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and Experts for North Africa**

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**Regional and international development agendas and special initiatives
implementation review**

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I- Introduction

1. This report reviews the main findings and recommendations from major United Nations conferences and regional consultations held in 2019.
2. Member countries of the sub-region began the process of appropriating and implementing Agendas 2030 (United Nations) and 2063 (African Union) since these were adopted as road maps for sustainable development and structural transformation.
3. 2019 saw the official launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) at the 12th African Union (AU) Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in July in Niamey, Niger. Comprising 1.2 billion people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in excess of US\$ 2,500 billion, this market will in time become the world's largest common market.
4. The fifth session of the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in April, provided an opportunity for member countries to share experiences on the coherent and harmonized implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063.
5. The continent also hosted the Global Conference for the Adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, whereby Member States pledged international cooperation to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility.
6. On the international level, 2019 also saw the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the 108th session of which brought together member State tripartite delegations June in Geneva (Switzerland). The session reaffirmed the ILO's position as the definitive global organization in matters of work, and adopted landmark instruments on violence and harassment at work, as well as a Declaration on the future of work.
7. Fundamental climate change issues were discussed this year during the World Climate Summit held in New York at United Nations Headquarters on 23 September 2019, giving member countries the opportunity to review progress and renew commitments in support of the Paris Agreement.

II- 108th Session of the International Labour Conference

8. The 108th Session of the International Labour Conference was held on 10-21 June 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. The International Labour Conference is the highest decision-making body of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It annually convenes Member State tripartite delegations along with a number of observers dispatched by international stakeholders to discuss an array of issues on the agenda as set by the Organization's Governing Council.

9. The conference was organized this year in celebration of the ILO's centenary. A number of landmark instruments on violence and harassment at work as well as a Declaration on the Future of Work were adopted by the International Labour Conference.

10. The Declaration addresses the future of work from a human-centered perspective. It emphasizes the need to strengthen stakeholder capacities to capitalize on opportunities created by a mutating world of work, to strengthen labor institutions to ensure adequate protection for workers, and to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all.

11. Specific areas for action identified include:

- Effective realization of gender equality in opportunities and treatment;
- Effective lifelong learning and quality education for all;
- Universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection;
- Respect for workers' fundamental rights;
- Adequate minimum wage;
- Maximum limits on working time;
- Safety and health at work;
- Policies that promote decent work, and enhance productivity; and
- Policies and measures that ensure appropriate privacy and personal data protection and respond to challenges and opportunities in the world of work relating to the digital transformation of work, including platform work.

12. The conference adopted a Convention recognizing that violence and harassment in the world of work can constitute a human rights violation or abuse...is a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and incompatible with decent work. The Convention defines "violence and harassment" as behaviors, practices or threats "that aim to, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm". It reminds member States of their responsibility to promote a "general environment of zero tolerance" towards such practices.

13. The new international labor standard aims to protect workers and employees, irrespective of contractual status, and includes persons in training, interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, jobseekers and job applicants. It recognizes that "individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer" can also be subjected to violence and harassment.

14. The standard covers violence and harassment occurring at the workplace; places where a worker is paid, takes a rest or meal break, or uses sanitary, washing or changing facilities; during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities; work-related communications (including through information and communication technologies); in employer-provided accommodation; and when commuting to and from work. It also recognizes that violence and harassment may involve third parties.

III- The African Integration Process: AU Extraordinary Summit

15. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was formally launched at the 12th Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), held on July 7, 2019, in Niamey, Niger. The launch of the free trade area comes on the heels of entry into force of the trade area on 30 May, thirty days following the receipt of ratification instruments from the twenty-second member country, in accordance with the legal provisions.

16. The agreement paves the way for the creation of a single market of 1.2 billion consumers, under which AfCFTA signatory countries commit to eliminate duties on 90% of goods and remove barriers at 84,000 kilometers of African borders.

17. A number of AfCFTA operational instruments were formally launched at the end of the Extraordinary Summit, including rules of origin; the online negotiating forum; the monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers; a digital payment system; and the African Trade Observatory.

18. A flagship project of the African Union Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA aims to strengthen the competitiveness of African industry and businesses by harnessing potential scale effects. It aims to overcome dependence on primary commodity exports and promote social and economic transformation for inclusive growth, industrialization and sustainable development in accordance with Agenda 2063.

19. AfCFTA implementation is divided into two phases. Phase one covers negotiations on the trade of goods and services. Emphasis is also placed on dispute resolution rules and procedures. The second phase covers negotiations relating to investment, competition policy and intellectual property protection.

20. Previously reluctant Nigeria and its neighbor Benin signed the agreement at the opening of the summit. Eritrea is the only country not to have signed the agreement to date.

