2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report: summary paper for the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Key messages

- Progress is being made in achieving the target of universal primary education. However, coverage is still insufficient and ensuring that children receive a high-quality primary education remains a challenge; school completion rates are low and the out-of-school population remains high. Measures to make school environments attractive, including measures to ensure that children have access to basic services and enjoy a safe, high-quality learning environment, are critical to encouraging pupils to enrol and stay in school and to realizing the goal of universal education. Governments, with the support of development partners, civil society and the private sector, need to invest more in the establishment of child-friendly, disability- and gender-sensitive schools and other education facilities in order to attract and keep learners in school.

- The population of Africa is growing fast. In 2018, it was estimated at about 1.2 billion people, with a large young population. The global population is projected to increase to 2.2 billion by 2050, and more than half of that growth will occur in Africa. To take full advantage of the potential demographic dividend provided by the continent’s youthful population, countries must adopt effective human capital development policies and systems to ensure the productive engagement of young people, including in the areas of education and skills development and health care. In addition, increasing numbers of decent jobs and improvements to public infrastructure will be needed to keep pace with population growth and ensure that young people are gainfully engaged in economic activity.

- Four years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, it is clear that Africa needs to do more to foster inclusive growth. Overall, gross domestic product (GDP) growth is lower than the 7 per cent target needed to achieve sustainable development. GDP per capita has increased at very
low rates, (and has actually decreased in some countries) due to high population growth rates, low productivity and limited technological adaptation.

- Low labour productivity is a key constraint on the continent’s efforts to promote sustainable development. In 2018, labour productivity in Africa increased by only 0.8 per cent, compared with 2.7 per cent globally. Tackling this challenge requires sustained investment in skills training and measures to diversify economies and lower the cost of doing business on the continent.

- The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the African Trade Observatory will significantly enhance efforts to promote sustainable development and structural transformation in Africa. In the decade leading up to 2016, Aid-for-Trade commitments to Africa more than doubled: Africa excluding North Africa registered a 107 per cent increase and North Africa a 153 per cent increase. Member States need to ratify the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and open their borders to ease the movement of people and goods.

- Although economic growth rates during the past 25 years have been relatively high, inequalities of income and wealth as well as in health and education access and outcomes have also increased. Sustained investment in infrastructure and basic services (including education, health, water and sanitation, and social protection mechanisms) and expanding opportunities for all to participate in the economic sphere are needed to tackle growing inequalities. Moreover, enhancing access to high-quality infrastructure is an important prerequisite for industrial development.

- Investment requirements to realize the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa are estimated at between $600 billion and $638 billion annually, equivalent to about one third of the continent’s GDP. Infrastructure spending alone amounts to approximately $72 billion annually, but the annual financing gap stands at between $50 billion and $93 billion. Countries in Africa need to do more to mobilize domestic resources to finance sustainable development, including by improving tax revenue management, plugging illicit financial outflows, reducing the cost of transferring remittances from abroad and developing capital markets to attract private investment. A costing tool to calculate the investment required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals is needed to generate accurate estimates at country level.

- Improving governance, strengthening institutions with a view to incorporating into domestic legislation and implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and monitoring and reporting progress in that area are all critical for the realization of sustainable development in Africa. Similarly, steps must be taken to strengthen public financial resource management and align national budgets with national development plans.

- Data gaps for most of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators remain a major challenge to setting baselines and measuring and reporting progress towards sustainable development in Africa. Governments, with the support of development partners, need to establish inclusive data ecosystems to tackle the gaps in the data that is needed for effective decision-making. They should review their current national strategies for the development of statistics, capacity requirements, legal frameworks, as well as data assets and gaps at national, subnational and community levels to ensure inclusivity and to enhance the roles of the various stakeholders involved in data generation.
and use. Governments should take the lead in ensuring that the costs associated with the production and dissemination of required data are financed from sustainable domestic resources.

I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. Within ECA, the report is coordinated by the Development Planning Section of the Macroeconomics and Governance Division.

2. The 2019 Africa Sustainable Development Report is aligned with the theme of the 2019 High-level Political Forum, namely Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. The report covers six Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries; Goal 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

II. Progress of implementation

3. The year 2019 marks the fourth reporting cycle on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa. The six Goals reported this year will complete the “baseline” review of the 17 Goals and pave the way for a review of all 17 Goals in 2020. This section highlights progress on the six aforementioned Goals.

