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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
Sixth session

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 24–27 February 2020

Item 9 of the agenda\*

**Consideration and adoption of key messages**

## **Draft summary of and key messages from the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), together with the Government of Zimbabwe and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system,<sup>1</sup> convened the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 27 February 2020.

2. The Regional Forum was attended by more than **2,000+** participants, comprising ministers and high-level representatives of the Governments of **[number]** ECA member States, intergovernmental bodies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, other international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders.

3. A summary of the deliberations, including presentations and key messages emanating from the Regional Forum, can be found in section VI below.

### **II. Opening of the session (agenda item 1)**

4. The session was moderated by the Director of the African Centre for Statistics of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Oliver Chinganya.

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\* ECA/RFSD/2020/1/Rev.1.

<sup>1</sup> The following entities of the United Nations system were involved as partners in that process: United Nations Development Coordination Office, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteers programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and World Food Programme...**[to be completed]**



5. The Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe, said that Africa had it all, and needed to succeed in achieving sustainable development, which it had not been able to do despite progress in some areas. The obstacles were many, including climate change, diseases and trade challenges, but Africa could overcome them if countries worked together. In 2018, the economy of Zimbabwe had grown at a rate of 6.2 per cent, especially as a result of the Kariba Dam. Then, because of cyclones Idai and Kenneth, the economy had contracted. She noted with particular pleasure that young people in Zimbabwe had developed solutions for future development and sustainable growth. African young people needed 13 million jobs per year. Those jobs should be created by business and through private sector development. With a smoke that thundered, an eagle that soared and an active youth population, Africa was ready to soar.

6. Nkosilati Nwatitu, climate ambassador from Zimbabwe, highlighted the negative effects of climate change on the environment, noting that a lack of rain had affected the water level of Victoria Falls. Millions of young people were affected by the impacts of climate change. He called upon African Governments to combat climate change to protect the environment. Young people needed to be part of national development plans. Bringing them to the front lines should be encouraged.

7. The outgoing chair of the Bureau, Nezha El Ouafi, stressed that African countries had made substantial, but insufficient, progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries had included both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in their national development frameworks, but the main challenge continued to be mobilizing funding for implementing the two Agendas. That required a concerted effort to mobilize global support for the neediest countries. At its fifty-second session, the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development had recognized the crucial role of strengthening fiscal policies with an objective of increasing public revenues by 12 to 20 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The role of digital technologies remained key not only in improving revenue collection, but also in strengthening the efficiency and transparency of revenue use and management, including its appropriate distribution. South-South cooperation was another key element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the regions. Morocco had developed a national sustainable development strategy, which served as a reference framework for implementing the Goals. A digital system had been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of the implementation of that strategy.

8. The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, Kwesi Quartey, noted that a priority task for Africa was to deliver on the commitment of “silencing the guns” to create a conducive environment for macroeconomic growth and stability. Prosperity, inclusion and the commitment to “leave no one behind” were not possible without peace, security and stability. According to available data, progress with regard to sustainable development had been mixed and uneven. Poverty rates were declining, and gains had been registered with regard to poverty reduction, health and literacy. Progress had also been made with regard to gender equality, but it was not sufficient. At the same time, high population growth, a lack of access to decent jobs, education and health care, inequalities and data gaps persisted. Women and girls and young people continued to be left behind. Through a recently adopted framework, the African Union was advancing a joint approach with the United Nations to reinforce implementation, review, reporting and resource mobilization with regard to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Public administrators had the responsibility to translate ambitions set out in global and regional development agendas into administrative measures, with education, science and technology being core priorities. The Regional Forum was an opportunity to reinforce joint implementation, monitoring and resource mobilization to attain the two

Agendas.

9. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, recognized the significant progress that had been made in Africa, particularly in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. However, given the many challenges it still faced, Africa was not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations development system, in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, would focus on accelerating the pace and scale of progress, with the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development serving as building blocks. The new generation of United Nations country teams and the regional repositioning of the development system would, in cooperation with the African Union, provide stronger, more cohesive platforms for integrated support to member States, thereby strengthening coordination, mobilizing resources, enabling transparency and results-based management, and effective positioning of regional issues in global forums. However, with climate change, hunger and terrorism causing considerable human suffering, success was possible only if member States integrated the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in their national development plans and adopted adequate national financing frameworks. All sectors of society, including the private sector, civil society, academia, local authorities and young people, must embrace action. Stronger public involvement and ownership of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 was needed, with young people being the drivers of change. Particularly in the light of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the impetus to silence the guns, Africa had the skills, leadership, optimism and creativity to realize its full potential.

10. The Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe, Paul Mavina, said that threats to sustainable development required everyone to share experiences to determine a common vision and implementation framework. Zimbabwe had ensured that its national development plan took into account the Sustainable Development Goals, and put in place a dedicated unit in the office of the President to ensure coordination. There was an effort to integrate the Goals into local and provincial development initiatives. All of the Goals were interlinked, which was why social and economic development should be comprehensive and include legislative reforms. In Zimbabwe, the funding gap was large but investment in smart agriculture was a starting point in addressing hunger and extreme poverty.

