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Key messages of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**I. Introduction****A. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

1. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, emphasized the role of effective governance at all levels for achieving sustainable development. The Conference recognized that the institutional framework for sustainable development should be consistent with the Rio Principles, and build on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Moreover, the Conference decided to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development, building on the strengths, experience, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development. An intergovernmental, transparent and inclusive negotiation process was launched by the General Assembly to define the format and organizational aspects of the Forum, with the aim of convening the first meeting of the Forum at the beginning of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

2. At the Conference on Sustainable Development, the participants called for the implementation of all sustainable development commitments to be monitored. They recognized that the sustainable development goals could be useful for ensuring coherent action on sustainable development and emphasized that the goals should take equally into consideration all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages. In addition, they stressed that the goals should be coherent with and integrated into the post-2015 development agenda, and called for an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process that would be open to all stakeholders.

3. In January 2013, the General Assembly established an intergovernmental open working group tasked with coming up with a set of sustainable development goals. In September 2014, the Assembly, in its resolution 68/309 on the report produced by the Open Working Group, which proposed 17 goals and 169 targets, decided that the proposal should "be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the

intergovernmental negotiating process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly”.

4. Africa made substantial contributions to the Open Working Group’s proposal for sustainable development goals and the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, through the following documents: the outcome document of the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting on the Rio+20 follow-up processes, held in November 2012, and the outcome document of the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals, held from 31 October to 5 November 2013, which informed the work of the African High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

5. In July 2013, the General Assembly established the High-level Political Forum and decided on its format and organizational aspects. The inaugural meeting of the Forum, in September 2013, and the second meeting of the Forum, in July 2014, highlighted its pivotal role in promoting and reviewing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. The theme of the 2015 meeting of the Forum, which will be held from 26 June to 8 July 2015, including a three-day ministerial segment from 6 to 8 July 2015, is “Strengthening integration, implementation and review: the High-level Political Forum after 2015”. In addition to issues of integration, implementation and review, the Forum will discuss new and emerging issues and the science-policy interface; sustainable consumption and production; and small island developing States, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and countries in special political situations.

B. Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

6. Against this backdrop, the Economic Commission for Africa, together with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, and in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, convened the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 17 and 18 June 2015. The Forum brought together high-level representatives of African member States, all relevant stakeholders and representatives of the nine so-called major groups of civil society identified in Agenda 21.¹ The main objective of the Forum was to enable African countries to deliberate and agree on Africa’s collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum, in the form of key messages. The key messages agreed upon at the Africa Regional Forum are set out below.

II. Sustainable development bodies and their role in strengthening integration, implementation and review beyond 2015

A. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

7. Rio+20 provided the much needed impetus for accelerating the implementation of sustainable development commitments, and gave clear guidance on the institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels, including the establishment of the High-level Political Forum on

¹ The nine major groups are: women; children and youth; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological community; and farmers.

Sustainable Development, which replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Conference recognized the role of all actors, from global to local, in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, and underscored the need for effective linkages among the various levels and across sectors to ensure consistency, coherence and synergistic approaches for enhanced implementation.

8. Resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in defining the format of the Forum to provide political leadership for sustainable development at the global level, paid due regard to the Rio+20 decision to create the Forum, and spelled out the mandate, functions and operational modalities of the Forum in relation to United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Assembly contextualized the review function of the Forum within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. Its decisions on preparations for and participation in the Forum's review sessions took into account the lessons learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development, in order to create a review mechanism that would strengthen integration and implementation.

B. Key messages of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

9. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development agreed upon the following key messages, to be used as Africa's collective input to 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

1. **The Forum reaffirms resolution 67/290 setting out the mandate, format and organizational aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and establishing the High-level Forum as the appropriate global, intergovernmental platform to provide political leadership and guidance for follow-up and review of sustainable development implementation and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.** The High-level Political Forum should ensure that poverty eradication and reducing income inequalities and unemployment remain the overarching objectives of the post-2015 development agenda. The agenda must continue to be underpinned by the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
2. **Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development is an important tenet of this development paradigm and, to a large extent, will determine the effectiveness of the High-level Political Forum.** In this regard, the Forum should learn from the lessons of the Commission on Sustainable Development and devise appropriate strategies to ensure its adequate delivery on this mandate. This should take into account the ability to attract the participation of stakeholders representing the three dimensions, Government, private sector and major groups, at all implementation levels.
3. **Effective mainstreaming of equity and inequality issues in meetings of the High-level Political Forum, particularly in terms of representation and participation of developing countries, such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other African countries, is important to strengthen the legitimacy of the Forum.** While it is important to mobilize adequate resources to sponsor a critical mass of stakeholders to participate in meetings, the Forum should ensure meaningful engagement

in terms of the equity implications of matters relating to development finance, technology transfer and capacity development.

