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

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level panel 3: Achieving full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa: taking forward the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development**

### Information and guidelines for high-level panel 3

#### I. Date, time and venue

1. The third high-level panel will be held on Tuesday, 28 April 2026, from 4.30 to 6 p.m. in the Plenary Hall. Participants will identify and discuss specific actions and interventions to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa, reflecting on the region's priorities and the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development.

#### II. Introduction

2. Africa faces a persistent and widening youth employment gap: every year, 3.1 million jobs are created, but 10 million–12 million young people enter the workforce.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, poverty levels remain high on the continent. It has been estimated that more than three quarters of the world's extreme poor would be living in sub-Saharan Africa by 2025.<sup>2</sup> In addition, inequality is widening in the region.

3. During the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and in other events, African countries articulated and agreed on regional priorities to inform deliberations at the Second World Summit for Social Development, which was held in Doha from 4 to 6 November 2025.

4. The Doha Political Declaration,<sup>3</sup> the outcome document of the Summit, is focused on promoting full, decent and productive employment for all, eradicating poverty and fostering social integration.

5. Participants in the Summit invited the regional commissions, within their respective mandates, to convene preparatory meetings at the regional level in advance of the follow-up to the Summit, in order to assess progress made, gaps and opportunities for action towards the implementation of that Declaration and

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

<sup>1</sup> African Development Bank, "Jobs for youth in Africa: catalyzing youth opportunity across Africa" (n.p., 2016). Available at [www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high\\_5s/Job\\_youth\\_Africa\\_Job\\_youth\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high_5s/Job_youth_Africa_Job_youth_Africa.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, "End poverty in all its forms everywhere". Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/Goal-01/>.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 80/5, annex.



of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

6. It is against that backdrop that high-level panel 3 is being held at the twelfth session of the Forum.

### III. Objectives

7. The objectives of the high-level panel are:

(a) To reflect critically on, identify and present specific, transformative actions to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa, in alignment with African priorities and efforts to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup> and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, and the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development;

(b) To identify and articulate the targeted roles of Governments, entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission and other intergovernmental organizations, development partners, private sector companies, young people and civil society in planning, financing and implementing practical measures to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa.

### IV. Guidelines

8. The Chair will outline the objectives of the high-level panel; introduce the moderator, presenter, panel members 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 highlights of the Doha Political Declaration, as relevant to African priorities, 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, before inviting questions and comments from selected discussants and from the floor to foster a dialogue on the topics that were raised by the panellists. At the end of the discussion, he or she will share reflections on the main messages that have arisen and hand over to the Chair, who will conclude the proceedings.

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

(a) What are the main outcomes and takeaways from the Second World Summit for Social Development and what concrete mechanisms are needed to ensure that commitments made at that Summit are translated into accelerated job creation, poverty reduction, inclusion and social protection?

(b) In the light of the outcomes of the Summit and African aspirations, what game-changing actions must be prioritized on the continent between now and 2030 to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa?

(c) 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 at the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development during the fifty-eighth session of the Economic

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<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

Commission for Africa and the 2026 Africa Business Forum, offer the greatest potential to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa?

(d) What urgent reforms are needed for African countries to foster progress in achieving full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa, and what are the most effective actions to address rising inequalities and ensure that women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups meaningfully engage in and benefit equitably from development progress?

(e) In which areas do the United Nations, the African Union, States, young people, the private sector and volunteers identify the greatest need for transformative, coordinated actions to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa, across continental, subregional, national and local levels?

(f) What are the most promising investment areas in which development partners and the private sector can drive significant acceleration to achieve full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa?

(g) What are the main factors that curtail equal rights and opportunities for all in efforts to promote employment, labour-force participation, decent wages and salaries, and access to resources, including credit?

(h) What actions, policies and strategies has your country or institution designed or implemented to improve access to core social services, such as education and health, while prioritizing inclusivity and equality?

## 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]

**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**

12. **Reflection on key messages:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

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