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Statutory issues

Progress report of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019

I. Introduction

1. The present report sets forth information on the organization of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and on the follow-up to its outcomes. The report covers the main activities, the results achieved, follow-up activities carried out, lessons learned to speed up attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The report also presents information on the planning for the sixth session of the Forum.
2. The report is being submitted to the Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in order to inform it of the progress achieved in the work of the Regional Forum. The Committee is invited to share its views on the lessons learned and to provide guidance on opportunities and recommendations to strengthen the work of the Regional Forum and for Member States to step up the pace and scale of implementation of programmes and activities to attain the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals set out in Agenda 2063.
3. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is organized pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the resolutions of the joint annual meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of ECA, and of the 2018 Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.
4. The Regional Forum is convened annually by ECA in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system. The overall goal of the Regional Forum is to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals set out in Agenda 2063 of the African Union by providing a multi-stakeholder

* E/ECA/COE/39/1.



platform for follow-up and review of the progress made, strengthening learning and advocating effective policy measures and actions for the effective implementation of the two agendas.

II. Organization and results of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

5. ECA, together with the Government of Morocco under the high patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system,¹ planned and convened the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019.

A. Objectives, attendance and main activities of the fifth session

1. Objectives of the session

6. The fifth session of the Regional Forum was convened to conduct the regional follow-up and review of progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063; and to provide a platform for peer learning, including on voluntary national reviews. An additional objective of the Regional Forum was to deliberate and agree on the priorities and policy recommendations of the African continent to inform the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, from 9 to 18 July 2019, and the summit meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals, held in New York on 24 and 25 September 2019.

2. Attendance and proceedings

7. The fifth session was attended by more than 800 participants, comprising ministers and other high-level representatives of the Governments of 45 ECA member States, intergovernmental bodies, major groups and other stakeholders,² United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and other international organizations.

8. The proceedings of the session were guided by its elected Bureau.³

¹ The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteer programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and World Food Programme.

² The term "major groups" refers to the following: groups and associations of women, children and young people; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological community; and farmers.

³ Chair: Morocco; First Vice-Chair: Angola; Second Vice-Chair: Chad; Third Vice-Chair: Uganda; and Rapporteur: Guinea.

3. Focus of the session

9. The fifth session of the Regional Forum was held on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, in line with that of the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum.

10. An in-depth review of selected Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16) for the high-level political forum was conducted, along with Goal 17 and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063, under the following sub-themes:

- (a) Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education;
- (b) Promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth;
- (c) Ensuring reduced inequalities;
- (d) Scaling up climate action;
- (e) Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions;
- (f) Strengthening the means of implementation and the partnership for sustainable development.

4. Preparatory events and side events

11. Twenty-six preparatory and side events were held on the margins of the Regional Forum and complemented the proceedings of its main session. Those events included the following:

(a) Regional preparatory workshop for the Africa voluntary national review countries at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum: in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ECA organized this regional capacity-development workshop for 17 African voluntary national review countries at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum. The objective was to strengthen the integrated voluntary national review and the process of reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to strengthen preparations for the voluntary national review at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum;

(b) The inaugural meeting of the African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum: this meeting was organized by ECA and the Department of Science and Technology of South Africa in collaboration with the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of Morocco. The main objective of the meeting was to review and provide policy recommendations on the role of science, technology and innovation in the effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Preparatory and capacity development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa: the objectives of the workshop were to update major groups and other stakeholders on the follow-up and review process of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063; to promote mutual learning in implementing the 2030 Agenda and tracking progress towards the achievement of the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and to promote dialogue and consensus among the major groups and other stakeholders on their prospects for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

5. Main meetings and activities of the Regional Forum

12. The principal meetings during the fifth session of the Regional Forum included the official opening, a high-level dialogue, round tables, and parallel and plenary meetings on the theme and sub-themes of the session, voluntary

national review and other topics pertinent to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

13. Morocco's Secretary of State for Sustainable Development, Nezha El Ouafi, delivered brief remarks and introduced the Head of Government of Morocco, Saad-Eddine El Othmani, who presided over the opening of the session and delivered the keynote address. The opening of the session also included an address by the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Sustainability of Senegal and chair of the outgoing Bureau of the fourth session of the Regional Forum, Amadou Lamine Guissé, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Giovane Biha, and the Director of Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization, African Union Commission, Mesfin Tessema.

