

## THIRD SESSION OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 17-19 MAY 2017

The third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD 3) convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 17-19 May 2017. The Forum was attended by over 400 representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS). Held in preparation for the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), ARFSD 3 convened under the theme, 'Ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity for all.'

Pre-events were held on 17 May, these included: the tenth Session of the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD-10); and, the Preparatory and Capacity Development Workshop for MGoS. CSD-10 reviewed implementation of the 2016–2017 work programme of the UN Economic Commission for Africa's (UNECA) sub-programme on innovations, technologies and managing Africa's natural resources. It also provided guidance on the work for the 2018–2019 biennium and the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Workshop. Organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and UNECA, the VNR Workshop strengthened preparations for the 2017 VNR through a regional exchange of experience and lessons learnt among African volunteering countries.

The Preparatory and Capacity Development Workshop for MGoS met to provide an opportunity to brief MGoS on the follow-up and review process of the identified Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2017–2019: SDG 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and 14 (Life Below Water).

ARFSD 3 met from 18-19 May and provided an opportunity to examine early results of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the SDGs, and Agenda 2063. Specific focus was placed on assessing the six sub-themes of the session: eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa; ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa; healthy lives and promoting well-being for all; gender equality and empowerment of all 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.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNECA COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ARFSD

As part of the restructuring of the UNECA's sub-programmes, endorsed at the sixth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union (AU) Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the UNECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in March 2013, the CSD was established as one of the UNECA's functional and sectoral subsidiary organs. The CSD is comprised of high-level experts and policymakers in the economic, social and environmental fields. It meets biennially and serves as a forum for: promoting cooperation; exchanging information and sharing experiences in the thematic areas under the purview of the sub-programme; providing advice to the UNECA on integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; and advocacy and assessment of follow-up activities to global agendas by African governments.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the outcomes of the CSD inform the ARFSD's deliberations as part of the process initiated by the HLPF.

The ARFSD, which first met in June 2015, was established pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 67/290, 70/1 and 70/299. The Forum meets on an annual basis to follow up and review the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. It also serves to engage and mobilize all

### IN THIS ISSUE

Brief History of the UNECA Committee on Sustainable Development and the ARFSD. ....	1
ARFSD 3 Summary .....	2
Preparatory and Capacity-Development Workshop for MGoS in the Africa Region .....	2
CSD-10 .....	4
ARFSD 3 Summary .....	5
Upcoming Meetings .....	11
Glossary .....	11

stakeholders to strengthen their commitment to action and garner international support for efforts translating the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into measurable, shared gains for the continent.

The outcomes of the meeting provide Africa's input to the HLPF.

### ARFSD 3 SUMMARY

#### **PREPARATORY AND CAPACITY-DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR MGOs IN THE AFRICA REGION**

Aida Opoku-Mensah, UNECA, opened this meeting and stressed that the objectives of the Forum are to facilitate the sharing of lessons to enhance capacities for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and collectively agree on messages to be forwarded to the HLPF, scheduled to convene from 10-19 July 2017 at UN Headquarters in New York.

#### **THE GLOBAL LEVEL FOLLOWUP TO AND REVIEW OF THE SDGs AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2017 MEETING OF THE HLPF:**

Isabela Cunha, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), highlighted that the HLPF is the “apex” of the review and implementation architecture for the SDGs. She noted a key feature of the HLPF is the unique mandate to include MGoS in the VNR processes by Member States on progress towards achieving the SDGs. She stressed that VNRs can facilitate the adoption and implementation of national development plans and review of institutional frameworks for multi-stakeholder involvement. She also noted that MGoS are expected to provide their own reports on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

#### **REGIONAL REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND AGENDA 2063:**

Bartholomew Armah, UNECA, discussed the African report on the SDGs and Agenda 2063, noting that a lack of access to data is hampering implementation reporting. He said the results are a “mixed bag” noting positive trends, such as declining poverty and maternal mortality rates, as well as negative trends, such as increased incidence of HIV/AIDS and food insecurity. Discussing emerging issues, challenges and opportunities, Armah underscored the need for: clear plans, strategies and policies; strong institutional and coordination frameworks; and, establishing financing mechanisms for medium- to long-term funding.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates debated, *inter alia*, how to: align the timelines of the SDGs and Agenda 2063; ensure that people with disabilities are highlighted in future discussions; and, ensure discussion of cross-cutting issues.

#### **ROUND-TABLE ON PEER LEARNING AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs AND AGENDA 2063:**

Stephen Chacha, African Philanthropic Foundation, Tanzania, chaired this session. He stressed the round-table's focus on showcasing solutions from different countries and sectors to illustrate progress towards achieving the two Agendas.

Daniel Nyanganyura, Regional Director, International Council for Science, discussed guidelines developed in collaboration with MGoS, on how the SDGs interrelate with each other aiming to identify synergies and conflicts between them at both regional and national levels.

