

## SUMMARY OF THE 2018 SESSION OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 2-4 MAY 2018

The fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) convened in Dakar, Senegal on Thursday and Friday, 3-4 May 2018, with pre-event workshops meeting on Wednesday, 2 May 2018. The Forum was attended by over 300 representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, and Major Groups and other Stakeholders. Held in preparation for the 2018 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Forum convened under the theme, “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.”

At this meeting, delegates discussed more than 50 key messages to be presented to the HLPF. They convened in parallel sessions, drafting groups and in plenary to discuss the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6);
- Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7);
- Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11);
- Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12);
- Life on Land (SDG 15); and
- Strengthening Means of Implementation and the Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17).

The pre-event workshops focused on: strengthening integrated and Voluntary National Review and reporting of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063; “what does leaving no one behind in Africa actually look like”; and the UN Economic Commission for Africa’s (UNECA) approach in supporting the implementation of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda in Africa. A preparatory and capacity-development workshop for Major Groups and other Stakeholders in Africa was also held, discussing, among other issues, the institutionalization of African civil society organizations in the work of the Regional Forum and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

In their discussions during the closing plenary, delegates agreed to review the final document containing key messages to the HLPF, and submit any comments to the Secretariat within two weeks.

## BRIEF HISTORY

The ARFSD follows on, and reviews the implementation of, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa and provides input to the annual sessions of the HLPF under the auspices of the UN’s Economic and Social Council. The five Regional Forums (in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Western Asia) were established following General Assembly resolutions 67/290, 70/1 and 70/299 which, *inter alia*, set out the importance of the regional dimensions of sustainable development, and invited the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the HLPF.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Brief History . . . . .	1
Pre-Event Workshops . . . . .	2
Report of the Fourth Session of the ARFSD . . . . .	4
Opening of the Session . . . . .	4
High-Level Panel on Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies: Action, Solution, and the Role of Technology . . . . .	5
Organizational Matters: . . . . .	5
Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: Support and Progress Made at Regional and Subregional Levels . . . . .	5
Round Table on Peer Learning . . . . .	6
Parallel Meetings on the Sub-Themes of the Session . . . . .	7
Consideration of Key Messages . . . . .	10
Theme, Dates and Venue of the 2019 Session of the ARFSD . . . . .	11
Closure of the Session . . . . .	11
Upcoming Meetings . . . . .	12
Glossary . . . . .	13

These Forums link national, regional and global discourses on the SDGs and serve as multi-stakeholder platforms to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The ARFSD was mandated by resolutions 930 (XLVIII) and 939 (XLIX) of the Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration, and the UNECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. In Resolution 939 (XLIX), the Conference of Ministers requested UNECA, in collaboration with the AU Commission, the African Development Bank and other partners, to convene the ARFSD on an annual basis for follow-up and review of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ARFSD first met in 2015 and has since provided a platform for engaging and mobilizing stakeholders to strengthen their commitment to action and garner international support for efforts to translate the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into measurable, shared gains for the continent. Most significantly, the outcomes of the meeting serve as Africa's input to the HLPF.

Most recently, the third session of the ARFSD met from 18-19 May 2017, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At this session, delegates addressed six sub-themes, namely: eradicating all forms of poverty; ending hunger and achieving food security; healthy lives and promoting well-being for all; gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation; and conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

### **PRE-EVENT WORKSHOPS**

#### **Preparatory and Capacity Development Workshop for Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) in Africa:**

This all-day workshop was held on Wednesday and brought together representatives of MGoS to formulate and discuss their inputs into the fourth session of the ARFSD.

Bartholomew Armah, UNECA, opened the session, and Adam Elhiraika, UNECA, chaired it. Riina Jussila, UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), underscored the need for voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to describe successes, failures and next steps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level. Armah then presented an overview of the

2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report, which makes linkages between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda on SDGs 6,7, 11, 12, 15 and 17.

In the ensuing discussion, participants, *inter alia*: suggested the development of rural growth centers as one solution to urban sprawl; underlined the need for regional bodies such as UNECA and the African Development Bank to fund research and development into SDG-related solutions including for smart cities and affordable clean energy; stressed the need to raise productive capacities in Africa to promote responsible consumption and production; and called UNECA to help coordinate MGoS's efforts to engage in the VNR process.

A round table on "promoting peer learning and the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063" was then facilitated by Lucy Mulunkei, Indigenous Information Network, Kenya. Priscilla Achakpa, Women Environmental Programme, Nigeria, highlighted the establishment of an SDG advisory group in Nigeria to consolidate stakeholders' views towards the country's VNR at the 2017 HLPF. Annick Andriamampianina, Africa 21, Switzerland, stressed the need to build skills among the youth to promote a circular green economy, and highlighted her organization's work on green jobs creation.

Cheikh Mboup, Nestlé, highlighted the role of the private sector in achieving the SDGs, including through promoting healthy living, developing resilience and prosperity in rural communities and creating youth "agri-preneurs." Said Kambi, Africa Corporate Governance Network, drew attention to the "Code for Responsible Investing" which addresses the SDGs by focusing on people's participation, the conservation of the planet and improving profit margins.

Judith Kaulem, Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, Zimbabwe, shared her country's SDG implementation plan, specifically noting the role of civil society in awareness raising and in educating journalists on SDG reporting. Nozipho Wright, International Network on Gender and Energy, Botswana, stressed that co-benefits of addressing issues related to gender and energy include combatting climate change and eradicating extreme poverty. In the ensuing discussion, participants mainly considered the rights of farmers partnering with the private sector, and how civil society can hold private sector actors accountable.



