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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
Third session  
Addis Ababa, 17–19 May 2017

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

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

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

**Consideration and adoption of key messages**

## **DRAFT Key messages of the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – convened the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 May 2017, in preparation for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, to be held in New York from 10 to 19 July 2017.

2. The third session of the Forum was attended by more than XXX participants, comprising high-level representatives of Governments, intergovernmental bodies, major groups and other stakeholders,<sup>1</sup> United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and other international organizations.

3. The Forum was attended by representatives of the following member States: XXXXXXXX.....

4. Since 2015, the Africa Regional Forum has been convened on an annual basis in Africa to undertake follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. The Forum promotes coordination and coherence, and the learning and sharing of best practices. It therefore serves as an important mechanism, not only for tracking progress in implementation, but also for keeping all the

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<sup>1</sup> The term “major groups” refers to the following sectors: groups and associations of women, children and young people; indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological community; and farmers.

stakeholders in Africa mobilized and engaged to strengthen their commitment to concerted action, and to garner international support for efforts to translate the Sustainable Development Goals and aspirations of Agenda 2063 into measurable and shared prosperity that benefits the planet and its people.

5. The theme of the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was “Ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity for all”. This theme is well aligned with that of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017: “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”.

6. Accordingly, the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development undertook in-depth review of the implementation of the cluster of Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, under the following corresponding sub-themes:

- (a) Eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa;
- (b) Ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa;
- (c) Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all;
- (d) Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- (e) Building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation;
- (f) Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

7. The review under each sub-theme examined the required enablers and means of implementation.

8. The follow-up and review during the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was preceded and informed by outcomes of a number of meetings, including the tenth session of the ECA Committee on Sustainable Development; the Africa regional workshop on preparations for the 2017 Voluntary National Reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017; and the preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in the Africa region.

## II. Chair’s summary of the key messages

9. The following is the Chair’s summary of the agreed key messages on the theme and sub-themes of the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for policy dialogue, policymaking and implementation at the national, regional and global levels, towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. These messages constitute Africa’s regional input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017.

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<sup>2</sup> Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

## **A. Ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity for all and overall success in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063**

### **1. Introduction**

10. The theme of the third session of the Regional Forum was premised on a number of considerations and trends relating to poverty eradication in Africa. Key among these is the realization that economic growth in Africa has been inadequate to eradicate poverty. In addition, the growth generated has largely been unequal – 7 of the 10 most unequal countries in the world are in Africa. Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in Africa therefore hinge on fostering inclusive and sustainable growth., Attainment of gender equality and women’s empowerment and consideration of youth in development planning and implementation are critical dimensions of inclusion in the region. Inevitably, poverty eradication and promotion of prosperity are challenged by constantly evolving situations around the world. Notable factors that must be taken into account that shape efforts to eradicate poverty and promote well-being and prosperity in Africa are the population dynamics, including rapidly growing populations, the changing climate and resource constraints created by the depletion of natural resources, and environmental degradation, including pollution. Thus, to restructure their economies and achieve sustained growth, African countries have identified the following as some of the priority areas for domestic and foreign investment: transformation of agriculture, resilient infrastructure, industrialization, innovation, and sustainable management of natural assets, including marine resources. These areas correspond to the six Sustainable Development Goals for in-depth review at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017.

### **2. Key messages**

11. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development presents the following key messages on its theme and to ensure successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063:

(a) The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 call for 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. Their shared intention is to place Africa on a new, sustainable path towards rapid and inclusive development. Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 see development as a process that requires holistic approaches that balance and integrate the economic, social and environmental pillars of development. They also recognize the urgency of strong government leadership, in the form of policies and programmes designed to eradicate poverty, end hunger, promote dynamic and inclusive growth, and combat climate change and its impacts – all backed by strategic investment of public resources;

(b) The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 calls for inclusive and integrated approaches to their implementation and reporting that builds on existing mechanisms and integrates the reviews of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, as key contributions to the realization of sustainable development. Thus, it is important to support the countries in mapping the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to ensure their convergence with the national development plans in terms of goals, targets and indicators, at every stage of the planning cycle.;

