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Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Eleventh session

Preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa
Kampala, 8 April 2025

Concept note

I. Introduction and rationale

1. Major groups and other stakeholders play an essential role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They strengthen inclusion by giving voice to voiceless, marginalized and vulnerable population groups; promote accountability, transparency and responsiveness; engage in capacity-building; share their experiences and knowledge during planning, implementation and review processes; and bolster the participation of diverse communities in national and subnational development processes and community ownership of those processes.

2. The 2030 Agenda includes the requirement for major groups and other relevant stakeholders to participate in the follow-up and review processes established for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the regional level, moreover, civil society organizations and other major groups are engaged in implementing, monitoring and evaluating Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, which is being implemented in coordination with the 2030 Agenda.

3. Nine years after the adoption, in 2015, of the 2030 Agenda, the world is falling short of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets. Globally, only 16 per cent of the measurable targets under the Goals will be achieved by 2030. In Africa, only 10 of 144 targets (7 per cent) are expected to be achieved by 2030, with a further 106 targets requiring accelerated action and another 28 showing signs of regression.¹

4. Several challenges and external shocks account for the difficulties with achieving the Goals in Africa. Climate-induced disasters cost African countries up to 5 per cent of their annual economic output.¹ In 2020 and 2021, the adverse effects of persistent poverty, informal employment and underdevelopment on the continent were compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

¹ Adivhaho Ramaite and Alize le Roux, “Accelerate, extend or abandon? Africa’s SDG dilemma”, Institute for Security Studies, 12 September 2024.

¹ Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Delivering on climate action will unlock a goldmine of human and economic benefits”, statement to the tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment 2024, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 5 September 2024.



pandemic.² With estimated average annual real gross domestic product growth of 3.1 per cent in 2023, the continent is falling far short of the level required to achieve Goal 8 by 2030.³ Moreover, gender inequality continues to adversely affect the life outcomes of African women and girls.

5. The growing external debt burdens and the recent tightening of monetary policy in major economies have significantly reduced the fiscal space of many African States, undermining their ability to invest in the critical services and infrastructure that are required to achieve the Goals. By the end of 2023, the total external debt of African States had reached more than \$1.1 trillion.⁴ Furthermore, the estimated financing gap for the Goals in Africa is \$1.3 trillion per year.⁵

6. If African States and institutions are to put themselves back on track towards achieving the Goals by 2030, transformative multi-stakeholder efforts will be required. Such efforts include raising development finance from various sources, domestic and external, improving governance, addressing political instability, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss, and harnessing the promise of science and technology to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and the creation of decent jobs.

7. It is against this backdrop that the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will be held in Kampala, from 9 to 11 April 2025, under the theme “Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive, science-based and evidence-based solutions for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union”. The Forum will conduct an in-depth review of the progress made in achieving five of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: Goal 3 (good health and well-being); Goal 5 (gender equality); Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth); Goal 14 (life below water); and Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

8. As one of the preliminary events of the Forum, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Africa Regional Mechanism of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders are organizing a preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa on 8 April 2025. In line with the theme of the Forum, the workshop will be focused on the role of science-based and evidence-based solutions, as well as that of major groups and other stakeholders, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding aspirations, goals and targets under Agenda 2063.

II. Objectives

9. The objectives of the workshop are:

- (a) To prepare major groups and other stakeholders for their participation in the Forum;
- (b) To brief major groups and other stakeholders on the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa;

² Yongyi Min (*Africa Renewal*), “How COVID-19 has impacted the SDGs in Africa”, United Nations, 18 July 2021.

³ African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook, 2024: Driving Africa’s Transformation – the Reform of the Global Financial Architecture* (Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 2024).

⁴ Patricia Cohen, “Africa’s debt crisis has ‘catastrophic implications’ for the world”, *The New York Times*, 28 August 2024.

⁵ African Union, African Development Bank, Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations Development Programme, *Africa Sustainable Development Report, 2024* (Addis Ababa; Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire; New York; 2024).

(c) To highlight and share the contributions of major groups and other stakeholders to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on science-based and evidence-based solutions;

(d) To articulate the chief messages of major groups and other stakeholders on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on the five selected Sustainable Development Goals, to form part of their contributions to the collective African input to the 2025 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(e) To enhance cooperation among major groups and other stakeholders, Governments and entities of the United Nations system, with a view to promoting implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

III. Content

10. Therefore, to achieve these objectives, the workshop will include the following sessions:

(a) Opening, featuring remarks by representatives of major groups and other stakeholders, of Governments and of entities of the United Nations system to set the scene for subsequent discussions;

(b) Review of the progress made in Africa with implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;

(c) Multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships to improve public governance and leave no one behind in future measures under the Sustainable Development Goals.

(d) Resilience to climate change and other shocks, including debt distress, in safeguarding the progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Follow-up on the outcomes of the Summit of the Future and preparations in the lead-up to the World Summit on Social Development;

11. The workshop will also feature discussions in breakout groups on the views and main messages of the major groups and other stakeholders concerning the Goals that are under review at the eleventh session of the Forum. In addition, a joint town hall meeting for stakeholders will be held, which will bring together participants in the workshop for major groups and other stakeholders, on the one hand, and the preparatory regional workshop on voluntary national and local reviews, on the other.

IV. Expected outcomes

12. The workshop is expected to have the following outcomes:

(a) Increased preparedness of major groups and other stakeholders to participate actively in the Forum;

(b) Improved capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to implement, monitor and review progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations, goals and targets under Agenda 2063;

(c) Advocacy by major groups and other stakeholders to promote science-based and evidence-based solutions and digital transformation to put Africa back on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Enhanced cooperation among major groups and other stakeholders, including national, subregional and regional policymakers,

experts and entities of the United Nations system, on promoting implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

V. Expected outputs

13. The workshop will generate the following outputs, which will be disseminated widely:

- (a) Summary of the chief messages of the major groups and other stakeholders;
- (b) Summary presentation of the chief messages of the major groups and other stakeholders, to be delivered during the Forum;
- (c) Summary report on the workshop.

VI. Main documents

14. The documents for the workshop will include the following:

- (a) Concept note and programme of work for the workshop;
- (b) Concept note and programme of work for the eleventh session of the Forum;
- (c) Background reports on the sub-themes of the eleventh session of the Forum.

VII. Participation

15. The workshop will be attended by representatives of all nine major groups: women; children and young people; Indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; businesses and industries; the scientific and technological community; and farmers. The Sendai Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism will also participate. In addition, representatives of other stakeholder groups will be represented, including national parliaments, local communities, volunteer groups, foundations, migrants and their families, older persons and persons with disabilities. Representatives of Governments and development partners will also be invited to attend.

VIII. Working languages

16. The workshop will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation available in both languages.

IX. Venue and date

17. The workshop will be held in person at the Speke Resort and Convention Centre Munyonyo, Kampala, 8 April 2025.

X. Contact

18. Enquiries concerning the organization of the preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa should be directed to:

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