

Africa must and can develop better

Africa should make a swift recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic to accelerate progress on sustainable development and build an inclusive pathway to achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo, Firmin Ayessa, said Wednesday.

Describing conditions caused by COVID-19 as unprecedented, Mr. Ayessa said the health and economic situation in Africa has been severely impacted by the pandemic, making it urgent for the continent to build back better and greener.

"My country is now a leader in the fight against climate change and as proof our country is at the front of the establishment of the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin which has the objective to redefine the foundation for collaborative economies which include rational exploitation of forest and sustainable management of water, coastal areas, the Congo river and its tributaries," he told delegates at the Seventh Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD), which was officially opened Wednesday by President Denis Sassou Nguesso.

The regional Forum seeks to integrate and review progress made in the implementation of the global 2030 Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063.

Speaking at the same event, Arlette Soudan-Nonault, Republic of Congo's Tourism and Environment



Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo (left), Ms. Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (centre) and Ms. Vera Songwe, ECA Executive Secretary (right) speaking during the Seventh Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development

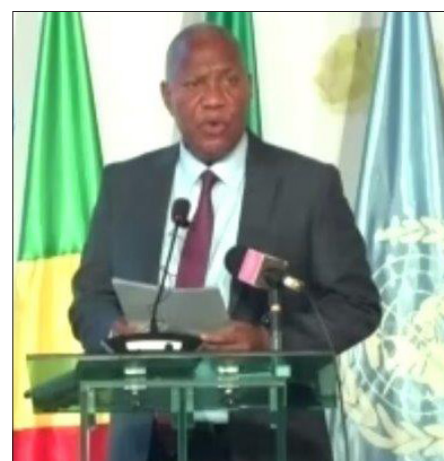
Minister, and incoming Chair of the Seventh Session of the ARFSD said Africa needs a sustainable development model to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063.

Reconstructing post COVID

In her message to the Forum, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, bemoaned that COVID-19 threatened decades of development progress and set back Africa's plans to deliver on the SDGs.

Ms. Mohamed said this was the time to leverage Africa's capacities and potential for Africa's 226 million young people to chart a new direction with the 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda as guidelines.

"As we listen to the voices of the world's young people, the time has come to make peace with nature and this means developing a just economic model which means embracing renewable energy, green



Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo, Mr. Firmin Ayessa

and resilience infrastructure and inclusive digitalization that protects natural resources," said Mohamed.

Addressing the Forum, ECA Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe, noted that Africa would need to replace and rebuild a stronger and

Panellists call on Africa to adopt greener pathways for development

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is supporting the African Union Commission (AUC) in finalizing the African Climate Change Strategy (2020-2030). James Murombedzi of the ECA's African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), said this at the on-going 7th Session of the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD) currently taking place in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

"The African Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 is designed to be a framework to guide climate actions in member States towards low carbon emissions development." Mr. Murombedzi said. "The continent must embark on adopting green pathways for economic growth. This is necessary as climate change is disruptive on national economies, ecosystems and livelihoods."

Mr. Murombedzi, who made a keynote presentation at the Climate Action forum, noted that climate change was directly impacting on Africa's ability to realize sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Africa's development framework as envisaged in Agenda 2063.

He went on to enumerate on some of the challenges to be addressed to cushion the continent from adverse climate effects, including integrating climate information services into the continent's development processes, engagement of all stakeholders, securing adequate means to implementation for transition into low emissions pathways and ensuring major emitters step up their climate ambitions.

Mr. Murombedzi also urged the continent to adopt climate smart interventions, which will generate decent and sustainable green and blue jobs. His sentiments come in the wake of the ECA's launch of the Building Forward for an African



Green Recovery Report, which provides an evidence-based roadmap for the continent to embrace clean energy sources as a recovery pathway in post-COVID-19 continental build forward better strategy.

Speaking at the same forum, James Kinyangi of the African Development Bank (AfDB) noted that the multilateral development bank was going to double its climate finance of \$12.5bn in its 2016-2020 timeframe to \$25bn in the period 2021-2025. According to Mr. Kinyangi, the AfDB is opening up several financing portfolios to ensure Africa's low-carbon and climate resilient development ambitions are adequately boosted.

Germain Mpassi, the Director-General for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Congo's Ministry of Tourism and Environment, noted that "Africa has its role to play in the attainment of the Paris Agreement's goals." Highlighting the importance of the Congo Basin's peatlands, he illustrated the measures undertaken to support peatland communities and also protecting these critical forests. Mr. Mpassi who chaired the session, which was hosted by Mami Mizutori,

the special representative of the UN Secretary General on Disaster, Risk Reduction, explained measures taken by his government to harness the Congo Basin as a veritable carbon sink and a global asset in curbing emissions.

