



Eleventh Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

*“Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable,
inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and
Agenda 2063”*

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Highlights of the background report on the sub- theme of decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)

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**DECADE
OF
ACTION**



The review in brief



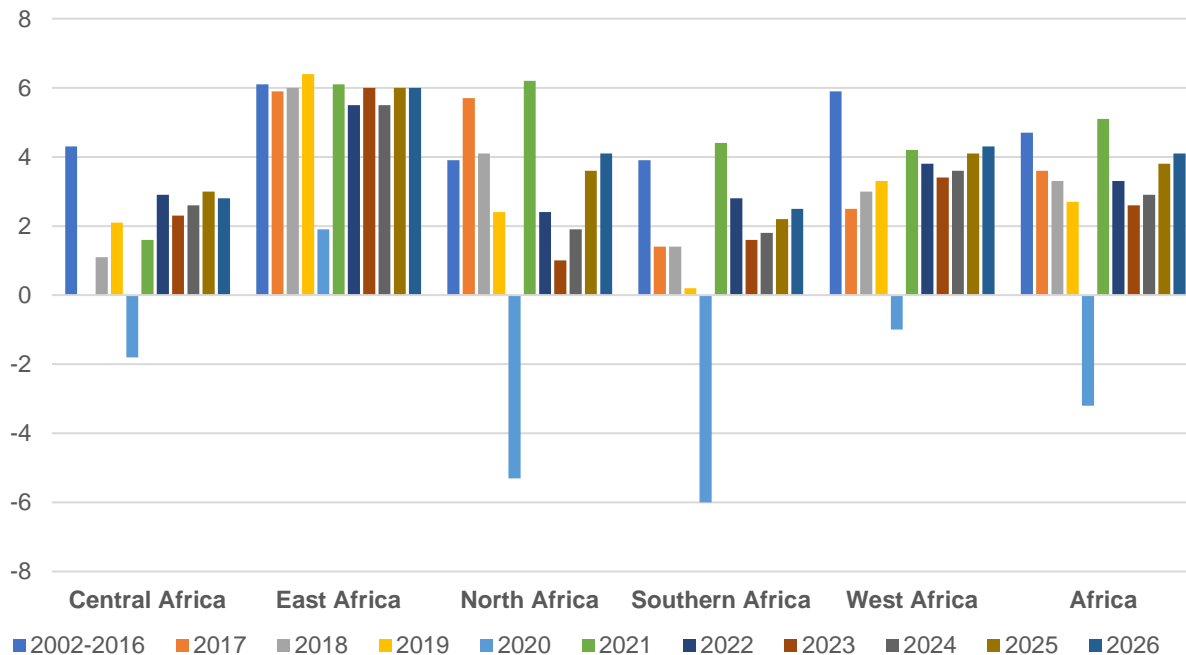
- ❑ 10 key indicators
- ❑ Span: **2015 to 2022/4** (some projections to 2026) – based on data availability
- ❑ **Overall:**
 - ❑ **Progress:** variations across Africa, the overall picture suggests some reversal
 - ❑ **Outlook:** sluggish
- ❑ **Key Message:** Achieving Goal 8 requires concerted and integrated efforts across sectors.
 - ❑ Bolster resilience to climate-related and other economic shocks, enhance growth and trade, foster economic diversification, promote productive work across all sectors, leverage digital transformation.

Real GDP Growth



- ❑ African countries are projected to be among the fastest-growing economies, with GDP growth expected to rise from 2.9% in 2024 to 4.1% by 2026.
- ❑ East Africa is leading in economic growth, with a 2.5% increase in real GDP per capita from 2015 to 2022, compared to 0.85% in Southern Africa, while other subregions declined.

