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Agenda item 11
Consideration and adoption of key messages and the declaration on the theme of the Forum

Twelfth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: summary and key messages

I. Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system,[1] convened the twelfth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, in a hybrid format with both in-person and online participation, from 28 to 30 April 2026.

2. The Forum was attended by more than 1,500 participants in person and over 1,200 online, comprising ministers and high-level representatives of the Governments of 48 members of ECA, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities, other international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders.

3. The twelfth session of the Forum was held under the theme "Turning the tide: transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063", which is closely aligned with that of the 2026 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, namely "Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future for all".

[1] The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Development Coordination Office, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office to the African Union, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Sustainable Development Group, United Nations Volunteers programme, World Food Programme and World Trade Organization.

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II. Opening of the session [agenda item 1]

4. The opening segment was moderated by the journalist and broadcaster, Lerato Mbele. It was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Uganda and Chair of the outgoing Bureau, Robinah Nabbanja. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Nabbanja; the Executive Secretary of ECA, Claver Gatete; the President of the Economic and Social Council, Lok Bahadur Thapa; the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Selma Haddadi; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres.

5. Highlighting the progress made since the eleventh session of the Forum, Ms. Nabbanja said that momentum had been maintained through the meetings of the Bureau and through the strengthened African presence in global platforms, such as the 2025 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In view of the unresolved gaps in climate finance, innovation and partnerships, it was necessary to boost science, technology and innovation and to deepen regional integration. The continent's priorities for the future were advancing the peace-development nexus; leveraging the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area to drive sustainable development; and investing in transport, infrastructure and logistics to reduce costs and attract investment.

6. The Executive Secretary of ECA said that slowing growth, inequality, fiscal pressures, climate shocks and geopolitical tensions posed ever greater global challenges, necessitating a unified African coalition to bridge the gap between climate ambition and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The priorities for Africa were treating essential services and infrastructure as economic assets; closing the infrastructure financing gap; leveraging urbanization; advancing the digital and green transitions in parallel; and strengthening data collection, institutions, regional cooperation and partnerships for large-scale implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

7. The President of the Economic and Social Council said that African development was constrained by conflict, economic instability, inequality and major gaps in infrastructure, electricity access and water supply. The Council remained committed to supporting Africa through initiatives aimed at bolstering development finance and climate resilience and at promoting equality, digital inclusion and science and innovation, and affirmed the important role of young people as drivers of development. Calling for investment in jobs and entrepreneurship, equitable finance and stronger domestic resource mobilization, he reaffirmed the Council's commitment to multilateralism and its focus on translating commitments into action.

8. Ms. Haddadi said that global and regional challenges continued to slow the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Early progress had been made in fulfilment of the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063[2] through flagship projects that were focused on regional integration and governance. Critical challenges remained, however, in respect of finance for the Sustainable Development Goals, climate adaptation and capacity for implementing the two agendas. The African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda played a vital role in mobilizing finance, strengthening institutions and promoting innovation. She called for increased investment in water supplies, stronger partnerships and sustained political will, while reaffirming the

[2] African Union, *Decade of Accelerated Implementation: Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan, 2024–2033* (Addis Ababa, 2024).

commitment of the African Union Commission to advancing the implementation of the two agendas.

9. Addressing the Forum in a recorded video message, the Secretary-General called for accelerated action to address the structural challenges that were hindering African development, including limited access to water and electricity, climate shocks, debt burdens and trade barriers. He emphasized that the African Continental Free Trade Area, renewable energy, digital connectivity and the continent's youthful workforce should be leveraged in order to fast-track efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. He noted that reform of the international financial system was urgently needed in order to ensure fair African representation, stronger global solidarity and increased investment in clean energy, electrification and affordable development finance to support industrialization and a just energy transition.