Dyborn Charlie Chibonga, World Farmers' Organization, Malawi, illustrated how his organization is helping smallholders to unite farmer cooperatives to operate as private sector businesses. Priscilla Achakpa, Women Environmental Programme, Nigeria, noted the key role of civil society organizations in Nigeria in tracking the implementation of the SDGs at the national, sub-regional and local levels and holding the government accountable to their actions.

Alex Richard Nkosi, African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), Togo, stated that the SDGs cannot be achieved without giving workers a voice to protect their rights and underscored the importance of commodity-based industrialization.

Ingrid Coetzee, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, South Africa, identified opportunities for cities and local governments to participate in achieving the two Agendas, in particular as innovation hubs for green economies. Siham Guendouz, African Youth Network for Sustainable Development, Algeria, discussed the role of civil society organizations and youth in developing national plans and policies, stressing the need to make agriculture “sexy” for greater involvement of youth in Algeria.

In the ensuing discussion, panelists and participants identified the need for, *inter alia*, greater engagement with citizens' groups; establishing an African youth development fund; creating a platform to share best practices; ensuring that jobs created are



(L-R) Isabela Cunha, UNDESA; Aida Opoku-Mensah, UNECA; Linus Mofor, UNECA; and Charles Akol, UNECA





(L-R) **Ingrid Coetzee**, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, South Africa; **Dyborn Charlie Chibonga**, World Farmers' Organization, Malawi; **Priscilla Achakpa**, Women Environmental Programme, Nigeria; **Stephen Chacha**, African Philanthropic Foundation, Tanzania; **Daniel Nyanganyura**, International Council for Science; **Guendouz Siham**, African Youth Network for Sustainable Development, Algeria

dignified and desirable; better linking the achievement of the SDGs with cultural practices in Africa; developing environmental education programmes; and, reversing neoliberal macroeconomic policy as a major driver of unequal development in Africa.

**REVIEW OF THE PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE 2017 SESSION OF THE ARFSD:** Charles Akol, UNECA, highlighted opportunities for interventions and specific preparations required by MGoS, noting key points in the schedule including the high-level panel on challenges. He stated that the MGoS statement would be presented during the round-table on peer-learning, exchange of experiences and lessons learned, noting that the statement would be informed by the discussions held in the breakout groups.

**BREAKOUT GROUPS ON THE VIEWS AND KEY MESSAGES OF THE MGOS ON THE SUB-THEMES OF ARFSD 3:** The workshop held six breakout groups to discuss key issues regarding the six SDGs under consideration.

On SDG 1 (No Poverty), key points included: greater focus on the “real poor,” particularly those who are disabled and marginalized; the need for a structural transformation towards commodity-based industrialization and recognizing unpaid work; assuring that the poorest are given a space to participate; and, ensuring that women have access to reproductive resources, including land rights and inheritance. In response, participants stressed, *inter alia*, the need to examine perverse agricultural and trade policies for industrial-scale agriculture that “pushes subsistence farmers into poverty,” and that relief from poverty must be seen as a “rights-based priority” rather than based on charity.

Noting that land grabs and poverty are causing increasing vulnerability to African farmers, key messages from the breakout session on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) included, among others: ensuring “food sovereignty”; enhancing farmers’ access to innovative financing; targeting research on nutrition based on local contexts; promoting diverse cropping systems; rebranding agriculture to appeal to the youth; and, investing in soil and water conservation. The ensuing discussion addressed: strengthening the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods by imploring African governments to allocate 10% of their budgets towards food security; protecting soil biodiversity; and, assuring that farmers’ lands for subsistence cultivation are not compromised.

On SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), key messages included the need for a human rights and life-cycle approach to achieve SDG 3, ensuring “no one is left behind.” Recommendations included: promoting comprehensive education for youth on their sexuality; ensuring the establishment of autonomous pan-African effective coordination mechanisms; and, focusing on health promotion and primary health care, not just curative health services. Participants responded suggesting that specific vulnerable populations be named and called for removing reservations related to sexual and reproductive health rights in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol).

On SDG 5 (Gender Equality), key messages included: gender accountability across global, regional and national frameworks; mobilizing resources for women’s empowerment, especially through progressive taxation and curbing illicit financial flows; promoting gender disaggregated data to ensure evidence-based advocacy; and, strengthening the “decent work” agenda by ensuring equal pay for equal work and violence-free work places. In response, participants emphasized strengthening gender accountability; the need for a pan-African accountability forum to learn lessons from countries’ VNRs; and, addressing women empowerment challenges by focusing on young girls.

On SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), key messages underscored the need to build climate resilient, gender-sensitive infrastructure that takes care of the needs of those living with disabilities. They also highlighted: commodity-based industrialization to enable diversification and value addition; deploying renewable energy infrastructure; and, effecting a paradigm shift away from neoliberal industrialization.