(c) To realize the breadth and depth of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, it is important for African Governments to design measures to expand fiscal space. Some of the areas to consider include improving tax administration, broadening the tax base and eliminating loopholes for tax avoidance, especially among the rich; prioritizing expenditures with the biggest impact on the less privileged; monitoring the reach of public spending to intended purposes; and fighting illicit financial flows by, among other, building tax audit capacity and strengthening cooperation on tax matters to contribute to the domestic resource mobilization efforts of developing countries. Domestic borrowing for critical priority spending, such as education, health care and infrastructure development, should be considered as a first option. Concessional external financing and debt issuance should also be sought for large investments;

(d) Voluntary national reviews are at the forefront in demonstrating and catalysing progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on account of the emerging good practices and lessons learned in domesticating and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. More countries are encouraged – and should be supported – to undertake and widely disseminate the outcomes of their Voluntary National Reviews. Countries are also encouraged to strengthen national frameworks for follow-up and review to allow adequate inputs to Voluntary National Reviews from major groups and other stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society;

(e) For timely policy decisions and adequate comparison within and between countries, the national statistics offices across the continent require stronger capacity for gathering and analysing data on a broad range of socioeconomic issues, including demographic profiles. Moreover, it is important to generate disaggregated data by age, gender, income and geographical location for baselines and to continuously inform and analyse the impacts of different policies and expenditure on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The national statistical offices, supported by development partners, therefore need to update their statistics development systems and data gathering and management plans to support the monitoring and reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(f) In order to efficiently and effectively measure impact, Governments require harmonized and robust frameworks for monitoring and reporting the progress in the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.;

(g) African Governments and other stakeholders recognize the importance of the data revolution for accelerating the continent's sustainable development. This recognition is embodied in the Africa Data Consensus and in the African Charter on Statistics. In order for Africa to harness the full transformative power of the data revolution, significant investment will need to be made in human resources, technological capabilities, platforms and tools, and in establishing effective governance frameworks related to the production, processing, protection, ownership, quality, openness, timeliness, relevance, accessibility, harmonization, inter-operability and use of different types of data, regardless of who produces or owns them.

(h) Successful implementation of both agendas to translate the commitment to poverty eradication, ending hunger and shared prosperity requires an effective institutional architecture for an integrated and coordinated approach and multi-stakeholder engagement in problem-solving, policymaking and planning and implementation. Strong and capable national and subnational planning agencies are paramount in ensuring that the various

sectors work together to ensure that the three dimensions of sustainable development are reflected in all aspects of development programming. Long-term planning and policy coordination, and ongoing progress monitoring, as well as impact evaluation, are needed to identify what works, and to address policy failures and gaps. In the context of leaving no one behind and pursuing inclusive growth and prosperity for all, Governments need to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement – including private sector and civil society — in design and implementation plans and monitoring of progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

## **B. Eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa**

### **1. Introduction**

12. Africa's progress on reducing poverty has been quite remarkable since 2002, as the poverty headcount ratio declined from 55.6 per cent in 2002 to 41 per cent in 2013. Overall, however, poverty in Africa has declined much more slowly than in other regions of the world; more than 50 per cent of the world's poor in 2013 were in Africa. Unlike the period 1990–2002, when the absolute number of people in extreme poverty in Africa increased from 276 million to 391 million, the absolute number of people in extreme poverty has remained constant, at around 390 million since 2002. Poor people in Africa start further below the poverty line compared with poor people in other regions of the world. Although their incomes are growing, such growth is insufficient to push them over the poverty line threshold. While the global poverty gap is small (3.2 per cent), the poverty gap in Africa is nearly three times that size (8.8 per cent). To eliminate the high rates of poverty in Africa within the set time frame, the countries of the region are therefore faced with the urgent challenge of crafting and adopting policies and measures that will increase the momentum gathered over the last two decades in efforts to combat poverty.

