> **"The seeds of succes in every nation on earth are planted in women and children"**

Contents

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Time for SPECIFICS on the SUSTAINABLE

"Hatred is a danger to everyone - and so fighting it must must be a job for everyone," **Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.**

"We have a common understanding that through Africa-led solutions born on the African soil we can change course and rise to the challenge of achieving Agenda 2063 and the SDGs" **Amina Mohamed, United Nations Deputy Secretary General**

"There is a need for us to form alliances and collaborate in order to avoid duplication, and achieve our objectives." **Mandry Ntshani ARFSD-9 delegate (South Africa)**

"Even in the best case scenario where more money is raised by African countries themselves, we still need support from outside the continent and we need that investment to come in large scale. Less that 2% of global investments in renewable energy have happened in Africa over the last two decades. Accelerating investments in energy will bring value for the investor and it will transforms Africa." **Jean-Paul Adam, Director, Technology ,Climate Change & Natural Resources Management Division, ECA**

"The Global Goals can only be met if SDG17 is well understood and implemented. A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, the civil society, legislators and other stakeholders around the five major means of implementation which are; finance, capacity building, statistic and data, technology, and trade." **Thierry H. AMOUSSOUGBO Head, E-learning & Knowledge Management Division African Institute for Economic Development & Planning, ECA**

" Happiness is not a destination; it's a way of traveling. "

◼◼◼◼ International Women's Day (IWD20230)- #EmbracingEquality

"Why Equal Opportunities aren't enough."

This blog captures reflections on the linkages between sustainable development goal-SDG 5-Achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls and other goals. Most importantly, what are the realities/ experiences and significance of this years International Women's Day theme "Innovation and technology for gender equality" for the diversity of African women and girls?

Globally, the Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated the speed and effectiveness of technological adoption, innovation, policy and regulation in the country at all levels. The ongoing technological and digital revolution is transforming economies and driving innovation and productivity across all sectors, with frontier technologies as artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, robotics, 3D printing, biotechnology and nanotechnology, that have already brought enormous benefits through the accelerated development of COVID-19 vaccines[1]

At Africa continental level, financial technologies continue to provide access to digital financial services for unbanked people, thus supporting the achievement of the Goals. Investment in financial technologies that foster financial inclusion in Africa (such as mobile money financial services) is projected to reach $4 billion by the end of 2022[2]

What does this theme mean for the women and girls in Kenya?

Cognizant that women and girls are at different levels, living and working in different places and are at different stages of development in their lives, thus their strategic and basic needs also differ. This would imply that women and girls need equal access and safety in design of technological innovations. It also implies that women play a significant role in the utilization of technology-therefore the imperative to involve them in the design and development of innovative technologies, and this must start from childhood through STEM. Some of the critical areas to and actions to implement, monitor and track progress on include but are not limited to the following:

Digital literacy: recognizing the importance of digital literacy for all women in their diversity, however special attention needs to be paid to girls, young women, women with special needs, the elderly and indigenous women, including enhancing capacities in developing basic computer skills, online safety, and the ability to navigate digital platforms and acquire basic tools.

Addressing the gender gap in tech: The underrepresentation of women in technology fields, the factors that contribute to this gender gap,

and potential solutions to encourage more girls, young women, women with special needs, indigenous women, to pursue careers in technological and STEM fields.

Tech for social impact: How young women can use technology to create positive social impact in their communities, including examples of projects that have used technology to address social issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability.

STEM education: The urgent need to raise awareness and sensitization of communities the importance of STEM education for young women, including strategies to encourage girls to pursue STEM subjects, the benefits of a STEM education, and the impact of gender stereotypes on girls' interest in STEM.

Addressing online harassment: The prevalence of online harassment and cyberbullying directed at women political aspirants, women leaders, young women and girls, and the impact it can have on their mental health, and the need to implement strategies to address and prevent online harassment.

Role models and representation: The importance of representation and role models in technology for girls and young women, with special attention to those with special need and from indigenous communities, mentorship and examples of women who have made significant contributions to the field of technology, and strategies for increasing representation of women in tech.

Technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship: recognizing the role of technology in entrepreneurship and enhancing capacities for young women, women with disabilities, the elderly, and indigenous women, providing access to affordable technology to facilitate women to start and grow businesses, and the unique challenges and opportunities that women entrepreneurs face.

Tapping into existing opportunities for technology and innovation, requires high level political will to build on the current momentum, governments should play a key role by putting in place policies and resources required to enable increased access to and disseminate technological innovations that promote women and girls' effective participation and contribution to social, economic, and environmental sustainability. This momentum should be harnessed to close the existing gender gaps in critical areas, including in research and development, human capacity, and infrastructure development. Bridging the skills deficiency gender gap in science, technology and innovation is vital to unlocking the potential of Africa's women and girls and enhance their contribution to accelerating economic growth and prosperity for all generations.