Breakout group discussing SDG 5 (Gender Equality)



(L-R) Isabela Cunha, UNDESA; Fatima Denton, UNECA; and Stephen Chacha, African Philanthropic Foundation, Tanzania

In the ensuing discussion, participants called for, *inter alia*, biodiversity-sensitive infrastructure and intersectoral discussions on infrastructure.

On SDG 14 (Life Below Water), recommendations included: banning single-use plastics; regulating the fisheries industry and aquaculture to manage adverse impacts on oceans; implementing regional action plans on marine litter; valuing Africa's oceans and marine ecosystems for increased consideration in economic planning and high-level decision making; and, endorsing The UN Ocean Conference Call for Action. Participants responded stating that, among others, there is an unnecessary depletion of ocean resources through the use of fishmeal and fish oils as feed material in aquaculture.

**CLOSING OF THE WORKSHOP:** Stephen Chacha said a small drafting team would finalize the MGoS statement for presentation to ARFSD 3, explaining that the draft statement would be forwarded to delegates for their consideration overnight.

In closing, Fatima Denton, Director, Special Initiatives Division, UNECA, stressed the time-sensitivity of the scale and pace of investments needed to realize the SDGs, noting that MGoS can serve as a "moral compass on the ground" in evaluating strategies and plans for achieving targets. She also noted the need for MGoS to form reciprocal links with governments and the private sector, especially as the implementation of the SDGs will require new institutional configurations beyond business-as-usual.

### CSD-10

Moubarack Lo, Senegal, Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the ninth session of the CSD, opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

Fatima Denton highlighted that the CSD was taking place in the context of the ARFSD, which is placed to strategically link national and global discourses on sustainable development. She explained the 17 SDGs represent a blueprint for transformational change and stressed the importance of inclusive economic growth, shared prosperity, and preservation of the environment. Denton also underscored the importance of sustainable natural resource management as a critical lever for economic growth and reducing poverty and hunger, and called on participants to help formulate policies to support a transition to an inclusive green economy.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** Chair Lo facilitated the election of the Bureau of the tenth session, with delegates electing: Mauritania as Chair; Mali as first Vice-Chair; Eritrea as second Vice-Chair; Zimbabwe as third Vice-Chair; and, São Tomé and Príncipe as Rapporteur.



Moubarack Lo, Senegal, Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the ninth session of the CSD

CSD-10 Chair Mohamed Yahiya Lafdal, Mauritania, introduced the provisional agenda, and it was adopted without amendment.

**INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES:** Nassim Oulmane, Chief, Green Economy and Natural Resources Section, UNECA, outlined the background, expectations, format and expected outcomes of the meeting. He stressed the importance of ensuring that Africa's key development priorities are reflected in the UNECA's programme of work.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY REPORT:** Fatima Denton introduced the UNECA sub-programme and provided an overview of the implementation of the 2016-2017 programme of work. She outlined challenges and opportunities, including: the strong correlation between natural resources and poverty; an abundance of natural resources that are currently not supporting broad-based development aspirations; the linkages between the sub-programme and SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action) and 14 (Life Below Water); and the potential for synergies to achieve a resilient green economy in Member States.

On green economy and natural resources, Oulmane discussed the background, strategic focus, outputs, and priority areas of the sub-programme. He stressed, *inter alia*, the importance of promoting integrated policy approaches, and generating and disseminating knowledge products and capacity building initiatives through, for example, partnership building. He identified priority areas such as promoting planning tools and methodologies to support integrated policy making assessments and fostering natural resource use efficiency.

Kasirim Nwuke, Chief, New Technologies and Innovation Section, UNECA, introduced the work of the sub-programme on Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). He discussed key issues and initiatives, including: the new global and regional context for STI; the importance of strengthening ICT and STI policies; core outputs, such as reports and parliamentary documents; special projects and activities, including a biomedical engineering innovation summer school; emerging issues, such as how social media might support the transformative agenda; and, opportunities and challenges, for example, the rapid pace of technological change.

James Murombedzi, Officer in Charge, African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), outlined how the ACPC works, the status of the implementation of its 2016-2017 programme of



work, priorities for 2018-2019, and expectations for the future. He said that the ACPC seeks to support sustainable, inclusive, and climate resilient development in Africa. He also noted key ACPC initiatives, including: Climate and Development in Africa; Weather and Climate Information Services; Building Climate Resilient Infrastructure; and, Climate Research for Development.

On priority areas for the 2018-2019 strategic framework of the sub-programme, Denton stressed the importance of supporting Member States in strengthening policies and national development plans. She highlighted: key challenges, including resource, implementation, and knowledge constraints; lessons learned, including the need for a phased approach; and, ways forward, such as creating spaces for policy dialogue and capacity building activities.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed a variety of issues related to the 2016-2017 programme of work and the priority areas of work for the 2018–2019 biennium. On standards, technologies and costs of green economy, one delegate noted that “green technologies should be subsidized.” In response, Denton stressed the importance of greening Africa’s industrialization and to “climate proof infrastructure,” highlighting that African countries do not need to “develop now and clean up later” and that new technologies “are not necessarily going to be more onerous.” On financing green economy strategies, delegates expressed concern about accessing the Green Climate Fund and selection criteria for UNECA project funding. Denton noted that the Green Climate Fund needs to have a “higher profile in the African region” and that it is important for country project proposals to align with national development plans as well as development partner requirements.

