



Economic Commission for Africa
Eighth African Regional Science, Technology and Innovation Forum
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 26 and 27 April 2026

Theme: “*Achieving progress towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through transformative and coordinated actions in science, technology, and digital innovation*”

Venue: Conference Room (CR2), UNCC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Provisional Programme of Work

Sunday, 26 April 2026

8.30–9 a.m.

Registration

9–10 a.m.

Opening session

Venue: Conference Room (CR2)

Moderator: Robert Lisinge, Director Technology Innovation Connectivity and Infrastructure Division, ECA

Rapporteurs: Melat Getachew and Pavel Bianki

Welcoming remarks:

- *Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Uganda and outgoing chairperson, Seventh African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, **Monica Musenero Masanza,***
- *Director of the UNESCO Addis Ababa Liaison Office to AU, UNECA and UNESCO Representative to Ethiopia, **Rita Bissoonauth,***
- *Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, **Claver Gatete,***
- *Keynote address by the Minister of Innovation and Technology of Ethiopia, **Belete Molla,***

10–10:30 a.m.

Coffee break

10.30a.m. –12.00 p.m.

High-level panel on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to accelerate progress towards *the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063*

Description/Summary: Artificial Intelligence presents significant opportunities for African nations in achieving Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Not only is Artificial Intelligence a transformative force, but with the effective integration of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), such as robust digital identification systems, secure payment platforms, and reliable data exchange frameworks, Africa can further accelerate its progress. Artificial Intelligence is projected to contribute up to \$1.5 trillion by 2030. Africa's Artificial Intelligence innovation is increasingly shaped by continent-level policy and coordinated capacity-building, with the African Union's Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2024). **Panelists will discuss efforts to scale up investment in artificial intelligence support infrastructure, including Digital Public Infrastructure initiatives such as the establishment of Africa Leader Forum on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) such as data centres and fabrication hubs for semiconductors, as well as in talent generation and research facilities to help Africa unlock the full potential of Artificial Intelligence.**

Venue: Conference Room (CR2)

Moderator: Robert Lisinge, Director, Technology, Innovation and Connectivity Infrastructure Division, ECA

Rapporteurs: Bahta Bekele, Melat Getachew and Prof Robert Ridley

Panellists:

1. Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Uganda, **Hon. Monica Musenero Masanza**
2. Innovation Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Ethiopia, **Dr. Solomon Belay**
3. Director of the UNESCO Addis Ababa Liaison Office to AU, UNECA and UNESCO Representative to Ethiopia, **Rita Bissoonauth**
4. Professor in Computer Science, British University in Egypt, **Hesham Auda,**
5. Senior Advisor on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, UN, Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET), **Mehdi Snene,**
6. Executive Director, Women Be Free, Benin **Ms. Clara Gninou**

General discussion

1.00–2.30 p.m.

Lunch break

2.30 – 3:30 p.m.

High-level panel on renewable energy technologies: strategies, policies and pathways for driving innovation and economic development in Africa

Description/Summary: Africa is expanding its renewable and sustainable energy capacity; however, investment remains insufficient to meet the growing demand for electricity. With the growing demand and adoption of sustainable energy technologies, sourcing and technical services remain largely imported. *Panelists will explore how to build innovative capacity and technical expertise towards localizing sustainable energy industries and capabilities to further connect energy with economic development in Africa.*

Venue: Conference Room (CR2)

Moderator: Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, ECA

Rapporteurs: Mariamwit Ayele and Bezawit Temsegen

Panellists:

1. Deputy Director Renewable Energy, Ministry of, Energy and Petroleum, Kenya, **Peter Thobora, Nairobi,**
2. Principal Environment Officer, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), Republic of Uganda, **Shallon Nuwamanya**
3. Deputy Permanent Secretary, National Energy Commission, Democratic Republic of Congo, **Eng. Andre Kabwe**
4. Co-founder and President, Ethiopian Women in Energy Association, **Adey Getachew,** Addis Ababa
5. Senior Policy Advisor, African Energy Commission (AFREC), **Nickson Bukachi,**

General discussion

Parallel Sessions

3.30–5 p.m.

Parallel Sessions on the Sustainable Development Goals 7, 9, 11, and 17

The parallel sessions examine how science, technology and innovation can accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 under the selected African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development-12, sustainable development goals (7, 9, 11 and 17). They highlight technologies and innovations that already contribute, or have strong potential to contribute, at scale to the Sustainable Development Goal from an African perspective, and outline the conditions needed for their effective deployment.