4. **Enhanced mainstreaming of sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system, including their support to member States, will greatly contribute to advancing sustainable development objectives.** This should be supported by the “Delivering as one” initiative of the United Nations system, at all levels. Globally, this should be done through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination; regionally, through the United Nations coordinating mechanisms; and nationally, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework mechanism in accordance with national priorities and strategies.
5. **A focused agenda will allow the Forum to entertain the depth and breadth of discussions necessary to effectively deal with specific issues of concern.** This will permit the Forum to reach robust conclusions to inform decisions that will facilitate buy-in and actions by all concerned, and will attract the level of implementation support required.
6. **The flexibility of the Forum to tackle new and emerging issues will strengthen its relevance.** The high-profile nature of new and emerging issues can attract the level of support required to effectively respond to a demand-driven agenda.
7. **The contextualization of the Forum’s review system within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals, is strategic and can help in ensuring an integrated and coordinated system that achieves integration and implementation.** The post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals embody objectives and thematic areas that cut across the three dimensions, and governance and peace and security imperatives. The review system needs to take into consideration the fact that the goals are not stand-alone ones but are interlinked, and so it needs to provide the opportunity for enhanced integration and implementation.
8. **The sustainable development goals and targets will provide a mechanism for follow-up and review to allow for coordination and comparability across countries, subregions and regions.** The targets should permit a focus on outcomes and means of implementation. The framework should ensure universality while at the same time allow for differentiation of targets, indicators and measurement methods that take into account different developmental contexts and specificities and national development priorities.
9. **The honouring by developed countries of internationally agreed commitments on the provision of official development assistance to developing countries, especially in Africa, is critical in order to help Africa to realize its developmental objectives, in particular to support Agenda 2063 and infrastructure development, which would serve as a catalyst for growth and job creation.** The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of 2002 and Agenda 21 of 1992 contain many targeted sustainable development goals that have not yet been implemented. Africa needs a post-2015 development agenda that builds on the successes and unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. An enabling global governance system that makes this possible is also required.
10. **The follow-up and review framework should not impose conditionalities on the global partnership for development as this**

may deter countries from participating. Instead, the framework should integrate incentives for participation. The follow-up and review process should therefore be conducted in a constructive spirit and be based on mutual learning and achievement. The review should equally focus on commitments both at the national and international levels.

11. **The Forum and regional bodies should ensure the necessary support is provided for Africa's continental processes and mechanisms.** In this regard, the Forum should ensure that all African countries have the necessary capacity to do proper follow-up and review at the national and local levels, starting with high-quality national statistics.
12. **The emergence of new development themes and goals in the sustainable development goals framework, as compared to the Millennium Development Goals framework, including those that seek to integrate social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, will require strengthening of the review system, which should remain flexible.** In this regard, there will be a need for well-coordinated interventions to strengthen the statistical capacity of institutions responsible for data gathering and analysis. The data revolution for sustainable development espoused by the Secretary-General should make this happen.
13. **There may be a need to conduct thematic reviews, particularly on new and emerging issues, to complement the sustainable development goals based reviews. These, should use the current review mechanisms within the United Nations system.** The reviews should analyse implementation challenges, constraints and lessons learned, and should build on the interlinkages approach of the Commission on Sustainable Development to bring out relationships with other thematic areas, while highlighting the economic, social and environmental dimensions that will allow for tackling implementation challenges in an integrated and synergistic manner.
14. **Multi-stakeholder reviews will be critical for the success of the review process. These should also promote the sharing of best practices and experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons to better inform the implementation process.** The reviews should be voluntary, State-led, participatory, evidence-based and multi-tiered, from local, national, subregional, regional and international levels.

C. Regional and subregional levels

10. On the review functions and processes of the High-level Political Forum, resolution 67/290 acknowledged the importance of the regional dimension, the role of the regional commissions and their partners in that regard, and took into account the need for strong linkages with regional, national and local-level processes, and the effective participation of countries in special situations. In the Africa region, the various configurations of the ECA Committee on Sustainable Development had been providing platforms for the members of the regional implementation meetings to deliberate on the region's collective input to the sessions of the global Conference, with impressive results. Africa's robust preparations and participation in Rio+20 ensured the adequate reflection of the region's concerns, priorities and interests in the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want".

11. The experiences gained in the organization of the Africa regional implementation meetings informed the organization of the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the sustainable development goals, which was

convened by ECA, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank in the context of the African consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. The outcome document was adopted as a technical input for the work of the African High-level Committee on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and was one of the key documents that guided the negotiating positions of African negotiators in the global sustainable development goals consultations in New York.

