



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
25 April 2024

Original: English

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## Economic Commission for Africa

### Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Tenth session

Addis Ababa (hybrid), 23–25 April 2024

Agenda item 11\*

**Consideration and adoption of key messages and the Addis Ababa declaration on the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to eradicate poverty in times of multiple crises**

## Tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: summary and key messages

### I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system,<sup>1</sup> convened the tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, in a hybrid format with both in-person and online participation, from 23 to 25 April 2024.
2. The Forum was attended by more than **XXX** participants, comprising ministers and high-level representatives of the Governments of **XX** members of ECA, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, other international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders.
3. The tenth session of the Forum was held on the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises:

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\* ECA/RFSD/2024/1/Rev.3.

<sup>1</sup> The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: United Nations 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 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 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Office to the African Union, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteers programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, World Food Programme and World Trade Organization *[amend as appropriate]*.



the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”, which closely aligned with that of the 2024 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, namely “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”.

## II. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

4. The opening segment was moderated by the journalist Hannane Ferdjani. It was officially opened by the Minister for Planning and Development of Ethiopia, Fitsum Assefa. Opening statements were delivered by the Minister for Hydraulics, Sanitation and the Environment of the Niger and Chair of the outgoing Bureau, Maizama Abdoulaye; the Executive Secretary of ECA, Claver Gatete; the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa; the Prime Minister of Uganda, Robinah Nabbanja; and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed.

5. Mr. Abdoulaye noted that the Forum was an opportunity for Africa to reaffirm its collective commitments, including those to future generations. Underscoring the numerous challenges impeding the continent’s achievement of the goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, he called for innovative solutions to bridge the financing gap, make debt more sustainable, tackle the adverse effects of climate change and foster gender equality and social inclusion.

6. The Executive Secretary of ECA highlighted the critical need to address the pressing fiscal challenges faced by Africa, which were hindering efforts to raise climate finance and reform the global financial architecture. A strategic focus was needed on areas in which action could have the greatest possible impact, namely the six transitions: food systems; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and social protection; and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It was important to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area to establish regional value chains for African critical minerals, in order to harness the global drive towards net zero to generate wealth for the continent. He also stressed the importance of collaboration and partnerships among all stakeholders, including the private sector.

7. Ms. Nsanzabaganwa noted the adoption of the second 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and the urgent need to tackle the development challenges faced by Africa. She emphasized the importance of strengthened collaboration, between the African Union and ECA, and the need to de-risk financing and mobilize domestic resources.

8. Ms. Nabbanja highlighted debt sustainability as a critical challenge for many African States and advocated the urgent reform of the global financial architecture. She emphasized the continent’s potential as a source of innovation and solutions that could be adopted elsewhere in the world, citing a number of initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and empowering young people and women, and observed that sustainable development could be driven by climate-smart agriculture, science, technology and innovation.

9. The Deputy Secretary-General underscored the negative effects on Africa of global crises and shocks, in particular the resulting contraction of fiscal space for such vital sectors as education and health care. Accordingly, Africa should strengthen its collective voice in calling for the proposed Sustainable Development Goal stimulus of \$500 billion per year. Lastly, she stressed the need to scale up measures that contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

10. Ms. Assefa, noting that Africa faced such challenges as climate shocks,

geopolitical tensions and extreme poverty, highlighted the importance of focusing on development priorities, including poverty reduction, peacebuilding and the empowerment of women and young people. In that context, she drew attention to the progress made by Ethiopia in mobilizing domestic resources to channel into its own development.

### III. Summary and key messages

11. The following sections contain a summary of the main issues, trends and key messages, including policy recommendations arising from the presentations and deliberations during the tenth session of the Forum. The key messages comprise priorities, policy options and recommendations for Africa, to accelerate implementation at multiple levels, and the region's collective input to the 2024 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

#### A. High-level panel 1: Stepping up ambition and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union [agenda item 2]

##### 1. Introduction

12. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/4/Rev.1).

13. The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa, gave a keynote address on the second 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, underscoring the role of Agenda 2063 and its vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. She discussed the seven pillars on which the Agenda was focused: prosperity; regional integration; governance and accountable institutions; peace and security; promotion of cultural uniqueness and diversity; investment in human capital, with a focus on women and young people; and Africa as a robust and influential player in the global arena.