11. The President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, highlighted the Regional Forum as an opportunity to review progress as the United Nations decade of action and delivery for sustainable development began, recognizing the interlinked and indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to not leave any country in Africa behind. Zimbabwe had been implementing Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, including by refocusing its national budget to align the programmes of government ministries with specific Sustainable Development Goals and establishing a coordination and implementation framework under the office of the President for collaborative technical coordination, supported by partners, the private sector and civil society. The Goals had also been integrated into local development initiatives for grass-roots impact. To accelerate achievement of the Goals and the implementation of Agenda 2063, priority areas of focus included transboundary projects, social safety nets and social protection in the light of persistent shocks, substantial financing gaps, investment in agriculture and associated value chains, efficient exploitation of natural resources, public-private partnerships and private sector participation, empowerment of small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector, gender equality and technology and innovation in the light of the fourth industrial revolution. Climate resilience was a key priority, as the continent was facing severe consequences from climate change. It was important to build strong institutions,

improve standards of living and address corruption, which hampered meaningful development. Credible data sources were needed for implementation, monitoring and reporting with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the support of ECA in the preparation of voluntary national reviews was commendable. He also saluted the initiative of the young people and promised to support their initiatives.

12. To accomplish the set objectives, the Regional Forum featured a high-level panel on accelerators to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the decade 2020–2030; plenary presentations and discussions on the support provided and progress made at regional and subregional levels in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; plenary round-table panels on voluntary national and local reviews and peer learning on implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; plenary round-table panels and parallel meetings on in-depth review, peer learning and dialogue on the sub-themes of the Regional Forum; presentations and discussions on the 2020 session of the Africa Science, Technology and Innovation Forum; presentations by major groups and other stakeholders; and presentations and discussions on support by the United Nations Development system for the implementation of the two Agendas.

13. The following sections summarize the main issues, trends and key messages, including policy recommendations arising from the presentations and deliberations during the sixth session of the Regional Forum. The key messages comprise priorities, policy options and recommendations for Africa, to accelerate implementation at different levels, and the region's collective input to the 2020 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

### **III. High-level panel on accelerators to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the decade 2020–2030 (agenda item 2)**

#### **A. Key trends and recommendations**

14. There had been some progress on some of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 4 on education. However, in Africa progress on Goals relating to other social spheres had been slower than it should have been. There had been barely any reduction in inequality, which continued to have a negative effect on peace and security.

15. There was a need to strengthen financing mechanisms through domestic resource mobilization, which would include capacitating local governments.

16. National development strategies and plans should support the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, hence the need to align implementation structures.

17. Given that results-based monitoring and evaluation systems were being introduced in most member States, every effort must be made to develop data collection mechanisms.

18. Young people must be included in the conceptualization, implementation and monitoring of efforts to accelerate the implementation of programmes for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into consideration the opportunities afforded by the fourth industrial revolution. African children and young people should be empowered by being provided with technological skills, as was the case in many developed countries.

19. The acceleration of women's involvement in science had been slow. Given that the world was changing fast, more women should be involved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

20. Many member States, such as Angola, Cameroon and Zambia, were mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into their national development plans and aligning implementation arrangements with existing frameworks. However, States needed to invest in data disaggregation in order to be able to measure their progress.

21. In order to accelerate the pace of implementation towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 aspirations, the Forum agreed to encourage the participation of the private sector and to harness diaspora remittances.

22. The high-level political forum should be an opportunity for global partnerships to assist in addressing the challenges faced by Africa, not solely to showcase what had been achieved.

## **B. Key messages**

23. In the light of the discussions, Africa should to be more assertive with regard to the resources it requires the global community to provide in order to ensure that it can implement sustainable development, in view of the historical and environmental imbalances it has experienced. Moreover, given that the effects of greenhouse gas emissions are deeply felt in Africa, despite the continent's low greenhouse gas emissions, developed countries should take more responsibility for their own industrial emissions, following the "polluter pays" principle.

24. In the light of the discussions, member States should:

(a) Focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level, through local governance structures;

(b) Harness diaspora remittances in order to finance the social, health and educational needs of their citizens living in Africa;

(c) Adopt a results-based management approach combined with a monitoring and evaluation system in order to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(d) Endorse the process of establishing an agreement relating to and operationalizing the African Continental Free Trade Area in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 through soft and hard infrastructure development.

25. In the light of the discussions, the United Nations and its development partners should create effective partnerships to finance the provision of capacity-building and the strengthening of data collection in order to ensure that Africa can meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

## **IV. Organizational matters (agenda item 3)**

### **(a) Election of the Bureau**

26. Ms. El Ouafi, Chair of the outgoing Bureau, presided over the election of members for the Bureau of the sixth session. She explained the procedure for electing the Bureau, emphasizing the rationale of geographic representation and the principle of rotation.

27. The Committee duly elected the following countries to constitute its Bureau, on the basis of rotational subregional representation:

Chair: Zimbabwe

First Vice-Chair: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Second Vice-Chair: Uganda

Third Vice-Chair: Liberia

Rapporteur: Morocco

**(b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

28. The President invited the Forum to consider the agenda and programme of work for the session. The agenda and programme of work were adopted without amendments.

**V. Progress report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 at the regional and subregional levels** (agenda item 4)

**A. Highlights of the *Africa Sustainable Development Report 2019***

29. The *Africa Sustainable Development Report* is produced annually by the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Commission for Africa. The focus of previous reports dovetailed with the themes of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The 2019 report covers all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on people, prosperity, the planet, peace and partnerships, along with the dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. There has been mixed progress in that regard; Africa might not meet the targets if scaling up does not occur.