14. The opening was followed by a high-level panel on the theme of the session; plenary presentations and discussions on the support and progress made at the regional and subregional levels on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; a round table on the voluntary national reviews and peer learning on the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; parallel panel meetings for in-depth review, peer-learning and dialogue on the sub-themes of the session; and presentations and discussions of outcomes and proposed key messages emanating from the parallel panel meetings.

15. Those activities enabled the participants at the session to assess progress, reflect on bottlenecks and challenges, and share and explore solutions to the task of attaining the goals, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the region.

B. Key outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Forum

16. The key outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Forum are set out in the following sections.

1. Agreement and adoption of policy options in the form of key messages to advance the implementation of activities aimed at the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding goals set out in Agenda 2063

17. Participants at the session adopted key messages (available at www.uneca.org/arfsd2019) on its theme and sub-themes that considered the challenges, progress and actions required to step up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Those messages were to be taken up by countries and stakeholders in policy dialogue and policymaking towards the implementation of the goals set out in both agendas at national, regional and global levels. The key messages also constituted the continent's regional input to the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum. Some of the key messages formulated at the session were the following:

(a) African countries have committed themselves to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and have made notable progress across all the goals of the two agendas;

(b) Given the extensive challenges, including low economic growth, huge shortfalls in finance for the goals, rising debt stocks and a severe lack of quality data and statistics faced by the region, the goals are unlikely to be achieved in Africa by 2030 at the current pace and scale of implementation. Drastic actions are therefore needed to step up the pace and scale of implementation;

(c) Efforts should be intensified to strengthen the alignment of national development strategies, plans, budget allocations, monitoring and

evaluation frameworks, and bilateral and multilateral development cooperation frameworks with the two agendas;

(d) National efforts and the mobilization of global support must be stepped up, in particular for the least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries in or emerging from conflict that are facing major challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(e) Efforts should be made to enhance the inclusiveness of education, in particular across such dimensions as gender, age, disability and location, through specific policy interventions, including through gender-sensitive and transport policies;

(f) It is crucial for countries of the region to implement business reforms to promote and unlock greater private sector investment, which is vital for the generation of additional revenue and the creation of jobs;

(g) To realize the potential offered by migration in reducing inequalities, actions are urgently required to strengthen arrangements at all levels in order to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;

(h) Developed countries should support African countries with the means of implementation, including capacity development, technology transfer and financing, in particular meeting the post-2020 minimum climate finance goal of \$100 billion annually;

(i) African countries need to implement integrated resource mobilization, budgeting and development planning processes and decentralized public financial management and to intensify efforts to combat corruption and illicit financial flows;

(j) African countries are called upon to ratify and implement the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, including the development of national plans and strategies to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Agreement to mobilize revenue, enhance productivity and achieve inclusive growth;

(k) African countries and their partners need to invest in building appropriate technical competencies and institutions and creating the necessary environment to encourage youth innovation and to derive maximum benefit from the dividends offered by advances in technology, to support the implementation of the two agendas.

2. Adoption of the Marrakech Declaration on Sustainable Development

18. The declaration calls for specific actions to accelerate progress to achieve the goals, including the following:

(a) The strengthening of South–South cooperation and the sharing of experience among African countries with a view to tackling the multiple and complex challenges and building multi-stakeholder partnerships, plans and programmes of action at the regional and subregional levels needed to ensure the desired development that leaves no one behind;

(b) The establishment of a solidarity fund for statistical development to support African countries in the collection, management and use of the necessary statistical data and statistics for compelling and evidence-based policy design, implementation, monitoring and reporting;

(c) Efforts to foster and promote innovation and technology to fill the gaps in data needed for the preparation of national and regional development policies;

(d) The strengthening of the role of stakeholders, in particular parliamentarians, in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Increased understanding and knowledge of policies and practices to conduct voluntary national reviews and to implement activities aimed at the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

19. This was made possible by the increased space for dialogue and the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in carrying out voluntary national reviews, and the design and implementation of national frameworks, including plans and programmes to achieve the goals of the two agendas.

4. Production of policy reports on the various sub-themes of the session

20. The partnership formed in the organization of the fifth session of the Regional Forum was also involved in the production of policy reports (available at www.uneca.org/arfsd2019) on the sub-themes of the session. These reports explored the significance of the sub-theme of the development of Africa, highlighting the progress achieved, challenges and gaps encountered, and options identified for scaling up the implementation of actions to achieve the targets set under the theme. The policy reports supported advocacy and informed deliberations on the key messages of the session.

