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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
Seventh session  
Brazzaville (online) 1–4 March 2021

Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda\*  
**Plenary round-table panels on strengthening  
implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda  
2063 at the national and subnational levels:  
voluntary national and local reviews of progress  
made, tools, approaches, lessons learned and the  
way forward to accelerate implementation**

## **Voluntary national reviews and responding to the COVID-19 crisis**

### **I. Date and time**

1. The plenary round-table panel will be held on 2 March 2021 from 2.30 to 4 p.m.

### **II. Introduction and objective**

2. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States Members of the United Nations were encouraged to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels which are country-led and country-driven". Since 2016, 45 African Member States have conducted voluntary national reviews. Ten African countries have volunteered for such reviews at the 2021 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Of those 10 countries, two (Angola and Djibouti) will be volunteering for the first time, six (Cabo Verde, Chad, Madagascar, Namibia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe) will be volunteering for the second time, while the remaining two (Egypt and Sierra Leone) will be volunteering for the third time. Therefore, by the end of the 2021 high-level political forum, only seven African countries would have yet to volunteer for a national review.

3. The objective of this round-table panel is to facilitate learning by highlighting solutions and good practices and exchanging experiences and lessons learned from voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. Panellists will also share insights relating to the challenges of conducting such reviews in the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the role of the reviews in ensuring a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and in strengthening implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

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\* ECA/RFSD/2021/1/Rev.1.



4. Panellists are invited to identify and articulate compelling solutions; share their views, experiences and lessons learned; and identify actions and other measures to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance the implementation of the two agendas.

### **III. Format**

5. The round-table panel will be led by a panel comprised of selected senior policymakers and experts from the countries involved in voluntary national reviews in 2021 or earlier, as well as other countries in Africa that are front-runners in the implementation of Agenda 2063. Major groups and the donor community will also have representatives on the panel. The detailed list is presented in paragraph 7 below.

### **IV. Guidelines**

6. The following guidelines will apply to the plenary round-table panel:

(a) The Chair will introduce the round-table panel, the objective as stated above and the panel members. The Chair will then yield to the moderator, who will guide the dialogue among the panellists and the other participants;

(b) The moderator will invite each panellist to address (in no more than five minutes) one or more of the following questions:

(i) What are the lessons that have been learned from the voluntary national review process?

(ii) How have the reviews contributed to policy and programme reform and other arrangements to accelerate the implementation of and reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in your country?

(iii) Drawing on the review that your country has conducted, what are some of the policies and practices that have worked and why have they been successful with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063?

(iv) What challenges have you experienced in conducting voluntary national reviews and what support could partners at the national, regional and global levels provide to strengthen the reviews and the follow-up thereto?

(v) Who are the key stakeholders in voluntary national reviews and what role did or should they play in the process, including the follow-up?

(vi) What are ways and opportunities to improve voluntary national reviews and reporting thereon, to support recovery from COVID-19 and to speed up implementation of the two agendas?

(c) The moderator will help to foster an interactive dialogue among the panellists. In doing so, the moderator will give representatives of the countries taking part in the voluntary national reviews in 2021 the opportunity to pose questions to representatives of countries that have previously participated in the review process;

(d) The moderator will then invite questions and other contributions from the floor;

(e) At the end of the dialogue, the moderator will provide a summary of the key policy messages, including the recommendations made. The moderator will then yield to the Chair, who will conclude the round-table panel discussion.

## V. Moderator and panellists

7. The moderator and panellists of the round-table panel will be as follows:

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau of the seventh session of the Regional Forum

**Moderator:** United Nations Resident Coordinator for Ethiopia

**Panellists:**

- Minister/member State representative (of a country that will undertake a voluntary national review in 2021)
  - Minister/member State representative (of a country that undertook a voluntary national review in 2020 or earlier)
  - Minister/member State representative (of a country that undertook a voluntary national review in 2020 or earlier)
  - United Nations representative
  - Civil society/private-sector representative
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