



Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Fifth session
Marrakech, 16–18 April 2019

Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

**Presentations and discussions of outcomes and proposed
key messages, including policy recommendations emanating
from the parallel panel meetings**

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Consideration and adoption of key messages

DRAFT¹

Summary and key messages of the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), together with the Government of Morocco and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and United Nations system² convened the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019.

2. The fifth session of the Regional Forum conducted a regional follow-up and review of progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. The Regional Forum provided a platform for peer learning, including sharing approaches, experiences and lessons learned in conducting voluntary national reviews and other efforts to advance the integrated implementation of the two agendas. The Regional Forum also deliberated and agreed on the priorities and policy recommendations of Africa in the form of key messages as the region's input to the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in New York

* ECA/RFSD/2019/1.

¹ Working document for the Forum.

² Among partner entities of the United Nations system were the following: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteer programme and UN-Women.

from 9 to 18 July 2019, and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit³, to be held in New York on 24 and 25 September 2019.

3. The Regional Forum was attended by [number] participants, comprising high-level representatives of Governments of [number] ECA member States, intergovernmental bodies, major groups and other stakeholders, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and other international organizations.

4. Section II contains a summary of the presentations, discussions held and key messages emanating from the Forum.

II. Summary and key messages

5. The fifth session of the Regional Forum was held on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, in line with that of the 2019 high-level political forum.

6. An in-depth review of selected Sustainable Development Goals for the high-level political forum was conducted along with Goal 17 and the corresponding goals contained in Agenda 2063, under the following sub-themes:

- (a) Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education;
- (b) Promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth;
- (c) Ensuring reduced inequalities;
- (d) Scaling-up climate action;
- (e) Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions;
- (f) Strengthening the means of implementation and the partnership for sustainable development.

7. Twenty-six pre-and side events,⁴ held on the margins of the Regional Forum, enriched the proceedings of its main session. Among those events were an expert group meeting on the 2019 high-level political forum; a regional preparatory workshop for Africa voluntary national review countries at the 2019 high-level political forum; the first African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum; and a preparatory and capacity development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa.

8. The opening session was moderated by the Officer in Charge of the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Division of ECA, Oliver Chinganya. The [title.....] of Morocco, [name], delivered the opening and keynote address. The opening of the Regional Forum was also addressed by the Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Forum [title, of Senegal, name], the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations and Vice-President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Omar Hilale, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Morocco, Philippe Poinot, the representative of the African Development Bank, [name] and the Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission, Victor Harison (TBC).

9. [Highlights from the Statements - to be inserted in-session]

10. To accomplish the set objectives as outlined in paragraph 2, the Regional Forum featured a high-level panel dialogue on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality: stepping up action to deliver the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa; plenary presentations and discussions on the support and progress made

³ The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly – Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁴ See <https://www.uneca.org/arfsd2019/pages/pre-events-and-side-events>.

at the regional and subregional levels on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; a round-table panel on the voluntary national reviews and peer learning on implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; parallel panel meetings for in-depth review, peer-learning and dialogue on the sub-themes of the Regional Forum; and presentations and discussions of outcomes and proposed key messages emanating from the parallel panel meetings.

11. Below is a summary of the main issues and trends and key messages, including policy recommendations, emanating from the presentations and deliberations during the Regional Forum. The key messages are the regional input of Africa to the 2019 high-level political forums on sustainable development to be held in July and September 2019. Member States are invited to consider the current key messages, including policy recommendations, in their efforts at national, regional and global levels to empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality; and to accelerate progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and the goals of Agenda 2063.

A. Stepping up action and sustaining momentum to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement Agenda 2063

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

12. In 2019, the Regional Forum will complete the first round of the review of progress made in Africa towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The current view is that the Goals are unlikely to be achieved in Africa by 2030 at the prevailing pace and scale of implementation. This can be attributed to extensive challenges faced by the region in multiple fronts.