This blog was written by Hellen Apila -Gender Lead -SDGs Kenya Forum and Mary Mumo-Gender Officer-SDGs Kenya Forum.

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1 Sudipto Paul, "What is 3D printing? Streamline prototyping and production", 28 January 2022.
2 Kingsley Ighobor, "Fintech, other knowledge-intensive services could drive Africa's prosperity, boost inclusion", 8 August 2022.
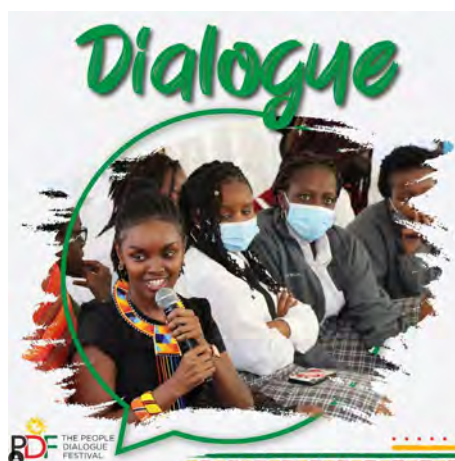
> **Stone Age** did not end because we ran out of **stones;** we transitioned to **better solutions.**

02

The fifth edition of the 2023 People Dialogue Festival (PDF)

The fifth edition of the 2023 People Dialogue Festival (PDF) was successfully held at the Nairobi National Museum of Kenya from the 8th to 11th of March 2023. With the theme "Competition and Collaboration in Democratic Development," the festival celebrated achievements that united ordinary Kenyans of all ages, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

Over the past four years, PDF's growth attracted tens of thousands, including elected leaders, government officials, civil society organizations, and academia. Participants engaged in fruitful dialogues on governance reforms, socio-economic issues, and preserving democratic progress, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a sustainable future.

Dialogue emerged as the heart of PDF, allowing policymakers and citizens to collectively reflect on Kenya's developmental strides. Holding institutions accountable and identifying reforms for economic growth and welfare enhanced Kenya's progress towards SDGs.

PDF's creative arts showcased unity in diversity while addressing complex societal issues. Renowned artists bridged the gap between leaders and citizens, promoting SDG-aligned solutions.

The festival promoted gender equality, youth inclusion, and citizen engagement in decision-making, fostering a genuine dialogue for sustainable development. It achieved its objectives, encouraging public participation, understanding of governance, and advocacy for issue-based politics, driving Kenya towards a transformed, sustainable future.

SDGs village

On 8th March 2023, Mr. Ole Thonke, the Ambassador of Royal Danish Embassy in Nairobi, officially launched the SDGs village. He expressed gratitude to all participants, workshops organizers, and supporters, emphasizing that SDGs require action, not mere rhetoric. In achieving SDGs, everyone must be involved, while duty bearers like the head of state have the highest responsibility for implementation. The private sector's role is vital in financing and delivering SDGs. Despite challenges, stakeholders remain committed to Agenda 2030, seeking solutions to push SDGs forward. The question remains: What can each individual do to contribute?

🟥🟧🟩🟨 Innovation And Technology For Gender Equality; Sdgs 5 Linkages

The Panel Session 2 at the 2023 People Dialogue Festival (PDF) tackled the vital theme of "Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality; SDGs 5 Linkages." With a strong focus on SDG 5 - Gender Equality, the session delved into the impact of digital transformation on localizing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moderated by Hellen Apilla from SDGs Kenya Forum, the panel featured influential women like Nerima Wako from Siasa Place, Susan Mutuku from Zein Media Foundation, Mercy Mwangi from KEWOPA, and Mary Mumo from SDGs Kenya Forum. Objectives were set to discuss how stakeholders adopt technology for gender equality, understand innovation trajectory across countries, explore the progress in digital revolution, and link innovation and technology to SDG 5.

Key points highlighted the importance of representing gender in all spaces, using technology for social impact and sustainable development, and dismantling gender stereotypes and online harassment. The role of women in driving innovation and change emerged as a crucial aspect in progressing towards gender equality. The session also addressed bridging the technology gap in rural areas through technology transfer, safety measures, responsive policies, and reporting mechanisms for harassment cases.

Challenges related to accessing financing for innovation and technology were discussed, including government prioritization, awareness gaps, and limited sponsors for women-led ideas. The rift between Global North and Global South tech companies and the equity divide also emerged as significant hurdles. Engaging questions were raised on changing societal perceptions, leveraging opportunities in the tech space, empowering parliamentary legislators and ministries, and transitioning tech skills to sustainable livelihoods.

In response, panelists emphasized changing perspectives on women's skills, lobbying tech companies for grassroot penetration, and ensuring policy coherence for budget allocations. They also advocated for technology that addresses local needs and stronger public participation to hold stakeholders accountable. The session concluded with recommendations to granulate budget allocations for local communities, capacitate parliamentary legislators on digital literacy, and leverage technology advancements in different sectors. Additionally, partnerships with tech companies were encouraged to flag abusive language and ensure adequate data for decision-making. Overall, the session highlighted the critical role of innovation and technology in achieving gender equality and provided actionable insights for advancing SDG 5 objectives.

