

# AFRICA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2022

BUILDING BACK BETTER FROM THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)  
WHILE ADVANCING THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT





**The Africa Sustainable Development Report provides a benchmark with which to assess the scale of the impacts of both shocks on the SDGs ”**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Context of the Report

The Africa Sustainable Development Report (ASDR) for the year 2022 comes at the midway of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to which world leaders, including African leaders, made commitments in 2015, *to end extreme poverty, inequality and climate change by 2030*. In addition, the ten-year implementation plan of the African Union's Agenda 2063, titled, *“the Africa We Want,”* that was initiated in 2013, ends in 2023. This report is also paramount because it covers the period when the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia crisis emerged with significant bearing on the implementation of both agendas.

The report is aligned with the 2022 *High-level Political Forum (HLPF)*, which reviewed SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17, focussed on the theme of *“Building back better from the Coronavirus disease while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”* It examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia crisis in the implementation of the SDGs and related goals of Agenda 2063. It tracks the performance of all African countries using latest data and highlights critical areas that require urgent policy interventions. The report also provides a benchmark with which to assess the scale of the impacts of both shocks on the SDGs. The key findings, and messages, specific policy recommendations as well as the associated data issues that have been relied on are summarized below.

## On Education (SDG 4)

***Africa made slow progress in the provision of quality education for all...***

The COVID-19 pandemic reversed some of the gains African countries had made in the past years. Despite considerable progress in school enrolment, some (288 million school-age children remain out of school, especially in countries affected by conflicts. In 2021, proficiency levels in grades 2 or 3 for children in Africa (excluding North Africa) was estimated at 28.9 percent for mathematics and 17.82 percent for reading. This was below the global average of 62.6 percent for mathematics and 61.4 percent for reading. Most African countries continue to dedicate less than 20 percent of their national budget to education, and about one out of three dedicate less than 15 percent (AU and UNICEF, 2021). The quality of education is also compromised by inadequate school infrastructure and the lack of trained teachers. The proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications in Africa excluding North Africa stagnated at around 68 percent between 2017 and 2019, lower than the global average of 81 percent. However, in 2020, 86.5 percent of teachers in Northern Africa had attained the minimum qualifications, similar to the global average.

On the positive side, completion rates for primary education in Africa excluding North Africa increased from 59.6 percent in 2015 to 63.2 percent in 2020, although this varied across residence (urban and rural) and income levels and was lower than the global average of 86.7 percent. Completion rates for upper secondary school in Africa excluding North Africa increased from 24.9 percent in 2015 to 26.7 percent in 2020 and remained below the world average of 58.2 percent.

In the meantime, Official Development Assistance for scholarships in Africa was estimated at \$1.6 billion in 2019, the highest of all global regions. North Africa received the highest

amount of \$98 million, followed by East Africa at \$95 million and Southern Africa, the least amount at \$12.5 million.

To strengthen the basic foundations for life-long learning, there is a need to focus on pre-primary and primary education. Pre-primary gross enrolment rate in pre-primary in North Africa increased from 41.8 percent in 2015 to 42.1 percent in 2020, while in Africa excluding Northern Africa, it increased from 24.9 percent in 2015 to 27.5 percent in 2020. Yet, the global average in 2020 was 60.8 percent. The educational value of pre-school is an integral part of a comprehensive education programme. In addition, school feeding programmes need to be scaled-up, as they have proved to be effective in increasing access to basic education, particularly for orphans and other vulnerable children.

A point of significant note is that the lack of adequate and timely data on indicators of learning outcomes hinders a comprehensive assessment of the SDG 4 focus on Quality Education.

## On Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SDG 5)

### *Progress towards gender inclusivity is slow and the enforcement of legal frameworks to protect women and girls against discrimination, domestic violence, child marriage, and female genital mutilation remains weak*

Most African countries lack adequate policies to end the discrimination of women and girls. In 2020, only 65.6 percent of legal frameworks in Africa (excluding North Africa) addressed violence against women. This is significantly lower than the global average of 78 percent. Violence against women is attributed to factors such as conflicts, traditional gender norms and lack of prosecution of culprits of spousal rape (United Nations, 2022). During the same period, only 66.3 percent of legal frameworks guaranteed employment and economic benefits for women, compared to the global average of 76.7 percent. Modest improvements were noticeable in frameworks that support marriage and family life at 76.1 percent, compared to the global average of 79.1 percent.

