



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL
FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

2025 AFRICA DAY:

**High-level (Ministerial) Meeting and the Official
Launch of the 2025 Africa Sustainable Development
Report**

Theme:

***“Advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development and Agenda 2063 through inclusive
growth and partnerships, social protection and decent
jobs”***

Statement

By

**Mr. Claver Gatete
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Secretary of ECA**

**New York, USA
23 July 2025**

H.E. Ms. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda & Chair of the 11th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development,

H.E. Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations,

H.E. Amb. Selma Malika Haddadi, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ministers,

Heads of Delegations,

Colleagues and Partners,

It is an honour to welcome you to this year's Africa Day at the High-Level Political Forum, a vital platform to reflect on Africa's progress and the critical choices we must make to stay on course toward sustainable development.

I am especially delighted that today marks the official launch of the ***2025 Africa Sustainable Development Report***, which is our continent's flagship evidence-based assessment of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Before we begin, I extend my sincere thanks to the African Union Observer Mission for hosting us today and also acknowledge our long-standing partnership with the Commission.

Since 2018, Africa Day at the HLPF has become the flagship African event on the ECOSOC calendar.

It is delivered in collaboration with the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, UNDP and the Economic Commission for Africa.

This year, we are pleased to broaden our partnership by welcoming the African Development Bank as a co-organizer.

Africa Day at the HLPF is your platform.

On behalf of all the co-organisers, I extend our greatest appreciation to you for making this a relevant and impactful platform in our joint efforts to make “the Africa We Want” a reality.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

So, how far have we come and how much further must we go to deliver on our shared promise of sustainable development for all Africans?

The 2025 Report presents a mixed picture.

Yes, Africa has made significant gains in areas such as education, healthcare and digital innovation.

But we cannot truly celebrate progress when we remain off track on more than half of the SDG targets.

With only five years to go, we have no other choice but to now act with urgency and greater resolve.

In this regard, allow me to outline five priority recommendations that can accelerate Africa's progress toward sustainable development.

First, we must address the continent's persistent development financing gap.

Africa today faces an annual SDG financing shortfall of up to US\$1.3 trillion, with the greatest burden falling on the Least Developed Countries.

To close this gap, we must scale up the use of innovative financing instruments, including blended finance, green and blue bonds and diaspora bonds.

Equally, we must harness the economic power of the informal sector, which employs over 83% of the workforce.

At the same time, reforming and digitizing national tax systems, closing loopholes and curbing illicit financial flows estimated at US\$88 billion annually are indispensable.

Furthermore, reform of the global financial architecture must also remain a central demand, not just for Africa, but for all developing regions seeking fair access to financing.

Second, Africa must accelerate economic diversification and regional integration.

While the continent is projected to host 12 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2025, growth must be made more inclusive, sustainable and transformative.

This means investing in value addition to our natural resources, scaling up green industrialization and leveraging the full potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area to deepen intra-African trade and build competitive regional value chains.

Special Economic Zones, such as those in Benin, demonstrate the potential for productive investment and export-led development.

ECA stands ready to support Member States to advance industrial policy, regional infrastructure and energy transitions aligned with their development priorities.

Third, we must strengthen national development planning and accountability systems.

This year, **nine** African countries undertook Voluntary National Reviews, including **two** second-time and **seven** third-time presenters.

VNRs are instruments for national alignment, peer learning and inclusive governance.

Encouragingly, more countries are integrating Agenda 2063 into their VNR processes, ensuring coherence between continental and global goals.

However, progress demands stronger investments in data systems, local capacity and cross-sectoral coordination.

ECA will continue to support countries through technical advisory services, the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and capacity-building initiatives for more effective planning and monitoring.

Fourth, inclusive development must be placed at the heart of every strategy.

No progress will be sustainable unless it empowers those furthest behind, especially youth, women, informal workers and marginalized communities.

With the World Social Summit approaching, Africa must take the lead in advancing a global agenda on social protection, decent work and inclusive growth.

To seize its demographic dividend, the continent must invest in education, healthcare and digital skills – which will equip its people to lead Africa’s next wave of innovation and enterprise.

Fifth, we must elevate Africa’s voice in global policy processes.

How can the world truly shape a sustainable future without Africa at the table?

In this respect, *the 2025 Africa Sustainable Development Report* is not just a scorecard – it is an advocacy tool.

It must inform national strategies and strengthen Africa's position in global dialogues from the SDG Summit follow-up and the Pact for the Future, to COP30 and beyond.

ECA will continue to support Member States to articulate their development priorities, advance regional consensus and shape global outcomes that reflect African realities.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

As I conclude, let us remember that the clock is ticking.

In five short years, we must reverse course, reignite progress on the SDGs and bring Africa's vision, as outlined in Agenda 2063, fully to life.

Indeed, Africa is a continent of possibilities.

As such, Africa Day at the HLPF must serve as a rallying point for collective resolve and renewed momentum to turn things around.

We already have the tools and the talent to deliver.

What we now need is unity of purpose, audacious leadership and partnerships that are transformative.

And ECA, working hand-in-hand with our allies, stands firmly by your side to ensure that our aspirations are translated into concrete action that will lead to lasting transformation across our continent.

I thank you.