III. Follow-up to and implementation of outcomes of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

A. Engagement in the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

21. As follow-up to the fifth session of the Regional Forum, ECA provided substantive support to the Bureau of the session and actively participated in a wide range of activities during the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2019. The objective was to provide support to member States with a view to ensuring a strong African voice, effective articulation and appreciation of the concerns and priorities of Africa both during the deliberations and in the outcomes of the meeting of the high-level political forum.

22. The key engagements and follow-up activities set out in the following sections contributed to the accomplishment of the set objectives at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum.

1. Submission and presentation of the key African messages at the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development

23. The outcome of the fifth session of the Regional Forum was submitted to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the African regional inputs to the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

24. Ms. el Ouafi, Secretary of State for Sustainable Development of Morocco and chair of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum, presented the outcome (key messages and Marrakech Declaration) of the Regional Forum to the high-level political forum during its session on the topic: “What are regions telling us about implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals?”

2. Participation in the session on financing the Sustainable Development Goals: moving from words to action

25. The session featured the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Vera Songwe, together with other high-level speakers.

The speakers shared lessons and made specific recommendations on how some of the key ideas set forth in the 2030 Agenda and the outcome document of the 2019 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up could be translated into reality, including with regard to such areas as sustainable investment, domestic resource mobilization and illicit financial flows.

3. Session on thematic review: perspectives of small island developing States, including main findings from the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway

26. The thematic review session was opened with a keynote address delivered by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Samoa, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi. That address was followed by an interactive discussion featuring resource persons and country representatives from across the three regions where small island developing States are located, who highlighted their approaches to the social dimension of sustainable development.

4. Participation in the sessions on voluntary national reviews at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

27. In all, 47 Member States, 17 of them from Africa, presented their voluntary national reviews. The African countries were: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone (presenting for the second time), South Africa, Tunisia and United Republic of Tanzania. By the end of the meeting, 35 African member States had participated in the voluntary national review process. The status of the voluntary national reviews as of December 2019 is set out in the annex to the present report.

5. Regional voluntary national review lab

28. The regional voluntary national review lab was jointly organized by the United Nations regional commissions on the theme: "From presentation to implementation: regional support for follow-up on the voluntary national review process". The voluntary national review lab provided a platform for member States, regional organizations and stakeholders to exchange experiences and identify good practices and recommendations emerging from the regions to support follow-up on the voluntary national reviews, close gaps and accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country and regional levels. The lab featured a panel of experts from each of the regions and an interactive discussion with the participants, representing member States, regional organizations, including United Nations agencies, and major groups and other stakeholders. The Africa region was represented in the lab by Sara Hamouda, from the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 Expert African Peer Review Mechanism.

6. Ministerial luncheon on the theme: "Translating the 2030 Agenda into national sustainable development realities: regional perspectives"

29. The ministerial luncheon was hosted jointly by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Inga Rhonda King, and the executive secretaries of the five United Nations regional commissions (ECA, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Europe). The ministerial luncheon built on the official programme of the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and provided a space for interactive exchange on trends, lessons learned and experiences from different regions. It identified policy responses that could make a tangible difference in diverse country and regional settings, demonstrating the key role of regional cooperation and integration in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

7. Africa Day at the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum: strengthening partnerships to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa

30. The African Union, ECA, the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), and UNDP convened the 2019 Africa Day on the margins of the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum. Africa Day is an annual event that provides a bridge between regional and global processes. On this occasion, it provided a platform to disseminate the outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Forum, share good practices, challenges and lessons learned and promote stronger coordination among partners. Africa Day also provided an opportunity for African countries to articulate the support required from development partners, with the aim of accelerating the implementation of the two agendas while leaving no one behind.

8. Side event on strengthening fiscal policy and harnessing digitization to scale up financing for the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa

31. This event was conceived and convened jointly by the Government of Morocco and ECA and brought together representatives of member States, development partners, the private sector and civil society organizations. Its objectives were to raise understanding and garner support to address the challenge of financing the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa; to foster South-South learning, to highlight the role of that process and to mobilize support for the promotion of sound fiscal policies and the use of digital technology to scale up revenue generation and management to boost investment for the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa; and to increase awareness, mobilize support and explore modalities for operationalizing the solidarity fund for statistical development in African countries in line with the Marrakech Declaration adopted at the fifth session of the Regional Forum.