Eliminating all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation remain critical. In Africa excluding North Africa, the proportion of women married or in a union before the age of 15 declined from 12.6 percent in 2015 to 10.8 percent in 2021, while it declined from 35.8 percent in 2015 to 34.7 percent for women married before the age of 18. Female genital mutilation in Africa excluding North Africa declined from 29.4 percent in 2015 to 24.7 percent in 2021, and from 83 percent in 2015 to 74 percent in 2021 in North Africa.

Political representation of women is on the rise, but with huge differences across regions and countries. The share of national parliamentary seats held by women in Africa excluding North Africa has steadily increased from 22.6 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2021 while it has stagnated at 24 percent in North Africa. Despite women comprising a large share of Africa's labour force, only 29.8 percent of managerial positions in Africa excluding North Africa in 2020 were held by women, a modest increase from 29.3 percent in 2015. In North Africa, women representation in managerial position declined from 7.3 percent in 2015 to 6.7 percent in 2020.

Legal gaps and insufficient regulations continue to hinder both men and women from enjoying full sexual rights. In North Africa, no laws and regulations in 2022 guarantee sex education while only 25 percent guarantee contraceptive consent. However, noticeable progress is registered regarding women maternity care (80 percent) and post-abortion care (80 percent). In Africa excluding North Africa, 97 percent of laws and regulations in 2022 guarantee lifesaving commodities, 81 percent guarantee maternity care but only 31 percent guarantee women full and equal access to abortion.



**Most African countries lack adequate policies to end the discrimination of women and girls ”**



**In 2021, 77 percent of litter originating from national land-based sources in Africa ended in the beach ”**

## On Life Below Water (SDG 14)

### *Organic and chemical pollutants from human activities continue to endanger Africa's marine ecosystem*

There are variations in the overall progress made by the African region towards Goal 14. For many countries, intermediate progress is reported, stagnation for some, and declining trends for several others. In most countries, coastal, marine, and freshwater waters are affected by pollution and acidification, dumping of solid and liquid wastes, discharges and runoff from agricultural chemicals, and poor coastal infrastructure management. In 2021, 77 percent of litter originating from national land-based sources in Africa ended in the beach, compared to the global average of 65.5 percent.

The low awareness from communities on waste management and the increasing urbanization of coastal areas without adequate waste management infrastructure imposes pressure on the oceans. The lack of appropriate circular economy policies and regulations to monitor marine and freshwater resources, including protection from waste and plastic pollution, further threatens the marine ecosystem, especially in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), whose economies are highly dependent on tourism.

In 2021, Africa, (excluding North Africa) had a coverage of protected marine areas of 23 percent, greater than the global average of 20 percent. Although some countries have demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of their marine oceanic resources (17 out of 54 countries), they are constrained by various socio-demographic, technological and financial factors. These include knowledge and information gaps, finance, limited technical capacities and awareness of the importance of conserving oceans and seas.

## On Life on Land (SDG 15)

### *Loss of forest cover, biodiversity and land degradation remains high and widespread in Africa*

In 2020, the proportion of forest area in Africa was 21.3 percent, lower than the global average of 31.2 percent. From 2010-2020, Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss. This was mainly due to the conversion of forest land for farming and grazing, and climate change. There are, however, considerable differences in forest cover among subregions. In 2020, Central Africa had the highest proportion of forest area of 44.3 percent, while North Africa had only 3.5 percent. As the loss of forest cover continues, some countries have demonstrated good practices in the integrated and sustainable management of forests, land and water catchments, such as Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative.

Land degradation is widespread and affects 46 percent of Africa's land and 65 percent of the population, costing the region US\$9.3 billion annually. The main drivers include variation in climatic conditions, demographic growth, land tenure insecurity and the expansion of settlements due to deforestation, unsustainable land and soil management, and poor farming practices.

Generally, African countries performed well in the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems. Between 2000 and 2020, the average proportion of mountain key biodiversity areas covered by protected areas increased from 16 percent to 27.6 percent in North Africa and from 33.2 percent to 41.7 percent in Africa excluding North Africa.

Poaching for ivory and loss of habitat has decreased the number of elephants. In 2021, the African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) was listed as Critically Endangered, and the African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) as Endangered. The threat to the Maccoa Duck in Eastern and Southern Africa was elevated from Vulnerable to Endangered, due to water pollution and the drainage of wetlands.