**B. First continental report on the implementation of Agenda 2063**

30. The Director of Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, International Cooperation and Resource Mobilization of the African Union presented the first continental report on the implementation of the first 10-year implementation plan (2014-2023) of Agenda 2063. The report had been prepared by the African Union Commission in collaboration with African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development. Covering the period from 2014 to 2019, its analysis was based on data from 31 African member States and six regional economic communities. The report indicated that aspiration 4, on a peaceful and secure Africa, stood out as the best-implemented aspiration, which was attributable mainly to the fact that the majority of African countries had put in place mechanisms to attain peace. However, the performance of Africa with regard to aspirations 3 and 5 had registered the lowest scores. The continent had performed very well in the implementation of aspiration 9, owing mainly to the signing and ratification of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area by the majority of member States, but had performed poorly on goal 5. He highlighted the urgent need to address key challenges, including data gaps, and financing and capacity issues, that were slowing the realization of Agenda 2063.

**C. Discussions and trends**

31. Participants acknowledged the findings of the first continental report and

expressed the wish to receive additional information with respect to the methodology used. They also discussed the need for further reporting frameworks at the national level and for uniformity in defining relevant indicators.

32. Poverty rates were declining, while gender equality and access to primary education, health care and electricity was improving. However, coverage was insufficient. The absolute number of people living in poverty was increasing, owing to high population growth rates, and millions of children were not receiving quality education, not completing key grades or were out of school altogether.

33. Measures to improve the reach and quality of social services, for example, by making school environments child-friendly, improving the quality of health care and expanding access to electricity and safe water were critical to realizing sustainable development.

34. Strong and accountable institutions were critical to realizing sustainable development in Africa. Inclusive economic growth could be built only on the firmest foundations of just, transparent and efficient governance and institutions administered by a capable State.

35. Improvements in road, rail, air and marine transportation systems and interconnections throughout the continent would help to spur economic growth.

36. The convergence between the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and the “High Five” priorities of the African Development Bank was an opportunity for strong collaboration and coordination between national Governments and development partners.

37. African countries could raise additional domestic revenue in the amount of 12 to 20 per cent of gross domestic product.

38. Sustainable development was everybody’s business. Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches were critical to realizing sustainable development.

## **D. Key messages and recommendations**

39. Following the discussion, the panel agreed on the following key messages and recommendations:

(a) Africa’s progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is mixed. Member States should come up with inclusive policies and formulate appropriate policies with sustainable funding mechanisms;

(b) Poverty and inequality should be addressed in tandem. Member States should take measures to expand job creation, increase household incomes, secure property rights, develop infrastructure and enhance human capital and labour productivity, which are key to promoting inclusive growth and reducing poverty;

(c) Good governance and trade within and among African countries, underscored by quality infrastructure and supportive policies, are key to inclusive growth. Member States should take advantage of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, which entered into force in May 2019, by investing in areas that support increased production and value addition, trade facilitation and trade-related infrastructure;

(d) Member States are encouraged to sign and ratify the legal documents for the establishment of the continental financial institutions and other African Union treaties;

(e) Member States should plan for growing urbanization to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. They should also take advantage of urbanization;

(f) To realize the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, member States should design measures to expand fiscal space for equitable spending, adjusting fiscal and tax policies and the management of tax revenue;

(g) Member States should address the issue of mounting debt, which has adverse implications for the realization of sustainable development;

(h) With regard to the United Nations decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, the time for action is now, and the future is bright. In the next 10 years, Governments, the private sector, civil society and development partners should collaborate in order to convert development aspirations and strategies into action;

(i) The African Union and the United Nations should work together to come up with one continental report that focuses on both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in order to reduce the reporting burden on member States;

(j) As Agenda 2063 encompasses the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union and United Nations should design a common monitoring framework for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 so that Africa can speak with one voice;

(k) Member States should engage with more stakeholders at the country level in the process of reviewing and validation of the report;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and the African Union Commission should organize technical workshops in order to understand the methodological approach that was used to come up with the results from the two reports.

## **VI. Summary and key messages** (agenda items 5, 6 and 7)

### **A. Background**

40. The Forum was held against the backdrop of evidence that, notwithstanding their considerable efforts over the last four years, countries and partners were not on track to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, within the set time frame. The coming decade, 2020–2030, therefore offered a window of hope to speed up the pace and expand the scale of implementation for delivery of the regional and global goals. As such, the Regional Forum represented an opportunity to translate into action the proclamation of the 2020s as a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, as endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 74/4.

41. Accordingly, the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was designed as an action-oriented gathering for member States and other stakeholders to explore, gain insight, share and agree on opportunities and sets of tangible and workable solutions and transformative actions that would enable the countries to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, within the set time frame.

42. The above attributes of the sixth session of the Regional Forum framed its focus and expectations, and also the execution of the main activities during the Forum.

### **B. Theme and activities of the session**

43. The sixth session was held on the theme: “2020–2030: A decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”. This theme is closely aligned with that of the 2020 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, namely: “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of

action and delivery for sustainable development”.

44. The principal activities carried out during the Forum were the following:

(a) Regional follow-up and review of progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. To this end, the Forum undertook a review of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. To promote an interlinked and integrated approach to the review and deliberation process during the session, the 17 Goals were clustered into five sub-themes articulated around the so-called “five Ps” – people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships;<sup>2</sup>

(b) Peer learning, including sharing approaches, experiences and lessons learned in conducting voluntary national and local reviews and other efforts to advance the integrated implementation of the two Agendas;

(c) Identifying and articulating priorities, policy options and recommendations of Africa in the form of key messages, to accelerate implementation at different levels, and as the region’s collective input to the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development (7–16 July 2020, New York).

