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

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Statutory issues**Report on the follow-up to the resolutions of the
Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning
and Economic Development****I. Introduction**

1. The present report contains highlights of the progress made in the implementation by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) of the resolutions adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development at its meeting, held in Addis Ababa in a hybrid format, with both in-person and online participation, from 12 to 14 March 2025, during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission.

2. The Conference adopted five resolutions, which were submitted to the Economic and Social Council for review and endorsement. The progress made in the implementation of the resolutions that require action to be taken by the Commission is highlighted in the present report.

II. Progress made by the Commission**A. Resolution 2025/3: Use of artificial intelligence to advance the
socioeconomic development of Africa****Paragraph 3**

Calls upon the Commission and its partners to continue to provide support to its members in establishing enabling environments for artificial intelligence development, including appropriate regulatory, institutional and governance structures at the national and regional levels, and adequate financing for research, innovation and business development;

3. The Commission made notable progress in supporting its members with the creation of enabling environments for the development and responsible use of artificial intelligence, primarily through targeted interventions in data

* E/ ECA/COE/44/1.



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governance, digital policy harmonization and institutional capacity-building, which together form the foundation for artificial intelligence readiness.

4. Significant milestones were reached following ECA technical support in defining implementation road maps for the development of data governance regulatory frameworks in four pilot members: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and United Republic of Tanzania. Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo finalized the drafting of their national data governance strategies; and Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania conducted national data governance situation assessments, which provide a diagnostic of each country's digital and regulatory landscape, identifying institutional strengths and gaps and mapping sectoral opportunities for data environments that are ready for the use of artificial intelligence.

5. Although a solid foundation for data governance and the use of digital identity, which are essential for artificial intelligence readiness, has been established by enhancing national capacities and fostering regulatory convergence, several gaps remain. The Commission will accelerate support for its members in order to develop national data governance, digital identity and artificial intelligence strategies, expand regional cooperation on cross-border data flows and promote access to blended finance models. Those actions will help to ensure that the African approach to artificial intelligence evolves within a coherent governance structure that advances inclusive socioeconomic development.

Paragraph 4

Requests the Commission and its partners to facilitate policy-based research and to develop knowledge-sharing platforms and collaborative networks among its members to promote the exchange of best practices in artificial intelligence deployment;

6. The Commission intensified its efforts to foster collaboration on the application of artificial intelligence. Recognizing that responsible and inclusive development of the technology requires shared learning and continuous policy dialogue, ECA prioritized knowledge exchange, networking and capacity-building among policymakers and regulators.

7. The Commission, in collaboration with its members, the African Union Commission, the International Telecommunication Union, the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and resident coordinator offices, convened the following three high-level multi-stakeholder regional forums to gather inputs for digital governance regulatory frameworks: the seventh African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, held in April 2025 in Kampala, serving as an input to the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held later in April in Kampala; the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society in Africa, held in May 2025 in Cotonou, Benin; and the fourteenth African Internet Governance Forum, held in May 2025 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. Three major declarations and outcome documents relating to Internet governance and a collaborative continental approach to artificial intelligence and broader digital transformation were adopted in connection with those events:

(a) 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, adopted by the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session,¹ which is aligned with a broader consensus that African States should strive to be leaders

¹ ECA/RFSD/2025/12.

in progress driven by artificial intelligence through responsible governance of the technology, backed by investments in infrastructure, skills development and ethical policies, all of which require cross-border and cross-sector collaboration;

(b) Dar es Salaam Declaration on Internet Governance, adopted at the fourteenth African Internet Governance Forum, which includes commitments to strengthen policy and legal frameworks for artificial intelligence, accelerate the adoption of digital public infrastructure and ensure effective governance of Internet resources;

(c) Cotonou Declaration on Accelerating the Digital Transformation of Africa, in which the African commitment to aligning digital policies with the Global Digital Compact was reaffirmed and pursuant to which a common framework for regulatory cooperation in areas critical for artificial intelligence governance, such as data interoperability, cybersecurity and universal connectivity, was established.

8. Those multi-stakeholder processes together created continental momentum for the creation of a coherent regulatory and institutional landscape that is conducive to the responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence.

9. To advance the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence in priority sectors, ECA, in collaboration with the digital financial services company Ant Group, supported the capacity-building of experts in emerging financial technology (fintech), including artificial intelligence-powered credit scoring and lending, and cryptocurrency and blockchain technologies. Complementing that work, ECA strengthened the capacities of public sector officials in cybersecurity, digital diplomacy and technological risk mitigation as part of efforts to enhance its members' ability to deploy artificial intelligence solutions securely. Furthermore, ECA has produced a forthcoming report on the digital landscape of Africa, which includes an outline of sectoral opportunities and the foundational requirements needed to enable the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence across the continent.