B. Action plan to implement the outcomes of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

32. The Bureau of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development adopted an action plan to take forward the outcomes of the fifth session and ensure their implementation. The action plan to be implemented by the Bureau together with ECA identified the following five areas: engagement of the Bureau through meetings of the ECA intergovernmental committees of experts and key regional and internal conferences to create awareness of the key messages and Marrakech Declaration; the development of statistics in key sectors and follow-up on the solidarity fund for statistics; and the provision of support for the incorporation at the national level of the Sustainable Development Goals through actions at local, national and regional levels with the participation of pan-African parliamentarians.

33. In line with the action plan, the following activities have been undertaken:

(a) ECA has commissioned a study on the solidarity fund, which will explore the modalities for operationalizing the fund;

(b) Working in collaboration with national and subnational governments, ECA is supporting voluntary local reviews in five subnational governments in selected countries, namely, the cities of Harare and Victoria

Falls (Zimbabwe), Accra (Ghana), and Yaoundé (Cameroon); and Ngora District (Uganda). These voluntary local reviews are designed to illustrate, share lessons and inspire more local governments to conduct such reviews and contribute to stronger voluntary national reviews. Key outcomes will be shared at the 2020 meeting of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;

(c) The Chair of the Bureau presented the outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Forum to the Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa at its eighth session, held in Addis Ababa from 28 to 30 August 2019;

(d) To expand awareness and deepen the engagement of various stakeholders in the work of the Regional Forum, including the implementation of its outcomes, ECA presented the outcomes of the fifth session of the Regional Forum and highlighted plans for the sixth session of the Forum at the following meetings:

(i) Twenty-fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Experts and Officials of Southern Africa, held from 10 to 13 September 2019 in Ezulwini, Eswatini;

(ii) Meeting of stakeholders of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) – African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency, African Peer Review Mechanism, regional economic communities, African Development Bank – held on 25 September 2019;

(iii) African continental workshop on voluntary national reviews and governance of Sustainable Development Goals: lessons learned from the 2019 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the road map to the 2020 meeting of the high-level political forum, held on 21 and 22 October 2019 in Kigali;

(iv) Retreat of African ambassadors serving in Ethiopia, held in December 2019 in Seychelles.

IV. Lessons learned and the way forward to accelerated implementation

34. The following lessons learned and suggestions on the way forward with the aim of increasing the pace and scale of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 were identified:

(a) *Slow pace of overall progress*: Progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, over the four years since its adoption, and Agenda 2063, over the five years since its adoption, has been slow. While much has been achieved in the first four years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including an in-depth review of the 17 Goals, the overall scale of implementation has not been sufficiently ambitious and transformative action will be required to achieve the goals within the set time. To this end:

(i) The decade 2021-2030 must be characterized by urgency and transformative action if countries are to achieve the goals within the set time. The areas where key transformations are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals include the following:

- Human capacity and demography
- Harnessing the digital revolution
- Transition to smart cities
- Decarbonization and expansion of energy generation and access

- Sustainable food production and biosphere management
- Achieving sustainable consumption and production;

(ii) To realize these Goals, political leadership and guidance need to be strengthened. This leadership should promote engagement by the entire government and the entire society in the Sustainable Development Goals, rather than underscoring sectoral approaches;

(iii) Efforts need to be intensified to ensure that national frameworks, including plans, strategies and budgets, are systematically aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(iv) Diverse stakeholders, in particular young people, vulnerable groups, city and other subnational governments and the private sector, must be mobilized and empowered to participate in a full and meaningful manner in the implementation of the two agendas;

(v) Countries need to mobilize requisite financial resources, with a focus on measures to raise domestic revenue. As an input to this effort, countries need to complete their assessments of financing needs for the two agendas;

(vi) Data and statistical capacity should be strengthened to ensure quality and timely disaggregated data and statistics for evidence-based policy design, to ensure effective implementation, tracking and reporting on progress;

(b) *Importance of voluntary national reviews:* These are crucial for sharing lessons learned and advancing implementation of the two agendas. In all, 35 African countries are included among the 142 countries worldwide that have presented their voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum on sustainable development by the end of 2019. Since 2016, a growing number of African countries have been covering both the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063 in their voluntary national review reports. To strengthen the potential of voluntary national reviews to achieve their desired impact, the following recommendations are put forward for future action:

(i) The 10 African countries yet to offer themselves for voluntary national review are encouraged to offer themselves for voluntary review at the 2021 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(ii) Voluntary national reviews must become more evidence-based and the lessons learned from the voluntary national reviews should be translated into better design of policies and programmes, with a view to enhancing their implementation;