Water And Sanitation: Leave No One Behind In The Context Of Water And Sanitation: A Panel Discussion at the 2023 People Dialogue Festival

Panel 3 at the 2023 People Dialogue Festival delved into the pressing topic of "Water and Sanitation: Leave No One Behind in the Context of Water and Sanitation."

This essential session shed light on the global disparities in access to adequate and sustainable water and sanitation, magnified during the recent pandemic, and the urgent need to align with SDG 6 as we progress towards Agenda 2030. The insightful discussion, moderated by Bridget Rugube from SDGs Kenya Forum, featured esteemed panelists, including Titus Muyoka from Ahadi Achievers CBO, Ridhwani Sadiki from Rural Citizen Network, and Milka Mutindi from Greening MUA Environmental Initiative. Objectives focused on understanding the challenges faced by specific counties and the world in achieving universal water access, assessing the economic impacts of water and sanitation disparities, and analyzing population data's effects on access. The panel explored the link between limited water access and leaving women behind, impacting their productivity and educational opportunities. The consequences of population growth on water resources, pollution, and sanitation were also examined, stressing the urgency to prioritize sustainability. The reduction of tree cover emerged as a significant factor affecting water access and climate change. The session emphasized the need to nurture and protect tree plantations to enhance water conservation efforts.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) showcased their efforts in involving communities in tree planting, creating a sense of responsibility and sustainability. The critical role of climate change in affecting ecosystems and the achievement of SDG 6 highlighted the need for urgent action. The consequences of inaction were illuminated through studies revealing contaminated water consumption and health complications. The session urged for robust conservation measures, public-private partnerships, and governmental prioritization to address these issues effectively. Key questions raised focused on accountability after tree planting, water conservation measures, local-global emission linkages, addressing public debt impact, and controlling human encroachment on wildlife reserves.

Panelists responded with calls for ownership and nurturing after tree planting, private sector engagement, rainwater harvesting techniques, and political engagement at both local and national levels. They emphasized community-centric approaches and collaborations to protect wildlife reserves and water resources. The session concluded with a collective responsibility call for securing water access, preserving catchment areas, and promoting sustainable water projects. It urged active involvement from citizens, government, and the private sector to ensure equitable water and sanitation access for all, paving the way for a brighter and healthier future.

Data For Sdgs Reporting: The Power of Data for SDGs Reporting

Data holds the key to global governance on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), driving decision-making, and shaping narratives. At the heart of this transformative process lies the accurate production, dissemination, and accessibility of data. During an insightful panel session at the 2023 People Dialogue Festival, experts explored the significance of data in SDGs reporting, monitoring, and implementation, and how various stakeholders can leverage development data for progress.

Chaired by Festus Odingo from SDGs Kenya Forum, the panel featured Dominick Loriakwe from The State Department for Economic Planning, Benjamin Charagu from Open Institute, Leah Wambugu from Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), and Ruth Nduleve from Makueni County Government.

The panel sought to achieve key objectives:

1. Understand data production, dissemination, and access in the context of new actors and power hierarchies.

2. Harness the potential of big data for SDGs implementation and monitoring.

3. Recognize the role of national statistical offices and international agencies as purveyors of development data.

Enriching primary data, collected by the National Statistical System (NSS), remains a challenge. Data often lacks a condensed, understandable format for citizens, leading to limited engagement. Governments and NGOs must establish governance structures for accountable data management and prioritize public needs. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in data production, providing valuable information relevant to SDGs. They advocate for data transparency, act as watchdogs for the government, and innovate data collection. Open Institute has been at the forefront of training CSOs representatives in data collection and utilization to enhance digital literacy.

Makueni County showcased impressive progress in data management, offering valuable lessons to other counties. Their annual statistical data document serves as a key tool for decision-making. Working closely with KNBS, Makueni has developed ward statistical profiles for targeted program identification and residents' use. The Localization Taskforce, established in 2013, has actively contributed to monitoring and evaluating SDGs. By bringing local perspectives to the national level, they have integrated SDGs into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP) and developed indicator handbooks for streamlined reporting.

CSOs can effectively contribute to SDGs reporting by exploring non-traditional data collection methods, such as citizen-generated data (CGD). CGD offers new avenues for filling data gaps and amplifying citizen voices, while KNBS ensures data validation and authentication. Kenya has made commendable progress in SDGs reporting, with 144 indicators currently in progress, and efforts continue to expand this number further. The Inter-Agency Technical Working Committee (IATWC) plays a vital role in coordinating SDGs implementation and involving all stakeholders.