10. On the margins of both the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society in Africa and the fourteenth African Internet Governance Forum, ECA, in partnership with Google, delivered two tailored training programmes on artificial intelligence policymaking and cloud technologies to more than 220 policymakers, regulators and development practitioners. The training sessions were aimed at strengthening participants' practical knowledge of policy frameworks for artificial intelligence, ethical considerations and the role of the technology in enhancing public sector efficiency.

11. The progress to date reflects a strategic focus on creating structured knowledge environments for artificial intelligence, laying the groundwork for the establishment of a continental knowledge and collaboration hub and leveraging the outcomes of the aforementioned meetings of the African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, African Internet Governance Forum and the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society in Africa. The partnership established with Google continues to be catalytic in connecting African policymakers to global artificial intelligence expertise. Further steps are needed to institutionalize the collaborative networks under a unified digital policy platform and establish a continental artificial intelligence knowledge platform linked with global and regional strategies for digital transformation.

B. Resolution 2025/5: Use of regional value chains to harness the wealth of Africa

Paragraph 4

*Urge*s the Commission and its partners to scale up analytical and capacity-building support for members of the Commission in the development of competitive regional value chains and special economic zones, including by providing assistance with the incorporation into domestic law of the provisions of the Agreement, with the de-risking of investments in priority industries and with the establishment of regulations and standards that are aimed at ensuring the success of the new generation of special economic zones in Africa.

12. Pursuant to the resolution, ECA implemented a range of analytical, policy and capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening sustainable value chains, facilitating regional cooperation and supporting the adoption of harmonized frameworks for special economic zones and investment de-risking. The Commission advanced preparatory activities to support the development of sustainable value chains in priority sectors, notably automotives, and cotton textiles and apparel.

13. In the automotive sector, ECA initiated the development of an automotive sustainable supplier finder database, which will serve as a digital marketplace connecting small and medium-sized enterprises with major buyers. Among the features of the platform will be supplier profiles, details about sustainability certifications and information on the requirements for buyers, providing the foundation for future data integration and matching functions. The efforts are aimed at strengthening business linkages for small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting regional sourcing and enhancing competitiveness within the African Continental Free Trade Area.

14. In relation to the cotton textiles and apparel value chain, ECA completed analytical work covering nine of its members² and conducted validation processes for a continental study and database on raw materials and inputs. The study includes policy recommendations to strengthen the African cotton textiles and apparel value chain through improved regional collaboration, infrastructure and quality standards, and a presentation of the benefits of alignment with the rules of origin relevant to the African Continental Free Trade Area. A regional validation workshop was held in Cotonou, in July 2025, bringing together 26 representatives (10 of whom were women) of ministries of trade and industry, export councils, industrial development boards, private sector organizations and academic institutions from 11 members of ECA.³

15. Consistent with the call included in the resolution for investment de-risking in priority industries, ECA is providing technical support to six of its members with the development of frameworks and partnerships that improve the investment climate for regional value chains and special economic zones. In Malawi, ECA is supporting the development of regulations for special economic zones, contributing to the country's implementation of its national industrial policy and the operationalization of the Special Economic Zones Act. In Lesotho and Namibia, ECA is providing technical assistance for the formulation of a common automotive policy framework, to facilitate those countries' integration into the regional automotive value chain. To strengthen local content development and promote the participation of the public in the special economic zones for battery electric vehicles, and related regional value chains, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, ECA convened a multi-stakeholder workshop, bringing together 58 participants from commercial

² Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco and South Africa.

³ Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

banks, academic institutions, government entities, the media, and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. The workshop was aimed at raising awareness of business and investment opportunities across the vehicle battery value chain. In South Africa, ECA is providing technical support for the establishment of a new industrial park in Gauteng Province.

16. To unlock the continent's potential for trade in services, ECA continued to promote the integration of the sector into regional and global value chains. In September 2025, ECA convened a multi-stakeholder conference in Addis Ababa on trade in services and financial value chains within the framework of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, facilitating peer learning and the sharing of lessons learned.

17. To support the establishment of regulations and standards for special economic zones, ECA conducted study tours to such zones and other similar industrial, trade and free zones and parks in Benin, Gabon and South Africa, and, outside Africa, in China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates. In collaboration with the African Export-Import Bank, further study tours are planned to Angola, Kenya, Malaysia and Morocco. The aim of the study tours is to identify effective regulatory models and operational practices that will contribute to the development of a coherent African framework for the standards and governance relevant to special economic zones.

18. To consolidate progress achieved so far relating to the resolution, ECA will intensify engagement with its members, with a view to supporting the implementation of investment de-risking measures and the operationalization of enabling policy frameworks. In the coming period, ECA will prioritize the finalization and dissemination of a study on norms and standards for special economic zones, the launch of the automotive sustainable supplier finder database and the facilitation of the validation and adoption of policy recommendations on the cotton, textiles and apparel value chain. In addition, it will scale up peer learning and investment promotion initiatives in order to accelerate the practical application of relevant tools and frameworks across Africa.
