



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited

11 April 2025

Original: English

Economic Commission for Africa

Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Eleventh session

Kampala (hybrid), 9–11 April 2025

Agenda item 11*

Consideration and adoption of key messages and the Kampala declaration on sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for driving job creation and economic growth and for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

Eleventh 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,¹ convened the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development at the Speke Resort Convention Centre in Munyonyo, Uganda, in a hybrid format with both in-person and online participation, from 9 to 11 April 2025.

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 eleventh session of the Forum was held on the theme “Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union”, which is closely aligned with that of the 2025 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, namely “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”.

II. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

4. The opening segment was moderated by the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance of Uganda, Chris

* ECA/RFSD/2025/1.

¹ The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: *[amend as appropriate]*.



Baryomunsi. It was officially opened by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Opening statements were delivered by the Minister of the Economy and Finance of Mauritania and Chair of the outgoing Bureau, Sid'Ahmed Ould Bouh; the President of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, Robert Rae; the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Claver Gatete; the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the African Union Commission, Moses Vilakati; the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed; and the Prime Minister of Uganda, Robinah Nabbanja.

5. Delivering the opening keynote address, Mr. Museveni highlighted the lack of value addition in various sectors of developing country economies, in general, and in Uganda, in particular, and outlined his Government's efforts to commercialize agricultural production and to establish industry and other high-value activities. He explained that, with a view to fostering value addition within the country, his Government had banned the export of unprocessed minerals. He also stressed the importance of establishing low-cost transport in the region.

6. Mr. Ould Bouh warned that, at the current pace, not all Sustainable Development Goals would be attained by 2030. He called upon States to recommit themselves to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The Second World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development offered opportunities for furthering African aims.

7. The President of the Economic and Social Council said that Africa would be central to the extraordinary measures that would need to be taken if the Goals were to be achieved. Given that the climate crisis would be ongoing for generations, States needed to demonstrate solidarity with one another to overcome it. New sources of financing would be needed in order to achieve the Goals.

8. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa commended Uganda, among other countries, for its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. Underscoring the structural threats stifling African progress towards attaining the Goals, he asserted that sustainable investments in transformative sectors could help the region to achieve its objectives. Intra-African and other forms of South-South cooperation were crucial. The strategic pillars of the implementation of the two agendas were: domestic resource mobilization; the de-risking of economies and the elevation of capital market development; the expansion of access to affordable finance to women and young people; and the leveraging of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. He called for bold leadership and stronger partnerships in the run-up to 2030.

9. Mr. Vilakati noted that, despite the threats that it faced, Africa possessed immense potential. Integration had been progressing within the African Continental Free Trade Area, which was contributing to the joint implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. He underscored that job creation remained a vital aim for Africa.

10. The Deputy Secretary-General stressed that, notwithstanding the lack of progress towards attaining the Goals and the sovereign debt burden, Africa was growing economically and women were playing an increasing role in parliaments across the region. United Nations coordination played an important role in the alignment of policies and operations. The voice of Africa needed to be featured at the Second World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The African Continental Free Trade Area exemplified the region's spirit of solidarity and cooperation.

11. Ms. Nabbanja said that the eleventh session of the Forum united countries with the common purpose of accelerating progress in the implementation of the two agendas. She lauded the actions and leadership of African policymakers who had contributed to sustainable development, in which academia, civil society, women and young people played a clear role.

III. Summary and key messages

12. 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 eleventh 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 2025 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

A. Presidential dialogue [agenda item 2]

1. Introduction

13. The presidential dialogue was chaired by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. It brought together the President of Zimbabwe and Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community, Emmerson Mnangagwa; First Deputy Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea, Gaudencio Mohaba Mesu; Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury and Economic Planning of Kenya, John Mbadi; former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete; and the President of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Discussion and trends

14. The leaders provided insights on how to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

3. Key messages

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

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Shift away from reliance on the export of raw materials and towards value addition through manufacturing and industrialization, with this transformation being particularly urgent in mining and in the export of such cash crops as coffee, tea and cocoa, for which greater value can be retained along value chains;

(ii) Prioritize full implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the further ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, since stronger regional integration and pan-African solidarity are vital for inclusive and sustainable growth;

(iii) Provide sustained investment in education and skills development with a view to creating decent jobs, in particular for African young people, including by prioritizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics, promoting gender equality, and embracing such emerging technologies as artificial intelligence and the Internet of things;

(iv) Leverage domestic resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, with external support guided by mutual respect, humility and inclusive dialogue, in recognition of the essential nature of African agency and self-determination;

(b) States and non-State actors should foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in order to unlock new sources of wealth and job creation, including by improving access to finance and prioritizing investments in green growth and strategic sectors.

