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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Subregional Office for Southern Africa**

**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials  
and Experts for Southern Africa**

Twenty-seventh session

Blantyre (hybrid), 13 and 14 October 2021

**Report of the Intergovernmental Committee  
of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa  
on the work of its twenty-seventh session**



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## **I. Opening of the session**

### **A. Introduction**

1. The twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa was held in a hybrid format on 13 and 14 October 2021 under the theme “Building back better from COVID-19 in Southern Africa: fostering commodity-based industrialization, manufacturing and regional value chains”.

### **B. Attendance**

2. Delegates from all 11 member States served by the Subregional Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (i.e., Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) participated in the session. Among the delegates were representatives from ministries of finance, industry, commerce and trade, industrial development, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives, and natural and mineral resources.

3. Other participants in the session included representatives of academic and research institutions, the private sector and private-sector umbrella organizations, regional economic communities, print and digital media houses, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and regional and international development partners, including United Nations entities. Experts and independent consultants in areas related to the theme of the meeting were also present.

### **C. Opening statements**

4. The Minister of Finance of Malawi, Felix Mlusu, delivered the opening address. Welcoming remarks were made by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Vera Songwe. Statements were made by the resident representative in Malawi of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Shigeki Komatsubara (representing the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Malawi), Deputy Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of Lesotho, Rethabile Maluke (on behalf of the Chair of the Bureau of the twenty-sixth session of the Committee and Minister of Finance of Lesotho, Thabo Sofonea), and Permanent Representative of the Southern Africa Regional Office of the African Union, David Claude Pierre. Video messages were delivered by the Secretary-General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Chileshe Kapwepwe, and the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Elias Mpedi Magosi.

## **II. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

5. The following countries were elected by the Committee to form the new Bureau:

Chair:	Malawi
Vice-Chair:	Mozambique
Rapporteur:	Zimbabwe

6. The Committee adopted the following agenda for its twenty-seventh session:
- (a) Opening of the session.
  - (b) Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
  - (c) Presentation of statutory reports:
    - (i) Economic and social conditions in Southern Africa;
    - (ii) Programme performance of ECA in Southern Africa;
    - (iii) Implementation of regional and international agendas and other special initiatives in Southern Africa: progress and status of the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.
  - (d) Presentation of the thematic report “Building back better from COVID-19 in Southern Africa: fostering commodity-based industrialization, manufacturing and regional value-chains”.
  - (e) High-level panel discussion on the theme of the session.
  - (f) High-level panel discussion on “New sources of competitiveness in Southern Africa’s inclusive and sustainable industrialization strategies: promoting made-in-Southern Africa in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area”.
  - (g) High-level panel discussion on the topic “New sources of competitiveness in Southern Africa’s inclusive industrialization strategies: blue, green and digital economies”.
  - (h) Presentation of the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting on “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area”.
  - (i) Drafting of the report on the twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa.
  - (j) Presentation and adoption of the report on the twenty-seventh session.
  - (k) Host and venue of the twenty-eighth session.
  - (l) Closing of the session.

### **III. Presentation of statutory reports**

7. The Committee considered three statutory reports submitted by the secretariat on: (a) economic and social conditions in Southern Africa in 2020 and prospects for 2021; (b) programme performance of the Subregional Office for Southern Africa; and (c) progress in the implementation of regional and international agendas and other special initiatives in the subregion, focusing on progress and status of Agreement implementation. The findings of the study on the theme “Building back better from COVID-19 in Southern Africa: fostering commodity-based industrialization, manufacturing and regional value chains” were presented and discussed by the Committee. Furthermore, the Committee reviewed the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting held on 12 October 2021 on the topic “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area” (see annex).

8. The Committee endorsed the report on the programme performance of the Subregional Office for Southern Africa for 2021, and the work programme for 2022.

#### IV. Observations

9. The Committee made several observations on the basis of the presentations made by the secretariat, panel discussions, and general discussions.