14. The Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Hanan Morsy, introduced the report on African progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 (ECA/RFSD/2024/10/Rev.1). She highlighted the potential of building on regional integration initiatives, including the African Continental Free Trade Area, and of developing markets for carbon and biodiversity credits, for the mobilization of financing for sustainable development. She noted that members of ECA must strengthen partnerships in order to mobilize \$2.8 trillion by 2030 for the implementation of their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. She called for the development of institutions that strengthen transparency, enhance accountability and foster participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

##### 2. Discussion and trends

15. Participants noted that progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including targets at the national level, was lagging and must, therefore, be accelerated. Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 had to be made relevant to the people of Africa and bring meaningful benefits to the most vulnerable populations, including those who lacked access to electricity and sanitation, suffered violence and insecurity and faced limited job prospects. Aligning the two agendas with actionable plans at the national and subnational levels and making the agendas relevant to local contexts was

crucial for maximizing impact and ensuring long-lasting results for the continent.

### 3. Key messages

16. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Engage meaningfully with civil society and demonstrate clearly that Agenda 2063 is a collective agenda for the whole of society and not just a government agenda;

(ii) Ensure that their financial agendas are self-determined and close the financing gap, including by raising more innovative and blended financing from the private sector and from taxation and by combating illicit financial flows;

(iii) Prioritize the preservation of food systems in Africa, given that they are central to the continent's economies and that African agriculture, which is largely rain-fed, is being negatively affected by climate change and more pronounced droughts and floods;

(iv) Manage natural resources responsibly and ensure that more value is added to minerals that are critical for the global energy transition;

(v) Prioritize actions to end conflict and instability and focus on conflict prevention;

(vi) Invest in human capital and the development of the vulnerable groups and young people of Africa, including through improved access to education and health care, as critical elements of socioeconomic development;

(vii) Adopt policies that build resilience against internal and external shocks and focus on implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

(b) Entities of the United Nations system and development partners should:

(i) Continue to use their convening power and allocate resources to members of ECA for the fulfilment of the second 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063;

(ii) Call for reforms of the global financial architecture, such as scaled-up concessional financing, including for middle-income countries, correct assessments of debt distress and an equitable recognition of African financial assets and trends, with a view to achieving more accurate credit ratings;

(iii) Support the process of learning from countries that have succeeded in the face of challenges, highlighting best practices for other countries to apply;

(iv) Recognize that national specificities must be taken into consideration in order to fulfil the sustainable development agenda.

**B. High-level panel 2: The race to 2030 and beyond: leveraging the Summit of the Future to get back on track towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [agenda item 4]**

**1. Introduction**

17. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/6/Rev.2).

**2. Discussion and trends**

18. Participants emphasized that the Summit of the Future should be centred on human rights and human dignity, including human rights economies, peace, security and governance. They highlighted the need for young people to be meaningfully engaged in the Summit and for Africa to rethink its approach to presenting its perspectives in negotiations on multilateral platforms, including the Summit. Participants in the Summit needed enhanced skills to contribute more effectively to dialogues, and Africa needed to be more self-determined and to clearly communicate regarding its assets and contributions when engaging with partners and in negotiations.

**3. Key messages**

19. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that:

(a) Members of ECA and development partners should:

(i) Ensure that the lead-up to the Summit of the Future is inclusive and incorporates the views and aspirations of women, young people and persons with disabilities;

(ii) Promote a new partnership that gives Africa a prominent position in the planned pact for the future to be adopted at the Summit;

(iii) Strengthen collaboration on the continent, including in science and technology, higher education and training, in order to support development and regional integration;

(iv) Invest in skills training for young people, in order to improve their employment prospects and address high levels of unemployment;

(v) Ensure that development generates sustainable jobs for young people, with a view to unlocking their full potential;

(b) Entities of the United Nations system should support members of ECA in strengthening their data systems for informed decision-making, including by helping to build their data-related skills and resources.