3.30–5 p.m.

Parallel Session A: Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)

Description/ Summary:

Africa's transition toward electric mobility is steadily gaining momentum, albeit from a low base and progressing at different speeds across the continent. The convergence of urbanization, climate commitments, energy diversification, and regional industrialization goals is positioning electric vehicles as a strategic opportunity for sustainable development. Despite encouraging trends, Africa remains the region with the lowest rate of Electric Vehicle adoption globally. The Electric Vehicle ecosystem across the continent is still in an emergent phase, marked by gradual growth in vehicle uptake, infrastructure deployment, policy development, and stakeholder engagement. *In this session, countries and private sector experience will be discussed and shared on how electric vehicles are accelerating energy transition in the transport sector, and on mechanisms to further accelerate transitions in Africa.*

Venue: Conference room 2 (CR2)

Moderator: **Robert Lisinge**, Director, Technology Innovation Connectivity and Infrastructure Division, ECA

Rapporteurs: Bezawit Temsegen and Sileshi Tsiege

Panelists:

1. Director General, Institute for National Transformation, Office of the President of Uganda, **Vincent C Anigbogu**,
2. Lead coordinator for the integration of electric vehicles, Ministry of Roads and Transport, Kenya, **Misiko Justo Wanyama**
3. World Resources Institute, Cities Director for Africa & Country Representative for Ethiopia, **Aklilu Fikresilassie**
4. Director of the Laboratoire de Photonique Quantique d’Energie & NanoFabrication, Universit, Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, President of the African Materials Research Society, **Balla Diop Ngom**
5. Senior Industrial and Chemical Engineer, Consultant, **Nebiyeleul Gessesse**,

General discussion

3.30–5 p.m.

Parallel Sessions B: Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)

Description/ Summary: While Africa has achieved notable progress in digital and physical connectivity, significant structural barriers remain in industrialization and innovation. The continent's high-tech manufacturing—currently at only 16.4% of total value added—toward advanced processing in sectors like aerospace and automotive. To address these, the session will focus on multi-stakeholder mechanisms through public, private, and academic partnership to align research with industrial needs, supported by institutional frameworks that incentivize private-sector participation, and leveraging the experiences of member states and academic institutions—to bridge the Research and Development (R&D) gap and elevate manufacturing value.

Venue: Conference Room 6 (CR6)

Moderator: United Nations Industrial Development Organization **Nobuya Haraguchi**, Officer-in-Charge, Division of Industrial Policy Research and Statistics

Rapporteurs: Saba Debebe, Arkadi Tsvetkov and Mr. Wondwossen Belete

Panelists:

1. Deputy Director of Institute of Science and Technology Planning and Foresight, Chinese Academic of Science and Technology for Development, China centers), **Dr. Like YUAN**,
2. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Pathirage Rohan

3. Director of Industry Minerals and Tourism, Department of Economic Development, Industry, Minerals, Entrepreneurship and Tourism and Minerals (ETTIM), African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, **Ms. Ron Osman Omar**,
4. UN Technology Bank, Ms. Federica Irene Falomi, Head of Programme
5. UNDP; **Deborah Naatujuna**, Innovation Specialist, Regional Service Center for Africa (RSCA) Addis Ababa
6. Chief Executive Officer and Founder Kubik, **Kidus Asfaw**, Addis Ababa

General discussion

3.30–5 p.m.

Parallel session C: High-level panel Goal 11(Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Description/ Summary: On making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Africa is the fastest-urbanizing continent, with significant growth in health, education, transport and digital technology infrastructure that is making the region's cities safe, competitive and liveable. Some estimates indicate 53.6 per cent of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa, lives in informal settlements with inadequate housing and poor basic services. This session explores the implementation of Goal 11 in Africa, specifically addressing the critical challenge of balancing rapid urbanization with constrained structural capacity. By examining successful African mechanisms and practices, the discussion will highlight how the continent can navigate explosive urban growth through different strategic pillars inclusive growth, smart mobility, and climate resilience. It also advocates for urban strategies that recognize and empower the informal economy as a foundational driver of sustainable and resilient urban life.