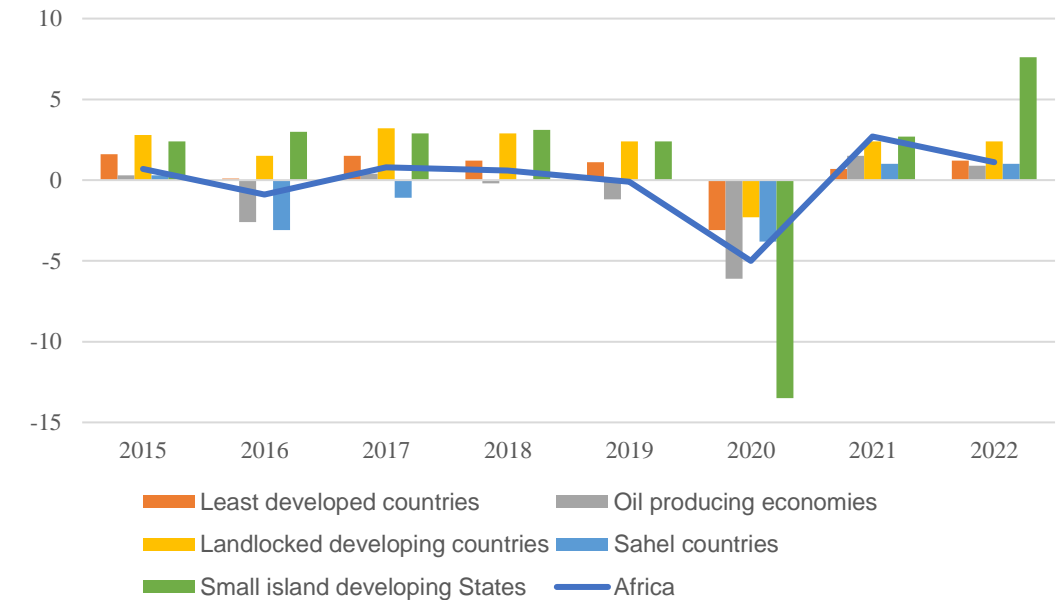
Figure I: Estimated annual change in real gross domestic product: African subregions and Africa as a whole, 2002–2026 (Percentage)



Source: World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 (United Nations publication, 2025).