B. High-level panel 1: Increasing ambition and finding innovative solutions for mobilizing sustainable finance, and channelling and using finance more efficiently and effectively to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, with emphasis on the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) [agenda item 4]

1. Introduction

16. The Chair of the Bureau introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/8).

2. Discussion and trends

17. Participants discussed ways to optimize sources of financing for inclusive and sustainable development, with a focus on improving tax policy and administration, curbing illicit financial flows and unproductive tax incentives, and better managing debt. They highlighted the need to leverage climate finance and natural capital accounting, explore innovative ways of utilizing the resources of development banks and national social security funds, and improve the efficiency of public expenditure and overall financial accountability.

3. Key messages

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

(a) Strengthen domestic resource mobilization by digitalizing tax administration, improving public financial management systems, expanding the tax base, including through the formalization of the informal sector, curbing financial leakages caused by illicit financial flows and unproductive tax incentives, reforming development banks by placing emphasis on lending for long-term productivity, and developing local capital markets;

(b) Encourage private sector participation by adopting de-risking measures, including reductions in the cost of capital for African economies, enhancing credit guarantee schemes to facilitate investment in long-term projects, such as infrastructure development, and leveraging partnerships, pension funds and diaspora bonds;

(c) Improve access to funding for climate adaptation and leverage green bonds and other innovative climate finance instruments to support sustainable development;

(d) Scale up accelerators of development, such as energy production and trade, within Africa and globally, going beyond renewable and green energy sources and exploring other sources, such as nuclear energy;

(e) Accelerate the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers, with a view to broadening the market size and increasing potential returns;

(f) Invest in and promote technology, in particular artificial intelligence and machine learning, and apply it to such areas as production processes, value creation, marketing, public and private financial systems, education and training, and service provision, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness;

(g) Improve the measurement of economic growth by using natural capital accounting techniques in order to boost credit ratings and to enhance the position from which the continent negotiates access to affordable finance;

(h) Enhance institutional financial management systems by ensuring that they include just and durable sovereign debt resolution mechanisms, improve legal frameworks, and use gender-based budgeting and boost financial literacy among women to facilitate equitable access to development finance.

C. High-level panel 2: Scaling sustainable, inclusive, science-based, evidence-based and data-driven solutions to dramatically increase economic growth, boost job creation and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 5]

1. Introduction

19. The Chair of the Bureau introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/2).

2. Discussion and trends

20. Participants deliberated on measures and models for scaling up job creation, economic growth and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. They also discussed the roles of Governments, United Nations entities, the African Union Commission and other intergovernmental organizations, private sector companies, young people and civil society organizations in the design and implementation of such measures and models. In addition, they debated the investments and success factors that are required for such measures and models to have a lasting impact.

21. The discussions were informed by presentations on the highlights of the *Africa Sustainable Development Report, 2025*² and on the outcomes of the following preliminary events: the leadership forum on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa and the preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa.

3. Key messages

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

(a) Mobilize finance and strengthen partnerships, with a view to fostering sustainable consumption and production methods, including the transition to circular economy models of growth in crucial value chains, such as agrifood systems and the processing of critical minerals;

(b) Rigorously review plans and programmes in areas with transformational effects on the attainment of several Goals, such as infrastructure, science, technology and innovation, digitalization, food systems, renewable energy systems, value added manufacturing and climate action;

(c) Strengthen data collection and use for the design and implementation of interventions and for the tracking of progress towards attainment of the Goals, including through the following measures:

² African Union and others, *Africa Sustainable Development Report, 2025* (forthcoming).

- (i) Enhancement of data integration and interoperability in all countries, governance, private sector collaboration and data infrastructure;
- (ii) Capacity-building in relation to data analytics;
- (iii) Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence;
- (d) Develop and implement systems for evidence-based mutual accountability at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- (e) Combat corruption and increase transparency in all aspects of resource mobilization, with a view to achieving sustainable borrowing, minimizing losses and enhancing the efficiency of resource use;
- (f) Bolster education and training systems, develop and implement curricula, and strengthen integrated, entrepreneurship-based capacity-development programmes for young people;
- (g) Adopt and implement policies to enable full engagement with persons in informal work and provide incentives for such persons to move into the formal sector, in order to increase productivity, job creation and sustainable economic growth;
- (h) Capitalize on the upcoming international conferences, including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the Second World Summit for Social Development and the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development, to advance a unified African position on priorities for the implementation of the two agendas.

