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Statutory issues

Report of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on its ninth session and follow-up activities

I. Introduction

1. The present report is 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) to inform it of the work, outcomes and follow-up of the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The Committee is invited to share its perspectives and provide guidance and recommendations in relation to the contents of the report with a view to stepping up the pace and scale of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

2. The report sets out the plans for the tenth session of the Forum, so as to inform members of ECA and other stakeholders and catalyse their engagement in the planning process.

3. The Forum is convened annually by ECA together with the Government of the host country and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and various entities of the United Nations system. The overall goal of the Forum is to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, with a focus on reviewing progress, strengthening learning and advocating policy measures and actions to implement the two agendas effectively.

II. Organization, focus and outcomes

4. ECA, together with the Government of the Niger and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United

* E/ECA/COE/42/1.



Nations system,¹ convened the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in Niamey from 28 February to 2 March 2023.

5. The session was attended by more than 900 participants in person and over 1,000 online, comprising ministers and other high-level representatives of the Governments of 44 members of ECA and representatives of intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities, other international organizations and major groups and other stakeholders.

A. Context, focus and objectives

6. The session was held as the world remained caught up in economic uncertainty caused by multiple crises, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change, biodiversity loss and the war in Ukraine. The convergence of those crises had amplified economic hardship, reduced prosperity and hampered progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The Regional Forum was held in the lead up to and preparation for the 2023 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held in July 2023, and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held in September 2023.

8. The theme of the session was “Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union”.

9. During the session, an in-depth review of progress was carried out and measures were identified to accelerate efforts to attain the five selected Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063.

10. The session also offered an opportunity for participants to learn from one another, share good practices and devise and promote solutions, including policy options and concrete initiatives, to accelerate and expand the scale of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

11. The proceedings of the session were guided by its elected Bureau.²

B. Main and other meetings during the Forum

12. The session was officially opened by the President of the Niger, Mohamed Bazoum. Welcoming remarks were delivered by the Governor of Niamey, Oudou Ambouca. Opening statements were delivered by the Secretary

¹ The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Development Coordination Office, 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 Special Adviser on Africa, 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 Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office to the African Union, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteers, World Food Programme and World Trade Organization.

² Chair: Niger; First Vice-Chair: Morocco; Second Vice-Chair: Namibia; Third Vice-Chair: Chad; and Rapporteur: Ethiopia.

of State for Business Development of Cabo Verde, Adalgisa Vaz, on behalf of the Chair of the Bureau of the eighth session of the Forum; the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA, Antonio Pedro; the President of the Economic and Social Council, Lachezara Stoeva; the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa; youth representatives, Anita Hamidou and Moustapha Djafare; and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed.

13. The proceedings of the session featured the following main meetings:

(a) Two high-level panels on two topics: “From Africa to the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit: priorities to address multiple crises and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union” and “From the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and beyond: financing to achieve inclusive recovery and just transitions and to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union”;

(b) Two plenary round-table panels, one on national and subnational actions and reviews to speed up and scale up implementation in Africa, and another on rethinking data availability and data systems in Africa to address multiple shocks and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(c) Parallel meetings for an in-depth review of progress made and peer learning on the sub-themes of the session around the five selected Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063;

(d) A plenary round-table panel on leveraging science, technology, innovation and digital transformation for accelerated recovery and implementation of the two agendas;

(e) Presentations and discussions on actions and partnerships to accelerate the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the two agendas.

14. The main meetings of the session were preceded by several events held on its margins. The outcome of those events enriched deliberations during the Forum. Among those events were:

(a) The fifth African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum;

(b) The regional preparatory workshop for African voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews, with a particular focus on the seven African countries conducting voluntary national reviews in 2023;

(c) The second session of the fourth Africa climate talks;³

(d) The preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in the African region for the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;⁴

(e) A total of 24 side events aligned with the theme and sub-themes of the session.⁵

³ The concept note, programme of work and presentations for the session are available at www.uneca.org/eca-events/fourth-africa-climate-talks-second-session.

⁴ The concept note and report on the workshop are available at www.uneca.org/eca-events/index.php/node/131.

⁵ For details on the side events, see www.uneca.org/eca-events/side-events.