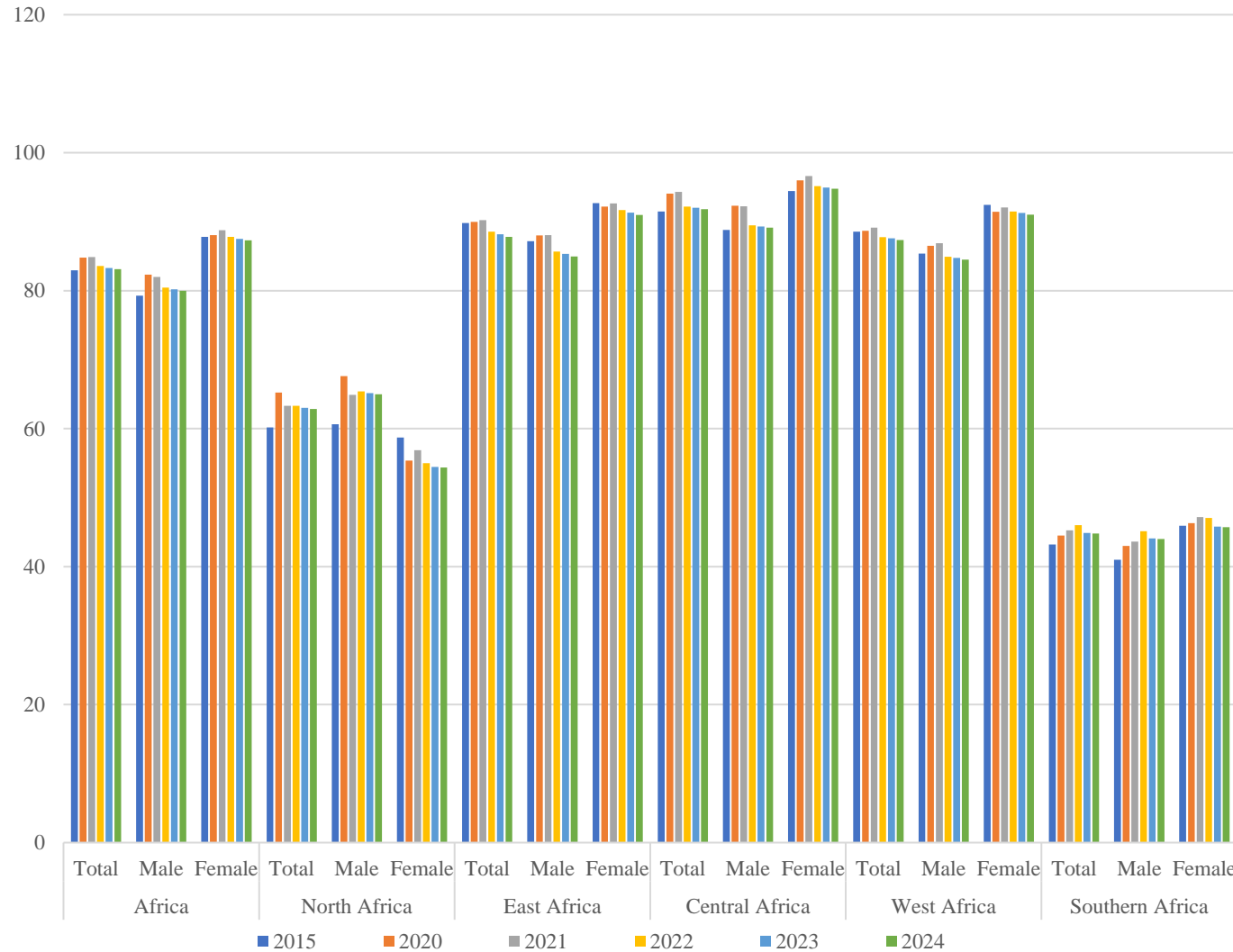
- ❑ Africa's GDP per capita growth averaged -0.012% (2015-2022).
- ❑ From 2015 to 2022, real GDP per capita rose by 1.9% in landlocked developing countries, 1.3% in small island developing states, and 0.5% in least developed countries, while Africa saw a decline of -0.01%.