D. High-level panel 3: Follow-up on the outcome documents of the Summit of the Future in the context of advancing sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions to increase the pace and scale of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 6]

1. Introduction

23. The Chair of the Bureau introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/4/Rev.1).

2. Discussion and trends

24. Participants discussed action-oriented measures for following up on the Pact for the Future and its annexes: the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. The Pact and its annexes were critical tools for accelerating implementation of the two agendas and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. Coordinated, inclusive engagement involving Governments, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and private companies, among other stakeholders, was needed in order for the Pact and its annexes to be translated into tangible results at the national and local levels and for a people-centred form of sustainable development to be forged, with resilient communities and youth empowerment and equity at its core.

3. Key messages

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

- (a) Support engagement with young people as strategic partners, with investments in education systems and skills development, among other areas, to equip learners with digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills and the capabilities necessary for decent work, while also promoting the proposed global youth platform as an important avenue for amplifying the voices of young people and

increasing their participation in critical policy-related decision-making processes;

(b) Incorporate the Pact for the Future and its annexes into domestic law, implement those laws by embedding their provisions into national development plans, and provide further support through technical assistance and capacity-building to align those plans with the cooperation frameworks of the United Nations system;

(c) Invest in green technologies, digital infrastructure and innovation, while ensuring a human rights-based approach to development, the integration of technological advancements and sustainability into policies, and the fostering of resilient and inclusive growth;

(d) Promote foresight and long-term planning processes that are grounded in high-quality data and evidence, and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and inclusive reporting, with a view to tracking progress on global commitments;

(e) Support the mainstreaming of human rights, innovation and digital technologies into development programming;

(f) Reinforce partnerships and scale up predictable and inclusive financing for sustainable development initiatives led by young people, including climate finance, technology transfer and infrastructure support;

(g) Promote the reform of the global financial architecture;

(h) Engage further with private companies to support entrepreneurship led by young people, innovation hubs and employment pathways, in particular in the green and digital economies and in the care sector;

(i) Give greater recognition to the role of civil society in driving grass-roots mobilization and policy accountability, by working with civil society organizations on the joint development of measures that meet local needs while contributing to broader global initiatives.

E. High-level panel 4: Capitalizing on the Second World Summit for Social Development to advance the achievement of African priorities (poverty eradication; full employment and decent work for all; inclusivity and social integration, leaving no one behind; and full achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063) [agenda item 7]

1. Introduction

26. The Chair of the Bureau introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/1).

2. Discussion and trends

27. Participants discussed the need for employment to be a strategic policy priority that received sufficient financing, emphasizing that green jobs must be fundamental in forward-looking strategies and that macroeconomic reforms must be aligned with social development goals. There was a critical need for data-driven policymaking, youth inclusion and gender equality. The demographic dividend on the continent must be harnessed for sustainable development, and Africa must act boldly and assertively in order to shape and lead its own development narrative.

3. Key messages

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

- (a) Prioritize people-centred policies, with a focus on the potential of young people and women, and concerted efforts to close employment gaps;
- (b) Strengthen economic security and resilience through robust and targeted social protection mechanisms, such as voluntary savings schemes and grants for older persons and persons with disabilities;
- (c) Ensure that employment is planned, adequately financed and integrated into national development strategies, and prioritize the creation of sustainable and decent employment opportunities for young people, with a view to reducing poverty sustainably and fostering inclusive economic growth;
- (d) Support the transition on the continent to green jobs, in particular in such sectors as energy, agriculture, waste management and sustainable finance, by investing in training and capacity development;
- (e) Prioritize intra-African labour mobility over dependence on labour markets outside the continent, and safeguard the rights and dignity of migrant workers through strong legal protections and ethical employment frameworks;
- (f) Lead efforts to mobilize domestic resources, including from local financing and tax systems, rather than external aid;
- (g) Invest in the generation and use of reliable data to guide evidence-based policymaking and track progress on sustainable development.

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. Good health and well-being [agenda item 8 (a)]

(a) Introduction

29. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2025/5), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/3).