12. The organization of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in preparation for the High-level Political Forum, will build on the experience of the Africa regional implementation meeting. In that context, the important role of regional actors, including ECA, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the regional commissions, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Africa, and the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Africa, is well recognized. The review process envisaged is for national and local-level review processes to feed into the regional-level process. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa platform and current review mechanisms, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness, will be essential to the process.

13. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **Adequate policy space should be provided for regional organizations, to allow them to discuss how to further enhance and develop existing regional follow-up and review mechanisms for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.** We need to provide adequate space for regional organizations to work with their members on addressing whether existing mechanisms are adequately following up the implementation of the agenda, while avoiding duplication of efforts.
2. **Building on the experiences of the African regional implementation meetings, including successes, challenges and lessons, will be critical for the successful convening of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.** In that regard, ECA should organize the regional forums together with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, and in collaboration with NEPAD, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Africa and other relevant actors. The Africa Regional Forum is the regional intergovernmental forum, with participation from major groups and civil society, established to deliberate on Africa's collective input to the High-level Political Forum, and its periodicity and programme should be informed by the High-level Political Forum.
3. **The provision of a strengthened platform that adequately ensures an enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development will contribute to ensuring the success of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.** To that end, preparations for and participation in the Forum should include stakeholders from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, regional economic communities, the private sector and other major groups across the three dimensions of sustainable development, and effective coordination should be ensured among delegations of member States from capitals, the African missions in Addis Ababa, and the African Group in New York and Geneva.

4. **The need for effective follow-up and review of the implementation of the sustainable development goals at the regional and subregional levels highlights the significant role of the regional commissions and their subregional offices in promoting a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, including fostering effective linkages among global, national and local institutions.** It also calls for the meaningful engagement of the African Union Commission and the relevant African Union specialized technical committees (including all three dimensions of sustainable development), the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and other relevant regional and subregional institutions. For each of the five subregions of Africa, the regional economic communities should provide the institutional framework for follow-up, review and reporting on the sustainable development goals, with the support of agencies of the United Nations system operating at that level, including the ECA subregional offices. The review at the subregional level should draw on the national processes. The subregional reports should, in turn, inform the report on sustainable development goals for Africa. The same process should be used for producing the thematic review reports.
5. **Agenda 2063 constitutes Africa's framework for implementing the post-2015 development agenda and its accompanying sustainable development goals framework.** In that respect, the Agenda, with its accompanying goals, targets and indicators, should provide a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for effective implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels.
6. **Africa has many platforms that could support the thematic reviews that may be undertaken under the auspices of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.** These include the various ECA statutory committees, the Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and other relevant African ministerial bodies. Should thematic reviews be agreed on as part of the High-level Political Forum process, these platforms, in addition to those of the United Nations system, should be leveraged, taking into account their comparative advantages in terms of enlisting the critical mass of expertise needed for reviewing a particular thematic area.
7. **The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa plays an important role in furthering the sustainable development agenda in the region.** This mechanism for United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme, including development frameworks such as Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plans, should ensure coherence and coordination in the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in Africa, and the High-level Political Forum review system through the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.
8. **The African Peer Review Mechanism is a mutually agreed upon programme voluntarily acceded to by the member States of the African Union to promote and reinforce high standards of governance and socioeconomic development.** It is a self-monitoring mechanism with no conditionalities attached. The Mechanism meets the criteria identified in the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and it should be strengthened and

updated to incorporate key sustainable development commitments and milestones, to provide a platform for individual country reviews in Africa in the context of the High-level Political Forum process that may be led by regional commissions.

9. **The *Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa*, an exercise in mutual accountability undertaken jointly by ECA and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development following a request made by the NEPAD Heads of State and Government in 2003, could form an integral part of the follow-up and review process in Africa.** The report does not seek to generate new commitments, but rather to track the implementation of existing commitments. The report should complement other tools for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on commitments related to the global partnership for sustainable development between Africa and its partners.

D. National and local levels

14. National ownership is crucial to effective integration, implementation and review processes. Broad-based national participatory approaches would enhance commitment, accountability and ownership, which are much needed. National structures and coordinating bodies guide the development and implementation of policies, strategies and plans for sustainable development. National coordinating bodies translate global and regional frameworks into national and local actions; provide the mechanism for coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national level; and ensure effective linkages from the local to the global levels. The national review process is, therefore, the most significant in the overall review process, for which a bottom-up process is critical. In this regard, the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Development Agenda places emphasis on the need for a bottom-up review process. It also highlights the significance of national reviews, which should inform subregional, regional and global review processes, in that order, with a view to enhancing national ownership and the legitimacy of the High-level Political Forum review process.