13. The average economic growth levels for African countries in 2018 of 3.2 per cent in 2018, is below what is needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To get on track to meet the Goals, Africa needs to triple its 2018 gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth of 0.6 per cent, which is too low to significantly mitigate the high levels of poverty and inequality. Even though the proportion of Africans living in extreme poverty declined from 57 per cent in 1990 to 43 per cent in 2012, within the same period, the total number of people living in poverty in Africa increased from 287.6 million to 388.8 million.

14. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa needs to meet incremental financing needs estimated to be between \$614 billion and \$638 billion per year. Shortfalls in realizing the required financing is clearly demonstrated in the infrastructure sector. The continent only raises approximately 50 per cent of the estimated amount of between \$130 billion and 170 billion annually required to close the infrastructure gap. Accordingly, most of the African countries will unlikely achieve Goal 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all). Limited access to energy and other critical infrastructure, including transport, continue to impede industrialization and the delivery of services that are essential for increasing production in the region.

15. Rising debt stocks and associated debt servicing costs are a concern and a major challenge in the effort to increase the mobilization of financial resources in Africa. Recently, there has been an upsurge in public and foreign debt levels, which rose to approximately 50 and 27 per cent, respectively, in 2018, from 48.4 per cent and 26.5 per cent in the previous year. The continent's total debt-to-GDP ratio rose to 37.6 per cent in 2018 from about 35.5 per cent in 2017. Foreign debt stocks are high, especially in the oil-importing and mineral-rich countries where they are estimated to be 45.4 and 62 per cent of GDP, respectively.

2. Key messages

16. The key messages include the following:

(a) Africa faces substantial challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, national efforts and the mobilization of global support, in particular for countries facing major challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063, must be intensified.

(b) African countries need to do more to raise domestic resources to finance sustainable development, including through improving tax revenue management, plugging illicit financial outflows, reducing the cost of remittances and developing capital markets to attract private investment.

(c) In their effort to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, countries need to consider the objective set in both agendas to make a bold, transformational change to build fairer, more inclusive, healthier, more prosperous and more resilient societies that use natural resources sustainably and create opportunity for all.

(d) Greater mobilization of resources is needed to catalyse, strengthen and increase the number of productive individual and concerted actions aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the 2063 Agenda. To effectively reach and engage all stakeholders, especially at the subnational level, more attention must be directed to capacity development and formal and non-formal education. In this regard, subnational governments, the private sector, academia and civil society must be empowered to contribute towards the implementation of the two agendas.

(e) To set Africa firmly on the path to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the goals of the two agendas must be fully integrated by countries into their policies and plans, national budgets, approaches to investment and private sector engagement and development. Efforts should, therefore, be intensified to strengthen the alignment of national development frameworks, including budget allocations, and bilateral and multilateral development cooperation frameworks with the goals of the two agendas.

(f) Stronger action by countries and their development partners is needed to ensure that an integrated and coherent approach is taken in the efforts to mobilize resources and financing for the implementation of key regional and global frameworks, including, among others, the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Paris Agreement and the SAMOA Pathway. Otherwise, a fragmented, silo or piecemeal approach to the implementation of these frameworks could lead to the dissipation of efforts and imbalanced and short-lived outcomes that, in turn, would undermine the integrated and linked-nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of leaving no one behind and efforts to attain balanced integration of the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development.

(g) Improving governance and strengthening of institutions to incorporate laws into domestic legislation, implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and monitor and report progress in the implementation of the two agendas are critical for the realization of sustainable development in Africa.

B. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

17. Achieving goals covered by this sub-theme is of critical importance to economic growth and poverty reduction. It is also important in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. A host of social and non-market benefits can be gained through education, such as increased child well-being, health status,

greater consumer choices, and social capital. In Africa, the positive spillover of education can also be gauged by the decline in adolescent (15 to 19 years of age) fertility rates based on the increased enrolment in secondary schools.

