



# Economic and Social Council

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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Committee on Private Sector Development,  
Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure,  
Industry and Technology**  
Third session  
Addis Ababa (hybrid), 14 and 15 November 2021

## **Boosting regional integration, infrastructure, trade, and technology towards prosperous and inclusive green industrialization in Africa**

### **Aide-memoire**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Third session of the Committee on Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Infrastructure, Industry and Technology (CPSDTIIT-3) will be held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa on 14-15 November 2023. The session will be preceded by Experts Group Meetings (EGMs) organized by the relevant divisions of the ECA on 13 November 2023. The session will be in a hybrid format (in-person and online). The session's theme is "*Boosting regional integration, infrastructure, trade, and technology towards prosperous and inclusive green industrialization in Africa.*"

#### **II. Background**

2. The CPSDTIIT was created to review the ECA's work in the areas of private sector development, regional integration, trade, infrastructure, industry and technology to provide a forum for dialogue and consensus-building and catalyze progress at the national and regional levels in these areas. The Committee is expected to address topical and emerging issues of relevance and take stock of progress made by member States in the concerned areas. The first session of the Committee was held on December 11-12, 2019, under the theme: "Private sector development and the digital economy in support of regional integration in Africa". The second session was held on December 09-10, 2021, under the theme "Africa's economic development in the post-COVID-19 era: Role of regional integration, infrastructure and technology".

3. Africa faces a trilemma of challenges that could prevent the continent from achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are the effects of climate change, pandemics and the Russia-Ukraine war.



4. The impacts of climate change in this decade are becoming more apparent, especially in the frequency and intensity of a diverse range of climate events and the cascading effects of these events on socioeconomic systems. Investment in infrastructure and technology is low in most African countries, which significantly impacts these economies' efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change. Most of these countries also have insufficient resilience and adaptability capacities; thus, climate change's effects will also have a cascading impact in limiting their economic growth.

5. Russia and Ukraine are significant commodities producers, and disruptions have caused global commodity prices to soar, especially oil, natural gas and various agricultural commodities. Many African countries rely on Russia and Ukraine for a significant share of their wheat imports, fertilizers and vegetable oils. Still, the war has disrupted global commodity markets and trade flows to Africa and increased food prices. The top ten African importers from Ukraine and Russia – Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Tunisia – are exposed to the crisis as they depend heavily on imports of wheat and maize. Just as the continent gradually recovered from the pandemic, this crisis threatened that progress. Many countries in the region are particularly vulnerable to the war's effects precisely because of higher energy and food prices, reduced tourism, and potential difficulty accessing international capital markets.

6. In a painful paradox, Africa imports more than a significant amount of food products annually despite having 60 per cent of the world's uncultivated arable land. Africa has the potential to become more than just a resilient food producer, but rather a global power food house/producer. A triple threat to the productive, economic, and geopolitical food systems presented by the Russia-Ukraine crisis makes it harder for Africans to produce and feed themselves. This has significantly disturbed the world's food supply and increased commodity prices. It is intolerable that about 272 million people in Africa experience hunger.

7. This trilemma of problems has severely impacted the African economy. Africa's economic growth, excluding North Africa, fell to 3.6 per cent in 2022 from 4.1 per cent in 2021, and the region's economic growth is anticipated to slow further to 3.1 per cent in 2023. Western and Central Africa's GDP growth is projected to fall to 3.4 per cent in 2023 from 3.7 per cent in 2022, while Eastern and Southern Africa's GDP growth falls to 3.0 per cent in 2023 from 3.5 per cent in 2022. The region's performance is nevertheless hindered by slower long-term growth in the continent's biggest nations. Eight of the ten African economies that comprise more than 75 per cent of the region's GDP are expanding at rates lower than their long-term average, including Sudan, Nigeria, Angola, and Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup>

8. Therefore, taking advantage of natural resource potential offers a chance to increase African nations' fiscal and debt sustainability. During the low-carbon transition, natural resources (oil, gas, and minerals) present a significant economic opportunity for African economies. Access to energy can be enhanced by expanding energy resources. Africa's objectives for universal, high-quality energy access face a huge barrier. Six hundred million Africans, or 43 per cent of the continent, lacked access to electricity in 2022. However, by creating a variety of energy sources, Africa's resource base and related investments could aid in accelerating economic development. For example, expanding green energy investments and regional infrastructure could reduce rural poverty and boost productivity because many natural resource projects are situated in distant and rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>

Harnessing the economic benefits from oil, gas, and mineral resources, including through enhanced intra-African trade under the AfCFTA, effective governance, and sound macro-fiscal management of resource revenues while planning for a low-carbon future, will be essential to ensuring a just transition for Africa. The abundance of natural resources can be effectively managed to create enormous potential for value addition, employment creation, and investments in human development. Regional integration allows African countries to use their natural resources effectively for productive transformation. Specifically, venturing into a common market will deepen Africa's trade integration through adopting harmonised policies in the relevant sectors, fostering a transition to green industrialisation and improving prospects for the continent's competitiveness for ease of participation in sustainable global value chains. Given the level of natural resource availability and diversity, this wealth can significantly alter the economic future of Africa.

### **III. Objectives**

9. The overall objective of the session is to ensure that ECA responds effectively and efficiently to the evolving needs and demands of its member States and to changing institutional landscapes and shifting priorities concerning national, regional, and global economic and social development within the context of inclusive and sustainable industrialization.

10. Specifically, the objectives of the session are:

(a) To review the work of ECA on private sector development and finance, regional integration, trade, infrastructure, industry and technology and its contribution to inclusive, green industrialization in Africa;

(b) To provide a forum for dialogue and consensus-building in the above areas in the context of the African development agenda, that is, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(c) To catalyze progress at the national and regional levels in these areas;

(d) To address topical and emerging issues of relevance to the Committee's areas of focus to take stock of the progress made by member States in the areas mentioned above;

(e) To reflect on the prospective work of the relevant subprogrammes and issue recommendations to guide such future work;

(f) To generate inputs for the fifty-sixth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which will be held in 2024.

### **IV. Expected outputs and outcomes**

11. The following outputs are expected:

(a) The report of the third session of the Committee, which will provide insights into the issues mentioned above;

(b) The reports of the expert group meetings.

12. The following outcomes are also expected:

(a) A better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by member States in boosting regional integration, infrastructure, trade, and technology towards prosperous and inclusive green industrialization in Africa;

(b) Guidance from member States, in the form of recommendations, on the work of ECA in private-sector development and finance, regional integration, trade, infrastructure, industry and technology.

## V. Format

13. The session will consist of plenaries during which the secretariat will deliver presentations on parliamentary documents and the issues paper on the theme of the Committee session. General discussion will follow the presentations.

## VI. Participation

14. Representatives of member States, the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, development finance institutions, United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia and sectoral organizations will attend the Committee session.

## VII. Contacts

Victor Konde  
Innovations and Technologies Section  
Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division  
Economic Commission for Africa  
Tel: +251 11 544 3654  
E-mail: [kondev@un.org](mailto:kondev@un.org)

Monga Mehlwana  
Energy, Infrastructure and Services Section  
Private Sector Development and Finance Division  
Economic Commission for Africa  
Tel: +251 91 264 0286  
E-mail: [mehlwana@un.org](mailto:mehlwana@un.org)

Souleymane Abdallah  
African Trade Policy Centre  
Regional Integration and Trade Division  
Economic Commission for Africa  
Tel: +251 94 418 9002  
E-mail: [abdallahs@un.org](mailto:abdallahs@un.org)