15. However, the new and emerging issues in the post-2015 development agenda could place additional stress on already weak national monitoring and reporting systems. In this regard, resource requirements, cost implications and data challenges need particular consideration to ensure effective implementation and review processes. National institutions in charge of monitoring, evaluating and reporting at all levels will, therefore, need to be clearly identified, appropriately mandated and resourced. This calls for enhanced support from the international community and the operationalization of a sustainable development data revolution, which is an important enabler for a review system according to the Secretary-General's report.

16. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **National coordinating bodies for sustainable development are essential for coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national level and ensuring effective linkages from the local to the global levels.** National sustainable development bodies should ensure the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and should promote the mainstreaming of sustainable development at the highest level of decision-making organs of government, the private sector and civil society organizations, in accordance with national priorities and strategies.

2. **The national review process is the most significant in the overall review process, for which a bottom-up process is critical.** The process should build on current national and local mechanisms and processes, with broad, multi-stakeholder participation, under the leadership of national Governments, and with the involvement of parliaments, civil society, science, academia and business. A government report and a national stakeholders report, complemented by a report produced by the United Nations system and other development partners, could constitute the main outcomes of the review. The African Peer Review Mechanism process will be instrumental to the national reviews in terms of national policies and measures to implement the post-2015 development agenda.
3. **The role and capacity of local governments and local government associations should be strengthened in implementing the post-2015 sustainable development process.** Partnerships should also be encouraged between the aforementioned groups and established networks of cities and local authorities in the region to advance sustainable development.
4. **All African countries should ensure gender mainstreaming with specific reference to women on a parity basis to enable their full participation and engagement across the three dimensions of sustainable development and related implementation processes.** Systematic and explicit gender mainstreaming should be undertaken to facilitate the elaboration and implementation of inclusive policies, programmes and projects, with a view to integrating gender aspects into the capacity-building of governmental institutions and other stakeholders, and enabling women to play a critical role in achieving sustainable development.
5. **The proposed sustainable development goals are not meant to set or replace national priorities and could be implemented with varying degrees of selection, modification or adaptation according to national circumstances.** To foster national ownership, commitment and accountability, countries should continuously review their own targets and indicators through national participatory processes, with the global post-2015 development agenda framework as a useful benchmark rather than a prescriptive framework. While Agenda 2063 is broadly consistent with the post-2015 development agenda, a systematic analysis of all of the goals and indicators against national circumstances and broader long-term sustainable development objectives would be useful.
6. **Institutions in charge of monitoring, evaluating and reporting at all levels will need to be clearly identified, appropriately mandated and funded.** At the community level, the monitoring and reporting units of local governments or local community councils should be strengthened to enable them to play a role in generating relevant data and implementation reports. At the local level, monitoring and reporting mechanisms for producing subnational reports should also be strengthened. Local reports should be consolidated at the national level through designated bodies. National statistics offices, which are expected to play a fundamental role, should be strengthened to enable them to generate reliable data.
7. **Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the sustainable development goals will place additional stress on national statistics systems.** There is a need to comprehensively examine data gaps and compilation limitations country by country, goal by goal, with a view to tackling potential capacity challenges in national statistics services. For the sustainable development goals, transparency, accountability and

national involvement in any estimation that is not derived from reported data should be enhanced at all stages. In addition, methods should be replicable and easily understood by national stakeholders and other users.

8. **With regard to the new and emerging themes in the sustainable development goals, resource requirements, cost implications and data quality and continuity must be given due consideration.** New and additional resources should be identified at the outset to support data collection, compilation and dissemination. Countries will continue to need assistance in improving their statistics systems. The international community should significantly scale up support to countries and national statistics offices with critical needs for additional capacity to produce, collect, disaggregate, analyse and share data for the new agenda. The envisaged data revolution for sustainable development should be geared towards delivering on this requirement.

III. New and emerging issues and the science-policy interface

17. It is recognized that new and emerging issues and challenges such as climate change, degradation and depletion of natural resources, energy poverty, youth unemployment and the leveraging new technologies and innovation, can be addressed by developing sound science-policy interfaces in order to enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels. The policy interface should be supported by four pillars: infrastructure development, technical competences, innovation and entrepreneurship, and enabling environment (see Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024). However, Africa has been slow to adapt and develop its science and technology sectors and commercialize its innovations. The continent spends just 0.42 per cent of gross domestic product on research and development, a long way off international targets. Spending on research and development needs to jump to 1 per cent in order to foster growth; at present only Tunisia has reached this target. Although Africa accounts for 13.4 per cent of the world's people, it produces just 1.1 per cent of the scientific knowledge. Africa cannot ensure sustainable development without science, technology and innovation, in order to transform traditional knowledge into competitive products at the regional and international levels.

18. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **African countries lag behind, not only in terms of adapting technologies but also with regard to developing regional research and development capacities.** To this end, African countries should put in place proper policy orientation towards creating an enabling framework that fosters environmentally sound technology, research, development and innovation, in line with sustainable development goals and targets. Governments should undertake technical assessment to ensure that technologies being transferred from elsewhere are appropriate for Africa's needs and environments.
2. **While it is well recognized that Africa contributes little to global greenhouse gas emissions, the continent is not immune to the resulting effects of climate change.** In this regard, while it is important to promote the green economy agenda towards more sustainable development planning, it is equally important to tackle the adverse effects of climate change. To this end, African countries should introduce policies and strategies to undertake appropriate mitigation and adaptation

measures in order to reverse the impact of climate change, but they should be supported in this endeavour.

3. **Access to modern energy services for cooking and heating, lighting and communications, and mechanical power for productive uses is a huge area of unmet needs on the continent.** The majority of people who do not have access to modern energy globally live in sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore critical to look into alternative energy sources and the efficient use of available energy sources by adopting innovative technologies. In this regard, member countries should create an enabling environment for the development and adoption of innovative technological approaches to enhance energy access and efficient use of energy. There is also a need for Governments to encourage the participation of the private sector in introducing new and emerging technologies for enhancing energy access and energy efficiency.
4. **Youth access to education and capacity-building, as well as entrepreneurship and employment, are key factors in determining their productivity and opportunities in the labour market.** Over the next decade, millions of young women and men are expected to enter the labour market in sub-Saharan Africa every year. If young people are given access to appropriate education, training, re-skilling and apprenticeship programmes, as well as the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills, they could be an engine for growth and make a meaningful contribution to development and stability. However, a growing unemployed youth population could put pressure on socioeconomic growth and threaten the stability of the economy. In this context, African countries need to develop national capacities and access to technologies and innovation to promote entrepreneurship and intensive employment policies among young people.
5. **The spread and use of information and communications technology (ICT) in urban and rural areas on the continent are fostering an Internet-based economy, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing growth and the transition to sustainable development.** However, owing to the enabling environment and support for capacity-building, in many countries there is a low level of innovative use of ICT. Member countries should therefore develop and implement policies and strategies that harness ICT use, including mobile and wireless access and broadband connectivity, to help to address the diverse challenges of urbanization. Policies should be developed to link rural areas to urban ones and to the rest of the economy.

IV. Sustainable consumption and production

19. The appreciable economic growth rates and the renewed drive for structural transformation in Africa offer a unique opportunity to establish more sustainable consumption and production patterns. There are many opportunities to leapfrog towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns that foster inclusive green growth and structural transformation in the region. This will permit Africa to avoid the levels of production and consumption-driven impacts observed in developed countries, safeguarding against unsustainable patterns of structural transformation in the future.

20. However, the application of sustainable consumption and production approaches demands considerable investments to acquire the technology and develop capacity needed, which is beyond the capabilities of most African countries. Africa is the poorest and least developed region of the world, where people are still struggling with the most basic needs such as food security, water,

sanitation and health services. The region therefore requires support to meet the costs associated with sustainable consumption and production. While acknowledging that both developed and developing countries should shift towards sustainable consumption and production, developed countries should take the lead in this endeavour in line with the Rio principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Sustainable consumption and production approaches should be home-grown and tailored to countries' transformation paths. The traditional ways of production and consumption, which are rooted in sustainability, should be improved and factored into modern sustainable consumption and production frameworks in order to enhance uptake.

21. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **Technological innovation is one of the most important elements of sustainable consumption and production.** Africa considers that access to safe, clean, affordable and sustainable consumption and production-related technologies, adapted to local needs and circumstances, would help the region to exploit its rich natural resource base without undermining its sustainability, thereby contributing to sustainable transformation in the region. Furthermore, in line with paragraph 273 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", which states, "We request the relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies", Africa recommends that the High-level Political Forum consider the issue of developing terms of reference for technology facilitation mechanisms and report back to Member States at the next meeting. International and regional cooperation can stimulate and promote the development and transfer of existing and emerging technologies through collaboration with the private sector, scientists and public institutions, as well as via North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.
2. **Research and development are at the core of context-based sustainable consumption and production innovation and development but are underdeveloped in Africa, where research institutions lack adequate human and financial resources.** Strategies to promote and strengthen regional, subregional and national institutions in science, research, technology and innovation in the area of sustainable consumption and production should be developed and implemented. This can be achieved through increased human and financial resources, as well as partnerships within and outside the region, and promoting partnerships between industry, academia and government.
3. **The promotion of indigenous and local knowledge should form an integral part of sustainable consumption and production promotion in Africa.** Traditional knowledge can provide Africa with the ability and the resources to establish and pursue sustainable consumption and production relevant to its development context. Traditional knowledge and resources, in the form of animals, plants, practices, processes and so forth, are the basis for sound environmental management and biodiversity and ecosystem preservation. They should therefore be protected and harnessed.
4. **Capacity development is crucial to successfully deploy sustainable consumption and production that promotes inclusive green growth and structural transformation in Africa.** Capacity development plays

