

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE BUREAU OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE AFRICA
REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT ITS FIRST MEETING,
HELD ON 1 APRIL 2020**

1. Today, 1st April 2020, the Bureau of the Sixth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development comprising representatives of the Government of Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Liberia and Morocco, held its first meeting virtually, with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as the Secretariat of the Bureau, to establish priorities and an execution plan for implementing the key messages and Victoria Falls Declaration of the Sixth session and previous sessions of the Regional Forum. The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of the Bureau, Honorable Professor Paul Mavima (MP), Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe and Chair of the Bureau.
2. Members of the Bureau recognize the current unprecedented and serious challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and note with grave concern the growing loss of human lives and huge negative economic and social impacts of the pandemic.
3. Members of the Bureau have observed that Africa is likely to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic given the region's underlying vulnerabilities. ECA's recent analysis on the impact of the pandemic estimates that economic growth in Africa is expected to drop from 3.2 percent to 1.8 percent. As of March 2020, a decline of 1.4 percentage points is expected from the effects of COVID-19, while African Ministers of Finance have called for an initial support package for African countries of 100 billion USD in 2020.
4. COVID-19 points to the importance of stronger global and regional partnerships to fully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals so as to build resilience to social, economic and environmental shocks and calamities. The Bureau therefore urge member States and other actors to take urgent and collective measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, provide the necessary support to the affected communities and address the social and economic implications of this pandemic.
5. Members of the Bureau pledge their full commitment to expand outreach, and to take and promote concrete actions in following-up and implementing the outcomes of the various sessions of the sixth Regional Forum.
6. Members of the Bureau therefore adopt an Action Plan to be implemented with the support of ECA, regional organizations and the rest of the UN Development system. Through this Action Plan:
 - (a) Members of the Bureau recognize the challenges and need for quality and timely data and statistics for evidence-based planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The Bureau therefore commit to finalize by August 2020, the strategic framework of the Solidarity fund for Statistical Development in Africa as agreed in the Marrakech Declaration of the Fifth session of the Regional Forum.
 - (b) The Bureau commit to work closely with ECA and other United Nations agencies to develop by November 2020, a Regional Strategy to operationalize the Victoria Falls Declaration on the Decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and the key messages of the Sixth session of the Regional Forum.
 - (c) The Bureau will effectively convey the outcomes of the Sixth session of the Regional Forum and champion Africa's position to the 2020 meeting of the High-level

political forum on sustainable development to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July.

(d) The Bureau commit to contribute to strengthening the capacity of member States and catalyze concrete multi-level actions to follow-up and implement the outcomes of the Regional Forum by carrying out advocacy campaigns at key conferences and other events at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels.

(e) The Bureau will take forward and expand initiatives to strengthen the capacity of subnational authorities in selected countries to conduct Voluntary Local Review to better domesticate and bolster local action to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(f) Moreover, the Bureau requests ECA and its partners to develop a monitoring and evaluation tool that enables tracking and comparability of progress of implementation across countries in the region.

(g) The Bureau in partnership with the Secretariat will mobilize resources for the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

7. The Bureau will convene regular meetings to take stock of progress and ensure effective implementation of the Action plan and report on progress accordingly during the Seventh session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in 2021.
8. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) is an intergovernmental forum convened by the Economic Commission for Africa in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and agencies of the United Nations system. The Sixth (2020) session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD 6) will be held under the theme “**2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063**”, in Victoria Falls.

The first Bureau meeting was attended by the following members:

- Prof. Honorable Professor Paul Mavima (MP), Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, **Zimbabwe, Chair of the Bureau,**
- H.E Ms. Nezha El Ouafi, Delegated Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans residing overseas, **Kingdom of Morocco,, Rapporteur**
- Prof. Georges Byeragi, Executive Secretary, Ministry of Economy, **Democratic Republic of Congo, 1st Vice Chair,**
- Hon Jacqueline Amongin, Member of Parliament, **Uganda, 2nd Vice Chair**
- Mr. Benedict Kolubah, Liberia, **3rd Vice Chair**