### **2. Key messages**

13. Key messages include:

(a) Economic growth is a necessary condition for poverty reduction in Africa, but growth alone is not sufficient. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ending poverty in Africa will require accelerated and inclusive structural transformation through economic diversification and accelerated industrialization;

(b) For Africa to harness the demographic dividend, growth needs to be sustainably high to create sufficient jobs and absorb the growing working-age population. It needs to be inclusive to expand choices and create livelihood opportunities for all, especially women and young people, and achieve substantial and broad-based improvements in human well-being. Moreover, investments in quality education and skills development must be increased and peace, stability and effective institutions enabled;

(c) Expanding social protection programmes and targeting appropriate schemes to the poor and most vulnerable, along with developing appropriate skills through quality education, technical and vocational training and entrepreneurial development, can further reduce poverty in Africa. The African Union Ouagadougou+10 process on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development identifies social protection as one of its six key priority areas, which is also reflected in the First Five-Year Priority Programme on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (2015–2019);

(d) Domestic resource mobilization is critical for achieving Sustainable Development Goal related to poverty in Africa. It is also in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in 2015 by the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which, among other things, said that public policies and the mobilization and the effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the principle of national ownership, were central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Africa should expand the domestic fiscal space through increased economic growth for broader and progressive taxation, to allow increased public investment on employment promotion and social protection. In addition, Africa should strengthen partnerships within the framework of South–South cooperation to leverage resources for financing;

(f) Weak data systems and data gaps in some member States pose serious challenges for effective monitoring and evaluation of progress in eradicating poverty. In particular, weak disaggregation of indicators, whether by gender or location, poses further challenges for data collection and analysis. In this context, target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals is critical: to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first”. This target promotes monitoring of disaggregated data by “income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”.

## **C. Ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa**

### **1. Introduction**

14. Africa’s food security and nutrition situation are worsening in absolute terms. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that the number of undernourished people increased by 30 per cent between 1990 and 2016. The situation is particularly severe in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions, where up to 23 million people in 11 countries have been affected by recurrent drought and floods, severely endangering food security and nutrition. The food insecurity situation is aggravated by the continuing conflicts in some countries and unfavourable weather conditions, including droughts and flooding, in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. This brings into sharp focus the multifaceted nature of food and nutrition security, and the imperative need for progress in all areas, including in peace building and promoting climate resilience, if hunger is to be wiped out and food nutrition security achieved in Africa.

15. Agriculture is a critical factor in ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa. However, African agriculture faces daunting challenges, including low productivity, environmental and soil degradation, climate variability, loss of biodiversity and, most important, chronic underinvestment.

Amalgamating climate resilient Ecosystems Based Adaptation approaches for on-farm production with clean energy for value addition represents a catalytic area that can potentially see Africa climate-proof its agro-value chains and maximize productivity to catalyse actualization of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

### **2. Key messages**

16. Key messages include:

(a) The interplay between low productivity, low incomes, and stagnant and degraded agricultural production systems in Africa has resulted in rooted hunger – an almost intractable problem that weighs massively on

Africa's development progress and consigns millions of Africans to lives that are virtually unliveable. As a result, the problem of global food insecurity has become, in large degree, an African phenomenon. Yet the means to address this profound challenge are mostly to be found within Africa itself. The key is to address the three elements – productivity, purchasing power and production – through a comprehensive, integrated approach to tackling food insecurity;

(b) Integrated multisectoral and multidisciplinary approaches are also crucial to national Governments' efforts to tackle the root causes of conflict and food and nutrition insecurity. These root causes include, among other things: degradation of land and water resources, low or declining agricultural productivity and incomes, exposure to recurrent drought and floods, and political instability resulting from uncertainty over access to land and water resources. Using new tools, such as shock-resistant social protection, Governments have powerful, proven means to encourage local development and promote new and innovative agricultural practices that provide more consistent yields, improve sustainability, conserve water and soils, maintain or increase biodiversity, or improve resilience to droughts and floods;

(c) National Governments, with support from development partners, need to establish or strengthen comprehensive, integrated, and cost-effective monitoring and reporting systems to follow up the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to provide the evidence base to inform coherent and integrated policymaking. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development brings new targets and indicators adapted to its new conceptual framework for ending hunger and poverty, and promoting sustainable development of food and agriculture systems. Many of the targets and indicators concerned with food security and sustainable agriculture have been specially developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to meet the requirements of the new agenda, and to help Governments understand what is required to achieve the larger goals in ways that “leave no one behind”;

