. Robert Chakanda**, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone discussed on the issue of evidence-based progress and policymaking, financing and implementation. He emphasized the critical role of consultative deliberations efforts to ensure successful SDGs implementation. Issue of empowerment needs to shift from top-down approach. We need to challenge that the conventional wisdom that all sorts of empowerment are dependent on governments. Harnessing demographic dividends need to focus on investment on youth. African countries have deliberated efforts in AU Meeting in 2017 on ways to harness demographic dividends and these actions need to be sustained.

37. **Mr. Suleiman Hassan**, Minister of Environment of Nigeria, states that citizens' aspirations need to be on board on SDGs efforts. Nigeria has a special office under the presidency that oversees SDGs as well as under the house and senate committees on SDGs as counterparts for the government. There is also inter-ministerial committee on SDGs. Other stakeholders also have roles working together with government. Nigeria also has conditional cash transfers (CCT) programs, initiatives to empower undergraduates, and capital provision for small establishments with progressive scheme. Nigeria also has the first Africa's green bond and use the funds raised for solar power energy to schools and communities. Now, Government of Nigeria is also planning to issue the next issuance of green bonds offshore. SDGs' needs assessment are also being conducted, by working with various stakeholders. Nevertheless, resource mobilization and technology transfers are still critical issues for Nigeria.

38. **Ms. Sheila Gweneth Carey**, Ambassador and Permanent Representatives of Bahamas to the United Nations and Co-facilitator of the Political Declaration of the Leader's Summit of the High-level Political Forum mentioned that Africa's agendas are indeed optimistically ambitious and that it reflects paradigm shift in development as displayed in SDGs. 2019 is an important year for global development agenda as for the first time, there will be an SDG Summit under the auspices of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It will be the first opportunity for countries to look



into the progresses that have been achieved in each SDGs. The SDG Summit is a golden opportunity to bring world leaders together and it should provide the political platform to speed up actions and implementations. Global development can achieve much more by recognizing the interlinkages among SDGs and through synergy of policies. Countries have been calling for robust, concise, and action-oriented documents to accelerate implementation of SDGs. The declaration has to be lofty yet grounded and impactful. The Global Sustainable Development Report will be launched in May 2019 to provide the fuel for further discussions and deliberations. She declared her full commitment to have a successful political declaration in the SDG Summit in September 2019 to accelerate SDGs implementation.

## **Discussions**

39. Floor interventions recorded several questions and comments. First, on issue pertaining to the role of parliament and that the for Africa, the problem is more than mere resources limitation, as implementation is still a challenge (Uganda), Second, intervention from Burkina Faso mentioned that there is technology in Africa. The issue is for governments to provide support in the mapping of existing technologies and their (potential) uses. Africa also needs specific units to support and incentivizes protection of intellectual property rights (Burkina Faso). Senegal intervened by saying that most countries evaluation showed that national statistical offices have less than 1/3 of available data. There is a need for global appeal to help collection of data with specialized institutions. Another intervention mentioned STI as a central tool for SDGs achievement. But African countries need to dedicate more efforts: 46 years ago, Kwame Nkrumah called for the allocation of 1% of GDP into sciences. Moreover, the African Union calls for 1% of GDP towards R&D by 2020. But to date, no African country has achieved 1%. (Seychelles). A member of major groups from Morocco reminded the danger of doing business-as-usual in the face of demographic boom, therefore the generation of quality employment should be key priority for decision makers in the continent.

## **Conclusions**

40. The chair of the session, Ms. El Ouafi, closed the session by providing the following **conclusions** with regards Africa: (i) to devise key solutions in Africa for speeding up the acceleration of the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda; (ii) to build a shared political consensus and willingness to accelerate SDGs; (iii) to translate plans into actions through collective engagements, for example the Climate Commissions--the Congo Basin and the Climate Commission on the Sahel--shifting from a mindset of challenges, to opportunities. King Mohammed VI, remains a Champion on Climate and Environment in Africa. The session concluded at 13.30 hours.

## **Key Messages**

41. There is a need for global appeal to help collection of data with specialized institutions. Another intervention mentioned STI as a central tool for SDGs achievement.

42. Africa also needs specific units to support and incentivizes protection of intellectual property rights

43. There is a need for global appeal to help collection of data with specialized institutions.

## **Recommendations**

44. Africa has to double its efforts to improve quality and inclusive growth
45. A better business environment shall lead to more creations of decent jobs in the formal sector that bring along better job security and stability.
46. Africa needs to put their efforts by sharing good practices together especially at the global level.
47. It is important now to have resource mobilization for Africa's climate change issues.
48. Africa needs to reckon the technology it needs through well-planned technology road maps.
49. Harnessing demographic dividends need to focus on investment on youth

## **V) Organizational Matters (agenda item 3)**

### **a) Election of the Bureau for the fourth session of the ARFSD**

50. Mr. Amadou Lamine Guisse, chair of the outgoing bureau presided over the election of the Bureau. He explained the procedure for electing the Bureau, emphasizing the rationale of geographic representation and the principle of rotation.

51. Following deliberations, the Committee elected the following countries to constitute its Bureau, on the basis of rotational sub regional representation:

<i>Chair:</i>	<i>Morocco</i>
<i>First Vice-Chair:</i>	<i>Angola</i>
<i>Second Vice-Chair:</i>	<i>Chad</i>
<i>Third Vice-Chair:</i>	<i>Uganda</i>
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	<i>Guinea</i>

### **b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

52. The President invited the forum to consider the agenda and programme of work for the session. The agenda and programme of work were adopted without amendments.

## **VI) Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: support and progress made at regional and sub regional levels (agenda item 4) 12:15 -13:00**

- Chair: Chair of the Bureau of the fifth session of the Regional Forum
- Presentations:
- Africa regional report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and goals of Agenda 2063, by Paul Mpuga, ECA
- Overview on the support to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and The Sustainable Development goals, by Josephine Etima, African Union Commission
- 
- ***Presentations***

53. The first presentation was made by Paul Mpuga, Economic Affairs Officer at UNECA on **the regional report on progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Agenda 2063**. Mr. Mpuga informed the participants that the report which is a collective outcome produced by ECA, the AU, the AfDB and UNDP informs the HLPF theme with focuses on the selected SDGs 4,8,10, 13, 16 and 17.

54. Mr. Mpuga made a presentation on the *2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report*, which is aligned with the High Level Political Forum and focuses on 6 goals (4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17) and related Agenda 2063 goals. Based on the draft report, the proportion of young people out of school is 21 per cent in primary, 36 in lower secondary and 57 in upper secondary. Though completion rates are improving, the quality of education need attention. Economic growth remains positive but below the expected target of 7 per cent needed to achieve the SDGs and labour productivity is low, limiting the possibilities of catching up. Africa's youthful population and increasing labour force, projected at 1.1 billion by 2030, require investments in education, training and a culture of entrepreneurship to create decent jobs. Seven of the top ten of the most unequal countries globally are in Africa, creating as a challenge for sustainable development. Children and women face the highest burden of inequality. All African countries have signed the Paris Agreement and over 70 per cent have ratified. There is increasing investment in disaster risk reduction, better coordination and scientific research but emerging consumption patterns are hindering preservation efforts. Addressing violence against women and girls needs to be prioritized, especially in countries in conflict. While financing requirements for sustainable development are large, estimated at \$600-\$638 billion annually, the good news is that Africa has capacity to mobilize more internal resources through fiscal policy adjustments, improved revenue management and tapping into the private sector as well as development partner support.

55. Ms. Josephine Etima from the AUC made a presentation on the AU/UN Framework and an overview of the joint activities and its challenges and recommendations. The Joint Framework was signed in January 2018 to enable the implementation and coherent integration of both Agendas 2030 and Agenda 2063. A core indicator handbook has been developed to guide RECs and countries in the implementation of both Agendas as well as several tools to assess progress against the goals of both agendas. There are several levels of progress that are being monitored at the national, regional and continental level. The need for consolidating processes so that all the efforts are integration and duplication is avoided. Furthermore, there are joint planning meeting and RCMs to ensure for greater consistency and coherence. There are many challenges including (i) financial constraints, (ii) integrating the various initiatives of the international institutions, particularly regarding monitoring tools at the regional and subregional levels, and (iii) lack of data and data quality.

- **Discussion**

- Because of data availability issues, it is difficult to assess the progress countries are making on the SDGs.

56. Some civil society initiatives exist to address this gap by producing assessment tools and gathering data. For example, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has developed an integrated index and dashboard and also counts with country profiles covering all 17 goals, which also incorporates elements of the Agenda 2063 goals [www.africasdindex.org](http://www.africasdindex.org)

57. Using the various developed including the Core Indicators Handbook allows all parties to focus their efforts on improving data collection in an integrated manner, which allows for comparability and verification of the data with reference sources.

### ***Recommendations***

58. Fast track the design and use of integration tools for both Agendas to ensure harmonized monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Strengthen the capacity of member States and RECs in using the tools harmonized adaptation and monitoring of both Agendas

59. Increase advocacy and awareness of the two Agendas among African constituents, including national governments and other stakeholders, as well as RECs and international organizations

60. The AUC and the UN should continue supporting capacity development in data collection, production and management by member States to ensure adequate reporting.

## **VII) Round-table Panel on Voluntary National Review and Peer learning on implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 (agenda item 5)**

Chair: Chair of the Bureau of the fifth session of the Regional Forum

61. . The Regional Team Leader for Inclusive Growth / Sustainable Development, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, Mr. Mansour Ndiaye invited discussants to share achievements, challenges and address structural issues, opportunities from their VNR experiences.

62. In addition, he pointed that institutional arrangements, the 3 dimensions of sustainable development, the 2018 HLPF results as well as the implementation of recommendations and follow ups would be inspiring for member states that are conducting their VNR process or are envisaging to do so.