View of the preparatory and capacity building workshop for major groups and other stakeholders



Participants from the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation

Priscilla Achakpa, speaking for the Interim Committee for the MGoS Regional Engagement Mechanism, briefed participants on the African Regional Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Coordination and Engagement Mechanism initiated in 2014. She recalled that the mandate of the seven-member Interim Committee was to prepare a position paper on the institutionalization of African CSOs in the work of the ARFSD and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. She lamented that many MGoS did not respond to the call on comments for the position paper, and that there was initially no support for MGoS institutionalization from the UNECA leadership. Achakpa then urged MGoS to provide input into the position paper on the institutionalization of African CSOs in the policy processes related to the implementation of the SDGs. Many called for all the Major Groups to be represented within the Mechanism.

Participants then broke into their Major Groups to formulate inputs into the ARFSD. In their messages to the ARFSD, they called on governments to, *inter alia*:

- invest in collecting age-, disabilities- and gender-disaggregated data;
- ensure access to clean sanitation in schools;
- prevent the commodification of water and hygiene services;
- ensure a just transition to renewable energy-related jobs;
- implement policies to encourage rural entrepreneurship;
- implement city planning policies that ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- prioritize safe, affordable and accessible public transport for older persons; and
- implement disaster risk reduction and management strategies that consider the needs of older people.

In closing, Armah reiterated UNECA's support for MGoS in terms of providing capacity building and welcomed the regional approach to MGoS engagement at the HLPF.

**Strengthening Integrated, Voluntary National Review and Reporting of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063:** This all-day workshop, comprising four sessions, began with opening remarks from Fatima Denton (UNECA) who stressed that the VNR is a "litmus test" in terms of the successes and challenges in implementing the SDGs. She emphasized that the workshop provides a platform for learning and sharing experiences on "what has worked and what has not" in implementing the SDGs.

In the first session, country representatives identified successes and challenges in their VNRs. Among these, Togo described how their national VNR has benefitted from tools aimed at sharing experiences and noted that greater efforts are

needed to ensure political will in SDG implementation. Senegal described the Threshold 21 simulation model (T21-Senegal) to analyze and model policy scenarios for SDG implementation in the medium and long-term.

Riina Jussila, UNDESA, reminded participants of the availability of guidance to countries in submitting their VNRs. Participants posed questions to Jussila regarding: the stages to be followed in providing a VNR; the need for more time at the HLPF to present VNRs; and, the need for greater capacity building for Africa as the "weakest link" in implementing the SDGs. In response, Jussila noted that countries must prioritize concerns within the HLPF, recalling the demand-driven nature of the process from governments rather than the development community.

In the second session, participants discussed the integration of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. In the first of two presentations, Alessandra Casazza, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), noted that the degree of convergence between the two Agendas, which stands at 89.2%, simplifies the integration and implementation of both Agendas. She also described the MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support) initiative of UNDP which pools resources from across the UN system to fast-track both Agendas in terms of financing, capacity building and technical support. Bartholomew Armah, UNECA, highlighted the importance of viewing international development agendas as mutually reinforcing and discussed the role of UNECA's Integrated Policy Reporting Tool to validate the quality and extent of integration between the Agendas and national planning frameworks. In the discussion, participants noted, *inter alia*, ways of addressing the different temporal horizons of the Agendas and complementarity between national and regional integration between the Agendas. In response, the presenters stressed the need:

- to pro-rate Agenda targets to coincide with political cycles;
- to aim for more ambitious goals to ensure less ambitious ones are covered; and
- for policy to support tools that offer a more nuanced understanding of how integration is taking place.

In the third session, participants heard strategies for countries to communicate their VNRs to the HLPF. Lamine Bal, UNDP, highlighted, *inter alia*:

- the need to focus on essential messages;
- the use of infographics to illustrate key findings;
- the impact of a short video or animation; and
- the need for social media presence.



L-R: **Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane**, Director, African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), UNECA; **Bassirou Samba Niassé**, Secretary-General, Ministry for Economy and Finance, Senegal; and **Moderator Minh-Thu Pham**, Executive Director, Global Policy, UN Foundation (UNF)

In response, participants discussed the need to prepare, in advance, responses to questions received from other countries and MGoS, and the importance of following a dynamic and creative presentation rather than a standard format. Guinea recommended that African Heads of State attend the HLPF to identify key themes relevant to their national contexts in moving towards the integration of the two Agendas.

In the fourth session, participants discussed existing support provided by and needed from UNECA, UNDP, and the Office of the Special Advisor for Africa to undertake and strengthen VNRs. Participants highlighted, among other issues, that capacity building must come from knowledge-sharing within Africa, the need to strengthen national statistical agencies to measure SDG targets and indicators and the benefits of regionalizing public planning processes to overcome capacity limitations.

**What Does Leaving No One Behind in Africa Actually Look Like:** This workshop, governed by Chatham House rules, addressed “leaving no one behind in Africa.” Participants acknowledged that when African leaders agreed to the SDGs, they committed to “no one being left behind,” noting, however, that challenges remain in defining what this means, and in taking the appropriate measures to achieve it so the concept does not become just rhetoric.