A. Goal 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4. Goal 4 sets out new ambitions for education, including quality education and learning from pre-primary to upper secondary levels for every child by 2030. Agenda 2063 calls for educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation.

5. There has been progress towards achieving the target of universal primary education in Africa; however, coverage remains low and ensuring high-quality education is a challenge. At the global level, the Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted by the international education community in November 2015 as a roadmap to lead the international community and national governments in their efforts to achieve Goal 4. At the continental level, the African Union Commission has developed a comprehensive ten-year continental education strategy for Africa to create a new African citizen who will be an effective change agent for the continent’s sustainable development.

6. Africa excluding North Africa has low school completion rates – 64 per cent at primary education level, 37 per cent at lower secondary level and 27 per cent at upper secondary level. The subregion also has the highest share of out-of-school population at 21 per cent in primary, 36 per cent in lower secondary and 57 per cent in upper secondary. Accordingly, further efforts and investment are required to meet the target of ensuring that, by 2030, all girls and boys
7. Early childhood care, nutrition and stimulation are critical in a person’s developmental stages, with lifelong implications for learning achievement, earning and well-being. Early childhood education is beneficial to young children for their educational development from school-entry age. However, participation in early childhood development programmes in Africa excluding North Africa remains low; participation in organized learning was estimated at only 41 per cent in 2016. Enrolment rates are slightly higher among boys compared with girls. There is very little country-level data available and the quality of that data varies widely.

8. Gender disparities in school enrolment are observed at all levels of education in Africa. Variations are wider at upper secondary level with Africa excluding North Africa having the lowest parity at 0.82 per cent. However, most countries in Africa have achieved gender parity in participation in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age.

9. Access to basic services such as drinking water, electricity and the Internet is low and presents a challenge to improved learning. In 2016, only 49 per cent of upper secondary level schools in Africa excluding North Africa provided access to drinking water. While more than 90 per cent of schools (all levels) in North Africa had access to electricity in 2016, the rates for the rest of the continent were only 37 per cent at primary, 52 per cent at lower secondary and 55 per cent at upper secondary levels. Data on the proportion of schools that have access to the Internet for pedagogical purposes is only available for nine countries.

B. Goal 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

10. Africa enjoyed sustained growth of about 4.5 per cent annually in the one and a half decades to 2015. Growth rates were supported by macroeconomic stability and robust growth in other regions, high commodity prices and regional efforts to strengthen macroeconomic fundamentals. Following the global economic recovery from the 2008–2009 downturn, GDP for Africa grew steadily, at close to 4 per cent annually in the period 2010–2015 and at roughly 3.2 per cent in the period 2017–2018, well above most other regions. This has contributed to poverty reduction and other socioeconomic improvements. Long-term prospects remain positive, thanks to strong economic fundamentals, growing demand for commodity exports and demographic factors. The ageing global population creates potential for the young population in Africa to boost growth – in the coming 20 years, the labour force in Africa is expected to grow to almost 1.1 billion.

11. Growth has slowed in recent years due to a weak global economy, declining commodity prices, tightening global financial conditions, internal conflicts and instability. Moreover, low levels of technology adaptation, limited access to capital and the large informal sector have all undermined productivity. Growth in Africa was estimated at 3.6 per cent in 2018, and for Africa excluding North Africa at only 3.1 per cent. This is well below the 7 per cent annual growth rates needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, due to African countries’ high population growth rates, GDP per capita growth remains low. Indeed, per capita income grew at an annual rate of only 1.9 per cent during the period 2000–2016. This compares with a per capita...
income growth rate of 3.3 per cent during the period 2002–2008 (prior to the 2008 global financial crisis).

12. **Labour productivity is low within a large informal sector.** The consumption of materials remains low. The average labour productivity growth rate in Africa is low (1.4 per cent annually during the period 2001–2018), compared with 5.7 per cent in East Asia. Informal sector employment in many countries in Africa is high, and can reach 50 per cent in certain non-agricultural sectors. However, increasing labour productivity and formal sector employment indicate that Africa is catching up with the rest of the world in terms of economic growth and employment. At 4.8 tons per capita in 2017 and a growth rate of only 14 per cent in the period 2000–2017, the continent’s material consumption is very low compared with other regions in the world.