Figure II: Estimated annual change in real gross domestic product per capita: African country groups and Africa as a whole, 2015–2022 (Percentage)



Source: ECA Sustainable Development Goal indicators database.

Figure III: Informal employment as a percentage of total employment, African subregions, and Africa as a whole, 2015–2024 (Percentage)

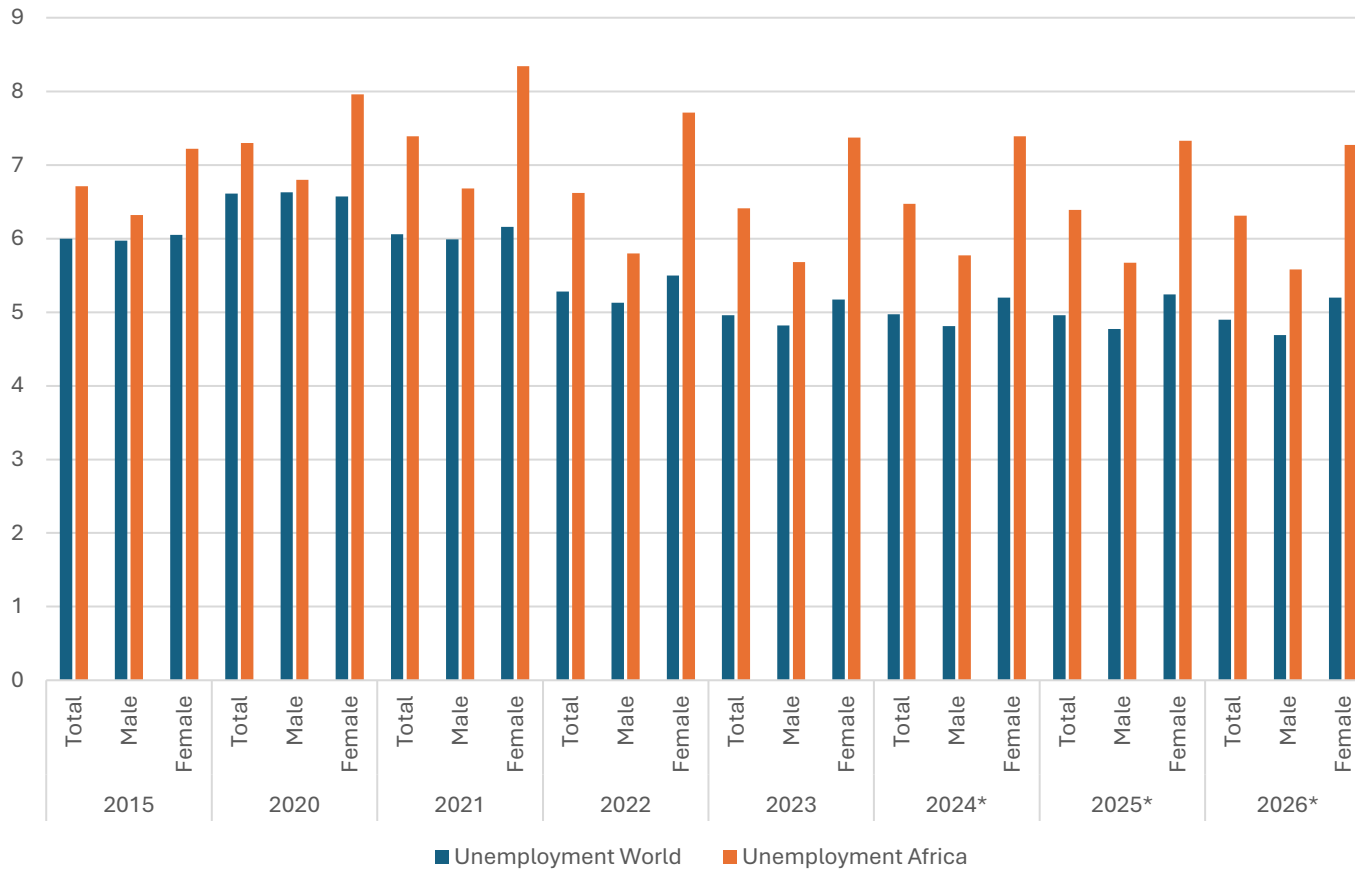


Informal Employment:

- ❑ **83%** of African workers are in informal employment in 2024, with women and youth disproportionately affected.
- ❑ **Highest informality rates** in East, Central, and West Africa (>87% since 2015).
- ❑ **Gender Disparities in Informal Employment:** Women are overrepresented in informal jobs with (Lower wages, Poor working conditions, and Limited access to social services).
