



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Building forward better from COVID-19 crisis alongside accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: **Insights from the 7th and expectations from the 8th session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)**



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Overview of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)

- ❑ An annual inter-governmental platform jointly organized by ECA, AUC, AfDB and UN System
- ❑ Convenes high-level policy makers and experts from ministries/agencies responsible for economic development, social development and environment management; regional and subregional organisations, UN bodies and major groups including CSOs and the private sector to:
 - Review progress, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063
 - Strengthen learning and advocate effective policy measures and actions at National, Regional and Global level, to advance implementation of SDGs and Goals of Agenda 2063
 - Agree on key policy options including Africa's priorities and policy recommendations to inform and spur actions at subnational, national, regional and global levels to accelerate the integrated implementation of the two Agendas – **These priorities also form Africa's Regional Position conveyed to HLPF.**

Seventh (2021) session of the ARFSD at a Glance

ARFSD-7 (2021)

- Held in hybrid format from 1-4 March 2021, in Brazzaville - Hosted by the Government of Republic of Congo under the Patronage of HE President Denis Sassou-Nguesso
- Elected Bureau members: Republic of Congo, Kenya, Niger, Algeria & Zimbabwe

Theme & Focus

- Held in preparation for the 2021 HLPF that took place in New York, 6-15 July 2021
- Theme: **“Building forward better: Towards a resilient and green Africa to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”** - Theme aligned with that of 2021 HLPF
- Reviewed 9 selected SDGs (1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 & 17) and corresponding goals of Agenda 2063

Partnerships & main Activities during the Forum

- ECA with Government of Republic of the Congo, AUC, AfDB and United Nations System
- Forum informed by background reports on the selected SDGs
- High-level dialogue, plenary and parallel segments; and co-organized workshops and side events on/for VNR, VLRs, major groups themes aligned with the goals of the Forum
- **Key Events associated with ARFSD-7: Africa RCP 2, Third Africa STI Forum; Launch of Africa AI Research Centre in Brazzaville; Launch of ECA report on Building Forward for an African Green Recovery & Regional Dialogue on African Food Systems**
- Details on the Forum available at: <https://www.uneca.org/arfsd2021>

What defined the focus of the Seventh session (ARFSD – 7)?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 70,000 people had died across the continent, out of over 2.7 million affected by the end of February 2021

GDP growth dropped from 3.3% in 2019 to -2.6% in 2020 and is projected to be 3.7% in 2021

Africa is facing its first recession in 25 years

The continent had lost over 30 million jobs by the time of the Forum

Poverty is once again on the rise

Africa is worst affected by climate change: The region already spends over 5% on average of its GDP (\$335 billion) annually to respond to climate disasters

Debt pressures are mounting

COVID led to widening of the continent's financing gap to \$385 billion and has derailed progress towards the achievement of the SDGs – **Green and greater ambition needed to get back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030**

10 Salient Key messages from the Forum for action moving forward

- 1. Tackling both the COVID-19 crisis and climate change, as part of a short, medium and long-term solutions, requires a response, recovery and reset programme to build forward towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063 goals.**
- 2. The African Union Commission, ECA and partners should explore and strengthen capacity of member states to access various sources of new financial resources including innovative finance mechanisms such as debt relief, Green and Blue bonds and debt swaps for SDGs, nature and climate action.**
- 3. Because of its contribution to carbon sequestration, targeted support should be provided for protecting the Congo Basin, including the conservation of its peatland. As such, development partners are invited to mobilize financing to capitalize the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin.**
- 4. Digitalization in the health sector must be leveraged, to ensure that digital interventions such as e-health and e-pharma services catalyze results in building forward better.**

10 Salient Key messages from the Forum for action moving forward continued -2

- 5. Member States should align their national development strategies with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) process and leverage the opportunities the AfCFTA offers to respond to and recover from COVID-19 crisis and build forward better subsequently.**
- 6. To leave no one behind, member States must provide adequate resources to strengthen their disaggregated data collection and strengthen accountability in use of resources for SDGs and Agenda 2063.**
- 7. Governments together with the private sector should develop innovative and inclusive financing models for STI that will drive entrepreneurship and promote innovations and technology-driven industrialization of food production systems.**
- 8. Member States should adopt decisive public policies including employment-intensive policies and green investments to build forward better**