13. The target of achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value is off-track. In most countries, women earn less than men, and women working in agriculture experience income gaps of up to 30 per cent. Gender pay gaps in other sectors are less pronounced.

14. **The window of opportunity for a demographic dividend is not fully exploited** given the high unemployment rate of young people (12.4 per cent) and the high proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (29 per cent, up from 20 per cent in 2010). Despite the adverse impacts it has on children’s learning, physical and mental growth and future income, child labour in Africa remains rampant, and is exacerbated by entrenched poverty and cultural dynamics. The problem is especially serious in Africa excluding North Africa, where it is estimated that more than 72 million children are engaged in economic activity for survival, with 31 million engaged in hazardous work. During the period 2010–2017, non-fatal injuries among male and female workers declined rapidly by about 40 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively.

15. **Access to financial services (banking, insurance, etc.) is low, with large gender gaps:** only 43.6 per cent and 32.5 per cent of the adult population in Africa and in North Africa, respectively, have a bank account, compared with a global average of 68.5 per cent. The number of bank branches per 100,000 adults was estimated at 7.9 in 2017. The number of automatic teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults increased almost three-fold from 6.1 in 2000 to 18.2 in 2017. Only 37 per cent of women in Africa excluding North Africa have access to financial services, compared with 49 per cent of men; the gap is larger in North Africa.

16. **Aid for Trade is improving and will continue to support economic growth and development in Africa.** In the decade leading up to 2016, Aid-for-Trade commitments to Africa more than doubled: Africa excluding North Africa registered a 107 per cent increase and North Africa a 153 per cent increase. The African Continental Free Trade Area and the African Trade Observatory will make a significant contribution towards realizing sustainable development and structural transformation.

### C. Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries

17. **Inequalities of income and wealth, and in health and education access and outcomes in Africa have increased** as African countries have achieved relatively high economic growth rates in the past 25 years. There are large regional, cross-country, intracountry, community and household-level income inequalities. It is important, moreover, to consider not only overall growth rates, but also how that growth is achieved, as the sources of growth can have a significant impact on poverty reduction. Growth in Africa is largely led by capital-intensive primary commodity exports, which leads to volatile growth
that is often far from inclusive and has a limited impact on employment and poverty reduction. As a result, Africa as a whole suffers from high levels of unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable jobs.

18. **Opportunities to participate in quality education and economic activities that can boost earnings are improving very slowly, limiting the growth of incomes of the most vulnerable populations.** Progress on Goal 10 is dependent on progress on other goals, in particular Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 2 on hunger, Goal 3 on health and Goal 4 on quality education. Equally, progress on Goal 10 has positive implications for progress on the other Goals.

19. **Africa is one of the most unequal regions of the world.** Estimated using the Gini coefficient, income inequality in Africa excluding North Africa was approximately 0.43 in 2011. Africa is home to 7 of the world’s 10 most unequal countries, and its Human Development Index score falls by 33 per cent when adjustments are made for inequality. In 2013, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (meaning that they earned less than $1.90 per day) was estimated at 34.8 per cent. In Central Africa, extreme poverty was estimated at 54 per cent, compared with 43.3 per cent in West Africa, 41 per cent in East Africa, 17.7 per cent in Southern Africa and only 2.7 per cent in North Africa. The poverty gap, which indicates how far incomes fall below the poverty line, was estimated at 13.5 per cent in 2013.

20. **Growing inequality adversely affects progress on poverty eradication, global and regional prosperity, peace and security, and social cohesion and human development.** Inequalities at the household level mean that children and women bear the brunt of poverty. Close to half (49 per cent) of children in Africa excluding North Africa live in extreme poverty.

21. **Incomes of the poorest are improving only slowly and social protection systems are weak.** At least two countries in Africa (Burkina Faso and Namibia) reported growth rates of more than 5 per cent in the incomes of the bottom 40 per cent of the population during the period 2012–2016. Four countries, however, registered negative growth in the incomes of that group: Niger (-0.06 per cent), South Africa (-1.3 per cent), Uganda (-2.2 per cent) and Zambia (-0.6 per cent). Social protection systems support very few people: in 2015, only 5 per cent of unemployed persons in Africa received cash benefits, compared with 22 per cent globally. Despite progress in recent years, several countries have at least one discriminatory law in their legal frameworks.

