United Nations General Assembly
Interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss
the main findings and recommendations contained in the report of
the Secretary-General on the review of the implementation of
commitments made towards Africa's development

Monday, 21 July 2025, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Conference Room 2, UN Headquarters

Concept Note

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 78/262, the President of the General Assembly will convene an interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss the main findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the implementation of commitments made toward Africa's development, on Monday, 21 July 2025. The meeting will be held in Conference Room 2 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The 2025 biennial report of the Secretary-General on the review of commitments made towards Africa's development takes stock of the progress made in implementing commitments related to governance, human capital, and science, technology, and innovation (STI).

The President of the General Assembly will use this opportunity as a moment to focus on the means of turbocharging the Sustainable Development Goals through the power of science, technology and innovation, particularly in Africa, focusing on digitalization and entrepreneurship and on closing the digital divide in Africa.

Background

Strong governance ensures transparent, accountable institutions that promote peace and inclusive societies. Through investment in knowledge, skills and capacities, communities can unleash the potential of their human capital. STI drives scientific and technological

advancement and industrialization, providing tools for innovation and economic transformation. Governance, human capital and STI underpin the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 3,4,5,8,9,16 and 17, with STI-related indicators found across 11 of the 17 SDGs.

Countries in Africa have faced challenges in ensuring their socio-economic resilience and protection vis-à-vis exogenous shocks. At the same time, economic transformation from exporting natural resources for manufacturing technological devices to investing in capacity building and frontier technologies are essential to achieve economic diversification and strengthening resilience. Efforts to tackle illicit financial flows and improve the efficiency of revenue mobilization and natural resource endowments' governance (including through the deployment of digital tools), are key to strengthen Africa's ability to deliver on its aspirations as outlined in the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

In this regard, African countries' governance must not only ensure the rule of law, effective institutions, inclusive decision-making, but also provide an enabling environment to enhance human capital. This can be achieved by empowering youth and entrepreneurs, nurturing digital talents and skills and promoting an African digital transformation to harness Africa's demographic dividend as well as the power of STI. National and regional policy frameworks must shift from reactive to proactive human capital strategies which prioritize education, digitalization, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Investment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education is therefore a key building block to promote and harness the skills and human capital necessary for Africa's economic transformation. This transformation, along with an enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem (including entrepreneurship education and the dissemination of an entrepreneurial thinking across all sectors), is conducive to fostering micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby leveraging the value of entrepreneurship to drive job creation, reduce inequalities, and expand economic opportunities for all.

The Pact for the Future, in particular, its annex the Global Digital Compact (GDC) provides an opportunity to maximize the benefits of digital technologies and to promote entrepreneurship, particularly for developing countries in Africa. The commitments and actions to close all digital divides has the potential to connect the remaining 2.6 billion people, largely in Africa, to the internet and ensure that they are equipped with literacy, skills and capacities as well as infrastructure to use and safely navigate the digital space.

However, currently Africa only contributes 2 per cent of the world's research output, accounts for 1.3 per cent of global research spending, and produces 0.9 per cent of all patents, which indicates Africa's severe offtrack on its STI Strategy adopted in 2014. To

move the agenda forward, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the Timbuktoo initiative to unleash Africa's startup revolution to catalyze innovation, foster collaboration and drive growth with the Pan-African fintech ecosystem as a driver of socio-economic development.

It is time for Africa to seize the benefits of the digital economy and emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, while effectively contributing to its governance and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Concerted efforts to support African countries must be scaled up to strengthen their capacities, including through policy exchanges, knowledge sharing, technical assistance, financial support, joint international research and personnel training that is tailored to the specific needs and priorities of Africa, amongst other options.

This interactive dialogue will serve as a milestone in the implementation of the Pact for the Future and its annexes, as well as a platform for reflection towards the Second World Summit on Social Development in November 2025 and the High-level Meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2025. These are opportunities to ensure that Africa addresses its specific needs in its quest to implement inclusive sustainable development.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are:

- To foster dialogue on the progress achieved in implementing the commitments made towards Africa's development in governance, human capital, STI and turbocharging the SDGs.
- To explore approaches that support digital transformation, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and closing the digital gaps in Africa.
- To identify opportunities for targeted action in addressing the present gaps in Africa's development, thereby accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063.
- To engage with various stakeholders and explore their potential to contribute to the digital transformation, innovation and sustainable development in Africa.

Format and Participation

The multi-stakeholder dialogue will consist of an opening segment, a panel discussion, and a closing segment.

The panel discussion will feature key stakeholders working on Africa's development. It will be followed by interventions from Member States, Observers, entities of the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders.

There will be no pre-established list of speakers. Participants wishing to take the floor are invited to press the microphone button. The time limit will be three minutes for individual statements and five minutes for statements on behalf of groups.

The meeting will be webcast on UN Web TV.

Programme Outline

Time	Segment
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Opening Segment
3:30 p.m. – 5:50 p.m.	Panel Discussion
5:50 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Closing Segment

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