(d) In the context of Africa's rapidly growing urbanization, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, as well as a number of related goals, necessitates the adoption of a two-pronged approach: namely, promotion of rural transformation and improvement of urban–rural linkages. This could be attained through targeted investments in infrastructure, in food systems capable of delivering safe, sustainable and nutritious food to urban markets, and in expanding economic opportunity for rural and peri-urban populations along the supply chain. One key prerequisite is to improve productive capacities by ensuring that rural people, especially women and young people, have adequate, affordable access to key productive assets such as land, and to education, technology, infrastructure and financial services;

(e) Rapid, sustained economic growth and increased agricultural productivity, though quite modest, over the past decade and more, have helped the proportion of undernourished people drop by almost half. Many African countries that used to suffer from famine and hunger can now meet the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable. In general, a significant number of African countries have made huge progress in eradicating extreme hunger. However, hunger and malnutrition have continued to constitute a huge barrier to development in most African countries. About 330 million people, or almost one in every four Africans, are estimated to be chronically undernourished, and about one in four children under the age of five years is stunted;

(f) Strong political commitment to end hunger and promote food security, driven by frameworks such as the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, has been transformed into some concrete results;

(g) Conflicts and civil insecurity continue to pose daunting challenges to food security in Africa. The correlation between the exposure of communities to conflict/civil insecurity, and the deterioration of their food security and nutrition situation is well documented. In context, the three pre-famine conditions currently reported in Africa are all linked to the impact of protracted conflict, which mainly affects rural communities where agriculture is the mainstay of the local economy. There is now greater recognition among African Governments of the importance of ensuring peace and stability, the lack of which has been both the cause and consequence of conflicts that risk thwarting efforts to fight food insecurity in many African countries;

(h) While most African countries have embarked on programmes and projects that aim at enhancing incomes of small-scale farmers through input subsidies and other measures intended to increase agricultural production, there is not yet substantial evidence of improvement in the agricultural productivity of small-scale farmers. Most small-scale farmers in Africa grow food, but their productivity is so low that they have little surplus for market and are themselves quite poor, hungry and food-insecure. African countries need to harness the potential for improving yields and, thereby, incomes for small-scale farmers;

(i) Despite the commitments for targeted investments in agriculture under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and an important increase in the share of total government expenditure on agriculture since 2011, the sector remains sharply underinvested. Because of the general decline in overall national expenditure, the absolute amount of investment has continued to decline. As a result, the significant increase (36 per cent between 2007 and 2015) in official development assistance to Africa's agriculture has been inadequate to cover the shortfall in agricultural expenditure in most countries. Increased investments in agriculture are needed to contain extreme hunger and feed into processing industries and export trade. Increased investments in research and development for climate-resistant breeds and appropriate technology – for example, irrigation and development of value chains, as well as other proactive measures, such as investor-friendly policies and regulations – are all required to expand both agricultural output and productivity;

(j) Frequent droughts and floods, changed precipitation patterns and extreme weather conditions are currently the norm rather than an exception in many parts of Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa, Sahel and Southern Africa. These continue to pose serious challenges to food security and nutrition. Thus food security cannot be achieved without climate-proofing Africa's food systems and enhancing productivity of the ecosystems that underpin production in the first place. There is, therefore, an imperative need for progress in climate resilience building.

## **D. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all**

### **1. Introduction**

17. Health and well-being are cornerstones for productive lives free of poverty. Many countries in Africa have already stepped up their efforts to achieve universal and equitable access to quality health care, including universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, to ensure realization of reproductive rights, and to improve health systems and

health financing, among other imperatives. However, progress between and within subregions and individual countries remains varied, and major challenges abound. For instance, at 25 per cent, Africa excluding North Africa has the world's highest unmet need for family planning. This impacts on progress in the area of women's sexual and reproductive health and children's health. Africa excluding North Africa remains the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, although deaths due to HIV/AIDS have declined by almost half in the last 10 years, owing to programmes on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and strong anti-retroviral treatment in member States. Nonetheless, the prevalence rate, estimated at 4.8 per cent in 2014 in the region, remains disturbingly high. Africa also continues to bear the brunt of the global burden of tuberculosis, and accounts for 28 per cent of the estimated 9.6 million cases that occurred worldwide in 2014. It is also noteworthy that, while communicable diseases remain a major threat, non-communicable diseases are on the upswing because of changing lifestyles, especially in urban areas. In addition, the neglected tropical diseases and mental health issues continue to pose challenges for Africa.

