



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



ECA
Southern Africa Office

Virtual High-Level Policy Dialogue for Southern Africa

**56th Session of UNECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance,
Planning and Economic Development**

Theme:

**Financing the Transition to Inclusive Green Economies in
Africa: Imperatives, Opportunities and Policy Options**

Thursday February 15, 2024

13:00-15:00

Organized by

UNECA Subregional Office for Southern Africa

ECA SRO-SA

Concept note



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I. Background

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) will hold its next annual Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development from February 28 to March 5, 2024 (COM2024) at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe on the theme “*Financing the transition to inclusive green economies in Africa: Imperatives, opportunities and policy options*”. More information on the fifty-sixth session of this Conference and the issues paper on the theme are available at: <https://www.unece.org/eca-events/cfm2024>.
2. The fifty-sixth session will consist of the preparatory meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, followed by the ministerial segment of the Conference. In addition to considering the statutory matters of the Commission, the Conference is one of the premier fora on the continent for dialogue and exchange of views among African ministers responsible for finance, planning and economic development and governors of central banks on issues pertinent to the development agenda of Africa.
3. As highlighted in the *Issues paper*, the imperative for financing Africa’s transition towards inclusive green economies is amply demonstrated in Africa’s pressing need to bridge its financing gap to achieve its larger sustainable development goals (SDGs). Based on the *UNCTAD World Investment Report 2023*, the annual investment needed from 2023 to 2030 for developing countries to achieve the SDGs varies between US\$6.9 trillion to US\$7.6 trillion depending on the chosen pathway. An important pathway for Africa, as it strives to improve access to energy for its firms and citizens and grease the wheels of its green industry, lies in accelerating the deployment of clean and renewable energy technologies. Yet, as pointed out in the *World Energy Investment 2023* report, of the approximately US\$ 10 trillion invested in clean energy globally between 2015 and 2022, only about 2 per cent or US\$ 211 billion went to Africa. The African clean energy transition will require, as noted in the *Issues paper*, an annual investment of about US\$ 190 billion over the period 2026-2030.
4. Africa has to industrialize and accelerate its structural transformation to lift millions of her citizens out of poverty but such an imperative cannot be divorced from the necessity to prepare the continent from adapting to climate change while contributing to global climate mitigation. The transition of African countries to inclusive green economies needs to be accelerated as climate change advances and in the face of other environmental risks such as unsustainable utilization of natural resources and potentially emerging global developments such as the integration of climate considerations in trade policies.
5. The *Issues paper* identifies opportunities for African countries to finance this transition at national and regional levels. Policy options include improving the enabling environment to attract private capital and private investment, manage debt sustainably, strengthen domestic resource mobilization, deploy and apply sustainable budgeting approaches, accelerate implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), leverage on Africa’s critical minerals for green industrialization in order to grow fiscal bases of countries and develop and tap into carbon credit markets among others.
6. Important questions that would be raised for discussion at COM2024 include:

- What do African countries consider to be the most pressing issues when dealing with climate-induced and economic shocks, and building resilience?
- What measures are African countries putting in place to deal with debt constraints?
- What should be the priorities of African countries to increase private sector financing dramatically? What type of technical support do Governments need?
- What measures are African countries implementing to develop carbon markets and environmental, social and governance bonds?
- What type of technical support do Governments need to mobilize climate financing?
- Which of the proposed changes to policy frameworks resonate well with African countries? What are the experiences and lessons learned regarding the reform that has already been implemented?
- Why does natural capital matter for economic growth? Who benefits from the use of natural resources? What are the effects on the environment and other areas of the economy?
- In the context of the “beyond GDP” debate, how can the value of natural resources and ecosystem services be better integrated into the national accounts of African countries? What comprises the wealth of a nation, considering natural capital accounts?
- How can the use of natural resource accounting tools in national development planning enhance the fiscal space of African countries?

II. Objectives

7. In order to stimulate discussions on the theme of COM2024, take into consideration national and regional specificities and promote cross-learning across regions, all subregional offices of the UNECA are organising high level policy dialogues across UNECA’s five main regions: North, East, Central, West and South.
8. The UNECA Subregional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) is holding a virtual high-level policy dialogue for its Southern African stakeholders in order (i) to stimulate reflections on the imperative for Southern Africa to transition towards inclusive green economies and priority pathways for doing so and (ii) discuss financing opportunities and options for accelerating the transition towards inclusive green economies in Southern Africa.

III. Format

9. The virtual high-level policy dialogue for Southern Africa will be virtual and lasts for one hour and a half. It will consist of two afternoon substantive sessions.
10. Key questions for discussion include:
 - a. Why is it imperative for Southern African countries to accelerate a transition towards inclusive green economies? What are the major challenges and opportunities for doing so?

- b. How can Southern African countries finance their transition towards inclusive green economies? What innovative financing options can be deployed? What are the best practices to learn from?

IV. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness among Southern African stakeholders of the necessity for Southern Africa to transition towards inclusive green economies;
- Enhanced understanding of national and regional priorities and experiences in fostering such a transition;
- Deepened knowledge of opportunities and options available to Southern African stakeholders to finance their transition towards inclusive green economies;
- Enhanced cross-sharing of national experiences in the area of financing the transition towards inclusive green economies.

V. Expected Outputs

- A meeting report highlighting the main messages of the high-level policy dialogue, which will be tabled at the COM2024 for consideration and discussion.
- A press release.

VI. Participants

11. All eleven member states of ECA SRO-SA in both public and private sectors, and participants at the latest ECA SRO-SA Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) meeting that was held in November 2023 in Gaborone, Botswana, including the members of the ECA SRO-SA Bureau consisting of Botswana as Chair, Angola as Vice-Chair and Zambia as Rapporteur.

VII. Date and Venue

12. Thursday February 15, 2024, Virtual. The registration link and draft programme are available at: <https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/virtual-high-level-policy-dialogue-southern-africa-56th-session-uneca-conference-african-ministers>.

VIII. Language

13. English, and simultaneous interpretation to Portuguese.

IX. Contacts

14. Further information on the meeting and any other related matters should be addressed to:

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