21. AfCFTA is to be one of the largest free trade areas since the World Trade Organization's inception, given Africa's current population of 1.2 billion people, which is projected to increase to 2.5 billion by 2050. The city of Accra was selected to host AfCFTA's future permanent headquarters.

IV- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)

22. The Intergovernmental Conference for the Adoption of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, convened under United Nations auspices on December 10 and 11, 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco. Member States adopted the GCM as the first global framework for strengthening international cooperation to better address the complex situation faced by the world's 258 million migrants (3.4% of the world's population). The Compact was formally adopted on 19 December 2018 by the United Nations General Assembly.

23. The GCM, which sets out a set of principles, commitments and agreements among United Nations Member States on international migration issues, is consistent with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, directly addressing SDG target 10.7, where Member States commit to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility.

24. The adoption of the Global Compact was made possible by the international and participatory process of consultations and negotiations, which allowed for thematic discussions on the various aspects of migration in addition to sub-regional, regional and global consultations.

25. The High-Level Panel on Migration (HLPM) was established in 2016 at the ninth annual joint meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to provide guidance and support to policy dialogues on international migration at the continental level.

26. HLPM pursued a two-pronged strategy: (a) to affirm Africa's commitment to global goals and values and (b) to use migration for Africa's development in a context of international cooperation. The Group proposed achievable commitments leading to implementation of HLPM's work plan and commitments through continental and global processes on international migration.

27. The panel is supported by a technical committee chaired by the Economic Commission for Africa. Its main function is to provide advice and technical support to panel members on issues related to their core functions. The Technical Committee is responsible for implementing the political decisions of the panel's program and for coordinating efforts to implement these plans.

28. Consultations were also held at the sub-regional level. Sub-regional consultations for North Africa were held on the sidelines of the African meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2017. Key recommendations are summarized as follows:

- North African States need to harmonize intra-regional and intra-African migration policies and ensure these are not driven by external interests;
- North African States need to strengthen international cooperation on migration routes, to include countries of origin, transit and destination, harness the benefits of migration and integrate migration into development programs and SDGs;
- Labor rights protection needs to incorporate stronger cooperation and governance of social security benefits for migrants and to develop portable social security benefit standards; and

- North African States need to strengthen international cooperation in Africa and beyond. This includes border management and the harmonization of migration policies in the sub-region, the integration of migration into development planning and the strengthening of national institutions in charge of migration.
29. The Compact's objectives cover all aspects of migration - from mitigating the adverse structural factors that drive people to leave their countries, to collecting data and establishing mechanisms to maximize the benefits of migration both in the host country and in the country of origin.

V- Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

30. The fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 16-18 April 2019 under the theme: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

31. The 5th Session of the Regional Forum is a key milestone in preparing the African continent for the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Regional Forum participants assessed progress made towards the implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063. The session provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and lessons learned from the integrated implementation of both programs and from voluntary national reviews. Participants also reviewed and approved Africa's priorities and policy recommendations in key message format. These messages were the continent's contributions to the 2019 High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in New York on 9-18 July 2019, and to the Summit on Sustainable Development Goals, held in New York on 24-25 September 2019.

32. Alongside formal sessions that took place in plenary and group sessions, a number of events were held to share experiences on sustainable development at the regional level. Twenty-six side events organized during the Regional Forum enhanced the main session's discussions, including an expert group meeting on the 2019 meeting of the High-level Political Forum, a regional preparatory workshop for African countries participating in voluntary national reviews, the first meeting of the African Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation and a capacity-building workshop for corporations and other stakeholders in Africa.

33. The 2019 edition of the Africa Sustainable Development Report presented at the forum was in line with the theme of the 2019 High-Level Political Forum: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The report examined the following six SDGs in depth: SDG 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and effective institutions) and SDG 17 (global partnership).

34. The Regional Forum is an intergovernmental platform established by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank. The purpose of this forum is to assess the progress made, exchange experiences in the field of sustainable development in Africa and make recommendations to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the regional level.

VI- The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2019)

35. The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the UN's central platform for monitoring and reviewing the progress made towards Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs"), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015. The HLPF convenes annually for eight days in July in New York and consists of voluntary national reviews from different countries and thematic reviews of progress on SDGs, supported by the ECOSOC technical commission and other intergovernmental bodies and forums reviews.

36. The HLPF has the mandate to:

- Provide political leadership and recommendations for sustainable development,
- Monitor and review progress in implementing the SDGs,
- Better integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,
- Have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda,
- Consider new and emerging sustainable development challenges,
- Since 2016, carry out the duties of ECOSOC's annual ministerial reviews on SDGs.