III. Summary and key messages

10. The following sections contain a summary of the main issues, trends and key messages, including policy recommendations, arising from the presentations and deliberations during the twelfth session of the Forum. The key messages comprise transformative and coordinated actions and recommendations for Africa, so as to accelerate efforts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2063 at multiple levels, and the region's collective input to the 2026 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

A. High-level panel 1: Scaling up transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union [agenda item 3]

1. Introduction

11. A representative of the secretariat introduced a summary of the report on African progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 (ECA/RFSD/2026/10) and the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/1).

2. Discussion and trends

12. Participants discussed ways in which to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 by addressing persistent fragmentation across planning, finance and delivery systems.

3. Key messages

13. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

(a) Scale up finance for development by strengthening national and local capacity, mobilizing domestic resources, attracting private investment through bankable projects and expanding innovative financing tools to close persistent gaps;

(b) Adopt systemic and integrated planning approaches by aligning national and subnational plans, budgets and results frameworks with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and move from fragmented sectoral approaches to whole-of-government systems;

(c) Move from coordination activities to delivery systems by moving from a dialogue model to implementation platforms based on clear outcomes, shared priorities and joint accountability across Governments, entities of the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society;

(d) Empower subnational governments as critical drivers of implementation by strengthening their capacity in planning, finance, data collection and service delivery, and integrating their work in these areas into national frameworks;

(e) Strengthen accountability and performance management through unified monitoring frameworks that align reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and ensure measurable results;

(f) Leverage philanthropy strategically to de-risk early-stage investments, support project preparation and mobilize additional public and private finance;

(g) Promote inclusive, people-centred and human rights-based development by ensuring the participation of young people, women and marginalized groups, and embedding equity across all development processes;

(h) Move from commitments to action by strengthening implementation capacity and scaling up proven innovations and embedding those innovations into finance and delivery systems;

(i) Capitalize on regional and global platforms, including the World Urban Forum, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and reviews of the New Urban Agenda, to advance integrated solutions for sustainable cities and accelerate progress across the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 at scale.

B. High-level panel 2: Unlocking finance for climate resilience and sustainable development in Africa: building on the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [agenda item 4]

1. Introduction

14. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/2).

2. Discussion and trends

15. Participants discussed means of addressing structural constraints on development and climate finance, including the high cost of capital, weak domestic resource mobilization, the limited number of bankable projects in the pipeline and fragmented, sector-siloed financing approaches.

3. Key messages

16. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen domestic resource mobilization and public financial management, and improve tax systems, spending efficiency and fiscal governance, with a view to financing climate resilience, infrastructure and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

(ii) Develop pipelines of integrated, investment-ready projects aligned with national plans and with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

through the strengthening of institutional capacity for project preparation, of risk structuring and of public-private partnerships;

(iii) Establish transparent systems to track climate and development finance by strengthening data collection, reporting and results frameworks to improve accountability and effectiveness;

(b) ECA should strengthen regional monitoring and policy coherence, assisting its members in translating the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change into coherent national strategies, implementation plans and measurable results;

(c) Regional and subregional institutions should:

(i) Strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional financing mechanisms, including development financing institutions, to mobilize and crowd in public and private capital at scale through innovative instruments, such as green bonds, debt-for-climate swaps and carbon markets;

(ii) Enhance the channelling of climate finance into the integrated delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals across such sectors as energy, water, transport, industry, cities and health, in order to support structural transformation and climate-resilient, inclusive growth;

(d) International financial institutions and development partners should:

(i) Support reforms of the international financial architecture, including credit rating methods, risk-weighting practices and capital adequacy frameworks, in order to reduce the high cost of capital in Africa and expand access to affordable, long-term finance for climate resilience and sustainable development;

(ii) Scale up predictable, concessional climate finance for adaptation, including a larger number of grants to support the reduction of loss and damage and of disaster risk, targeting the most vulnerable African countries.

C. High-level panel 3: Achieving full employment and decent work for all, poverty reduction and social protection in Africa: taking forward the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development [agenda item 5]

1. Introduction

17. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/3).