Participants noted that Africa has experienced remarkable growth in recent years with economies showing resilience to both global and domestic shocks, yet unemployment rates are not receding and, in certain countries are actually increasing. They agreed that the groups most adversely affected by this are women, particularly young, rural women of minority groups, persons with disabilities, the elderly and the youth. Throughout the workshop, participants emphasized that vulnerable groups should not be viewed solely as beneficiaries of the SDGs and Agenda 2063, but as active participants in ensuring that they themselves are not left behind.

They also reiterated that for solutions to have the most impact, they need to cater to both the local and national levels and be embedded in national development plans.

Discussing the challenges related to leaving no one behind, some participants opined that existing data has little utility, preferring instead more targeted data, which puts the spotlight on

those being left behind, with one participant noting that targeted national data would show the rate of progress for the country and exactly how far behind certain groups have fallen.

Others proposed “leaving no country behind,” with several emphasizing the need to ensure access to basic services such as education and healthcare by vulnerable groups. They also recommended promoting the interconnectivity of the SDGs, in order to allow the SDGs to be attainable and have as much impact as possible. To illustrate this, one participant called for SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) to focus on improving infrastructure (which is addressed under SDG 9), as building better bridges and roads could close the gap between rural and urban communities where marginalized groups exist.

Participants also considered that the risk of being excluded from enjoying the benefits of economic and social progress is not static, and can occur at any time in one’s life, with many calling for dynamic policies to address this reality.

They further discussed the importance and relevance of different SDGs in leaving no one behind, reiterating that it is more beneficial to address the SDGs as an interconnected whole instead of, for example, weighing poverty over healthcare.

The workshop concluded with the following key recommendations: policymakers and researchers need to work together to gather the required evidence to inform policies on inclusion, and that evidence-gathering needs to engage different stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society and vulnerable groups.

## REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE ARFSD

### *OPENING OF THE SESSION*

Fatima Denton, UNECA, moderated the Forum on Thursday morning. Gervais Meatchi Tchaou, Chair of the outgoing ARFSD Bureau, Togo, emphasized that the ARFSD is a platform to strengthen the convergence and complementarity of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Priya Gajraj, UN Resident Coordinator, Senegal, stressed the importance of the Forum in strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, UN Special Representative, highlighted that undertaking VNRs would increase the momentum in implementing the two Agendas, and called for



Fatima Denton, UNECA

strengthening and reinvigorating subregional and regional strategies, approaches and interventions, and developing home-grown and innovative financial mechanisms.

Officially opening the Forum, Mahammed Dionne, Prime Minister of Senegal, reiterated the country's commitment to the achievement of the SDGs, and highlighted national SDG-related

programmes including the roll-out of green cities, increasing the use of solar energy, and working to incorporate the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into national planning.

### **HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES: ACTION, SOLUTION, AND THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY**

This session was opened by Mame Thierno Dieng, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal, who urged countries to ensure sustainable use of natural resources and enhance resilience to external shocks. Habofanoeh Lehana, Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship, Lesotho, stated that addressing challenges related to sustainable cities and communities is key to achieving the 2030 Agenda, as they relate to poverty, health, climate change, energy and water.

Baryomunsi Chris, Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Uganda, stressed the importance of increasing partnerships and knowledge and technology transfer to achieve the SDGs related to high population growth rates, poverty, youth unemployment and informal settlements in Africa.

Said Kambi, Executive Director, Africa Corporate Governance Network, stressed that corporate governance is key to creating employment and collaborative networks, building on opportunities that arise out of crisis and enhancing investment in local small and medium-sized enterprises on the continent.

In the ensuing discussion, participants considered issues such as the need for: Africa to adopt green development pathways, for instance through investing in green villages; more dynamic and flexible arrangements for means of implementation to cater to different national circumstances; and an annual forum on science, technology and innovation (STI) on the sidelines of the ARFSD to showcase practical implementation pathways.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:**

**Election of the Bureau:** On Thursday, delegates broke into sub-regional groups to elect bureau members. West Africa nominated Mame Thierno Dieng, Senegal, as ARFSD Chair for 2018-2019. Three Vice-Chairs were then nominated: Lesotho for Southern Africa; Cameroon for Central Africa; and Mauritania for North Africa. Uganda was nominated for East Africa and appointed Rapporteur.

**Adoption of the agenda and programme of work:** On Thursday afternoon, South Africa pointed out that the agenda and organization of work had not been adopted and called for the allocation of adequate time for the parallel sessions to discuss

Africa's messages to the HLPF. ARFSD Chair Dieng noted these concerns and announced that the parallel sessions would take place before the end of the day.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND AGENDA 2063: SUPPORT AND PROGRESS MADE AT REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL LEVELS**

Bartholomew Armah, UNECA, discussed the SDGs reflected in the Africa Regional Report on the Implementation of the SDGs and Goals of Agenda 2063. On SDG 6 (Clean Water and



Bartholomew Armah, UNECA

Sanitation), he stated there are spatial disparities with access to water varying between rural and urban settings, also noting regional disparities with regards to water in Africa. In this regard, he highlighted specific challenges related to water availability in North Africa, and pointed to poor sanitation standards in other parts of Africa. On SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Armah suggested African

countries consider solar energy as a more important source of energy moving forward. On SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), he pointed out that Africa is experiencing rapid urbanization, lamenting that much of this is unplanned and unsustainable given the lack of necessary infrastructure resulting in the prevalence of urban slums.