Delegates highlighted the need to contextualize green economy approaches to sub-regional differences and that the visibility of the UNECA and ACPC could be increased in African sub-regions. In response, Denton noted the requests and referred to “an idea” on decentralization to make the ACPC more visible. A number of delegates stressed the importance of public-private partnerships and private sector investment in green economy national strategies as well as the importance of inter-ministerial coordination at the country level for SDG implementation. Other issues discussed included: supporting the Africa Mining Vision in the new UNECA strategic framework.

**THEME, DATES AND VENUE OF CSD-11:** Oulmane proposed that the eleventh session of the CSD take place in April/May 2019, and invited Member States to express interest in hosting the event. He noted that if there were no proposals by summer 2018, the UNECA would host the next session in Addis Ababa.

**OTHER MATTERS:** A number of delegates noted country level initiatives and events relevant to the work programme of the UNECA sub-programme.

**CLOSING OF THE MEETING:** In closing, Fatima Denton stressed the importance of working with Member States to develop top priorities in the run up to the HLPF. She said “this is your Commission” and called on delegates to keep challenging the UNECA. Chair Lafdal adjourned the meeting at 5:26 pm.

### AFRSD 3 SUMMARY

Fatima Denton, opened the Forum on Thursday morning, noting that the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 provide a unique opportunity for Africa to achieve sustainable economic growth and to configure a transformational model of development.

Nehal Magdy Ahmed El Megharbel, Deputy Minister for Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, Egypt, noted that the SDGs cannot be achieved unless they are embedded within national policies and plans and stressed the importance of building indicators.

Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, AUC, highlighted the need to transform from the “yo-yo economics” of transnational corporations extracting natural resources, towards a transformative climate-resilient green economy.

Abdalla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary, UNECA, highlighted Africa’s comparative advantage through commodity-based industrialization, inter-African trade, timely disaggregated data for fine-tuning policies and green industrialization to avoid a “development first, cleanup later” mindset.

Seleshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Ethiopia, stressed the importance of domesticating and recognizing vulnerable communities in implementing the SDGs and highlighted Ethiopia’s implementation progress, noting substantial efforts being made to deploy renewable energy resources.

### HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING IN ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL:

Minister Bekele introduced the moderator, Fatima Denton, UNECA, who stressed the need to work collectively in ensuring that the two Agendas are well aligned with each other, noting that the panel discussion will provide insight into some of these problems.



**Nehal Magdy Ahmed El Megharbel**, Deputy Minister for Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, Egypt



A bird's eye view of the opening plenary of the 3rd Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development



(L-R) **Ben Paul Mungyereza**, Executive Director, Uganda Bureau of Statistics; **Mutuuzo Peace Regis**, Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda; **Amedi Camara**, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, Mauritania; **Anthony Mothae Maruping**, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, AUC; **Rosalie Matondo**, Minister of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment, Republic of Congo; **Nehal Magdy Ahmed El Megharbel**, Deputy Minister for Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, Egypt; **Seleshi Bekele**, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, Ethiopia; **Nyasha Chikwinya**, Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Zimbabwe; and **María Jesús Ncara Owono Mze**, Vice Minister for Education and Science, Equatorial Guinea

Amedi Camara, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, Mauritania, stressed the importance of including all stakeholders in implementing the SDGs and discussed Mauritania's strategy for shared growth.

Mutuuzo Peace Regis, Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda, highlighted, *inter alia*, how the Government of Uganda empowers women to take up leadership roles and property ownership as well as programmes to support youth and the elderly.

Deputy Minister Ahmed El Megharbel highlighted the development of Egypt's sustainable development strategy, "Egypt Vision 2030," noting its ambitious goals for inclusive growth and social justice to provide decent jobs for youth.

Rosalie Matondo, Minister of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment, Republic of Congo, said Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 provide an opportunity to address the multiple challenges facing the planet. Noting growing vulnerabilities in the Congo, she highlighted a number of national programmes assisting in SDG implementation. She urged for greater financing for local communities to address adverse environmental impacts.

María Jesús Ncara Owono Mze, Vice Minister for Education and Science, Equatorial Guinea, stated that education is a fundamental pillar of development for Equatorial Guinea, outlining the steps taken to support this, including emphasizing the importance of education in the 2020 Equatorial Guinea Action Plan.

Commissioner Maruping underscored the role regional economic communities play in implementing the two Agendas. He noted that national and regional policies already address a number of the SDGs and targets contained in the two Agendas prior to their adoption, explaining the "implementation train is already moving but just needs polishing." He urged establishing a single implementation, accountability and monitoring framework, with a single report on progress.