## 2. Key messages

18. Key messages include:

(a) Health is slowly moving from the margins of policy debates to a central position in development planning in Africa. This is evident from the increased attention being given to health in the region through a number of policy frameworks and instruments. In order to promote healthy lives and deliver health care to all, however, it is necessary to avoid fragmentation in funding and interventions, strengthen health-care systems and ensure effective multisectoral responses, provide adequate financing and address the problem of unequal access to effective services;

(b) Member States are on average still far from meeting key health-care financing goals. Among such goals is that set in the Abuja Declarations and the Frameworks of 2000/2001 for Action on Roll Back Malaria, and on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases, of allocating 15 per cent of national budgets to health. Because of the failure to attain set financing targets, among other factors, Africa's investment in the health sector remains lower than that of other regions. Sustained investments in health care, coupled with appropriate reforms, are therefore needed to have in place resilient systems that can respond effectively to the health needs of African people;

(c) Weak data systems and data gaps in some member States in the areas of demography and certain health indicators pose serious challenges for the effective monitoring and evaluation of progress. In particular, the very limited disaggregation of indicators, whether by age, gender or location, complicates the processes of data collection and analysis. Thus, enhancing the availability of data and empirical evidence in the health-related Sustainable Development Goals is of critical importance. In this context, strong and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be put in place and supported by credible data to inform analysis and the design and implementation of policy. Countries will be required to strengthen the capacity of their national statistical systems to monitor progress towards the health-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals both for national and wider reporting;

(d) Redistributive fiscal policies that allow for social protection systems that target the poor and vulnerable — all children, young people, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons,

indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants — are indispensable in addressing health inequities and inequitable conditions among people. Countries should therefore be supported in designing and implementing such fiscal policies, including ensuring that the private or the joint sector funding large capital development projects plans for and sets aside dedicated funding in their environment protection plans to address health challenges that are faced by both the resident locals and the migrant workforce in situations of large mining, road- and bridge works, among others;

(e) Domestic resource mobilization is critical for sustainable health outcomes in Africa. Africa should expand the domestic fiscal space through increased economic growth for broader and progressive taxation, which will allow more public revenues to be spent on health. In addition, it should strengthen partnerships within the framework of South–South cooperation to leverage resources for health financing. In parallel, African countries will need to ensure access to continuing health funding, such as through the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria, in particular for service delivery in situations where local capacities do not meet threshold requirements, and strengthen existing partnerships.;

(f) Africa has adopted regional frameworks and initiatives that demonstrate political will and commitment, and which should be pursued to realize the region’s vision of harnessing its demographic dividend to achieve the health-related goals and targets, and sustainable development. The following are among those regional strategic frameworks that should be fully supported and implemented: the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; the Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030; the Abuja Declarations and Frameworks of 2000/2001 For Action on Roll Back Malaria, HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases on increasing government funding for health; the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health Systems in Africa; the Addis Ababa Declaration of 2006 on Community Health in the African Region; the 2012 Tunis Declaration on Value for Money, Sustainability and Accountability in the Health Sector; the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa Beyond 2014 and its operational guide; and the 2016–2030 Maputo Plan of Action for the Operationalization of the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;

(g) In the context of health and development, it is imperative that Africa achieves its goals to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities while respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of people living with HIV and vulnerable populations, and promoting gender equality and rights. Global health and HIV-related strategies, for example, the 2016-2021 Strategy On the Fast Track to End AIDS of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the 2017-2022 Strategy of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Investing to the End the Epidemics, and the Strategy of the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief PEPFAR 3.0 – Controlling the Epidemic: Delivering on the Promise of an AIDS-free Generation, all note the centrality of human rights and investing in human rights programmes in the context of HIV. There is also a growing recognition of the need for a rights-based response to tuberculosis.