- ❑ **Structural inequalities** persist in African labour markets.
- ❑ **29%** of African workers lived in extreme working poverty (earning < \$2.15/day) in 2023.
- ❑ **Slow progress:** Only a slight decline since 2015 (30.43%).
- ❑ **Regional variations:**
 - **Highest:** Central Africa (43.32%)
 - **Lowest:** North Africa (5.01%)
- ❑ **Informal employment remains dominant,** hindering decent work (SDG 8) and poverty reduction.

Source: ILO, “statistics on informality”, modelled estimates, ILOSTAT database.

Figure IV: Unemployment rates, Africa as a whole and world, 2015–2026 (Percentage)



Source: ILO, “Statistics on unemployment and labour underutilization”, modelled estimates, ILOSTAT database.

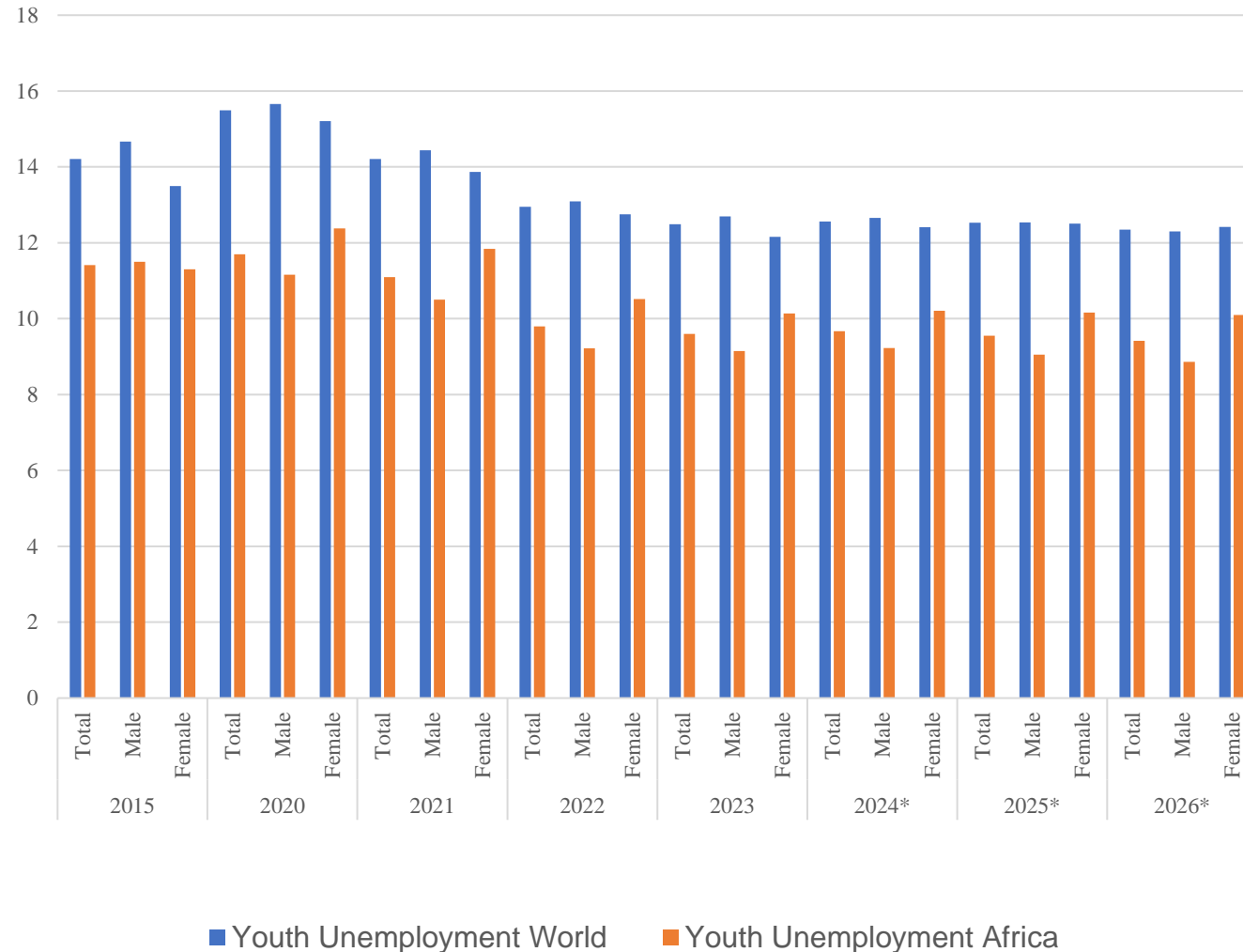
Official rates mask the magnitude of the problem