10. On economic and social conditions in Southern Africa, the Committee:

(a) Observed that sound debt management was critical as countries aim to build back better;

(b) Enquired as to how sound debt management should be characterized;

(c) Noted that domestic resource mobilization should be enhanced, tax systems should be strengthened, incentives to pay taxes should be put in place, and business environments should be enhanced to expand private-sector participation in economic activities;

(d) Noted the need to explore the reasons why member States were resorting to debt financing over other types of development financing;

(e) Underscored the need for transparency in the management of financial resources;

(f) Emphasized the importance of mainstreaming the concerns of women and young people in government budgets, plans and policies;

(g) Noted the need to support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to address the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19);

(h) Observed that member States should support the provision of up-to-date statistical data for the preparation of the report on economic and social conditions;

(i) Expressed concern over the lack of analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on inequality, and the lack of consideration given to inequality in development policy circles;

(j) Called for a broader perspective to be taken when analysing the impact of COVID-19 on economies, including in relation to access to education, energy, employment and inclusive industrialization.

11. On progress made in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area in Southern Africa, the Committee:

(a) Noted the progress made by all countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9;

(b) Noted the persistent infrastructure deficit in Southern Africa and the impact of the pandemic on progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want;

(c) Highlighted the constraints faced by countries in realizing the Goals in the form of inadequate data, lack of a mechanism to track progress, and weaknesses in monitoring mechanisms;

(d) Emphasized that decent work for all was key to inclusivity and sustainable development and questioned whether informal work amounted to decent work;

(e) Stressed the need to look for innovative and new sources of development financing;

(f) Noted that industrialization could be a pathway towards strengthening domestic resource mobilization and reducing reliance on debt;

(g) Observed the need for countries to address their infrastructure deficits, in particular in the energy sector;

(h) Highlighted the need to explain the benefits of the Agreement to member States to promote the ratification process;

(i) Expressed concern that the private sector should be more involved in Agreement negotiations in order to build a sense of private-sector ownership in the process;

(j) Observed that trade facilitation was key to delivering on the expected benefits of the Agreement;

(k) Underscored that negotiators and national committees established to implement the Agreement must be supported and empowered through legislative structures, among other means.

12. On policies and strategies for fostering commodity-based industrialization, manufacturing and regional value chains, the Committee:

(a) Observed that the share of manufacturing in gross domestic product (GDP) had fallen since 1996 in all Southern African countries except Angola, Lesotho and Namibia;

(b) Noted that Southern Africa was commodity-dependent and that a large part of its commodity exports consisted of minerals;

(c) Observed that Southern Africa continued to experience a deficit in energy production and supply, which limited the capacity for industrial development in the subregion;

(d) Underscored the need to achieve energy security;

(e) Underscored the need to take advantage of new opportunities (e.g., the demand for locally produced pharmaceuticals) to create opportunities for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises;

(f) Observed that sustainable industrialization should be placed on the agenda in the light of climate change and that attention should be paid to the large role that Governments could play in facilitating economy-wide and sector-specific development;

(g) Observed that, without significant tariff concessions and rules of origin, the benefits of Agreement for industrialization might not materialize;

(h) Underscored that regional integration and regional markets were key for countries in Southern Africa to muster the economies of scale needed to support industrial development;

(i) Highlighted the critical importance of exchanging knowledge and skills to anchor the emergence from the current crisis, spreading fairly the economic gains, and ensuring the participation of women and young people in all economic activities;

(j) Stressed that the transformation of resource-based economies would require deeper beneficiation, a focus on green industrialization, and the intensive use of renewable energy;

(k) Emphasized that regional cooperation and exchange of best practices in commodity-based industrialization were potent ways to facilitate economic recovery in the region;

(l) Expressed concern over the financial, market access and technical challenges faced by micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in their effective participation in national and regional value chains, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of such enterprises, including those owned by women and young people, as an anchor to building back faster and greener from the COVID-19 crisis;