C. Main outcomes and results

15. The main outcomes and results of the session are described in the following paragraphs.

1. Commitment to support and expand innovative and transformative initiatives to deliver tangible results at scale and speed aligned with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

16. Forum participants reached a consensus, expressed commitment to and called for increased support for initiatives that have a strong potential to drive at scale the rescue of the attainment of the Sustainable Development in Africa. The initiatives included:

(a) The implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, which has multiplier impacts across multiple Goals;

(b) The great blue wall initiative, which is designed to protect 2 million km² of marine areas and restore 2 million hectares of critical coastal and marine ecosystems and, thus, help to sequester 100 million tons of carbon and create 1 million to 2 million blue jobs by 2030;

(c) The sustainable debt coalition, which is aimed at addressing the difficult fiscal positions of emerging markets and developing economies and their debilitating impact on climate action and development; reducing the cost of green financing for emerging economies, to spur coalition partners to agree on a set of new crucial commitments to alleviate the debt burden while supporting the environment; and launching a new track for consultations at the intersection of debt, climate and development;

(d) The battery mineral value chain initiative, which is designed to promote the adding of value to the mining of such minerals as cobalt, copper, graphite and manganese on the continent and using them to fuel new job-creating and income-generating industries across the mineral value chain;

(e) A regional carbon credits registry and an African carbon markets initiative, which are aimed at developing and expanding credible registries of carbon credit projects across Africa to generate tradable carbon credits to support local communities, improve access to clean energy and protect land, forests and marine ecosystems;

(f) An initiative relating to Goal 7, the aim of which is to accelerate private sector investment in expanding access clean energy with a view to mitigating climate change.

2. Key messages to advance the implementation of activities aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

17. Participants in the session adopted key messages on its theme and sub-themes that addressed the challenges, progress and policy options and actions required to step up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.⁶

3. Niamey Declaration on accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

18. In the Niamey Declaration on accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We

⁶ The summary and key messages adopted at the Forum can be accessed at www.uneca.org/eca-events/sites/default/files/eventdocumets/ARFSD_9_Summary_and_Key_Messages_EN.pdf.

Want, of the African Union, participants in the session requested the accelerated implementation of the two agendas, and recognized the need to address the impact of cascading crises throughout the world. Through the Declaration, the participants welcomed and called for more transformational initiatives to accelerate the implementation of the two agendas.⁷

19. The Niamey Declaration and the key messages arising from the session (ECA/RFSD/2023/12) constituted the African regional input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July 2023, and to the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held under the auspices of the General Assembly in September.

20. A summary of selected initiatives, policy options and actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063, drawn from the key messages and the Niamey Declaration, is contained in annex I to the present report.

4. Peer learning and capacity development on policies, plans, programmes and practices and the conduct of voluntary national and local reviews aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

21. The session provided a space for dialogue and the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in relation to efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063, including the design and implementation of national frameworks; the conduct of voluntary national and local reviews of the two agendas; science, technology and innovation; and climate action and the inclusion of major groups and other stakeholders.

5. Background policy reports on the various sub-themes of the session

22. In preparation for the session, a policy report was produced on each sub-theme, covering the significance of the sub-theme to the development of Africa and highlighting the progress, challenges, gaps and options for scaling up the implementation of action to achieve the targets set under the sub-theme.⁸

III. Follow-up to the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

23. As part of the follow-up to the ninth session of the Forum, ECA and its partners undertook activities to promote the uptake of the outcomes of the session and support members of ECA in conveying African concerns and priorities during the deliberations and in the outcomes of the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. The main follow-up activities are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

1. Submission and presentation of the key messages to the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development

24. The key messages adopted by the Forum were submitted to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat as the African regional input to the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

⁷ The declaration can be accessed at www.uneca.org/eca-events/sites/default/files/eventdocuments/ARFSD_9_Niamey_Declaration_Final_EN.pdf.

⁸ The policy reports can be accessed at www.uneca.org/eca-events/ninth-session-africa-regional-forum-sustainable-development/documents.

Subsequently, the Minister for Environment and Combating Desertification of the Niger and the Chair of the ninth session of the Forum, Garama Saratou Rabiou Inoussa, presented the key messages during the high-level segment of the political forum.

2. Participation in the sessions on voluntary national reviews at the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development

25. ECA participated in the sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development concerning voluntary national reviews to support and reinforce the messages of the seven African countries (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) that were presenting their reviews during the high-level political forum.