45. The proceedings of the main session of the Regional Forum were enriched by the more than 60 preparatory and side events<sup>3</sup> held on its margins. Among those events were the second session of the Africa Regional Science Technology and Innovation Forum; a regional workshop on voluntary national review: strengthening voluntary integrated national reviews of and reporting on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and a preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in the African region for the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

## **C. Panels and parallel meetings**

### **1. Voluntary national and local reviews on implementation of the two Agendas**

#### **(a) Discussion**

46. Prior to the sixth session, 35 African member States had conducted and participated in voluntary national reviews at high-level political forums. Another 17 had committed to participating in such reviews in 2020. The voluntary national reviews were playing an important role in focusing attention, particularly on legislation; strengthening the engagement of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, young people and vulnerable groups; and promoting reforms in areas such as poverty reduction, health, water and sanitation and renewable energy.

47. The key challenge facing States that conducted voluntary national reviews was the lack of disaggregated data and statistics, which affected the review methodology and often resulted in inadequate inclusion. That in turn undermined the principle of leaving no one behind. Another challenge was financing, both for the reviews themselves and for implementation of the

<sup>2</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals were arranged in the following clusters for each sub-theme: people: Goal 1 – no poverty, Goal 2 – zero hunger, Goal 3 – good health and well-being, Goal 4 – quality education, and Goal 5 – gender equality; prosperity: Goal 7 – affordable and clean energy, Goal 8 – decent work and economic growth, Goal 9 – industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 10 – reduced inequalities, and Goal 11 – sustainable cities and communities; the planet: Goal 6 – clean water and sanitation, Goal 12 – responsible consumption and production, Goal 13 – climate action, Goal 14 – life below water, and Goal 15 – life on land; peace: Goal 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnerships: Goal 17 – partnerships for the goals.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.uneca.org/arfsd2020>.

resulting recommendations.

48. Voluntary national reviews and the implementation of the resulting recommendations could be strengthened through increased political commitment to the reviews, raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, tackling corruption, building robust institutions, standardizing the review frameworks and involving a greater diversity of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society organizations.

**(b) Key messages**

49. In the light of the discussions, member States are encouraged to:

(a) Conduct voluntary national reviews; member States that have not yet done so are encouraged to volunteer in the forthcoming cycle. Voluntary national reviews should not, however, be conducted as a formality; they should be objective and lead to fundamental changes in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

(b) Develop clear mechanisms for and invest in generating and using disaggregated data to support evidence-based voluntary national reviews and national development frameworks. They should also invest in information and communications technology that can contribute to timely collection, dissemination and use of data and information for voluntary national reviews and planning;

(c) Ensure that voluntary national reviews highlight flagship projects and good practices that contribute to transformation and accelerate implementation, particularly in key areas such as poverty eradication, women's empowerment and job creation. They should be supported by the United Nations country team, ECA and other partners;

(d) Strengthen resource mobilization for both conducting and implementing the recommendations resulting from voluntary national reviews that embody linkages and convergence between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and national development plans. Moreover, there should be follow-up to the reviews, including the building of partnerships that result in meeting the goals of the two Agendas.

50. In the light of the discussions, ECA and the African Union Commission are encouraged to develop a peer review mechanism and a community of practice to promote effective voluntary national reviews and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

**2. Voluntary national reviews, voluntary local reviews and peer learning on implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063**

**(a) Discussion**

51. During the session, panellists considered the role of voluntary local reviews in accelerating the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in Africa. They recalled that in the 2030 Agenda, States Members of the United Nations were encouraged to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels which were country-led and country-driven.

52. The insufficient localization of global and regional agendas in Africa was an impediment to accelerating implementation, follow-up and review.

53. Voluntary local reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals were critical in ensuring ownership, accountability and the commitment of all stakeholders, at all levels. Subnational governments were most immediately and directly responsible for the actual implementation of programmes and strategies aimed at achieving the targets in Agenda 2030; the reviews should

also be at the subnational level. Voluntary local reviews were identified as important tools for meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement and mobilization to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. ECA was working with selected cities and localities on the preparation of voluntary local reviews, the experience and findings of which were considered during the session. Africa faced the challenge of the lack of reliable data, even at the local levels, which affected the conduct of voluntary local reviews.

54. The notion of leaving no one behind could be achieved only through engaging the different groups in the community; women, the elderly and young people should be encouraged to participate fully in efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

**(b) Key messages**

55. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum agreed that, in order to accelerate the implementation of the two Agendas, local and regional governments should be fully engaged in the Africa Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

56. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum also agreed that member States should:

- (a) Integrate voluntary local reviews in their voluntary national reviews;
- (b) Assist local authorities to collect reliable, consistent local data and statistics in order to conduct voluntary local reviews;
- (c) Establish voluntary local review mechanisms to improve accountability, transparency and public ownership of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (d) Provide local authorities with adequate resources to enable them to assess their local resources for their local economic development;
- (e) Promote strong partnerships and coordination with local stakeholders for effective voluntary local reviews, with particular focus on vulnerable groups;
- (f) Encourage community awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, in collaboration with the media and traditional communication channels;
- (g) Commit further to ensuring full localization of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 by transforming governance systems through effective devolution of responsibilities and resources;
- (h) Establish peer reviews among local authorities to improve implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
- (i) Institutionalize the engagement of young people as key stakeholders for the conduct of voluntary local reviews, including through young people and child parliaments and councils;
- (j) Integrate, with the assistance of ECA, local development and urban issues in national development, national budgetary instruments and key economic sector policies.