**C. High-level panel 3: Priorities of young people regarding the Summit of the Future and the reinforcement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 5]**

**1. Discussion and trends**

20. Participants welcomed the appointment of an Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, the first position of its kind in the history of the United Nations, symbolizing the significance of youth issues in the institutional structure of the United Nations system.

21. Participants noted that progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable

Development Goals was severely off track and that the Summit of the Future provided an opportunity for young people to become the drivers of development. In preparation for the Summit, the Pan-African Youth Union would be holding a regional consultation in April 2024 with youth councils across Africa in order to finalize a common African position on youth.

## **2. Key messages**

22. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA and development partners should:

(a) Involve young people in all decision-making processes and thus create opportunities that transform development outcomes, resulting in stronger, more inclusive societies;

(b) Commit themselves to bridging the digital divide by addressing the skills gap and skills mismatch to prepare young people for a better future;

(c) Establish funding mechanisms for start-ups, with the aim of supporting innovation among young people;

(d) Invest in infrastructure and establish systems that support the teaching of science, technology and innovation to young people to enable them to conceive, test and develop new ideas;

(e) Expand access to comprehensive sexual health education and awareness-raising efforts, with a view to ending teenage parenthood, breaking the poverty cycle, empowering young people and creating productive opportunities for them, resulting in improved mental health support and reduced opportunities for their radicalization;

(f) Strengthen existing structures involving young people by ensuring that they are funded sustainably, to enable young people to engage meaningfully in development processes.

## **D. Plenary round-table panel on voluntary national and local reviews and actions to reinforce institutions, policies, plans and budgets to speed up and scale up integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 6]**

### **1. Introduction**

23. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the plenary round-table panel (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/1/Rev.2).

### **2. Discussion and trends**

24. The moderator noted with appreciation the likelihood that, by the time of the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2024, all African States would have completed at least one voluntary national review of their progress with sustainable development, marking a significant achievement. Such reviews, which served as a tool for States to draw lessons from their peers and improve their implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, were complemented at the grass-roots level by voluntary local reviews. Participants discussed the measures needed to speed up voluntary national and local reviews and to increase their impact.

### **3. Key messages**

25. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

- (i) Meaningfully place young people at the centre of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, by championing entrepreneurship, job creation, institution-building, technology and other initiatives, all led by young people, and by enabling them to serve as a link between their communities and the Goals;
  - (ii) Focus on implementing and following through on policies relating to the commitments that they have made, with women as key drivers of policy formulation, and prioritize funding for areas identified in the voluntary national and local reviews;
  - (iii) Harness voluntary local reviews to engage transparently with stakeholders and ensure that local priorities, successes and perspectives are incorporated into such reviews, while retaining their originality and local linkages;
  - (iv) Promote integrated financing mechanisms to mobilize targeted funding and align budgets with the Goals, and ensure that funding is of a sustained nature, rather than being allocated only to specific projects;
  - (v) Improve systems for data collection, aggregation and analysis, in order to ensure that the reviews are based on the realities on the ground and that policies are targeted and evidence-based;
  - (vi) Develop innovative programmes to disseminate the findings of voluntary national and local reviews;
- (b) Entities of the United Nations system should:
- (i) Assist in building the capacities of government focal points for voluntary national reviews, in order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and to strengthen the alignment of the two agendas, in coordination with all entities of the United Nations system and the African Union;
  - (ii) Employ such tools as the *Africa Voluntary Local Review Guidelines*, training of trainers and other exercises to expand outreach to include the input of more communities and localities in voluntary local reviews.

**E. Plenary round-table panel on the transformation and modernization of statistical systems in order to produce high-quality data and statistics that can be used to track progress and reinforce national policies and plans to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 7]**

**1. Introduction**

26. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the plenary round-table panel (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/2/Rev.2).

**2. Discussion and trends**

27. Participants reflected on the challenges involved in the production of high-quality data and statistics in Africa, including the lack of legal and institutional frameworks, limited capacity and technical infrastructure, inadequate coordination among national statistical systems, fragmented data systems, insufficient funding and investment, and the inconsistent presentation of data.

Countries were urged to transform and modernize their national statistical systems, following the ECA road map for the transformation and modernization of official statistics in Africa, 2023–2030, and with the support of partners.