Addressing SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), Armah noted Africa's challenge is in post-harvest waste at the production phase, highlighting that 30% of what is produced rots on farms. On SDG 15 (Life on Land), he said deforestation is occurring at a rapid pace, and contributing to adverse impacts related to climate change. He noted that the report recommends that governments invest more in research and development (R&D), STI and stronger partnerships with the private sector and academia.

Giving an overview on the support to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, Thokozile Ruzvidzo, UNECA, drew attention to the fact that Africa is the only continent in the world implementing two interrelated agendas on sustainable development. She demonstrated the various ways UNECA provides support to the region in the implementation of the two Agendas and described an online toolkit on gender statistics developed by UNECA, which provides the critical data to help mainstream gender across all the SDGs. She also emphasized the importance of data to monitor the implementation of both Agendas and guide countries in making informed, evidence-based decisions.

In the ensuing discussion, participants: noted the intersectoral nature of the SDGs and suggested the development of a toolbox to monitor their implementation; drew attention to the dearth of credible quantitative data on the continent; urging the use of qualitative data to inform SDG implementation policies; and



L-R: **Carla Cruz**, Cabo Verde; **Joern Geisselman**, GIZ; **Nassim Oulmane**, UNECA; **Moderator Alloune Badiane**, The Urban Think Tank Africa (TUTTA); and **Mohamed Hanafi**, Egypt

queried the source of quantitative data used in development reports, calling instead for national data to reflect a more accurate reflection of the status of implementation.

Armah noted that data is required for policy simulation and modeling of links between multiple SDGs. He described models related to cross-sectoral planning, but noted that this kind of modelling requires data, and called on governments to prioritize investments in SDG-related data collection. Ruzvidzo noted that the UNECA considers both qualitative and quantitative data, calling on governments to provide data as it also contributes to resource mobilization efforts.

#### **ROUND TABLE ON PEER LEARNING**

On Friday morning, delegates engaged in a round table discussion on peer learning, focusing on solutions, good practices and lessons learnt in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Togo described its experience in submitting its VNR to the HLPF for the third time. He noted that training sessions were critical to integrating SDGs into the national development plan for 2018-2022, and that the need to “domesticate” the SDGs requires in-depth stakeholder analysis to identify the needs and contributions of each stakeholder and to ensure no one is left behind.

Cabo Verde stressed the importance of “localizing” the implementation of the SDGs and the importance of identifying novel financial mechanisms for making progress towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. She noted that the country development plan is officially called the “Sustainable Development Strategic Plan,” illustrating the integration of the SDGs into national planning. She highlighted main themes crucial for national development, including gender equality and addressing climate change, and stressed the importance of communicating the SDGs to the private sector, local municipalities and CSOs.

Egypt highlighted that after emerging from two revolutions, addressing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 was not a matter of choice, but an imperative for development. He noted that Egypt’s national development plan must be continuously reviewed to ensure goals and targets are continuously relevant. He identified progress made: in urban development in the prevention of slum expansion; in the establishment of new smart, inclusive and accessible cities; and in ensuring sustainable energy by creating an enabling environment for renewable energy and in positioning itself as a regional energy hub. He emphasized that, as incoming Chair of the Group of 77 (G-77) countries, Egypt will advocate

achieving the SDGs through new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and nano-technology, that maximize benefits and minimize social and environmental impacts.

MGoS presented their recommendations, noting that there are cross-cutting issues related to participation which are central to the achievement of the SDGs. These include the need for policy-making processes to involve women and girls, young people, the aging and people living with disabilities in the decision-making process, as these groups are all disproportionately affected by poverty, exclusion and the impact of environmental and climate change. They called on governments to support the meaningful participation of civil society actors by providing accurate, evidence-based, disaggregated, qualitative and quantitative data.

Joern Geisselmann, GIZ, spoke about Partners for Review (P4R), a transnational multi-stakeholder network for government representatives and stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and academia involved in the national review and monitoring processes towards achieving the SDGs. He highlighted that to make progress on means of implementation, three approaches could be considered: a “whole of government” approach, with each ministry taking responsibility and ownership; a lead or responsible government ministry; or a combination of both. However, he noted that challenges remain with the disaggregation of data required to make informed decisions on SDG implementation, and lamented the limited involvement of private sector and academic institutions.

In the ensuing discussion, South Africa invited countries to partner with the South African SDG Hub, which links South



**Joern Geisselman**, GIZ

African policy makers with SDG-relevant research and innovations. Côte d’Ivoire urged involving traditional rulers from village settings to localize the implementation of the SDGs, noting that his country has undertaken this by translating the SDGs into 63 local dialects. Morocco highlighted the country’s work

in setting up a multi-stakeholder strategic committee on SDGs headed by the government to ensure the right stakeholders are consulted.

In response, Cabo Verde shared her country's plans to localize the SDGs, including plans to establish a national planning council composed of teams focusing on the two Agendas as well as other agreements such as the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. Egypt drew attention to the country's multi-stakeholder national committee on the SDGs, which meets monthly and receives progress reports from the national statistics agency. To ensure the localization of the SDGs, MGoS underlined the importance of including local authorities, women, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders in project design. Commenting on the complexity of harnessing big data, GIZ noted that usually the rights to this data are held by private sector actors who may not be amenable to sharing this resource for free, highlighting that the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and the UN Global Pulse may be helpful resources for national statistics offices.

