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**Economic Commission for Africa
Committee of Experts of the Conference of African
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**

Forty-third meeting

Addis Ababa, 12–14 March 2024

Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

**Date, venue and theme of the fifty-eighth session of the
Economic Commission for Africa**

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Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In the present document, suggestions made by the secretariat are set forth for the consideration of the Committee of Experts. The Committee may wish to consider the dates and a theme for the fifty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Africa, to be held in 2026, and to provide the secretariat with guidance in that regard.

II. Date and venue

2. The secretariat proposes that the fifty-eighth session of the Commission be held at its headquarters in Addis Ababa in March 2026. Alternatively, the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development may decide otherwise, upon an invitation by a member of the Commission to host the said session, under the condition that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/243, the Government issuing an invitation has agreed to defray the actual additional costs directly and indirectly involved with holding the meeting away from the headquarters of the Commission.

III. Theme

3. The secretariat submits the following potential topics for the consideration of the Committee of Experts:

- (a) Option one: “Future of work in Africa amid demographic, technological and climate change”;
- (b) Option two: “Growth through innovation: harnessing data and frontier technologies for the economic transformation of Africa”;

* E/ECA/COE/43/1.



(c) Option three: “Harnessing natural resources, biodiversity and climate finance for economic and climate resilience in Africa”.

A. Background

4. Africa stands at a crucial juncture, at which its rapidly growing and youthful population, its wealth of natural resources, the emergence and evolution of frontier technologies and intra-African trade hold the key to its economic transformation and climate resilience. Strategic policy choices must be made in order for African States and institutions to capitalize on those resources for economic transformation and for adaptation to major changes in the global economy, to the evolving geopolitical situation, to new technologies, to climate change and to regional megatrends. The proposed themes are intended to enable the exploration of specific policy options and of measures that need to be taken.

1. Option one: “Future of work in Africa amid demographic, technological and climate change”

5. The future of work in Africa will be shaped by three critical issues: the continent’s rapidly growing and youthful population, the rise of frontier technologies and climate change. By 2063, young people will make up half of the continent’s working-age population of 2 billion people; those 1 billion young workers represent a demographic dividend, if sufficient productive jobs can be created. Policies to foster skills development among the workforce are needed because many jobs will be rendered redundant by increasing digitalization – in particular the widespread use of artificial intelligence – and adoption of other technologies; this process has already begun and has been accelerated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The adverse effects of climate change on livelihoods will continue to be felt, requiring sustainability solutions that include the creation of green jobs in the renewable energy sector and in sustainable agriculture, within a framework of sustainable production and consumption.

6. If chosen, option one would entail analysis of the implications of these megatrends, which are broad and varied, presenting both opportunities and threats. To fully seize the opportunities, African States will require populations that are better educated, healthier, more technologically savvy and better equipped for a rapidly changing world of work. It would also involve exploring the specific policy options and measures that will be required for an inclusive and sustainable future labour market, in which decent employment opportunities are ensured.

2. Option two: “Growth through innovation: harnessing data and frontier technologies for the economic transformation of Africa”

7. While the importance of science, technology and innovation is widely recognized on the continent, challenges persist, such as low levels of investment in research and development, inadequate infrastructure, and the limited interaction between the drivers of science, technology and innovation and their potential beneficiaries. In addition, in view of the declining importance of traditional skills and the rise of data and technology as pillars of the economy, it is crucial that African countries transition from resource-driven to data-driven economies.

8. If chosen, option two would involve exploring the specific policy options and measures that are required in order to harness data and frontier technologies, with the aim of driving African economic growth through automation, job creation, regional integration and the development of technology-enabled subsectors of the financial, agricultural, education and healthcare sectors.

3. Option three: “Harnessing natural resources, biodiversity and climate finance for economic and climate resilience in Africa”

9. The natural resources of Africa are crucial for the continent’s economic transformation and climate resilience. Strategic policies on natural resource governance, technology, climate action and trade are needed, but raising finance is challenging, owing to States’ heavy debt burdens, inadequate sources of traditional external revenue and difficulties with domestic resource mobilization. Innovative approaches are essential, if African States and institutions are to harness the continent’s vast natural resources to enhance its economic and climate resilience.

10. If chosen, option three would entail examining the specific policy options and measures that are required to address such problems as stranded assets and commodity dependence. In the African context, those problems relate to the following needs: to harness African natural resources in the global transition to a low carbon economy; to unlock the potential of the continent’s mineral, oil, gas, land, forest and fishery resources; to balance the interplay and policy trade-offs between technology, trade, natural resources and climate resilience; and to use green financing, including climate finance and biocredits, along with other innovative financial instruments, to finance economic transformation and climate resilience in Africa.

B. Previous themes

11. For reference, a list of the themes of previous sessions of the Commission that have been held since 2000 is provided in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Themes of previous sessions of the Commission

<i>Session</i>	<i>Joint annual meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Fifty-sixth	N/A	2024	Financing the transition to inclusive green economies in Africa: imperatives, opportunities and policy options
Fifty-fifth	N/A	2023	Fostering recovery and transformation in Africa to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities
Fifty-fourth	N/A	2022	Financing Africa's recovery: breaking new ground
Fifty-third	N/A	2021	Africa's sustainable industrialization and diversification in the digital era in the context of COVID-19
Fifty-second	N/A	2019	Fiscal policy, trade and the private sector in a digital era: a strategy for Africa
Fifty-first	N/A	2018	African Continental Free Trade Area and fiscal space for jobs and economic diversification
Fiftieth	Tenth	2017	Growth, inequality and unemployment
Forty-ninth	Ninth	2016	Towards an integrated and coherent approach for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Forty-eighth	Eighth	2015	Implementing Agenda 2063: planning, mobilizing and financing for development
Forty-seventh	Seventh	2014	Industrialization for inclusive and transformative development in Africa
Forty-sixth	Sixth	2013	Industrialization for an emerging Africa
Forty-fifth	Fifth	2012	Unleashing Africa's potential as a pole of global growth
Forty-fourth	Fourth	2011	Governing development in Africa
Forty-third	Third	2010	Promoting high-level sustainable growth to reduce unemployment in Africa
Forty-second	Second	2009	Enhancing the effectiveness of fiscal policy for domestic resources mobilization
Forty-first	First	2008	Meeting Africa's new challenges in the twenty-first century
Fortieth	N/A	2007	Accelerating Africa's growth and development to meet the Millennium Development Goals: emerging challenges and the way forward
Thirty-ninth	N/A	2006	Meeting the challenge of employment in Africa
Thirty-eighth	N/A	2005	Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa
Thirty-seventh	N/A	2004	Mainstreaming trade policy in national development strategies
Thirty-sixth	N/A	2003	Towards greater policy coherence and mutual accountability for development effectiveness
Thirty-fifth	N/A	2002	Accelerating Africa's progress and performance: the challenge of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
Thirty-fourth	N/A	2001	Implementing the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme: compact for Africa's recovery
Thirty-third	N/A	2000	The challenges of financing development in Africa