Ben Paul Mungyereza, Executive Director, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, emphasized the importance of data and statistics to monitor progress in implementation of policies and programmes. He stressed the importance of statistics agencies remaining independent and free from political interference, thus ensuring the credibility of data.

Nyasha Chikwinya, Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Zimbabwe, underscored the role of climate-smart agriculture to elevate the role of women in

achieving the SDGs. She also highlighted the importance of a robust education programme for girls, gender-sensitive media, and financial inclusion for women to strengthen their role in greening industrialization in Africa.

Bekele offered closing words, recapping the importance of gender parity, integrating SDGs in national development agendas and planning commissions, and underscoring the role of statistics in tracking the SDGs for reporting to the HLPF.

**ELECTION OF THE 2017 BUREAU AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK:** The Secretariat noted that the procedure for electing members of the Bureau is conducted through consensus by Member States. Upon discussion between Member States regarding greater clarification on the criteria for sub-regional representation within the Bureau, and whether to consider Egypt's proposal to appoint Bureau positions according to a follow-up role of outgoing presidents to ensure policy coherence, delegates agreed to proceed with the full rotation of all Bureau members. Member States then broke into sub-regional groups to elect Bureau positions for each sub-region. East Africa elected Seychelles as first vice-Chair. Southern Africa elected Zimbabwe as second vice-Chair. Central Africa elected Republic of Congo as third vice-Chair. North Africa elected Algeria as Rapporteur. Finally, West Africa elected Togo as Chair of the 2017 Bureau.

Incoming Chair of the elected Bureau, Gervais Tchaou Meatchi, Togo, thanked Members and adopted the agenda and programme of work without amendment.



Delegates from West Africa in consultation on their sub-region's nomination for the Bureau



**PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs AND AGENDA 2063:** Gervais Tchaou Meatchi, Togo, Chair of the 2017 Bureau, introduced the session and the speakers.

Bartholomew Armah, UNECA, presented the Africa Report on the SDGs and Agenda 2063. He outlined progress on the SDGs being assessed at the 2017 HLPF and highlighted, *inter alia*, the need to: prioritize value addition and industrialization to reduce poverty; challenges such as statistical gaps; and, the need for policy coherence to leverage synergies and minimize trade-offs.

Negussie Gorfe, African Centre for Statistics, UNECA, presented on the joint UNECA and AUC-developed framework for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the two Agendas. He discussed how the goals, targets and indicators of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 do not exactly match but overlap in many instances, and called for an African integrated monitoring framework.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates and presenters debated, *inter alia*: validation processes for indicator selection; domestic financing mechanisms for implementing the Agendas; aligning coherent implementation of the two Agendas; the need for independence of statistics divisions; the challenge of mapping and matching the indicators of the two Agendas; the need to enhance indicator data on SDG 13 (Climate Action); and, the reliability of data on female genital mutilation.

#### **ROUNDTABLE ON PEER LEARNING AND THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO AGENDAS:**

This session, which brought together representatives from several African countries to exchange experiences was moderated by Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue, Cornell University, US, who identified the need to balance urgent action in implementing the Agendas while measuring progress towards achieving the Agendas' indicators and targets.

Senegal explained how the two Agendas were being assessed in alignment with the country's national plan according to a scoring and classification system. He also noted the objective of integrating and filtering all components of the two Agendas into the national plan by 2019.

Egypt shared experience in implementing the Agendas, including the: need to pay attention to collaboration across ministries; adoption of a participatory approach to integrate stakeholders' positions within the national strategy; and, promotion of public-private partnerships for renewable energy production.

Kenya described integrating the Agendas within the "Kenya Vision 2030," and into the national constitution. He highlighted Kenya's efforts to eradicate poverty through social protection systems and ensuring that women represent two-thirds of appointed and elected positions in government.

Nigeria discussed how the objectives of the Agendas are being integrated in the country's economic recovery and economic growth plan. He also identified challenges, including establishing the total cost of programmes and projects.

Togo noted that it is in the process of establishing its national plan 2018-2022, which aims to domesticate the SDGs. He also emphasized the establishment of technical teams for measuring the targets contained in both the Agendas and in monitoring and verifying the national plan.

Belay Begashaw, Director General, SDGs Center for Africa, emphasized that the Center, established in 2016, assists African countries in developing business plans to cost national planning efforts and to establish a tracking system to capture synergies and trade-offs in monitoring progress towards the SDGs.

The MGoS representative offered recommendations bridging several SDGs, including: ensuring decent jobs; linking involvement of the private sector with national and international labor standards; and, supporting smallholder farmers through flexible grants. He also encouraged Member States to engage with MGoS to effectively track the SDGs.