a fundamental role in realizing sustainable consumption and production objectives and sustainable structural transformation. Crucially, sustainable consumption and production needs to be incorporated into the formulation and implementation of development policies, strategies, plans, programmes and budgets at the sectoral, national and international levels. In order to effectively meet this on a sustainable basis, capability for in-country and intra-regional planning, delivery, coordination, monitoring and reporting of capacity development should be built. Countries need to clearly define their sustainable consumption and production capacity development needs. They should be supported to conduct national capacity self-assessments, and formulate and implement comprehensive capacity development plans or strategies for sustainable consumption and production. Countries should also mobilize technical and financial resources to implement sustainable consumption and production as one of the regional flagship programmes approved by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

5. **A shift from the current investment trends to more sustainable ones is essential to foster sustainable consumption and production in key strategic areas in Africa, such as sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis.** In addition to official development assistance and traditional funding mechanisms, countries should explore innovative funding sources to scale up sustainable consumption and production approaches and practices. Initiatives in this area should also aim at linking policy and industry stakeholders to facilitate access to finance for sustainable consumption and production.
6. **Mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production in education and training curricula at all levels will contribute to its successful application in Africa.** In that regard, all learning institutions and sectors should be targeted, including schools, colleges, public service, business and industry. It is important that countries and partners provide the necessary institutional, political, technical and financial support to stakeholders wanting to promote low-resource and low-waste intensity economies and lifestyles, share information, and foster alternative ways of consuming, producing and trading.
7. **Africa's political, business and technological leaders need to champion sustainable consumption and production technology development and transfer.** They should target a broad range of policy interventions in order to influence activities in key economic areas, including through the mainstreaming of sustainable consumption and production into national development frameworks and the implementation of target-oriented action plans. Given the role of the green economy in pursuing sustainable development goals, Governments should provide an enabling environment to promote green investments by the private sector, particularly small and medium-scale enterprises. There is also a need for more coordination between different subregional sustainable consumption and production initiatives in Africa.

V. African small island developing States

22. The major obstacle for African small island developing States is their narrow terrestrial base. Sustainability for these island States is all about the ability to use oceanic space as opportunities for development. Efficient and optimal use of rich marine resources, while respecting environmental and ecological parameters, offers the prospect of sustained environmentally sound and socially inclusive economic growth, which can significantly transform

economies of African small island developing States. They are, however, vulnerable to the effects of climate change and countries need to enhance their understanding of the effects of climate change in relation to development and develop strategies to deal with them.

23. Climate change will undoubtedly complicate matters for African small island developing States, and coping with the challenges caused by the effects of climate change will require enormous financial resources, technology transfer and, most importantly, effective national, regional and global policy and governance frameworks. National ownership of these measures is critical. Effective national, regional and global policy, governance frameworks of ocean space as a common good, and favourable international partnerships in support of small island developing States will go a long way in ensuring their sustainable development and survival.

24. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **Small island developing States should be supported to move towards a blue economy.** As African small island developing States' terrestrial resources are limited, they should explore the large resources in the ocean and coastal ecosystems, which offer excellent opportunities for development while protecting environmental integrity.
2. **Promoting a sustainable governance structure for oceans for African small island developing States is critical.** African small island developing States should be supported to promote an effective governance structure for fisheries, shipping, use of seabed mineral wealth potential, sustainable tourism, managing emissions and sea pollution, as these areas are vital for development, in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
3. **Small island developing States need support for renewable energy development in their efforts to achieve sustainable energy for all.** Commodity transformation in the value chain, tourism and seabed mining require sufficient and reliable energy, which cannot be satisfied from expensive imported fossil fuels. Small island developing States should be encouraged and supported to consider harnessing the many commercially feasible renewable energy options available that could enable them to meet the objective of providing energy for all and reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.
4. **Innovation, appropriate technology access and transfer are essential for the economic transformation of small island developing States.** Harnessing enormous ocean and marine resources in addition to managing education, health care, farming, water, energy, tourism and ecosystems, requires innovative approaches and adoption of appropriate technologies. Small island developing States should therefore be supported in their efforts to innovate and acquire appropriate technologies.
5. **Small island developing States should be supported to strengthen their climate information services and reinforce their capacity to predict weather patterns and prepare for and manage extreme events to ensure sustainable development in alignment with the requirements of the Samoa Pathway.** Small island developing States need capacity and information networks for early warning on climate services. Their economic sectors are sensitive to the effects of climate change, and such effects are increasingly becoming severe, affecting economies as well as human livelihoods.