22. **Beyond income and wealth, inequality is manifested by disparities in access to social services.** In 2015, only 43 per cent of the rural population in Africa excluding North Africa had access to safe drinking water, compared with 82 per cent of the urban population. Similarly, only 37 per cent of the rural population had access to electricity, compared to 88 per cent in North Africa.

D. **Goal 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

23. **Goal 13 commits States to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”** and underscores the global need to mitigate anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the damage already caused by climate change. It acknowledges that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. Governments and all other stakeholders are called upon to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This goal is strongly linked to and has important implications for the other Goals and to Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the Sendai Framework. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, issued in 2018, it is still possible to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels if
urgent action is taken to cut emissions by half by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050. That report provided crucial input to the negotiation process at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018.

24. Despite the limited availability of relevant data, it seems likely that Africa is making progress on Goal 13. A number of initiatives, including the Dakar Declaration of the General Assembly of the African Ministers Council on Water on the Prioritization of Water Security and Sanitation in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2014) and the Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene (2015), are facilitating efforts to address climate change. In addition, the African Development Bank has identified five priority areas – the “High Fives” – and has also adopted green and inclusive growth as the main objective of its ten-year strategy for the period 2013–2022 with a view to promoting economic transformation and improving the quality of growth in Africa.

25. A two-step approach is being undertaken by countries in Africa to implement the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa. Step one provides for an assessment of the implementation of the Extended Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006–2015), in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action; and step two provides for the revision of the Extended Programme of Action. A recent review shows that coordination and partnerships are being strengthened in many areas addressed by the Extended Programme of Action and are contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Sendai Framework. Almost all countries in Africa have submitted their nationally determined contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and six African countries have resubmitted a revised version of those contributions. By February 2019, six countries had submitted the first iteration of their national adaptation plans for responding to climate change. The Africa Nationally Determined Contributions Hub was established by the African Development Bank in 2018 to serve as a resource pool for countries in Africa, with a view to fulfilling obligations relating to the Paris Agreement. The Hub focuses on three key support areas: fostering long-term climate action; mobilizing means for implementation in the areas of finance, capacity-building, and technology development and transfer; and coordination, advocacy and partnerships to ensure the efficient use of available resources.

E. Goal 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

26. This Goal is reflected in the aspirations of Agenda 2063: Aspiration 3 – An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; and Aspiration 4 – A peaceful and secure Africa. The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals is inextricably linked to the presence of peace at national, subnational and local levels. To achieve sustainable development, it is important for societies to be inclusive in all areas of human endeavour.

27. Progress in reducing violence and related death rates is low, and data gaps are large. Of the countries in Africa with available data, 25 countries recorded between 100 and 5,000 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015. Only 18 countries have reported on the percentage of children between 1 and 14 years of age who have been subjected to physical punishment or psychological aggression (or both) by caregivers. In those countries, 60 per cent of children
indicated that, in the previous month, they had been subjected to physical punishment; furthermore, more than 80 per cent of children in 12 countries reported that they had experienced some form of physical punishment.

28. During the period 2014–2016, only nine countries in Africa reported estimates of the age and sex distribution of detected victims of trafficking. Predominantly, trafficking victims are young females and more than 40 per cent of reported victims are girls under 15 years of age. Boys are equally vulnerable to trafficking among children aged 15 years and above. Among the nine countries with data, 1 in 10 women between 18 and 29 years of age, and as many as 15 per cent of women in conflict areas, had been subjected to sexual violence.

29. The rule of law and equal access to justice for all are improving slowly. Of the countries with data, 15 per cent reported that more than 50 per cent of individuals held in detention had yet to be sentenced, while another 18 per cent of countries reported that more than 20 per cent of detainees had not been sentenced. These figures show that facilities and processes to expedite the trial and sentencing of detainees remain inadequate in many countries.

