



Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Eighth session

Kigali (hybrid), 3–5 March 2022

Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

High-level panel on unlocking financing to build forward better from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerate delivery of sustainable development in Africa

Building forward better: a green, inclusive and resilient Africa poised to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Concept note

I. Background

1. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is an annual multi-stakeholder platform organized jointly by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the host Government in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other entities of the United Nations system. It brings together ministers, senior officials, experts and practitioners from United Nations Member States, the private sector, civil society, academia and United Nations organizations. Accordingly, the eighth session of the Forum will be organized jointly by ECA and the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with partners as outlined above.

2. Like all the other regional forums on sustainable development, the Africa Regional Forum is mandated by the General Assembly. The regional forum is one of the three mechanisms mandated to follow-up, review and catalyse actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by United Nations Member States in September 2015. The other mechanisms are the voluntary national reviews and, at the global level, the high-level political forum on sustainable development. To complement these processes and to bolster local action, national and subnational governments have embarked on voluntary subnational review processes. In Africa, at its sixth session, the Forum mandated the development of regional guidelines to support voluntary local reviews by cities and others subnational governments.

3. In an arrangement unique to Africa, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development undertakes integrated follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. This is because, for Africa, the two agendas provide a synergistic framework for achieving inclusive and people-centred sustainable

* ECA/RFSD/2022/1.



development in the region. The Forum also provides a platform for peer learning, including on voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews by subnational entities.

4. To date, seven sessions of the Forum have been held. Currently, the Congo occupies the chair of the five-member Bureau¹ of the seventh session of the Regional Forum, held in Brazzaville in March 2021.

II. Theme of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

5. The eighth session of the Forum will be held under the theme “Building forward better: a green, inclusive and resilient Africa poised to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”, aligned with that of the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum, namely “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

6. Since its onset in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to unfold with calamitous impacts on people’s livelihoods. Millions of lives have been lost. Recovery efforts to date have been uneven, inequitable and inadequately geared towards achieving sustainable development. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Sustainable Development Goals were already off track, although some progress had been achieved in poverty reduction, maternal and child health, access to electricity, and gender equality. Inequality indicators were also improving, with income inequality declining in some countries. The COVID-19 crisis, however, continues to threaten the reversal of decades of development gains, further delaying the urgent transition to greener, more inclusive economies and throwing progress on the Goals even further off track. It is exacerbating existing inequalities, whether in income, wealth, opportunities or other dimensions, within and between countries and hitting the most vulnerable people and the poorest countries hardest.

7. Notably, the global extreme poverty rate rose for the first time in over 20 years. In 2020, some 120 million people were pushed back into extreme poverty. An additional 101 million children have fallen below the minimum reading proficiency level, potentially wiping out 20 years of education gains and heightening the risk of a generational catastrophe in terms of schooling. In addition, women have experienced rising levels of domestic violence. Child marriage is projected to rise, after a decline in recent years, and unpaid and underpaid care work is increasingly and disproportionately falling on the shoulders of women and girls, with impacts on their educational and income opportunities and health. Tackling inequality will be crucial for reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing the resilience of societies. International solidarity and partnerships will be pivotal to efforts to respond to the health emergency on a global scale, including through vaccine roll-out and strengthened access to financing.

8. Notwithstanding the global economic slowdown, concentrations of major greenhouse gases continue to rise. With the global average temperature reaching approximately 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels, the climate crisis continues to wreak havoc across the globe with far-reaching adverse impacts. Biodiversity is declining and terrestrial ecosystems are being degraded at alarming rates. Evidence shows that 1 million plastic drinking bottles are

¹ Chair: Congo; first Vice-Chair: Kenya; second Vice-Chair: Niger; third Vice-Chair: Algeria; and Rapporteur: Zimbabwe. Information and documents related to the seventh session of the Forum are available at www.uneca.org/arfsd2021.

purchased every minute and 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are thrown away each year.² As the three principal crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and rampant pollution persist concomitantly with the pandemic, the world remains woefully off track in meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

9. Crucially, the pandemic has brought about colossal financial challenges, particularly hitting developing countries remorselessly, with a significant rise in debt distress and dramatic decreases in foreign direct investment and trade.