10 Salient Key messages from the Forum for action moving forward continued -3

9. **Delivery modalities of the United Nations system should be inclusive and strengthened to encompass the engagement of civil society and the private sector**
10. **COVID-19 makes inclusive and participatory voluntary national and local review on the implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063 more vital than ever. Reviews should be forward-looking to support peer-learning and lay the foundational plans for a sustainable rebound and to build resilience**
 - **To date, 46 African countries have conducted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)**
 - **By the end of 2022 HLPF, all member States, except one will have conducted at least one VNR (see next slide)**
 - **In Six countries namely, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, cities and other subnational governments have conducted Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) on SDG and Agenda 2063 implementation – vital for localization of the goals and ensuring no one is left behind**
 - **ECA and partners have developed guidelines to support roll-out of VLRs across cities and other subnational jurisdictions in member States in the region**
 - **ECA also provides support to countries to align their national development plans with and report on the SDGs and Goals of Agenda 2063 through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT)**

The above & other key messages adopted by ARFSD-7 were conveyed to the 2021 HLPF through: Chair of the Bureau (Republic of Congo), Africa Day at 2021 HLPF, Interventions by the ECA/ES at 2021 HLPF, Regional VNR Lab and side event on VLRs.

Status of Voluntary Review by African Countries – EA countries highlighted

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Volunteers	Countries yet to volunteer
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Egypt Madagascar Morocco Sierra Leone Togo Uganda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Benin Botswana Ethiopia Kenya Nigeria Togo* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Benin* Cabo Verde Egypt* Guinea Mali Namibia Niger Senegal Sudan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Algeria Burkina Faso Cameroon Central African Republic Chad Côte d'Ivoire Eswatini Ghana Lesotho Mauritania Mauritius Congo Rwanda Sierra Leone* South Africa Tunisia United Republic of Tanzania 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Benin** Burundi Comoros Democratic Republic of the Congo Gambia Kenya* Liberia Libya Malawi Morocco* Mozambique Niger* Nigeria* Seychelles Uganda* Zambia 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Angola Cabo Verde* Chad* Egypt** Madagascar* Namibia* Niger** Sierra Leone** Tunisia* Zimbabwe* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Botswana* Cameroon* Comoros* Cote d'Ivoire* Djibouti Equatorial Guinea Eritrea Eswatini* Ethiopia* Gabon Gambia* Ghana* Guinea-Bissau Lesotho Liberia* Malawi* Mali* Sao Tome and Principe Senegal* Somalia Sudan* Togo*** 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> South Sudan

Highlights of the Eighth (2022) session of ARFSD (ARFSD-8)

Objectives

1. To conduct a regional follow-up and review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals – Focus on 5 SDGs (4, 5, 14, 15 & 17) and corresponding goals of Agenda 2063:



2. To Facilitate learning, including sharing approaches, tools, experiences and lessons learned from measures and investments aimed at recovering from COVID-19 alongside SDG implementation (in line with the current Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development)
3. In the context of decade of action and COVID-19 implications, to identify ambitious actions for the sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and to dramatically scale up implementation to achieve the SDGs by 2030
4. To deliberate and agree on Africa' regional input to the 2022 HLPF

Highlights of the Seventh (2022) session of ARFSD - Continued

- ❑ **Theme:** The Forum will be guided by a theme inspired by that of the 2022 HLPF: *“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”*
- ❑ **Subthemes:** The subthemes will be action-oriented and formulated around the 5 selected SDGs (4, 5, 14, 15 & 17) and inspired by the main theme of the ARFSD-8.
- ❑ **Venue and Date:** ARFSD-8 Will be hosted by the Government of Republic of Rwanda, in Kigali, from (Dates); Hybrid format with emphasis on in-person participation.
- ❑ **Partnerships:** Enhanced bottom-up approach with scaled up engagement of RECs; integrating segments devoted to private sector engagement; and continued strong contributions by AUC, AfDB, UN entities, CSOs and youth representatives.
- ❑ **Participation:** All 54-member States; major groups and other stakeholders; African Union Commission; African Development Bank; AUDA-NEPAD; Regional economic communities; United Nations; Development partners and other international organizations

Key Asks from RECs , IC SOE and member States

1. Deploy the policy options agreed in the ARFSD to bolster national and local implementation of the SDGs, Agenda 2063 goals and covid-19 recovery - **move from policy options to concrete on-the-ground action**
2. Strengthen subregional (REC level) follow-up of and reporting on the implementation of the two agendas and covid-19 recovery - **it is currently a missing link**
3. RECs are invited and encouraged to prepare and submit subregional perspectives during the ARFSD-8
4. Member States are invited to bring to and share at ARFSD, good practices, acceleration actions and other practical measures and recommendations to scale up implementation of the two Agendas and recover from COVI-19 crisis
5. Proposal are welcome from the IC SOE on key elements to improve the work of the Regional Forum
6. Disseminate information on and plan to participate in ARFSD-8 in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2022



Thank you.

Ideas
to
Action