2. Discussion and trends

18. Participants discussed ways of advancing employment, poverty reduction and social protection by addressing interconnected challenges through integrated approaches and aligning the commitments set out in the Doha Political Declaration of the “World Social Summit” under the title “the Second World Summit for Social Development” with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,[3] with the aim of driving effective national and local action.

[3] General Assembly resolution 80/5.

3. Key messages

19. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen integrated approaches linking employment, social protection and poverty reduction;

(ii) Expand inclusive and sustainably financed social protection systems and universal health coverage;

(iii) Accelerate decent job creation, in particular for young people and women, through skills development and alignment with the labour market;

(iv) Support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by ensuring improved access to finance, technology and the opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(v) Mainstream gender equality and reduce structural barriers, including the burdens of unpaid care;

(vi) Ensure the meaningful participation of young people in policy design and implementation;

(vii) Translate the Doha commitments into specific national actions with strong accountability frameworks;

(viii) Expand decentralized and targeted social protection systems;

(ix) Integrate climate resilience into social protection frameworks;

(b) ECA, the African Union Commission, United Nations entities and partners should:

(i) Provide coordinated technical support for the implementation of employment and social protection policies;

(ii) Strengthen collaboration and policy coherence between the African Union and the United Nations;

(iii) Enhance financing strategies, including domestic resource mobilization and innovative finance;

(iv) Support enterprises led by women and young people;

(v) Strengthen data systems and evidence-based policymaking;

(vi) Align programmes to reduce fragmentation and support coherent implementation at the national level.

D. Plenary high-level round-table panel 1: Evidence-based voluntary national and local reviews to drive transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 6]

1. Introduction

20. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/4/Rev.2).

2. Discussion and trends

21. Participants highlighted the growing role of voluntary national and local reviews as strategic instruments for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and

Agenda 2063, emphasizing the need to strengthen policy coherence, coordination and trust between the national and subnational levels.

3. Key messages

22. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen the role of voluntary national and local reviews, as integrated, evidence-based instruments for enhancing accountability and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, through improved multilevel coordination;

(ii) Promote effective adaptation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 to local contexts by reinforcing the role of local governments, strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring that approaches to adaptation are inclusive and integrating local and national data to translate review findings into practical action;

(iii) Institutionalize coordinated mechanisms that link the planning and budgeting processes of multiple levels of government;

(b) Members of ECA and development partners should invest in data and statistical systems, including digital tools and disaggregated data collection, in order to improve evidence-based decision-making and ensure that national policies and reporting are informed by local realities;

(c) National and subregional policymakers should increase the available funding and strengthen partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through the use of innovative finance and domestic resource mobilization, while fostering continuous learning, trust and accountability by means of iterative review processes and sustained multi-stakeholder engagement.

E. Plenary high-level round-table panel 2: Driving ambitious and integrated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: leveraging the roles of the United Nations system, young people, the private sector, civil society and volunteers [agenda item 7]

1. Introduction

23. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/5).

2. Discussion and trends

24. Participants called for accelerated, integrated action to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 by strengthening financial sovereignty, mobilizing public and private investment and improving delivery through coordinated systems, institutional reforms, and stronger, country-led implementation supported by United Nations entities. They said that sustainable development depended on peace, inclusion and partnerships, in particular on empowering young people, women and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises by ensuring their meaningful participation, skills development and access to finance and enabling environments, and on leveraging technology, regional integration and multi-stakeholder collaboration to secure a broad impact.