## On Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)

### *Africa needs to foster its domestic resource mobilization and savings as well as boost its ICT to accelerate implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063*

The continent has made little progress in implementing SDG 17. Africa's domestic revenue generation continues to lag behind other regions. In Africa, excluding North Africa, revenue as a proportion of GDP declined from 16.5 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2020 before rebounding to 16.4 percent in 2021. Africa's proportion of the domestic budget financed by domestic taxes remained high at 65.8 percent in 2019 compared to 61.9 percent in 2015. In 2020, Africa lost about \$89 billion to illicit financial outflows (IFFs).

OECD countries have collectively fallen short of their target to dedicate 0.7 percent of their gross national income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA). In addition, Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) inflows to Africa continue to lag behind other regions such as Asia and Latin America SDG 17 and the Caribbean. In 2021, Africa received \$83 billion of FDI, far less than the \$690 billion received in Asia and \$134.4 billion received in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Debt management has been challenging for African governments, with debt servicing taking away already scarce capital resources from sustainable development and much-needed critical infrastructural projects. In Africa, excluding North Africa, debt service increased from 27.9 percent of exports of goods and services in 2019 to 32.8 percent of exports of goods and services in 2020 and 29.5 percent of exports of goods and services in 2021.

ICT in Africa remains limited despite some notable progress. Although fixed broadband subscriptions in Africa increased from 0.4 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2015 to 0.60 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2021, this is significantly lower than the global average of 16.7 subscriptions per 100 people. The subscription rate varies in Africa, with Egypt, South Africa, and Tunisia recording the highest subscriptions. The proportion of individuals using the internet in Africa constantly increased from 16.3 per 100 inhabitants in 2015 to 35.3 per 100 inhabitants in 2021.

## Impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the SDGs in Africa

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on selected SDG indicators is conducted under four scenarios: a no Covid; a COVID baseline; a High Damage scenario, and; an SDG Push scenario. The pandemic pushed 23.6 million people in Africa into extreme poverty in 2021 compared to a hypothetical world without Covid. By 2030, at least 492 million people will be left in extreme poverty and at least 350 million people by 2050. With countries accelerating the SDGs through deliberate policies (SDG Push), the number of people in extreme poverty would decline from 489 million in 2021 to 442.4 million in 2030, and 159.7 million by 2050.

The pandemic did not significantly affect school completion rates. By implementing SDG Push policies, primary education completion rates could increase from 75.1 percent in 2021 to 85.2 percent in 2030 and 95.8 percent by 2050.

The pandemic had negligible effects on carbon emissions. In 2021, African countries emitted 0.4 billion tons of carbon across all scenarios. By 2030, a high damage scenario would lead to 0.6 billion tons of carbon emissions relative to an SDG push scenario with 0.58 billion tons. Adopting climate-smart policies could decrease carbon emissions in all African regions, although with varying magnitudes. While electrification rates are projected to increase from 54 percent in 2021 to 60 percent in 2030 and 79.8 percent by 2050 under the Covid baseline scenario, implementing SDG Push policies would increase access to 76.5 percent by 2030 and 92.1 percent by 2050.



**By 2030, a high damage scenario would lead to 0.6 billion tons of carbon emissions relative to an SDG push scenario with 0.58 billion tons ”**

Overall, with a more ambitious pursuit of the SDGs, 15 African countries can eradicate malnutrition (compared to five under the Baseline) by 2030, and 19 countries would reduce neonatal mortality to at least 12 per 1000 live births (compared to 13 countries under the baseline) by 2030. In the long term, 42 countries would have less than 3 percent of their population suffer from malnourishment (compared 19 countries under the baseline) and 33 countries would have less than 3 percent of its population in extreme poverty (compared to 20 countries).

## Impact of the Ukraine-Russia crisis on the implementation of the SDGs in Africa

A steady increase in the prices of food, fuel and energy have been recorded in international markets, mainly due to the effects of the Ukraine and Russia crisis. The negative supply shock is threatening food security and economic stability and triggering social unrest in some African countries. Four scenarios (Business as usual (BAU), COVID-19, Ukraine, and Ukraine+COVID-19) are used to analyze the impact of the shocks on SDGs using price changes over the period 2020-2022.

Overall, GDP growth in Africa is anticipated to decline by negative 3.3 percent under the Ukraine+Covid-19 scenario compared to BAU. However, there are significant differences among countries, and in 2022, high commodity exports will increase GDP growth in Ethiopia by 0.2 percent, Guinea by 4.4 percent and Nigeria by 0.6 percent. The Ukraine+Covid-19 shock had a negative 0.2 percent effect on agricultural labour productivity in Africa, while the Ukraine crisis led to an overall decline of 0.7 percent in agricultural labour productivity in 2022. At the country level, both shocks led to a decline in rural household incomes in 8 out of 15 African countries analyzed. The combined effect of the shocks has increased unemployment in 11 of the 16 countries analyzed in this report.