F. Goal 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

30. Financing requirements for sustainable development in Africa are large, with estimates ranging between $0.5 trillion and $1 trillion. Investment requirements to realize the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa are estimated at between $600 billion and $638 billion annually, equivalent to about one third of the continent’s GDP. Infrastructure spending alone amounts to approximately $72 billion annually, of which 65 per cent is from domestic resources provided by African Governments, 25 per cent from the private sector and 10 per cent from development partners. The annual financing gap for infrastructure stands at between $50 billion and $93 billion. Achieving universal energy access by 2025 will require an investment of $30 billion and $55 billion annually. Countries should consider the following:

- To better understand the investment requirements for implementation of the two Agendas in each country, more accurate national-level estimates are needed. Those estimates will help to guide policy action and investment on the ground;
- A costing tool for Sustainable Development Goal implementation that can generate accurate estimates for each country, as well as policy analysis models to help prioritize critical investment should be developed.

31. Despite improvements, government revenue-to-GDP ratios in Africa remain low. Total government revenue as a percentage of GDP in Africa averaged only 24.7 per cent between 2000 and 2017. However, the tax-to-GDP ratio increased from approximately 12 per cent in 2000 to 16 per cent in 2014 – slightly higher than the 2015 global average of 14 per cent.

32. Illicit financial outflows and bribery continue to impede resource mobilization efforts. At its peak in 2014, illicit financial outflows from Africa amounted to about 8 per cent of GDP, leading to annual losses of some $50 billion (at 2016 prices). In addition, an average of $26.7 billion left Africa through other channels during the period 2005–2014. Trade mis-invoicing alone accounted for losses of at least $73 billion annually between 2000 and 2015.

33. Rising debt levels are a cause for concern. A major challenge impeding greater financing mobilization in Africa is posed by rising debt levels and associated debt servicing costs. Africa has recently witnessed an upsurge in
both public and foreign debt levels, from 48.4 per cent and 26.5 per cent, respectively, in 2017 to 50 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, in 2018. The continent’s total debt-to-GDP ratio rose from approximately 35.5 per cent in 2017 to 37.6 per cent in 2018. Foreign debt levels are particularly high in oil importing and mineral rich countries, where foreign debt is estimated at 45.4 per cent and 62 per cent of GDP, respectively.

34. **Declining trends in official development assistance.** This type of assistance offers an essential channel for countries in Africa to mobilize financing for critical investment projects, thereby promoting stability and inclusive growth. In the three decades leading up to 2017, Africa was the largest recipient of official development assistance (accounting for 43 per cent of the total). In 2017, aid to Africa was estimated at some $29 billion; however, its role in promoting inclusive and sustainable development and promoting good governance has been widely questioned.

35. **Regional efforts are needed to boost resource mobilization in Africa.** The 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development highlights the need for integrated national financing frameworks to leverage the potential of all financial flows, whether private or public, for sustainable development. At the Conference, Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives committed themselves to mobilizing domestic resources as the single largest and most important source to finance sustainable development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda underscores seven action areas for strengthening financing for sustainable development: expanding and improving domestic resource mobilization; promoting domestic and international private business and financing; strengthening international development cooperation; using international trade as the engine for development; addressing debt and debt sustainability; promoting science, technology and innovation and building capacity; and addressing systemic issues such as good governance and prudent macroeconomic policies.

36. **Gross fixed capital formation, an important measure of investment, increased steadily from approximately 18 per cent of GDP in 2000 to 23 per cent of GDP in 2017** in part due to the improving investment climate. Fixed capital formation remained highest in North Africa, where it reached almost 30 per cent of GDP. Remittances from diaspora communities are a major source of foreign exchange earnings and in some countries represent a more important source of financing than foreign direct investment. In 2017, total remittances to Africa reached nearly $77 billion (approximately 4.3 per cent of GDP).

37. **Foreign direct investment is an important avenue for financing growth and development in Africa, but more needs to be done to improve the investment climate.** Better infrastructure, access to electricity and policies to facilitate business activities as well as appropriate investment policies and regulations are needed to ensure that investment, products and services meet national and international standards, particularly health and safety standards. There was a marked decline in foreign direct investment to Africa, from close to $57 billion in 2015 to under $42 billion in 2017 – a decline of approximately 26 per cent over two years. That decline was in part precipitated by declining global commodity prices and muted growth rates on the continent. On a positive note, foreign direct investment inflows to Africa were projected to improve by 20 per cent in 2018 to some $50 billion, primarily as a result of accelerating regional integration efforts, an expected recovery in commodity prices and investments in infrastructure.