(m) Underscored that commodity-based industrialization and manufacturing-based industrialization are different stages of the same strategy for promoting regional growth and development;

(n) Emphasized the importance of industrialization to deepening regional integration and ensuring overall economic prosperity, while noting that greater integration could be a strategic lever to help countries weather the emergence of unprecedented challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic;

(o) Expressed concern over the limited support provided to business associations by Governments, noting that an empowered private sector would be an important partner in policymaking;

(p) Noted the need to create a conducive operating environment for businesses;

(q) Acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 and its role in revealing the potential of digital technologies for enhancing economic growth;

(r) Expressed concern that, while foreign direct investment was critical to promoting industrial development, local participation remained low.

## V. Recommendations

13. The Committee proffered recommendations: (a) to strengthen the national and regional macroeconomic environment to address the impact of COVID-19 and build back better; (b) to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement in Southern Africa; (c) to foster commodity-based industrialization, non-resource-based manufacturing and regional value chains; and (d) to build back better to achieve resilience in a post-COVID-19 context.

14. On strengthening the national and regional macroeconomic environment to address the impact of COVID-19 and build back better, member States should:

(a) Pay greater attention to the supply of reliable and up-to-date statistical data to inform evidence-based policymaking;

(b) Support the production of research that analyses the effects of the pandemic on inequality, with a view to identifying opportunities for recovery and closing the inequality gap through, inter alia, rural development, greater access to high-quality education and leveraging digitalization;

(c) Foster collaboration among academia, research institutions, and public- and private-sector entities, leverage the research capacity available in regional think tanks, partner organizations, and universities, and promote the dissemination of research;

(d) Enhance industrialization of the region by quickly rolling out regional, national and local frameworks for promoting industrialization;

(e) Continue to open economies across the region to members of the relevant regional economic communities in order to build resilience against external shocks;

(f) Advance the regionalization of supply networks that can be anchored within national and regional industrialization frameworks, and aim to level the playing field and harmonize policies and regulations across the region to enable value-chain development;

(g) Foster the development of regional value chains, including those already identified in regional industrialization strategies;

(h) Adopt complementary financing mechanisms for the Sustainable Development Goals, including by setting up and operationalizing integrated national financing frameworks, employing innovative sources of financing and stemming illicit financial flows.

15. On accelerating the implementation of the Agreement in Southern Africa:

(a) Member States should:

(i) Take action at a national level to develop human resources and to address the challenges that undermine competitiveness, including macroeconomic instability and regulatory bottlenecks that affect the set-up of businesses;

(ii) Resolve the problems of energy shortages and insufficient development of education and skills in order to reap the gains from the Agreement;

(iii) Support the development of clean and renewable energy sources;

(iv) Recognize regional content in addition to local content to foster the development of regional value chains;

(v) Address constraints inhibiting the set-up of an environment that enables regional trade, private-sector development and firm competitiveness;

(vi) Accelerate the implementation of the various Agreement protocols and provisions, including those on rules of origin requirements, which will aid industrialization and address trans-shipment issues;

(vii) Ensure that national-level legislation, structures and mechanisms exist to facilitate the enforcement of intellectual property rights;

(viii) Pay attention to the role that e-commerce can play in promoting cross-border regional trade;

(ix) Invest in technology adaptation and innovation and implement trade- and logistics-facilitation measures;

(x) Start planning strategically on how to best position the region as a manufacturing and technology hub;

(xi) Ensure that the private sector is viewed as a critical partner in the implementation of the Agreement and that inclusiveness is considered;

(xii) Consider the fast-tracking of industrialization in the region and identify strategic sectors to ensure that the Agreement delivers on its promise as a game-changer;

(xiii) Prioritize the development of skills, new sources of competitiveness, and an inclusive industrialization agenda that involves women and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, while promoting innovation and creativity;

(xiv) Engage in an assessment of how ready firms are to take advantage of the Agreement;