African countries dependent on imports from Ukraine and Russia show significant delays in achieving SDGs 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 9 on industry, innovation and technology. The effects of these shocks on the growth rates of household income among the bottom 40 percent of the population and on the share of labour in GDP is moderate.

## Key policy recommendations

Overall, African countries need to invest in building and strengthening the capacities of national statistical offices for better and timely collection of highly disaggregated data that tracks the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

### On quality education (SDG 4)

Africa is progressing on the targets of universal primary education, particularly on enrolment, completion, and gender parity. However, coverage is still inadequate, and the quality of education remains low. The Covid 19 pandemic has endangered the overall moderate progress recorded over the last decade. Building and upgrading school facilities in terms of drinking water availability, electricity, computer and internet still remains a challenge.

Concerted efforts by policymakers are needed to reduce the number of out-of-school children. The educational value of pre-school is an important part of a comprehensive education programme and school feeding initiatives could be scaled up, given their effectiveness in increasing access to basic education, more so for orphans and other vulnerable children. Pre-primary and primary education is also vital for laying the basic foundations for life-long learning.

Despite significant efforts by African countries to finance education during the Covid-19 crisis, significant disruptions were observed due to inadequate financing. More public resources are needed to address the inadequate school infrastructure and



**The Covid 19 pandemic has endangered the overall moderate progress recorded over the last decade ”**

equip teachers with the required training. The private sector can play a major role in filling the financing gap.

The lack of accurate and timely data, as well as data on learning outcomes impedes the measuring of progress, evidence-based planning and decision making in the education sector. There is an urgent need for countries to invest in building the necessary statistical capacities for comprehensive gathering of the appropriate data.

#### Main policy recommendations:

- Close the education financial gap by mobilizing financial resources for school infrastructure and improving the quality of teacher training.
- Invest in building capacities of national statistical offices in collecting timely and highly disaggregated data.
- Development partners must align behind the SDG 4 monitoring agenda in countries, ensuring that all their initiatives in the education sector are consistent with the SDG 4 monitoring agenda. Donors financing for the education sector should ensure that the SDG 4 monitoring indicators, especially learning outcome indicators, are supported and funded in every national education plan and budget.
- More public and private sector resources are needed to address the inadequate school infrastructure and equip teachers with the required training. There is the need to increase the number of professionally qualified teachers. African countries need to prioritize redesigning their teacher development programmes at all levels, including digital and pedagogical skills for learner-centered, inclusive quality education.
- Focus on foundational learning from an early stage to raise learning levels and the overall quality of education by emphasizing teaching focused on basic reading and mathematics in preschool and primary school. The curricula at primary school should provide dedicated time and methodological approach on literacy and numeracy to improve foundational learning skills.
- Social protection programmes that include cash transfers or child allowances should be dedicated to groups where the school dropout rates are very high. A specific focus should be given to young Africans at secondary school that fail to participate in education.

#### On gender equality (SDG 5)

Mixed progress on gender equality and women's empowerment are observed in Africa. One fourth of seats in national parliaments are held by women in 2021 which is a slow upward trend since 2015. The gender With the exception of North Africa, the gap in managerial positions is gradually closing in Africa over the last 2 decades, but the situation has worsened in Northern Africa. There is the need to strengthen the region's political commitment to gender equality and empowerment, through the introduction and implementation of legal frameworks that fight discrimination on the basis of sex and also strengthen women's economic independence.

Governments in Africa must work towards addressing existing social and cultural behaviour and norms that facilitate outlawing practices such as female genital mutilation and violence against women, through advocacy and grass-root engagement on women's rights, especially in rural and marginalized settings.

Measures must be instituted to address barriers to women's integration and career progression in the labour market, as well as ensure adequate social protection measures to cushion against shocks.

#### Main policy recommendations:



**There is an urgent need for countries to invest in building the necessary statistical capacities for comprehensive gathering of the appropriate data ”**



**There is limited awareness on the importance of conservation of oceans and seas in Africa ”**

- Protect women and girls from violence, child marriage and outlawed practices such as female genital mutilation by fully implementing existing legal frameworks that criminalize such offenses.
- Barriers to women’s integration and career progression in the labour market and political sphere need to be addressed through legislative provisions that impose mandatory principles of equality and those that integrate gender into workplace policies.
- Cushion the vulnerable, especially women from the negative effects of external crises through targeted social protection schemes.