57. Following its consideration of the sub-theme, the Regional Forum further agreed that the United Nations system should:

- (a) Assist in the development of a common template for voluntary local reviews for ease of integration and standardization of procedures;
- (b) Design a template for peer-reviewed voluntary local reviews in Africa that is aligned with voluntary national reviews in order to better standardize key principles.

### **3. Sub-theme of people**

#### **(a) Key messages**

58. Following their consideration of the sub-theme, the panellists agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Member States should invest in data, research and new knowledge, while being cognizant of social norms and practices. They should also address issues of adaptation and resilience, and new technologies must be revisited with a view to using them to solve the problems of the people of the continent;

(b) African member States should create new knowledge and avoid being consumers of wrong knowledge in order to maintain the dignity of their people and generate prosperity and peace for the continent;

(c) Member States should revisit educational programmes and focus especially on education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, while paying attention to secondary education of the girl child because the science and mathematics gap by gender is very wide in most member States. They should also increase national financing options for education;

(d) Member States should improve their management of climate change, including through the management of underground water resources. This is because sustainable and steady economic growth is linked to the effects of climate change on the continent;

(e) Member States should take a position on gas energy as a transitional energy source for the continent as they prepare for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(f) Member States should rethink their educational systems and use them to prepare young people for specific types of work. Young people can then take advantage of the world's evolving megatrends. There is a need to start building the future generations of Africa by nurturing them to become better citizens;

(g) Member States should put in place the policies necessary to promote agriculture, including by building capital and increasing resilience in order to stimulate economic activity;

(h) Member States should shift from a single service delivery approach to multiple targeted service delivery approaches;

(i) Member States must engage the sectors that are driving inequalities among the population, notably security, as highlighted by the African Union theme for 2020, "Silencing the guns", and also address the various sociocultural constraints, especially issues related to gender inequality;

(j) Member States and development partners should explore innovative financing, especially with regard to how to work effectively with the financing that is available on the continent.

### **4. Sub-theme of partnerships**

#### **(a) Key messages**

59. Following their consideration of the sub-theme, the panellists agreed on the following key messages:

(a) African countries should design and implement innovative financing policies and undertake reforms to broaden their tax bases, eliminate loopholes that permit tax avoidance and prioritize expenditure with the greatest impact on the less privileged, and monitor the reach of public spending and combat illicit financial flows;

(b) African countries should operationalize the African Continental Free Trade Area and develop national strategies and plans of action in that regard;

(c) African countries should support multisectoral partnerships to promote human and institutional capacity-building and modernize national statistical offices and other institutions, agencies and civil society organizations;

(d) African countries should undertake capacity needs assessments with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and develop related capacity-building strategies and plans;

(e) African countries should design and implement digital transformation policies and strategies by 2025, and at least 40 per cent of their populations should be using digital financing;

(f) Development partners and United Nations organizations should support South-South and North-South cooperation to accelerate capacity-building for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of Agenda 2063.

## 5. Sub-theme of prosperity

### Key messages

60. Following their consideration of the sub-theme, the panellists agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Member States should redefine the concept of prosperity in the African context to resonate with ordinary citizens and adopt a people and human rights-based approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, countries should institutionalize stakeholder processes to jointly design solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Member States should integrate pro-employment policy approaches in their macroeconomic and sectoral economic policy frameworks, in an effort to stimulate labour demand and decent jobs. These should be complemented with social protection systems to address extreme poverty, which remains widespread in Africa, facilitating a transition to affordable renewable energy;

(c) Member States should accelerate structural transformation leveraging agricultural and value addition to mineral endowments to support sustainable and innovation-based industrialization while addressing infrastructure deficits and strengthening institutions and governance frameworks;

(d) Member States should ratify and put in place the necessary measures for the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in order to draw on the resulting opportunities to accelerate industrialization and intra-regional trade;

(e) Member States should integrate a spatial perspective and urban approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and address related binding constraints, with particular reference to infrastructure, renewable energy and barriers to institutional capacities;

(f) Member States should scale up policies for education that is inclusive and of a high standard, skills enhancement and health services as necessary ingredients to achieve prosperity in all its facets and to develop incentives for skilled Africans to remain on the continent and to stem the brain drain while attracting the diaspora to return;

(g) Member States should create and reinforce regional innovation systems as incubators for science, innovation and technology development,

drawing on African expertise and local innovations, and advance the development of emerging technologies, with particular emphasis on increasing women's involvement;

(h) Member States should put in place specific measures to create an enabling environment for increased private sector investments and involvement in financing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Africa, while leveraging untapped revenues and diaspora remittances and fostering stock market investments by Africans through systematic education and awareness programmes;

(i) Member States should consider migration governance as an integral part of all development efforts in the pursuit of prosperity;

(j) Member States should effectively engage and fully involve young people and persons living with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and advance gender equality and women's empowerment, while paying particular attention to children and their specific needs and vulnerabilities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(k) Member States should generate reliable and timely data and develop statistical systems to address current gaps. In addition, they should ensure coherence and coordination across government ministries and among development partners for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with regional economic communities being critical at the subregional scale;

(l) The United Nations development system should provide technical assistance to regional economic communities in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to ensure that no country is left behind;

(m) Member States are called upon to accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism and undergo governance reviews.