#### **PARALLEL MEETINGS ON THE SUB-THEMES OF THE SESSION**

**Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6):** This group met on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, Kenya, on behalf of the group, reported the following key messages from the group's discussions, calling on governments to:

- invest more in settlement and urban planning, potable water access points in rural communities and improved sanitation facilities to eliminate open defecation and ensure appropriate waste management;
- invest more in both soft and hard climate-proofed water infrastructure to ensure sustained water supply, enhance adaptation to seasonal variability in precipitation and build resilience to climate change-induced impacts, including slow-onset impacts;
- improve access to appropriate technologies and enhance capacity in the water sector, which are the cornerstones of African efforts to reach a new frontier of development that includes the exploitation of the blue economy;
- strengthen capacity to manage water resources and to monitor, evaluate and report on progress in gaining access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation;
- harmonize and streamline monitoring and reporting mechanisms and processes for better use of human resources, effective planning and the efficient use of limited financial resources; and
- to create an enabling environment through better water governance regimes, with institutional arrangements in which there is recognition of the interdependence of water usage among various competing sectors and that make use of cross-sectoral planning.

In the discussion, delegates called for language that strengthens or clarifies the key messages, for example, by putting a stronger emphasis on sanitation, which often comes secondary to messaging on clean water, but is a necessary step to achieving clean water. Others suggested including advice to strengthen language on transboundary water treaties.

**Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7):** This group, facilitated by Senegal, met on Thursday evening, and established a drafting group to finalize the text of the key messages. On Friday morning, Senegal reported the following key messages from the group's discussions, calling on governments to:

- put in place coherent policies and an enabling environment to leverage limited public resources to mobilize private sector investment, including from domestic resources, capitalizing on the decrease in the cost of renewable energy technology;
- address data gaps and reliability, including by providing age- and gender-disaggregated data, especially on biomass, to inform investment planning, develop greater capacity to collect and analyze energy data, harmonize data-collection methodologies and strengthen existing data-collection systems;
- develop in-country human and institutional capacities for energy planning and management and greater engagement with the private sector;
- ensure that climate resilience is fully integrated into the planning and implementation of energy infrastructure and investment, especially for hydropower systems, which are at risk due to climate change and variability;
- promote sharing good practices and experiences with both on- and off-grid systems, including business models and instruments to attract private sector investment, and promote the coordination of the various regional and sub-regional programmes on energy access to create synergies and share experiences;
- systematically prioritize energy efficiency in all sectors and capitalize on quick wins in energy efficiency in cities, industries, buildings and transportation, recognizing that energy efficiency gains enhance access;
- promote investment in strengthening the grid for greater efficiency and increased penetration of variable renewable power and promote cross-border interconnections to accelerate access to electricity;



Moderator Amadou Lamine Diagne, Senegal



L-R: **Mwampei Choba**, South Africa; **Samba Harouna Thiam**, UN Environment Programme (UNEP); **Mageda Esolyo**, Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) and **Moderator Amadou Lamine Diagne**, Senegal

- promote local content enhancement throughout the full renewable energy value chain as a catalyst for longer-term enhanced deployment of renewables with wider socioeconomic benefits; and
- accelerate efforts to encourage innovation in energy services and promote collaborative research and development at the regional level.

In the ensuing discussion, participants called for governments to ensure that measures to provide affordable and accessible energy access to take into account a just transition for workers in the energy sector; and underscored the importance of involving regional structures like Economic Community of Central African States to support energy transitions at the national level.

**Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11):** This group met on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, Uganda reported the following key messages from the group's discussions, proposing that:

- the role of urbanization in driving inclusive growth needs to be strategically integrated into national development planning;
- well-financed and designed national programmes that deliver solutions to different economic and social groups are urgently needed to respond to the enormous challenge of the availability, affordability and quality of housing;
- strategic investments in urban infrastructure and services, including energy, transport, water, sanitation and waste management, will enhance the potential of cities to facilitate sustainable development in Africa;
- given their role in generating emissions and their high vulnerability to physical, human and economic damage, cities and their local authorities must be taken into due consideration in policy frameworks to address climate change;
- land-use and spatial planning policies, backed by the necessary legislation and governance mechanisms are essential to ensuring that the evolving urban form of Africa's growing cities is sustainable;
- effective planning, governance and management constitute key elements for inclusive and sustainable urbanization but face capacity limitations in most African cities; and

- the production of quality statistics and research on human settlements and sustainable development should be enhanced. In the discussion that followed, many called for stronger language, stressing the need to emphasize the importance of trees and forests in and around urban settings, and proposed a focus on gender, particularly the addressing sexual harassment, which women experience in cities, and the sensitization of landowners who often sell land without due consideration for sustainable development practices.

**Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12):** This group met on Thursday evening and briefly on Friday morning. In plenary on Friday, UN Environment (UNEP) reported the following key messages:

- strengthen the implementation of sustainable consumption strategies, particularly in areas such as sustainable lifestyles, strategic investment in resource-efficient cities, sustainable public procurement and sustainable tourism;
- safeguard the continent's natural resources on which growth is predicated, including through shifting to sustainable public procurement by reducing waste in production and consumption patterns and maintaining the structure and functions of ecosystems;
- conduct comprehensive evaluations, with the ultimate goal of reducing inefficiencies in food supply chains, and bridging the large policy deficiency in terms of influencing the underlining behaviors that are the natural primary drivers of unsustainable consumption and production;
- continue to strengthen their scientific capacity regarding the hazardous potential of wastes and materials that are transferred or exchanged within their jurisdictions and promote the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes;
- accelerate the implementation of the Bamako Convention, given that the success of the African and the global conventions on the control of transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes depends on the concerted efforts and collaboration of all states;

- emphasize national capacity development on data generation, utilization and sharing to adequately highlight the various benefits that African countries can gain by mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production into their national statistics and reporting frameworks;
- implement an integrated approach in shifting to sustainable consumption and production by involving non-traditional actors such as the ministries of planning, economy and finance; and
- develop and implement programmes for skills development at all levels that support sustainable consumption and production.

In the ensuing discussion, participants, *inter alia*: shared that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is developing a guideline for clean fuel and renewable energy also related to sustainable consumption and production; requested more information on actual initiatives for sustainable procurement; stressed the need to include additional measures to encourage participation, with some pointing to a project to “communicate the SDGs with our grandparents”; and underlined the need for funding the Bamako Convention in order to implement it.

**Life on Land (SDG 15):** This group met on Thursday evening, establishing a drafting group that met late into the night to finalize the text of the key messages. On Friday morning, Cameroon reported the following messages from the group’s discussions, including messages to:

- recognize the urgent need for African countries and international partners to increase investment to, *inter alia*, combat land degradation, support large-scale ecosystem restoration, and to further strengthen ongoing efforts to end poaching and the illicit trafficking of wildlife;
- prioritize tangible national actions and on-the-ground outcomes through landscape-level and cross-sectoral approaches such as Africa’s Great Green Wall initiative and regional programmes on biodiversity and economic development, including the 3S (Sustainability, Security, Stability) Initiative;
- scale-up funding, capacity development and technology support to achieve National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, land degradation neutrality targets, ecosystem restoration, sustainable forest management programs and other ecosystem management plans;

- strengthen and implement tools and processes for integrating the sustainable use and management of natural capital into strategic regional, sub-regional, and national development policies and other frameworks;
- strengthen rights and access to land resources and participative approaches for the management of land, freshwater, forests, and biodiversity by combatting “land grabbing” and implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land Tenure, Fisheries, and Forests, particularly by enhancing access and participation by indigenous people, local communities, women, and youth;
- enhance capacity to collect, manage and disseminate data on environment-related sectors as an integral priority of national statistical systems, including by expanding the availability and use of relevant information and knowledge platforms, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, to inform national policy-making and implementation;
- enhance engagement with the business sector to incorporate natural capital into corporate policies, standards and practices;
- work with other regions and stakeholders to develop an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework that includes harmonized indicators, capacity building, and communication strategies to update targets for SDG 15; and
- enhance high-level political commitment by convening a global summit with Heads of State to raise the political and economic relevance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for their importance in achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

In the discussion, participants called for, among other things: raising the importance of mainstreaming scientific knowledge to achieve SDG 15; promoting a sense of responsibility in ensuring inclusive governance; enshrining the rights of women and young girls within the context of biodiversity and ecosystem service; and ensuring STI is considered in implementing SDG 15.

**Strengthening the Means of Implementation and the Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17):** This group met on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, South Africa and Mauritania presented the key messages, which were grouped as follows: finance for development; science, technology and innovation; capacity building and systemic issues; and trade.



L-R: Bouna Manell Fall, Senegal; Diatou Thiaw, Senegal; and Tadong Leonel, Cameroon

On financing for development, messages included:

- reaffirming that the 2030 Agenda recognizes the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in light of different national realities, capacities, levels of development in African countries, and to ensure that developed countries honor their historic obligations and responsibilities in this regard;
- ensuring full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as critical for the realization of SDGs and their targets in Africa;
- addressing illicit financial flows and their negative consequences, and ensuring that multinational corporations, most of which are based in developed countries, make their rightful contributions to African countries where their revenues are generated;
- assuring adequate funding allocation to projects and programmes for vulnerable groups;
- developing strategies for African development while avoiding the increase of its internal and external debt; and
- pursuing the mainstreaming of innovative mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environmental Facility, to strengthen partnerships in sustainable land, forest, and biodiversity management.

On STI, messages included:

- improving the quality of STI data, access to data, use of technologies to improve data collection, and significantly increasing STI investment to promote technology transfer between African countries through partnerships with the private sector;
- creating an Africa STI-for-SDGs Multistakeholder Forum as a side event to ARFSD to enable Africa to coordinate itself for representation at the HLPF and the UN STI Multistakeholder Forum; and
- developing an African platform for research and innovation exchange to enable the dissemination of SDG-relevant African research and innovation to governments and citizens.

On trade, messages included:

- ensuring that trade agreements are consistent with and promote commitment to gender, human rights obligations to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;

- the need for strong governance, finance, and overall innovative support for the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA);
- promoting the development of African export markets based on comparative advantage and; and
- systematically integrating gender analysis and human rights impact assessments into trade policies at international, regional, and national levels, especially by recognizing women's informal trade activities, their contributions, and vulnerabilities.