## **E. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls**

### **1. Introduction**

19. The need to ensure inclusive and people-centred development is underlined in both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. Pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls should lie at the heart of efforts to implement the goals set in both agendas, if poverty eradication and inclusive and sustainable development are to be realized. Momentum on gender equality and empowerment has been rendered by initiatives such as the declaration of 2010–2020 as the African Women’s Decade; 2015 as the Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063; 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women; and also by other global and regional frameworks that foster gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

### **2. Key messages**

20. Key messages include:

(a) Growth that overlooks or worsens gender inequality cannot be inclusive or sustainable. Appropriate measures and stronger action must be taken to reflect gender and women’s issues, including those of girls and young women, in the national integrated plans that countries are developing to incorporate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 into their domestic legal frameworks, and also in regional strategies and plans to harness the demographic dividend. Using gender equality as an organizing policy lens for all development planning, budget prioritization and implementation would ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment is deliberately taken into account from the design stage. The ministries responsible for developing a national integrated plan for the implementation of both agendas should ensure the full and effective participation of the ministry in charge of gender equality and women’s empowerment, of women’s movements and of gender experts, to ensure that gender issues are analysed and taken on board. The Africa Data Revolution initiative should facilitate a systematic integration of gender dimensions in national statistics systems to support policymaking and tracking of progress on gender equality;

(b) A number of African countries have formulated policies and enacted laws to secure and protect the rights of women and girls, although some countries still have laws that discriminate against women in the private and public spheres. The challenge is therefore to ensure that all the countries in the region undertake the necessary legislative reform to protect the rights of women and girls, and to address the current weak implementation of the frameworks. Directly tackling harmful social norms and transforming discriminatory institutional settings is key. Implementation of these efforts must be accompanied by appropriate resources and strengthened monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;

(c) African countries’ commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment should go along with the harnessing of domestic resources – both financial and human – to implement fully and urgently the gender goals, in order to steer the development discourse in the right direction, and to maximize the potential and outcomes of women’s social, economic and political empowerment. Sufficient financial and human resources should be

allocated for the implementation of the gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment goals;

(d) Violence against women and girls constitutes the most pervasive form of violation of women's and girls' basic human rights. A critical barrier to the elimination of violence against women and girls that should be urgently addressed is the lack of laws on such violence or, where they exist, failure to enforce them effectively;

(e) African countries have made commendable progress toward ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. For instance, women's representation in national parliaments has risen by 14 percentage points over the last 25 years, from 8 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2015, and strides have been made in women's representation in local governments. Concern remains, however, in areas such as women in managerial positions, including the low proportion of women judges in constitutional courts;

(f) Special attention should be given to women's economic empowerment by harnessing their entrepreneurial talent and opportunities. In this context, women should be fully involved in and benefit from the continuing engagement by Africa in strategies and initiatives to transform the continent's economies;

(g) There are alarming rates of maternal mortality and an unmet need for voluntary family planning, in particular among younger women. Greater investment in women's sexual and reproductive health should also be prioritized in development planning and financing at all levels. In this, it is critical for the international community to reaffirm the promise of universal access to reproductive health and family planning, and to increase investment in this area, in particular for young girls, given the size of this population group.

## **F. Building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation**

### **1. Introduction**

21. Infrastructure, industrialization and innovation are among Africa's top priorities that are recognized as central to higher economic growth and poverty eradication. These areas feature as part of the fast-track programmes and initiatives in the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. Progress in these areas is considered crucial for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of Agenda 2063. Progress in the goals under this sub-theme is vital to African countries' efforts to bridge the infrastructure gap, including the development of modern, clean and low-carbon energy, and to harness the transformative and job-creating potential of industrialization and innovation for shared green growth and prosperity.

