

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
31 March 2023English and French only
Original:
English/French

Economic Commission for Africa
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
Ninth session
Niamey (hybrid), 28 February–2 March 2023

Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

**Consideration and adoption of key messages and
the Niamey declaration on accelerating the inclusive and
green recovery from multiple crises and
the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063:
The Africa We Want, of the African Union****Niamey Declaration on accelerating the inclusive and
green recovery from multiple crises and the
integrated and full implementation of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda
2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union**

We, African ministers, and senior officials responsible for the environment and sustainable development, finance, planning, economic and social development, water, energy, industry, infrastructure, urban planning and land management, education, statistics, the digital economy, science and technology, heads and members of delegations of parliaments and experts representing Governments and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society,

Gathered online and in person in Niamey from 28 February to 2 March 2023 at the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the theme “Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union” and placed under the high patronage of the President of the Niger, Mohamed Bazoum,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government of the Niger for having hosted the Forum and having ensured that all the necessary conditions were in place for the successful completion of its work, which was marked by fruitful and high-quality discussions on the monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved, the exchange of experiences in the area of sustainable development in Africa, and the formulation of key messages aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

*ECA/RFSD/2023/1.



Concerned about the convergence of geopolitical, financial, climate and biodiversity crises that have served only to amplify economic hardship, reducing prosperity and societal progress in Africa by exacerbating poverty, land degradation, food insecurity and the lack of access to affordable energy, which, in turn, has deepened existing inequalities and hampered progress in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Mindful that the repercussions of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) persist, as numerous countries, battered by a significant rise in their debt distress and dramatic decreases in foreign direct investment and trade, stand on the brink of financial crisis and have scarcely recovered over the past two years,

Underlining that addressing security challenges and committing to lasting peace across the continent is a prerequisite for accelerating efforts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing the extreme vulnerability and special circumstances of African countries in the face of climate change and, in particular, underlining the challenges faced by the Sahel region, landlocked countries and African small island developing States,

Concerned about the serious challenges that African countries are facing in managing their public debt, which are exacerbated by prohibitive borrowing costs, and highlighting the need for significant sustainable financing to ensure an inclusive, green and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the accelerated delivery of sustainable development in Africa,

Welcoming the convening of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the opportunity it offers for reinforcing high-level political commitments and providing much-needed momentum to address the impact of cascading crises throughout the world and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030,

Recognizing the potential of the natural and human resources on the continent and the real and plentiful opportunities that are available for Africa to take on the challenges that are arising, but also of the need to form ambitious, fair and equitable internal and external partnerships to guarantee firmly the transformation of the continent,

Reaffirming the right to development as an inalienable human right that underpins the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and underlining the interconnected nature of all the Sustainable Development Goals and the centrality of integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

Convinced that maintaining the status quo presents a threat to the implementation of the two agendas and that only innovative integrated solutions, incorporated vertically and horizontally into an institutionally coherent framework, will enable the successful implementation of the agendas,

Welcoming the launch, at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, of the sustainable debt coalition initiative, and the outcomes adopted at the twenty-seventh session, in particular the Sharm el-Sheikh implementation plan and the decision to create a fund to respond to loss and damage,

Welcoming also the adoption, at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which will serve as a strategic guide for the implementation of the Convention and its protocols for the period from 2022 to 2030,

Welcoming further the discussions at the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held on 18 and 19 February 2023, in particular those relating to the sustainable

development agenda, efforts to combat climate change and other related challenges,

Welcoming the successful operationalization of regional initiatives to combat climate change and to promote sustainable development, in particular the African climate commissions,

Welcoming also the discussions at the second Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Climate Commission for the Sahel Region, held in Addis Ababa on 17 February 2023, in particular those concerning the creation of an executive secretariat for the Climate Commission and a climate fund for the Sahel region,

Recalling the urgent need to implement meaningful, integrated and constructive projects and programmes, as part of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030),

Noting the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the objectives of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” (2018–2028) and the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in 2023, as well as the continental mechanism of civil capacity for disaster preparedness and response and the African forest landscape restoration initiative, in particular the development and universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning and early action systems and programmes, the building of urban resilience and the expansion of disaster risk financing and insurance, and the urgent need for transformative initiatives to achieve the objectives of those frameworks,

Recognizing the work of the United Nations resident coordinators in integrating development assistance with the organization and coordination of partnerships for the delivery of sustainable development at the national level,

Welcoming multiple initiatives implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations system and other partners, such as the voluntary national and local reviews, debt-for-nature swaps, the regional digital carbon registry, the harmonization of the greenhouse gas accounting and reporting protocols, capacity-building in relation to green, blue and sustainable bonds, the great blue wall initiative, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative and the liquidity and sustainability facility, to overcome financing challenges and to bolster positive action in support of the climate and nature and to accelerate significantly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

Acknowledging the critical importance of official statistics as a trusted reference and benchmark for estimations and projections, the current challenges that traditional methods for the production of official statistics pose for the achievement of the timeliness and disaggregation levels required to effectively monitor the progress made by Africa towards the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and national development agendas, and the unique opportunities to fill the gap that are presented by new technologies and data sources, such as big data and artificial intelligence,