(b) Discussion and trends

30. Participants discussed good health and well-being as being essential components of social and economic development. They highlighted the negative effects of the prevailing geopolitical situation, which had led to reduced flows of official development assistance into African healthcare systems. They also noted that the lack of involvement of academic institutions and the limited use of results and products of research in the development and implementation of health policies and programmes posed a major limitation on efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of those policies and programmes.

(c) Key messages

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

- (a) Strengthen domestic resource mobilization to enhance the ability of African Governments to finance their healthcare systems, with development assistance serving only as a supplementary source;
- (b) Promote innovative, domestic and sustainable financing for resilient healthcare systems and enhance resource efficiency and effectiveness through good governance and strengthened partnerships, in particular through South-South cooperation;
- (c) Support the training of health personnel and foster inclusivity, equity and high quality of services as vital components of universal healthcare coverage systems that are also resilient to climate shocks;

(d) Promote initiatives for the local production of vaccines, medical consumables and other pharmaceuticals, including by reinforcing capacity-building for national companies operating in the sector, and also by leveraging the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(e) Strengthen the involvement of academic institutions and their research products in the definition and formulation of health policies and programmes;

(f) Prevent, prepare for and respond to public health emergencies through the strengthening of immunization programmes, long-term investments in water, sanitation and hygiene, enhanced early warning systems for rapid detection and response to health threats, and resilient primary healthcare systems;

(g) Strengthen the quality of statistics through the use of granular data, innovation, digital health solutions and artificial intelligence, and data disaggregated by age, geography and sex, to ensure more sophisticated and data-led health interventions and targeted, evidenced-based health policies and programmes, as has been done to reduce and eliminate the vertical transmission of HIV;

(h) Strengthen the quality of healthcare and well-being by placing greater focus on neglected issues, such as nutrition, mental health and HIV/AIDS, giving special consideration to vulnerable groups and minorities.

2. Gender equality [agenda item 8 (b)]

(a) Introduction

32. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2025/6), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/3).

(b) Discussion and trends

33. Participants identified challenges and emerging issues that were hindering the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063. There was an urgent need to accelerate progress by ensuring that laws were not only enacted but also adapted to local contexts, implemented and enforced. The challenges could be addressed effectively through greater knowledge-sharing and policy advocacy.

(c) Key messages

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

(a) Accelerate efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into policy design, planning and budgeting and improve resource allocation for the effective implementation of gender-responsive initiatives;

(b) Prioritize the elimination of all discriminatory laws, the reshaping of harmful gender norms and practices and the enforcement of laws, statutes and policies aimed at increasing gender equality;

(c) Ensure that women and girls have access to opportunities in science, technology and innovation through digital learning and literacy programmes, with a view to helping them to gain employment in emerging sectors;

(d) Strengthen data systems that have a focus on gender by investing in the collection of reliable gender statistics and data that are disaggregated by sex, standardizing indicators and leveraging technology, in order to facilitate the creation of evidence-based policies and ensure accountability for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment;

(e) Promote the equitable redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work by investing in high-quality social services, ensuring broader access to affordable childcare, leveraging appropriate technology, supporting fair parental leave and taking unpaid care work into account in policies and national

statistical accounts;

(f) Invest in mentorship programmes, safeguard civic space and enforce gender quotas to enhance the meaningful participation and transformative leadership of women and girls in public, private and political decision-making;

(g) Establish mechanisms for improving accountability and reducing corruption as prerequisites to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Decent work and economic growth [agenda item 8 (c)]

(a) Introduction

35. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2025/7), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/3).

(b) Discussion and trends

36. Participants noted that, despite the fact that 9 of the 20 fastest-growing economies in 2024 were in Africa, productivity across African economies remained below the global average. Many middle-income countries were either caught in or were at risk of being caught in the “middle-income trap”, facing protracted periods of subdued growth and struggling to transition to high-income status. Challenges to boosting economic growth included a large informal sector, high unemployment, in particular among young people, child labour and gender disparities in access to economic opportunities.