6. **Small island developing States should be supported to mobilize financial resources and human capital.** These States face enormous challenges of development and are not resilient to the impacts of climate change owing to their unique circumstances. They should be supported to effectively deal with problems of adaptation to the effects of climate change. This requires sufficient financing from both domestic and international sources as well as augmenting and strengthening human resources.
7. **Enhancing partnerships and regional integration is critical in overcoming small island developing States' development challenges.** They should be assisted in seeking public-private partnerships at the domestic, regional and international levels to enable them to leverage new spaces for economic development and new resources to ensure the protection of sensitive areas.

VI. African least developed countries

25. African least developed countries have registered improvements in some of the priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, such as health and education, but there are still many challenges and gaps to meet all of the globally agreed targets. Key among the challenges are Africa's vulnerability to external shocks and high dependence on official development assistance, as demonstrated by the catastrophic effect of, and response to, the recent Ebola virus disease outbreak in parts of West Africa.

26. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **Least developed countries need to strengthen their resilience to shocks and improve global competitiveness in order to address their challenges and sustain gains.** Indeed, African countries are continuing to pursue structural transformation in order to build their economic resilience, but this must be complemented with sound, innovative and effective industrial policy institutions, mechanisms and processes, and also complementary investments in infrastructure, health and education.
2. **Regional institutions should create synergies and adopt strategies that can better address the concerns of least developed countries.** This should take into account the strong recommendations from the African least developed countries' ministerial meeting on structural transformation and the upgrading of least developed countries, which took place in Milan, Italy, in June 2015. In this regard, regional institutions should prioritize initiatives and programmes that foster structural transformation and graduation from least developed country status.
3. **Least developed countries require the support of development partners in pursuing and achieving their development aspirations.** Development partners should provide least developed countries with additional, enhanced, preferential, concessional and most favourable treatment in the areas of finance, technology, know-how and other resources. Additionally, they should provide differential and flexible treatment to least developed countries in undertaking international commitments and obligations that are not commensurate with their capacity, needs and stage of development.
4. **Some of the major challenges hindering the development of least developed countries, including the achievement of the future**

sustainable development goals, are insecurity, terrorism, arms and drug trafficking and security problems for immigrants. Therefore, African countries should develop more regional cooperation and seek strong and comprehensive support from developed countries to address these challenges in the pursuit of legitimate development aspirations.

5. **Least developed countries should take advantage of the upcoming major global events in a way that facilitates their graduation and transformation aspirations.** In this regard, the importance of the post-2015 agenda process in the global development landscape cannot be overstated.

VII. Landlocked developing countries

27. The Almaty Programme of Action served to focus attention and rally support at various levels for examining the unique development challenges faced by landlocked developing countries. The Vienna Programme of Action is based on the renewed and strengthened partnerships between landlocked developing countries and the transit countries and their development partners. It is intended to support landlocked developing countries to deal with the enduring challenges and consolidate the achievements made and accelerate progress towards achieving sustainable development in these countries. African countries need to leverage the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and continue to build robust institutions that maintain and improve the business environment, economic governance and macroeconomic management.

28. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **At the regional level, Agenda 2063 provides a unique opportunity to galvanize international, regional and national support for tackling the challenges facing the continent, including African landlocked developing countries.** The 10-year plan for the implementation of Agenda 2063 should therefore incorporate the measures set out in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. Moreover, African landlocked developing countries should domesticate the Vienna Programme of Action. The action areas in the Vienna Programme of Action should inform and feature as development priorities in policies and programmes of Africa's development partners, including bilateral and multilateral support agencies.
2. **Regional integration is a cornerstone for the integration of African landlocked developing countries into regional and global markets.** African landlocked developing countries should vigorously pursue policies, strategies and programmes to promote regional integration. In this regard, the decision to launch negotiations on the establishment of a continental free trade area in July 2015, with the aim of reaching an agreement by 2017, and the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade should be fully supported and implemented.
3. **Developing the industrial sector is crucial for the structural transformation of African economies.** African landlocked developing countries should therefore consider designing and implementing industrial policies to increase value addition in commodity and resource exports, where many countries already have a comparative advantage, and in other activities, where economies can develop that advantage.

4. **Africa should improve the quality and coverage of its infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, information and communications technology) and boost its energy production and distribution networks.** Particular attention should be given to transit transport corridors and regional infrastructure projects. This is vital to closing the competitiveness gap faced by African firms, particularly those of landlocked developing countries. It will further allow trade and trade policy to effectively promote industrialization. Infrastructure policies and regulation of services provided through the infrastructure network also have to be improved to overcome non-physical barriers to trade and transport.