3. Participation in the ministerial segment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council

26. ECA participated in the programme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which featured, among other items, the opening of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, a ministerial segment, a fireside chat on the Global Sustainable Development Report, a general debate on building momentum towards the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the presentation of messages from the United Nations Environment Assembly and the regions, the introduction of the reports of the Secretary-General on the theme of the high-level political forum for the high-level segment (E/2023/78), the introduction of the report of the Committee on Development Policy (E/2023/33), and a panel discussion on overcoming an excessive focus on short-term results.

4. Convening and participating in Africa Day

27. Africa Day is an annual event at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and is organized jointly by ECA, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and the United Nations Development Programme. It brings together ministers, experts and practitioners to share good practices and lessons learned to overcome challenges facing African States in their efforts to implement and monitor the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. In addition, the Day is aimed at raising awareness and promoting the outcomes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The theme in 2023 was “Harnessing water and energy for Africa’s sustainable industrialization and inclusive economic transformation”.

5. Convening and participating in side events at the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development

28. ECA joined partners to convene or to participate in side events to the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development to articulate and advance African perspectives and priorities. The events related to the following topics:

(a) Bridging gaps and forging partnerships to enhance reporting on Sustainable Development Goals in Africa;

(b) Innovations and frontier technologies that assist with the preparation for voluntary national reviews and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into voluntary national reviews to support the acceleration of the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Adapting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to the local context in Uganda;

- (e) Charting a pathway towards accelerated digital transformation in Africa;
- (f) United Nations Group on the Information Society;
- (g) Harnessing the power of digital innovation for a sustainable world following the COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society action lines for advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (h) Transformation from the ground up by acting at the local level;
- (i) Harnessing high-impact policies in the local context to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through Goal 11 and towards the Sustainable Development Goals Summit;
- (j) Regional approaches to building urban resilience and responding to crises by adapting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to the local context.

6. Engagement at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit

29. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit was held in September 2023 and marked the culmination of multilevel preparatory forums and other meetings, including the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, that generated specific and actionable acceleration policies, measures and other interventions relating to the Goals.

30. At the Summit, ECA and partners launched the Africa Sustainable Development Report, which provides policy options for the ambitious scaling-up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

31. In addition, as part of the Global Africa Business Initiative, ECA held high-level discussions on building a battery electric vehicle value chain in the region and helped to push forward a landmark cross-border battery initiative between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia.

IV. Items for consideration emerging from the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit

32. The process that led up to the high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit set the tone for the selection of 12 high-impact initiatives aimed at demonstrating that transformative progress was possible despite challenging global circumstances. The initiatives were also aimed at galvanizing further leadership and investment to spur progress towards achieving the Sustainable Goals at scale between now and 2030. A table containing a brief description of the initiatives is set out in annex II to the present report.

33. At the high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, Heads of State and Government and high representatives adopted political declarations that included commitments and calls to action relating to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

34. The Committee of Experts is invited to provide guidance and identify further actions needed to address emerging issues and to fulfil the commitments and implement the calls for action made in those political declarations, the most salient of which are set out in annex III to the present report.

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

35. The theme of the tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be aligned with the theme of 2024 high-level political forum, namely, “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”.

36. The key features of the tenth session will include:

(a) An in-depth review of five selected Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 1 (no poverty), Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 13 (climate action), Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063;

(b) The identification of measures to take forward the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and to operationalize the 12 high-impact initiatives to accelerate the achievement of the Goals;

(c) Preparation and articulation of the African regional input to the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, which will be held in New York from 8 to 18 July 2024;

(d) Africa’s preparations and input for the Summit of the Future, which will be held in New York on 22 and 23 September 2024.

37. The tenth session will be organized by ECA together with the host country, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system. It will be held during the week of 22 April 2024.

38. The session will be attended by ministers, other high-level policymakers and experts from all States Members of the United Nations in the region, along with representatives of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the African Union Development Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism, regional economic communities, United Nations system organizations and other development partners, major groups and other stakeholders.

39. Members of ECA, regional and subregional organizations, major groups and other stakeholders, organizations of the United Nations system and other development partners are invited to:

(a) Contribute to the organization of the session;

(b) Plan and participate in the session, including by organizing and holding side events to support the deliberations during the session.

Annex I

Selected initiatives, policy options and actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and goals of Agenda 2063

1. The following paragraphs are a summary of salient messages, selected initiatives, policy options and other actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, drawn from the key messages and the Niamey Declaration that arose from the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

A. Salient trends and cross-cutting policy options and actions

2. The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 are essential frameworks for achieving shared prosperity in a world that is peaceful, just and resilient to multiple shocks. Halfway towards the deadline for fully implementing the 2030 Agenda, however, most African countries are struggling and are generally not on track to meet most of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. Unrelenting efforts are needed to achieve those Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.

