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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
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Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level parallel meetings to review in depth and showcase progress made and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning in connection with the sub-themes of the Forum**

## **Information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings on the sub-themes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

### **I. Date, time and venue**

1. The high-level parallel meetings on the sub-themes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be held on Wednesday, 29 April 2026, from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m., in the parallel meeting rooms indicated in section V.
2. Participants in the parallel meetings will thoroughly review the progress made towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development alongside the strategic objectives of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, showcase and advocate the scaling-up of transformative and coordinated policy solutions and actions for the two agendas and reach consensus on a set of key messages presenting ambitious, transformative and coordinated actions that must be taken or scaled up to accelerate the implementation of the agendas.

### **II. Introduction**

3. The twelfth session of the Forum is being held with less than five years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and in the third year of the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063.<sup>1</sup> This period – designated as the decade of acceleration – marks a renewed commitment by African countries to accelerate progress towards a prosperous, integrated and peaceful continent.
4. Despite the significant global and regional efforts undertaken, progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remains inadequate. As highlighted in the concept note of the Forum, Africa is making slow progress on 12 of the 17 Goals and is regressing on 5.
5. A review of the selected Goals for the twelfth session of the Forum reveals substantial implementation gaps, with current trajectories indicating that targets will not be achieved by 2030. For example, access to basic drinking water services stagnated at about 36 per cent between 2015 and 2023, well

\* 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).



below the global average of over 70 per cent;<sup>2</sup> some 600 million people still lack access to electricity,<sup>3</sup> and close to 1 billion people lack access to clean cooking appliances and fuels in Africa.<sup>4</sup> Manufacturing value added as a share of gross domestic product has stagnated, slipping from 10.7 per cent in 2015 to 10.6 per cent in 2024.<sup>5</sup> Improvements in housing conditions have also been minimal, with the share of the 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> Regarding Goal 17, the mobilization of 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 these challenges, a decisive change in the steps taken and concerted multi-stakeholder engagement are urgently required in the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in order to accelerate progress and place Africa firmly on track to achieve the goals of the two agendas.

7. The parallel meetings will be focused on advancing progress on one of the following five sub-themes, each of which is based on one of the five Sustainable Development Goals to be considered at the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development:

- (a) Clean water and sanitation: assuring sustainable water availability and safe sanitation systems to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (b) Affordable and clean energy;
- (c) Industry, innovation and infrastructure;
- (d) Sustainable cities and communities;
- (e) Partnerships for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

8. During the parallel meetings, the deliberations will be guided by the theme of the Forum: “Turning the tide: transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”.

9. Accordingly, the parallel meetings will contribute to the achievement of the objectives set out in the concept note of the Forum (ECA/RFSD/2026/4) and the objectives listed in section III.

### III. Objectives

10. The objectives of the parallel meetings are:

- (a) To conduct an in-depth review of the attainment in Africa of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063, with a focus on the second 10-year implementation plan;

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<sup>2</sup> 2026 *Africa Sustainable Development Report* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, “Decoding Africa’s energy journey: three key numbers”, 27 January 2025.

<sup>4</sup> News 365, “One billion Africans affected by lack of access to clean cooking energy”, 18 July 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).

(b) To increase learning and to showcase and advocate the scaling-up of transformative and coordinated policy solutions and actions for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the effective implementation of the second 10-year implementation plan;

(c) To articulate and agree on key messages presenting between six and eight ambitious, transformative and coordinated actions that are needed or should be scaled up to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the second 10-year implementation plan.

## IV. Guidelines

11. The Chair of the Bureau will designate a member of the Bureau to chair each parallel meeting.

12. The moderator of each parallel meeting will be selected from among the representatives of the entities of the United Nations system and regional organizations that, along with the Economic Commission for Africa, prepared the background reports on each sub-theme.

13. During each parallel meeting, the discussion will be led by a multi-stakeholder panel, each of which will include selected sectoral ministers or other senior policymakers, along with representatives of the African Union, the African Development Bank, entities of the United Nations system, the private sector, young people and civil society. For more details, see section V.

14. Each parallel meeting will be informed by a presentation about the background report on the meeting's sub-theme, which will include suggested key messages on that sub-theme and the outcomes of the impact labs.

15. Participants are expected to discuss and reach a consensus on a set of six to eight key messages regarding ambitious, transformative and coordinated actions that must be taken or scaled up to accelerate attainment of the selected Goal and the strategic objectives of the second 10-year implementation plan.

16. The key messages agreed upon during the parallel meeting will be presented for consideration by the Forum in plenary and will inform the consolidated draft key messages to be adopted by the Forum.

17. The Chair of each parallel meeting will outline the objectives of the parallel meeting, as set out in section III, and introduce the moderator, opening speaker, presenter and panellists. The Chair will then hand over to the moderator and close the parallel meeting at the end of the dialogue.