- ❑ **Disparities:** unemployment rates significantly higher for women and young people; **persons with disabilities** face additional challenges in exercising their right to work
- ❑ **Jobs gap:** In 2024, 113 million (unmet need) vs. 39.5 million (categorized as unemployed)

Working Poverty:

- ❑ **29%** of African workers live in extreme working poverty (less than \$2.15/day).

Figure V: Youth unemployment rates: Africa as a whole and the world, 2015–2026 (Percentage)



Youth Unemployment:

- ❑ The lack of productive and decent employment remains a critical challenge
- ❑ **71.7%** of workers aged 25 to 29 in jobs categorized as “insecure”. Predominantly work in the informal economy.
- ❑ **23.29%** of African youth (15–24) are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- ❑ **Gender gap:** 29.6% of young women vs. 17.1% of young men, with regional variations

Source: ILO, “Statistics on unemployment and labour underutilization”, modelled estimates, ILOSTAT database.

Youth Employment Strategies:

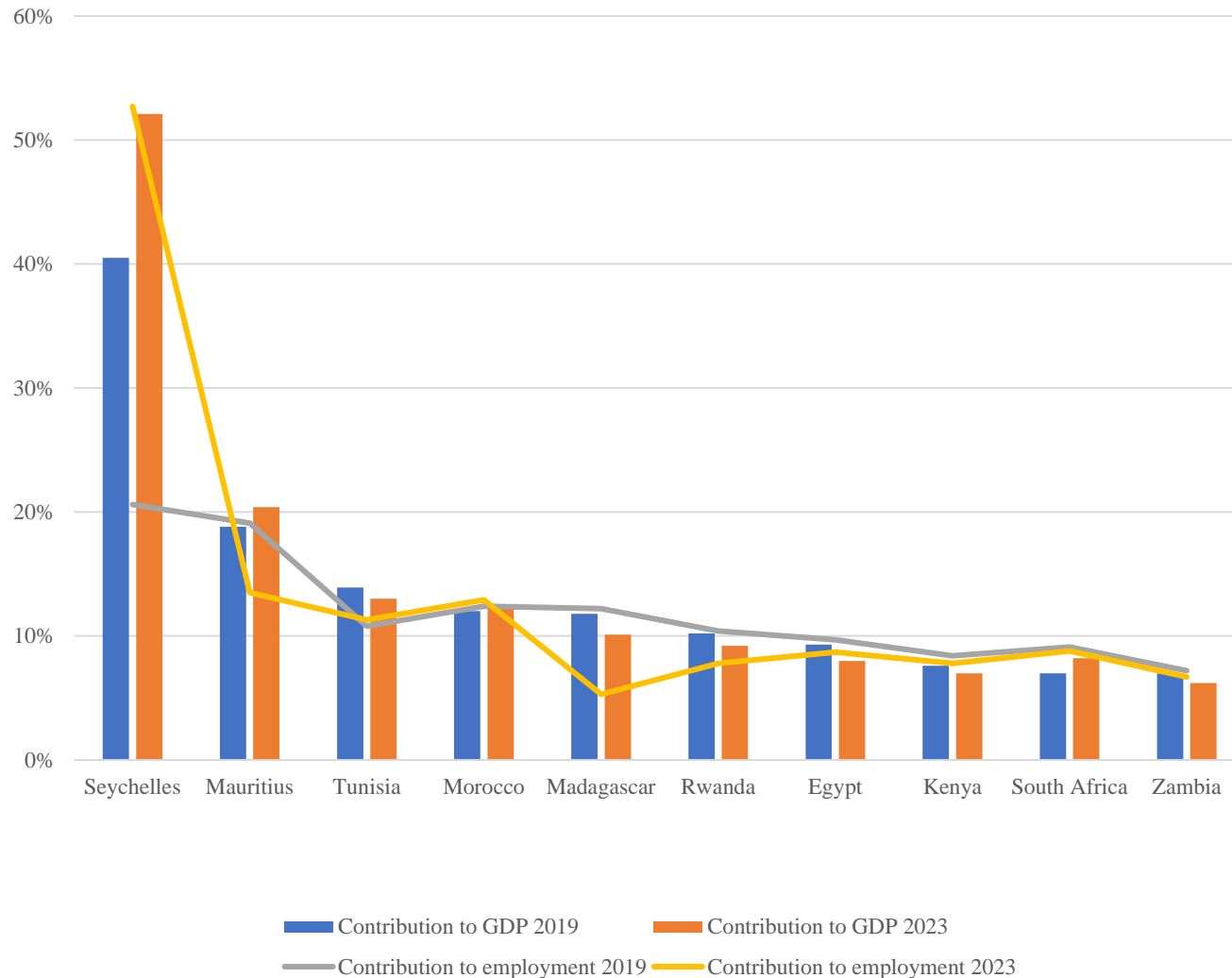
- ❑ The stubborn youth employment challenge **not a lack of strategies or policy initiatives**. **69%** of African countries have adopted youth employment strategies.
- ❑ **Strategies are comprehensive:** education, training, enterprise development, and labour market issues, macro and sectoral policies,

Implementation Challenges:

- ❑ Lack of resources and low priority given to youth employment initiatives.

- ❑ 1 in 5 five (21.6%) of African children are in child labour, with 41.4 million in hazardous work.
- ❑ agricultural sector contributes some 80.7 per cent (74.4 million children)
- ❑ Prevalent in traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups, indigenous and rural areas,
- ❑ Highest prevalence rate in East and West Africa

Figure VI: Contribution to gross domestic product and employment of the travel and tourism sector in selected African countries, 2019 and 2023 (Percentage)



Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2024).

Tourism Sector:

- ❑ Contributed 6.8% to Africa’s GDP in 2023, with significant growth post-pandemic.
- ❑ Key countries: Mauritius (20.4% of GDP) and Seychelles (52.1% of GDP).

Progress in Africa

- ❑ Significant expansion of financial services through mobile money platforms.
- ❑ Mobile money transactions in Africa totaled \$1.26 trillion in 2022, contributing significantly to GDP.

Mobile Money Account Ownership (2011-2021)

- ❑ More than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ❑ 49% of adults owned an account in 2021.
- ❑ Notable increases in Mali (8% to 44%) and Senegal (6% to 56%).