The following discussants took the floor:

63. **Senegal:** The VNR exercise was conducted in 2018 and the following best practices and lessons learnt have been identified:

- 1) The high level involvement of the president was important for process ownership.
- 2) An Hoc technical committee was created in order to focus on certain principles and to identify gaps
- 3) The validation of the VNR was shared at different levels in order to obtain insights/inputs that were incorporated. The latter highlights the importance of inclusiveness, participation and transparency as key aspects of the VNR
- 4) The preparation and submission process of the document was an opportunity for strategic coherence and application of principles of Agenda 2030 but also for strengthening planning tools as well as communication and overall ownership;

The following progress has been identified following the presentation of the VNR:

- 1) adjustments of policies and strategies: the level of integration went from 77% to 97%
- 2) in addition to resources allocated to close the gaps

3) Mechanism of monitoring for the SDGs were put in place

64. **South Africa** conducted broad consultative process to engage all the stakeholders on their needs, expectations, guidelines and objectives for the preparation of the VNR. The country has aligned its development plan integrating the indicators and targets from the SDGs and agenda 2063 with the contributions of all the stakeholders. The representative emphasized the importance involvement of Public-Private Partnership and the Civil society organization in the process. It is critical to domesticate the SDGs and popularize them to all the segments of the population. It is necessary to advocate to policymakers that SDGs and Agenda 2063 are part of our daily life and therefore should be people centered. The role of Statistics South Africa has been highlight in term of methodology and model applied for better coordination.

65. **Mauritius:** As a first time VNR presenter and as an African nation, Mauritius believes that it was imperative to understand what were the commitments taken both in Africa and globally in order to better grasp what implementation entails. The Delegate informed that they engaged with DESA to reflect on these commitments and their implementation. The challenge was to understand what should be the very specific SDGs for Mauritius to focus on. Subsequently, the brainstorming with line ministries, stakeholders etc. led to choose SDGs 1, 4, 13 and 14 as the focus besides discussing implementation with regards to other SDGs. For example, 1) when it comes to climate change, Mauritius had to grasp the issues and challenges that it is facing; 2) Regarding SDG 14, the question is how to turn the country *from an Island state to an Ocean State* 3) as far as SDG 1, it is also important for poverty eradication through several projects (social register etc.).

66. **Member Pan-African Parliament, Honourable Jaqueline Amongin:** The representative of the Pan-African Parliament indicated the critical role of the Parliament to facilitate the implementation of the SGDs and Agenda 2063. There is need to appropriate the objectives for the achievement of the results. It is noticed that the different positions of the Member States. The commitments of the Member States and Parliaments are very important to put the necessary means for the implementation. The RECs should be counted in order to facilitate and mainstream the implementation of the SDGs. In addition, the role of the Parliaments must be emphasized for better SDGs coordination and visibility.

67. **Representative of major groups and other stakeholders:** The group recommended that best practices be adopted in order to better coordinate interaction government and stakeholders; for example, on the implementation of policies on investment, the promotion of decent work, health and safety at work. It is recommended that Governments promote progressive tax regimes that support vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities to ensure they are not left behind. On the climate action, resource mobilization and climate finance should be domesticated, while maintaining transparency and accountability on financial flows. It is important to also have strong institutions, especially for conflict resolution, peace consolidation and justice.

68. **UNDESA:** every year DESA analyze the VNRs presented at the HLPF. The VNRs represent a global snap shot of where the SDGs stands. The best practices that DESA looked at internationally and that have transformational effects are:

- 1) The integration of the SDGs in national development plans shows greater success in the implementation of the SDGs. It is highly recommended.
- 2) At the institutional level, the inter-ministerial committee or SDGs Focal Points and Offices for example supported by experts' bodies is a show of taking ownership by Governments. It is part of a pertinent Government approach to achieve the SDGs and shows to help strengthen the process and the impact on the ground
- 3) multi stakeholder engagement is important (as well as partnership with private sector)
- 4) the priority of *leaving no one behind* shows how countries are identifying those at risks (migrants, elderly etc.)
- 5) women empowerment should be a cross cutting focus
- 6) Custom prioritization of goals and targets are important
- 7) mobilizing financial resources to strengthen data and statistics remains critical

UNDESA concluded that so far in 2019 we have 18 African countries that have conducted the VNRs. The presented congratulated them and encouraged the remaining 18 African countries to start the process countries which DESA is ready to assist in the process.

69. The following points were raised during discussions:
- Improving private sector partnership (i.e. technology access) with African universities is critical in order to enhance the use of knowledge produced and to export it (South Africa has good experience in the matter that could be scaled up). South Africa noted that for example there is an SDG hub in collaboration with the University of Pretoria
  - The participation of Civil Society around free movement in the continent is a hindrance. The Civil society is an ally to complement Member States Efforts
  - The parliament has a critical role to play in the appropriation of resources (budget support)
  - Technology and infrastructure are important elements for the achievement of the SDGs
  - The genuine participatory element of the VNR is challenging but important. In addition, data access is key in the production of the VNRs

70. **keys messages**

1. Ownership at the highest level is key for the process of the VNR to be successful and for the implementation, follow up and review of the Agenda 2030
2. Genuine participatory approach is important for the success of the VNRs and SDGs as a whole:
  - a) Engagement as wide as possible is key for the VNR and for the implementation, follow up and review of the Agenda 2030. This includes partnerships with various actors (academia, private sector, CSOs);
  - b) The inclusion of vulnerable groups is important in the implementation and review of the SDGs;
  - b) women empowerment must be a cross cutting focus during the implementation and review of the SDGs

3. Localization is important for community level engagement in the context of the SDGs
4. Institutional coordination mechanism (for integrated approaches) is essential for the implementation, follow up and review of the Agenda 2030
5. Financing through Domestic resource mobilization for example is a crucial tool for the success of the implementation, follow up and review of the Agenda 2030
6. Targeted Alignment, prioritization and acceleration (MAPS process) are important steps towards the integration of the SDGs into National Development Processes
7. STI and infrastructures remain an important investment for the achievement of the SDGs
8. Data availability and measurements are important for robust monitoring systems of the SDGs

## **VIII) Parallel panel meetings on the subthemes of the session [agenda 6]**

### **In-depth review, peer-learning and dialogue on the sub-themes of the Regional Forum (agenda item 6)**

#### **A. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4)**

##### **Presentations**

71. Mr. Gauci from ECA made a presentation on *Education towards Global and Regional Agendas*. He noted that the move from MDGs to SDGs also requires a shift in focus from on education outputs to education outcomes. Africa has experienced a significant increase from 25 million in 1990 to 164 million students entering school systems. This has had an impact on the quality of education, leading to less people completing the education cycles. Furthermore, the amount of trained teachers is also a concern, at primary level it is 70 per cent and at secondary level it drops to 50 per cent. Gender as an aspect of inclusion is also important, with gender parity of nearly 1 at primary school, dropping to 0.9 in lower secondary and 0.84 in upper secondary. Member States are still linked to MDGs as they are monitoring enrollment and completion. They are not considering the new targets posed by SDGs (e.g. number of computers per classrooms). The data shift is still work in progress within countries and will need adaptation, including through anchoring the targets into national plans. The statistical capacity is still geared towards the previous MDG agenda. There is also a technology gap which has to be factored in. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, para. 12 mentions the costs of SDGs, which need to be factored in to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to meet the SDGs. Greater investment in data is therefore key to progress on SDGs. Completion rates of educational cycles remain a serious challenge. There is a lack of trained teachers to match education demand. Technical and vocational education and training needs to be scaled up. Equity in education remain a serious challenge. Low income household are marginalized from education and equity in education remains a challenge. Budgetary allocations for education must be aligned in global and regional programmes to overcome some of these challenges.

72. Mr. George Boade from UNESCO, served as discussant and raised the issue of poor planning systems as a main cause for the mismatch for education demands and offer. There is a preference in Africa to send kids to university rather than vocational training. Major challenge

remains maintaining basic education statistics. We have a limited culture of using data to inform and sustain political decisions. Leaders need to use evidence from data in order to have sustainable and managed systems in our country. Furthermore, the costs for data are not internalized and financing is often sought externally. Existing reporting mechanisms in countries are sometimes inexistent, pointing to the need to develop these in the context of SDGs, to ensure countries to report 2 to 3 times so that they learn from the process of the SDGs.

Representatives from Humanity and Inclusion (HI) and (ANCEFA) presented videos on inclusive education for children with disabilities.

### 73. *Discussion*

- Ministers from Education of Sudan and Ethiopia raised the issue of considerable data gaps and data quality, including gender and disability sensitive data. There was a common understanding that the lack of data a major problem, generates exclusion and affects measuring progress on the SDGs.
- In terms of quality of education, it was noted that many teachers are not meeting the training requirements, and this has an impact on the performance measures, such as the literacy and numeracy levels of those that compete.
- There were also points made on the root causes of poor education outcomes, such as school dropout rates and how this may be affected by other social dynamics, such as child marriage). A recommendation was made for ministries to stop working in silos and worked concertedly, for instance on also developing health statistics which have a bearing on education outcomes.
- Concerns on education budget allocations were raised, in particular as to how they may be less prioritized than a defense budget. The need to prioritize investing in education rather than defense was raised. On the need for more qualified teaching personnel, the session also discussed the possibility of refugee teachers being allowed to teach in the receiving countries.
- Education can lead to greater inequity, because of the associated costs of resources. Solutions to overcome some of the resource gaps include subsidizing children through direct pay to their parents to retain them in school, and the need for teachers to engage and use IT to impart knowledge. There is also need to quantify the costs of quality teachers and the need to factor this into existing educational programmes in the countries.
- Children with disability, especially in rural areas, are the ones suffering most from data exclusion and data gaps. Deliberate efforts to census children who is accessing education and rural and urban, children with disabilities are necessary to better understand the underlying factors causing exclusion. Children with disabilities are invisible because they are stigmatized. VNRs should change the name and say accountable NRs.
- A delegate of Morocco, shared the vast country experience in working on education outcomes. Morocco has created various types of baccalaureate and international baccalaureates and this is helping link the education systems to the market. Regional approaches to adapting their



education to their respective sub-regions are also in place. All education institutions have at least an IT room. Programme to support families in keeping the children in the schools.

- Current tax revenues are too low to reach the SDGs, we need to widen the tax base to mobilize more resources and allocate particularly for education. Taxing the hard to get. 70 and 80 per cent are in the informal sector and hence not taxed. Education bonds to help increase the financial envelope for education. The quality of education is a multivariate reason. Ways to manage costs may be cost sharing for educational materials, such as books. We have worked with the government of Morocco on an index of educational exclusion. The learning from member States could be used to move forward on the SDGs.