Recalling the strategic directions of the African summit on industrialization and economic diversification, held in Niamey in November 2022 in support of inclusive and sustainable industrialization and economic diversification,

Reaffirming the principle of full participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the need to ensure inclusion in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and gender equality, and the full participation of young people so as to harness the African demographic dividend,

Welcoming the emphasis placed on industrialization and structural transformation as essential priorities for Africa, in particular by using the global green energy transition and the associated high demand for the natural resources of the continent to meet it, and by prioritizing value creation and links with regional and global value chains for manufactured products and services connected with those resources,

Recognizing the efforts of member States and other stakeholders in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and considering the critical role played by young people and women in the transformation of the continent,

1. *Call upon* the participants in the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to adopt transformative and accelerated actions to realize tangible results relating to all the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure that such actions recognize the unique circumstances faced by African countries, including the need to address the growing debt crisis in the region; deliver on financing for efforts to achieve the Goals, including through concrete actions to reform the global financial architecture; promote investments to sustainably exploit African renewable energy and mineral resources and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area; and encompass clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms at various levels and for different stakeholders;

2. *Request* the United Nations resident coordinators to boost their support for the revitalization of national institutions and development plans that are aimed at transformational initiatives to facilitate the recovery from multiple crises and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Request* the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations system and other partners to continue to support African member States in the pursuit of resource-based industrialization, including the promotion of a mineral value chain for lithium ion batteries in Africa;

4. *Invite* development partners to support African countries in gaining access to sources of innovative finance;

5. *Call upon* the Commission and its partners to devise and implement an action plan to seek and mobilize global support for the development and operationalization of regional initiatives and the sustainable debt coalition in Africa and elsewhere;

6. *Request* the entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the African Export-Import Bank and other partners to continue and to expand their support to scale up and deliver initiatives, such as voluntary national and local reviews, debt-for-nature swaps, the regional digital carbon registry, the harmonization of greenhouse gas accounting and reporting protocols, capacity-building in relation to green, blue and sustainable bonds, the great blue wall initiative and the liquidity and sustainability facility, to overcome financing challenges, to bolster positive action in support of the climate and nature and to accelerate significantly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union;

7. *Call upon* the entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission and other partners to devise and implement capacity-development programmes and other initiatives to assist member States and regional economic communities in effectively implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

8. *Invite* member States to acknowledge the successful organization by Egypt of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to support the country during its presidency of the Conference

of the Parties by ensuring, among other things, that the efforts made to create the loss and damage fund bear fruit through the mobilization of resources to compensate for the mounting losses of infrastructure, ecosystems and livelihoods as a result of the extreme climate phenomena that are badly affecting the continent, and to support the goals of the sustainable debt coalition that was launched during the session;

9. *Call upon* the international community to respect its obligations under the Paris Agreement and to redouble its efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in order that humanity may continue to enjoy a stable climate system;

10. *Invite* member States and their partners to make greater efforts to implement the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa and the African forest landscape restoration initiative, in particular by placing an emphasis on the development and universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning and rapid action systems and programmes, the enhancement of urban resilience, the expansion of catastrophe risk insurance and financing, and the urgent implementation of large-scale African-owned adaptation initiatives, such as the great blue wall initiative and the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative;

11. *Call upon* all African countries to redefine and develop their economic models, integrating the protection of natural resources, including water and land, the promotion of renewable energy and a just transition, the implementation of green and resilient infrastructure that supports sustainable industrialization, and the development of urbanization that enables inclusive growth, addressing the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities, while foregrounding a recognition of the value of human capital;

12. *Call upon* member countries to improve national financing for the production of data, to increase the use of new and alternative data sources, including big data, to fill the gaps in the data required for the effective monitoring of progress made towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and national agendas, and to train more data professionals, including at the subnational level, in the generation, sharing and utilization of data;

13. *Call upon* the entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other partners to strengthen digitalization efforts and the use of new and innovative technologies to help create real-time data systems that are modern, flexible, broad and adaptive to shocks, to mobilize the resources needed to help member States to build their capacity to use big data and artificial intelligence to produce timely and disaggregated data in order to monitor progress towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and national agendas, and to invest in building the capacity of data professionals to generate, share and utilize data, with a focus on young people;

14. *Encourage* all African countries to harness science, innovation and state-of-the-art emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and the potential of young people to drive the necessary transformative change over the coming 10 years and achieve the objectives of sustainable development, and to increase national investment in digital meteorological and climate observation systems to help to provide early warning systems for all the citizens of the continent;

15. *Urge* member States to promote open science, as defined in the recommendation on open science of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as an essential framework for transformative international scientific cooperation;

16. *Request* the Government of the Niger to present the key messages on behalf of Africa to the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its meeting to be held in New York from 10 to 19 July 2023, at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit on 19 and 20 September 2023, during the high-level week of the General Assembly, at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and at other relevant global, regional and subregional forums in order to advocate accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.