Challenges include the lack of consistency in conducting SDG surveys and low awareness levels despite statistics indicating otherwise. Key questions and responses delved into sea-level water rise, data gaps due to cultural practices, agricultural sustainability, and data protection measures. Recommendations called for building capacity at national levels, developing electronic monitoring systems for counties, embracing CGD, and harnessing big data approaches for urban climate solutions. As Kenya continues its journey towards Agenda 2030, the power of data and collaboration among stakeholders will remain pivotal in achieving the transformative vision of the SDGs.
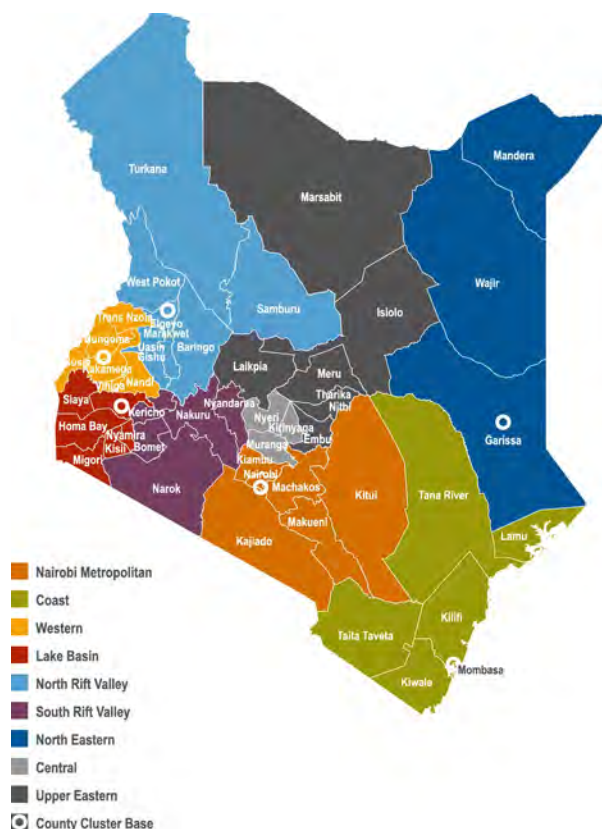
> "The **art** of farming teaches us patience, resilience, and the beauty of growth."

03

Nairobi Metropolitan
Coast
Western
Lake Basin
North Rift Valley
South Rift Valley
North Eastern
Central
Upper Eastern
County Cluster Base

n Kenya, devolution refers to the process of localisation of power and resources from the national government to county governments. As a result of the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, this system was established in Kenya to promote local participation, equitable distribution of resources, and address regional imbalances. As a result of devolution in Kenya, the global goals, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are relevant in the following ways:

A. Goal 1: No Poverty: Devolution aims to address poverty at the local level by empowering counties to plan and implement poverty eradication strategies based on their specific needs. Through devolved resources, counties can invest in poverty reduction programs such as social welfare, agricultural development, and employment creation.

B. Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being: Devolution promotes the provision of quality healthcare services across counties. By decentralizing healthcare management, each county can address its unique health challenges and allocate resources accordingly. This ensures better access to healthcare, improved health outcomes, and reduced health disparities.

C. Goal 4: Quality Education: Devolution allows counties to prioritize and manage their education systems. Each county can tailor educational programs to address local needs, improve infrastructure, and enhance access to quality education. This fosters inclusive and equitable education, contributing to achieving SDG 4.

D. Goal 5: Gender Equality: Devolution provides an opportunity to address gender disparities at the county level. County governments can implement policies and programs that promote gender equality, such as women's empowerment initiatives, access to reproductive healthcare, and measures to combat gender-based violence.

E. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Devolution encourages counties to develop their economic potential and attract investment. By focusing on job creation, skills development, and supporting local businesses, counties contribute to sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities, aligning with SDG 8.

F. Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities: Devolution supports the development of sustainable urban and rural areas. Counties can plan and implement infrastructure projects, housing programs, waste management systems, and environmental conservation initiatives that promote sustainable development at the local level.

G. Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Devolution enhances citizen participation and accountability. By bringing decision-making closer to the people, counties can foster transparent governance, promote civic engagement, and strengthen local institutions, contributing to peace and justice at the grassroots level.

Overall, devolution in Kenya aligns with several global goals by empowering local communities, promoting inclusive development, and addressing regional disparities. By decentralizing power and resources, Kenya strives to achieve sustainable and equitable development across its counties in line with the SDGs.

██ ██ ██ ██ **The problems of the world are increasingly becoming interconnected and interdisciplinary. While the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals is meant to make the world a better place and alleviate suffering; much progress is yet to be made.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formulated by the United Nations and its partners and were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2015. They aim to ensure that everyone including least developed countries participate in the formulation of global and universal goals meant to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place. The 17 goals cover all aspects of life on planet Earth and are interrelated therefore the achievement of one goal might influence the achievement of others. SDGs have 169 targets which are used to monitor the progress made in the realization of the goals. Each country is given the freedom to prioritize and develop a framework required to achieve them. Most nations usually focus on SDGs that are in line with the current development agenda.