(iii) Voluntary local reviews at city, municipal, district or other decentralized government level should be promoted and supported to strengthen voluntary national reviews and to generate action at local and community levels – where such action matters most;

(c) *Action at the regional level:* An important role is played by support at the regional level for countries in conducting and following up on voluntary national reviews and overall implementation through, among other functions, providing a platform for peer learning, expanding multi-stakeholder dialogue on workable solutions and tackling cross-border issues. Regional forums on sustainable development play a key role in promoting peer review, policy exchange, strengthened collaboration and inclusive engagement of a multitude of stakeholders from a wide variety of sectors. To strengthen the work of the regional forum:

- (i) It is important to identify and engage the active involvement of champions and advocates of good practices, with a view to scaling up implementation;
- (ii) Specific activities relating to the key outcomes of the fifth session and preceding sessions should be implemented;
- (d) *Tackling inequality*: There is a vital need for action to tackle the growing and unacceptable levels of inequality within and between countries;
- (e) *Climate change*: Climate change represents a serious threat that could derail progress across all the goals. Countries and stakeholders, including those in the private sector, must take immediate and ambitious action to combat climate change. This will necessitate setting higher ambitions and according balanced attention to mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation.

V. Plans for the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

35. Considering the lessons learned from the past years of implementation of the two agendas, the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is designed to be an action-oriented event.

A. Objectives and expected outcomes

36. The overall objective of the sixth session is to conduct a regional follow-up and review of progress made, facilitate peer learning, and advance transformative solutions and actions to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.

37. The Forum will enable Member States and other stakeholders to explore, gain insight into, share and agree on sets of concrete and workable solutions and actions that will enable the countries to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the set time frame.

38. The Regional Forum will also prepare African countries for the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in New York from 7 to 17 July 2020.

B. Theme and focus

39. The sixth session of the Regional Forum will be held under the theme: “2020–2030: a decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.” This theme is closely aligned with that of the 2020 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development: “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.”

40. The sixth session of the Regional Forum will undertake a review of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. To promote a linked and integrated approach to the review and deliberations during the session, the goals will be clustered around the so-called “five Ps”: people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships.

C. Organization, venue and date

41. The sixth session of the Regional Forum is being organized by ECA, together with the Government of Zimbabwe and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system organizations.

42. The session will be held at Elephant Hills Hotel, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 27 February 2020.

D. Participation

43. The participants will include the 54 member States of ECA (represented by ministers and high-level policymakers and experts from ministries and agencies in charge of economic planning, finance, environment and natural and mineral resources, social affairs, energy, agriculture, justice, statistics and science and technology); the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; the President of the Economic and Social Council; the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (representing Africa in the Bureau); African permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York; representatives of major groups and other stakeholders, including civil society, business and industry organizations, the academic sector and research institutions; the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism; the African Development Bank; the regional economic communities; agencies and organizations of the United Nations system (including United Nations regional directors and all resident coordinators); development partners and other international agencies and organizations.

Annex

Participation of countries in Africa in voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Countries yet to volunteer
1. Egypt 2. Madagascar 3. Morocco 4. Sierra Leone 5. Togo 6. Uganda	1. Benin 2. Botswana 3. Ethiopia 4. Kenya 5. Nigeria 6. Togo* 7. Zimbabwe	1. Benin* 2. Cabo Verde 3. Egypt* 4. Guinea 5. Mali 6. Namibia 7. Niger 8. Senegal 9. Sudan 10. Togo**	1. Algeria 2. Burkina Faso 3. Cameroon 4. Central African Republic 5. Chad 6. Côte d'Ivoire 7. Eswatini 8. Ghana 9. Lesotho 10. Mauritania 11. Mauritius 12. Congo 13. Rwanda 14. Sierra Leone* 15. South Africa 16. Tunisia 17. United Republic of Tanzania	1. Burundi 2. Democratic Republic of the Congo 3. Gambia 4. Kenya* 5. Liberia 6. Libya 7. Malawi 8. Morocco* 9. Mozambique 10. Niger* 11. Nigeria* 12. Seychelles 13. Uganda* 14. Zambia 15. Zimbabwe*	1. Angola 2. Comoros 3. Djibouti 4. Eritrea 5. Equatorial Guinea 6. Gabon 7. Guinea-Bissau 8. Sao Tome and Principe 9. Somalia 10. South Sudan

Key:

*Presenting voluntary national review for the second time

**Presenting voluntary national review for the third time