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- (xv) Fast track the mainstreaming of national and regional industrialization strategies, while ensuring coherence across the multiple and overlapping industrialization strategies that exist at a regional and continental levels;
  - (xvi) Address the challenges associated with weak connectivity through border facilitation and digitalization;
  - (xvii) Map the sectors and goods in which the region has a competitive advantage;
  - (xviii) Ensure greater synergies across trade in goods and trade in services, and accelerate the conclusion of negotiations on the Protocol on Trade in Services;
  - (xix) Embrace an outlook for trade that does not limit itself only to regional economic communities or the African continent, but instead harnesses global trade opportunities;
  - (xx) Leverage better strategic partnerships to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement;
  - (xxi) Put in place mechanisms to ensure coherence across various ongoing initiatives undertaken with development actors to support the implementation of the Agreement.
- (b) Regional economic communities should:
- (i) Reiterate the critical role of industrialization and structural, sustainable transformation as driving forces for development and regional trade;
  - (ii) Consider adopting a made-in-Southern Africa approach and a common regional strategy towards the implementation of the Agreement and the development of regional value chains;
  - (iii) Address the challenges causing a lack of competitiveness through regional collaborative approaches;
  - (iv) Consolidate a developmental approach to regional integration through effective markets, development of transport and information and communications technology infrastructure, and the promotion of political stability, macroeconomic stability, and science and technology;
  - (v) Address the extent to which the “exclusivity” criterion in the Protocol on Trade in Goods can facilitate trade within the region;
  - (vi) Consider a regional competition policy to ensure that benefits are equitably shared among members;
  - (vii) Engage in more trade- and investment-promotion activities and accentuate the search for market intelligence (e.g. through the holding of regional trade fairs to close information gaps and the production of catalogues) to take stock of what is being produced in the region;
  - (viii) Facilitate peer learning and sharing of experiences, lessons learned and best practices across member States.

16. On fostering commodity-based industrialization, non-resource-based manufacturing and regional value chains:

(a) Member States should:

(i) Foster commodity-based industrialization, non-resource-based manufacturing and regional value chains as a way to build back better and build resilience;

(ii) Make the most of the region's comparative advantages in commodities production to develop full commodity value chains by leveraging State assets, rights and purchases and by creating a conducive environment for investing in the backward, forward and knowledge linkages in the commodities sector;

(iii) Promote the smart use of national endowments (e.g. water, electricity) and State rights to leverage industrialization;

(iv) Harness regional integration to develop commodity-based industries and value chains;

(v) Promote skills development and research, development and innovation to build industrial competitiveness and upgrade value chains;

(vi) Make use of the energy transition to build back better by developing linkages for energy generation, storage and distribution;

(vii) Facilitate the growth of local capital to build commodity-based value chains;

(viii) Continue to promote and attract investment at the national and regional levels, deploy investment strategies that are mutually beneficial, safeguard human welfare and protect the environment, and regulate the types of investments that are flowing in;

(ix) Design competition policies to strengthen market-based competition, and establish competition authorities and related institutions that can investigate domestic irregularities in the area of investment promotion;

(x) Promote the establishment of special economic zones in their countries and address transboundary issues by pursuing a spatial economic-development approach;

(xi) Invest in energy production and interconnected regional infrastructure, including by exploiting new and renewable sources to support the industrialization agenda;

(xii) Promote fertilizer production, especially those that are nitrogen-based (e.g. urea), to foster agriculture, and subsequently support agroprocessing and value addition. Production of fertilizer should be done with a clear strategy to manage possible emissions that may be harmful to biodiversity and ecosystems;

(xiii) Undertake a historical analysis of the causes of de-industrialization in Southern Africa, especially as experienced by Zimbabwe and more recently South Africa, to learn lessons that would inform current and future efforts to promote industrialization in the subregion;

(xiv) Develop strategies to promote innovative financing by the private sector, such as lease financing facilities, to support the growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and their participation in the industrialization process.