## **6. Sub-theme of the planet**

### **Key messages**

61. Recognizing that climate change poses an existential threat to Africa, jeopardizing the attainment of the continent's development agenda, and recognizing also (i) the urgency of mobilizing adequate financial resources to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, (ii) the need to address the potential stranding of Africa's carbon assets, (iii) the importance of biodiversity in delivering sustainable development and building resilience to climate-induced disasters and human insecurities, and ensuring environmental integrity, sustainable land use and land management, as well as access to sustainable ecosystem services as a human right, (iv) the need to build capacities to align nationally determined contributions, the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and national development plans to scale up action, (v) the importance of integrated management of transboundary resources, and (vi) the potential of Africa's blue economy and the opportunities it could unleash for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, the meeting participants made the following recommendations:

(a) All parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must take a more ambitious approach and accelerate actions to meet their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, the Doha Amendment and the Paris Agreement;

(b) Member States are encouraged to develop just transition strategies using a new climate economy approach that guarantees social, economic and environmental benefits;

(c) Member States should facilitate innovative financing mechanisms for the Sustainable Development Goals, including enhanced domestic resource

mobilization, the use of green and blue bonds and the creation of an enabling environment for direct private sector finance in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Member States should ensure a whole-of-society approach in their efforts to deliver on sustainable development, with particular emphasis on the engagement of indigenous people, women, young people, children, persons with disabilities and local communities, capitalizing on indigenous knowledge systems;

(e) Parties to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity should ensure that the new deal for nature and people includes tangible actions and targets and the means for their implementation;

(f) The United Nations system should provide technical assistance to the African transformative initiatives, including the Great Green Wall Initiative, the Congo Basin Climate Commission, the Sahel Region Climate Commission, and the Climate Commission for Small Island States. In this regard, States are encouraged to support the establishment of a committee on climate governance at the regional level;

(g) Member States should expedite their national implementation of Africa's Blue Economy Strategy through the development of policy, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks. The United Nations system should support this process, which complements the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway;

(h) Member States should implement an integrated and coherent approach to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, and to water management and sanitation plans. In addition, they should increase resource allocation to national and regional hydrological and meteorological institutions and put in place or strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks for improved production and delivery of weather and climate information services, including for multi-hazard and integrated early warning systems;

(i) In order to ensure effective implementation, monitoring, review and reporting of the Sustainable Development Goals, States should collaborate and strengthen partnerships to invest in data generation, including from remote sensing and other geospatial sources, big data and various observational networks and infrastructures.

## **7. Subtheme of peace**

### **(a) Discussion**

62. The panellists discussed the sub-theme on peace covered in Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and the corresponding aspirations of Agenda 2063.

63. Among the issues that arose was that of leaving no one behind. It was agreed that for that to be realized, an inclusive approach to governance was required, including access to justice and the rule of law, and opportunities for marginalized people, including young people, people with disabilities, women and indigenous people. The consensus was that such an approach needed to be meaningful and a framework for regular people-centred consultation and dialogue with all stakeholders.

64. It was also agreed that disaggregated data were required for evidence-based monitoring and evaluation, tracking progress and allocating resources to accelerate the implementation of programmes for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063 aspirations. The observation was made that there needed to be greater collaboration among data generators,

collectors and compilers for harmonization and in order to ensure the quality and completeness of data input into the national database.

65. Participants commented that respected intergovernmental and international institutions such as the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and others involved in the observation of elections needed to be diligent and to curb corrupt practices including the rigging of elections, which deprive populations of their rightful choices.

66. The comment was made that corruption had significant reach in Africa and had led to the weakening of governance structures and processes. It facilitated resource leakages through illicit financial flows, which led to the channelling of funds into other areas rather than into African development programmes, or to support the efforts invested in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 aspirations.

67. The discussion turned to African Governments and the need to respect the separation of powers and mandates of governance institutions to ensure good governance, eliminate State capture, curb rent-seeking and corruption, and also to ensure that resource allocation went to those sectors and activities most deserving of it. Included in that was the commitment of Government to ensure that no one was left behind by the progress made in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 aspirations.

**(b) Key messages**

68. Following their consideration of the sub-theme, the panellists agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Member States must adopt a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which would ensure raised awareness of its populations and that all people have access to justice, that their rights are protected, that the resource represented by volunteers is harnessed, that all forms of discrimination of marginalized people are eliminated and that people from all sectors of society have access to decent livelihoods;

(b) Those who violate the rules must be discouraged through prohibitive penalties. Conflicts such as those in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Arica and the Sahel must be prevented and managed responsibly and in a timely fashion, and adequate resources must be allocated to support the mandate in the resolution;

(c) In order to leave no one behind, Member States must mainstream the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into their national development plans and planning processes at the local levels of government, and ensure that the planning, implementation and monitoring development processes are genuinely inclusive of all stakeholders from all sectors of society;

(d) Member States must collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure that they are signed on to the national Sustainable Development Goals implementation plan and that they implement programmes to achieve it, and generate and provide data for tracking implementation and reporting;

(e) The United Nations and the African Union Commission must reinforce their governance mechanisms and hold Member States accountable, and banish the contradictions inherent in respecting the sovereignty of nations while they may be violating the aspirations of the peace goals;

(f) Member States must practise transformative leadership that commits to “silencing the guns” that kill and destroy livelihoods, leaving many people destitute.