18. The moderator will call upon the opening speaker to deliver a statement. He or she will then call upon a representative of the secretariat or one of the authors of the background report on the sub-theme in question to give a presentation on the background report and the outcomes of the impact labs that lasts for no longer than seven minutes. The presentation will be focused on progress made in implementation, best practices and proven solutions, barriers and major issues in implementation, and emerging key messages presenting six to eight ambitious and transformative actions that are needed or that should be scaled up to accelerate attainment of the goals.

19. The moderator will then invite each panellist to speak for no longer than five minutes, focusing on one or more of the questions set out in paragraph 20, before inviting questions and other contributions from the floor in order to spark an interactive discussion to identify ambitious, transformative and coordinated actions and other measures that should be introduced or scaled up to accelerate attainment of the selected Sustainable Development Goal. At the end of the parallel meeting, the moderator will invite a representative of the secretariat or one of the authors of the background report on the sub-theme in

question to share reflections on the key messages agreed upon during the meeting, and will then hand over to the Chair, who will close the meeting.

20. During the discussions, the moderator of each parallel meeting will invite the panellists to address one or more of the following questions:

(a) What progress has been made since the previous review of the selected Sustainable Development Goal and the related goals of Agenda 2063?

(b) What are the principal barriers to accelerating efforts to achieve the selected Sustainable Development Goals and to deliver on the second 10-year implementation plan? How can the means of implementation be realized?

(c) What are the best practices, the most promising strategic investment areas and the financing models that would enable countries – in collaboration with their development partners, the private sector and civil society – to significantly accelerate progress on the selected Goal, the broader Sustainable Development Goals and the second 10-year implementation plan?

(d) Which five impactful and scalable game-changing actions must Africa prioritize between now and 2030 to regain the momentum needed to achieve the selected Goal and the strategic objectives of the second 10-year implementation plan?

(e) What urgent reforms are required for African countries to better align their national development plans, budgets and financing frameworks with the Sustainable Development Goals and the second 10-year implementation plan in order to ensure coherent and more rapid implementation?

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

(g) Which priority investment-ready initiatives – 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 2026 Africa Business Forum and the impact labs – offer the greatest potential for accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the second 10-year implementation plan, and how can stakeholders collaborate to support and scale them up effectively?

## V. Chairs, moderators and panellists

21. The Chair, moderator, presenter and panellists of the parallel meeting on the sub-theme of clean water and sanitation: assuring sustainable water availability and safe sanitation systems to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 will be as follows:

**Venue:** [to be determined]

**Opening statement:** Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural, Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission, Moses Vilakati [to be confirmed]

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

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

**Presentation:** Highlights of the background report on the sub-theme of clean water and sanitation: assuring sustainable water availability and safe sanitation systems to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 ([position], [organization], [name] [to be determined])

**Panellists:**

- Minister [Ministry], [country], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [Ministry], [country], [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:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

22. The Chair, moderator, presenter and panellists of the parallel meeting on the sub-theme of affordable and clean energy will be as follows:

**Venue:** [to be determined]

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

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

**Opening statement:** Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission, Lerato Dorothy Mataboge [to be confirmed]

**Presentation:** Highlights of the background report on the sub-theme of affordable and clean energy ([position], [organization], [name] [to be determined])

**Panellists:**

- Minister [Ministry], [country], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [Ministry], [country], [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:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

23. The Chair, moderator, presenter and panellists of the parallel meeting on the sub-theme of industry, innovation and infrastructure will be as follows:

**Venue:** [to be determined]

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

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

**Opening statement:** Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals, African Union Commission, Francisca Tatchouop Belobe [to be confirmed]

**Presentation:** Highlights of the background report on the sub-theme of industry, innovation and infrastructure ([position], [organization], [name] [to be determined])

**Panellists:**

- Minister [Ministry], [country], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [Ministry], [country], [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:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

24. The Chair, moderator, presenter and panellists of the parallel meeting on the sub-theme of sustainable cities and communities will be as follows:

**Venue:** [to be determined]

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

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

**Opening statement:** Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union Commission, Amma Twum-Amoah [to be confirmed]

**Presentation:** Highlights of the background report on the sub-theme of sustainable cities and communities ([position], [organization], [name] [to be determined])

**Panellists:**

- Minister [Ministry], [country], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [Ministry], [country], [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:** [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

25. The Chair, moderator, presenter and panellists of the parallel meeting on the sub-theme of partnerships for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 will be as follows:

**Venue:** [to be determined]

**Chair:** Chair of the Bureau

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

**Opening statement:** Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, African Union Commission, Gaspard Banyankimbona [to be confirmed]

**Presentation:** Highlights of the background report on the sub-theme of partnerships for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 ([position], [organization], [name] [to be determined])

#### **Panellists:**

- Minister [Ministry], [country], [name] [to be determined]
- Minister [Ministry], [country], [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 private sector [position], [organization], [name] [to be determined]

#### **General discussion**

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