Noting that poverty tends to be viewed as an economic problem, Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue discussed how a demographic perspective can improve understanding of poverty trends and policy initiatives. He suggested integrating demographic concepts into the two Agendas.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates posed questions for the panelists on a number of issues. One delegate queried the source and reliability of particular poverty statistics in the analysis of poverty trends. In response, Eloundou-Enyegue agreed that there were more up to date statistics available. Another delegate asked about harmonized national frameworks for monitoring and evaluation and Senegal said it would be happy to share its experiences with other countries.

Delegates also raised questions on mainstreaming the SDGs into national development plans. In response, Egypt noted the need for an "implementation mechanism" that will bring together ministries to support and implement sustainable development; Senegal stressed the importance of starting with national development plans and then incorporating the SDGs; Kenya noted how the SDGs were aligned with its "Vision 2030" through government issued circulars; Nigeria stressed the opportunity for think tanks to link between projects and plans; and, Togo underscored the importance of domesticating and internalizing the SDGs.



**Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue,**  
Cornell University, US



Participants from Major Groups and other Stakeholders consult



Parallel panel session on "Ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa"

Other issues raised included: the importance of the private sector in achieving sustainable development; the composition of national level thematic groups on implementation of the two Agendas; government and civil society collaboration for evidence-based research; and, structures and processes to ensure that planning, implementation and monitoring of the two Agendas is inclusive of civil society.

#### **PARALLEL PANEL SESSION ON KEY MESSAGES:**

Six parallel panel sessions met on Friday morning to discuss the six sub-themes of the session: eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa; ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa; healthy lives and promoting well-being for all; gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls; building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation; and, conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. The panels then reported back to plenary on Friday morning and afternoon.

**Eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa:** Noting that economic growth is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for poverty reduction in Africa, the panel session made recommendations including: growth must be inclusive; social protection programmes should be expanded; domestic resource mobilization should be augmented through increased economic growth for broader and progressive taxation; South-South cooperation is encouraged to leverage financing; investment in capacity building to prevent, reduce and manage risks from climate change and other hazards; and, harnessing the potential of women.

In the ensuing discussion, participants noted, *inter alia*: the need to recognize children in the text; the imperative of up-to-date human development data; and, the importance of local authorities in implementing poverty reduction strategies.

**Ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa:** Key messages included that: hunger should be considered a national and regional security issue; structural bottlenecks resulting in low productivity and vulnerable agricultural systems are

the root cause of food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition in Africa; multi-stakeholder approaches should address problems of low agricultural productivity along the whole value chain; policy must ensure smallholder farmer access to productive resources through supportive enabling environments; responses to agricultural failure and food insecurity should address root causes of protracted conflicts and political insecurities; effective leadership is required for the effective implementation and accountability of results; it is essential for all actors, including farmers, agrifood businesses, the private sector and civil society, to assume their respective roles and responsibilities; and, that tracking progress and reporting to support mutual learning is essential for sustained and effective action.

In response, participants discussed, *inter alia*, the need for: governments to promote climate smart agriculture and to keep buffer stocks for disaster management; considering the nexus between food, energy and water; additional funding for soil conservation and resilient agricultural infrastructure; and the need to consider the science-policy interface. Participants also discussed: the impact of pesticides on farmers; the relevance of the blue and green economies for local economic development; and, the impact of climate variability on agriculture.

**Healthy lives and promoting well-being for all:** Key messages included: ensuring universal access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services; calling on governments to ensure fair and mandatory public financing to build universal and equitable health coverage; the need to respect and strengthen regional frameworks that demonstrate political will and commitment to achieve health-related goals in the context of sustainable development; respecting sexual and reproductive health rights in policy and eliminating barriers that hamper women and girls' access to reproductive health services; and, the need for collaboration and international assistance around health innovation, including drug and health technology to improve access to good quality medicine, eradicate diseases and extend life expectancy. It was also suggested that text be added to the introduction specifying that efforts to achieve



universal and equitable access to quality health care be targeted for all people, including those with disabilities, children, youth, elderly, rural populations and vulnerable groups.

In the ensuing discussion, participants highlighted, *inter alia*: the need to address root causes of chronic and emerging diseases in Africa; the importance of sustainable sanitation services; and, the importance of building climate-resilient health systems.

**Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls:** Key points included: reflecting gender issues in national integrated plans for the two Agendas; the generation of gender statistics as key components of gender equality and sustainable development in Africa; legal reform to secure and protect the rights of women and girls; needing sufficient financial and human resources for gender equality, and women and girls' empowerment goals; addressing the lack of laws that criminalize violence against women and girls; the full participation of women in leadership and decision-making at national and local levels; ensuring decent work and quality education for all women; and, prioritizing greater investment for women's sexual and reproductive health in development planning and financing.

In response, participants stressed, *inter alia*: the disproportionate impacts chronic diseases, such as Ebola, have on women; the need to redistribute the burden of unpaid care work; the need for more action-oriented statements in the text; the need to criminalize gender violence and promote gender equality; the importance of internal and external financing to promote "welfare for all"; the need to ensure the safety of environmental and women's rights defenders; the importance of addressing country legislation that encourages servitude and modern day slavery; the need to consider gender stereotypes from early childhood; and, the need to consider the role of women in the mining sector.