#### 74. *Recommendations*

- African countries need to make more efforts to develop empirically grounded policy making as input to policy processes by leveraging statistics. In order to do so, cost of generating and managing statistics need to be internalized and monitoring and evaluation tools need to be part and parcel of statistics development programmes to properly track progress on the SDGs.
- There are valuable learning experiences and emerging best practices of educational programmes and systems in the continent. ECA, together with the various stakeholders need to support efforts and offer platforms for greater information sharing and dissemination of such experiences across Africa.
- Mobilizing resources for the education systems will require concerted efforts to exploit wider fiscal opportunities and develop innovative finance mechanisms to ensure more equity is achieved in sharing the costs of education.
- Greater equity must also be achieved for disabled children who are worse hit in accessing education. Deliberate efforts to census children who is accessing education and rural and urban, children with disabilities are necessary to better understand the underlying factors causing exclusion.

### **B. Parallel Meeting on SDG 8**

#### **1. Introduction, main issues and trends**

75. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all remains a daunting challenge for African countries. Unemployment rates in Africa are generally low, averaging 6.8 per cent in 2018. Underemployment and informal employment are widespread, however, with large numbers of people involved in precarious and vulnerable employment. Most of the employment opportunities in Africa are in the informal economy, which is characterized by low productivity and poor working conditions. Africa has the highest rate of estimated informal employment in the

world, at 85.8 per cent of total employment, and the highest rate of vulnerable employment globally, averaging 66 per cent. Lack of sufficient productive and decent jobs is complicating efforts to end poverty on the continent. Over the past few years, Africa has recorded the highest rate of population growth globally, averaging 2.6 per cent per annum, and by 2050, 25 per cent of the world's population will be on the continent. As millions of young Africans join the labour market, the pressure to provide decent and productive jobs increases.

## **2. Key messages**

76. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Employment creation requires a proactive, comprehensive and gender, age and disability-responsive approach to employment policy that includes coordinated demand-side and supply-side measures. There is a need to recognize and make use of the skills and capacities of older persons and to ensure that the creation of jobs is mainstreamed in all macroeconomic and development policies and that all such policies contain clear employment targets and benchmarks. Incentives for foreign and domestic investment must be linked to local content and local employment. Importantly, the adoption and implementation of national employment policies that are anchored to effective broad-based social dialogue and consultations are key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 and the related goals of Agenda 2063;

(b) The private sector has a crucial role to play in terms of employment creation and in bridging the extensive finance gap. Accordingly, it is important to implement doing business reforms to promote and unlock greater private sector investment, which is vital for the generation of additional revenue and the creation of jobs;

(c) Transformation of the rural and informal economies through sustained investments in physical and social capital is essential to the enhancement of productivity and the strengthening of inter-sectoral linkages between agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In particular, investments in rural infrastructure are needed to create jobs, reduce poverty and boost local economic development;

(d) It is important to strengthen information systems in order to ensure the availability of reliable and timely data that are disaggregated for gender, age and disability, in particular, labour market data and statistics, which are required for assessing labour markets and specific challenges, shaping appropriate policies and programmes, and monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it is important that African countries standardize their reporting on labour statistics by implementing recent resolutions such as, in particular, that concerning the statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization and the other concerning the statistics on work relationships, the guidelines on measuring

informality, and all other guidelines associated with the decent work indicators. This undertaking should include recognition of the unpaid economy constituted primarily by women and older persons, through data collection and analysis within the national accounts system. There is a need to ensure non-discrimination and equality of treatment for all workers, migrants, indigenous people and nationals abroad and at home;

(e) There is need to enhance the employability of young people, including through, the strengthening of intergenerational knowledge transfers from older persons, and technical and vocational education and training. Easier access to quality apprenticeship must be ensured for disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities. Business and digital skills must be mainstreamed into school curricula, to equip young people with the requisite business and digital skills to foster entrepreneurship. African countries must leverage and scale up digital economy-driven local initiatives, including e-cooperatives such as the Yam Token West Africa Solar Pack, to promote youth entrepreneurship and employment;

(f) Recognizing that social security is a basic human right, it is imperative that African countries extend social security coverage to workers in the informal economy and migrant workers. In line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), African countries should establish and maintain social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees, necessitating increased public investment in social protection, health and education. It is also important to adopt and implement policies that aim to guarantee a level of wages that is compatible with the needs of workers and families and with the requirements of the development strategies pursued.

(g) Social protection and flexible working arrangements need to be provided in order to facilitate and improve conditions for older persons in the informal and formal labour markets. Thus it is important to remove age restrictive policies on access to microcredit, loans and financial investments.

- **Parallel Meeting on the subtheme on SDG 10**

**Reducing Inequalities Within and Among Countries**

77. The parallel session of the subtheme on Reducing Inequality within and among countries was chaired by

Dr. Robert Chakanda, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economy of Sierra Leone and the discussant was Mr. Thangavel Palanivel of UNDP

**Summary of the Presentation**

78. The session started with a presentation from Mr. Saurabh Sinha, Chief of Social Policy Section, ECA on the joint UN progress report on SDG 10 in Africa, in which he highlighted the importance of the theme of reducing inequalities within and among countries given that the central theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development is anchored on this. He highlighted the difficulty in measuring inequality in Africa as the metric used – increase in the wellbeing of the bottom 40 percent – is only measured in 13 countries. It is also important that particular attention is paid to the drivers of inequalities such as access to education, geographic location among others. For example, in many cases, rural communities lag far behind those in cities. Mr. Sinha also emphasized the need to change the narrative around migration in Africa as this has had more positive effects that need to be recognized. Remittances from migrants in Africa alone is around 40 billion US dollars although the cost of sending remittances in Africa is on the high side – around 10 percent.

- **Discussions**

79. Dr. Robert Chakanda, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economy of Sierra Leone also highlighted the importance of access to reliable data in the drive towards reducing inequalities. He shared examples of measures the government of Sierra Leone is taking to reduce inequalities including expanding access to free and compulsory education, expanding access to decent jobs across the country and launching specific programmes aimed at reducing gender inequalities such as the “Hands Off our Girls” campaign launched by the First Lady of Sierra Leone. Dr. Chakanda also said it is important to emphasize the full implementation of key continental frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development as a tool towards addressing the multidimensional drivers of exclusion and inequalities in African countries and strengthen the incorporation and use of population dynamics to guide priority actions within countries.

80. Mr. Thangavel Palanivel, UNDP, expressed his particular appreciation for the joint report on SDG 10 in Africa and proceeded to highlight a few points. He highlighted the issue of uneven growth across sectors and geographic locations or agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and challenges they present with regards to reducing inequalities. It is also the case that much of the economic growth in countries are capital intensive rather employment intensive with high disparities in assets and access to infrastructure, high inequalities in education and health attainment and inequalities in educational and health attainment. These tend to be much more importance areas to focus on than the income disparities that is often used.

- **Recommendations**

81. Participants shared their thoughts from working across Africa on the issue of reducing inequalities in Africa. They highlighted the following:

- The need to revamp and expand access to social protection interventions, particularly for women and children;
- The need to go beyond income as a measure of inequality to look at access to opportunities
- The importance of guaranteeing spaces for engagement for civil society, including ensuring channels of engagement between CSOs and countries.
- Examine the role of the informal employment sector in reaching people and reducing inequality
- Eliminate barriers that make it difficult to access essential services that are key reducing inequalities such as laws that prohibit girls who become pregnant from staying in school
- Need to further address the systemic root causes or drivers of inequalities especially because in some countries in Africa, inequality is rising although poverty levels are falling. It is important to learn from those countries that are succeeding in reducing inequality.
- Address the challenge of illicit financial flows and tax evasion which also contributes to deepening inequality within countries
- In terms of inequalities between countries there needs to be an emphasis on trade relations as well as taxation of multinational companies, many of who escape paying taxes in African countries
- African countries must address the issue of the centrality of population dynamics and its link towards reducing inequalities by translating into country-level action, the implementation of continental instruments such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development.
- There is also a need to look at inequality from the perspective of sectors of economy and to explore measures to protect those left behind.
- Africa needs to promote structural economic transformation which would facilitate movement of labour from low productivity agriculture/rural sector into higher productivity urban based industry & services sector.
- Pro-poor macroeconomic policies and regulation required to ensure benefits of globalization and technology are shared

## **Parallel Meeting on SDG 13:**

### **Climate Action:**

#### **Parallel Event- Scaling Up Climate Action**

##### ***Chairs:***

*The session was chaired by Mrs Rajae Chafil, Director 4 C Maroc and Mr. Koffi Amegbeto, FAO Regional Initiative on ZeroHunger and Regional SDG Manager.*

The discussants were:

- Mr. Samba Thiam, Head of UN Environment Liaison Office to AUC, UNECA, and Representative to Ethiopia,
- Mr. Amjad Abbashar, Chief, UN Office for disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office for Africa, Mr. Kai-Uwe Schmidt, Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance Initiative,
- Ms. Nicole Perkins, Country Representative (Morocco), Global Green Growth Institute,
- Mr. Mithika Mwenda, Executive Secretary, Pan Africa Climate Justice Alliance

#### **Summary of the Presentation**

82. Mr. Linus Mofor from UNECA provided a background to set the tone of the discussion. He made the case that global warming is a reality backed by evidence. He emphasized on the particular situation of Africa which was severely affected by the effects of climate change in comparison to other regions (10 times more accentuated in Africa). He underscored the low adaptive capacity and limited resilience of African countries.

83. He further noted that all African countries had signed the Paris Agreement. Regarding Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), he underscored serious challenges, including the non-alignment with National development plans, SDGs and the Agenda 2063; the fact that they are prepared in a short delay; the lack of means of implementation (finance, technology, capacity building) as well as the lack of data. He further highlighted the issue of financing as close to USD 3 trillion of conditional and unconditional finance is needed. He however underscored that financing flows have been very low; and that there was limited data on the continent to assess progress on SDG13. He further noted that only 18% of disasters were reported and highlighted the need for a comprehensive effort to address disaster risk management. Among the challenges, he also underscored the limited institutional coordination on NDCs; the inadequate financial, technical and human resources, and the limited investment in the production of climate services. He recommended the inclusion of climate change in curriculum of schools to educate children, beyond civic education.

84. With regards to Priority Actions, Mr. Linus Mofor highlighted the need to provide support to the most vulnerable sectors of the society; to invest in data collection to inform Goal 13 indicators and strengthen capacity in collecting data as the data need to be disaggregated, on the role of the private sector that needs to be involved more prominently and on financial institutions.