### 3. Key messages

28. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

(a) Ensure that data and statistics generated by officials responsible for national statistical systems are relevant for decision-making;

(b) Establish sound legal and institutional frameworks aligned with contemporary needs and international standards for agile and resilient national statistical systems;

(c) Establish and strengthen partnerships with various entities and stakeholders, such as those promoted within the framework of the high-impact initiative on the power of data, launched at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023, and encourage processes to modernize statistical systems by empowering different segments of society, such as the private sector, the academic community, civil society and young people, to contribute to the reforms;

(d) Support the transformation and modernization of national statistical systems, address funding constraints, build capacity and share technology and innovations;

(e) Strengthen the coordination of national statistical systems and harness non-traditional data sources by developing guidelines on their integration into official statistics;

(f) Improve the statistical infrastructure by creating more innovative digital data centres and supercomputers in Africa, investing in digitalization and harnessing the capability, creativity and innovative talents of young people.

## F. Parallel meetings for an in-depth review of progress made, peer learning and acceleration actions regarding the sub-themes of the Regional Forum [agenda item 8]

### 1. No poverty [agenda item 8 (a)]

#### (a) Introduction

29. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2024/5/Rev.1), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/5/Rev.1).

#### (b) Discussion and trends

30. Participants noted that the effects of climate change, terrorism and internal conflicts, health crises such as those brought on by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the Ebola virus disease, and the influx of refugees fleeing from insecurity and inflation had hampered the efforts of countries to reduce poverty. They noted that increasing investment in agriculture and raising agricultural productivity, investing in high-quality education, health and social protection and ensuring access to water and sanitation services were crucial for combating poverty.

#### (c) Key messages

31. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA



and development partners should:

- (a) Promote efforts to accelerate the reform of the international financial architecture in order to mobilize the resources needed to tackle poverty;
- (b) Support African countries in alleviating debt in order to expand the fiscal space that Governments need to support social programmes;
- (c) Prioritize and ensure greater allocation of budgetary resources to efforts to reduce poverty and tackle inflation;
- (d) Address gender inequality, create jobs and assist young people in gaining access to economic resources, and access to land in particular, in order to reduce poverty;
- (e) Prioritize the poverty-climate-change nexus and ensure that solutions are focused on women and young people;
- (f) Integrate monitoring and evaluation frameworks into poverty-reduction strategies that are informed by gender- and age-disaggregated data and develop homegrown solutions to address economic and social challenges;
- (g) Engage stakeholders in the pursuit of national development objectives, which is critical to ensuring that processes are more inclusive and contribute to effective outcomes.

## **2. Zero hunger** [agenda item 8 (b)]

### **(a) Introduction**

32. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2024/6/Rev.2), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/5/Rev.1).

### **(b) Discussion and trends**

33. Participants noted that the continent was falling behind in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, underscoring the importance of enhancing domestic agricultural production by using existing resources efficiently and ensuring that smallholder farmers had access to essential inputs, technology and technical assistance. Effective product marketing was vital, and policy incentives, such as tax relief for agricultural mechanization, were also crucial.

### **(c) Key messages**

34. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

- (a) Establish and continuously improve policies and institutions to create an environment that supports business and is conducive to exercising the right to food for all;
- (b) Build resilience to shocks, including the long-term effects of climate change, and adopt sustainable farming practices;
- (c) Use the opportunities arising from technological advancement, innovative solutions and partnerships;
- (d) Adopt a rights-based, multisectoral approach to advancing the six transitions that are required to ensure food and nutrition security for all, namely the transformation of food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;
- (e) Boost the people and entities striving to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture within Africa,

including by means of peacebuilding, land rights, women's empowerment, agricultural mechanization, implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, agricultural entrepreneurship, regional value chains and agro-industrialization through agro-parks;

(f) Apply a system-wide approach to efforts to ensure food security and the right to food, shifting from a focus purely on agriculture to the promotion of nutrition-oriented food systems.

### **3. Climate action [agenda item 8 (c)]**

#### **(a) Introduction**

35. A representative of the World Meteorological Organization provided a short introduction to set the scene, and a representative of the secretariat presented the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2024/7/Rev.1), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/5/Rev.1).