3. Key messages

25. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

(a) Strengthen integrated delivery systems by shifting from fragmented programmes to coherent, results-based implementation efforts, aligning priorities related to the Sustainable Development Goals with national budgets and ensuring that both rural and urban areas benefit from such efforts;

(b) Scale up finance and increase access to enabling environments by aligning investment with national priorities, expanding affordable finance for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, improving infrastructure and leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area to unlock market access;

(c) Empower young people as leaders and innovators by including them in decision-making, consolidating youth networks and coalitions and supporting them through the provision of flexible finance and capacity-building;

(d) Advance the peace, security and development nexus by strengthening coordination and stakeholder mobilization to deliver sustainable results, while promoting inclusive approaches that recognize stability as a foundation for development, and ensure the participation of women and persons with disabilities;

(e) Promote volunteerism and whole-of-society participation by reducing bureaucratic barriers and integrating volunteer efforts into national strategies so as to harness broad-based engagement.

F. High-level parallel meetings to review in depth and showcase progress made and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning in connection with the sub-themes of the Forum [agenda item 8]

1. Clean water and sanitation: assuring sustainable water availability and safe sanitation systems to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 8 (a)]

(a) Introduction

26. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2026/5), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/6).

(b) Discussion and trends

27. Participants reflected on progress made on the continent and actions needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) and to implement the Africa Water Vision 2063 and Policy.

(c) Key messages

28. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Value water as a strategic asset by integrating it into national planning and investment to drive transformation across sectors;

(ii) Scale up climate-resilient, inclusive and human rights-based water infrastructure through integrated management, innovation, digital tools

and improved access for vulnerable groups such as young people, women and persons with disabilities;

(iii) Strengthen transboundary water cooperation to support resilience, regional integration and shared benefits with regard to food, energy and climate adaptation;

(iv) Protect water quality and ecosystems by reducing pollution, improving wastewater management and restoring natural systems;

(v) Close the water financing gap by strengthening domestic resources, improving project bankability and using innovative finance, including climate and private capital;

(vi) Anchor actions in the Africa Water Vision 2063 and Policy by strengthening leadership, coordination and data-driven implementation in the lead-up to the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6;

(b) ECA and other United Nations entities should:

(i) Promote gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene systems, ensure safe and private sanitation facilities, remove such barriers as taxation on menstrual products and expand equitable access to affordable menstrual and reproductive health commodities, including vaccines;

(ii) Strengthen technical support with regard to data, integrated planning and alignment with climate frameworks;

(iii) Deliver coordinated support and mobilize financing by promoting cross-sectoral approaches, developing bankable projects and aligning investments with continental priorities.

2. Affordable and clean energy [agenda item 8 (b)]

(a) Introduction

29. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2026/6), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/6).

(b) Discussion and trends

30. Participants discussed ways to position energy as a driver of economic transformation in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), by addressing electrification gaps and investment barriers, such as perceptions of the high risk of such investment, limited local-currency finance, inadequate transmission and distribution networks and regulatory fragmentation, while leveraging the potential renewable energy of Africa through improved finance, supportive policies and stronger partnerships.

(c) Key messages

31. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed that members of ECA should:

(a) Advance progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 7 by strengthening political leadership and establishing coherent, clear and predictable policy and regulatory frameworks for the unlocking of public and private investment;

(b) Develop robust pipelines of bankable clean energy projects aligned with national and regional priorities, supported by effective risk-mitigation instruments, with the aim of mobilizing domestic and international capital;

(c) Expand decentralized renewable energy solutions, alongside investments in regional energy transmission and distribution infrastructure, and integrating energy efficiency and digitalization as system-wide enablers, to improve energy access, resilience, and affordability;

(d) Leverage energy-transition minerals to promote industrialization, regional value chains and local manufacturing, with a view to strengthening the participation of Africa in emerging clean-energy industries, in line with relevant human rights standards;

(e) Elevate inclusive and gender-responsive clean cooking as a core energy, development and public-health priority, supported by dedicated finance, institutional frameworks and inclusive delivery models.

3. Industry, innovation and infrastructure [agenda item 8 (c)]

(a) Introduction

32. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2026/7), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/6).