(c) Key messages

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

(a) Support the adoption of pro-employment macroeconomic and strategic industrial policies and facilitate export-led growth and economic diversification, while ensuring proper coordination and knowledge-sharing among ministries, departments and agencies to ensure integrated planning, proper monitoring and efficiency in the implementation of such policies;

(b) Create a strong business environment for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, domestic private sector firms, and large enterprises, including by spurring innovation, providing infrastructure for information and communications technology, trade, transportation and telecommunications and promoting local tourism and trade within and between African countries;

(c) Improve labour standards and adhere to labour rights, including for migrant workers, ensure the mental health of workers, provide them with psychosocial support and provide feedback mechanisms through which they are empowered to stand up for their rights;

(d) Boost investment in education, including by developing improved curricula on entrepreneurship in order to align teaching objectives with industrial demands and training and capacity-building needs, while also ensuring job matching and financial support, and increase the participation of young people in policy design;

(e) Incorporate the needs of vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, women, young people and minority ethnic groups, into policy design, focusing on the adoption of accessible devices and technologies to increase access to work opportunities and create an enabling environment for these vulnerable groups, while ensuring that non-governmental and civil society organizations play a significant role in capacity-building and decision-making platforms, and that unpaid care is recognized and rewarded;

(f) Enhance the growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by reducing taxes, enabling value addition and ensuring maximum utility with limited capital, while also creating pathways for informal workers and businesses to transition to formal employment, and increasing value addition, employment opportunities and wealth generation for small-scale farmers, including through the establishment of cottage industries;

(g) Strengthen political commitment to economic growth and employment and follow through on the global and continental commitments contained in the financing initiatives of the International Labour Organization, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

4. Life below water [agenda item 8 (d)]

(a) Introduction

38. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2025/8), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/3).

(b) Discussion and trends

39. Participants reflected on African progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, noting that it was the most underfunded Goal and that, although the blue economy held immense potential for the continent, progress on attaining the related objectives contained in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 remained insufficient. Challenges persisted as a result of limited coordination, fragmented policies, a critical lack of funding and the growing impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, and inland and marine waters were increasingly under pressure from rapid population growth, destructive practices and rising pollution, in particular from plastics. Although fisheries offered significant potential, African States continued to contend with illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and overfishing, which threatened food security.

(c) Key messages

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

(a) Accelerate progress towards the achievement of Goal 14 by implementing the strategies of the African Union on maritime and ocean governance and the blue economy, and associated subregional and national policies, strategies and action plans;

(b) Utilize local Indigenous knowledge, support youth-led initiatives and invest in development that is beneficial to nature and actions that are focused on the blue economy, with a view to balancing economic growth and job creation with ecosystem regeneration;

(c) Leverage sustainable and innovative resources, such as blue bonds, debt swaps, diaspora financing and opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area, in order to finance initiatives that can help to protect the oceans in the region;

(d) Enhance scientific capacity, data systems and policy coordination, with a view to unlocking greater private and domestic investment;

(e) Scale up investment in research, vocational training, ocean science infrastructure, ocean entrepreneurship and the restoration of coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, including by improving the measurement and valuation of blue natural capital, promoting scientific cooperation and ensuring that local communities benefit from and contribute to ocean preservation;

(f) Promote inclusive job creation in the blue economy, with a focus on opportunities for women, young people, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities;

(g) Foster the development of training and vocational programmes for which the curricula include issues related to the blue economy, and improve access to education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(h) Ensure that the voice of Africa is heard in efforts to shape global ocean governance, including by ratifying and implementing major relevant treaties, such as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and by contributing to the finalization of the proposed United Nations treaty on global plastics.

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/2025/9), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/3).

(b) Discussion and trends

42. Participants emphasized that effective partnership mechanisms must align with national development plans. They highlighted the importance of platforms for coordination and the mobilization of additional resources and expertise, including through public-private partnerships and community-based approaches. The diaspora was a vital partner in providing financing through remittances and diaspora bonds. Reliable, digitalized and interoperable data systems were also important for effective monitoring and decision-making.

(c) Key messages

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

(a) Strengthen public-private, inclusive and multilevel partnerships with non-governmental organizations, communities and the diaspora, and foster coordination that is aligned with national priorities in order to leverage resources, technical expertise and implementation capacity;

(b) Scale up domestic resource mobilization and explore innovative financing options, such as green bonds, diaspora bonds and blended finance, while advocating fair debt resolution mechanisms and global financial reform that is grounded in human rights;

(c) Invest in data systems by supporting national statistical offices, and adopt artificial intelligence and big data solutions to enable the use of real-time, disaggregated data for inclusive and evidence-based policymaking;

(d) Leverage the creative sector for employment opportunities and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure that all financing strategies address gender equality and inclusion;

(e) Embed human rights principles in economic policy and international financial reforms, while fostering South-South cooperation that is transparent, equitable and focused on shared challenges and solutions.