## **Summary of Discussions**

### ***Discussant 1: Mr. Samba Thiam, Head of UN Environment Liaison Office to AUC, UNECA, and Representative to Ethiopia***

85. Mr. Samba Thiam started by making a statement about climate change being the most systemic threat to humanity today. He highlighted that more than political will, there was a need for political choice. He emphasized that focus should be made on innovation and the set-up of financial mechanisms, fiscal reforms, at country level. He also noted that there needs to be a conducive environment for the private sector to address climate friendly technologies and to harness domestic resources. He underscored the need for coordination and strategic partnerships. He concluded by stating the need to create platforms with a view to enhancing experience sharing platforms; and South-South and triangular cooperation.

### ***Discussant 2: Ms. Nicole Perkins, Country Representative (Morocco), Global Green Growth Institute***

The discussant highlighted the issue that Africa needed to step up and be part of various negotiations on climate change which are currently occurring without its presence.

### ***Discussant 3: Mr. Kai-Uwe Schmidt, Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance Initiative***

86. Mr. Schmidt's main message was focused on large scale removals. He underscored that governance's definition was the multilevel process such as the UNEA. He highlighted the need to focus on governance gaps related to large scale removals.

### ***Discussant 4: Mr. Amjad Abbashar, Chief, UN Office for disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office for Africa***

87. The discussant provided information about the mandate of the Office disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office for Africa and underscored the importance of early warning mechanisms to address disasters (example of Cyclone IDAI). He also emphasized the need to have robust data collection systems and advocate for capacity building.

***Discussant 5: The Chair, Ms Rajae Chafil Director 4 C Maroc***

88. She underscored the need to focus on Africa's priorities, and was of the opinion that adaptation and mitigation of climate change were more important for African countries than greenhouse gas emission control. She stressed the importance of territories and the territorial actors against climate change.

***Discussant 6: Mr. Mithika Mwenda, Executive Secretary, Pan Africa Climate Justice Alliance***

89. The discussant emphasized the role of people, vulnerable, women, youth, the disabled in the discussions on climate change. He underscored the need to bring climate justice in the discourse. He noted that climate justice was a mainstream issue globally but not in Africa.

**Recommendations**

- Establish African Groups on SDGs (example a group on technology development and research)
- Create a platform for Africa to enable informed participation in negotiations related to green growth improvement in Africa.
- Establish a clearing house to evaluate the policy barriers in market access for private sector investment in climate friendly services and products
- Create a research and development center on climate change
- Establish an early warning system to diminish the impact of climate change.
- 

**Key messages**

90. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) African countries have ratified the Paris Agreement with ambitious nationally determined contributions to climate action, requiring financing of close to \$3 trillion. Developed countries should support African countries with the means of implementation (finance, technology and capacity) essential for the nationally determined contributions, including mobilization of the required finance in line with existing pre-2020 commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities under the Convention to ensure climate justice, and the post-2020 minimum climate finance goal of \$100 billion annually. African countries are encouraged to develop innovative mechanisms, including innovations in fiscal instruments, for the mobilization of domestic resource resources to finance their nationally determined contributions;



(b) The adoption of the rulebook for the Paris Agreement on climate change during the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties requires a demonstrable shift from commitments of intent to fulfilments in spurring tangible actions on climate change for a just transition and building the resilience of people, communities and economies in African countries. The reinstatement is sought in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement by the Conference of Parties at its twenty-sixth session of the special needs and circumstances of Africa, with due consideration for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities;

(c) In the spirit of “one Africa, one voice, one position”, African key stakeholder platforms have consolidated approaches towards climate negotiations. African countries are encouraged to set aside dedicated resources to institutionalize and support the African group of negotiators on climate change to ensure its sustainability and independence in African aspirations and expectations in the global climate discourse processes;

(d) Noting that adaptation and resilience are of utmost importance to Africa, countries are urged to review their nationally determined contributions ensuring synergy and coherence with national development plans and policies, national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction policies, together with alignment with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(e) The investment needed for implementation of the nationally determined contributions by African countries is well beyond that which can be provided from limited public resources. Countries are encouraged to review, reformulate and package their contributions as investment portfolios to provide a mechanism through which private sector financing can be mobilized;

(f) The cross-cutting, transboundary and multidimensional nature of climate change provides an exceptional opportunity for integrated approaches, coherence and institutional coordination for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including risk-informed and climate-resilient development planning and investment in climate-sensitive sectors. Governments are encouraged to promote public-private partnerships, and South–South and triangular cooperation and to strengthen the capacity of an appropriate existing institution to lead comprehensive responses to climate change challenges across the economy and in liaison with the regional efforts and support systems. Furthermore, countries are encouraged to take urgent measures at the local, national and regional levels to address climate-induced human insecurities affecting the continent, including internal displacements, pastoral conflicts and food insecurity;

(g) There is a severe lack of data for tracking Sustainable

Development Goal 13 indicators, development of early warning systems and provision of climate response measures. Countries and development partners are urged to make urgent efforts to invest in, first, coordinated efforts aimed at strengthening the capacity of the national statistics offices in data collection, analyses and reporting and disaggregating by age, gender, income and geographical location to better tailor support to groups at risk of being left behind because of climate change impacts; second, research and development, innovation, digitization and national technology development and adaptation for climate response and monitoring; and, third, production and uptake of climate information services;

(h) Countries and development partners are urged to invest in human and institutional capacity strengthening and involve local stakeholders for, first, policy coherence and integrated implementation, follow-up and review of nationally determined contributions aligned with national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; second, integration of climate resilience in investments in climate-sensitive sectors; third, disaster preparedness and management; fourth, inclusion of climate change in curricula at all levels; and, fifth, creation of a research-policy interface to ensure research-enhanced policymaking.

- **Parallel Meeting on the subtheme “Ensuring reduced Inequalities” SDG 10**

**Parallel Session C: Reducing Inequalities Within and Among Countries**

91. The parallel session of the subtheme on Reducing Inequality within and among countries was chaired by

Dr. Robert Chakanda, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economy of Sierra Leone and the discussant was Mr. Thangavel Palanivel of UNDP

**Summary of the Presentation**

92. The session started with a presentation from Mr. Saurabh Sinha, Chief of Social Policy Section, ECA on the joint UN progress report on SDG 10 in Africa, in which he highlighted the importance of the theme of reducing inequalities within and among countries given that the central theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development is anchored on this. He highlighted the difficulty in measuring inequality in Africa as the metric used – increase in the wellbeing of the bottom 40 percent – is only measured in 13 countries. It is also important that particular attention is paid to the drivers of inequalities such as access to education, geographic location among others. For example, in many cases, rural communities lag far behind those in cities. Mr. Sinha also emphasized the need to change the narrative around migration in Africa as this has had more positive effects that need to be recognized. Remittances from migrants in Africa alone is around 40 billion US dollars although the cost of sending remittances in Africa is on the high side – around 10 percent.

## Discussions

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94. Mr. Thangavel Palanivel, UNDP, expressed his particular appreciation for the joint report on SDG 10 in Africa and proceeded to highlight a few points. He highlighted the issue of uneven growth across sectors and geographic locations or agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and challenges they present with regards to reducing inequalities. It is also the case that much of the economic growth in countries are capital intensive rather employment intensive with high disparities in assets and access to infrastructure, high inequalities in education and health attainment and inequalities in educational and health attainment. These tend to be much more importance areas to focus on than the income disparities that is often used.

## Recommendations

95. Participants shared their thoughts from working across Africa on the issue of reducing inequalities in Africa. They highlighted the following:

- The need to revamp and expand access to social protection interventions, particularly for women and children;
- The need to go beyond income as a measure of inequality to look at access to opportunities
- The importance of guaranteeing spaces for engagement for civil society, including ensuring channels of engagement between CSOs and countries.
- Examine the role of the informal employment sector in reaching people and reducing inequality
- Eliminate barriers that make it difficult to access essential services that are key reducing inequalities such as laws that prohibit girls who become pregnant from staying in school
- Need to further address the systemic root causes or drivers of inequalities especially because in some countries in Africa, inequality is rising although poverty levels are falling. It is important to learn from those countries that are succeeding in reducing inequality.
- Address the challenge of illicit financial flows and tax evasion which also contributes to deepening inequality within countries
- In terms of inequalities between countries there needs to be an emphasis on trade relations as well as taxation of multinational companies, many of who escape paying taxes in African countries

- African countries must address the issue of the centrality of population dynamics and its link towards reducing inequalities by translating into country-level action, the implementation of continental instruments such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development.
- There is also a need to look at inequality from the perspective of sectors of economy and to explore measures to protect those left behind.
- Africa needs to promote structural economic transformation which would facilitate movement of labour from low productivity agriculture/rural sector into higher productivity urban based industry & services sector.
- Pro-poor macroeconomic policies and regulation required to ensure benefits of globalization and technology are shared equitably.

## **SDG 16: Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions**

### **1. Introduction, main issues and trends**

96. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

97. The presence of peace at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, Sustainable Development Goal 16, is inextricably linked to the attainment of the other Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, governance in Africa remains on an upward trajectory. Improvements are being made regarding the rule of law, participation, rights, and transparency and accountability.

98. Notwithstanding, challenges and gaps remain in ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions. Insecurity, social strife, political tension and riots continue to plague the continent. All types of crime, including organized crime, is a challenge, in particular in the large African economies. While participation has improved, driven by democratic elections, it is happening alongside a shrinking civil society space, worsening trends related to freedom of association and assembly, civil rights and liberties, and freedom of expression. Corruption continues to weaken good governance and the compounding principles of inclusion, participation, ownership, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness. Illicit financial flows continue to be a challenge; significant amounts of financial resources are being lost annually from the continent through such flows and other forms of corrupt activities.

### **2. Key messages**

99. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Political leadership and stakeholder participation remains paramount. Good political leadership and effective multi-stakeholder engagement are crucial for ownership, commitment, galvanizing support, mobilizing resources and ensuring accountability pertaining to the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(b) Mobilization of adequate and context-specific means of implementation is essential. Although external financial resources are required to implement the 2030 Agenda, Africa must also take active responsibility for its own development. Measures must be vigorously taken to enhance domestic resource mobilization and curb illicit financial flows, attract foreign direct investment and create effective financing structures, including through natural resources management and climate governance. Development partners should complement domestic efforts aimed at capacity and technology development through effective international cooperation programmes;

(c) Stronger efforts are needed to encourage good governance, transparent and accountable leadership, effective institutions and responsive and effective global partnerships. In this regard, appropriate and results-oriented human and institutional capacity-development strategies and programmes are needed to cover vulnerable and marginalized populations, including young people, women, older persons and people living with HIV, who are agents of, and active contributors to, peace, security and development. Civil society organizations also need to be involved, including through the application of human rights-based approaches that address poverty and unemployment, among other social challenges;

(d) Deeper and stronger dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders, including global, regional, and national institutions, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, national human rights institutions and religious organizations, is required to promote development and apply appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the targets and indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Such a framework should entail the development of databases that include non-traditional entities in data collection, such as the judiciary and the police, to facilitate analysis, performance tracking and the provision of technical support to countries, and the integration of Goal 16 into national development plans;

(e) Stronger efforts are needed to establish or strengthen national human rights institutions in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), in order to ensure accountability, rule of law and access to justice in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) A dignified environment must be created for the return and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, vulnerable and marginalized populations, who are often the victims of crises;

(g) The solidarity of African States in the field of security should

be strengthened, with a view to limiting the consequences of transboundary crises, including through advocacy at the international level for security finance in Africa.