10. In the African region, notwithstanding progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, available assessments show that countries are similarly off track, with the acute curtailment of gains achieved through years of progress in reducing poverty and improving socioeconomic outcomes. COVID-19 continues to severely test countries' social, economic, political and environmental resilience. According to the African Development Bank, the shock of COVID-19 has meant that Africa will not be able to bridge the large financing gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, estimated at \$200 billion per year, with existing government revenues and development assistance, placing countries in a vicious cycle of liquidity challenges, reduced fiscal space and debt distress.

11. Where education is concerned, the disruption caused by the pandemic has significantly widened the already extensive gaps in access to inclusive quality education and training and, by so doing, constrained the implementation of efforts and achievement of the targets of Goal 4. In or around March 2020, almost all African governments closed schools and training institutions, leaving millions of pre-primary, primary and secondary children and learners following training and vocational courses out of school for an extended period, in some cases for over two years. Despite countries' best efforts to reach children through remote learning, one out of two students, from pre-primary to upper secondary levels, could not be reached. Millions of children also missed out on services that are often provided through schools, such as school meals, immunization campaigns, mental health and psychosocial support, and protection from violence. Consequently, millions of children, especially the most marginalized, are at risk of never returning to school and, as a consequence, of lifelong poverty.

12. The pandemic has severely aggravated gender inequalities, threatening to undermine progress in women's empowerment. While women represent about half of the population of Africa, the continent's gender index has an average of 48.6 per cent, the deficit caused by a wide gender gap in key sectors pertaining to the development of the continent. For Africa to bridge the gender divide and mobilize the African citizenry to be drivers of "the Africa we want", it needs to take a critical look at its commitments to uphold gender equality and women's empowerment and respond to the most challenging instances of inequality. More than ever, women are needed as equal partners in crafting gender-responsive laws, policies and budgets to build forward better and ensure a gender transformative agenda in both private and public spheres.

13. More than 3 billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods and over 80 per cent of world merchandise trade is carried out by sea. Oceans contribute to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and food security. The benefits that they provide, however, are increasingly undermined by human activities. Rising carbon dioxide emissions are driving ocean warming, acidification and deoxygenation, which threaten marine ecosystems and the people who depend on them and are overwhelming the capacity of oceans to moderate climate change. Added to which, overfishing is depleting fish stocks, one third of which are already overexploited. Land-based pollutants, including plastic pollution and nutrient and sewage runoff, adversely affect coastal habitats and communities. These changes have long-term repercussions that require urgent efforts to scale up the protection of marine environments, investment in ocean science and support for small-scale fishing communities and the sustainable management of the oceans.

² For further details, see <https://www.unep.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/>.

14. Although slowing, the rate of loss of forests across the world remains alarming. The proportion of forest area fell from 31.9 per cent of the world's total land area in 2000 to 31.2 per cent in 2020. This translates to a net loss of almost 100 million hectares. The rate of forest loss in Africa is higher than the global average (0.6 compared to 0.12 per cent); Africa had the highest annual rate of net forest loss between 2010 and 2020 (at 3.9 million hectares); and it is only in Africa that the rate of net forest loss has increased in every decade since the 1990s.³ The proportion of forest area in Africa declined by 2.5 percentage points, to 21.3 per cent, during the period 2000–2020. This is of concern, given that the proportion of forest area in Africa is already below the global total of 31.2 per cent. The rate of forest loss has risen mostly because of the conversion of forest to agricultural land. The continuing disappearance of forests signals the need for accelerated action to reduce deforestation, restore degraded lands and implement sustainable forest and land management practices. COVID-19 has been a stark reminder of the need to restore forests and other ecosystems in order to forestall infectious and zoonotic diseases, enhance the resilience of ecosystems to climate change, protect biodiversity and support rural livelihoods.