(b) Discussion and trends

33. Participants said that, despite lessons learned on policy coherence, strong institutions and partnerships, progress towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) in Africa remained off track, owing to infrastructure and productivity gaps. They underscored the need to accelerate industrialization through digital transformation, green opportunities, stronger governance and investment in industrial systems.

(c) Key messages

34. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Prioritize the attainment of Goal 9, as industrialization, innovation and infrastructure drive broad development spillover benefits, serving as a backbone for accelerating the attainment of all the Goals;

(ii) Strengthen investment in resilient, sustainable and integrated infrastructure, in particular in energy, transport and digital systems, to accelerate industrialization and build domestic technological capabilities;

(iii) Promote and adopt circular economy and material efficiency approaches, including in the critical minerals, mining and extractive industries;

(iv) Scale up investment in industrial parks, special economic zones and digital innovation systems, focusing on strategic sectors;

(v) Enhance access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises by developing capital markets, leveraging innovative blended finance and improving regulatory environments;

(vi) Strengthen cross-country collaboration in science, technology and innovation to empower young people, local communities and grass-roots innovators;

(vii) Adopt forward-looking industrial strategies that are aligned with those of other African countries and are supported by whole-of-government regulatory frameworks, including the establishment of regulatory sandboxes, so as to avoid fragmented sectoral approaches;

(viii) Leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area to improve cross-border connectivity and to drive industrialization, job creation and diversification;

(ix) Implement decarbonization measures for regional and global competitiveness;

(x) Institutionalize meaningful engagement with civil society, academic institutions, women, young people and other groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of all infrastructure and industrialization projects;

(b) United Nations entities and development partners should:

(i) Support members of ECA in developing risk-mitigating instruments for infrastructure projects and investment pipelines to attract private infrastructure investment;

(ii) Support members of ECA in designing and implementing integrated policies on industry, innovation and infrastructure that are aligned with all the Sustainable Development Goals and with the relevant goals of Agenda 2063;

(iii) Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen data systems and research and development, so as to measure progress towards the attainment of the Goals;

(iv) Strengthen technological capabilities for the identification of priority sectors, including through investments in education, infrastructure and human capital, to drive competitive and resilient industrialization;

(v) Promote cooperation and policy coherence across Africa to advance infrastructure development, digital transformation and industrialization across the continent;

(vi) Assist members of ECA in mobilizing innovative financing solutions, including blended finance and public-private partnerships, so as to close infrastructure and industrial financing gaps.

4. Sustainable cities and communities [agenda item 8 (d)]

(a) Introduction

35. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2026/8), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/6).

(b) Discussion and trends

36. Participants said that, while rapid urbanization offered opportunities for transformation and regional integration, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11 required integrated, data-driven and inclusive approaches, stronger governance and financing, and enhanced local capacity to address informality, inequality and climate risks.

(c) Key messages

37. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Translate policies related to Goal 11 and national urban policies into action-oriented frameworks by strengthening multilevel governance, improving coordination across regional, national and local levels and building local capacity in planning, project preparation, financial

management and data use, with clear accountability mechanisms;

(ii) Promote integrated urban planning approaches by aligning spatial, economic, social and climate priorities, strengthening urban data systems through better integration and disaggregation and through the incorporation of informal sector dynamics, and expanding municipal finance through fiscal decentralization, improved revenue mobilization and the use of innovative financing tools;

(iii) Advance risk-informed, climate-resilient and inclusive urban development by embedding disaster risk reduction in planning, scaling up early warning systems and nature-based solutions and ensuring the participation of young people, women and persons with disabilities, while promoting knowledge-sharing and applying best practices more broadly;

(b) Development partners should:

(i) Strengthen support provided to members of ECA in translating urban policies into action-oriented, measurable plans through integrated urban planning, enhanced multilevel governance and targeted technical assistance to strengthen municipal finance, including fiscal decentralization, innovative finance and improved project preparation capacity;