### **E. Strengthening the means of implementation and the partnership for sustainable development: SDG 17**

#### **Report of the parallel session on Goal 17: “ Strengthening the means of implementation and partnership for sustainable development”.**

100. The Session was chaired by Hon Bety Amongi, MP, Uganda and co-chaired with Mrs. Juliet Wasswa Mugambwa, Senior Programme and Management Officer (OSAA). The discussants were: Mrs Bio Djara Koutouma, Ministry of Planning Finance, Economic Development (Benin), Mr Jose Martinez Carbajo, Director, Financial, Private Sector & Sustainable Development Department (World Bank) and M. Mmboneni Muofhe, Deputy Director General Science and Technology (South Africa)

#### **Summary of the Presentation**

101. Mr. Thierry Amoussougbo of ECA made a presentation by reminding participants that the Goal17 has 19 targets grouped in four clusters i.e finance; science, technology and innovation; capacity-building and systemic issues; trade. He alluded on the crosscutting and enabling roles of the goal 17. Strengthening innovative implementation mechanisms and partnerships will accelerate the achievements of the other sixteen goals.

102. Referring to resource mobilisation needs for implementing the SGDs, Mr Thierry said that Africa requires between US\$600 to US\$638 billion per year. He explained that Africa still has low ratios of government revenue and tax revenue to GDP, giving scope for further domestic financing. ODA, Foreign Direct investment, international remittances provide opportunities to finance development; however enabling legal and regulatory environments need to be promoted to harness these potentials.

103. Mobilizing sufficient resources to meet the investment requirements of countries in Africa will entail improving tax and non-tax revenue management and combating illicit financial flows.

104. With regard to nurturing science, technology and innovation for accelerating SDGs, Mr Thierry noted that Science, technology and innovation is an important domain that can provide countries with new opportunities to enhance economic, social and environmental transformation. Despite some on-going efforts and success in area such as mobile technology, African countries need to do more in term of increasing investment in R&D, supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, promoting enabling environment for national and regional innovation systems to flourish and promote regional and global science, technology cooperation agreements.

105. Africa’s participation in international trade remains low, and ratification of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area needs to be given priority in order to promote intra-regional trade.

## Discussion

106. The World Bank representative underscored that regional integration, connectivity and regional infrastructure are key to promoting sustainable development and transformation. Citing an evaluation report on regional integration, he noted that Africa has come a long way in this area and there is room for further growth of intra-regional trade, especially with increased investment in the transport sector. Institutional capacity development and consistent support to national and regional institution are key to mobilising additional financing for sustainable development.

107. The Deputy Director of the Department of Science and Technology of South Africa emphasized the need for African countries to adopt enabling environment for strengthening national innovation systems and promoting strong Intellectual Property Rights framework that will secure investors and enable more FDI.

108. The Representative of Benin noted that African countries will not be able to implement all the goals and therefore need to define their priorities based on their comparative advantages. Priorities can focus on targets. She shared the estimation of achieving the targets selected as priorities which is beyond the resource mobilisation capacity of the country

## Recommendations

109. African countries should develop strong regulatory framework to protect the rights of workers and to reduce capital flight from the continent.

110. Member States need to increase investments and update legal frameworks for data gathering to capture big data and citizen-generated data

The group worked directly on the draft key messages to fine-tune the language and nuance the content.

## Science Technology Innovation (STI)

### Africa STI Forum (AfriSTI Forum) for the SDGs”; Marrakech, Morocco

#### 1. Context:

111. The first African Regional Science and Technology Forum () was organized on 16 April 2019 following the resolution 960 (LI) of 15 May 2018 of the Conference of Ministers. The resolution called upon the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission and other partners, to take all steps necessary to organize on a regular basis a multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation as an input into the work of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. This resolution is based on the General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, adopting the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the post-2015 development agenda: Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

112. The Agenda contains the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, of which 48 targets refer to “technology” or mostly relate to technology and innovation<sup>2</sup>. For instance, Goal 17 Target 8 is to “fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2016) Global Sustainable Development Report 2016, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.

enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology”. The Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries is now established in Turkey.

## **Organization and participation**

113. AfriSTI Forum was organized by ECA and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Republic of South Africa in collaboration with the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco. The joint organization of the inaugural AfriSTI Forum by ECA and DST underscores the close relationship between the two to advance the frontiers of STI and science and technology policy in Africa to transform the continent and achieve the targets of the SDGs and the Aspirations of African Union Agenda 2063.

114. The Forum was attended by a number of Members States, non-governmental organizations and UN system Funds and Programmes including UNESCO and WIPO. Egypt and Ethiopia were represented by Ministers. I am also pleased to inform you that the first STI Forum attracted more participants than expected. The room assigned was not only fully packed but remained so for the entire day. The link door to the adjoining meeting room was opened to accommodate participants. It is encouraging to see the immense interest, dedication and importance attached to the role of STI in today’s world, as demonstrated in our highly engaging and fruitful discussion from 9:00 till 20:00 O'clock the day before yesterday.

115. One notable innovation of the Forum was the full integration of young African innovators into the programme. Nearly every session began with an innovator presenting his/her innovation and explaining how the innovation was contributing to the achievement of the SDGs in general and the SDG under review in particular. The innovations ranged from portable solar systems and safer cooking technologies to community managed ICT mesh networks that offer unlimited internet for about US\$ 2 per month. These innovator presentations not only provided context to the discussions but also enriched them.

116. The theme of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” shaped the discussions and outcomes of the AfriSTI Forum. Overall, the Science, Technology and Innovation Forum can serve a parameter for measuring progress towards the achievement of the SDGs targets insofar as the more a society is transformed, the more technology it uses and produces and the better are the indicators of social and economic progress,

117. The Forum can also serve as platform for identifying:

- (a) Effective approaches, mechanisms, strategies and policies for applying science, technology and innovation to development in Africa;
- (b) Technological options that will likely have a greater impact on efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (c) Opportunities for scaling up actions to apply science, technology and innovation at the regional, national and local levels;
- (d) Potential barriers to applying science, technology and innovation in Africa and ways to overcome them.

## **Structure**

118. The Forum was structured into eight major sessions, five of which focused on each of the Sustainable Development Goals under review this year by the United Nations General Assembly



(Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16). A session focused on SDG 17, which although not under review this year, intersects with all the SDGs that are under review. The sessions explored how technologies, especially technologies developed in Africa, can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Despite data limitations, emerging opportunities presented by science, technology and innovation that Africa can take advantage of to achieve the SDGs, and some of the key barriers that need to be overcome in order to scale up technology diffusion and actions were highlighted.

## **2. Key outcomes**

119. The Forum affirmed STI as a key means of implementation of the SDGs and the Agenda 2063. It also affirmed that Africa's development challenges should be a trigger for innovation and their solution represents enormous resource that can be harnessed to develop the continent. It further affirmed that the technologies to achieve the SDGs under review are being produced in Africa and should be explored.

There were several recommendations, which fall in a few broad issues as follows:

### **A. Infrastructure for STI development.**

120. The Forum agreed that inadequate infrastructure (both hard and soft), including research infrastructure was a fettering the contribution of STI to the achievement of the SDGs. This inadequacy confers advantages to some and can deepen inequalities. Several countries in their presentations submitted that adequate provision of hard and soft infrastructure for research, development, innovation and entrepreneurship was key to enabling STI to accelerate the achieved of the SDGs. Hard infrastructure includes laboratories, libraries, observatories (e.g. STI observatories for AU and Egypt), key projects (e.g. the Square Kilometer Array of South Africa) etc. Soft infrastructure refers to skills, knowledge systems and other intangibles (e.g. intellectual assets) that compliments and enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of hard infrastructure. Currently, Africa has limited infrastructure for R&D and should be investing more in this area.

### **B. Financing of R&D.**

121. Successful deployment of STI as a means of implementation depends on adequate financing. Participants underlined that most African countries are not investing in STI as evidenced by the fact that most are yet to meet the African Union goal of investing at least 1% of their GDP in research and development. The continent's average expenditure on R&D is estimated at about 0.5% of GDP – far from the global average of 2.3% of GDP. This has several consequences such as over-dependence on R&D funding from abroad and on foreign expertise, and disconnection between domestic needs and research agenda. If STI is to fulfil its role as a means of implementation in Africa, then governments and the emerging globally large African privately-owned firms must intensify their efforts to popularise R&D and innovations and make much efforts with commensurate funding.

### **C. Governance of science, technology and innovation**

122. The governance of innovation was underlined as fundamental to enabling STI to prosper and contribute effectively and efficiently to the building of inclusive and equitable societies. It was underlined that good governance is important in ensuring that technology is applied in a fair manner, funding for STI is not abused, inventors and innovators are adequately protected, acknowledged and rewarded, and research ethics and safety are not sacrificed in the hunt for success, markets and profits.

### **D. Building technical competencies in research and innovation**

123. It was recognized that African has made commendable effort in building technical competencies in research and innovation but that this is not at a rate sufficient to enable the continent to address its challenges and use STI to build inclusive societies. Africa has only a handful of universities in the top 1000, R&D institutions with technology transfer offices and technology hubs with skilled manpower and national fund managers with the necessary experience to bring innovations and start-ups to market. Participants therefore emphasised that Africa needs to scale up the building of technical competencies of its research, innovation and entrepreneurship support institutions. These are needed to manage and grow academic institutions, research centres, incubators, innovation hubs and techno-poles and/or innovation cities.

