

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLFP) -
AFRICA GROUP**

INTRODUCTION

- The social, economic and environment are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. For instance, the nexus between health and environment demonstrates the intrinsic relationship between social and environmental dimensions, as is the case with the poverty-environment nexus that establishes the interwoven relationship between the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Their balanced implementation is therefore necessary for a balanced approach towards SDGs implementation.
 - Effective Means of Implementation is central to the full implementation of SDGs, including the environmental dimension.
 - Poverty eradication is the overriding factor in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Therefore concerted efforts should be aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms and manifestations.
- A. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level;**
- The principle of leaving no-one behind entails shared prosperity that is based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. It refers to the creation of an enabling environment that reduces inequality and improve wellbeing of all people. It means access to clean, safe drinking water, sanitation and living in clean environment with improved management of chemical waste.
- B. The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges;**
- **Institutional/Legislative Gaps:** Gaps include weak institutions, legislation and policies as well as weak implementation capacity. Strengthening governance systems - institutions, legal frameworks and policies at both national and regional levels should be addressed. Cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination at national levels need to be addressed.

- Pollution should be approached in a broad perspective that recognizes its various dimensions - air, land and water, in the production and implementation of policies and legal frameworks.
- Reducing gaps in the implementation of SDGs require human capacity building, training and an increased support for research to improve knowledge on issues of environmental governance, poverty-environment nexus, and health-environment nexus, among others.
- **Natural disasters** pose tangible threat to the realization of SDGs. Supporting developing countries to develop infrastructure that is resilient to the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, the ongoing floods and other impacts of extreme weather events is necessary. Deliberate policies should be undertaken to identify gender-specific needs and protection measures related to floods, droughts and other disasters and involve women in all aspects of decision making relating to adaptation and mitigation, including disaster risk reduction and choice of adaptation technologies.
- Attention should be paid to sharing of best practices for the development and implementation of strategic frameworks and early warning systems for enhanced disaster risk management, sustainable land management, land restoration and resilience to drought.
- **Climate Change:** Africa contributes less than 5 percent of carbon emissions however, bear the brunt of the impact of climate change. The effects of climate change especially in rural areas which rely on agricultural production result in food insecurities. Improvements are required through support to early warning systems, adaptation needs assessment and adaptation activities. In particular there should be support for affordable technology development and transfer, financial and technical resources for both adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Promotion of and support for drought resistant crops, crop diversification, improved farming technologies, improved irrigation techniques is important. Countries should be supported in their efforts to control climate related diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.

C. Valuable lessons learned on eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity;

- **Poverty-environment:** Environmental degradation is a source of poverty. Desertification, illegal trade in wildlife and loss of natural capital impede the achievement of SDGs. It is important therefore that mechanisms that lead to translating exploitation of natural resources and biodiversity base into value adding activities, adequate and employment opportunities and enhanced returns are created as a way of eradicating poverty while realizing sustainability of the environment.
- Sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity including land and water can also lead poverty eradication.
- Blue economy is a potential contributor to transformation and prosperity in the region. Therefore advancing knowledge on marine and aquatic biotechnology, supporting the growth of Africa's shipping industry, the development of sea, river lake transport and sustainable exploitation of deep sea mineral and other resources is necessary to create wealth on the continent.
- Understanding the poverty-environment nexus requires acquisition of knowledge through capacity building, exchange programmes and best practices, among others, which has potential to help governments design relevant policies and make informed decisions.
- Adoption of programmes and policies that aim to strengthen collaboration between sectors responsible for economy and development, environment and agriculture will enhance governments' capacity to understand and appreciate the poverty-environment nexus.

d). Areas where political guidance by the high level political forum is required;

- Guide member states and institutions in ensuring a balanced approach in the implementation of the three dimensions of sustainable development
- Poverty-environment and health-environment nexus
- Ensuring that mechanisms are put in place for countries to add value to the natural resources for creation of wealth and sustainable development.

e). Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in poverty eradication;

- Support affordable technology development and transfer, financial and technical resources to support the implementation of SDGs in developing countries.
- Support measures for drought resistant crops, crop diversification, improved farming technologies, better irrigation techniques. Countries should be supported in their efforts to control climate related diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.
- Transform, grow and industrialize our economies through value addition of natural resources;
- Support investments in programmes that address the challenges of desertification, deforestation, drought, biodiversity loss and water scarcity
- Advance knowledge on marine and aquatic biotechnology supporting the growth of the Africa's shipping industry, the development of sea, river lake transport and sustainable exploitation of deep sea mineral and other resources
- support for access to clean and renewable energy, water supplies, safe drinking water
- support to farmers and modernization of agriculture for increased production, productivity and value addition for food security
- Strengthen collaboration and cooperation at national level for policy coherence and effective implementation of SDGs.