G. Plenary round-table panel on harnessing science, technology, innovation and digital transformation to underpin sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for economic growth, job creation and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 9]

1. Discussion and trends

44. Participants deliberated on how to employ science, technology and innovation to drive job creation and economic growth. A number of issues were critical to ensuring the comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted role of science, technology and innovation in advancing sustainable and inclusive development across Africa: digital transformation; economic growth strategies; science diplomacy; healthcare innovation; education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics; implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2034; digital transport initiatives; gender equality in science, technology and innovation; marine resource sustainability; and partnerships with the European Union, among other collaborators. Science, technology and innovation were fundamental to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

2. Key messages

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

(a) Tailor global strategies to local needs, ensuring that such strategies are secure, safe, inclusive and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact to effectively bridge the digital divide, while also investing in digital public infrastructure and affordable rural Internet access, with a view to empowering communities and driving equitable transformation;

(b) Strive to be leaders in progress driven by artificial intelligence, improving access to high-quality healthcare, with a view to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through responsible governance of artificial intelligence, backed by investments in infrastructure, skills development and ethical policies, all of which require updated, validated data and cross-border and cross-sector collaboration;

(c) Strengthen public-private partnerships by offering such incentives as tax concessions and financial support to attract private investment in science, technology and innovation, prerequisites for which include the establishment of partnerships with telecommunication companies, which can help to reduce connectivity costs, improve digital access and foster a supportive network;

(d) Develop robust frameworks for science, technology and innovation that are aligned with industrial growth objectives and actively engage in science diplomacy to forge strategic partnerships;

(e) Allocate from 5 to 10 per cent of their maritime or fisheries budgets to upgrading and maintaining science, technology and innovation infrastructure, including by establishing regional consortiums to jointly purchase high-resolution satellite services;

(f) Develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula, offering scholarships and establishing mentorship programmes for young people, while implementing supportive policies and establishing innovation hubs for the commercialization of research;

(g) Increase women's participation, leadership and visibility in

science, technology and innovation, with a view to fostering inventiveness and achieving equitable development.

H. Plenary round-table panel on voluntary national and local reviews as a means of fostering sustainable, inclusive, science-based, evidence-based and data-driven solutions to dramatically increase economic growth, job creation and the pace and scale of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 10]

1. Introduction

46. The Chair of the Bureau introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the plenary round-table panel (ECA/RFSD/2025/INF/6/Rev.2).

2. Discussion and trends

47. Participants noted that African States had much to be proud of in their progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and that the clearest way to ensure the implementation of development policies was to harmonize countries' commitments under the 2030 Agenda with their commitments under Agenda 2063. Voluntary national and local reviews could help to align efforts to implement the two agendas. Furthermore, they could serve as powerful tools to place women at the centre of the sustainable development process, as had been demonstrated by past innovative reviews led by young people, civil society organizations and Governments. They stressed that the attainment of the Goals was contingent upon success at the local level, given that grass-roots organizations drove effective and meaningful change, stakeholder engagement and data collection. The 2030 deadline for achieving the Goals was approaching, and, accordingly, national and local reviews must be used to assess current conditions more accurately and must be linked with implementation road maps.

3. Key messages

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

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Align their commitments under the 2030 Agenda with their commitments under Agenda 2063, as it is the clearest way to ensure the implementation of development policies;

(ii) Put national and local voluntary reviews to use as powerful tools that could help to place women at the centre of the sustainable development process;

(b) Members of ECA and development partners should ensure that national and local reviews are more grounded in reality and are linked with road maps for implementation in order to ensure that the Goals can be achieved;

(c) National and regional policymakers should liaise with local grass-roots stakeholders in order to ensure that positive examples of meaningful change achieved at the local level are scaled up and out.

I. Consideration and adoption of key messages and the Kampala declaration on sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for driving job creation and economic growth and for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 11]

49. The Forum considered and unanimously *[to be checked]* adopted, as amended, *[to be checked]* the summary and key messages outlined in previous sections of the present report and the Kampala declaration on the effective delivery of sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 (ECA/RFSD/2025/XX).

J. Appreciation

50. The ministers, high-level officials and participants expressed their appreciation to the President of Uganda and to the Government and people of Uganda 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 Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the President of the African Development Bank, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and XXXX *[amend as appropriate]* for their attendance and contributions to the Forum.