3. Innovative and transformative initiatives, such as the great blue wall, great green wall, battery and electric vehicle value chain and regional African carbon markets; digital transformation; the capitalization of the demographic dividend of the African youth population; and the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area will be important drivers in the full implementation of the two agendas in Africa.

4. Members of ECA and their development partners should support and implement targeted actions to strengthen national and subnational institutional arrangements to mainstream the Goals into plans and budgeting frameworks and to achieve the Goals.

5. To attain the Goals, it is crucial to reinforce people-centred approaches and boost the engagement of vulnerable populations and those at risk of being left behind by channelling funding to unlock the agency of women and girls, young and older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, local communities, refugees, displaced persons and immigrants.

6. The demographic dividend can be realized through targeted investments to strengthen human capital, expand opportunities for job creation and manage global commons.

7. Resident coordinators should boost their support for revitalizing national institutions and development plans and advancing transformational initiatives to recover from multiple crises and achieve the Goals.

8. Members of ECA should integrate climate change into national development planning and budgeting.

B. Voluntary national and local reviews

9. Members of ECA and their partners should strengthen voluntary national reviews and use them as accountability mechanisms to ensure the delivery of public services to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. Moreover, strong links must be established and maintained

among voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews to strengthen human rights-based approaches, data collection and policymaking.

10. Members of ECA and their partners must ensure that voluntary national reviews and all action taken to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 are fully inclusive and involve the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders.

11. Entities of the United Nations system should continue to support local communities and governments in undertaking voluntary local reviews in order to adapt the sustainable development agenda to local contexts.

C. Data and statistics

12. Road maps should be designed, financed and implemented to modernize and transform national statistical systems to inform the formulation of data-driven policies and programmes and for reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

13. Members of ECA and their partners should increase financing at the national level for the sustainable production of data and strengthen digitalization efforts and new and innovative data technologies.

D. Science, technology and innovation

14. Science, technology and innovation policies and strategies should be incorporated and fully implemented as integral priorities of national development visions and plans to drive the implementation of the two agendas.

15. Members of ECA and their development partners should invest massively in science, technology and innovation, ensuring that funding mechanisms are aligned with African development priorities and that endogenous and local knowledge is taken into account in the development of economic models and research on the continent.

E. Initiatives, policy options and actions specific to the selected Sustainable Development Goals and corresponding goals of Agenda 2063

1. Clean water and sanitation

16. Members of ECA should increase domestic resource allocation to, and facilitate private sector investment in, improving and developing water and sanitation infrastructure and managing water resources, in particular transboundary groundwater resources.

17. Members of ECA and development partners should promote and support the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into plans and policies to manage water resources.

18. ECA and the United Nations system should revitalize UN-Water/Africa so that it can efficiently and effectively deliver in response to requests by countries and regions for technical support.

2. Affordable and clean energy

19. Development partners should support investment in natural gas as a transition fuel in Africa, in line with the Kigali Communiqué of the Sustainable Energy for All Forum and the African Common Position on Energy Access and Just Transition, to spur the faster and at-scale integration of variable renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar energy and green hydrogen.

20. African countries and their partners should promote renewable energy, a just transition and the implementation of green and resilient infrastructure, including by defining and pursuing economic models that are built on sustainable value chains, allow African countries to yield the benefit of their natural resources, and build on the comparative advantage of the continent through its natural capital and demographic dividend.

21. African Governments should urgently strengthen their policies and create an enabling environment to use limited public resources to leverage foreign direct investment and investment by the African private sector in the energy transition.

3. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

22. Members of ECA should invest in projects to promote industrialization and the export of finished goods so as to exploit fully the opportunities stemming from the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

23. African Governments should implement policies and strategies to scale up innovation, support small and medium-sized enterprises, create jobs and boost productivity in Africa.

4. Sustainable cities and communities

24. African countries and their partners should build the resilience of cities to climate-induced disasters, including by strengthening governance capacities and multi-hazard early warning and early action systems, and leveraging the programmatic partnership approach of the “Making Cities Resilient 2030” initiative across the continent.

25. Members of ECA should create an enabling environment for an inclusive governance architecture for urban planning, in particular for the inclusion of such marginalized groups as migrants, refugees and persons living with disabilities.