38. **Capital markets provide an important platform for mobilizing long-term capital.** Both debt and equity markets offer opportunities for resource mobilization from domestic and external sources. Active capital markets are an indication of economic and political stability and investment potential, and can
rally investors (including nationals living in the diaspora) to inject their money in a country. However, the few capital markets already in existence in Africa are still relatively unsophisticated and are poorly connected with global capital markets. Africa accounts for under 1 per cent of the world’s stock market capitalization. By December 2018, only 29 countries in Africa had functioning stock exchanges. Total stock market capitalization was only $732 billion in 2014, and the average market capitalization of the 20 countries covered by the ABSA Africa Financial Markets Index was only 56 per cent of GDP in 2018.

III. Emerging issues, challenges and opportunities to enhance implementation

39. The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 operate within different time frames (15 years for the 2030 Agenda and 50 years for Agenda 2063, which is divided into five 10-year implementation plans), making comparisons of targets difficult. Tools are therefore needed to align the two Agendas with, and integrate them into, national development frameworks.

40. Climate change-relevant issues, such as inequality at country and regional levels, the sustainable management of land ecosystems, desertification, biodiversity conservation and land degradation, are important to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, but these issues are not fully addressed in the current 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

41. The effective functioning of national human rights institutions is key to ensuring that human rights are universally respected. Some 38 per cent of countries in Africa have established national human rights institutions that comply with international standards and 20 per cent have established human rights institutions that partially comply with those standards.

42. There are large data gaps for a number of indicators relating to school attendance, climate change, gender- and age-disaggregated income, and in many cases methodologies are being developed to address those gaps. Official data and statistical capacity to adequately measure and compare progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16 are limited: many countries do not have the data nor the capacity to understand whether their citizens have access to justice. The main obstacle is that many of the checks and balances that promote good governance directly impede the activities of the authorities entrusted with ensuring that these checks and balances are established and operationalized.

43. Access to basic services and facilities in schools, including electricity, drinking water and the Internet remains low in Africa. This in part leads to elevated school drop-out rates. It is important to enhance efforts to develop globally-agreed standards for measuring proficiency.

44. Mobilizing sufficient resources to meet the investment requirements of countries in Africa, improving tax and non-revenue management, plugging illicit financial flows and developing capital markets are all critical for sustained economic growth and poverty reduction.

IV. Delivering on the means of implementation

45. A harmonized approach to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 is required. The integrated nature of the two Agendas means that an integrated approach to their implementation and reporting is also needed. Development policy should address not only universal access to basic goods and services (education, food, health care, housing, water and energy, and social protection mechanisms) but also the quality of such services and the impact they have on development outcomes. Although considerable progress was achieved in terms of school enrolment as a result of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,
inadequate attention was given to the enrolment of students in secondary and tertiary education or to students’ learning achievements: those issues require further attention. Similarly, socioeconomic policies should have an equitable distributional impact.

46. ECA is spearheading the development of an integrated planning and reporting toolkit that will align the two Agendas and facilitate their integration into national development plans. This will help to reduce the costs associated with the incorporation of salient aspects of the Agendas into domestic law and reporting on progress achieved towards their achievement.

47. In January 2018, the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was signed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to facilitate implementation of the two Agendas. Coordinated support to African countries undertaking voluntary national reviews is now needed to enhance the quality of national reports and support countries’ efforts to implement the Agendas and comply with relevant recommendations.

V. Conclusions

48. Africa is making progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, albeit with large variations on the different Goals both among and within countries. The large resource requirements to realize sustainable development and address weaknesses in governance structures are major challenges to progress. Sluggish growth in per capita income combined with high levels of unemployment and entrenched inequalities have serious implications for the continent’s fundamental objective of eradicating poverty in one generation. Weak economic fundamentals mean that sustainable development and economic transformation are proceeding slowly. Countries in Africa need to strengthen their macroeconomic fundamentals, including by reducing fiscal deficits, debt levels and inflation, in order to improve their resilience to internal and external shocks and promote economic sustainability. The effective management of countries’ natural resources could help generate significant additional revenue to support sustainable development. To create employment opportunities, further efforts are needed to enhance workers’ skills, particularly the skills of young people, support the development of a robust private sector, enhance the efficiency of the public sector, promote technological adaptation, and combat corruption. Data gaps are a significant challenge that continue to impede effective reporting and Governments therefore need to establish inclusive data ecosystems.