### **3. Cross-cutting issues.**

#### **Local solutions for local challenges**

124. It was emphasised and demonstrated that Africa should first look inwards for local solutions to local challenges before turning to the wider world for assistance. Local solutions for local challenges was emphasized. This should include explicit strategies to stimulate local inventions, innovation production, sales, consumption of locally produced technologies. Incubators and start-ups should be promoted as a matter of strategy and policy, with appropriate regulatory environment and an intellectual property rights regime that is sufficiently supportive. Data are needed to inform value chains to enable countries to exploit and improve their strengths while managing their weaknesses.

#### **Trade and competitiveness**

125. Participants noted that STI can advance intra-Africa trade. They also noted that the soon-to-come-into-effect African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can provide added impetus for technology and innovation not only to drive Africa's growth and competitiveness, but it can also promote equity and inclusiveness. Digital trade is rising on the continent and will rise even more when the AfCFTA comes into force. Technology, such as digital identification platforms and digital payments systems will be important in this new world of intra-Africa trade as drivers. Frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence and Internet of Things present new opportunities for governments to create inclusive, fair and equitable societies. African Governments need to put

in place policies to ensure that the application of these technologies will not widen and deepen existing inequalities or create new ones.

### **Private Sector and Intellectual Property**

126. Participants recognized the leading role of the private sector in scientific research, commercialization of creating innovative solutions to tackle many problems. The Forum also recognized the possible positive role that a strong IP regime can play in spurring innovation. They underscored that an adequate or optimal intellectual property rights regime and a conducive environment for private sector growth are pre-requisites for innovation and technologies to be deployed in a manner to contribute to inclusive and equitable growth. Countries are encouraged to do their utmost to protect innovations and inventions by Africans and such protection should apply to indigenous knowledge, geographical names etc. African countries were encouraged to look into the WIPO database to identify technologies now in the public domain that they can use to grow their economies in a fair and equitable manner. They were also encouraged to enhance the contribution of private higher education institutions to scientific output and innovation and to strengthen the strategic relationship between the public and private sectors in the innovation ecosystem.

### **Peace and security**

127. Participants acknowledged that the absence of peace and security can deepen inequalities and create social tensions. They recognized the dangers posed by ICT and the Internet in the generation and dissemination, practically at zero marginal cost of “Fake News” and other dangerous materials. But they also applauded the fact that technologies are enabling expansion of coverage of national identification systems as well as to free and fair elections. They emphasized that to the extent that technologies do this, they will help reduce conflicts and violence which are important drivers of inequality and exclusion.

### **Youths and women**

128. Youths and women outnumber men but remain poorly utilized resources on the continent. In an aging and male dominated world, their perspectives are needed and important if Africa wishes to become a true global pole for growth. This entails that all policies and initiatives mainstream youths and women

### **Regional collaborations**

129. African countries have smaller markets, limited STI resources and small industrial bases. Intra-African collaboration is key and can be supported by continental portals for skills, infrastructures and policies that can enable collaborations.

### **Conclusion**

130. Participants applauded the Forum and encouraged ECA to continue to organize it as a means of identifying African technologies (and other technologies) appropriate for meeting the targets of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

**IX) Presentations and discussions of outcomes and proposed key messages, including policy recommendations emanating from the parallel panel meetings [agenda item 7]**

## **Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education**

### **1. Introduction, main issues and trends**

As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

131. Achieving goals covered by this sub-theme is of critical importance to economic growth and poverty reduction. It is also important in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. A host of social and non-market benefits can be gained through education, such as increased child well-being, health status, greater consumer choices, and social capital. In Africa, the positive spillover of education can also be gauged by the decline in adolescent (15–19 years of age) fertility rates based on the increased enrolment in secondary schools.

132. Primary school completion has broadly improved in some African countries. Nonetheless, two thirds of the countries in Africa have yet to reach the target of full completion in primary education. A critical aspect contributing to lower completion rates is the large increase in student enrolment, which is affecting classroom size. The supply of trained teachers at the primary and secondary school levels is an important constraint on the provision of quality education. Africa has the lowest proportion of trained teachers globally. In addition, in Africa, excluding North Africa, gender parity in primary to lower secondary schools increased between 2005 and 2015 from 0.96 to 0.98. The gender parity ratio, however, was lower at the upper secondary level, at 0.82 because of a number of factors, including child marriage, resulting in increased pregnancy, which affects school attendance of adolescent girls.

### **2. Key messages**

133. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (a) The monitoring of progress in Africa towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 is limited by the lack of available data and of the disaggregation of such data. For this reason, good quality data on special needs children are vital for inclusivity and fulfilment of the global and regional agendas. A top priority for the continent is the development of statistical systems to enhance empirically grounded educational policy direction. To do this, the coverage and frequency of censuses and surveys need to be increased and administrative systems, including civil registration and vital statistics, must be modernized. This entails significant investment in data technologies, capacity, infrastructure and human and financial resources;
- (b) Strengthening the production of disaggregated data (equity variables within and across countries) and their use as evidence for policy formulation and

decision-making will improve the quality of data and development of the education sector;

- (c) Inclusiveness of education, in particular across gender, age, disability and location, needs to be enhanced through specific policy interventions, including, among others, through gender-sensitive and transport policies;
- (d) Supply side constraints, including qualified teachers and books for students, are impeding efforts to improve educational systems. Innovative financing mechanisms need to be implemented to ensure a level playing field for all;
- (e) Education budget allocations need to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The larger scope associated with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the consequent resource requirement need to be computed and anchored within national and sectoral plans to ensure national ownership, alignment between country-specific priorities and the 2030 Agenda and policy coherence between national line ministries and finance;
- (f) There is a need to scale up technical and vocational education and training to improve the match between educational production and labour demand;
- (g) To improve completion rates across school cycles, investment in early childhood development education is critical;
- (h) Infrastructure is needed to develop and ensure child-friendly schools and complementary pedagogical materials that reflect inclusion, in particular for children with disabilities;
- (i) The uneven progress towards educational attainment on the continent necessitates a stronger orientation towards peer learning and information sharing across countries.

## **A. Promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth**

### **3. Introduction, main issues and trends**

134. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

135. Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all remains a daunting challenge for African countries. Unemployment rates in Africa are generally low, averaging 6.8 per cent in 2018. Underemployment and informal employment are widespread, however, with large numbers of people involved in precarious and vulnerable employment. Most of the employment opportunities in Africa are in the informal economy, which is characterized by low productivity and poor working conditions. Africa has the highest rate of estimated informal employment in the world, at 85.8 per cent of total employment, and the highest rate of vulnerable employment globally, averaging 66 per cent. Lack of sufficient productive and decent jobs is complicating efforts to end poverty on the continent. Over the past few years, Africa has recorded the highest

rate of population growth globally, averaging 2.6 per cent per annum, and by 2050, 25 per cent of the world's population will be on the continent. As millions of young Africans join the labour market, the pressure to provide decent and productive jobs increases.

#### 4. Key messages

136. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (h) Employment creation requires a proactive, comprehensive and gender, age and disability-responsive approach to employment policy that includes coordinated demand-side and supply-side measures. There is a need to recognize and make use of the skills and capacities of older persons and to ensure that the creation of jobs is mainstreamed in all macroeconomic and development policies and that all such policies contain clear employment targets and benchmarks. Incentives for foreign and domestic investment must be linked to local content and local employment. Importantly, the adoption and implementation of national employment policies that are anchored to effective broad-based social dialogue and consultations are key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 and the related goals of Agenda 2063;
- (i) The private sector has a crucial role to play in terms of employment creation and in bridging the extensive finance gap. Accordingly, it is important to implement doing business reforms to promote and unlock greater private sector investment, which is vital for the generation of additional revenue and the creation of jobs;
- (j) Transformation of the rural and informal economies through sustained investments in physical and social capital is essential to the enhancement of productivity and the strengthening of intersectoral linkages between agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In particular, investments in rural infrastructure are needed to create jobs, reduce poverty and boost local economic development;
- (k) It is important to strengthen information systems in order to ensure the availability of reliable and timely data that are disaggregated for gender, age and disability, in particular, labour market data and statistics, which are required for assessing labour markets and specific challenges, shaping appropriate policies and programmes, and monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it is important that African countries standardize their reporting on labour statistics by implementing recent resolutions such as, in particular, that concerning the statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization and the other concerning the statistics on work relationships, the guidelines on measuring informality, and all other guidelines associated with the decent work indicators. This undertaking should include recognition of the unpaid economy constituted primarily by women and older persons, through data collection and analysis within the national accounts system.

There is a need to ensure non-discrimination and equality of treatment for all workers, migrants, indigenous people and nationals abroad and at home;

- (l) There is need to enhance the employability of young people, including through, the strengthening of intergenerational knowledge transfer from older persons, and technical and vocational education and training. Easier access to quality apprenticeship must be ensured for disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities. Business and digital skills must be mainstreamed into school curricula, to equip young people with the requisite business and digital skills to foster entrepreneurship. African countries must leverage and scale up digital economy-driven local initiatives, including e-cooperatives such as the Yam Token West Africa Solar Pack, to promote youth entrepreneurship and employment;
- (m) Recognizing that social security is a basic human right, it is imperative that African countries extend social security coverage to workers in the informal economy and migrant workers. In line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), African countries should establish and maintain social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees, necessitating increased public investment in social protection, health and education. It is also important to adopt and implement policies that aim to guarantee a level of wages that is compatible with the needs of workers and families and with the requirements of the development strategies pursued.
- (n) Social protection and flexible working arrangements need to be provided in order to facilitate and improve conditions for older persons in the informal and formal labour markets. Thus it is important to remove age restrictive policies on access to microcredit, loans and financial investments.

## **B. Ensuring reduced inequalities**

### **1. Introduction, main issues and trends**

137. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

138. Since 2000, significant gains have been made in lifting people out of poverty and reducing inequalities, however, large disparities remain regarding income and wealth, and access to food, health care, including long-term and palliative care, social protection and pension systems, education, land, clean water and other assets and resources essential for living a full and dignified life. The share of the bottom 40 per cent of the population in seven of the thirteen countries in Africa with comparable data increased much more slowly than that of the total population between 2008 and 2015.

139. Increasing wealth and income at the bottom – along with increasing access to non-income opportunities and achieving greater equality of outcomes – is one way of reducing inequality.

140. In 2015, only 43 per cent of the rural population in Africa, excluding North Africa, had access to safe drinking water services compared to 82 per cent of the urban population. Similarly, only 37 per cent of the rural population had access to electricity, compared to 88 per cent in North Africa.