Venue: Caucus room 11 (CC11)

Moderator: Giuseppe Tesoriere, Economic Affairs Officer, ECA

Rapporteurs: Mr. Thomas Sinmegn, and Mr. Gaochao Deng

Panellists:

1. Senior Advisor, ITU Regional Office for Africa, Addis Ababa, **Chirstine Sund**,
2. Urban Mobility Project manager, World Resources Institute (WRI), Ethiopia, **Ms. Iman Abubaker**
3. Urban Innovation and technology specialist, United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC), **Sophie Naue**
4. Italian Trade and Investment Commissioner for the Italian Trade Agency, Addis Ababa, **Claudio Pasqualucci**
5. Project manager, Mastercard Foundation, Addis Ababa, **Abel Solomon**

General discussion

3.30–5 p.m.

Parallel session D: Goal 17 (partnership/multi-stakeholder collaboration)

Description/ Summary: This session reviews the uneven progress of **Goal 17** in Africa by proposing a shift from global dependency toward a self-sustaining innovation ecosystem by operationalizing collaborative governance between government, industry, and academia, to bridge its R&D deficit, and leverage **science diplomacy** for transboundary resource management. In this regard, a Strategic Priority to deliver on the objectives of STISA 2034 is the Strengthening of Science Diplomacy and Partnerships. Likewise, the alignment of national Science Technology and Innovation (STI) policies with the African Continental Free Trade Area **protocols** on digital trade and intellectual property, for creating a unified framework to accelerate technology transfer, ensure universal water security, and drive sustainable industrialization across the continent. This session will assess and highlight key achievements and impacts, identifying future opportunities for strengthening the existing partnership.

Venue: Conference room (CR4)

Moderator: Dr. Mahaman Bachir Saley, Africa Union

Rapporteurs: Ms. Olwethu Tyani and Prof Robert Ridely

Panellists:

1. Director of the African Open Science Platform (AOSP), **Dr. Tshiamo Motshegwa**
2. Science Counsellor, Chinese Mission to the AU on China-Africa Innovation Cooperation, Addis Ababa, **Dr. Kaihui He**,
3. Deputy Director-General: International Cooperation and Resources, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), South Africa, **Daan Du Toit**, South Africa
4. Director of Science Technology and Innovation Policy, African Academy of Sciences, **Nkem Khumbah**, Academia
5. Program Manager of CISTRAT, Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development (CASTED), UNESCO Category 2 Centre, China. **TIAN Nianping**,
6. *Senior Researcher and Geomatic Scientist, Director of the Open Science Initiative, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD)*, **Dr. Jean-Christophe Desconnets**,
7. UNESCO, Expert and Consultant in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Policy, **Galindo Moreno**, **Manuel Ricardo**

General discussion

5–5.30 p.m.

Coffee break

Monday, 27 April 2026

SPECIAL SESSIONS

8.30–9.30 a.m.

Special Session A: Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

Description/ Summary: Official estimates indicate a critical gap in African water security: over 400 million people lack access to basic drinking water, and more than 700 million remain without safely managed sanitation. This deficit persists despite the continent’s vast natural water reserves. Bridging this gap requires a strategic intensification of innovation and technical capacity. *Panelists will share best practices and address the systemic challenges faced by African countries, including financial mechanisms for innovation and the integration of robust policy and management systems necessary to implement and advance universal access to clean water and sanitation across all communities.*

Venue: Conference Room (CR2)

Co-moderators: **Abou Amani**, Director of the Division of Water Sciences and Secretary of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, UNESCO and **Ms Mandry Ntshani**, Director Africa Multilateral Cooperation, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, South Africa

Rapporteurs: Ms. Olwethu Tyani and Dr. Samuel Chigome

Panellists:

1. Senior technical expert and the Climate and Water Advisor, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) Directorate of the African Union Commission (AUC), **Ahmed Eldaw**,
2. Chemistry Department, Nelson Mandela University and CEO SabiNano): **Sabelo Mhlanga, Academia**
3. Network Director: AUDA-NEPAD Southern African Network for Water Centres of Excellence South Africa, **Nico Elema**
4. Senior Research Manager: Water Research Commission (WRC), South Africa, **Valerie Naidoo**
5. Chief Hydrologist, Hydrological Adviser of The Gambia with WMO, Water Convention Focal Point, Department of Water Resources, **Landing Bojang**
6. Deputy Focal Point for the preparation of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference at the Ministry of Water and Sanitation of Senegal, **Amadou Gueye**

General discussion

9:.30–10.30 a.m.