Morocco's Razi Bozekri, who serves as Director of Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Green Economy, outlined the clean energy trajectory undertaken by the Moroccan government in transiting to renewable energies through the use of solar and wind. Morocco's Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex, which was connected to Morocco's main grid in 2016, is among Africa's success stories of clean energy adoption. The AfDB, among other partners, were involved in making this green clean energy quest a reality.

Mr. Bozekri also recalled the establishment of the three African climate commissions namely; Sahel Regional Commission; Congo Basin Commission and the Commission of Island States. He acknowledged the strides made by these three commissions in supporting continental efforts to address climate change

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L'Afrique est exhortée à garantir des modes de consommation et de production durables

La mise en œuvre de l'Objectif de développement durable numéro 12 sur la consommation et la production durables est importante car elle recoupe tous les autres ODD et aide les pays à réaliser des plans de développement globaux, à réduire les futurs coûts économiques, environnementaux et sociaux, renforcer la compétitivité économique et réduire la pauvreté.

C'est ce que déclare ce mercredi, le Directeur de la Division de la technologie, du changement climatique et de la gestion des ressources naturelles, de la Commission économique pour l'Afrique (CEA), M. Jean-Paul Adam, lors d'une réunion parallèle au 7^{ème} Forum régional africain pour le développement durable (FRADD) en cours.

Il dit que l'Afrique doit faire davantage pour garantir des modes de consommation et de production durables.

M. Adam appelle les pays africains et leurs partenaires à investir de manière significative dans la recherche et à moderniser les outils technologiques pour éviter les écueils d'une production et d'une consommation non durables. Il appelle également le continent à faire plus pour protéger ses océans.

« Il est nécessaire de traduire les souhaits exprimés dans l'ODD12 en actions concrètes », affirme M. Adam, de la CEA.

Pour sa part, la Directrice régionale du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE) pour l'Afrique, Juliette Biao Koude-noukpo, exhorte la CEA à prendre l'initiative d'engager un dialogue avec la Commission de l'Union africaine (CUA) sur les décisions clés qui ont été prises au niveau continental mais restent à mettre en œuvre.



De telles recommandations, dit-elle, peuvent aider à résoudre certaines des questions débattues au Forum. Par exemple, M^{me} Koude-noukpo fait remarquer l'incapacité des États membres de l'UA à mettre en œuvre une résolution les appelant à consacrer au moins 15% de leur Produit intérieur brut (PIB) à la santé d'ici 2020.

« La COVID-19 a montré la fragilité des États africains dans ce domaine », dit-elle, ajoutant que le développement durable en Afrique a été gravement entravé par la pandémie.

Le Directeur régional du PNUE reconnaît que des progrès significatifs ont été accomplis dans la mise en œuvre de l'ODD 12, mais ajoute qu'il reste encore à faire, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'accès des

femmes et des petits exploitants agricoles à la terre.

Le Représentant du Maroc, M. Ben Yahia, a fait une présentation sur la mise en œuvre de l'ODD 12 dans son pays.

Le Coordonnateur sous-régional pour l'Afrique de l'Est et Représentant de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) auprès de la CUA et de la CEA, M. Chimimba David Phiri, déclare que le continent peut faire mieux en essayant d'assurer des modes de consommation et de production durables.

Le thème du 7^{ème} FRADD est « Mieux construire l'avenir : Vers une Afrique résiliente et verte pour la réalisation du Programme 2030 et de l'Agenda 2063 ». ■

Panellists call on Africa... (cont. from page 2)

that were firm during the African Action Summit led by Morocco's King Mohammed VI on the margins of COP22 held in Marrakech.

Climate financing and digitization of climate information systems as well as access in the continent featured prominently in the live-

ly session that was also addressed by Mithika Mwenda of the leading continental climate civil society umbrella body, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), and Chinma George from Nigeria who represented the youth. ■

Africa urged to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Implementing sustainable development goal number 12 on sustainable consumption and production is important as it cuts across all the other SDGs and assists countries to achieve overall development plans, reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and reduce poverty.

This was said Wednesday by the Director of Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Jean-Paul Adam, during a parallel meeting at the ongoing 7th African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD).

He said Africa needs to do more to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Mr. Adam pleaded with countries on the continent and partners to significantly invest in research and modernize technological tools to avoid the pitfalls of unsustainable production and consumption. He also called on the continent to do more to protect its oceans.

"It is necessary to translate the wishes expressed in the SDG12 into concrete actions," the ECA Director said.

For her part, the Regional Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for Africa, Juliette Biao Koudonoukpo, urged the ECA to take the lead in initiating dialogue with the African Union



Mr. Jean-Paul Adam, Director of Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division of the Economic Commission for Africa, during a parallel meeting at the ongoing Seventh African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development.

Commission (AUC) on key decisions that have been taken at continental level but remained to be implemented.