### **On life below water( SDG 14)**

The analysis shows variations in the overall progress made by the African region towards Goal 14 on life below water. For many countries, intermediate progress is reported for some indicators (littering, conservation of protected areas, and sustainable fisheries). The **Chlorophyll-a indicator** – a common indicator of coastal eutrophication (excess nutrient loading into coastal environments and resulting into the excess growth of plants and algae), has experienced a reverse trend. Most countries have demonstrated strong commitments to enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of marine and oceanic resources for inclusive and sustainable development.

Coastal and marine resources present huge potential for development of the tourism industry, fisheries, and aquaculture as well as a great opportunity for the Blue Economy including the creation of green jobs that can serve to curb unemployment. Despite their contribution to the economy and social life, there is limited awareness on the importance of conservation of oceans and seas in Africa. Coasts and marine waters are affected by pollution and acidification, dumping of solid and liquid wastes as well as discharges and runoffs from agricultural chemicals, and poor coastal development in many countries.

It is critical to create awareness regarding the potential negative impacts of increasing coastal population and associated infrastructure development (ports, industries, tourism, and production facilities). Special emphasis should be given to protection of coasts and marine ecosystems to ensure sustainable development.

#### **Main policy recommendations:**

- Diversify economic activities, especially in SIDS and promote the development of climate resilience and a low carbon emission tourism industry, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors.
- Encourage investment in the ocean, marine research and coastal development master plans.
- Create awareness of waste management and infrastructure development in coastal areas so as to curb pollution.

### **On life on land (SDG 15)**

Moderate progress was recorded on Goal 15 that focuses on life on land. Given current trends, the promise of protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity is unlikely to be achieved by 2030. The probability of survival of threatened species has been decreasing since 2000; the trends in overall extinction risk for species (red list index) have deteriorated over the last 2 decades.

Governments should mobilize and channel increased funding for a green and resilient recovery from COVID-19 and to scale up sustainable management of land, forests, and biodiversity. As part of this effort, they should exploit innovative sources of finance such as



the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility designed by ECA and its partners, debt swaps for sustainability, green and blue bonds, and carbon credits. Increased financing should be channelled to decentralized entities and local communities in order to achieve a tangible and meaningful impact on the well-being of people and ecosystems.

Moreover, Member States should strengthen public and private partnerships, coordination, and implement at-scale, policies, plans and legislative frameworks for the sustainable management of land, forests, and biodiversity. Governments, private sector, and other partners need to scale up investments for nature-based and integrated solutions to the interrelated problems of climate change, forest and biodiversity degradation and loss, land degradation, and natural disasters.

Governments should strengthen and scale up the valuation of natural capital and the mainstreaming of biodiversity, nature-based solutions, and climate-friendly agriculture and disaster risk reduction in voluntary national reviews and development plans and budgets.

Also, governments should endeavour to empower women, young people, indigenous peoples, and local communities by strengthening and enforcing resource tenure rights and enhancing access to finance, to achieve inclusive wealth creation and the sustainable management of forest and biodiversity resources and to manage natural resource-based conflicts and disputes.

#### Main policy recommendations:

- Significantly scale up efforts to domesticate and implement the policy frameworks to foster sustainable management of forests, biodiversity, and land.
- Mobilize resources to increase funding for the activities related to the protection, restoration and sustainable use of forests, land and biodiversity.
- Put in place strategies to enhance alternative livelihood options for communities that heavily rely on forests for livelihood. They should empower local communities by strengthening and enforcing resource tenure rights and access to finance to accelerate the sustainable management of forest and biodiversity while also mitigating natural resource-based conflicts and disputes.

#### On partnerships for the goals (SDG 17)

The continent has made little progress overall on Goal 17. The enablers for the implementation of the Goals have registered only slight improvement.

New partnerships and sources of development financing are required to meet the rising needs of future development in Africa. Both regional development banks, as well as the Bretton-Woods institutions, need to urgently step up their efforts to boost their financial support to African countries. For instance, advanced economies could re-channel a share of their Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) resources to Africa. This could be a potential additional source of resources for countries, cushion against food and oil shocks, and support debt repayment.