(b) Regional economic communities should:

(i) Promote a SADC commodity-based industrialization strategy that builds on the Africa Mining Vision and a SADC regional mining vision;

(ii) Continue to support the development of regional value chains, including a renewable energy localization strategy for SADC, to support the development of backward, forward and knowledge linkages;

(iii) Support the implementation of a common external tariff for trade within regional commodity-based value chains.

17. On building back better to achieve resilience in the post-COVID-19 context:

(a) Member States should:

(i) Pay greater attention to promoting inclusiveness in the development agenda;

(ii) Leverage growing opportunities from the blue, green and digital economies and identify market niches and opportunities for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises as they aim to build back better after the pandemic;

(iii) Consider the potential of tapping into green and blue bonds and green and blue finance facilities such as climate finance, carbon trading and offset arrangements, and debt-for-nature swaps as they aim to mobilize financing to build back better;

(iv) Leverage digital tools and platforms to connect suppliers and consumers in markets and along regional value chains;

(v) Consider accelerating productive integration in addition to market integration;

(vi) Address the constraints faced by micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in leveraging blue, green, digital and other opportunities through the Agreement, including by setting up special funding mechanisms;

(vii) Support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in gaining access to financing and in removing other constraints;

(viii) Prioritize the achievement of development objectives in the face of limited resources;

(ix) Foster mobilization through partnerships to work towards achieving national development objectives.

- (b) Regional economic communities should:
  - (i) Accelerate the implementation of the digital aspects of their free trade areas and the blue, green and digital economy elements of their industrialization frameworks;
  - (ii) Consider how regional collaboration and existing regional and national industrial frameworks contribute to the development of the blue, green and digital economies in Southern Africa (e.g. in terms of strategic investment and spending, enhancing dialogue, and capacity-building);
  - (iii) Promote the sharing of lessons learned and best practices to support countries in venturing into the blue, green and digital economies.

18. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting on “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area” (see annex).

## **VI. Way forward**

19. The Committee underscored:

(a) The need to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group;

(b) That the Subregional Office for Southern Africa should continue to urge member States in the subregion to ratify the Agreement, and should provide technical support for the development of national strategies in preparation for trading as State parties, once trade commences under the Agreement;

(c) That the Subregional Office should work closely with member States, regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders to support member States in building back better in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic;

(d) That the recommendations of the study on fostering commodity-based industrialization, manufacturing and regional value chains be submitted to the appropriate stakeholders (i.e. the secretariats of COMESA and SADC) for implementation.

### **Vote of thanks**

20. Delegates to and participants in the twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Malawi for hosting the session, the Chair for ably steering the deliberations and guiding the preparation of the present report, and to the secretariat for successfully organizing the session.



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## Annex

### **Outcome statement of the ad hoc expert group meeting on “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area”**

#### **Introduction**

1. An ad hoc expert group meeting on “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area” was organized by the Subregional Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the Government of Malawi, and held on 12 October 2021 in a hybrid physical and online format owing to travel restrictions imposed to control the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

2. The overall objective of the meeting was to provide a platform to critically examine the findings of a study report on the theme of the meeting, identify gaps, and provide input and further insights to add value to the report and refocus the recommendations. The recommendations of the meeting were to be presented for endorsement at the twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa, scheduled to be held in a hybrid format in Blantyre on 13 and 14 October. Specifically, the meeting: (a) provided an opportunity for deeper reflection, information- and experience-sharing on the key issues, challenges and constraints, and on ways of boosting agricultural value chains and economic transformation in Southern Africa, including by leveraging the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area ; (b) explored modalities for leveraging the Agreement in the context of relevant instruments of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to promote agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation; and (c) proffered recommendations for tackling challenges and constraints and accelerating economic transformation in the agriculture sector in Southern Africa.