#### **(b) Discussion and trends**

36. Participants deliberated on the progress made, the experiences of members of ECA and the innovations that were needed to accelerate transformative climate action in Africa. They noted that Africa disproportionately suffered from extensive climate-related loss and damage, amounting to between 5 and 15 per cent of GDP, and the impact thereof fell more heavily on women, children and persons with disabilities. Participants also expressed concern at the huge gap in the financing needed to obtain the estimated \$2.8 trillion required to implement nationally determined contributions in Africa.

#### **(c) Key messages**

37. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that:

##### **(a) Members of ECA should:**

(i) Remove barriers to the availability of funds for climate action by fostering diversification of and innovation in climate-finance instruments, including through the adoption and replication of proven models of debt-for-climate swaps, green and blue bonds, risk insurance, and national environment and climate-change investment funds;

(ii) Be at the forefront of defining, leading and owning people-centred just transitions and make optimal use of their abundant resources to build resilient economies, unlock socioeconomic benefits, create green and decent jobs, achieve sustainable industrialization, and empower women, young people, local communities, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples, all of whom are among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change;

(iii) Foster regional collaboration, enhance public-private partnerships, strengthen regional integration and leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area to drive innovative and transformative climate action, promote sustainable industrial practices and mobilize finance from the private sector;

(iv) Accelerate investment in strengthened early warning and early action systems to ensure timely responses to climate disasters and resilience thereafter;

(v) Strengthen national capacity to access and utilize climate finance in a timely and effective manner;

(vi) Ensure that their participation in carbon markets is inclusive, not focused on natural capital and characterized by high standards of integrity, and consider using appropriate carbon-tax mechanisms, including levies, to mobilize domestic revenue for local climate action;

(vii) Prioritize climate literacy and enhance risk knowledge and risk governance in support of an integrated approach to planning and implementing disaster-risk reduction, and promote formal, informal and non-formal education and training programmes for women and young people to equip current and future workforces with the skills needed for green jobs, thereby ensuring a just transition to a low-carbon economy;

(viii) Enhance the collection and availability of localized, disaggregated and contextualized climate data to support climate-resilient development planning;

(b) African States, their development partners and the private sector should work together to enhance outreach and technical assistance to vulnerable countries through the Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, and to develop and support the use of climate and disaster-risk financing instruments and transfer and de-risking instruments;

(c) The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-ninth session should recognize the special needs and circumstances of African States, with a view to contextualizing just transition pathways for States, and with due regard to the principle of equity and common-but-differentiated responsibilities and to the respective capabilities of African States.

#### **4. Peace, justice and strong institutions [agenda item 8 (d)]**

##### **(a) Introduction**

38. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2024/8/Rev.2), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/5/Rev.1).

##### **(b) Discussion and trends**

39. Participants noted that, although African countries were progressing in terms of the democratic nature of their elections, they were regressing in relation to their human rights obligations, resulting in a deterioration of peace, security and the rule of law.

##### **(c) Key messages**

40. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen governance institutions and the rule of law to protect human rights, raise awareness at all levels of society of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, ensure equal access to justice for all and foster transparency and accountability;

(ii) Bolster data-collection systems relating to the Sustainable Development Goals by providing legal mandates to collect, process and make available data to support the assessment of risks and weaknesses, compile indicators and advocate appropriate policies and corrective measures;

(iii) Enhance government strategies and institutional structures to combat illicit financial flows and the trafficking of small arms, in order to curb the haemorrhaging of resources and the fomenting of conflict and violence, with a view to instituting post-conflict management and achieving lasting peace;

(iv) Embed human rights approaches in policies and governance practices, facilitate access to information and ensure fundamental freedoms and a legal identity for all, with a view to protecting and promoting freedom of expression, the rights to assembly, association and opinion, the active engagement of all marginalized groups, respect for all international conventions on human rights and participation in global peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes;

(v) Provide the resources for stronger and more effective African engagement in global standard-setting processes, with the aim of building the financial security and other forms of independence of the continent and safeguarding its interests in the global arena;

(vi) Boost the mobilization of domestic resources, with a view to ensuring that Africa has a greater capacity to fund its sustainable development agenda and development aspirations;

(vii) Harness migration as a development opportunity and address the incoherence of policies in this area at the national and international levels.

