

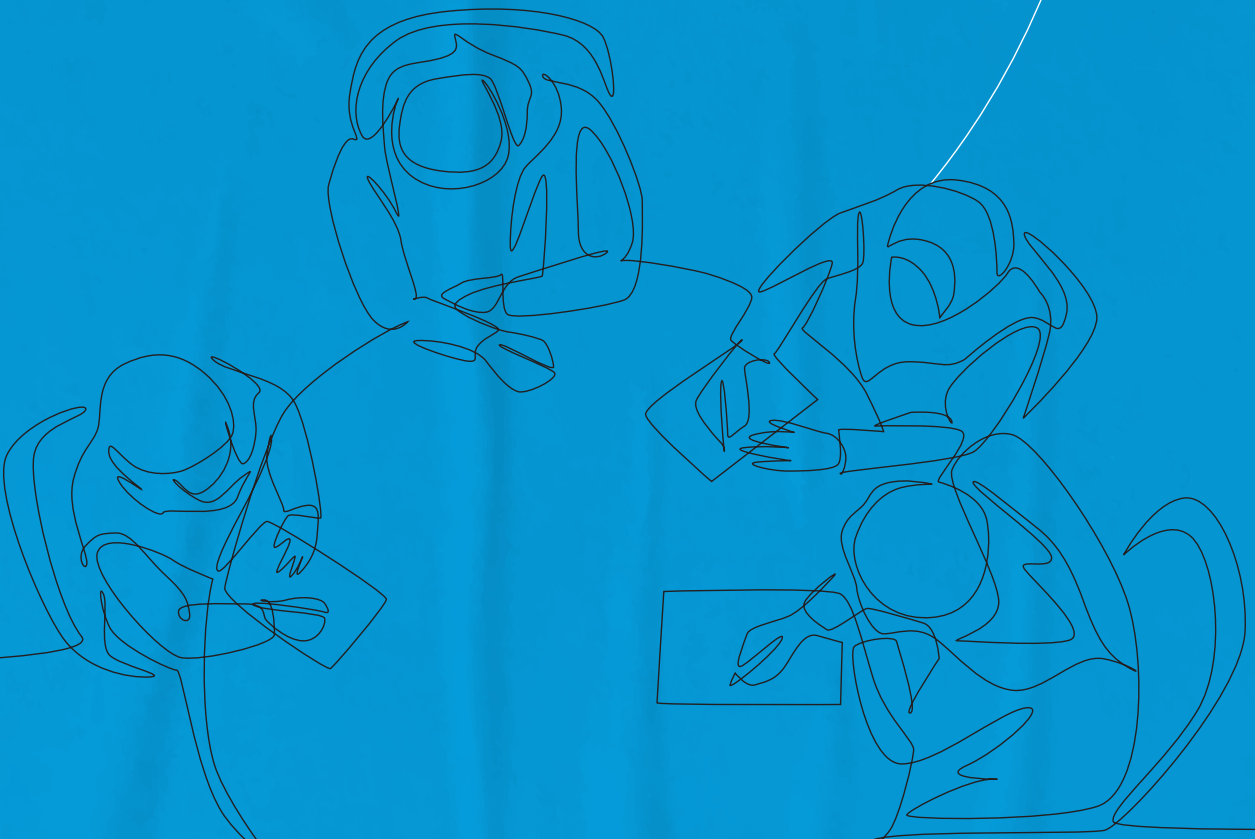


United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK (2022-2025)

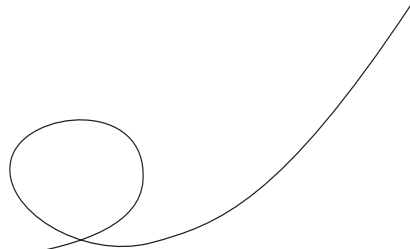




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Publications Section
Economic Commission for Africa
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 544-9900
Fax: +251 11 551-4416
E-mail: eca-info@un.org
Web: www.uneca.org

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First printing December I 2022

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Designed and printed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the ECA Printing and Publishing Unit. ISO 14001:2015 certified.
Printed on chlorine free paper

Executive summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it significant human, social, and economic consequences, some of which are still not yet fully understood. Of course, the continent was already facing significant systemic and structural issues, each of which are affected as a consequence of the pandemic. Responses to these issues therefore need to be structured around and together with post-pandemic planning and recovery. Moreover, Africa faces a range of issues, from the spread of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, a new continent-wide free trade agreement, to burgeoning green and blue economies, that represent both challenges and potential opportunities to further the social and economic development of the continent.

In this context, it is opportune to reflect on what is needed to accelerate progress to achieve the goals that the continent has set itself in both the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*¹ and in *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*². Through support to these Agendas in a Decade of Action³, we hope to improve the ability of Member States to address both the structural and systemic impediments to sustainable development, as well as building the necessary resilience to deal with present concerns such as COVID-19, as well as future challenges in wide range of areas, from population growth to climate change.

This **Medium-Term Programme Framework (MTPF) 2022 – 2025**, is part of UNECA's response to the challenge of delivering on the promise of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas. While the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures to deal with the human, societal, and economic costs will likely dominate the agenda over the course of the next few years, the MTPF looks at ways in which the continent can potentially '*build forward together*', drawing on Africa's resources, strengths and potential to help drive post-pandemic sustainable development in a *transformative* way. The MTPF provides a systems-based view of the work of UNECA, noting the interconnections and interdependencies between the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and building upon recent work of the UN system and others⁴ to take a holistic approach, such as contained in *The Future Is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development* (2019)⁵, for a sustainable future⁶.