(ii) Support members of ECA in strengthening integrated urban data systems by aligning national and local platforms, incorporating informal sector dynamics and fostering peer learning, knowledge exchange and the dissemination of best practices to enable evidence-based planning and decision-making;

(iii) Promote human rights-based, inclusive and risk-informed urban development approaches by promoting broader participation and advancing equity while helping to strengthen resilience frameworks, including early warning systems and disaster risk reduction strategies, to enhance urban sustainability and resilience;

(iv) Promote the adoption and implementation of rights-based and gender-responsive policies that prevent xenophobic violence, strengthen social cohesion and guarantee equal access to housing, education, justice and opportunities for migrants, refugees, displaced persons and non-nationals.

5. Partnerships for the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 8 (e)]

(a) Introduction

38. A representative of the secretariat introduced the background report on the sub-theme (ECA/RFSD/2026/9), along with the document containing information and guidelines for the high-level parallel meetings (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/6).

(b) Discussion and trends

39. Participants discussed ways of accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals through coordinated, multi-stakeholder approaches that aligned finance with national priorities, expanded innovative financing instruments and strengthened institutional frameworks, private sector engagement and accountability systems, while addressing such constraints as limited fiscal space and fragmented development architectures. Participants also explored how declining aid could be leveraged as an opportunity for reform by promoting homegrown solutions, scaling up investments in infrastructure and education, strengthening cooperation and advancing results-based planning, integrated data systems and private-sector-driven models, such as climate-resilient agricultural systems.

(c) Key messages

40. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen discipline and alignment in partnerships as core principles;

(ii) Enhance the development of a coherent, long-term plan to move away from sectoral approaches;

(iii) Foster stronger linkages between development planning and budgeting processes;

(iv) Enable legally binding commitments by Governments to deliver basic services to their populations, following a human rights-based approach;

(v) Strengthen evidence-based policymaking grounded in high-quality data;

(b) Members of ECA and development partners should:

(i) Work towards strengthening African credit rating agencies to challenge prevailing risk perceptions;

(ii) Enhance the role of African credit rating agencies as mechanisms for checks and balances, while acknowledging that, on their own, they will not reduce the cost of capital in Africa.

G. Plenary high-level round-table panel 3: Harnessing science, innovation and frontier technologies to scale up transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 [agenda item 9]

1. Introduction

41. A representative of the secretariat provided a brief oral introduction on the topic.

2. Discussion and trends

42. Participants discussed critical aspects of African performance in respect of science, technology and innovation, the five Sustainable Development Goals under review during the twelfth session and progress made on initiatives launched during previous sessions.

3. Key messages

43. In the light of the discussions, the Forum agreed that members of ECA, United Nations entities and development partners should:

(a) Coordinate the implementation of policies and frameworks on artificial intelligence and digital public infrastructure in order to harness such technologies as public goods, with a view to ensuring coherence, efficiency and digital sovereignty;

(b) Strengthen the participation and incentivization of the private sector through national and continental policies and planning for infrastructure development and the production of artificial intelligence;

(c) Ensure that the governance of artificial intelligence in Africa is built on a simple, stable and shared baseline of minimum global standards, that such governance is fundamentally focused on African priorities and is context-

sensitive, and that African countries have sovereignty over their data, which should include the use of local languages;

(d) Advance the adoption of electric vehicles in Africa, driven by strong technical leadership and using integrated planning across energy, transport and urban systems and inclusive approaches;

(e) Adopt innovative water and digital technologies, backed by adequate finance and strong multisectoral collaboration platforms, which are essential for delivering scalable solutions and securing binding commitments, in particular through the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6;

(f) Align research and development with industrial transformation to forge effective partnerships and develop strong, coordinated data and statistical systems, enhanced technical capacity and sustained political commitment to the effective linking of research, skills development and industrial growth;

(g) Promote and operationalize continental open-science platforms that support open innovation, open access and science diplomacy as a way to enhance African competitiveness in the fields of science, technology and innovation, with a view to supporting and financing the implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2034.

