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Seventh Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CFSSD-7) and The Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

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I Background

The Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), within the context of reform of its intergovernmental machinery, created the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CFSSD), by Resolution 853 (XL) in April 2007. The CFSSD is both a technical and a legislative organ and is composed of high-level experts from governments, academia, Research and Development (R&D) institutions, the private sector and civil society of ECA member States. It meets on a biennial basis and serves as a forum for the promotion of cooperation, exchange of information and sharing of experiences in the areas of sustainable development with focus on food security, agriculture, human settlements and environment, among African countries. It provides advice in these areas to member States and to ECA, on ways to strengthen its support to member States.

It also provides a platform for advocacy and for assessment of follow-up activities by African governments to global plans of action, especially the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Agenda 21, the World Food Summit Programme of Action and the Habitat Agenda. In this regard, the CFSSD meetings have provided platforms for the Africa Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs) to review progress in the implementation of commitments contained in Agenda 21 (A21), the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (PFIA21) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The outcomes of the RIMs feed into the Sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

In line with the above, and in view of the critical importance of mobilising strong political leadership to articulate Africa's concerns and priorities at the Rio+20 Conference, the seventh meeting of the Committee will focus on Africa's preparation for the conference. In light of the foregoing, the CFSSD constituency will be broadened to bring together all relevant actors/stakeholders. The Seventh Session will therefore involve the participation of ministers and high-level experts from a cross-section of sustainable development actors, including governments, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector from member States, as well as from African regional and subregional organizations, and development partners. The Experts Segment will be held from 20 to 22 October 2011 and the Ministerial Segment from 24 to 25 October 2011.

II Context

The Seventh Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CFSSD-7) will build on the achievements of the previous Committee meetings. In line with General Assembly resolution A/64/236, it will also provide the platform for the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, referred to as Rio+20, to be held in Brazil in June 2012. The objective of Rio+20 is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges. The focus of the Conference will include the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: (1) A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (2) The institutional framework for sustainable development.

The Conference is expected to result in a focused political document. The African Union Heads of State and Government, meeting at their 17th Ordinary Session in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from

23 June to 1 July 2011, adopted a decision on Africa's Regional Preparations for Rio+20 (Decision 381 (XVII)), which invited member States to work for a Common African Position on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development and in this context, welcomed the Regional Preparatory Conference. The decision also voiced strong support for the regional preparatory process underway and called for effective engagement of all relevant actors.

The Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20 will thus be the culmination of the Regional Preparatory Process that was initiated in 2010 to feed into the global process. The regional preparations are being coordinated by ECA in collaboration with African regional and subregional organizations and other organizations of the UN system. The preparatory process is intended to provide guidance and facilitate consultations in order to ensure the coordination of Africa's preparations for the Conference in an effective and efficient manner. This is essential to effectively guide and prepare African countries to collectively articulate their concerns and priorities at the Conference and ensure that these are adequately reflected in its outcomes. The process will also serve to strengthen the regional consultative mechanism to support national, subregional and regional level implementation following Rio+20.

III Scope and Objectives of CFSSD-7

The Seventh Session of the CFSSD will focus on concerns related to Africa's priorities and expectation for Rio+20 as well as address some statutory and legislative issues. In this context, the main objectives of the Session are twofold:

The first is to review the implementation of the 2010/2011 work programme of the ECA Subprogramme on Food Security and Sustainable Development (FSSD) and provide guidance on work for the 2012/2013 biennium in the context of the proposed programme budget of the ECA strategic framework for 2012/2013.

The second is to provide a platform for the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20. In this respect, this segment will highlight the need for a comprehensive and a holistic approach to sustainable development and the mix of interrelated actions required to address the key concerns of Rio+20. The main objective of the Conference is to provide a high-level forum to deliberate on the objective and themes of Rio+20 and on other substantive matters of importance to Africa, with a view to arriving at a consensus on Africa's key priorities and concerns, to effectively articulate them and ensure that they are adequately reflected in the outcomes of Rio+20.

IV Format and Themes of the meeting

The meeting is organized along two segments addressing a number of thematic issues, as follows:

A Experts Segment

The Experts Segment will be divided into six main sessions, with a drafting group meeting in a parallel session.

1. Implementation of the 2010/2011 Work Programme of the ECA Subprogramme on Food Security and Sustainable Development

There will be a presentation on Progress in the Implementation of the ECA Subprogramme on Food Security and Sustainable Development (FSSD) during the 2010/2011 biennium. The presentation is intended to elicit guidance from the Committee on work for the 2012/2013 biennium in the context of the proposed programme budget of the ECA strategic framework for 2012/2013.