15. The COVID-19 pandemic has sped up the digital transformation of governments and businesses, profoundly changing the ways in which we interact, learn and work. Yet, nearly half of the global population are still not online. In Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, just over one fourth of the population were connected. The cost of Internet access and Internet-connected devices, and the lack of related skills, are the highest barriers to access for large parts of the world. To ensure that no one is left behind, continued collective efforts are needed to connect the remaining 49 per cent of the world's population. Close collaboration among governments, policymakers and network operators is required to bring the unconnected fully online. In that context, it should be noted that fixed broadband has had a significant impact on the world economy. In least developed countries, however, fixed networks are almost completely lacking, with only 1.3 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants.

16. Where financing is concerned, international private sector investment flows to developing and transition economies in sectors relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals fell by about one third in 2020. Except for renewable energy (where growth in new projects continued but was cut to one third of the pre-COVID level), investment activity fell sharply across all Sustainable Development Goal sectors, with the fall more pronounced in poorer regions. Projections of foreign direct investment for the current year are gloomy. Related risks include the latest waves of the pandemic, the slow pace of the vaccination roll-out and uncertainty about the global investment policy environment. In addition, although remittance flows remained strong in 2020, despite the pandemic, flows to sub-Saharan Africa fell by 12.5 per cent. The growing debt stress has restrained the financing of both COVID-19 recovery and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

17. The world is thus at a decisive juncture in its history. The actions that people take today will have pivotal ramifications for generations to come. With dedicated leadership from the highest political level, countries can still deliver on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the interdependence and linkages among the various dimensions of sustainability – from health, well-being, and social and economic prosperity to climate and ecosystems. To offset the vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic, governments and the international community should make structural transformations and develop common solutions, guided by the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. A renewed commitment to ensure that African growth trajectories create better jobs, advance gender equality, tackle growing poverty, reduce carbon emissions and conserve natural resources and inequalities is a further imperative. This is a strategic

³ For details, see Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Main report", Rome, 2020. Available at <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9825en> <https://www.fao.org/3/ca9825en/ca9825en.pdf>.

opportunity for African countries to adopt different growth models which prioritize value addition, in order to leapfrog technologically to a sustainable, inclusive, job-rich future. The African Continental Free Trade Area, which started trading in January 2021, will be an important lever for a green future, in view of the growing body of evidence that investments in green pathways create more jobs and enhance value addition. Innovative sources of funding, such as the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility launched by ECA and partners, debt swaps for the Sustainable Development Goals, and green and blue bonds will be needed and will play an important role in delivering the requisite financing.

19. Investments in sustainable technology and innovation, climate smart agriculture, renewable energy and transport, biodiversity and human capital development will be fundamental for building forward better and realize a green and resilient Africa. As the pandemic continues to further test multilateral and global partnerships, the interconnected global economy requires a shared global response to ensure that all countries, developing countries in particular, can confront compounding and parallel crises in the areas of health, the economy and the environment and recover better. Strengthening multilateralism and global partnerships is more crucial than ever before to provide equitable, just and transparent processes and systems for the management and implementation of rapid growth solutions. Notably, as the pandemic affects everyone everywhere, building forward better and the implementation of solutions require action and participation from all sectors of society, including governments at all levels, the private sector, academia, civil society and individuals – youth and women, in particular. Above all, African agency and ownership of its development paradigm and of the solutions that it can develop with global partners, will underpin the generation of positive spillovers and delivery of common goals that will benefit Africa and the rest of the world.