## **D. Presentations and discussions (agenda item 8)**

### **1. 2020 session of the Africa Science, Technology and Innovation Forum**

#### **Key messages**

69. Following its consideration of the issues arising from the second session of the Africa Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Member States should build capacity in the basic sciences and engineering, guided by national heritage, priorities and comparative geographical advantages in order for Africa to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by emerging technologies;

(b) Member States should translate their words into action and significantly increase investment in research and development, universities and research centres;

(c) Member States should align critical skills at the country level in order to effectively prepare for a future that is increasingly driven by science, technology and innovation;

(d) Member States should establish innovation hubs, incubators and common equipment centres that serve industry, academia and society at large;

(e) Member States should develop a strategy that concomitantly implements the second, third and fourth industrial revolutions in order to leapfrog ahead and achieve sustainable development in Africa by 2063;

(f) Member States should strengthen collaboration and partnerships at the continental and regional levels to support regional networks and capacity-building initiatives;

(g) Member States should learn from previous mistakes in other regions and achieve significant gains by avoiding the expensive mistakes made in developed countries;

(h) Member States should adopt and promote renewable energy technologies in order to mitigate the impact of climate change and avoid the unsustainability of carbon-dependent economies;

(i) Member States should redesign their higher education curricula to put an emphasis on the production of goods and services.

### **2. Major groups and other stakeholders**

#### **Key messages**

70. Following its consideration of the perspectives of major groups and other stakeholders, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Member States should invest in institutions that generate data and also recognize citizen-generated data to resolve the data paucity problem. These data should be disaggregated, in order to understand intersectionality of group-based inequalities, and accessible to all stakeholders such as civil society organizations, media and citizens;

(b) Member States should to guarantee civic space for civil society organizations and trade unions, as well as protect all human rights defenders and media workers to protect and promote freedom of expression. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, it is of utmost importance to achieve the meaningful and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including children, young people, older persons, people with disabilities, women, internally displaced persons, refugees, indigenous communities, smallholder farmers, and other marginalized groups, in all stages of decision-making processes. This dynamic should also prevail in peace processes and conflict resolution processes by

through support for local initiatives to combat terrorism, violence, extremism and xenophobia;

(c) Member States should integrate the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in national development plans for joint implementation and monitoring. The two Agendas should therefore be reflected in national budgets. Governments should also adopt clear financing mechanisms for the Sustainable Development Goals with an emphasis on domestic resource mobilization by engaging the private sector, curbing illicit financial flows and progressively increasing public investments;

(d) Member States should undertake structural transformation through quality public education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, technology skills transfer, and revaluation of indigenous knowledge to tackle the many challenges facing humanity;

(e) Member States, through subnational governments and the private sector, should invest in climate-resilient infrastructure as well as the transition towards 100 per cent renewable energy.

### **3. Support from the United Nations development system to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063**

#### **Key messages**

71. Following its consideration of support from the United Nations development system, the Regional Forum agreed on the following key messages:

(a) Advancing the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 is at the core of the work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and shows the significance of the African Union as a strategic partner of the United Nations;

(b) At the subregional level, the subregional coordination mechanisms work with the regional economic communities within the framework of the two Agendas taking into account the subregional specificities;

(c) Despite the tremendous work done and the productive relationship between the United Nations and the African Union and its building blocks, the regional economic communities, Africa is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 or the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

(d) A coherent and coordinated implementation of the various African Union-United Nations frameworks will contribute to accelerating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 aspirations, while addressing the development, peace and security and human rights nexus;

(e) The African Union theme of 2020 “silencing the guns” calls for the mobilization of African Union and United Nations entities around the continent’s peace and security agenda in a coherent fashion;

(f) The African Union and United Nations reforms provide ample opportunities for strengthening the partnership between the two entities from regional, subregional to national levels.

#### **Silencing the guns**

(a) Strengthen partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in line with relevant resolutions, in particular UNSCR 2457 (2019), and in that regard, establish African Union-United Nations teams to coordinate joint initiatives;

(b) Regional commissions and United Nations country teams to support African Union member States and other stakeholders to develop and implement

country-level strategies on silencing the guns, including supporting national structures to mainstream inclusive approaches for silencing the guns;

(c) United Nations to support the strengthening of capacities of the African Union blueprint mechanisms for the promotion of peaceful societies such as the African Governance Architecture, the African Peace and Security Architecture;

(d) National initiatives on conflict prevention should be mainstreamed into national development planning processes from macro to sectoral and different levels of government. In that regard, they called for support for timely mediation of potential violent conflicts situations, from the village, community and city to the national levels;

(e) Voluntary national reviews reporting processes should integrate conflicts and peace and security issues as a way of addressing the peace, security, human rights and development nexus;

(f) Recognizing the increasing linkage between climate change and conflict, there is a need to mainstream the environment, natural resources and climate change challenges into peace and security initiatives;

(g) Leverage refugee-development nexus in view the former's potential and actual contribution to local economies;

(h) Strengthen cooperation in information sharing aimed at combating, among others, human, drugs and arms trafficking, terrorism and violent extremism, including whistleblowing. Implement the African Union Peace and Security Council decision on naming and shaming;

(i) Prioritize combating terrorism and terrorist groups, these being a major source and factor for irregular migration, including by ensuring timely sharing of intelligence pertaining to terrorism and violent extremism;

(j) Encourage the international community to support adherence to the implementation of international instruments that prohibit the transfer of weapons into the hands of illegal end users, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, as a complimentary to the silencing the guns project;

(k) Promote peace and security in Africa by promoting income generating programmes for young people in Africa to prevent them from joining rebellious groups;

(l) The African Union Commission and the United Nations should establish avenues of communication with the entities that are providing guns in Africa, in the interests of addressing the root causes of war in Africa.