18. Primary school completion has broadly improved in some African countries. Nonetheless, two thirds of the countries in Africa have yet to reach the target of full completion in primary education. A critical aspect contributing to lower completion rates is the large increase in student enrolment, which is affecting classroom size. The supply of trained teachers at the primary and secondary school levels is an important constraint on the provision of quality education. Africa has the lowest proportion of trained teachers globally. In addition, in Africa, excluding North Africa, gender parity in primary to lower secondary schools increased between 2005 and 2015 from 0.96 to 0.98. The gender parity ratio, however, was lower at the upper secondary level, at 0.82 because of a number of factors, including child marriage, resulting in increased pregnancy, which affects school attendance of adolescent girls.

2. Key messages

19. The key messages include the following:

(a) Monitoring progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 is limited in Africa because of insufficient available data. A top priority of the continent is the development of statistical systems to enhance empirically grounded educational policy direction. To do this, the coverage and frequency of censuses and surveys need to increase, and administrative systems, including civil registration and vital statistics, must be modernized. This entails significant investment in data technologies, capacity, infrastructure and human and financial resources.

(b) The inclusiveness of education, in particular across gender and location, needs to be enhanced through specific policy interventions, including, among others, through gender-sensitive and transport policies.

(c) Supply side constraints, including qualified teachers and books for students, are impeding efforts to improve educational systems. Innovative financing mechanisms need to be implemented to ensure a level playing field for all.

(d) Education budget allocations need to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The larger scope associated with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the consequent resource requirement need to be computed and anchored within national and sectoral plans to ensure national ownership, alignment between country-specific priorities and the 2030 Agenda and policy coherence between national line ministries and finance.

C. Promoting decent work and inclusive economic growth

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

20. Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all remains a daunting challenge for African countries. Although unemployment rates in Africa are generally low, averaging 6.8 per cent in 2018, underemployment and informal employment are widespread, with large numbers of people involved in precarious and vulnerable employment. Most of the employment opportunities in Africa are in the informal economy, which is characterized by low productivity and poor working conditions. Africa has the highest rate of estimated informal employment in the world, at 85.8 per cent of total employment, and the highest rate of vulnerable employment globally, averaging 66 per cent. Lack of sufficient productive and decent jobs is complicating efforts to end poverty on the continent. Over the past few years, Africa has recorded the highest rate of population growth globally, averaging 2.6 per cent per annum, and by 2050, 25 per cent of the world's population will be on the continent. As millions of young Africans join the labour market, the

pressure to provide decent and productive jobs increases.

2. Key messages

21. The key messages include the following:

(a) Employment creation requires a proactive, comprehensive and gender-responsive approach to employment policy that includes coordinated demand- and supply-side measures. There is a need to ensure that the creation of jobs is mainstreamed in all macroeconomic and development policies and that all such policies contain clear employment targets and benchmarks. Incentives for foreign and domestic investment must be linked to local content and local employment. Importantly, the adoption and implementation of national employment policies that are anchored to effective broad-based social dialogue and consultations is key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 and the related goals of Agenda 2063.

(b) The private sector has a crucial role to play in terms of employment creation and in bridging the extensive finance gap. Accordingly, it is important to implement doing business reforms to promote and unlock greater private sector investment, which is vital for the generation of additional revenue and the creation of jobs.

(c) Modernization of the rural economy through sustained investment in physical and social capital to enhance productivity and strengthen intersectoral linkages between agriculture and non-agriculture activities is instrumental for structural transformation and diversification in Africa. Investment in rural infrastructure is needed to create jobs, reduce poverty and boost local economic development.

(d) It is important to strengthen information systems in order to ensure the availability of reliable, timely and disaggregated data, in particular, labour market data and statistics, which are required for assessing labour markets and specific challenges, shaping appropriate policies and programmes, and monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it is important that African countries standardize their reporting on labour statistics by implementing recent resolution, in particular one concerning the statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization and another one concerning the statistics on work relationships, the guideline on measuring informality, and all other guidelines associated with the decent work indicators.