(b) Entities of the United Nations system should:

(i) Help countries to improve their data-collection systems, with a view to supporting planning, evidence-based policymaking, advocacy, monitoring, reporting and evaluation in relation to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(ii) Support the process of reforming the international governance architecture, with a view to moving towards a new, inclusive, global tax system, and advocating the fulfilment of official development assistance commitments.

## **5. Partnerships for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 8 (e)]**

### **(a) Introduction**

41. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2024/9/Rev.1), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2024/INF/5/Rev.1).

### **(b) Discussion and trends**

42. Participants highlighted the urgent need to address the multiple interconnected crises, each of which represented a significant obstacle to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations under Agenda 2063. The situation was exacerbated by scarce resources, stressed national budgets and competing priorities among development partners. Participants also underscored the need for structured multi-stakeholder partnerships, encompassing Governments, the private sector, civil society and development partners, in order to foster an integrated approach to effectively addressing humanitarian, developmental and peace and security challenges.

**(c) Key messages**

43. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

- (a) Members of ECA should:
  - (i) Improve policy and regulatory frameworks and create enabling environments for raising green financing, enhancing domestic resource mobilization and managing debts sustainably;
  - (ii) Increase investment in national statistical systems and implement road maps for their modernization, with a view to improving their resilience and facilitating the collection of reliable data;
  - (iii) Champion the use of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to accelerate the achievement of the goals and aspirations under the two agendas and to ensure that the benefits of globalization are enjoyed equally by all;
  - (iv) Increase partnerships with volunteer organizations to leverage the potential for volunteers to bridge skills, capacity, funding and data gaps across the continent;
- (b) Development partners should:
  - (i) Ensure that Africa has sufficient concessional and innovative financing available on an equitable basis, including priority access to new mechanisms for credit enhancement and greater access to affordable financial instruments, such as debt-for-nature swaps, in order to address the intertwined challenges of debt, climate change and sustainable development;
  - (ii) Support the design of regional, national and sectoral capacity-building strategies and plans, and invest in their implementation, leveraging existing platforms and emerging technologies to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and enhance the related monitoring and reporting.

**G. Plenary round-table panel on leveraging science, technology, innovation and digital transformation for poverty reduction and reinforcement of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 9]**

**1. Key messages**

44. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

- (a) Reform education curricula and step up collaboration between educational institutions and private and public partners to ensure that those institutions become entrepreneurial in nature, producing goods and services, and undertake research and development in tune with the requirements of society;
- (b) Redouble their efforts to put in place policies and mechanisms to ensure that digital platforms and technologies are accessible to all and safe and secure, in particular for young people, women and the elderly, and that digital technologies are included across the entire education system to prepare young people for future employment;
- (c) Leverage the large African diaspora community for knowledge

and expertise by using existing open innovation platforms and making increased investment in research and development centres, technology hubs and parks and similar facilities that may encourage students, researchers and entrepreneurs in the diaspora and private firms to come to Africa;

(d) Develop an action plan on science, technology and innovation that will promote increased investment in research and development and strengthen intellectual property regimes, with a view to supporting human capital development and industrialization and taking maximum advantage of the opportunities afforded by the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(e) Enhance their teaching and learning environments by engaging the necessary qualified teachers, providing sound infrastructure that empowers both teachers and students to use digital tools and safe spaces for children, in particular girls and women, and, where appropriate, forging partnerships with the private sector;

(f) Create a continent-wide system of collaborative multisectoral and multidisciplinary networks for problem solving, with a view to devising holistic solutions to complex challenges impeding progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2;

(g) Adopt a declaration on scientific freedom to encourage the dissemination and use of science to inform policies and benefit society at large, with provisions on increased access to data and the formation of professional scientific bodies to safeguard intellectual property rights;

(h) Invest in research infrastructure and education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and build bridges between humanities and social sciences, on the one hand, and natural sciences, on the other hand, through collaboration and partnerships among different disciplines.