37. The Forum convenes every four years at Head of State and Government level under the auspices of the General Assembly, and every year under the auspices of ECOSOC.

38. The seventh edition of the Forum, on the last year of a four-year cycle following adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda to 2030, was held on 9-18 July in New York, under the theme of "Empowering people and ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality".

39. The Forum held an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals) which is reviewed on an annual basis.

40. These reviews are intended to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) aim to strengthen government policies and institutions and mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for SDG implementation. During the 2019 forum, 47 countries, including 15 African countries¹ (including 3 countries of the sub-region) conducted voluntary national reviews.

¹ Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Tanzania.

VII- The Climate Action Summit 2019

41. Climate change is the most important challenge of our time. All segments of society need to contribute to bridging this gap. UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened the Climate Action Summit on 23 September 2019 to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in response to global challenges. The summit was a milestone in international political cooperation and sparked broad support at the very core of the real economy. These developments send powerful political and economic signals and give new impetus to the "race to the top" initiated by countries, companies, cities and civil society; a necessary impetus to achieve the Paris Agreement and SDG objectives.

42. Key statements made include the following:

- France announced it will not enter any trade agreement with countries whose policies contravene the Paris Agreement.
- Germany committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Twelve States pledged funding for the Green Climate Fund, the public financing mechanism designed to help developing countries implement adaptation and mitigation measures in the fight against climate change. This is in addition to recent pledges made by Norway, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, doubling contributions in this regard.
- The United Kingdom also announced a decision to double its overall international funding the fight against climate change to £11.6 billion for the 2020-2025 period.
- India reported that 80 countries have joined the International Solar Energy Alliance, and committed to increase its renewable energy production capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022, while at the same time ensuring it can reach 450 gigawatts thereafter.
- China affirmed it will cut emissions by over 12 billion tons per year and continue efforts to promote healthy growth and low-carbon development.
- The European Union stated that a minimum of 25% of its upcoming budget would be devoted to climate-related activities.
- The Russian Federation announced that it will ratify the Paris Agreement, bringing the total number of acceding countries to 187.
- Pakistan reported that over 10 billion trees will be planted in the country over the next five years.

43. On the unprecedented measures taken by private sector actors:

- A group of the world's largest asset managers - with over \$2 trillion in investments under management - committed to building only carbon-neutral portfolios by 2050.
- 87 large corporations with a combined market capitalization exceeding \$2.3 trillion pledged to reduce emissions and ensure that operations do not contravene the scientific consensus on what is necessary to limit the effects of catastrophic climate change, namely a 1.5° C increase.

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- 130 banks - representing one third of the world's banking sector - committed to conducting business in a manner consistent with Paris Agreement objectives.
44. On the transition from brown to green energy:
- Michael Bloomberg expressed his willingness to increase the funding and geographical scope of his coal phase-out activities to 30 countries. The businessman's initiatives have already led to the closure of 297 of the 530 coal-fired power plants in the United States.
 - A number of States, including France and New Zealand, announced they would no longer allow oil and gas exploration activities on their territories or waters.
 - The Heads of State of Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Finland expressed their willingness to phase out coal. The Republic of Korea announced a doubling of its contribution to the Green Climate Fund and the closure of four coal-fired power plants, with a commitment to close six others by 2022.
 - The Summit also led to decisive initiatives to optimize energy efficiency and reduce the growing energy needs of air conditioning, such as the Three Percent Club coalition, which aims to improve global energy efficiency by 3% per year, and the Cool Coalition, which aims to set ambitious national targets for its members limiting global warming to 1 degree and a carbon-free world by 2050.
45. As to raising additional funds and removing obstacles in this regard:
- A number of States announced new contributions to the Green Climate Fund, the public financing mechanism designed to help developing countries implement adaptation and mitigation measures to combat climate change, of these - France, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom - indicated a doubling of current contributions.
 - The Climate Investment Funds Program was also officially launched at the Summit. This mechanism aims to directly mobilize \$1 trillion in clean energy investments by 2025 in 20 least developed countries.
46. All initiatives adopted at the Summit aim to be equitable for all, promote employment, improve air quality and health conditions and protect the most vulnerable, while allowing for further action on adaptation, agriculture and early warning systems, so as to ensure the protection of an additional 500 million people from the effects of climate change. A full list of announcements and commitments made at the Climate Summit is available at www.un.org/climatechange .
47. The Summit was preceded by the Youth Climate Summit, which provides a global platform for youth engaged in climate action, with the objective of promoting solutions to the international community and engaging in genuine dialogue with leaders on one of the world's most important challenges. The summit included a full day of programs that brought together young activists, innovators, entrepreneurs, and change agents engaged in the fight against climate change at the pace and scale required to meet this challenge ■