### **Leveraging the decade**

(a) Translate the African Union-United Nations frameworks into action in order to make a difference in people's lives at regional and country levels in realising the goals of Agenda 2063 and 2030;

(b) Consult and engage the African Union at the design stage of initiatives to ensure that the African Union is in the driving seat and facilitate the involvement of member States at the implementation stage;

(c) Ensure regional, subregional and country level interface in the new evolving collaborative framework between the African Union and the United Nations at the regional level and actively engage member States, Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country teams in the new cooperation architecture;

(d) The integrated planning and reporting tool provides a good framework to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and national development plans, which should be rolled out at country level.

## **Youth forum**

(a) Youth agency is important in development processes and as such, voice, power and participation should be accorded to young people;

(b) To harness the youth demographic dividend, there is need for significant investment in the youth, particularly in relation to innovation, technology, and skills development;

(c) More efforts should be made to involve Africa's young people from the design stage of development, peace and security policies and solutions;

(d) Expanded access to quality and inclusive education for persons with disabilities; national-level budgeting to address the practical needs and strategic interests of persons with disabilities.

(e) The UN should promote inclusion by promoting and strengthening the participation of people with disabilities since their participation in the society is also important.

(f) Education for young girls should be promoted and that should include sexual education and STEM education.

## **E. Submission of the key messages to the high-level political forum and their presentation by the Chair**

72. The Regional Forum requested the secretariat to submit its key messages to the high-level political forum through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, by 28 April 2020. The Regional Forum further requested the Chair to make a presentation of its key messages to the high-level political forum under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council at its meeting in New York from 7 to 17 July 2020, during the session on the reports of the regional forums for sustainable development.

## **F. Consideration and adoption of key messages (agenda item 9)**

73. Following the adoption of the key messages, the Regional Forum adopted the ministerial declaration, entitled Victoria Falls Declaration on the United Nations Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development in Africa, the text of which is set out in the annex to the present report.

## **G. Theme, dates and venue of the seventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (agenda item 10)**

## **H. Other matters (agenda item 11)**

## **I. Closing of the session (agenda item 12)**

### **1. Appreciation**

74. The ministers, high-level officials and participants expressed their appreciation to the President of Zimbabwe and to the Government and people of Zimbabwe for hosting the sixth session of the Regional Forum and for the warm hospitality extended to them. They also expressed their appreciation to the President, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union for their attendance at the Forum.

## Annex

### **Victoria Falls Declaration on the United Nations Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development in Africa**

*We, African ministers and officials responsible for sustainable development, finance and economic development, social development, agriculture, justice, statistics, and science and technology and representatives of the African Union Commission and other intergovernmental organizations, parliaments, the private sector and civil society,*

*Having met* in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 24 to 27 February 2020 at the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme “2020–2030: a decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”,

*Expressing* profound gratitude and appreciation to the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, and the Government and people of Zimbabwe for generously hosting the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the warm hospitality extended to participants,

*Expressing also* warm appreciation for the attendance at the Forum of President Mnangagwa, the Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed, and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, Kwesi Quartey,

*Recalling and reaffirming* the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held on 24 and 25 September in New York, proclaiming the 2020s as the decade of action to deliver on goals,

*Recalling and reaffirming also* the Marrakech Declaration on Sustainable Development and the key messages adopted at the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 18 April 2019,

*Recalling and reaffirming further* General Assembly 70/1, in which the Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Recalling* Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, adopted at the twenty-fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union,

*Recognizing* the efforts by member States and other stakeholders in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

*Considering* the critical role of young people in the continent’s transformation agenda,

*Welcoming* the presence for the first time in the Regional Forum of voluntary local review and underscoring the essential role of voluntary local review in localizing and strengthening voluntary national review, and ensuring the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

*Noting* with serious concern that Africa is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and that there is a window of opportunity within the decade 2020–2030 for decisive action on a continental scale to achieve the Goals,

*Emphasizing* with serious concern the existential threat posed by climate change and the urgent need to raise ambition on climate action to avert catastrophic impacts of climate change across multiple goals,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing Agenda 2063,

1. *Call upon* all African countries to urgently revisit frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, to align their national development plans with the principles of the two agendas and to set in motion programmes and projects to deliver on the 10 commitments for action outlined in the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, and invite the United Nations country teams to provide strong, coordinated and coherent support to member States in that regard;
2. *Also call upon* all African countries to develop and implement people-centred and inclusive national strategies to support the United Nations decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, which are mainstreamed in the national development plans and budgeting processes and in that regard strengthen mechanisms for the mobilization of resources at the national level and make efficient use of funding for the two agendas;
3. *Further call upon* all African countries to implement the key messages of the Regional Forum;
4. *Call upon* the Economic Commission for Africa and partners to scale up their support of member States' capacity development for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and develop and implement a regional strategy to support the United Nations decade of action and delivery for sustainable development through targeted interventions and capacity development in transformational areas, including climate action; youth education, entrepreneurship and innovation; women's empowerment; food systems; data and statistics; trade; evidence-based voluntary national and local reviews and integrated planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting tools; science, technology and innovation; and stakeholder engagement;
5. *Invite* the Economic Commission for Africa to report annually to the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on the development and implementation of a regional strategy in support of the United Nations decade of action and delivery for sustainable development;
6. *Request* the Government of Zimbabwe to present these messages on behalf of Africa to the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its meeting in New York from 7 to 16 July 2020; and in various global, regional and subregional forums in order to advocate for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.