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## Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development CSO Side Event Outcome Document

11th Session | 6th–11th April 2025 | Speke Resort Convention Centre, Munyonyo, Uganda

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### Introduction

During the 11th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) under the theme, *“Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.”* held from 6th to 11th April 2025 at Speke Resort Convention Centre, Munyonyo, Uganda, Civil Society Organisations under the CSO Core Reference Group on SDGs hosted by Uganda National NGO Forum convened a hybrid side event under the theme *“Deepening CSO Engagements in Advancing the Pact for the Future through Partnerships and Best Practices.”* The objective of this gathering meeting was to review progress, share good practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening CSO participation in implementing Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and the emerging global Pact for the Future

The session featured a key note address interrogating the stake of CSOs in achieving the SDGs, the Pact for the Future and the African Dream 2063. This was followed by panel discussions on; exploring innovative financing mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies to support sustainable partnerships and effective programing; adapting civil society gains to promote realization of sustainable development and the Pact of the Future; the role of data in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; mainstreaming leave no one behind priorities for the realization of Agenda 2030, the Pact of the Future and Agenda 2063; deepening youth engagement for sustainable development and the Pact of the Future through amplifying their voices in national and regional forums and Policy Dialogues. The hybrid side event brought together a diverse group of over 100 participants from across the African continent, including grassroots organizations, youth-led initiatives, women’s rights networks, national and regional CSO platforms, academia and think tanks, development partners and government representatives.

This outcome document synthesizes the main discussions and offers a set of thematic, action-oriented recommendations to inform policy, partnership building, and future advocacy.

### Key Recommendations

#### A. Partnerships & Governance

- I. The value of partnerships can not be overstated. Achieving the SDGs requires building diverse, innovative, and inclusive partnerships across all sectors and levels. SDG 17- focused on partnerships- is the cornerstone of Agenda 2030. Realising the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the Pact for the Future demands deliberate, well structured, and enduring collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, and development partners.
- II. Governments must recognise the role of civil society as a bridge between policy and practice. CSOs are essential in amplifying the voices of marginalised communities, monitoring development progress, and holding duty bearers accountable to their

commitments. Civil society engagement is fundamental to achieving inclusive and effective development outcomes.

- III. There is an urgent need to recommit to multilateralism by rebuilding trust in international cooperation and strengthening global governance systems. A renewed, inclusive, and accountable multilateral order is essential to address shared challenges and deliver on the promises of the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and the Pact for the Future.
- IV. Governments must prioritize accountability and transparency by taking decisive action to combat corruption. Ending corrupt practices is critical to restoring public trust, ensuring efficient use of resources, and driving sustainable and inclusive development.
- V. To achieve Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030, and the Pact for the Future, governments must go beyond policy and practice. They should prioritize integrated planning, coordinated actions, and shared ownership among all stakeholders to ensure collective responsibility and effective implementation.

## **B. Financing & Resource Mobilization**

- VI. Governments should collaborate with civil society to develop resource mobilization models anchored in African realities, with a strategic focus on unlocking the vast potential of African philanthropy. Harnessing local resources and partnerships is key to driving sustainable, self-reliant development across the continent.
- VII. Governments must take decisive action to tackle illicit financial flows by strengthening legal frameworks to secure domestic resources. These resources should be effectively utilized to improve public services and maximize the value of existing assets for sustainable development.
- VIII. Governments must invest in viable Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) that enable effective collaboration between the private sector and governments. The private sector brings innovation, resources, and expertise, while governments provide the scale and regulatory framework. This strategic partnership will accelerate SDG progress by leveraging both public resources and private sector innovation, capital, and expertise.
- IX. African governments should actively explore crowdfunding as a strategic fundraising tool for development projects, social enterprises, and entrepreneurship. Crowdfunding harnesses small contributions from a wide base of individuals, often via online platforms, making it an effective way to mobilize resources. In the context of achieving the SDGs, crowdfunding is especially crucial for African nations where traditional funding sources are often limited or inefficient.
- X. Governments should prioritise investments in infrastructure bonds as a powerful financial tool to mobilize capital for long-term infrastructure development. These bonds are crucial for funding key projects in sectors like health, education, and transportation, which are essential for achieving the SDGs.

## **C. Evidence & Data**

- XI. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 requires not only government commitment and resources, but also smarter, more inclusive, and data-driven approaches. Citizen-generated data (CGD) is a powerful tool that can accelerate SDG implementation by filling critical data gaps, providing real-time, localized insights, and amplifying the voices of marginalized and underserved communities. It is not just a monitoring tool but a strategic investment in inclusive, evidence-based development.
- XII. Governments should prioritize the development of open data systems, digital tools, and local capacity-building initiatives to enhance monitoring, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Strengthening data ecosystems at the grassroots level is essential for effective SDG tracking and transparent governance.

## **D. Inclusion & Social Justice**

- XIII. In the pursuit of inclusive development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), health equity must be central to government action. Health is not only a fundamental human right but also a key driver of social and economic participation. Without equitable access to healthcare, millions are left behind, perpetuating cycles of poverty, marginalization, and inequality.
- XIV. Development planning must integrate gender, disability, geography, and socioeconomic status to ensure the inclusive and equitable implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. This approach ensures that no one is left behind and that the needs of all communities are addressed.

## **E. Youth Engagement**

- XV. Beyond beneficiaries, young people are essential drivers of the solutions needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is crucial to create platforms that allow youth to be heard, and capacitate them to influence decision-making, shape policies, and take leadership roles in implementing Agenda 2030.

## **Next Steps**

1. The outcomes of the side event will be shared with key stakeholders to ensure wide visibility and engagement.
2. The CSO Core Reference Group on SDGs will organize regional reflections after the 11th session of the ARFSD to assess progress and ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations.
3. Civil society organizations will continue advocating for the integration of the Pact for the Future into national development plans.

## **Conclusion**

The 11th ARFSD presented an opportunity for civil society to showcase dedication, innovative solutions, and solidarity in advancing Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and the Pact for the Future. The moment for action is now, and civil society must be at the heart of this transformative journey. Civil Society Organizations across Africa are not only ready but resolute in their commitment to driving a sustainable, just, and inclusive future.