H. Plenary high-level round-table panel 4: Sustaining the gains made in relation to the 2030 Agenda: African considerations on shaping the post-2030 United Nations framework for sustainable development [agenda item 10]

1. Introduction

44. A representative of the secretariat introduced the document containing information and guidelines for the plenary high-level round-table panel (ECA/RFSD/2026/INF/9).

2. Discussion and trends

45. Participants reflected on considerations that could be incorporated into the post-2030 United Nations framework for sustainable development.

3. Key messages

46. In the light of the discussion, the Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Drive coordinated and collective action by strengthening nationally owned strategies, partnerships and multilateral cooperation in the areas of finance, science and technology, and cross-border collaboration, with the support of ECA, other United Nations entities and United Nations country teams, the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development, regional economic communities, the African Development Bank and other regional banks, and development partners, to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and to proactively shape the post-2030 United Nations framework for sustainable development;

(ii) Translate commitments into results by putting people, in particular young people, women, persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable communities, at the centre of development by strengthening institutions and increasing finance, accountability and investment in education and jobs, including by institutionalizing mechanisms for the

engagement of young people, women, persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable communities, especially in rural areas and at the subnational level, that enable co-creation and inclusive decision-making and accountability;

(iii) Enhance the collective engagement of Africa in the process of shaping the post-2030 global development framework by formulating coordinated national, subregional and continental inputs that are anchored in Agenda 2063 and its second 10-year implementation plan, and by advancing a people-centred, dignified and human rights-based approach ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to be convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2027;

(iv) Strengthen alignment among global, continental and subregional development frameworks in order to reduce fragmentation and ensure that economic, social and environmental priorities – including resilience to shocks – are addressed in an integrated manner;

(v) Advance climate-resilient structural transformation of the economy by prioritizing productive capacity, regional economic integration, value addition and resilient infrastructure, innovation systems and the diffusion of digital technologies to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and informal-sector enterprises as core pillars of the post-2030 development agenda;

(vi) Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, public financial management and financial oversight institutions in order to expand fiscal space, increase accountability and reinforce the social contract, in line with relevant human rights standards, including the right to development;

(vii) Combat illicit financial flows and support sovereignty in finance through reform of the global financial architecture and improved domestic resource mobilization;

(viii) Advance a future-oriented development framework in which risk preparedness, resilience, intergenerational equity and strategies for leaving no one behind are embedded as essential conditions for sustaining development gains beyond 2030;

(b) Development partners should:

(i) Provide predictable, long-term and concessional finance alongside reform of the global financial architecture in order to support adaptation efforts, infrastructure development and investment aimed at strengthening resilience to global shocks without exacerbating debt vulnerability;

(ii) Enhance African coordination mechanisms to address cross-border risks, support the equitable sharing of public goods and accelerate delivery of development outcomes related to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through collaboration among the African Union, regional economic communities and entities of the United Nations system at the national, regional and global levels, the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and its opportunity- and issues-based coalitions, the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the Agenda 2063 technical working group, the African Development Bank and other African multilateral banks, to support coherent, inclusive and evidence-based preparation towards the post-2030 United Nations framework for sustainable development.

I. Consideration and adoption of key messages and the declaration on the theme of the Forum [agenda item 11]

47. The Forum considered and unanimously adopted, as amended, the summary and key messages outlined in previous sections of the present report and the draft Addis Ababa declaration on turning the tide: transformative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 (ECA/RFSD/2026/12).

J. Appreciation

48. The ministers, high-level officials and participants expressed their appreciation to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, representing the Government, and to the people of Ethiopia for the warm hospitality extended to them. They also conveyed their gratitude for the arrangements made to enable both in-person and online participation in the session and to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to participate fully in the Forum. They expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Prime Minister of Uganda, the Executive Secretary of ECA, the commissioners of the African Union Commission and representatives of development and financing partners for their participation and contributions to the Forum.