D. Ensuring reduced inequalities

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

22. Since 2000, significant gains have been made in lifting people out of poverty and reducing inequalities, however, large disparities remain regarding income and wealth, and access to food, health care, education, land, clean water and other assets and resources essential for living a full and dignified life. Africa is one of the most unequal regions of the world. Estimates using the Gini coefficient indicated that income inequality in Africa, excluding North Africa, was approximately 0.43 in 2011, one of the highest rates of inequality globally. The continent is home to seven of the world's 10 most unequal countries and loses 33 per cent of its human development index score when adjustments are made for inequality.

23. In 2015, only 43 per cent of the rural population in Africa, excluding North Africa, had access to safe drinking water services compared to 82 per cent of the urban population. Similarly, only 37 per cent of the rural population had access to electricity, compared to 88 per cent in North Africa.

24. Migration contributes positively towards the achievement of inclusive growth and sustainable development. Facilitating, instead of restricting, migration should be a priority, as it is expanding the possibilities for people to

realize their human development aspirations and potential through mobility.

2. Key messages

25. The key messages include the following:

(a) Midway into the implementation of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and four years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, more efforts are needed to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and to ensure the expansion of full and productive employment opportunities, especially for women and young people.

(b) Growth that worsens gender inequality cannot be inclusive or sustainable. Appropriate measures and stronger action must be taken to reflect issues relating to gender and to women, including those relevant to girls and young women, in the national integrated plans, budgets and legislation pertaining to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(c) Higher levels of social investment and mobilization of resources at the global, regional and national levels are needed to improve skills and capacity-building through the provision of education, apprenticeships, training, adequate infrastructure and health care, and ensuring food and nutrition security. This is especially urgent in the case of young people and women, many of whom work in the informal sector doing low-skilled jobs.

(d) Efforts need to be intensified to mobilize the necessary resources and assistance to address inequality and implement, where appropriate, redistributive policies that reduce disparities in wealth, income and access to public services. Such policies should also include modernization of agriculture, food security, building community resilience, emergency preparedness and rural development. A key policy priority in this respect is social protection.

(e) The recent adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a significant step towards leveraging the potential of migration for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To realize this potential, actions are urgently required to set in motion and strengthen arrangements at all levels to implement the Compact.

E. Scaling-up climate action

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

26. Climate change is a cross-cutting issue affecting all of the Sustainable Development Goals as a “threat multiplier” that aggravates existing vulnerabilities and structural inequalities. Accordingly, urgent and ambitious global action on climate change, well beyond current pledges under the Paris Agreement, is needed. Otherwise, there is a serious risk that the development agenda for Africa, which is encapsulated in national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, will not be implemented. The continent contributes less than 6 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, with the average per capita emissions of 0.8tCO₂e per year (tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per person per year), significantly below the global mean of 5tCO₂e per year. Despite this, Africa is already being severely affected by the adverse impacts of climate change; a very recent example of this is the severe damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. A compelling case is made for urgent and concerted global action on climate change in a special report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.

27. All African countries have signed the Paris Agreement, and 48 of them have already ratified it and set ambitious nationally determined contributions to climate action, requiring approximately \$3 trillion of conditional and unconditional financing. By submitting ambitious nationally determined contributions, African countries are sending a strong signal that although the

continent has contributed the smallest amount to climate change, it is ready to stand with the rest of the world in addressing its impacts.

28. The African Group of Negotiators on climate change have worked diligently to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice in the global negotiations on climate change.

2. Key messages

29. The key messages include the following:

(a) In return for the ambitious nationally determined contributions, Africa is requesting that global commitments be turned into productive actions and that developed countries fulfil their commitments to support the continent with appropriate means of implementation (finance, technology and capacity), including the \$100 billion per year climate finance goal, and the existing pre-2020 commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which ends in 2020.