Presentation of report and key takeaway from the parallel Sessions on Goals 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR2)

Moderator: Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, ECA

Rapporteurs: Asfaw Yitna, Meskerem Kifle, Ikome Ekwa Itue, and Ms. Sandra Shoko.

General discussion

10.30 - 11.00 am. *Coffee Break*

11.10 –12.00 p.m. **Special Session B. Partnership in Action: African Union – European Union High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation**

The African Union–European Union High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation provides the strategic framework for long-term research and innovation cooperation between Africa and Europe. It guides joint priorities across four pillars: Public Health, Green Transition, Innovation & Technology, and Capacities for Science.

This session takes place in the context of the upcoming 2nd AU–EU Ministerial on Science, Technology and Innovation, to be held in Addis Ababa on 27 October 2026, and preceded by a dedicated side event on AI in Science. Against this backdrop, the discussion will offer an opportunity to take stock of progress and reflect on future directions.

Under the AU–EU Innovation Agenda and High-Level Policy Dialogue–aligned partnerships, tangible progress has been made in areas such as collaborative health research, food and nutrition security, climate and sustainable energy, and capacity-building initiatives. The Horizon Europe Africa Initiatives continue to expand support for joint research and innovation activities aligned with these priorities.

The session will assess impacts, highlight key achievements, and identify future opportunities to further strengthen AU–EU cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, contributing to the implementation of Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR2)

Co-Moderators:

Dr. Mahaman Bachir Saley, Head of Division, Science, Technology and Space Division, AU-EU High level Space Dialogue, African Union Commission, and **Dr Laurent Bochereau**, Science Counsellor, European Union Mission to the African Union

Rapporteurs: Ms. Blen Adem and Dr. Samuel Chimoge

Panellists:

1. Director, STI National Council for Scientific Research and Technologies, Algeria, **Professor Mokhtar Sellami**,
2. Deputy Director General, Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI), **Dr Alemseged Abdissa**, Addis Ababa

3. Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), **Dr Sylvie Lewicki**,
4. Partnership development, **VLIR-UOS** (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad – Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking), Brussels, Belgium, **Mr. Jan Kennis Vlirous**,
5. Vice-president for International Affairs, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), **Dr Isabel Diaz**,

General discussion

12.00 - 1.00 p.m.

Special Session C. Partnership in Action: Building continental platforms for innovation

ECA plays a crucial role in supporting its members in harnessing science, technology, and innovation to drive digital transformation and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Furthermore, ECA helps its members to foster innovation, including through the Origin Research and Innovation Labs, in which academic patents are commercialized, and the Alliance for Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa, the aim of which is to reform higher education, with a view to cultivating entrepreneurs and supporting the creation of 1 million start-ups. This session will share experiences and best practices of initiatives to build continental platforms for innovation.

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR2)

Moderator: **Mr. Mactar Seck**, Chief Emerging and Frontier Technologies, Innovation and Digital Transformation Section, ECA

Rapporteurs: Asfaw Yitna and Arseni Armanshin,

Panellists:

1. Head, Origin Research and Innovation Hub, Dedan Kimathi University, **Ndirangu Kioni, Kenya**
2. Executive Director, Soar Research Foundation, Lead African Bio-medical Engineering Consortium, Daniel Atwine, Uganda,
3. Chief Executive Officer, Higher Education Loans Board, Kenya and Chair, Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa, **Geoffrey Monari, Kenya**
4. Programme Coordinator, Long-Term Joint Research & Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy, LGI Sustainable Innovation, Mr **Léonard Lévéque**
5. Chief Executive Officer, GreenChemSolution, and Executive Director of the Alliance for Research, Innovation and Education for Africa, **Yonas Gizaw**

General discussion

1.00 - 2.00 p.m.

Lunch break

2.00 - 3.00 pm.

Special Session D. Implementing the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa – 2034

The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2034 has set six strategic priorities: (i) Since Technology and Innovation for accelerating sustainable and inclusive industrialization; (ii) Building human capital, infrastructure, and skills; (iii) Building African capabilities in frontier and emerging technologies; (iv) Strengthening science diplomacy and partnerships in Science and Technology Innovation; (v) Private sector engagement; and (vi) Addressing youth and gender inequalities. This session seeks to sensitize on the newly launched Implementation Plan of STISA 2034 identify innovative and bold actions needed to realize the continental and global development aspirations.