## **H. Presentations and discussions on transformative pathways and ambitious actions for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 10]**

### **1. Introduction**

45. Representatives of the secretariat, members of ECA, United Nations resident coordinators and major groups and other stakeholders made presentations that drew upon the outcomes of the annual meeting of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and shared insights emerging from national experiences and efforts to accelerate implementation of the two agendas.

### **2. Discussion**

46. The Forum engaged in a dialogue on the support provided by entities of the United Nations system in the development of transformative pathways and for ambitious action to accelerate the implementation of the two agendas.

#### **(a) Presentation on transformational initiatives by entities of the United Nations development system to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 10 (a)]**

47. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Human dignity and human agency, solidarity and a new generation of leadership should be at the centre of the Summit of the Future and the work of the development system, as investing in solidarity and preserving human dignity are essential for sustainable development;

(b) The United Nations and the world must recognize the importance of critical minerals, the need to reform the global financial architecture and the need to adhere to principles for the governance of carbon markets, all of which are critical to ensure that Africa finances its own development;

(c) There is a need to strengthen the capacities of United Nations country teams and to develop innovative solutions for partnering with the private sector to ensure sustainable development.

**(b) Presentation on perspectives of major groups and other stakeholders with regard to reinforcing and accelerating implementation of the two agendas [agenda item 10 (b)]**

48. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Intensify efforts to formulate inclusive policies that are aimed at improving their economies, protecting the most vulnerable and creating more decent-quality jobs, while empowering women and young people;

(ii) Strengthen social dialogue mechanisms to empower citizens;

(iii) Invest in sustainable systems for the production of nutritious food, by implementing resilient agricultural practices that are gender-responsive and less labour-intensive, while increasing productivity and preserving ecosystems;

(iv) Prioritize climate change adaptation efforts and make better use of the continent's carbon absorption potential as a bargaining tool in global discussions on climate finance;

(v) Promote policies, practices and processes that address drivers of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and accelerate the implementation of initiatives designed to reduce armed conflict in Africa;

(b) The African Union Commission should enhance its coordination of consultations among African Governments to better promote the exchange of knowledge, enhance capacity and foster joint learning in the areas of technology, trade, policy formulation and development financing;

(c) Development partners should:

(i) Prevent trade restrictions and correct distortions in global agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the corresponding mandate that emerged from the Doha Development Round;

(ii) Follow through on promises to assist countries in their efforts to adapt to climate change through robust social protection plans for affected communities;

(iii) Increase the provision of official development assistance to meet the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for countries that are members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

(c) **Presentation on the transformation of food systems as an accelerator for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa** [agenda item 10 (c)]

49. In the light of the discussion, the key messages agreed on by the Forum were that members of ECA should:

(a) Improve their national institutions, enhance regional collaboration and broaden the scope of their ministries responsible for food to encompass entire food systems, with a view to ensuring a comprehensive approach to the transformation of food systems;

(b) Improve collaboration between Governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and entities of the United Nations system for the successful implementation of national pathways for food systems and for their integration into existing planning frameworks;

(c) Align national food system strategies with climate policies for sustainability, taking advantage of the convergence initiative of the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub as an important tool to support African countries in rendering their food systems more sustainable, equitable and resilient, with a view to their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives under the Paris Agreement.

**I. Consideration and adoption of key messages and the Addis Ababa declaration on the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to eradicate poverty in times of multiple crises** [agenda item 11]

50. The Forum considered and unanimously adopted, as amended, the summary and key messages outlined in previous sections of the present report and the Addis Ababa declaration on the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to reinforce the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to eradicate poverty in times of multiple crises (ECA/RFSD/2024/XX).

**J. Appreciation**

51. The ministers, high-level officials and participants expressed their appreciation to the President of Ethiopia and to the Government and people of Ethiopia for the warm hospitality extended to them. They also conveyed their gratitude for the arrangements made to enable both in-person and online participation in the session and to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to participate fully in the Forum. They expressed their appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the President of the African Development Bank, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Prime Minister of Uganda and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations for their attendance and contributions to the Forum.

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