(b) Following the agreement on the rulebook for the Paris Agreement reached at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties, Africa calls for a demonstrable shift from commitments of intents to fulfilments in spurring tangible actions on climate change for a just transition for Africa, and for the reinstatement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement by the Conference of Parties at its twenty-sixth session of the special needs and circumstances of Africa considering the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities.

(c) African Governments need to provide the resources required to institutionalize and support the African Group of Negotiators on climate change politically and financially to ensure its sustainability in advancing the African common negotiating position on climate change.

(d) There is urgent need – ahead of the coming into force of the Paris Agreement in 2020 and the first global stocktake in 2023 – for African countries to review and align their nationally determined contributions with national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In this process, it is essential to ensure synergy and coherence with national adaptation plans, disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and plans, and national frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(e) The implementation of the nationally determined contributions by African countries requires a massive investment, well beyond what can be provided from the limited public resources. Accordingly, most of the investment required to finance the nationally determined contributions will need to come from the private sector. Countries must review, reformulate and package the actions to meet their nationally determined contributions as investment portfolios to provide a mechanism through which the much-needed private sector financing can be mobilized.

(f) The cross-cutting, transboundary and multidimensional nature of climate change provides a unique orientation for integrated approaches, coherence and institutional coordination for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including integration of climate resilience into the planning and investment in climate-sensitive sectors. In this regard, it is important to have at the level of the African Union Commission a dedicated climate change commissioner to coordinate regional responses for climate change. Similarly, Governments could consider establishing a chief climate authority to lead comprehensive responses to climate change challenges across the economy and in liaison with the regional climate commissioner.

(g) There is a severe lack of data on the indicators for tracking Sustainable Development Goal 13. Countries and development partners urgently need to invest in coordinated efforts aimed at strengthening the

capacity of the national statistics offices in data collection, analyses and reporting and disaggregating by age, gender, income and geographical location to better tailor support to groups at risk of being left behind because of climate change impacts.

(h) With large scale-carbon removal, also classified as a form of geoengineering, identified as a part of the required solution pathways if emissions do not start to decline well before 2030, it is important that African countries ensure the risks and opportunities of geoengineering are well communicated globally, and that a governance framework is established for the development and deployment of such technologies.

F. Ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

30. The presence of peace at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, Sustainable Development Goal 16, is inextricably linked to the attainment of the other Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, governance in Africa remains on an upward trajectory. Improvements are being made regarding the rule of law, participation, rights, and transparency and accountability.

31. Notwithstanding, challenges and gaps remain in ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions. Insecurity, social strife, political tension and riots continue to plague the continent. All types of crime, including organized crime, is a challenge, in particular in the large African economies. While participation has improved, driven by democratic elections, it is happening alongside a shrinking civil society space, worsening trends related to freedom of association and assembly, civil rights and liberties, and freedom of expression. Corruption continues to weaken good governance and the compounding principles of inclusion, participation, ownership, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness. Illicit financial flows continue to be a challenge; significant amounts of financial resources are being lost annually from the continent through such flows and other forms of corrupt activities.

2. Key messages

32. The key messages include the following:

(a) Political leadership and stakeholder participation remains paramount. Good political leadership and effective multi-stakeholder engagement are crucial for ownership, commitment, galvanizing support, mobilizing resources and ensuring accountability pertaining to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(b) Mobilization of adequate and context-specific means of implementation is essential. Although external financial resources are required to implement the 2030 Agenda, Africa must also take active responsibility for its own development. Measures must be vigorously taken to enhance domestic resource mobilization and curb illicit financial flows, attract foreign direct investment and create effective financing structures. Development partners should complement domestic efforts aimed at capacity and technology development through effective international cooperation programmes.

(c) Stronger efforts are needed to encourage good governance, transparent and accountable leadership, effective institutions and responsive and effective global partnerships. In this regard, appropriate and results-oriented human and institutional capacity-development strategies and programmes are needed.