On capacity building and systemic issues, messages included:

- strengthening national statistical development for data collection as well as statistical management plans to respond to reporting requirements of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, including by enhancing the capacity of data users;
- readapting and reorienting national statistical development strategies to consider disaggregating data related to vulnerable populations to ensure no one is left behind; and improving data quality by increasing financing to promote technology access; and
- ensuring that successes and gaps in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 are reflected in impact evaluation and the coordination and planning of long-term policies on the African continent, including by aligning the two Agendas to development policies at the national, regional, sectoral, and local levels;
- promoting inclusive governance and enhancing participation of vulnerable groups; and
- improving evaluation and reporting requirements and enhancing CSO involvement.

Participants then noted the important role of libraries as sources of data; the need to recognize the private sector as stakeholders in ensuring social and environmental accountability; and the need to consider access to information and “open digital spaces” for enhancing STI.

### **CONSIDERATION OF KEY MESSAGES**

On Friday evening in plenary, delegates discussed the summary and key messages of the fourth session of the ARFSD (ECA/RFSD/2018/9). Morocco stated that the substance of key messages should emphasize the sharing of responsibility between regions, the international community and other stakeholders. With Guinea, he also proposed that key messages be ranked according to priority.

Guinea suggested including a recommendation on strengthening VNRs by inviting Africa's Heads of State to submit proposals on topics relevant to their country contexts as they relate to the SDGs. He also emphasized that the limited reliability of statistical data be emphasized as a key message rather than a cross-cutting one. Côte d'Ivoire suggested that particular partnerships within African countries be emphasized in key messages, including the efforts of ECOWAS and South-South Cooperation. Mauritania requested addressing discrepancies between the English and French versions of the text.

On SDG 6, Egypt suggested that key messages focus on improving collaboration and cooperation on water resource management challenges rather than on requesting international financial support. He also invited delegates to attend and



Christo Janse Van Noordwyk, South Africa, with Charles Akol, UNECA

actively participate in the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity taking place in November 2018, in Egypt.

South Africa suggested editorial changes, including re-ordering and deleting several paragraphs under key messages related to SDG 17 to avoid duplication. MGoS suggested defining the dimensions of data disaggregation as “age, disability and gender.” It also suggested greater emphasis on scaling up access to information for women and young girls in “domesticating” the SDGs.

ARFSD Chair Dieng proposed adopting the summary of the meeting and key messages, taking into consideration the discussions in plenary. Egypt requested that the adoption be postponed until all the changes had been made, suggesting that the Secretariat e-mail delegates the final document to ensure their comments have been adequately reflected. The Secretariat noted that the draft, reflecting all the changes, will be made available on the meeting website, noting that delegates are welcome to submit any changes to this document to the Secretariat within two weeks.

#### ***THEME, DATES AND VENUE OF THE 2019 SESSION OF THE ARFSD***

On Friday, Morocco expressed interest in hosting the fifth session of the ARFSD, and delegates welcomed this offer. Session Chair Cheikh Dieng, Senegal, recalled that, in the agreed rotation, it should be Southern Africa’s turn to host the next meeting, but said that given the lack of other expressions of interest, Morocco would be the next host of the Forum.

Lesotho, supported by South Africa and others, welcomed Morocco’s offer to host the next session of the ARFSD, and suggested that Southern Africa be considered to host the sixth session of the Forum in 2020. Delegates agreed to this proposal.

They also agreed that, as stipulated by the HLPF, the theme of the fifth session of the ARFSD would be “empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality,” and that the Forum will address:

- SDG 4 on Quality Education;
- SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth;
- SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities;
- SDG 13 on Climate Action; and
- SDG 16 on Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.

#### ***CLOSURE OF THE SESSION***

In the closing plenary, Giovane Biha, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECA, said that the Commission will present Africa’s key messages to the HLPF in July, and lauded the Forum for sending a strong signal to the international community regarding Africa’s commitment to implementing the two Agendas.

Habofanoeh Lehana, Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs, Lesotho, congratulated delegates for their work on the key messages and welcomed UNECA’s commitment to including a political dimension in the ARFSD.

Session Chair Dieng, offered to share Senegal’s scientific and technological expertise with interested countries, to assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. He urged the continent to “lift its voices as one” in efforts to implement the two Agendas, and closed the meeting at 9:26pm.



**Giovane Biha**, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECA, congratulates, **Cheikh Dieng**, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal, on behalf of the President of the Forum.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### 13th Session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 13):

The 13th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 13) will provide input to the 2018 session of the High-level Political Forum, particularly its consideration of SDG 15. **dates:** 7-11 May 2018 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York City, US **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **e-mail:** [unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

**Seedbeds of Transformation:** The Role of Science with Society and the SDGs in Africa: Future Earth, the South African Government Department of Science and Technology, the National Research Foundation of South Africa, and START are organizing the “Seedbeds of Transformation: The Role of Science with Society and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa” conference. The event will engage scholars, practitioners, and policy experts in collaboratively exploring the transformation challenges for Africa. **dates:** 9-11 May 2018 **location:** Port Elizabeth, South Africa **www:** <https://seedbeds.futureearth.org/>

**Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development:** The 51st session of the UNECA and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will be held at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 11-15 May 2018. The ministerial segment will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Committee of Experts. The 51st session of the Commission will focus on the theme: African Continental Free Trade Area and fiscal space for jobs and economic diversification. **dates:** 11-15 May 2018 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** Sandra Baffoe-Bonnie (UNECA) **phone:** +251-11-544-3378 **email:** [baffoe-bonnie@un.org](mailto:baffoe-bonnie@un.org) **www:** <https://www.uneca.org/cfm2018/pages/notification>