20. The decade of action and delivery for sustainable development (2021–2030) hence presents an opportunity and a window of hope to dramatically speed up the pace and expand the scale of implementation to deliver the regional and global goals, alongside recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Previous sessions of the Forum and meetings of the high-level political forum, including at the level of heads of State and government, helped to spotlight several areas in which ambitious and transformative actions will drive progress across multiple goals. Building forward better will require the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and concerted efforts to strengthen the capacity of Africa to respond to shocks such as COVID-19, climate change and biodiversity loss. By so doing, African countries can shift the trajectory of development back on track towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals, aspirations and targets of Agenda 2063, while also strengthening implementation of the Paris Agreement. Lessons learned from the pandemic will help us rise to current and future challenges. Governments need to seize the moment to make this a decade of action, transformation and restoration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and make good on the Paris Agreement.

21. Within that context, the objective, sub-themes and format of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development shall be as set out below.

III. Objective of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

22. The overall objective of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 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 aspirations, goals and targets of Agenda 2063.

23. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis and with a particular focus on five Sustainable Development Goals to be considered at the 2022 high-level

political forum and the corresponding goals of the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, the specific objectives of the Forum are as follows:

(a) To conduct a regional follow-up to and review of the implementation of the selected five Sustainable Development Goals – Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 14 (life below water), Goal 15 (life on land) and Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. The review will also take into account linkages with other Sustainable Development Goals and development frameworks such as the Paris Agreement on climate change; the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway); the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction; the Convention on Biological Diversity; and frameworks on gender and women’s empowerment;

(b) To create space for peer learning and sharing experiences, approaches, good practices and lessons learned on initiatives aimed at inclusive and green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in an integrated manner;

(c) To assess and identify gaps, lagging areas, challenges and opportunities for an inclusive and green recovery that reinforces progress towards full attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) To identify and articulate workable policy options and other measures to boost recovery from COVID-19 and drive accelerated implementation of the two agendas.

IV. Sub-themes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

24. The activities of the eighth session of the Forum will be conducted on the basis of the following sub-themes, which have been crafted around the five Sustainable Development Goals to be considered at the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum:

- (a) Quality education;
- (b) Gender equality;
- (c) Life below water;
- (d) Life on land;
- (e) Partnerships.

25. The Forum will emphasize the critical importance of efforts to ensure the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in the light of their synergistic and mutually reinforcing nature; the two agendas together provide a framework for transformative and sustainable development on the continent. In considering each of the sub-themes, the Forum will take into account the various repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic; consider progress in the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; consider linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals; and identify and promote integrated actions to meet multiple objectives in a coherent manner that ensures that no one is left behind.

26. A concise analytical report will inform deliberations on each of the sub-themes. Such analysis will encompass the corresponding goals of the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063. Among the critical issues to be covered under each sub-theme are:

(a) Key trends and progress towards achievement of the selected targets of the given cluster of Sustainable Development Goals. Under each sub-theme, the Forum will consider and highlight linkages between the selected Goals and other goals and targets, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;

(b) Challenges, constraints and emerging issues, including, in particular, the implications for States of the COVID-19 pandemic and fiscal challenges, as they endeavour to implement the two agendas;

(c) Opportunities and transformative actions, partnerships and measures that countries should adopt in order to promote a resilient and green recovery, build back better in a post-pandemic world and dramatically accelerate implementation of the two agendas.

V. Format of the eighth session of the Forum

27. In the light of challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the eighth session of the Forum will be held in a hybrid format that will provide for both in-person and virtual participation. The Forum will encompass the following pre-session meetings and events, and main segments:

A. Pre-session Forum meetings and events

28. The session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be preceded by meetings that aim to bring together and synthesize diverse stakeholder perspectives and exchange cutting-edge ideas, tools, experiences, good practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In addition, similar meetings will be organized on the margins of the Forum. The outcomes of those meetings will inform the deliberations of the Forum. It is anticipated that pre-session meetings and events will include the following:

(a) Regional preparatory and capacity-building workshop for major groups and other stakeholders, including civil society, academia and the private sector;

(b) Regional preparatory workshop for African voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews: strengthening integration and reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(c) Session of the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa;

(d) Expert workshops and other thematic meetings aligned with the theme and sub-themes of the Forum.