### **2. Key messages**

22. Key messages include:

(a) Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is a significant source of incomes, which allows for rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, including women and youth. Without industrialization, a sustainable path of economic development will not be achieved. Industry provides a breeding ground for entrepreneurship, fosters technological dynamism and productivity

growth, creates skilled jobs and, through intersectoral linkages, establishes the foundation for the expansion of both agriculture and services;

(b) Within the process of globalization, the interconnection and interdependence between industrial development and trade are increasing. International trade is important for fostering industrial growth and the structural transformation of the economy. African countries should diversify away from traditional trade patterns, marked by excessive reliance on exports of raw materials and semi-processed goods and on traditional comparative advantages of raw materials and unskilled labour. Manufacturing plays a crucial role in transforming the economic structure of poor economies. It is a catalyst for shifting economies away from simple, low-value activities with poor growth prospects to activities with high productivity, increasing returns and strong growth potential;

(c) Global industrial value chains, linking the entire sequence of activities from raw material extraction, production, design, research and development, to marketing, delivery and disposal after use, opens up new avenues for industrial capacity-building and structural transformation of the economies of developing countries. Enterprises can link up with outside entities to acquire technologies and skills to leverage external resources for industrial development. While participation in global value chains can accelerate the process of industrial capacity-building by enterprises, for this to be successful, domestic industrial capacity-building must be rewarding and sustainable;

(d) Focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and industries, and helping them link up with the global economy, agro-industries and rural industrialization, and on regional industrial development, with effective participation in the regional and global value chain, can play an important role in poverty eradication efforts. SMEs account for the majority of registered enterprises in Africa and for a large share of new jobs created over the last decade. This share is even higher in the “informal economy”. SMEs provide job opportunities for Africa’s youth in sectors as diverse as agro-industry, information and communications technologies, automotive components, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, as well as in the service industry. Despite this, SMEs have difficulty accessing capital and technical skills and, as a result, face difficulties scaling up. In order to better support SMEs, it is important for financial institutions to develop knowledge and expertise in the sectors where SMEs are active;

(e) The importance of private sector involvement, especially through SMEs, must be highly considered. Private enterprises must be supported. International support, including analysis and support by international organizations, is needed. The African Development Bank and the Continental Business Network could play an important role in this. Clear, simple and stable regulation is needed for private sector investment. Support to the development of SMEs must also be seen as a means to develop capacities through experience, as well as to increase fiscal revenue by helping them grow and transition out of the informal economy;

(f) The high transaction costs related to unreliable and expensive power supply and telecommunications, and poor transport infrastructure, have undermined the development of productive capacities of African economies, contributing to the marginalization of the region in world trade, finance and investment. They have also contributed to a poor supply response to structural adjustment policies and the failure to diversify. Because of its capital-intensive nature, rehabilitating, modernizing,

greening and expanding Africa's transport, telecommunications, water and energy infrastructure are key, and will be possible only by joining forces with the private sector;

(g) The development of national education and training systems is crucial as a means to address the capacity gaps. Capacity gaps could also be addressed through infrastructure development and industrialization strategies that identify needs and priorities to relate them with the required capacities. Capacity development programmes focusing on design and implementation of projects must be put in place. These capacities should span both technical and financial competencies, including the ability to address taxation and illicit financial flows;

(h) Innovation offers unique opportunities to "late-developer" countries to leapfrog: they can seize opportunities not only in emerging but also in mature industries. Forerunners may be locked in to current technologies due to large sunk investment costs, but late developers are not locked in, and can benefit from entering mature industries without having to bear the research and development costs. Late developers can adopt the most up-to-date products and services, processes, organizational methods and marketing tools as part of catch-up and leapfrogging. Like other world regions, Africa has particularly benefited from innovations enabled by information and communication technologies – better take-up and use is imperative;

(i) All actors need to be brought together, not only by government and the private sector, but also by education and training providers, including through vocational and technical education. Research partnerships must also be built, and should be explored, between universities, private firms, civil society organizations and Governments;

(j) The challenges in financing can be addressed by shifting the perception from a focus on financing gaps to investment opportunities. This can be done through the definition of clear strategies and an initial focus on areas with high returns on investment. Furthermore, Governments could be supported by high-level "business units" comprised of finance experts in charge of developing public-private partnerships. Those business units could also provide support in attracting finance from financial markets, remittances and other innovative mechanisms.