**Vienna Energy Forum 2018 Special Session:** The Vienna Energy Forum is a global forum focused on key issues surrounding energy for development. The Vienna Energy Forum 2018 Special Session will focus in particular on SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy). **dates:** 14-16 May 2018 **location:** Vienna, Austria **www:** <https://www.viennaenergyforum.org/>

**Expert Group Meeting on SDG 15: Progress and Prospects:** The UN Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and partners are organizing an Expert Group Meeting on SDG 15 (life on land) and its role in advancing sustainable development through implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ahead of the 2018 session of the HLPF. SDG 15 is one of the Goals to be reviewed in-depth at the 2018 session. **dates:** 14-15 May 2018 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?page=view&ni=2717&type=13&menu=1634>

**UNLEASH SDG Innovation Lab 2018:** The 2018 UNLEASH SDGs Innovation Lab will convene 1,000 cross-sectoral leaders under the age of 35 from around the world to design and deploy scalable solutions for the SDGs. There are eight themes for “SDG talents” to work on at this year’s Innovation Lab: SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); SDG 3 (Good Health and

Wellbeing); SDG 4 (Quality Education); SDG 6 (Clean Water); SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy); SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production); and SDG 13 (Climate Action). **dates:** 30 May - 6 June 2018 **location:** Singapore, Singapore **www:** <https://unleash.org/innovation-lab-2018/>

**Third STI Forum:** The Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) will convene on 5-6 June 2018. The STI Forum is a component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM). It is convened once per year by the ECOSOC President to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the SDGs. **dates:** 5-6 June 2018 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York, US **contact:** UNDESA **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2018>

**UNGA High-level Event on SDG Financing:** UN General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák will convene an event titled “Financing for SDGs--Breaking the Bottlenecks of Investment, from Policy to Impact.” It will provide an opportunity for relevant actors to showcase and share best practices of scaling up investment in SDG sectors. **date:** 11 June 2018 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Office of UNGA President **www:** <https://www.un.org/pga/72/event-latest/financing-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

**ICLEI World Congress 2018:** The ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability – World Congress 2018 will assemble more than 1,200 local, regional and national governments, international agencies, researchers and private sector actors from around the world, with the aim of designing innovative ideas to steer the global urban agenda and strengthen collective action on sustainability worldwide. **dates:** 19-22 June 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability **phone:** +49228/97629900 **email:** [world.congress@iclei.org](mailto:world.congress@iclei.org) **www:** <https://worldcongress2018.iclei.org/>

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2018:** The 2018 session of the HLPF, convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will take place from 9-18 July 2018. The theme of HLPF 2018 will be: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” The sub-set of SDGs to be reviewed in depth by HLPF 2018 will be: SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 15 (life on land). SDG 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development) is also considered each year. **dates:** 9-18 July 2018 **location:** New York City, US **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

**2018 UN Biodiversity Conference:** The 14th meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the 9th Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (CBD COP 14, Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 9, and Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 3) are expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. **dates:** 7-22 November 2018 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt contact: CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

**Global Science, Technology and Innovation Conference (G-STIC) 2018:** G-STIC 2018 will take place from 28-30 November, in Brussels, Belgium. G-STIC aims to build knowledge bases and global expert networks to support the technological transitions needed for implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. G-STIC seeks to contribute to a robust advisory system on integrated technological solutions to the UN and other international policy fora, as they relate to the SDGs, the climate goals and the Means of Implementation of binding multilateral environmental agreements. **dates:** 28-30 November 2018 **location:** Brussels, Belgium **www:** <https://www.gstic.org>

**Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4):** The fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) will take place from 11-15 March 2019, in Nairobi, Kenya, as agreed during UNEA-3 in December 2017 (UNEP/EA.3/L.2). By the same text, the Assembly decided that following the 2019 session, UNEA will convene during the last week of February, unless otherwise decided by UNEA. **dates:** 11-15 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya contact: UNEP **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

**Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation:** The Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 20-22 March 2019. In the preparations for the Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, the UN Secretary-General has been requested to prepare a “comprehensive report, consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference, no later than August 2018, reviewing the

trends in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, including the progress made by the international community, in particular the United Nations, in supporting and promoting such cooperation and identifying new opportunities, as well as challenges and suggestions to overcome them.” **dates:** 20-22 March 2019 **location:** Buenos Aires, Argentina **www:** <http://undocs.org/A/71/L.83>

**ARFSD 5:** The fifth session of the ARFSD will be held in preparation for the 2019 session of the HLPF. The Forum aims to provide a platform to: garner international support to translate the SDGs and Agenda 2063 aspirations into measurable and shared prosperity; examine early results of implementing the two Agendas; and strengthen national governments implementation efforts; and, inform the global debate at HLPF. **dates:** TBC 2019 **location:** Morocco contact: UNECA **email:** [ecainfo@uneca.org](mailto:ecainfo@uneca.org) **www:** <http://www.uneca.org/>

## GLOSSARY

Agenda 2063	Africa Union Commission Agenda 2063
ARFSD	Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
AU	Africa Union
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development/Sustainable Development
MGoS	Major Groups and other Stakeholders
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews



After closing remarks from **Giovani Biha**, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa, the meeting closed at 9:26pm.