VIII. Global partnership for development

29. The scale and ambition of the post-2015 development agenda calls for a renewed and strengthened global partnership for its implementation. This partnership between Governments should be implemented in a spirit of global solidarity, in particular solidarity with the poorest and the vulnerable. It should facilitate focused and intensive global engagement in support of the realization of the post-2015 development agenda and the implementation of the sustainable development goals and targets, bringing together Governments, with appropriate support from the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders, and mobilizing all available means of implementation.

30. The implementation of sustainable development in Africa necessitates the mobilization of adequate means of implementation, both domestically and externally. In that context, the positions expressed in the outcome document of the Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the sustainable development goals, the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda and Agenda 2063 are pertinent. With regard to the global partnership for development, the strategy and means of implementation, identified in the Africa sustainable development goals outcome document, are crucial. The outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development is expected to be a game changer in terms of sustainable development implementation, particularly the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be adopted in September 2015.

31. In the light of the above, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following messages as Africa's collective input to the 2015 meeting of the High-level Political Forum.

1. **Adequate means of implementation are necessary to realize sustainable development in general and the sustainable development goals in particular.** They include financial resources, technology development and transfer, capacity development, regional integration, trade and market access, provision of official development assistance, South-South cooperation, financial stability and domestic and external debt control, as a complement to and not a substitute for North-South cooperation. These are not mutually exclusive, and should be employed in a complementary manner for efficient and effective delivery.
2. **Africa recognizes that it must take responsibility for its development, and in this regard the role of domestic financial resources, both public and private, is critical for achieving sustainable development.** Private capital flows are one source of sustainable development financing. The continent should also improve governance and ensure an enabling investment climate for increased domestic and foreign investment, and the stemming of illicit financial flows. However,

regional actions should be complemented by a favourable international enabling environment and effective global partnerships for mobilizing new and additional financial resources. In this connection, Africa urges development partners to fully honour their existing official development assistance commitments to the region.

3. **The requirements of sustainable development financing surpass, by far, the resources that could be mobilized domestically.** In this regard, developed countries should honour their commitment to reach the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance; provide 0.15–0.20 per cent of their gross national income to least developed countries by 2018 to achieve these objectives; and allocate at least 50 per cent of their total official development assistance to least developed countries that have agreed to devote 0.1 per cent of this amount to the creation and operation of technology banks for least developed countries. Developed countries should also encourage the private sector, including transnational corporations, private foundations and civil society institutions, to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries.
4. **Africa can save billions of dollars if illicit financial flows, including through fraudulent transfer pricing and tax evasion by multinationals, are stemmed and the cost of remittances reduced.** In this regard, developed countries need to step up efforts on disclosure standards. The international community should be more responsive to the challenge of illicit financial flows from Africa. The 2009 pledge by the World Bank, supported by the Group of Eight, to reduce the average global cost of remittances from 10 per cent to 5 per cent by 2014 should be operationalized, taking into account Africa's specific context.
5. **The third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place in Addis Ababa, in July 2015, is expected to result in a bold and ambitious outcome that will ensure the predictability and adequacy of development financing.** In this connection, Africa calls for enhanced support for developing countries, in particular small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developed countries of the region. The African Group maintains that the two processes (financing for development and sustainable development goals) should be retained as two separate tracks.
6. **Technology development and transfer are a key means of implementation, and African countries will have to rely on technology if they are to shift to a more sustainable development path.** It is imperative to bridge the technological divide so as to promote sustainable industrialization, inclusive growth and transformational change across the African continent. Progress towards realizing the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals will depend on strides made in the means of implementation. To this end, the international community should commit to adequately support the establishment of a continental network of centres of excellence, innovation fund and hubs, leveraging current networks and institutional arrangements, to assess needs and identify, develop, adapt and transfer clean technologies.
7. **African States further support the call by the African Group for the expeditious operationalization of the proposed technology bank and the creation of the technology facilitation mechanism.** This mechanism is an integral component of the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda, which will be dedicated to developing countries.

8. **Capacity development is crucial for implementing sustainable development, including developing resource-efficient and inclusive economies in developing countries.** In this regard, the international community should commit to adequately support the establishment of innovation funds to support innovative enterprises in early stages and during commercialization. Support should also be provided for the elaboration of broader national capacity development strategies that embody all aspects of capacity development, including human resources, productive capacity, organizational and institutional development.

IX. Submission and presentation

32. The 2015 session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development requests ECA to officially submit its key messages to the High-level Political Forum via the latter's secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, by 23 June 2015. The Regional Forum further requests its Chair, Mr. Mayacine Camara of Senegal, to make a presentation of its key messages to the High-level Political Forum in New York on 26 June 2015, during the session on the reports of the regional forums for sustainable development.