

Eleventh Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) Side Event: Future of Work in Africa Amidst Climate Change Developments

Description of the Side Event and Objectives

Climate change presents significant risks to employment, economic stability, and sustainable growth across Africa, threatening progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. The continent's reliance on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and natural resources, has placed its workforce at the forefront of climate-induced vulnerabilities. For instance, agriculture employs a large proportion of the population and around 52 per cent of the workforce in Africa.

Climate-induced disruptions such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation—are already affecting job security, displacing communities, and exacerbating inequalities.

However, climate change also offers opportunities for a transition toward a green, inclusive, and resilient economy. Renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable infrastructure can drive economic transformation and job creation if the right policies and investments are put in place.

This side event will convene policymakers, private sector leaders, development finance institutions, and academics to discuss strategies for aligning Africa's workforce development with climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Participants will explore how climate-related investments (green technologies, skills development etc.) can drive sustainable economic growth while minimizing the risks of job loss or/and displacement. The event will also highlight the best practices and actionable policy recommendations to ensure Africa's labor market remains competitive and inclusive amidst climate change.

Organizers:

- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – Macroeconomic Policy, Finance and Governance Division
- The Coalition for Capacity on Climate Action (C3A)

Partner Organizations:

- The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action
- World Bank
- Minister of Finance, Uganda

Moderator

- Dr. Zuzana Schwidrowski

Panellists and Speakers

- Dr. Sam Mugume Koojo, Assistant Commissioner, Macroeconomic Policy Department, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda
- Dr. Andrew Mundalo Allieu, Senior Economist, ILO Regional Office for Africa
- Ms. Olapeju Ibekwe, Chief Executive Officer, Sterling One Foundation
- Dr. Etienne Espagne, Senior Economist, World Bank
- Dr. Nadia S. Ouedraogo, Economist, ECA

Contribution to the Forum's Main Theme and Sub-Themes

This side event directly contributes to the discussions on the Forum's main theme by addressing the intersection between climate change, economic growth, and employment in Africa. The event will focus on the following key sub-themes:

1. **Implementing climate-smart agriculture and renewable energy projects:** These initiatives will help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on livelihoods, ensuring food security and job preservation.

2. **Expanding green jobs and reducing the skills gap:** The transition to a low-carbon economy necessitates workforce upskilling and training in emerging sustainable industries, ensuring inclusive access to opportunities.
3. **Promoting inclusive policies to address labor market vulnerabilities:** Targeted policies are needed to protect informal sector workers from the economic disruptions caused by climate change.

Expected Outcomes

1. **Policy recommendations** for African governments on aligning climate resilience strategies with job creation and economic growth.
2. **Strategic partnerships** to mobilize climate finance and investments in green infrastructure and sustainable industries.
3. **Enhanced regional cooperation** to support inclusive employment opportunities and strengthen Africa's economic resilience against climate-induced shocks.