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**Speech by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
Eleventh Session of the Africa Regional Forum on
Sustainable Development (ARFSD)**

**9–11 April 2025 | Kampala, Uganda | Speke Resort
Convention Centre, Munyonyo**

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

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda,

Your Excellencies Presidents and Prime Ministers.....

Distinguished Ministers and Delegates,

Representatives of the United Nations and Development Partners,

Esteemed Colleagues, Friends of Africa, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Allow me to stand on the existing protocols

It is both an honour and a privilege to address you today as we open the 11th (Eleventh) Session of the **Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (AFRSD)**. On behalf of the African Union Commission Chairperson, H.E Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, and my entire delegation, I bring warm greetings of solidarity and ambition—the kind of ambition that envisions an “integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing dynamic force in the Global arena”.

We gather at a pivotal moment , when the geopolitical global landscape is marked by the complex challenges ,as well as issues of climate change, pollution, economic volatility , persistent inequalities. Yet, amidst these challenges, Africa posses immense potential, untapped potential Africa’s youthful population, abundant natural resources, and growing entrepreneurial spirit present us with unique opportunities to drive transformative

change. We also make strides on integration through ACFTA just to share that we remain prisoners of hope towards the development agenda of Africa

Let me begin with three key messages—messages that I hope will shape our dialogue and stir our collective will to act boldly, as we take one step at a time advancing towards the Africa we want, as guided by the Global Strategy – UN Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030 and our Continental Strategy – Agenda 2063.

First, a message of gratitude

To the Government and people of Uganda—thank you. Thank you for your warm hospitality, your generosity, and above all, your steadfast commitment, under the leadership and the vision of His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni, to Africa’s unity and progress. Uganda has stood with us since the days of the Organization of African Unity and continues to play a vital role in our collective journey.

I also extend heartfelt appreciation to my brother, Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Your leadership breathes life into this forum,

with every successful Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), becoming more visible, more real, and more actionable.

Second, a message about Africa’s development story.

Our journey is not defined by a single thread, but by a rich tapestry of ambition, policy choices, and enduring commitments. The Continental Strategy - Agenda 2063 is Africa’s blueprint for long-term transformation. Yet, across our continent, we continue to see complementary visions that are also shaping progress; Uganda’s Vision 2040, the East African Community’s Vision 2050, and countless district and community-level plans. And of course, our shared global commitment—the UN SDG, which does not only guide our programming but allows us to compare and mirror our progress against that of other continents.

Allow me to demystify the common misconception that the plans are duplicating and competing agendas. They are actually converging commitments. Together, they weave Africa’s development story. Our study evaluating the FTYIP showed 86% convergence between the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and a further discovery that majority of National Development Plans (NDPS) are aligned to both Agendas. The pain in the achievement of these strategies had been, on our side - coordinating Member

States better and guiding measurements and reporting protocols. On the side of Member States, it is about action and implementation, delivering promises to our citizens as per our national development planning

What matters is not where we begin—but how we act. What actions are we taking? What trade-offs are we managing? How do we measure impact? This is the essence of this Forum’s theme: Driving job creation and economic growth.

Whether we speak of decent work, green jobs, or youth employment—it all comes down to one thing: delivering jobs. At every level—local, national, regional, continental, and global—we must ask: What are we doing? How are we making our commitments visible? And how are we making them count?

Third, a message about the future.

In 2024, our Heads of State and Government endorsed the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. The plan departed from of low level of performance across all aspirations evident in the global strategic performance such as SDG3 good health and wellbeing , despite Africa accounting to 16% of the global population it bears 23% of the global disease burden (WHO, 2024)

other health concerns include maternal mortality remains high with 525 deaths per 1000 live births. Other concerns include aspects of SDG five gender equality with AU gender score card reflecting 25% parliamentary seats held by women despite the population quantum of 25% across the continent. Gaps remain on indicators related to decent work and economic growth, life below water. That plan defines seven bold Moonshots—ambitious targets that reflect our collective will. One of them being that “ **Moonshot 1 – Every Member State should achieve, at least middle income level**”, it calls for radical sustainable development agenda, conscious of the hindrances but intentionally focusing Africa on its rich unexploited potential, including the demographic dividend, compelling us to create jobs that are due to our youthful population. These will be delivered through transformative Pathways, with a clear focus on identified key Enablers and Accelerators.

But let us be clear: Plans don't deliver themselves. People do. Over and above the greatest resource being the people, in 2023, our leaders pledged their Commitment, Accountability, Resources and Desire to lead implementation of Agenda 2063. This was building on the earlier commitment by the UN Secretary General and AU Chairperson, in 2018, signing the joint implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and UN SDGs. The new AUC leadership pledge their

total commitment to coordinate and guide Member States on the joint implementation of the two Agendas. Over the second week of assuming duty, we convened 49 Member States to share the robust Domestication plan, guiding them on the need to jointly implement, two agendas one framework and taking the agenda to its owners—the citizens of Africa.

I wish also to report that, on 7 April 2025, on the sidelines of this Forum, UNECA in collaboration with the AU Technical Working Group on Agenda 2063 and the UN Development Coordination Office convened UN Resident Coordinators to explore joint implementation of Agenda 2063's Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan and UN Agenda 2030 for Africa transformation and Sustainable Development.

The key takeaways were that:

- National Development Plans must remain the cornerstone—not just for the SDGs and Agenda 2063—but also for Regional Economic Communities, National Governments, and Local Authorities.

The shift we need is from alignment to commitment. We must move beyond simply aligning our work to articulate clear commitments, shaping investment choices, and holding ourselves accountable for results.

We must strengthen our collective assets by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities—within the UN system, the African Union, Member States, and development partners. Only then can we unlock the full potential of our partnerships and work in true synergy.

- We must seize the momentum around climate action as a powerful entry point to deliver across our development agendas—whether global, continental, regional, national, or local.

Climate is not just an environmental issue—it is an economic, social, and developmental imperative. It offers a unifying platform to integrate SDGs, Agenda 2063, and national priorities in a coherent and impactful way.

So, I extend a call to action to all of you—legislators, policy-makers, development practitioners, civil society leaders, youth champions, private sector partners, and citizens across Africa: Make your commitment visible.

Wherever you sit—whether in a local council, a national ministry, a regional body, or a global institution—your role matters. Whether your entry point is a national strategy or the SDGs, you can act,

deliver, and report in alignment with Agenda 2063.

In conclusion...

Let our gathering in this pan Africanist city of Kampala, be a turning point—where ambition meets accountability, where vision meets action. Let us think boldly, collaborate intentionally, and deliver consistently.

The Africa we want is not a distant dream. It is a decision—and a shared responsibility.

I wish you fruitful deliberations, enduring partnerships, and transformative outcomes. May this Forum set a new benchmark for what Africa can achieve—together.

Thank you.

Asanteni sana. Merci beaucoup. Shukran. Webale nyo.