B. Main segments of the eighth session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

29. The eighth session of the Forum will comprise the following main segments:

(a) Opening of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: addresses will be delivered by a representative of the Congo, Chair of the 2021 Bureau of the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development; the Executive Secretary of ECA on behalf of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and special guests and high-level representatives of the African Union Commission and African Development Bank. A representative of Rwanda will then officially open the session;

(b) High-level panel dialogue on unlocking finance to build forward better from COVID-19 and accelerate delivery on sustainable development: the dialogue will set the tone for the Forum, focusing on effective measures to address the overarching challenge of mobilizing adequate and sustainable finance to invest in sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Panellists will articulate the financing needs and provide high-level insights on

opportunities to mobilize finance, focusing on the role of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility designed and launched by ECA and partners;

(c) Plenary presentations and discussions on progress at regional and subregional levels in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: these will provide a synopsis of progress at regional and subregional levels towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063, taking into account the COVID-19 context. Progress and key regional initiatives to build forward better from COVID-19 and achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 will also be considered;

(d) Plenary round-table panel on boosting the generation and use of data and statistics to build forward better and accelerate delivery on sustainable development in Africa: this panel will address the need for scaled-up efforts and highlight opportunities including initiatives at various levels to boost the generation of, access to and use of accurate, timely and disaggregated data and statistics for a green, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(e) Plenary round table on voluntary national reviews and peer learning towards building forward better and accelerating delivery on sustainable development in Africa: this round table will facilitate learning and strengthen practice in conducting and following up on such reviews of the implementation of the two agendas. It is anticipated that the panellists will outline compelling solutions; share their views, experiences and lessons learned from voluntary national reviews; and identify actions and other measures to build forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(f) Round table on voluntary subnational reviews and peer learning to bolster local action to build forward better and accelerate delivery on sustainable development in Africa: this panel will showcase tools such as Africa's voluntary local review guidelines and exchange the experiences and good practices of cities and other subnational governments with voluntary local reviews and the contribution of such reviews to implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 at the local level, strengthening voluntary national reviews and bolstering action to better implement the two agendas in the context of a green, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID 19 crisis;

(g) Parallel meetings for an in-depth review of progress made and peer learning on the sub-themes of the Forum: five parallel meetings will be held on the following sub-themes:

- (i) Quality education;
- (ii) Gender equality;
- (iii) Life below water;
- (iv) Life on land;
- (v) Partnerships.

The parallel meetings will review in depth and facilitate peer learning on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, with a special emphasis on the selected sub-themes. The panellists and participants in each parallel meeting will identify, articulate and agree on as key messages, including policy options and other measures for building forward better and accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The parallel meetings will be open to all participants in the Forum;

(h) Plenary round-table panel on leveraging science, technology, innovation and digital transformation to build forward better from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerate delivery of sustainable development in Africa: this panel will address the importance and application of, and showcase intervention and lessons learned in leveraging, the enabling and transformational power of

science, technology, innovation and digitalization to achieve a green, inclusive, and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and accelerate the delivery of sustainable development in Africa. Deliberations during this panel will capitalize on the outcomes of the fourth session of the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa;

(i) Presentations and discussions on sustainable recovery from the COVID 19 crisis and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: this segment will comprise two sub-items, as follows:

(i) Presentation and discussions on support by the United Nations development system for building forward better and accelerating the delivery of sustainable development. This sub-item will feature a presentation and discussions on the role of and ongoing interventions by entities of the United Nations development system, including through opportunity and issue-based coalitions, to support member States, regional economic communities and the African Union Commission in building forward better from the COVID-19 crisis and implementing in full the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(ii) Presentation by the major groups and other stakeholders: this presentation will be followed by a discussion featuring perspectives from civil society, the private sector and academia on measures to ensure a green, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with a clear goal of full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The discussions will highlight the outcomes of the preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups in the region;