██ ██ **Why SDGs?** Unlike Millennium Development Goals, SDGs address more global issues and are being implemented in all parts of the world. They provide a mechanism that helps countries and different humanitarian agencies collaborate by addressing the most pressing issues facing humanity. Policymakers are also able to work with academics, activists, civil society, and other local and international organizations since the achievement of sustainable development goals requires a multi-stakeholder approach.

The SDGs are meant to end poverty in all its forms, make the world a peaceful place, and reduce inequalities among other goals by 2030. Eight years since their adoption, a lot of progress has been made in the achievement of some goals in different parts of the world. However, the implementation, suitability, and effectiveness of sustainable development goals especially in African countries are up for debate. This is because they are not created in a way that they address local problems with local solutions. It is up to the governments and other stakeholders to choose what to address and focus on. It is also very unlikely that the goals will actually be achieved by the year 2030 as desired. If this is the case, what next? What happens to Agenda 2030? These are some of the questions that remain unanswered.

In addition, since United Nations' resolutions are not binding, it has become more difficult to hold nations accountable for the implementation of certain pressing goals. Nations have the leeway to focus on certain goals which more often are in line with their national development agenda, neglecting others. Implementation of SDGs also requires trade-offs between different goals. For example, to achieve SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure or SDG 8 on economic growth, we have to work against SDG 13 on climate action. This is because more economic activity (if not carbon neutral) would lead to more emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gasses contributing to climate change and reversing the efforts that have been made to save the planet.

██ ██ **The Reality of SDGs Implementation in Kenya** In 2008, the late President Mwai Kibaki launched the Vision 2030 Initiative meant to transform Kenya into a rapidly industrializing middle-income country by 2030. It mainly addresses the development of the country and increases the quality of life for Kenyans by 2030. This initiative provided the required framework and building blocks for the implementation of sustainable development goals. There has been much progress on the implementation of the Vision 2030 agenda. The government of Kenya and the UN also worked on the UN development assistance framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022 meant to support Kenya achieve its development goals. The UNDAF focused on three main priority areas including; Transformational governance, the development of human capital, and inclusive and sustainable growth. These goals are in line with Kenya's development goals as enumerated in the third five-year medium-term plan.

Moreover, since 2013, the Kenyan government came up with the Big 4 agenda focusing on improving the standards of living of Kenyans. The Big 4 Agenda focused on enhanced manufacturing, food security, affordable housing, and universal health care. All these coincide with the sustainable development goals and humanitarian work being done by UN Agencies and other organizations. However, food security remains a big challenge in Kenya and the larger Horn of Africa as a result of the failed rainy seasons coupled with other overlapping crises that affected the production of food. The first pilot project of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) which is in line with SDG 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing was launched in 2018 in 4 counties with high incidences of communicable diseases and child death. The program was meant to reduce the cost of accessing basic services such as primary healthcare and maternity services in public hospitals. The government is looking to continue subsidizing health insurance coverage to low-income earners and vulnerable populations through the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). Until universal healthcare is rolled out throughout the country, poor Kenyans will continue grappling with access to quality and affordable healthcare.

In Kenya, civil society organizations play a major role in SDG implementation. Their main role is to provide oversight over the work done by government agencies and research based on the different issues addressed by the SDGs. On the other hand, the private sector plays a major role in the implementation of the SDGs in the country by raising finance for the implementation of projects. In Kenya, the management of the implementation and reporting of SDGs is under the State Department of Planning through the SDGs Coordination Directorate which works with other stakeholders through a committee called the Inter-Agency Technical Working Committee (IATWC). The IATWC is co-chaired by the Kenya Private Sector Alliance and the SDG Kenya Forum and has other members including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Academia.

Kenya has made some steps towards the achievement of the SDGs since the country already had some development agenda. The major challenge for Kenya is the limited fiscal space to fund projects that are meant to achieve the SDGs. In addition, the crippling debt burden and other national issues discount the progress that has been made to improve the quality of life of Kenyans. Needless to say, a lot of work needs to be done to alleviate the suffering of the Kenyan people especially the most vulnerable populations who are unemployed and lack access to basic needs such as food and clean water.

Written by Don Nyagudi Finance and Accounting Specialist | SDGs Kenya Forum: African Youth Delegate Fellow | First published with LEED Initiative.

04

"It will be intriguing to observe how society **adapts to the presence of artificial intelligence,** but it is certain that **humans well being** will always be the **priority to us**"

Key Messages from The Ninth Session Of The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD2023)

ARFSD 2023
27 February to 2 March 2023
NIAMEY, NIGER

Ninth session of the
Africa Regional
Forum on Sustainable
Development

The Ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-9) was convened in Niamey from 28 February to 2 March 2023. The Forum was organized jointly by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Government of Niger, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and other entities in the United Nations system.

The theme of the ninth session of the Regional Forum was "Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063." During the session, an in-depth review was undertaken of progress made in the implementation of five selected Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation); 7 (affordable and clean energy); 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure); 11 (sustainable cities and communities); and 17 (partnerships for the Goals) and the corresponding goals of the Africa Agenda 2063.