A. Strategic policy recommendations

49. The strategic policy recommendations are as follows:

(a) Measures to combat climate change are a priority and the responsibility of all stakeholders. Recognizing that member States have different climate change response and disaster risk management capacities, especially in terms of data availability, monitoring and evaluation systems, capacity-building initiatives should be based on comprehensive needs assessments and tailored to country contexts. It is important to map out the synergies and relationships among the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the Sendai Framework, and to integrate the objectives set forth in those instruments into national development plans to promote coherent implementation and progress reporting.
(b) Quality education and learning are critical to realizing sustainable development. Governments should leverage innovative financing mechanisms and public-private partnerships to fund school electrification and other infrastructure projects to help achieve the goal of quality universal primary education. Pre-primary and primary education need to be made compulsory and efforts need to be made to reduce school drop-out rates. The need to increase public investment in early childhood development and care and pre-primary education cannot be greater than at present given the spread of new technologies and the impact they have on innovation and the way we do things.

(c) Programmes for gender equality, women’s empowerment and youth education and employment must be strengthened. Equal opportunities for education and employment are needed to promote inclusive growth, reduce inequalities and help combat negative gender outcomes such as gender-based violence. Urgent measures are needed to address the situation of young people who are not in employment, education or training in order to mitigate the negative outcomes of the “youth bulge”. The efficiencies arising from new technologies provide opportunities to leverage the youth dividend. In line with Agenda 2063, countries in Africa need to develop and promote policies to enhance access to and control of productive assets (including financing) by women and young people.

(d) Efforts must be made to address inequality to generate greater traction for sustainable development. In order to achieve this objective, it is important to ensure that public resources are used to support programmes that focus on poverty reduction, job creation and boosting aggregate demand for goods and services within the lowest two income quintiles in order to grow their incomes at rates that are faster than national averages. Those measures should be complemented with well-targeted universal social protection programmes for those income groups.

(e) Financing mechanisms must be strengthened. Mobilizing additional resources from multiple sources is a must for countries in Africa if they are to realize sustainable development, which requires significant investments in infrastructure and social services. African Governments need to design measures to expand their fiscal space, including by: strengthening tax administration mechanisms; broadening the tax base and eliminating loopholes for tax avoidance; prioritizing expenditure on initiatives that have a significant impact on poorer income groups (such as infrastructure development initiatives and initiatives to enhance access to education and health services); and monitoring the reach of public spending. Domestic borrowing, external financing and debt issuance for critical priority spending (such as education, health care and infrastructure development) should be considered. Member States must accelerate the transition towards a fully functional continental free trade area to help boost intra-Africa trade, create jobs and spur economic growth.

(f) Efforts must be made to facilitate the development of capital markets. Africa needs to address a number of structural bottlenecks in order to promote the growth and dynamism of capital markets. For example, the lack of active and liquid secondary markets limits transparency and price formation; this encourages investors to adopt buy-and-hold positions. High transaction costs, ambiguous property rights, information gaps and a large informal sector can all be addressed by reducing the cost of doing business, enhancing education and transparency, more effectively regulating capital markets, creating new and innovative financial products and devising strategies to encourage small private companies to go public. In addition, online trading platforms that provide direct market access to investors and allow them to execute trades on their own without going through brokers can boost market activity.
(g) **Efforts must be made to strengthen data systems and capacities.**

In order to make timely policy decisions and to facilitate comparisons within and among countries, national statistics offices throughout Africa need to build their capacities to gather and analyse data on a broad range of socioeconomic and environmental issues. Up-to-date and well disaggregated data provide for the ongoing analysis of the impact of macroeconomic and microeconomic policies on poverty and inequality, education, labour, the environment, social protection mechanisms, and other key issues. Disaggregated data, by age, gender, income and geographical location, are needed to ensure an accurate assessment of progress in various areas, as well as the identification and categorization of gaps and challenges. National statistics offices, supported by development partners, need to update their statistical systems and data gathering plans to support the reporting requirements of the two Agendas.