141. Migration contributes positively towards the achievement of inclusive growth and sustainable development. Facilitating, instead of restricting, migration should be a priority, as it is expanding the possibilities for people to realize their human development aspirations and potential through mobility.

### **2. Key messages**

142. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (a) Midway into the implementation of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and four years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, more efforts are needed to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and ensure the expansion of productive employment opportunities, in particular for women and young people, in order to reduce inequalities;
- (b) Given the interlinkages between Goal 10 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, a comprehensive approach is needed, with strong coordination among national agencies, to the implementation of and reporting on the various indicators of Goal 10;
- (c) Inequality relates not only to inequality of income or consumption but also includes non-monetary aspects such as horizontal inequalities, gender inequality, intergenerational inequalities and the so-called “digital divide”. Appropriate measures and stronger action are needed to enhance access to education, health and employment opportunities for girls and young women, vulnerable and other marginalized groups, such as indigenous people and people in rural areas, by integrating these issues into national development plans and budgets;



- (d) Higher levels of mobilization of domestic financial resources, through rationalization of taxes, curbing illicit financial flows and other means, are needed to improve social investments in skills and capacity-building, education, apprenticeships, training, adequate infrastructure and health care, and food and nutrition security and social protection. There is a need to revamp and expand access to social protection interventions with examples and good practices for policies and sustainable financing. This is especially urgent in the case of young people and women, many of whom work in the informal sector doing low-skilled jobs. It is important to recognize the contribution of the informal sector and small enterprises and to examine the role of informal employment in reaching people and reducing inequality;
- (e) Efforts need to be intensified to mobilize the necessary resources and assistance to modernize agriculture, enhance food security, build community resilience and strengthen emergency preparedness;
- (f) The recent adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a significant step towards leveraging the potential of migration for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To realize the potential offered by migration in reducing inequalities, actions are urgently required to strengthen arrangements at all levels to implement the Global Compact;
- (g) Member States need to address the issue of the centrality of population dynamics in reducing inequality by implementing continental instruments such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014;
- (h) Monitoring the comprehensive attainment of Goal 10 in Africa is limited by the lack of data availability. Special efforts need to be made to strengthen regular reporting and tracking of progress of the tier III indicators for informing inclusive policies.

### **C. Scaling-up climate action**

#### **1. Introduction, main issues and trends**

143. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

144. Climate change is a cross-cutting issue affecting all of the Sustainable Development Goals as a “threat multiplier” that aggravates existing vulnerabilities and structural inequalities. Accordingly, urgent and ambitious global action on climate change, well beyond current pledges under the Paris Agreement on climate change, is needed. Otherwise, there is a serious risk that the development agenda for Africa, which is encapsulated in national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, will not be implemented. The continent contributes less than 6 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, with the average per capita emissions of 0.8 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per person per year, significantly below the global mean of 5 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per person per year. Despite this, Africa is already being severely affected by the adverse impacts of climate change; a very recent example of this is the severe damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. A compelling case is made for urgent and concerted global action on climate change in a special report from the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.

145. All African countries have signed the Paris Agreement, and 48 of them have already ratified it and set ambitious nationally determined contributions to climate action, requiring approximately \$3 trillion of conditional and unconditional financing. By submitting ambitious nationally determined contributions, African countries are sending a strong signal that although the continent has contributed the smallest amount to climate change, it is ready to stand with the rest of the world in addressing its impacts.

146. The African Group of Negotiators on climate change have worked diligently to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice in the global negotiations on climate change.

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## 2. Key messages

147. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (i) African countries have ratified the Paris Agreement with ambitious nationally determined contributions to climate action, requiring financing of close to \$3 trillion. Developed countries should support African countries with the means of implementation (finance, technology and capacity) essential for the nationally determined contributions, including mobilization of the required finance in line with existing pre-2020 commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities under the Convention to ensure climate justice, and the post-2020 minimum climate finance goal of \$100 billion annually. African countries are encouraged to develop innovative mechanisms, including innovations in fiscal instruments, for the mobilization of domestic resource resources to finance their nationally determined contributions;
- (j) The adoption of the rulebook for the Paris Agreement on climate change during the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties requires a demonstrable shift from commitments of intent to fulfilments in spurring tangible actions on climate change for a just transition and building the resilience of people, communities and economies in African countries. The reinstatement is sought in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement by the Conference of Parties at its twenty-sixth session of the special needs and circumstances of Africa, with due consideration for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities;
- (k) In the spirit of “one Africa, one voice, one position”, African key stakeholder platforms have consolidated approaches towards climate negotiations. African countries are encouraged to set aside dedicated resources to institutionalize and support the African group of negotiators on climate change to ensure its sustainability and independence in African aspirations and expectations in the global climate discourse processes;
- (l) Noting that adaptation and resilience are of utmost importance to Africa, countries are urged to review their nationally determined contributions ensuring synergy and coherence with national development plans and policies, national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction policies, together with alignment with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (m) The investment needed for implementation of the nationally determined contributions by African countries is well beyond that which can be provided from limited public resources. Countries are encouraged to review, reformulate and package their contributions as investment portfolios to provide a mechanism through which private sector financing can be mobilized;

- (n) The cross-cutting, transboundary and multidimensional nature of climate change provides an exceptional opportunity for integrated approaches, coherence and institutional coordination for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including risk-informed and climate-resilient development planning and investment in climate-sensitive sectors. Governments are encouraged to promote public-private partnerships, and South–South and triangular cooperation and to strengthen the capacity of an appropriate existing institution to lead comprehensive responses to climate change challenges across the economy and in liaison with the regional efforts and support systems. Furthermore, countries are encouraged to take urgent measures at the local, national and regional levels to address climate-induced human insecurities affecting the continent, including internal displacements, pastoral conflicts and food insecurity;
- (o) There is a severe lack of data for tracking Sustainable Development Goal 13 indicators, development of early warning systems and provision of climate response measures. Countries and development partners are urged to make urgent efforts to invest in, first, coordinated efforts aimed at strengthening the capacity of the national statistics offices in data collection, analyses and reporting and disaggregating by age, gender, income and geographical location to better tailor support to groups at risk of being left behind because of climate change impacts; second, research and development, innovation, digitization and national technology development and adaptation for climate response and monitoring; and, third, production and uptake of climate information services;
- (p) Countries and development partners are urged to invest in human and institutional capacity strengthening and involve local stakeholders for, first, policy coherence and integrated implementation, follow-up and review of nationally determined contributions aligned with national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; second, integration of climate resilience in investments in climate-sensitive sectors; third, disaster preparedness and management; fourth, inclusion of climate change in curricula at all levels; and, fifth, creation of a research-policy interface to ensure research-enhanced policymaking.

#### **D. Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions**

##### **3. Introduction, main issues and trends**

148. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

149. The presence of peace at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, Sustainable Development Goal 16, is inextricably linked to the attainment of the other Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, governance in Africa remains on an upward trajectory. Improvements are being made regarding the rule of law, participation, rights, and transparency and accountability.

150. Notwithstanding, challenges and gaps remain in ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions. Insecurity, social strife, political tension and riots continue to plague the continent. All types of crime, including organized crime, is a challenge, in particular in the large African economies. While participation has improved, driven by democratic elections, it is happening alongside a shrinking civil society space, worsening trends related to freedom of association and assembly, civil rights and liberties, and freedom of expression. Corruption continues to weaken good governance and the compounding principles of inclusion, participation, ownership, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness. Illicit financial flows continue to be a challenge; significant amounts of financial resources are being lost annually from the continent through such flows and other forms of corrupt activities.

#### 4. Key messages

151. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (h) Political leadership and stakeholder participation remains paramount. Good political leadership and effective multi-stakeholder engagement are crucial for ownership, commitment, galvanizing support, mobilizing resources and ensuring accountability pertaining to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (i) Mobilization of adequate and context-specific means of implementation is essential. Although external financial resources are required to implement the 2030 Agenda, Africa must also take active responsibility for its own development. Measures must be vigorously taken to enhance domestic resource mobilization and curb illicit financial flows, attract foreign direct investment and create effective financing structures, including through natural resources management and climate governance. Development partners should complement domestic efforts aimed at capacity and technology development through effective international cooperation programmes;
- (j) Stronger efforts are needed to encourage good governance, transparent and accountable leadership, effective institutions and responsive and effective global partnerships. In this regard, appropriate and results-oriented human and institutional capacity-development strategies and programmes are needed to cover vulnerable and marginalized populations, including young people, women, older persons and people living with HIV, who are agents of, and active contributors to, peace, security and development. Civil society organizations also need to be involved, including through the application of human rights-based approaches that address poverty and unemployment, among other social challenges;
- (k) Deeper and stronger dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders, including global, regional, and national institutions, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, national human rights institutions and religious organizations, is required to promote development and apply appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the targets and indicators of

Sustainable Development Goal 16. Such a framework should entail the development of databases that include non-traditional entities in data collection, such as the judiciary and the police, to facilitate analysis, performance tracking and the provision of technical support to countries, and the integration of Goal 16 into national development plans;

- (l) Stronger efforts are needed to establish or strengthen national human rights institutions in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), in order to ensure accountability, rule of law and access to justice in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (m) A dignified environment must be created for the return and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, vulnerable and marginalized populations, who are often the victims of crises;
- (n) The solidarity of African States in the field of security should be strengthened, with a view to limiting the consequences of transboundary crises, including through advocacy at the international level for security finance in Africa.

## **E. Strengthening the means of implementation and partnerships for sustainable development**

### 1. Introduction, main issues and trends

152. As presented during the session and discussed by participants, the main issues and trends pertaining to this sub-theme may be summarized as set out below.

153. To finance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Africa needs between \$500 billion and \$1 trillion. Compared with other regions, Africa has the lowest ratio of government revenue to GDP. The continent has made significant progress in technology development and transfer based on assessments in terms of information and communication technologies and the import of capital goods, but the pace of the development has declined over 2017–2018, as economic growth and fiscal space contracted, owing to the rising debt burden and growing fiscal deficits. Mobilizing sufficient resources to meet the investment requirements of African countries may entail improving tax and non-tax revenue management and curbing illicit financial flows in order to sustain economic growth and reduce poverty. To implement the 2030 Agenda effectively, adequate capacity is required at all levels.