African governments should aim to strengthen domestic resource mobilization through accelerating digitalization, improving tax policy and administration, curbing illicit financial flows, and creating the enabling governance, legal and judicial frameworks for enhanced accountability, transparency, and participation. Better alignment of development strategies with development financing frameworks through the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) will support efforts to improve public financial management and procurement systems, and adopt result-oriented debt management strategies.

#### Main policy recommendations:

- Prioritize efforts to expand fiscal space through ambitious domestic resource mobilization initiatives, eliminating unnecessary tax waivers and incentives, addressing



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tax leakages and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of tax administration systems.

- Tighten public financial management systems, including sound budget formulation and execution, allocating public resources to priority areas and maximizing value for money by mainstreaming procurement systems.
- Strengthen debt management policies, including debt transparency, a careful balance between increased spending and borrowing and better negotiation of debt contracts.
- Encourage strategic development cooperation, specifically through enhanced south-south cooperation, channelling foreign investments into productive sectors, and, tapping into innovative financial instruments.

### Building resilience from external shocks

Digital disruption and innovation will be key in addressing the challenges faced by the education system across the continent. With schools closed and stark divides in access to online learning, closing the internet access gap would halve the human development regression by getting children back to education – albeit remotely. The surge in tele-schooling, tele-working, tele-medicine, and digital payments being deployed during the COVID-19 crisis are just the tip of the iceberg. Investments in digital transformation have been simultaneously driving pandemic response and setting the path for acceleration beyond recovery.

Governments should keep investing in digital transformation of public services, the education system, the health sector, etc., through digital platforms while planning broader digital transformation strategies. Digital transformation should target designing solution that allow:

- Delivering critical governments services, including healthcare, remotely;
- Supporting data integration and insights for better decision-making;
- Establishing digital payment platforms and e-commerce systems, with a focus on women-run small and medium enterprises and closing the digital divide for women and for marginalized populations;
- Enhancing digital financing options, including for improved remittance flows.

Reducing poverty will require strong investment in diversifying and transforming African countries' economies. Governments will have to create fiscal space to invest in priority markets, strengthen engagement with the private sector, and develop inclusive, green economic recovery strategies, including in partnership with development partners.

Social protection, including cash transfers, universal health coverage and access to other basic services, will be central to uprooting the inequalities that permeated societies before the pandemic, and that are starkly visible today. Public-private solidarity and partnerships will be critical to build resilient social protection systems that can weather shocks, create strategies for informal sector workers, and design a new generation of resilient, green jobs that support youth-led entrepreneurship.

Temporary Basic Income and Universal Basic Income could be part of a renewed social contract as well as social protection measures and fiscal stimuli that reflect the care economy and are inclusive, reaching domestic and informal workers, people with disabilities and women migrants.

Rebalancing nature, climate, and the economy will be key to fight against the climate change. Designing and de-risking nature-based solutions will be critical to orient African countries quest for development in a sustainable pathway. Also, encouraging sustainable public-private partnerships such as in ecotourism and green transport systems,

transforming agriculture from a carbon contributor to a carbon sink, and ensuring integrated thinking and action with the health sector to tackle air pollution that kills 7 million people each year are among the policies to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

African countries' must translate the Nationally Determined Contributions and adaptation plans into urban planning, agriculture and land use climate solutions. Among the opportunities, African countries should explore green recovery grants to promote and protect nature-based jobs and livelihoods, including rural entrepreneurship; promote community-based and owned solutions and approaches, especially in indigenous communities, and accelerate a green energy transition as part of the COVID-19 response, including the political economy of fossil fuel subsidy reform.

Countries must collectively adopt a set of decisions and actions that, to the greatest extent, meet the needs of all. The threats of the COVID-19 pandemic require global response, based on unity and mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It is time for selfishness and greed to be replaced by solidarity.

**Main policy recommendations:**

- Build resilient economic systems to reduce the over-reliance on food imports by transforming agricultural productivity through modernization
- Make significant investments to promote equitable and affordable access to energy so as to sustain economic transformation.
- Global solidarity and partnership is required to address the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## About this publication

The 2022 Africa Sustainable Development Report reviews Africa's performance on five goals, and related targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account their correspondence with Agenda 2063.

The report uses the latest data from international sources to track performance and highlight lessons learned in the implementation of the two agendas. In line with the theme of the 2022 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), this year's report is aligned with the theme, "Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) while Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and Goals 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related goals of Agenda 2063.

Further, the report examines the impact of COVID-19 and Ukraine-Russia war on the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063, and provided policy options to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the continent.