The SDGs Kenya Forum attended the 9th session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Niamey, Niger from 27th February to Friday 3rd March 2023. This is an annual multi-stakeholder platform is mandated to follow up, review and catalyse action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by Member States of the United Nations in September 2015.
The Regional Forum also provides a platform for peer learning, including voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews by subnational entities. The theme of the ninth session of ARFSD was "Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union", and is aligned with the theme of the 2023 meeting of the high-level political forum, namely "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels".

The overall objective of the ninth session of the Forum was to conduct a regional follow-up and review of progress made, facilitate peer learning and advance transformative solutions and action to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations, goals and targets of Agenda 2063.

Speakers reiterated that it is crucial for member states to urgently enhance climate ambitions by reinforcing their commitments. They called for African countries to redefine their socioeconomic development models through a strategic focus on investing in a green transformation. Such a transformation is viable if the means to implement it are rooted in the productive capacity of the continent. It was noted that African green growth trajectories have the potential to create better jobs, advance gender equality, tackle growing poverty, reduce carbon emissions and conserve natural resources and tackle inequality in a sustainable way. In this vein, the African Continental Free Trade Area will be an important lever for a green future in enhancing value addition. With the right investment in a sustainable value chain, intra-African trade can flourish on the basis of green investment-with no better example than the value chain for batteries linked to critical minerals. Investment in sustainable technology and innovation, climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy and transport, biodiversity and human capital development will all be crucial in accelerating the drive towards an inclusive, green and resilient recovery.

Speakers also noted that Africa will not be able to bridge the large financing gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, estimated at $200 billion per year to 2030, 6 on account of its severe challenges in managing public debt, which have been exacerbated by reduced fiscal space and prohibitively expensive borrowing costs, which are restricting efforts to leverage additional financial resources for investment in critical infrastructure, trade development, just transitions and the achievement of a post-pandemic green and sustainable recovery. It is crucial that advanced economies channel far larger flows of financing to developing countries so that the latter can achieve economic development and meet the Goal targets. The lending capacity and annual flows of the multilateral development banks must be increased, primarily through greater paid-in capital to these institutions, but also through greater leveraging of their balance sheets. Other measures, such as notably increased overseas development assistance, large-scale philanthropy and refinancing of debts that are falling due, are required to bolster finance for implementation of the Goals in low-income and lower-middle income countries.

The call to action was on Governments to seize the moment to make this a decade of action, transformation and restoration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and make good on the Paris Agreement. With dedicated leadership at the highest political level,

countries can accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with a view to realizing a green and inclusive future. The decade of action and delivery for sustainable development (2021–2030) thus presents an opportunity and a window of hope to dramatically speed up the pace and expand the scale of implementation to deliver on the regional and global goals, alongside accelerating the recovery from multiple crises.

With regards to data, the COVID-19 crisis underscored the importance of timely and high-quality data for both promptly responding to and recovering from crises, and of accelerated and innovative approaches to data and information collection, dissemination and use. Looking ahead, consolidating and scaling-up data innovation and new forms of partnership are essential for the design of evidence-based recovery and policies, plans and other interventions for implementation of the Goals.

Ultimately, none of the above can be achieved in the absence of a renewed commitment to strengthening international solidarity and partnerships, as no one economy can respond alone to the multiple and complex crises faced by countries.

Written by Hellen Apila -Gender Lead -SDGs Kenya Forum.

African-led solutions key to achieving SDGs, says UN's Amina Mohammed

Niamey, Niger, 28th February 2023 (ECA) - During the 9th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-9) in Niamey, Niger, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, emphasized the importance of Africa delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. She called for greater leadership, commitment, and investment in achieving the SDGs.

Ms. Mohammed addressed the delegates at the ARFSD, highlighting the need for Africa-led solutions to address the challenges of achieving Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. She urged world leaders to set clear ambitions to reduce poverty and inequality by 2030, emphasizing the importance of investing in African economies, people, especially women and youth.

The forum, organized jointly by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Government of Niger, and other partners, centered on the theme "Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063." During the three-day event, progress in the implementation of five selected Sustainable Development Goals related to clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, and partnerships for the Goals was reviewed.

Ms. Mohammed highlighted the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in lifting millions of Africans out of poverty through increased intra-Africa trade. She emphasized sustainable industrialization and economic diversification as key factors for Africa's development and stressed the importance of harnessing emerging green and digital technologies.

Ahead of the SDGs Summit in September 2023, Ms. Mohammed urged African leaders to set clear ambitions for poverty reduction and inequality by 2030, leveraging financing and aligning SDG commitments with national institutions and budgets.