(d) Deeper and stronger collaboration among global, regional and national institutions is required to promote development and apply appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the targets and indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Such a framework should entail the

development of databases to facilitate analysis, performance tracking and the provision of technical support to countries, and the integration of Goal 16 into national development plans.

G. Strengthening the means of implementation and partnerships for sustainable development

1. Introduction, main issues and trends

33. To finance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Africa needs between \$500 billion and \$1 trillion. Compared with other regions, Africa has the lowest ratio of government revenue to GDP. The continent has made significant progress in technology development and transfer based on assessments in terms of information and communication technologies and the import of capital goods, but the pace of the development has declined over 2017–2018, as economic growth and fiscal space contracted, owing to the rising debt burden and growing fiscal deficits. Mobilizing sufficient resources to meet the investment requirements of African countries may entail improving tax and non-tax revenue management and curbing illicit financial flows in order to sustain economic growth and reduce poverty. To implement the 2030 Agenda effectively, adequate capacity is required at all levels.

2. Key messages

34. The key messages include the following:

(a) African countries need to implement integrated resource mobilization, budgeting and development planning processes and decentralized public financial management; intensify efforts to combat corruption; and simplify subsidy and procurement regimes and approval processes for investment.

(b) Strengthening capital markets provides an important avenue to mobilizing revenue from the private sector in Africa and beyond. In order to avoid the threat of marginalization, in the case of investors choosing the more developed markets over Africa, efforts to integrate regional capital markets and facilitate cross-listing are critical.

(c) African countries have the potential to increase government revenue by between 12 and 20 per cent of GDP by adopting appropriate fiscal policies; taxing hard-to-reach sectors, such as agriculture, the informal sector and the digital economy; improving mobilization of non-tax revenue; leveraging the use of information technology and digitization to widen the tax base, reduce revenue collection costs and improve tax administration mechanisms; and strengthening policies that tackle base erosion and profit shifting, tax avoidance and tax evasion.

(d) Countries need to address common challenges that impede the harnessing of science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. Such challenges include the lack of capacity to implement related policies, political leadership, balanced engagement and participation to ensure that resources are in line with aspirations, and address fragmentation. In addition, there is need to strengthen the evidence base for measuring and monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of science, technology and innovation programmes, including those related to social and environmental issues, beyond economic outcomes. Gender disparity in the field of science, technology and innovation is also a challenge in most African countries.

(e) In order to measure progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, all stakeholders – aside from national statistical systems – need to fulfil their roles in the development process, including in implementation, monitoring and reporting on progress.

(f) National statistical systems in Africa need to address the challenge of data quality. Only a handful of national statistics offices have data

quality assurance frameworks to ascertain and measure the quality of the data produced. The key challenge in data quality can be attributed to the differences in methodologies, concepts, definitions and standards used within national statistical systems and across member States, which make international harmonization difficult.

(g) Additional investment to strengthen capacities and systems for data gathering are needed to ensure accurate assessments of financing needs towards realizing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa. Well-disaggregated and up-to-date data on population trends, the state of social services and infrastructure, and future demand and requirements are needed in order to make accurate projections. Data systems need to be tailor-made and interlinked across the continent to meet the reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

(h) African countries must ratify the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and develop national plans and strategies to exploit the opportunities presented by the Agreement. National plans and strategies should be designed to complement the broader trade policy of each State and identify the key trade opportunities, current constraints and steps required to take full advantage of the African market, including revenue mobilization and the empowerment of women and young people.

(i) To unlock the potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhancing the means of implementation, the following should be prioritized: a coherent financing and partnership framework; an institutionalized dialogue and engagement mechanism; a robust review and accountability system; enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development; and optimal use of innovation as an incentivizing and scaling tool.

(j) The horizontal nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships should not dilute the special lead and accountability role of Governments in promoting strong political will and implementing policy and institutional reforms in line with the 2030 Agenda; a more effective approach for doing this is to focus on all of society, instead of national concerns. Strong government institutions and processes that include all vulnerable groups are essential for enhancing the means of implementation.