(j) Presentation of commitments and acceleration actions to deliver on sustainable development: this segment is intended to showcase, inspire and scale up transformational actions to speed up progress to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in line with the current decade of action and delivery on sustainable development. Member States, major groups, United Nations system entities and other development partners will present commitments and acceleration actions to achieve the goals of the two agendas;

(k) Consideration and adoption of key messages and the Kigali Declaration on Building Forward Better from COVID-19 and Accelerating Delivery of Sustainable Development: the Rapporteur will present the consolidated set of the emerging key messages of the Forum and the Kigali Declaration on Building Forward Better from COVID-19 and Accelerating Delivery of Sustainable Development in Africa. The key messages and the Declaration represent the collective input by the Africa region to the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

VI. Expected outputs

30. The meeting will generate the following outputs, which will be disseminated widely:

(a) Policy reports on the sub-themes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) Outcome document of the eighth session of the Forum, setting out agreed priorities, policy options and recommendations of Africa, in the form of key messages to accelerate implementation of the two agendas and to serve as the region's collective input to the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(c) Report on the proceedings of the Forum, including on salient issues, priorities, and recommendations pertaining to the theme and sub-themes of the eighth session of Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

VII. Expected outcomes

31. The eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is expected:

(a) To achieve consensus on the urgent priorities for action at subnational, national, regional and global levels to advance inclusive and green recovery from COVID-19 and to accelerate implementation of the two agendas. These priorities will be captured in the form of key messages and a Kigali declaration to be adopted by the Forum, outcomes which will also be presented by the Chair of the Bureau of the eighth session of the Forum to the high-level political forum at its 2022 meeting, to be held in New York in July 2022;

(b) To strengthen the capacity of the 2022 voluntary national review countries to undertake their reviews and present the review reports at the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum;

(c) To furnish member States, civil society, the private sector, academia and development partners with increased knowledge and skills and to equip them with tools to act on and widen the reach of the Forum's outcomes;

(d) To enhance commitment and momentum and to expand partnerships to advance recovery from COVID-19 and to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

VIII. Documentation

32. The documents for the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development include the following:

(a) Pre-session documentation:

(i) Concept note for the Forum;

(ii) Africa regional report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

(iii) Report on ECA and African Union support for the implementation, follow-up and review of the two agendas;

(iv) Concise analytical reports covering the sub-themes of the session;

(v) Reports and outcome documents of relevant past meetings and events;

(j) Post-session documentation:

(i) Agreed key messages of the Forum to the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(ii) Final report on the deliberations of the eighth session of the Forum, including on salient issues, priorities and recommendations on the theme of the session;

(iii) Report of the fourth session of the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa;

(iv) Report of the regional workshop on voluntary national reviews;

(v) Report of the regional workshop for major groups and other stakeholders.

IX. Participants

33. The meeting will be attended by representatives of:

- (a) All 54 member States of ECA (ministers and high-level policymakers and experts from ministries and agencies in charge of economic planning, finance, environment, natural resources and mineral resources, social affairs, energy, agriculture, justice, statistics and science and technology);
- (b) African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency and Africa Peer Review Mechanism;
- (c) African Development Bank;
- (d) Regional economic communities;
- (e) Agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and other international agencies and organizations;
- (f) Major groups and other stakeholders, including civil society, business and industry organizations, and academic and research institutions;
- (g) Development partners.

X. Working languages

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

XI. Dates and venue

35. The eighth session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be held, in a hybrid format, in Kigali from 3 to 5 March 2022.

XII. Contacts

36. Enquiries relating to the organization of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development should be directed to:

Jean-Paul Adam
 Director
 Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management
 Division
 Economic Commission for Africa
 Email: jean-paul.adam@un.org

Nassim Oulmane,
 Chief
 Green and Blue Economy Section
 Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management
 Division
 Economic Commission for Africa
 Email: oulmane@un.org