In his opening remarks, President Mohamed Bazoum of Niger acknowledged the challenges his country was facing, such as conflict and food insecurity due to climate change. He stressed the importance of promoting a fair planet, inclusive of economic growth and environmental protection, to achieve real progress on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

Antonio Pedro, ECA's Acting Executive Secretary, emphasized the significance of digital technologies in fueling Africa's transformation. He mentioned that E-Commerce is expected to grow by 50% in Africa by 2025, and bridging the digital divide, particularly along gender lines, is essential for true inclusion and unlocking the potential of the 4th industrial revolution. He also noted that Africa would revisit some of the SDGs, including SDG #9, to promote resilient infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

Speaking on behalf of the African Union Commission's (AUC) Chairperson, Monique Nsanzabaganwa, AUC Deputy Chairperson affirmed that both Agenda 2023 and Agenda 2063 remain robust and essential blueprints for transforming and improving the well-being of the African people.
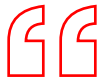
🟥🟧🟩🟨 ECA launches Origin Initiative for East African region

At the 5th African Science, Technology, and Innovation Forum 2023 in Niamey, Niger, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) launched the Origin Initiative, a physical hub in East Africa.

The main objective of the initiative is to provide guidance for the establishment of original research and innovation labs, as well as organizational arrangements for entrepreneurial universities across Africa.

Former executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Vera Songwe, introduced the Origin Initiative, emphasizing that the name "Origin" was deliberately chosen because addressing problems effectively requires understanding their source or "origin." Accordingly, the solutions should be developed in the same location, taking into account the nature and context of the challenges. As a result, unique issues demand creative solutions that are rooted in the region's culture and values.

Prof. Ndirangu Kioni, Vice-Chancellor of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Kenya, highlighted the significance of the Origin Initiative in establishing research partnerships with industries and attracting talented individuals from diverse disciplines to shape the future. He emphasized that the initiative's primary focus is to inspire and accommodate passionate and brilliant minds from various fields who are driven to innovate and invent. The Origin Initiative will serve as a platform to showcase breakthroughs, encourage prototyping, and create clear pathways for bringing products and firms to the market. It aims to attract the brightest talents to address complex challenges faced by both companies and society at large, while also fostering research collaborations with industry partners.

Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD2023) "Quotes"

"600 million Africans currently do not have access to energy. Connecting those 600 million Africans will be one of the biggest boosts to economic productivity in Africa."

Jean-Paul Adam, Director, Technology, Climate Change & Natural ResourcesManagement Division, ECA

"We need Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policies that are integrated and linked to national and regional development plans. We must also invest in human capital. That means promoting STEM discipline, not only at university level, but starting at a very young age."

Lidia Arthur Brito, Regional Director for Southern Africa, UNESCO

"We need to invest in strong multidisciplinary data, information and knowledge capabilities for science-based decisions and policies"

André Kamga Foamouhoue Director General, African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (AMCAD)

Niamey Declaration on accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

We, African ministers, and senior officials responsible for the environment and sustainable development, finance, planning, economic and social development, water, energy, industry, infrastructure, urban planning and land management, education, statistics, the digital economy, science and technology, heads and members of delegations of the parliaments of member States of the African Union and experts representing Governments and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society,

Gathered online and in person in Niamey from 28 February to 2 March 2023 at the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the theme "Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 : The Africa We Want, of the African Union" and placed under the high patronage of the President of the Niger, Mohamed Bazoum,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government of the Niger for having hosted the Forum and having ensured that all the necessary conditions were in place for the successful completion of its work, which was marked by fruitful and high-quality discussions on the monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved, the exchange of experiences in the area of sustainable development in Africa, and the formulation of key messages aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union,

Concerned about the convergence of geopolitical, financial, climate and biodiversity crises that have served only to amplify economic hardship, reducing prosperity and societal progress in Africa by exacerbating poverty,land degradation, food insecurity and the lack of access to affordable energy, which, in turn, has deepened existing inequalities and hampered progress in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, Mindful that the repercussions of security crises and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) persist, as numerous countries, battered by a significant rise in their debt distress and dramatic decreases in foreign direct investment and trade, stand on the brink of financial crisis and have scarcely recovered over the past two years,

Concerned about the serious challenges that African countries are facing in managing their public debt, which are exacerbated by prohibitive borrowing costs, and highlighting the need for significant sustainable financing to ensure an inclusive, green and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the accelerated delivery of sustainable development in Africa,

Recognizing the potential of the natural and human resources on the continent and the real and plentiful opportunities that are available for Africa to take on the challenges that are arising, but also of the need to form ambitious, fair and equitable internal and external partnerships to guarantee firmly the transformation of the continent,

Convinced that maintaining the status quo presents a threat to the implementation of the two agendas and that only innovative integrated solutions, incorporated vertically and horizontally into an institutionally coherent framework, will enable the successful implementation of the agendas,

Welcoming the launch, at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, of the sustainable debt coalition initiative, and the outcomes adopted at the twenty-seventh session, in particular the Sharm el-Sheikh implementation plan and the decision to create a fund to respond to loss and damage,

Welcoming also the adoption, at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, of the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which will serve as a strategic guide for the implementation of the Convention and its protocols for the period from 2022 to 2030,

