



# Economic and Social Council

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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
Twelfth session  
Addis Ababa (hybrid), 28–30 April 2026

Item 3 of the provisional agenda \*

**High-level panel 1: Scaling up transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The African We Want, of the African Union**

## Information and guidelines for high-level panel 1

### I. Date, time and venue

1. The first high-level panel will be held on Tuesday, 28 April 2026, from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. in the Plenary Hall. The focus of the panel is the theme of the twelfth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, “Turning the tide: transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”.
2. Participants will discuss specific, transformative and coordinated actions, as well as approaches to rapidly scale them up in order to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the strategic objectives of the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.<sup>1</sup>

### II. Introduction

3. The twelfth session of the Forum is being held with less than five years remaining to achieve the Goals and in the third year of the second 10-year implementation plan, during the decade of acceleration, as designated by the African Union, which represents a renewed commitment by African countries to fast-track progress towards a prosperous, integrated and peaceful continent.
4. Despite significant global and regional efforts, progress towards the Goals remains far off track. As highlighted in the concept note of the Forum,<sup>2</sup> Africa is making slow progress on 12 of the 17 Goals and is regressing on 5 of them.
5. There are substantial implementation gaps in progress towards achieving the five Goals in Africa that are the areas of focus of the twelfth session, with current trajectories indicating that targets will not be achieved by 2030. For example, in Africa, access to basic drinking water services stagnated at around 36 per cent between 2015 and 2023, well below the global average of over 70

\* ECA/RFSD/2026/1/Rev.1.

<sup>1</sup> African Union, *Decade of Accelerated Implementation: Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan, 2024–2033* (Addis Ababa, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> ECA/RFSD/2026/4.



per cent;<sup>3</sup> some 600 million people remain without electricity;<sup>4</sup> and manufacturing value added as a share of gross domestic product has remained largely unchanged, slipping from 10.7 per cent in 2015 to 10.6 per cent in 2024.<sup>5</sup> Improvements in housing conditions have been minimal, with the share of the African urban population living in slums or informal settlements declining only slightly from 46.2 per cent to 45.7 per cent between 2015 and 2022.<sup>6</sup> Mobilizing sustainable finance remains a major constraint, with the region facing an annual financing gap exceeding \$1 trillion.<sup>7</sup>

6. In the light of the challenges, a decisive change in the steps taken and concerted multi-stakeholder engagement are urgently required in the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 in order to accelerate progress and place Africa firmly on track to achieve its development goals.

### III. Objectives

7. The objectives of the panel discussion are:

(a) To reflect critically on, identify and present specific, transformative and coordinated actions, as well as methods to scale them up rapidly, in order to advance the attainment of the Goals, in alignment with the strategic objectives of the second 10-year implementation plan;

(b) To identify and articulate the targeted roles of Governments, entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other intergovernmental organizations, development partners, private sector companies, young people and civil society in planning, financing and implementing the practical actions and interventions to achieve the Goals alongside the strategic objectives of the second 10-year implementation plan.

### IV. Guidelines

8. The Chair will outline the objectives of the high-level panel; introduce the moderator, guest speaker or presenter, panellists and discussants, all of whom are listed in section V; hand over to the moderator to conduct the panel discussion; and conclude the proceedings at the end of the panel discussion.

9. The moderator will first invite the presenter to introduce the highlights of the *2026 Africa Sustainable Development Report*, to set the scene for the panel. The moderator will then invite the panellists, as indicated in section V, to speak for no longer than three minutes each in response to one or more of the questions listed in paragraph 10 or to questions from the floor, before inviting questions and comments from selected discussants and from the floor on the topics that were raised by the panellists. At the end of the discussion, the moderator will share reflections on the main messages that arose and hand over to the Chair, who will conclude the proceedings.

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<sup>3</sup> *2026 Africa Sustainable Development Report* (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, “Decoding Africa’s energy journey: three key numbers”, 27 January 2025.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Industrial Development Organization, “SDG 9 Indicators”, Statistics Portal. Available at [https://stat.unido.org/analytical-tools/sdg?tab=charts&country=R1\\_002](https://stat.unido.org/analytical-tools/sdg?tab=charts&country=R1_002) (accessed on 12 January 2026).

<sup>6</sup> Economic Commission for Africa calculations based on United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), “Housing, slums and informal settlements”, Urban Indicators Database. Available at <https://data.unhabitat.org/pages/housing-slums-and-informal-settlements>.

<sup>7</sup> African Union and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Africa’s Development Dynamics 2023: Investing in Sustainable Development* (Addis Ababa, African Union Commission; Paris, OECD Publishing, 2023).

10. During the discussion, the moderator will invite the panellists to address one or more of the following questions:

(a) What specific structural, policy and institutional shifts are required in Africa to deliver coordinated and scalable impact across countries and subregions in order to accelerate simultaneous progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the second 10-year implementation plan?

(b) What three game-changing actions that are both impactful and scalable must Africa prioritize between now and 2030 to stay on track for the fulfilment of both agendas?

(c) What urgent reforms are needed for African countries to improve the alignment of their national development plans, budgets and financing frameworks with the two agendas for coherent and faster implementation?

(d) Where do the African Union Commission, entities of the United Nations system, governments, young people, civil society and the private sector see the highest priority opportunities for coordinated and transformative actions across continental, subregional, national and local levels, and how can those actions be scaled up effectively?

(e) What are the most promising strategic investment areas and financing models for development partners and the private sector to drive significant acceleration across both agendas?

(f) Which priority investment-ready initiatives, which have been identified in analyses by the Economic Commission for Africa, other United Nations entities, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank and in the impact labs, offer the greatest potential to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Goals and the implementation of the second 10-year implementation plan, and how can stakeholders collaborate to support and scale them up effectively?

## V. Chair, moderator and panellists

11. The Chair, moderator, presenter, panellists and discussants will be as follows:

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

**Moderator:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

**Opening statement:** Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission, Selma Malika Haddadi [to be confirmed]

**Presenter:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

**Panellists:**

- Minister [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Representative of the United Nations [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Representative of the African Union [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Representative of the African Development Bank [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Representative of development partners [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

- Representative of young people or civil society [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]
- Representative of the private sector [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

**General discussion**

**Reflection on key messages:** moderator or other selected speaker [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

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