3. Welcome remarks were made by the Director of the Subregional Office for Southern Africa, Eunice Kamwendo. The official opening address of the meeting was delivered by the Deputy Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of Lesotho and Chair of the twenty-sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa, Rethabile Maluke. The opening session was moderated by the Principal Secretary for Administration at the Ministry of Finance of Malawi, Hetherwick Njati. The meeting was attended by experts from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, regional and international development organizations, academia, and research institutions from the following countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

4. National, regional and international organizations represented at the meeting included: the Malawian ministries of finance, economic planning and development, agriculture, information, industry, trade, energy and mining; the National Planning Commission of Malawi; the Zambia Development Agency; the Economic Commission for Africa; the African Export–Import Bank; the African Development Bank; the African Organization for Standardization; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the International Fund for Agricultural Development; the secretariat of African Continental Free Trade Area; the secretariat of COMESA; the secretariat of SADC; Oxfam International; the Brenthurst

Foundation; the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes; Women and Resources in Eastern and Southern Africa; Stellenbosch University; the University of Zimbabwe; Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources; the Farmers Union of Malawi; and the Tea Association of Malawi.

### **Agenda and programme of work**

5. The agenda for the meeting was adopted as follows:
  - a. Opening of the meeting.
  - b. Presentation by the Subregional Office of the draft report “Agriculture value chains, linkages and transformation in Southern Africa: opportunities from the African Continental Free Trade Area”.
  - c. Panel discussion on agricultural value chains and the African Continental Free Trade Area: opportunities and strategies for Southern Africa.
  - d. Panel discussion on enhancing the agroprocessing sector and the role of regional value chains.
  - e. Panel discussion on opportunities for synergy and coordination in promoting agricultural value chains.
  - f. Preparation of draft recommendations.
  - g. Presentation, discussion and adoption of the recommendations.
  - h. Closing of the meeting.

### **Account of the proceedings**

6. The experts thanked the organizers for providing an opportunity to reflect, share information and experiences on the key issues, challenges and constraints, and ways of boosting agricultural value chains and economic transformation in Southern Africa, including by leveraging the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area. They considered the draft report and agreed that the recommendations therein were well grounded and based on clearly identified challenges.

7. The experts focussed on both substantive and technical aspects of the report, identified the agricultural sector’s challenges and matched those with national, regional and continental policies aimed at addressing them. The experts deliberated on the opportunities provided by the African Continental Free Trade Area and the specific agricultural value chains in Southern Africa that could benefit from this continent-wide arrangement. Finally, the experts augmented the recommendations outlined in the report.

### **Way forward**

8. At the closing of the meeting, the Director of the Subregional Office, Ms. Kamwendo, thanked the experts for the commitment that they had showed to ensuring the success of the meeting. She further thanked the Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee for presiding over the day’s discussions. She expressed her gratitude to the panellists, moderators and participants who had helped to steer and focus the discussions. She noted that the meeting has managed to touch on numerous important issues in respect of

promoting the agricultural sector, such as the need to provide supportive infrastructure and access to market information. She acknowledged that there were countless challenges to which particular attention needed to be paid. She indicated that throughout the day there has been a repetition of positive points including: (a) an abundance of political will, as seen in the many continental and subregional frameworks created to accelerate value-chain development; (b) the fact that the subregion enjoyed relative peace and security, which was an important enabler for development; and (c) member States were already re-orienting their development plans to ensure inclusive industrialization and wealth creation.

9. Ms. Kamwendo concluded by stating that: (a) the consultant would factor into the final version of the report the observations and recommendations made by the senior officials and experts; (b) a record of the meeting's full proceedings would be shared with all attendees; (c) ECA would finalize the report and share it with stakeholders; and (d) the meeting's recommendations would be tabled for considerations and adoption at the twenty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee.

10. In the closing remarks, the Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee, Ms. Maluke, emphasized that development was needed for young people, and it had to be grounded in strengthened partnerships and the use of technology. She argued that support for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises could be provided through capacity-building, training and network-building. Better access to infrastructure would be needed to interconnect that network. Finally, she thanked all participants, moderators and ECA staff.

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