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**Economic Commission for Africa****Preparatory and capacity development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in the Africa region for the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 24 February 2020

**Concept note****I. Introduction and rationale**

1. Major groups and other stakeholders<sup>1</sup> play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development. It is well known, for instance, that they contribute significantly to efforts aimed at enhancing inclusion in a number of ways; representing the voiceless, marginalized and vulnerable populations, engaging in capacity-building activities; and strengthening participation in and ownership of development processes by diverse communities, in particular at the national, subnational and local levels. Clearly, major groups bring to bear key aspects that are essential to enhancing the reach, effectiveness and durability of development initiatives and outcomes.

2. In General Assembly resolution 70/1 on transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the need was recognized for major groups and other relevant stakeholders to be involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the follow-up and review processes. In that regard, Governments, the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and other actors were called upon in the context of an enhanced Global Partnership to deliver on the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals and targets, which are at the core of the Agenda. Moreover, a high-level political forum, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, was established to carry out regular reviews in line with resolution 67/290. In addition, the reviews are intended to provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. In addition, major groups and other relevant stakeholders were called upon to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. Also of note, citizens of African countries, civil society organizations and all other identifiable groups are being engaged with respect to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation under Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, which is being implemented in coordination with the 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> References to major groups and other stakeholders align with General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2012 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. More information on major groups and other stakeholders is available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/aboutmajorgroups.html>.



3. Accordingly, the effective implementation of the two agendas requires various actors to work together and strengthen their collaborative and integrated approaches with major groups and other stakeholders. For the contributions of major groups and stakeholders to be full and effective towards the successful implementation of the agendas, capacity development is required to enhance their knowledge on the processes and procedures for engagement. These groups need access to information to better understand their roles and platforms to engage more effectively with one another, Governments and other development actors. In that regard, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, has been organizing workshops since 2015 to strengthen the capacity of these groups to participate and articulate inputs to the follow-up and review of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at regional and global levels.

4. Through the capacity development workshops, African major groups and other stakeholders have been actively engaged in the work of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which is one of the mechanisms providing inputs to the follow-up and review at the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

5. Against this backdrop, ECA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, and the interim committee of major groups and other stakeholders is organizing a preparatory workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa to help African countries prepare for the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in New York. The workshop is scheduled to take place during the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, which will be held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 27 February 2020, on the theme “2020–2030: A decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”.

6. The sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is designed to be an action-oriented Forum for member States and other stakeholders to explore, gain insight into, share and agree on sets of concrete and workable solutions and actions that will enable countries to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the set time frame.

7. In the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now*,<sup>2</sup> the Secretary-General of the United Nations states that despite considerable efforts these past four years, we are not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We must dramatically step up the pace of implementation as we enter a decisive decade for people and the planet.” As such, it is a timely opportunity for Africa to examine and propose concrete ways to accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## II. Objectives of the workshop

8. The workshop will be held on 23 February 2020, the day before the main session of the Regional Forum begins. It is intended that the following objectives be achieved:

(a) Brief major groups and other stakeholders on the follow-up and review process related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the light of the selected Sustainable Development Goals approach;

(b) Promote mutual learning through the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and promising approaches and practices in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and tracking of progress towards achieving the Sustainable

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<sup>2</sup> [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf).

Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, with a special emphasis on the selected Goals that may be particularly relevant from the 2019 high-level political forum;

(c) Promote dialogue and consensus among the major groups and other stakeholders on their perspectives to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

### **III. Expected outcome**

9. The workshop is expected to lead to the following outcomes:

(a) Increased understanding and capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to design and implement approaches and practices to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and follow up on and review progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

(b) Articulation of and consensus on the perspectives of major groups and other stakeholders to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and follow up on and review progress in achieving the Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

(c) Strengthened capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to actively and effectively engage in the follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(d) Enhanced cooperation among major groups and other stakeholders and between them and other stakeholders, including national, subregional and regional policymakers, practitioners and experts, and United Nations entities.

### **IV. Expected outputs**

10. The workshop will generate the following outputs, which will be disseminated widely:

(a) A joint statement of the major groups and other stakeholders to be delivered during the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) A communiqué by the major groups and other stakeholders on the workshop and the sixth session of the Regional Forum;

(c) Summary report of the workshop.

### **V. Key documents**

11. The documents for the workshop include the following:

(a) The present concept note;

(b) The concept note, agenda and programme of work for the sixth session of the Forum;

(c) The regional report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(d) Background papers on the sub-themes of the sixth session of the Forum.

## **VI. Participation**

12. The workshop will be attended by representatives of the nine categories of major groups and the following stakeholder groups: educational and academic entities; persons with disabilities; volunteer groups; and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development.

## **VII. Working languages**

13. The meeting will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous interpretation in the two languages.

## **VIII. Venue and date**

14. The workshop will be held on 24 February 2019 at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

## **IX. Contact**

15. Enquiries concerning the organization of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development should be directed to:

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