5. Partnerships for the goals

26. The financing of the Sustainable Development Goals should be delivered through concrete actions to reform the global financial architecture to make it responsive to African needs.

27. The Sustainable Debt Coalition and the loss and damage fund that was announced at twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be urgently operationalized.

28. Partnerships and action should be galvanized to rescue and foster accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals at the 2023 high-level political forum on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, including through specific measures to promote investment to use African renewable energy and mineral resources sustainably, leverage the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and strengthen the monitoring and accountability mechanisms related to the Sustainable Development Goals at various levels.

29. Addressing security challenges and committing to lasting peace across the continent, including through regional and global solidarity, is a prerequisite to accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063.

Annex II

High-impact initiatives

The 12 high-impact initiatives (6 transitional, 1 cross-cutting and 5 enabling) listed in the table are aimed at demonstrating that transformative progress is possible, despite challenging global circumstances, and at mobilizing further leadership and investment to bring progress to scale between now and 2030. They are intended to scale up and speed up the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁹

Transitions	Scaling up ambition to deliver on Goal 7 through energy compacts
	Leveraging the power of biodiversity and nature to drive equitable economic progress
	Transforming education to build a better future for all
	Accelerating job creation and social protection for just transitions globally
	Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger
	Building inclusive digital public infrastructure
Cross-cutting	Eliminating violence against women and girls
Enablers	Scaling up long-term affordable financing for the Goals
	Transforming trade to boost economic development
	Strengthening local coalitions to achieve the Goals by 2030
	Building public-sector capabilities for the future
	Unlocking the power of data for the Goals

⁹ For more information, see www.un.org/en/sdg-summit-2023/page/transformative-action.

Annex III

Commitments, calls for action and issues emerging from the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit

1. With a view to facilitating consideration by the Committee of Experts, the commitments and calls for action made in the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/HLPF/2023/L.1) and in the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (A/RES/78/1, annex), along with emerging issues that were discussed at the forum and at the Summit, are listed below.

A. Commitments

2. The Heads of State and Government and high representatives committed to:

(a) Act with urgency to realize the vision set out in the 2030 Agenda as a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, leaving no one behind;

(b) Bold, ambitious, accelerated, just and transformative actions, anchored in international solidarity and effective cooperation at all levels;

(c) Continue to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their national policy frameworks and develop national plans for transformative and accelerated action;

(d) Continue to take action to bridge the digital divides and spread the benefits of digitalization;

(e) Take action to strengthen international, national and local data systems efforts to collect high quality, timely, relevant, disaggregated and reliable data on Sustainable Development Goal progress and to intensify efforts to strengthen data and statistical capacities in developing countries;

(f) Advance in a timely manner the Secretary-General's proposal to address the Sustainable Development Goal financing gap through a stimulus, to tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, to enhance support to developing countries and to massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development and expand contingency financing to countries in need;

(g) Prevent and combat illicit financial flows and strengthen international cooperation and good practices on assets return and recovery;

(h) Support reform of the international financial architecture and of international financial institutions and multilateral development banks;

(i) Explore measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product to have a more inclusive approach to international cooperation.

B. Calls for action

3. The Heads of State and Government and high representatives issued a call for action to:

(a) Scale up debt swaps for Sustainable Development Goals, including debt swaps for climate and nature, and debt swaps for food security, as appropriate, while

recognizing that debt swaps cannot replace broader debt treatments in unsustainable debt situations, to allow developing countries to use debt service payments for investments in sustainable development;

(b) Urgently and voluntarily re-channel special drawing rights to countries most in need, including through multilateral development banks, while respecting relevant legal frameworks and preserving the reserve asset character of special drawing rights.

C. Emerging issues

4. Emerging issues that were discussed during the high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit related to the following:

(a) Considering digital literacy and universal Internet connectivity as the foundational pillars of the fourth industrial revolution to help to prevent the exacerbation of the digital divide;

(b) Making voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews more data- and evidence-based and participatory, and using the outcomes of those reviews to strengthen the reform and implementation of policies and plans at the national and local levels;

(c) Undertaking joint work to boost the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through 12 high-impact initiatives;

(d) Increasing efforts to promote gender and women's rights; and including and strengthening voices from the private sector, civil society and young people in the design, implementation and review of policies, plans and programmes relating to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Harnessing the potential in mineral, water and energy resources to drive green industrialization in Africa.