Welcoming further the discussions at the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held on 18 and 19 February 2023, in particular those relating to the sustainable development agenda, efforts to combat climate change and other related challenges,Welcoming the successful operationalization of regional initiatives to combat climate change and to promote sustainable development, in particular the African climate commissions,Welcoming also the discussions at the second Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Climate Commission for the Sahel Region, held in Addis Ababa on 17 February 2023, in particular those concerning the creation of an executive secretariat for the Climate Commission and a climate fund for the Sahel region,

Recalling the urgent need to implement meaningful, integrated and constructive projects and programmes, as part of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030),Noting the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the objectives of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018–2028) and the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in 2023 and the urgent need for transformative initiatives to achieve the objectives of those frameworks,

Recognizing the work of the United Nations resident coordinators in integrating development assistance with the organization and coordination of partnerships for the delivery of sustainable development at the national level,

Welcoming multiple initiatives implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations system and other partners, such as the voluntary national and local reviews, debt-for-nature swaps, the regional digital carbon registry, the harmonization of the greenhouse gas

accounting and reporting protocols, capacity-building in relation to green, blue and sustainable bonds, the great blue wall initiative, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative and the liquidity and sustainability facility, to overcome financing challenges and to bolster positive action in support of the climate and nature and to accelerate significantly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, Recalling the strategic directions of the African summit on industrialization and economic diversification, held in Niamey in November 2022 in support of inclusive and sustainable industrialization and economic diversification,

Welcoming the emphasis placed on industrialization and structural transformation as essential priorities for Africa, in particular by using the global green energy transition and the associated high demand for the natural resources of the continent to meet it, and by prioritizing value creation and links with regional and global value chains for manufactured products and services connected with those resources,
Recognizing the efforts of member States and other stakeholders in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and considering the critical role played by young people and women in the transformation of the continent,

1. Request the United Nations resident coordinators to boost their support for the revitalization of national institutions and development plans that are aimed at transformational initiatives to facilitate the recovery from multiple crises and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
2. Request the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations system and other partners to continue to support African member States in the pursuit of resource-based industrialization, including the promotion of a mineral value chain for lithium ion batteries in Africa;
3. Invite development partners to support African countries in gaining access to sources of innovative finance;
4. Call upon the Commission and its partners to devise and implement an action plan to seek and mobilize global support for the development and operationalization of regional initiatives and the sustainable debt coalition in Africa and elsewhere;
5. Request the entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the African Export-Import Bank and other partners to continue and to expand their support to scale up and deliver initiatives, such as voluntary national and local reviews, debt-for-nature swaps, the regional digital carbon registry, the harmonization of greenhouse gas accounting and reporting protocols, capacity-building in relation to green, blue and sustainable bonds, the great blue wall initiative and the liquidity and sustainability facility, to overcome financing challenges, to bolster positive action in support of the climate and nature and to accelerate significantly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063;
6. Call upon the entities of the United Nations system, the African Union Commission and other partners to devise and implement capacity-development programmes and other initiatives to assist member States and regional economic communities in effectively implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
7. Invite member States to acknowledge the successful organization by Egypt of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to support the country during its presidency of the Conference of the Parties, by ensuring, among other things, that the efforts made to create the loss and damage fund bear fruit through the mobilization of resources to compensate for the mounting losses of infrastructure, ecosystems and livelihoods as a result of the extreme climate phenomena that are badly affecting the continent;
8. Call upon the international community to respect its obligations under the Paris Agreement and to redouble its efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in order that humanity may continue to enjoy a stable climate system;
9. Invite member States and their partners to make greater efforts to implement the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa and the African forest landscape restoration initiative, in particular by placing an emphasis on the development and universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning and rapid action systems and programmes, the enhancement of urban resilience and the expansion of catastrophe risk insurance and financing;
10. Call upon all African countries to redefine and develop their economic models, integrating the protection of natural resources, including water and land, the promotion of renewable energy and a just transition, the implementation of green and resilient infrastructure that supports sustainable industrialization, and the development of urbanization that enables inclusive growth, while foregrounding a recognition of the value of human capital;
11. Encourage all African countries to harness science, innovation and state-of-the-art emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and the potential of young people to drive the necessary transformative change over the coming 10 years and achieve the objectives of sustainable development, and to increase national investment in digital meteorological and climate observation systems to help to provide early warning systems for all the citizens of the continent;
12. Request the Government of the Niger to present the key messages on behalf of Africa to the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its meeting to be held in New York from 10 to 19 July 2023, at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit on 19 and 20 September 2023, during the high-level week of the General Assembly, at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and at other relevant global, regional and subregional forums in order to advocate accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

DECADE OF >>> ACTION

#TwendeKaziNaSDGs

Leave No Kenyan Behind

" **We need to focus on solutions that will make greatest impact**

U.N. Secretary-General
Antonio Guterres "

LEAVE NO ONE
BEHIND