## **G. Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

### **1. Introduction**

23. Africa has vast ocean, sea and marine resources that are fundamental to the realization of sustainable development in the region. In all, 38 of the 54 African countries are coastal States and the continent's coastline stretches over a total length of some 40,000 km. Freshwater and ocean fish make a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of more than 200 million Africans, and provide income for more than 10 million. The sustainable management of marine resources is pivotal to poverty eradication, given that most of the poor rely on natural resources for their livelihood and poverty reduction strategies. The potential of marine resources to eradicate poverty and to foster sustainable development in the region, however, is being undermined by multiple challenges that undercut livelihood opportunities, resulting in major economic losses and degradation of the very resources upon which the continent depends. Such challenges include overfishing and

illegal fishing, and fishing that is unreported and unregulated. Other obstacles to the sound harnessing of the continent's marine wealth include pollution (both land and sea), unsustainable tourism, coastal erosion and flooding. Many of these factors are further aggravated by climate change.

## 2. Key messages

24. Key messages include:

(a) Achieving long-term sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Africa will depend on the sustainable and optimal management of its natural capital, including oceans, seas and marine resources. This notwithstanding, African coasts and marine space are facing a cycle of declining ecosystem health and productivity. This is brought on by an increased demand in living and non-living resources, the development of new technologies, declining fish stocks, climate change, biodiversity and habitat loss, as well as weak ocean governance. The ocean- and marine-based natural capital should therefore be harnessed through sound social, environmental and economic policy regimes. It is also crucial to eliminate, reverse and recoup illicit financial activities in order to enhance the flow of marine resources-based economic and social benefits and increased investments for sustainable development of ocean and sea resources;

(b) Effective governance and integrated approaches to the management of Africa's ocean and marine resources are crucial to the achievement of targets under Sustainable Development Goal 14, other Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals. Currently, however, Africa's rich marine and coastal resources, including minerals, oil and gas, and biodiversity, are managed within a perceived weak ocean governance framework and sectoral approaches. An emerging and promising comprehensive initiative is the application of ecosystem approaches in the management of the economic exclusion zones and high seas;

(c) Transboundary approaches to management of shared marine resources are needed to enhance national and regional efforts to face challenges in the marine and coastal environment, as well as implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As the world transitions to an inclusive green economy and looks towards oceans/blue natural capital for the 2030 Agenda, countries will continue to rely on the "shared seas" approach to restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, as envisaged under the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Successful and timely implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (countries' climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments in the short-to-medium term) is critical to address and harness, respectively, the opportunities arising from climate change to the sustainable development and management of oceans, seas and marine resources. Blue carbon should be integrated into global climate action activities in recognition of oceans and associate coastal ecosystems as important sinks in order to leverage finance for the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions;

(e) Strengthening the capacity of least developed countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), especially in the context of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, is key for sustainable, managed and enhanced social, economic and environmental benefits from oceans, seas and marine resources. In particular, investments are needed to enhance knowledge capacity of least developed countries and SIDS in ocean and marine science on the interaction between oceans, and climate impacts on

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marine and ocean resources, and to strengthen the marine observation capacity. Moreover, creation of a platform for SIDS will enable collective implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and the related targets;

(f) Strengthening a regional approach to needed marine environmental protection provides an appropriate scale for the implementation of an ecosystem approach to conservation. A regional approach often allows for political consensus among parties that share similar history, culture and interests in the region. Equally, a number of transboundary or local–cumulative problems – such as marine pollution, unplanned urbanization in coastal cities and urban poverty, overfishing, climate change, impacts from oil and gas exploration, illegal trade in flora and fauna – though with global impacts, can be readily addressed at the regional or subregional levels. Regional approaches such as the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy) should be supported and fully implemented. This will allow identification and implementation to scale best practices and regional approaches to maintain and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and will support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063;

(g) Regional and international cooperation to fight piracy both at its source and the market place is crucial. Countries should cooperate in sharing information on vessel registration and licensing to make it hard for pirates to easily obtain flags to fly on their boats, and to minimize the cost of vessel identification and stop and search inspection. Sharing of intelligence information, joint naval patrols and cooperation in enacting piracy laws and prosecution could also go a long way towards keeping pirates at bay.

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