

Preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in the African region for the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Kampala, 6–7 April 2025

Concept note

I. Background

1. 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 implementing the 2030 Agenda, including in 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 lie at the core of the Agenda.

2. The contributions of major groups and other stakeholders are essential in achieving the two agendas. They strengthen inclusion, including by giving voice to the voiceless, marginalized, and vulnerable populations; promoting accountability, transparency, and responsiveness; engaging in capacity-building activities; sharing their experiences and knowledge in planning, implementation, and review processes; and strengthening participation in and ownership of development processes by diverse communities at the national, subnational and local levels.

II. Introduction and rationale

3. Nine years after adopting the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the world is off track to achieving its Goals and targets. Globally, only 16 percent of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets will be achieved by 2030. Only 10 out of 144 measurable SDG targets in Africa are expected to be reached by 2030 (or 7 percent).¹ Furthermore, 106 targets required accelerated actions. At the same time, 28 showed signs of reversal of progress.² Several challenges and external shocks account for Africa's difficulties in achieving the SDGs.

4. Climate change costs African countries three to five percent of their annual economic output,³ due to climate-induced disasters. Poverty, unemployment, and economic inequalities have persisted and worsened due to the impacts of the COVID-19

¹Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., (2024). The SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future. Sustainable Development Report 2024. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press. doi: 10.25546/108572

²Ramaite, A. and le Roux, A. (2024) *Accelerate, extend or abandon? Africa's SDG dilemma*, ISS Africa. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/accelerate-extend-or-abandon-africa-s-sdg-dilemma>

³ <https://unfccc.int/news/delivering-on-climate-action-will-unlock-a-goldmine-of-human-and-economic-benefits-simon-stiell-at>

pandemic.⁴The continent's economic growth of 3.1 percent in the past five years has fallen well below the average seven percent that is needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.⁵Moreover, gender inequality continues to affect women's and girls' live outcomes adversely. It costs the continent **USD 95 billion annually**.

5. The growing external debt burdens and the recent tightening of monetary policy in major economies have significantly reduced the fiscal space of many African countries, undermining their ability to invest in critical services and infrastructure required to achieve the SDGs. By the end of 2023, Africa's external debt reached more than USD 1.1 trillion.⁶The 2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report estimated the SDG financing gap for Africa to be USD 1.3 trillion annually.⁷

6. For the African continent to get back on track to achieve the SDGs in the remaining six years, transformative and multi-stakeholder efforts are required. These include raising financing for development from various sources, including domestic and external, improving governance, addressing political instability, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss, and harnessing the promise of science and technology to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent job creation.

7. It is against this backdrop that the eleventh session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will take place from 8 to 10 April 2025 in Kampala, Uganda. Its theme is: "*Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.*"The Regional Forum will also conduct an in-depth review of the implementation in Africa of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 14 (Life Below Water), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

8. The Economic Commission for Africa and the Africa Regional Mechanism for Major Groups and Other Stakeholders are organizing a preparatory and capacity-development workshop for major groups and other stakeholders in Africa from 6 to 7 April 2024. In line with the Regional Forum theme, the workshop will emphasize the role of science- and evidence-based solutions, as well as major groups and other stakeholders, in achieving the two agendas.

9. The workshop will include the following sessions:

- (a) An opening session featuring remarks by representatives of major groups and other stakeholders, governments,

⁴ <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2021/how-covid-19-has-impacted-sdgs-africa>

⁵ AfDB (2024) *African economic outlook 2024 | African Development Bank Group, African Economic Outlook 2024*. Available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/publications/african-economic-outlook>

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/28/business/african-debt-crisis.html>

⁷ AU, AfDB, ECA, UNDP (2024). 2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report. Available at: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-07/asdr_2024_-_en_0.pdf

and the UN system to set the scene for subsequent discussions;

- (b) A session on reviewing the progress made in achieving the 2030 Agenda in Africa;
- (c) A session to examine the role of major groups and other stakeholders, particularly the scientific and technological community and the education and academic community, in promoting science- and evidence-based solutions to achieve the two agendas.
- (d) A session on the role of disaster risk reduction in safeguarding the progress made in achieving the SDGs.
- (e) A session on [placeholder]
- (f) A session on [placeholder]
- (g) A session on [placeholder]
- (h) Five parallel sessions to consider key messages from the major groups and other stakeholders on the five selected Sustainable Development Goals of the Regional Forum;and
- (i) Astakeholders' joint townhall that will bring together participants from the major groups and other stakeholders'workshop and the voluntary national reviews' workshop.

III. Objectives

10. The objectives ofthe workshopare as follows:

- (a) To brief major groups and other stakeholders on the progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda in Africa;
- (b) To highlight and share the contributions of major groups and other stakeholders tothe implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on science- and evidence-based solutions and technological innovations;
- (c) To produce key messages from major groups and other stakeholders on implementing the 2030 Agenda, focusing on the five selected Sustainable Development Goals,to form part oftheir contributions to thecollective African input to the 2025 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

IV. Expected outcomes

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

- (a) Increased understanding and capacity of major groups and other stakeholders to implement, monitor, and reviewprogress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Advocacy by major groups and other stakeholders to promote science- and evidence-based solutions and digital transformations to put Africa back on track to achieving the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Enhanced cooperation between major groups and other stakeholders, including national, subregional, and regional policymakers, practitioners, experts, and United Nations entities, to promote the 2030 Agenda.

V. Expected outputs

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

(a) A summary of key messages from major groups and other stakeholders that will contribute to the outcome document of the Regional Forum;

(b) A summary presentation of the key messages from major groups and other stakeholders that will be delivered during the Regional Forum and

(c) An outcome document.

VI. Key documents

13. The documents for the workshop will include the following:

(a) The present concept note and the program of work;

(b) The concept note and the program of work for the eleventh session of the Regional Forum;

(c) Background papers on the sub-themes of the eleventh session of the Regional Forum.

VII. Participation

14. The workshop will bring together representatives of nine major groups: women, children, and young people; Indigenous peoples; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; businesses and industries; the scientific and technological community; and farmers. Other stakeholder groups will also attend, including local communities, volunteer groups, foundations, migrants and their families, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Representatives of governments and development partners will also be invited to attend.

VIII. Working languages

15. The workshop will be conducted in English and French, and simultaneous interpretation services will be provided in both languages.

IX. Venue and date

16. The workshop will be held in person from 6 to 7 April 2025 in Kampala, Uganda, at the Speke Resort Convention Centre, Munyonyo.

X. Contact

17. Inquiries concerning the organization of the preparatory and capacity-development workshop should be directed to:

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