This MTPF provides an overview of *five areas of transformation* as well as a set of eighteen outcomes describing the high-level changes necessary to realise the transformations. UNECA contributes to these outcomes through the provision of products and services under its three core functions – think tank, convening, and operational. The production of knowledge, whether by UNECA or by Member States using UNECA tools and services, helps to inform the development of policies and strategies at national, sub-regional, and continental levels. As a pan-African institution with roots in the UN system, UNECA works to bring governments together, helping to bring about common understanding, approaches, and policy decisions for the good of all Africans. Policy advisory services and capacity building through UNECA's operation function, support governments' understanding of problems and policy approaches,

- 1 United Nations, 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', A/RES/70/1 § (2015).
- 2 African Union, 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want' (Addis Ababa: African Union Commission, September 2015).
- 3 United Nations, 'Report of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Convened under the Auspices of the Economic and Social Council at Its 2019 Session' (United Nations, 9 August 2019).
- 4 Jeffrey D. Sachs et al., 'Six Transformations to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals', *Nature Sustainability* 2, no. 9 (September 2019): 805–14. [Six Transformations to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (Nature Sustainability) 2, no. 9 (September 2019).
- 5 United Nations, 'The Future Is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development' (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019).
- 6 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 'Building Forward for an African Green Recovery' (Addis Ababa, May 2021).

while giving them increased ability to plan and implement their national development strategies and plans.

UNECA will work together with Member States, the African Union, the African Development Bank, the UN system and other stakeholders, across thematic areas, helping to craft coherent policy and strategic responses to sustainable development challenges, and effective social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part One

African transformations

Section One: Background

The mission of the **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)** is to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered and transformed Africa, informed by the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The work to support sustainable development is multi-dimensional, encompassing a range of interconnected and interdependent policy areas. This is reflected in the diverse nature of UNECA's work to support the continent's countries in transforming their economies and effectively integrating into a common economic, social and political space, while promoting international cooperation to create a more prosperous and inclusive continent.

Accelerating progress towards 2030 – the 'Decade of Action'

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** ('2030 Agenda')⁷, with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is the universal vision and plan of action for transforming economies, improving well-being and increasing opportunity, and protecting the natural environment. UNECA is committed to supporting Member States in achieving their national SDG targets, and for helping the continent as a whole to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda. UNECA has worked with RECs, IGOs and Member States to improve capacities to monitor and understand progress towards the goals, to integrate them into policies and strategies, as well as providing research and advisory services in a range of substantive areas linked to the SDGs, such as developing sustainable, green economies, reducing poverty and inequality, improving access to public services, and developing infrastructure.

During 2019's **High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**, Member States called upon the international system to redouble its efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in what has been called a new *Decade of Action for achieving the SDGs*⁸ by 2030.

In recent years, UNECA, in collaboration with the UN system and the African Union Commission, has convened the **Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)** with a focus on advancing the implementation of the SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063, especially in the decade from 2020 to 2030⁹. The forum has called for efforts to raise domestic resources to help finance development, setting transformative national goals and agendas, improving training and education, ensuring alignment of resources with national targets in the two Agendas, pursuing multilateral agreements such as the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, and seeking improvements to governance and institutions. Furthermore, the seventh ARFSD in 2021 placed emphasis on recovery and green growth in Africa following the COVID-19 pandemic. It particularly highlighted the importance of transformative actions to

7 United Nations, 'United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1', 25 September 2015, 1, http://www.un.org/ga/search/viewm_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1.

8 United Nations, 'Political Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Convened under the Auspices of the General Assembly', A/RES/74/4 § (2019).

9 Economic Commission for Africa, 'Sixth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: Summary, Key Messages and Victoria Falls Declaration', Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 24 March 2020).

accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 (see below). The Forum also underlined the need for innovative financing and domestic resource mobilization in support of the Agenda, as well as the critical role of Africa's natural resources for the continent and the world.

Recent reforms of the UN Development System seek to translate the vision of a *Decade of Action* into practice¹⁰. The central idea of these reforms is to strengthen momentum to achieve the SDGs while enhancing coordination and reducing duplication amongst UN development system actors, and maintaining the overall relevance and responsiveness of development actors to the rapidly changing global social, political, economic, technological, and environmental context. Finally, the UN's **Regional Collaborative Platform** (RCP) for Africa unites all UN entities working in sustainable development across the continent in order to address Africa's challenges in a coherent, coordinated way. The Executive Secretary of UNECA acts as one of the RCP's co-chairs.

Agenda 2063: The Africa we want

Agenda 2063 is the continent's ambitious pan-African framework for attaining inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development around seven key aspirations for African growth and prosperity.

Member States have recognised the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 as well as the **African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development** (AUDA-NEPAD)¹¹, the African Union's official development arm.

COVID-19 and the development agendas

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the context of a promising time for the African continent. Progress had been made in 2019 with the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). At the time, around 500 million sub-Saharan Africans were projected to see their national per capita incomes rise faster than the world average¹². Significant challenges remained, with average growth rates still below what was needed to achieve the SDGs, low commodity prices particularly affecting some countries, along with weak governance, and rising public debt levels. However, positive developments such as continued economic expansion, high global returns on foreign direct investment (FDI), and increasing use of technology and innovation provided fuel for optimism for the early years of the 2020s.

The impacts of the pandemic on the continent highlight the systematic and interlinked nature of risk

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