**Building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation:** Key points included the need to: consider international agreements, such as climate change, in industry, innovation and infrastructure; diversify away from traditional trade patterns; and to shift perceptions from "a focus on financing gaps to investment and research and development opportunities." Other key points

included the: opportunity green industrialization provides for Africa to "leapfrog and plug competitively into global value chains"; significance of inclusive and sustainable industrial development as a source of income; allowing for "rapid and sustainable increases in living standards for all people, including women and youth"; extent to which global and regional value chains open up new avenues for domestic capacity building; need for financial institutions to better support small and medium-sized enterprises; the need to develop national education and training systems to address capacity gaps in designing and implementing resilient infrastructure; and, the unique opportunities innovation offers to "late-developer" countries to leapfrog and seize opportunities in emerging and mature industries.

Delegates noted the need to add a stronger message to ensure environmental and social safeguards are established during infrastructure development and the need to emphasize "ecologically-sound" industrialization that involves participatory decision-making.

**Conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development:** Key messages included that achieving long-term sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Africa will depend on sustainable and optimal management of natural capital, including oceans, seas and marine resources. They underscored the importance of effective governance and integrated approaches for achieving targets under SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and stressed weak governance frameworks and sectoral approaches as hampering "promising" ecosystem approaches. Other messages included: the need for transboundary approaches to manage shared marine resources; the challenges national and regional efforts face in managing marine and coastal environments; and, the need to take history, culture and common interest of a region into account when implementing strategies.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates noted the need for: effective governance and integrated approaches for managing Africa's rivers and lakes, in addition to ocean and marine resources; protection of coastal communities; combating piracy; balancing diverse economic interests of the oceans, including



Parallel panel session on "Conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development"

marine resources, fisheries, and mineral and energy resources; incorporating sub-regional and inter-state exploitation of marine mineral resources; and, identifying the impacts of ecotourism on sustaining local communities, providing jobs and assuring local incomes.

#### CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF KEY

**MESSAGES:** During Friday afternoon's plenary session, Sudan, in considering the modalities for discussing and adopting the key messages of ARFSD 3, queried whether the recommendations provided by the Forum would be legally binding. The Secretariat confirmed that recommendations would not be binding, but would serve as an instrument to advocate for further support from the international community. In response, Member States and MGoS stressed: the importance of committing the international community to South-South as well as North-South cooperation; using agreed UN language on sexual and reproductive health, rather than proposing new language; and, assuring that recommendations from the Forum do not contradict positions of national heads of state.

Plenary then adjourned to revise the document based on the outcomes of the panel sessions and comments received.

Reconvening in the early evening, with the English version of the "Draft key messages of ARFSD 3," in hand, Chair Meatchi gave delegates time to review the document and then opened the floor for comments.

In the discussion, participants made a number of recommendations, including: using the phrase "women and girls rights" consistently throughout the document; adding a paragraph on the specific needs of women in sensitive contexts, such as refugee women and displaced women; adding text on the protection of marine resources, extractive resources and energy resources within the Exclusive Economic Zones of Member States; and, adding text on the protection of riverine and coastal communities from environmental impacts, such as pollution.

In relation to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), substantial and lively debate ensued on removing the word "sexual" from the phrase "sexual and reproductive health services," with Mauritania, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria in favor of removing reference to "sexual." Ghana, Gabon, Republic of Congo, and MGoS were opposed to the change of language, with Ghana and South Africa noting that African Heads of State had

adopted similar language in internationally-agreed documents such as the 2030 Agenda. Benin, South Africa, Algeria, and Niger suggested amending the text to arrive at a compromise solution. Egypt, supported by Nigeria, stressed that consultation with capitals was required on this point before proceeding with a decision. The Secretariat proposed taking the interim decision to use "reproductive health" in order to give delegates time to consult with capitals to determine if "sexual" should be mentioned in the document, and delegates agreed.

To allow time for consultation with capital, the Secretariat stated that Member States should submit their comments or amendments on the document by Wednesday, 24 May 2017, noting that comments made during the final plenary session would also be included in the meeting report.

**CLOSING PLENARY:** Fatima Denton, UNECA, thanked partners, translators, the Government of Ethiopia, the Secretariat, and all delegates for their hard work throughout the meeting, urging Member States to submit their comments or amendments on the key messages timeously.

The Secretariat noted that several Member States had expressed interest in hosting ARFSD 4, emphasizing certain criteria would need to be developed to evaluate candidates and it would be prudent to wait until these Member States had consulted with their capitals before revealing potential candidates. He mentioned that the next meeting would take place at the end of April or early May 2018. Mauritania suggested that it would be wise to afford Member States the opportunity to express their candidature, stating their own interest in hosting the next meeting. Nigeria, noting it was West Africa's turn to host the next meeting, also expressed interest in hosting, as did the Gambia.