2. Presentations and discussions on key parliamentary reports

These will cover the following:

- a. Implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Highlights of the Fourth Issue of the Sustainable Development Report on Africa;
- b. Food Security in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Options;
- c. Development of Strategic Agricultural Commodities Value Chain for Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa: An Overview.

3. Presentations and discussions on Special Initiatives

Under this sub-theme, the Committee will examine the following:

- a. Climate Change and Development in Africa; and
- b. The Land Policy Initiative.

4. Experts Segment of the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20

These discussions will afford participants the opportunity to identify the problems and opportunities unique to their situation, and propose specific actions and recommendations to be adopted by the meeting on the following:

- a. Africa Regional Review Report for Rio+20;
- b. Africa Report on New and Emerging Challenges;
- c. Africa Report on a Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication;
- d. Africa Report on Institutional and Strategic Frameworks for Sustainable Development, and International Environmental Governance (IEG);
- e. Statements by Major Groups.

5. Drafting Group for the Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20

Following the opening session, member States will be invited to designate delegates to represent them in an open-ended Drafting Group, which will meet in a parallel session to the plenary sessions. The Group, with the assistance of the Secretariat, will consolidate the discussions from the segment of the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20 on a set of recommendations, within the framework of a draft Africa Consensus Statement, to be reviewed by the Committee for presentation to the Ministers for their subsequent consideration and adoption.

6. Review of the Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20 and Adoption of the Draft Report of CFSSD-7

The Committee will have before it a draft of the Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20 and the report of CFSSD-7 for review. The Committee will make comments and observations on the drafts,

which will form the basis for finalising the draft Statement to be considered by the Ministers. The Report highlighting the broader deliberations will be presented for adoption by the Committee.

B Ministerial Segment

The Ministerial Segment will be divided into three main strands.

1 Opening: setting the tone

The Opening session, which will offer incisive insights, devoted to opening speeches and keynote address by eminent persons, will set the tone for discussion and provide perspectives on the broader picture.

2 Ministerial policy dialogue on the objective and themes of Rio+20

Sustainable development challenges are multifaceted and efforts to meet the Rio+20 agenda will have to rely heavily on a renewed commitment by governments, backed by institutional measures put in place, including enhanced capacities and structured partnerships at all levels.

The ministerial policy dialogue will be interactive, involving high-level panel presentations on the key issues, opportunities and options followed by response from expert resource persons and major groups to further stimulate discussions under the following sub-themes:

- Progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and New and emerging challenges;
- Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the Institutional framework for sustainable development; and
- Means of implementation: bridging the gap.

3 Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20 and Africa's participation at Rio+20

The Conference will also deliberate on a proposal aimed at ensuring Africa's effective participation at Rio+20, including the organization of side events on topics relevant to Africa's sustainable development agenda. The Conference will provide guidance on the proposed participation modalities. The Conference will discuss and consider a draft Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20 and decision/resolution on the Africa Consensus Statement for presentation to the African Union Summit of January/February 2012.

V Documentation

Working documents based on a review of issues will serve as the conceptual framework and an analytical core for facilitating the discussions at both the expert and ministerial segments of the meeting. They will provide useful insights and general orientation and contribute to the discussions on what and how to address the challenges of sustainable development in general, leading to the adoption of a Consensus Statement defining Africa's priorities and choices to achieving the objectives of Rio + 20 in particular. The background papers prepared for the two segments to guide the general discussions and on the sub-themes are included in the list of documents.

VI Expected Outcomes

At the expert level, the expected outcomes include:

- Guidance and direction on a number of sustainable development issues including the implementation of FSSD 2012/2013 work programme.
- Set of practical and action-oriented recommendations on the different thematic areas in regard to advancing its sustainable development agenda.
- Inputs to the key priorities and concerns to be reflected in the Ministers Consensus Statement on the outcomes of Rio+20

At the Ministerial level, the expected outcomes based on the inputs from the general conclusions and recommendations of the experts and on its own discussions, crystallizing further the issues and emerging consensus will be the following:

- The Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20.
- Draft resolution on the Consensus Statement and on modalities for Africa's effective participation at Rio+20 for consideration by the African Union Summit of January 2012.
- Press releases.

VII Participants

Considering the need to have a holistic and coordinated approach to sustainable development involving partnerships among the major stakeholders, the event will bring together as a priority, representatives from relevant government ministries, in particular environment, planning, health, education, gender and population, as well as technical/professional experts involved in addressing issues of sustainable development. Participants will also include Civil Society, Business and Industry Organizations, Academia, and Research Institutions; International agencies and organisations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as Development Partners.

VIII WORKING LANGUAGE

The meeting will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation of deliberations in both languages.

IX Dates and Venue

The meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- The Experts Segment will take place from 20 to 22 October 2011.
- The Ministerial Segment will take place from 24 to 25 October 2011.

X. Administrative arrangements

These are provided in a separate information note.