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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda *

Plenary round table on voluntary national reviews and peer learning to build forward better and accelerate delivery of sustainable development in Africa: voluntary national reviews and peer learning to strengthen country-level interventions

Information and guidelines for the plenary round table on voluntary national reviews

I. Date and time

1. The plenary round-table panel will be held on 3 March 2022 from 4.15 to 6 p.m.

II. Introduction

2. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, member States of the United Nations were encouraged to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are country-led and country-driven”. Forty-six African countries have conducted voluntary national reviews since 2016. Twenty-one African countries, the highest of any region globally, are currently conducting voluntary national reviews, the findings of which will be presented at the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. These countries include 7 that are preparing their first reviews,¹ 13 that are preparing their second reviews,² and 1 that is preparing its fourth review.³ By the end of the 2022 meeting of the high-level political forum, only one African country would be yet to volunteer for a national review.

III. Objective

3. The objective of this round-table panel is to facilitate learning and strengthen practice in conducting and following up on voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

* ECA/RFSD/2022/1.

¹ Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia.

² Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Senegal and Sudan.

³ Togo.



4. Panellists will also share insights relating to the challenges of conducting such reviews in the era of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the role of the reviews in ensuring a green, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis alongside accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

5. Among other issues, this round-table panel will offer the opportunity to highlight the outcomes of the pre-event on voluntary national and local reviews.

6. It is anticipated that the panellists will outline compelling solutions; share their views, experiences and lessons learned; and propose concrete ways that voluntary national reviews can best contribute to building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating the implementation of the two agendas.

IV. Format

7. The panel will comprise selected policymakers and senior experts from the countries involved in voluntary national reviews in previous years and in 2022 and from other countries in Africa that are front runners in the implementation of Agenda 2063. The panel will also include representatives of young people. A detailed list of panellists is presented in paragraph 9 below.

V. Guidelines

8. The following guidelines will apply to the plenary round-table panel:

(a) The Chair will introduce the round-table panel, the objective as stated above and the panel members. The Chair will then yield to the moderator, who will guide the discussion among the panellists and the other participants;

(b) The moderator will invite each panellist to speak for no longer than five minutes on one or more of the following questions:

(i) What are some of the good practices and lessons learned in the voluntary national review and follow-up processes?

(ii) How have the reviews contributed to policy and programme reform for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and for faster implementation of the two agendas in your country?

(iii) Drawing on the review that your country has conducted, what are some of the policies and practices that have worked and why have they been successful with respect to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and delivery of sustainable development?

(iv) In what ways have the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of data and statistics and other challenges affected voluntary national reviews and their follow-up?

(v) What support should partners at the national, regional and global levels provide to strengthen the reviews and the follow-up thereto?

(vi) Who are the key stakeholders in voluntary national reviews and what role did or should they play in the process, including the follow-up?

(vii) What measures and changes are needed to strengthen voluntary national reviews so that they contribute optimally to building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate delivery of sustainable development?

(c) The moderator will help to catalyse an interactive dialogue among the panellists. In doing so, the moderator will give representatives of the countries taking part in the voluntary national reviews in 2022 the opportunity to pose questions to representatives of countries that have previously participated in the review process;

(d) The moderator will then invite questions and other contributions from the floor;

(e) At the end of the dialogue, the moderator will provide a summary of the key policy messages, including the recommendations made. The moderator will then yield to the Chair, who will conclude the round-table panel discussion.

VI. Chair, moderator and panellists

9. The moderator and panellists for the round-table panel discussion will be as follows:

Chair: Chair of the Bureau of the eighth session of the Forum

Moderator: Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA

Panellists:

- President of the Economic and Social Council, and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations, Collen Kelapile
- Minister of Planning and Development of Côte d'Ivoire, Nialé Kaba
- Deputy Minister for the Digital Economy and Innovation, Mariam Hamadou Ali
- Chief Executive Officer, secretariat of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, Eddy Maloka
- Lecturer in International Relations, University of Namibia, Rosetta Nawases
- Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Najat Maalla M'jid