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR2)

Moderator: Dr. Mahaman Bachir Saley, African Union Commission

Rapporteurs: Ms. Olwethu Tyani and Prof. Robert Ridely,

Panellists:

1. Professor of Science and Technology Policy, Graduate School of Technology Management, University of Pretoria, South Africa, **Prof. John Ouma Mugabe**,
2. Officer-in-Charge, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, **Martiale Zebaze Kana**
3. Team Lead, Elevate Trust, **Ms. Sandra Shoko**, *Youth*
4. Director Africa Multilateral Cooperation, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, South Africa, **Mandry Ntshani**,

General discussion

3.00 - 5.00 pm.

Special Session E. Regional Dialogue on AI Governance: Regional priorities and perspectives on AI Governance

As part of the Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance was established as an inclusive space within the United Nations for governments and stakeholders to deliberate on today's most pressing AI challenges including capacity gaps, data governance, and institutional preparedness. As part of this process, ECA and ESCWA have jointly organized this regional consultation. The session will serve as a platform to discuss regional and international cooperation, share best practices and lessons learned, and facilitate open, transparent and inclusive discussions on AI governance. Critical issues including human rights, development, and the impact of AI on children and vulnerable groups will be prioritized, alongside strategies to combat malicious use and ensure information integrity. Outcomes will include actionable collaboration areas and tools for responsible AI, contributing to global discussions and ongoing cooperation for equitable governance across the regions.

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR2)

Co-Moderator:

- Chief, Frontier and Emerging Technologies, Innovation, and Digital Transformation Section, ECA, **Mr. Mactar Seck**
- Head of Programme, UN Technology Bank, **Ms. Federica Falomi**

Opening Statement

- Director of the United Nations Regional Commissions New York Office, **Ms. Thilmeeza Hussain**
- Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the UN and Co-Chair of the Global Dialogue on AI, **H.E. Amb. López**
- Permanent Representative of Estonia to the UN and Co-Chair of the Global Dialogue on AI, **H.E. Amb. Tammsaar**
- Minister of Knowledge Economy, Start-ups, and Micro-enterprises of Algeria, **H. E. Mr. Noureddine Ouadah (tbc) online**
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Panelists:

1. Deputy Minister of Technical and Higher Education, Republic of Sierra Leone, **Hon. Sarjoh Aziz Kamara**
2. Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Post and Digital Economy, Republic of Central Africa, **Mr Adolphe Nicaise SAMAFU**
3. Chief of ICT Policies, Digital Cooperation and Digital Development, UN - Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), Beirut, Lebanon, **Ayman El-Sherbiny**
4. UNESCO: Chief of the Section for Basic Sciences, Research, Innovation, and Engineering, **Dr. Amal Kasry**
5. Senior Advisor on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, UN, Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET), **Dr. Mehdi Snene**
6. Data Policy Advisor, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Addis Ababa, **Mr. Kuuku Sam Abraham**
7. Founder, Girlhype Coders, South Africa, **Baratang Albertina Miya**
8. Manager, African Multilateral Affairs, International Relations Central Department, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Egypt, **Amr Farouk Safwat**
9. Chief Executive Officer, Betawaves, Tunisia, **Ms. Amel Saidane**
10. CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting, Member of the UN Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group 2025, **Dr. Jimson Olufuye**
11. Vice-Chancellor (Emeritus), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State, Nigeria, **Prof. Charles O. Esimone**,
12. Vice President of the United Nations Association of Uganda (UNA-U), **Ms. Samantha Kkungu**
13. Professor, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal, **Adama Sow Badji**
14. Assistant Research, Fellow at the international Research and Training Centre for Science and Technology Strategy, **Yan Zhou**

Summary of Key Messages

5.00 - 5.30 p.m.

Closing of the session statements:

- Director of the Division of Water Sciences and Secretary of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, UNESCO **Abou Amani**
- Chief, Emerging and Frontier Technologies, Digital Transformation Section, Economic Commission for Africa, **Mactar Seck**
- Representative of African Union Commission
- Representative of the Government of Ethiopia

Rapporteurs: Meskerem Kifle and Bezawit Temsegen

5.30 - 6.30 p.m. Networking and Partnership (Coffee break)