### 2. Key messages

154. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (a) African countries need to implement integrated resource mobilization, budgeting and development planning processes and decentralized public financial management; to intensify efforts to combat corruption and illicit financial flows; and to simplify subsidy and procurement regimes and approval processes for investment;

- (b) Strengthening capital markets, promoting effective public–private partnership frameworks, provides an important avenue to catalyse capital from the private sector in Africa and beyond. In order to avoid the threat of marginalization, in the case of investors choosing the more developed markets over Africa, efforts to integrate regional capital markets and facilitate cross-listing are critical;
- (c) African countries have the potential to widen the tax base; to reduce revenue collection costs and improve tax administration mechanisms; and to strengthen policies that tackle base erosion and profit shifting, tax avoidance and tax evasion;
- (d) Countries need to address common challenges that impede the harnessing of science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. Such challenges include the lack of capacity to implement related policies, political leadership, balanced engagement and participation to ensure that resources are in line with aspirations, and address fragmentation. In addition, there is need to strengthen the evidence base for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of science, technology and innovation programmes, including those related to social and environmental issues, beyond economic outcomes; to strengthen the governance of science, technology and innovation, including intellectual property management; to invest in human capacity and institutional science, technology and innovation infrastructure; and to support local, regional innovation and intra-Africa collaboration in science, technology and innovation. Gender and age disparity in the field of science, technology and innovation is also a challenge in most African countries;
- (e) In order to measure progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals articulated in Agenda 2063 and targets, all stakeholders need to fulfil their roles in the development process, including in implementation, monitoring and reporting on progress in a coherent manner;
- (f) National statistical systems in Africa need to address the challenge of the availability, accessibility, disaggregation and quality of data. Various mechanisms, tools and innovations should be developed to harness all available data. The key challenge in data quality can be attributed to the differences in methodologies, concepts, definitions and standards used within national statistical systems and across member States, which make international harmonization difficult;
- (g) Adequate investment to strengthen capacities and systems for data gathering and use is needed to ensure accurate assessments of financing needs towards realizing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa. Well-disaggregated and up-to-date data on population trends, the state of social services and infrastructure, and future demand and requirements are needed in order to make accurate projections. Data systems need to be tailor-made, secure and

interlinked across the continent to meet the reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

- (h) African countries must ratify the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and develop national plans and strategies to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Agreement. National plans and strategies should be designed to integrate the broader trade policy of each State and identify the key trade opportunities, current constraints and steps required to take full advantage of the African market, including revenue mobilization and the empowerment of vulnerable groups;
- (i) To unlock the potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhancing the means of implementation, the following should be prioritized: a coherent financing and partnership framework; an institutionalized dialogue and engagement mechanism; a robust review and accountability system; enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development; and optimal use of innovation as an incentivizing and scaling tool;
- (j) The horizontal nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships should not dilute the special lead and accountability role of Governments in promoting strong political will and implementing policy and institutional reforms in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; a more effective approach for doing this is to focus on the aim of leaving no one behind. Strong government institutions and processes that include all vulnerable groups are essential for enhancing the means of implementation;
- (k) Volunteerism should be promoted, as it provides an opportunity for diverse stakeholders to come together to find solutions to local and indigenous challenges, ensuring that, through a participatory, people-centric, socially inclusive approach, no single person is left behind in the search for solutions to development, peace and security and humanitarian challenges;
- (l) Member States are encouraged to engage with volunteers and create spaces and conditions that allow everyone – young people, people with disabilities, women – to contribute to shaping their communities, with a view to ensuring greater ownership of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and, at the same time, enhancing access to the benefits of volunteering;
- (m) Capacity-building, training courses and tools should be considered for facilitating the integration of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (n) It is an urgent imperative for African countries to invest in research and development infrastructure to harness science, technology and innovation in order to empower people and promote inclusivity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (o) Successful deployment of science, technology and innovation as a means of implementation depends on adequate financing. African countries must scale up their investments to meet the African Union goal of investing at least 1 per cent of their GDP in research and development;



- (p) The continent's fast-growing youth population represents rich potential gains in the areas of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, but is a largely untapped resource. With a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, African countries and their partners need to invest in building appropriate technical competencies and creating the necessary environment to encourage youth innovation;
- (q) Many African countries lack science, technology and innovation policies, plans and strategies. Where they exist, the frameworks are poorly funded, implemented and monitored. African countries should therefore develop, strengthen, implement, monitor and evaluate their science, technology and innovation frameworks;
- (r) African countries should promote intra-Africa science, technology and innovation collaboration and partnerships. Such collaboration is key to promoting peer learning, mobilizing resources, minimizing risks and developing regional value chains, and can be supported by continental portals for skills, infrastructures and policies.

#### **F. Submission of the key messages to the high-level political forum and their presentation by the Chair**

155. The Regional Forum requested the secretariat to submit its key messages to the high-level political forum through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, by 30 April 2019. The Regional Forum further requested the Chair to make a presentation of its key messages to the high-level political forum under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council at its meeting in New York from 9 to 18 July 2019, during the session on the reports of the regional forums for sustainable development.

#### **G. Consideration and adoption of the ministerial declaration**

156. Following the adoption of the key messages, the Forum adopted the ministerial declaration, entitled "Marrakech Declaration on Sustainable Development in Africa", the text of which is set out in the annex to the present document.

**X) Consideration and adoption of key messages [agenda item 8].**

157. Following refinement of the key messages in line with the discussion under agenda 7, a revised consolidated set of messages in both languages was presented for consideration and adoption by the Forum.

**XI) Theme, dates and venue of the 2020 session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (agenda item 9)**

158. The forum delegates were provided with the opportunity to volunteer to host the Sixth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

Given that the hosting is based on a rotational basis, Southern Africa was due to host the Fifth Session, however, none of the Southern African countries volunteered to host the Fifth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The Kingdom of Morocco then came forward and expressed interest to host the Fifth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development provided that there was no candidature from a Southern African country.

This year Southern region came back and took its slot and after consultation Zimbabwe offered to host the 6<sup>th</sup> ARFSD in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

159. There was consensus on Zimbabwe decision and it was endorsed by the forum

**X) Closing Session (agenda item 10)**

**CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF KEY MESSAGES**

**Secretary of State in charge of Sustainable Development**

160. The Secretary of State presided on reading the key messages to the participants for comments and adoption. The secretariat took note of comments and all key messages were approved subject to some reformulation in very few ones.

The Secretary of State thanks ECA and its Collaborative partners for a successful ARFSD

**ECA Deputy Executive Secretary**

161. In her closing remarks, Madam Biha, ECA's Deputy Executive Secretary on behalf of the Executive Secretary, Ms. Vera Songwe commended the delegates, Bureau and colleagues from the UN family and ECA for ensuring that the objectives of the Forum are met and for the quality and outcome of the meeting which was excellent and apologized for having come for such a brief period during the Forum.

162. She highlighted that the Forum took into consideration two Agendas, 2030 and 2063 which she closely followed greatly with compassion and highlighted two of the many interesting messages that characterize the work from the forum where very strong messages towards coordination and forging resilience among the African people were reiterated.

163. She mentioned that the coordinated and integrated programme of Agendas 2030 and 2063 and confirms the indivisibility of the objectives of the Forum and that the Key messages would be taken into

consideration for action at the regional, national, and sub-national levels. She reminded the delegates that the implementation period for both Agendas was short.

164. She shared that the ECA would take the outcomes from the Forum to the upcoming Session of the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Financing and Economic Planning slated to take early next year in order to ensure that the recommendations will translate to programmatic and financial support.

165. She thanked the delegates, the Prime Minister of Morocco, H.E.. El Othmani, Prime Minister and Head of the Government of Morocco and Ms, Nezha El Ouafi, Secretary of State in charge of Sustainable Development for presiding over the Opening, and for providing support to the Forum process and thanked the people of Morocco, Partners and UN agencies for making the Forum a Success.

DRAFT

## ANNEX1: Marrakech Declaration on Sustainable Development in Africa

[Original: French]

*We, African ministers and officials in charge of environment and sustainable development, finance and economic development, social development, statistics, and science and technology and representatives of intergovernmental organizations, parliaments, the private sector and civil society of the member States, meeting at the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, co-hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Economic Commission for Africa, under the high patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in Marrakech from 16 to 18 April 2019,*

*Expressing our gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI for the high patronage that he has bestowed upon the Forum, thereby ensuring the necessary conditions for the success of its work, which was characterized by fruitful and rich discussions regarding the monitoring and assessment of the progress accomplished, the exchange of experience in the area of sustainable development in Africa and the formulation of recommendations with the aim of accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level, in preparation for the meeting of the high-level political forum and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in New York in July and September 2019, respectively,*

*Do hereby state that:*

*We reaffirm our commitment to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and our adherence to the guidelines set out for implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the regional meetings, of a general or sectoral nature, and also the key messages adopted at the current fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum in 2019;*

*We call upon all African countries to strengthen South-South cooperation and the sharing of experience among African countries with a view to tackling the multiple and complex challenges and building the multi-stakeholder partnerships, plans and programmes of action at the regional and subregional levels that are needed to ensure the desired development that leaves no one behind;*

*We welcome, in this regard, the initiatives launched at the first Action Summit convened by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on the sidelines of the twenty-second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the establishment of the Congo Basin Climate Commission chaired by the Congo, the Sahel Climate Commission chaired by the Niger, and the Island States Climate Commission chaired by Seychelles;*

*We also welcome the efforts made by the African States to ensure the implementation of these initiatives;*

*We reaffirm the urgent need to take appropriate measures swiftly to bring the consequences of global warming under control, limiting it to a level not exceeding 1.5°C, in accordance with the recommendations of the latest report of the*

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

*We emphasize* the interdependence of peace, security and sustainable development, and recognize the progress that has been made by African countries in that regard,

*We reiterate* the strategic importance of mobilizing adequate, predictable and additional financial resources to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, urge member States to establish effective financing strategies and call upon our development partners to meet their respective commitments in support of Africa;

*We highlight* the difficulty faced by a number of African countries in reporting on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and call for the establishment of a solidarity fund for statistical development, designed to support African countries in the collection of the necessary statistical data;

*We call for* efforts to foster and promote innovation and technology to fill the gaps in data needed for the preparation of national and regional development policies;

*We also call for* the strengthening of the role of stakeholders, in particular parliamentarians, in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;

*We call*, lastly, on all countries to implement the key messages of the Forum and we request the Kingdom of Morocco to present these messages on behalf of Africa to the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2019 and the United Nations summit on the Sustainable Development Goals, to be held in New York on 24 and 25 September 2019.

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



Copy of ARFSD  
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