In other matters, Burkina Faso requested that the Secretariat develop specific criteria for electing the Bureau prior to ARFSD 4.

Chair Meatchi thanked all Members and participants and closed the meeting at 8:55 pm.



Participants draft the key messages of ARFSD 3



Chair Meatchi Tchaou Gervais, Togo



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### ECOSOC Special Meeting on Innovations in Infrastructure Development and Promoting Sustainable Industrialization:

The President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will organize this meeting to highlight the relevance of SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). The Special Meeting will aim to bring the challenges involved to the attention of national, regional and international actors, and to forge solutions to bridge the gaps in infrastructure and industrialization across countries. **date:** 31 May 2017 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** President of ECOSOC **www:** <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2017/2017-special-meeting-ecosoc-%E2%80%9C9Cinnovations-infrastructure-development-and-promoting>

**The UN Ocean Conference:** The high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (Life Below Water), co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden, will coincide with World Oceans in 8 June 2027. It aims to foster action to reverse the decline in ocean health, and will contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda by providing input to the HLPF. **dates:** 5-9 June 2017 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** Permanent Missions of Fiji and Sweden **phone:** +1-212-687-4130 (Fiji); +1-212-583-2500 (Sweden) **www:** <https://oceanconference.un.org/sideevents>

**Expert Group Meeting on SDG 2:** The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), is organizing an expert group meeting on progress in achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), as an input to the 2017 HLPF session. **dates:** 12-13 June 2017 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York City, US **www:** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2K\\_9-fowH8GtKj6M3hmYVdRVIE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2K_9-fowH8GtKj6M3hmYVdRVIE/view) [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2K\\_9-fowH8GUUtvTTJvaWhta28/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2K_9-fowH8GUUtvTTJvaWhta28/view)

**Governance of Maritime Resources and Activities for Sustainable Development in Africa:** This policy dialogue will provide a platform to share national experiences and build strategies to better protect African States' maritime interests and implement the AU's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy for the Seas and Oceans. Session topics include: governance of fishery resources and fishing activities in Africa; African governance of offshore mineral resources and mining, and of marine energy resources; and, governance and area surveillance to ensure safety and security at sea. **dates:** 21-23 June 2017 **location:** Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire **contact:** Martin Ndendé, UNECA **phone:** + 251 115 44 54 92 **email:** MNdende@uneca.org **www:** <http://www.uneca.org/idep-21>

**HLPF 5:** The fifth session of the HLPF, convening under the auspices of ECOSOC, will be held under the theme 'Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.' HLPF 5 will conduct in-depth reviews of the implementation of five SDGs: SDG 1 (No Poverty); 2 (Zero Hunger); 3 (Good Health and Well-being); 5 (Gender Equality); 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); and, 14 (Life Below Water). **dates:** 10-19 July 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

**Fifth Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development:** This meeting will take place under the theme, "The World in 2050: Looking Ahead for Sustainable Development." The 27 conference topics will cover all 17 SDGs and a number of cross-cutting issues, including data, the role of universities in achieving the SDGs, and the arts as a tool to raise awareness of the SDGs. **dates:** 18-19 September 2017 **venue:** Columbia University, Lerner Hall **location:** New York City, US **email:** [info@ic-sd.org](mailto:info@ic-sd.org) **www:** <http://ic-sd.org>

**Forty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food Security:** This meeting will convene under the theme, "Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition." The agenda of the session will cover: CFS and the SDGs; nutrition; policy convergence; workstreams and activity updates; an independent evaluation of CFS; and, critical and emerging issues for food security and nutrition. **dates:** 9-13 October 2017 **location:** Rome, Lazio, Italy **contact:** CFS Secretariat **www:** <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/plenary/cfs44/en/> <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/about/en/>

**Fifth Annual Conference of the Green Growth Knowledge Platform:** This meeting will focus on the theme of Sustainable Infrastructure. The Conference seeks to stimulate research on these issues and foster interdisciplinary dialogue where relevant. **dates:** 27-29 November 2017 **venue:** World Bank **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** World Bank **email:** [sustainableinfra@worldbank.org](mailto:sustainableinfra@worldbank.org) **www:** <http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/event/fifth-green-growth-knowledge-platform-annual-conference-2017>

**ARFSD 4:** ARFSD 4 will be held in preparation for the 2018 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:** Late April/ early May 2018 **location:** tbc **contact:** UNECA **email:** [ecainfo@uneca.org](mailto:ecainfo@uneca.org) **www:** <http://www.uneca.org/> <http://www.regionalcommissions.org/regional-forums-on-sustainable-development/>

## GLOSSARY

ACPC	Africa Climate Policy Centre
Agenda 2063	Africa Union Commission Agenda 2063
ARFD 3	Third Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
AU	Africa Union
AUC	Africa Union Commission
CSD-10	Tenth Session of the Committee for Sustainable Development
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
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