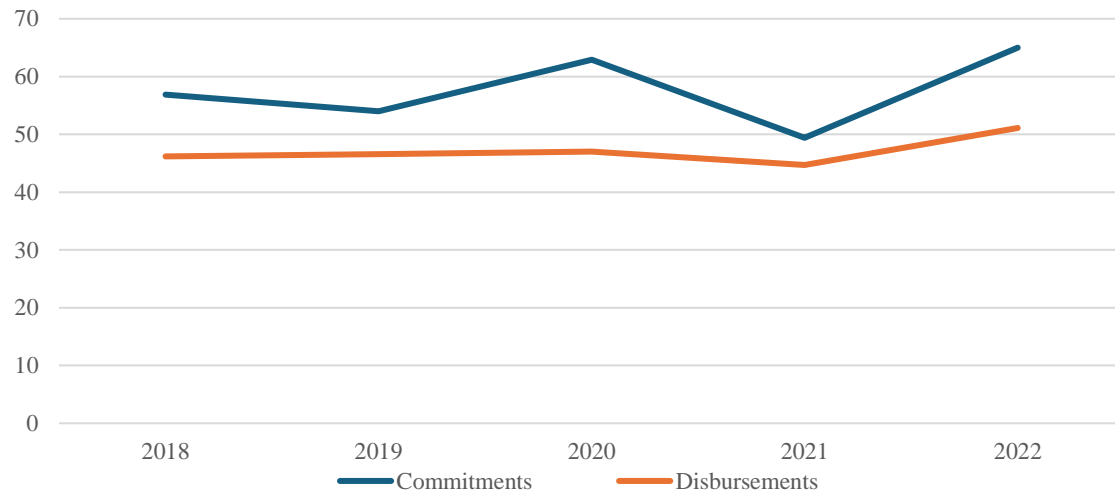
Mobile Money Interoperability (2024)

- ❑ Endorsed by the African Union for continent-wide adoption by 2027.
- ❑ Africa accounts for over 70% of global mobile money transactions.

Equity Gaps

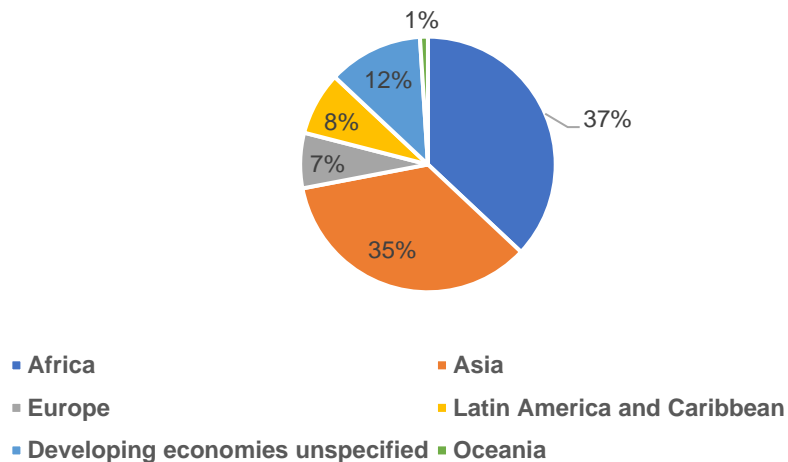
- ❑ The average gender gap in account ownership is 12 percent in Africa.
- ❑ Mali reduced the gender gap from 20 to 5 percentage points (2017-2021).
- ❑ South Africa has maintained a negligible gender gap since 2014.

Figure VII: Evolution of Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements, 2018–2022 (Billions of United States dollars)



Source: WTO and OECD, *Aid for Trade at a Glance 2024*

Figure VI: Share of total Aid for Trade disbursements by global region, 2021–2022 average (Percentage)



Source: WTO and OECD, *Aid for Trade at a Glance 2024*

Aid for Trade Disbursements:

- ❑ About 632 billion USD disbursed globally by 2022, with 37% directed to Africa.
- ❑ Focus on infrastructure, digital connectivity, and trade facilitation.

Challenges:

- ❑ Decline in disbursements to Africa, particularly in productive capacity building.
- ❑ Need for increased support to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

- ❑ **Key Message:** Achieving Goal 8 requires integrated efforts across economic, social, and digital sectors.
- ❑ **Call to Action:** African countries must prioritize decent work, economic growth, and youth employment to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.



01

Economic Diversification

Adopt pro-employment macroeconomic policies and seek to diversify economies



02

Formalization of Informal Economy

Create pathways for informal workers and businesses to transition to formal employment.



03

Youth Employment

Integrate training, job matching, financial support for youth, and participation of youth in policy design



04

Digital Transformation

Invest in ICT infrastructure and digital skills to drive economic growth.



05

Trade

Increase support for trade-related infrastructure and capacity building.



**THANK
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Ideas
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Action