Such recommendations, she said, can help address some of the issues being discussed at the Forum. For example, Ms. Koudonoukpo noted the failure by AU member States to implement a resolution calling on them to spend at least 15% of their Gross domestic product (GDP) on health by 2020.

"COVID-19 has shown the fragility of African states in this area," she said, adding sustainable development in Africa had been severely hampered by the pandemic.

The UNEP Regional Director acknowledged that significant progress had been made in the implementation of SDG12, but added

more remained to be done, especially regarding women and small-holder farmers' access to land.

The Representative of Morocco, Mr. Ben Yahia, gave a presentation on the implementation of SDG12 in his country.

The Sub-Regional Coordinator for East Africa and Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the AUC and ECA, Mr. Chimimba David Phiri, said the continent could do better in trying to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The theme of the 7th ARFSD is "*Building forward better: towards a resilient and green Africa to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.*" ■

African Policymakers Advised to Invest in Science, Technology and Innovation for Labor Market Competitiveness

The African labour market is marked by skills mismatch, especially in the informal sector. One out of every three working-age persons in Africa lacks the necessary skills to secure a decent job or achieve high productivity.

To address that challenge, a call to build the capacity of higher learning and technical schools as institutions that must be leading in science, technology and innovation was made at the ongoing seventh session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) which is being held from March 1 to 4, in Brazzaville (Congo).

Ms Christina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to UN Secretary General said that science and technology is an enabler that has proved efficient in turning the COVID-19 disruptions into opportunities and to strengthen the human capital.

According to Hubert Gijzen, UNESCO Regional Director for Southern Africa, almost 50 per cent of university graduates in Africa fail to get a job that corresponds to their studies.

Gijzen said that creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among the students, the necessity to invest in quality education in science

and technology and the need for collaboration are all important address the problem of the labour market.

“We need to put the best brains together and to share knowledge and information to overcome the immense challenges we are facing”, he noted.

Ms Hendrina Chalwe Doroba, Division Manager, Education, Human Capital and Employment at African Development Bank Group (AfDB) said that there is a critical need for policymakers to ensure that we have the right skills needed if we are to actively contribute to the development of the sustainable solutions of our continent.

“The COVID -19 pandemic intensified the need for Africa to invest in science and technology and innovation for the continent to be able to develop homegrown solutions for our local challenges” explained Ms Doroba.

Ms Wilhemina Quaye, the Director for the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Ghana stressed the need to have a very strong youth and gender perspective in thinking and planning as science, technology and innovation



Ms Christina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to UN Secretary General

are mainstreamed in all the sectorial policies.

Ms Quaye said that science, technology and innovation could be leveraged as an answer to address most of the developmental challenges on the continent if adequate financing and effective coordination between the private sector and research institutions are in place.

Experts were discussing at a roundtable panel on leveraging science, technology, innovation and digital transformation for a resilient and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and realising the decade of action in Africa was organized ■



Plaidoyer pour un financement massif de la recherche en Afrique

Le Directeur de la Division de la technologie, du changement climatique et de la gestion des ressources naturelles, de la Commission économique pour l'Afrique (CEA), M. Jean-Paul Adam, estime que « l'ODD12 est le plus transversal des ODD ».

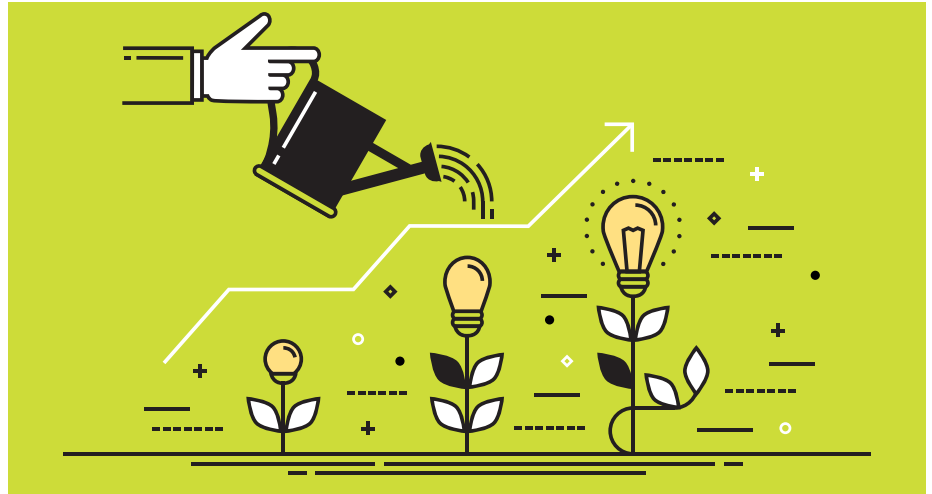
Il intervenait ce mercredi 3 mars 2021, lors de la réunion parallèle sur le sous-thème : « Consommation et production durables », (en référence à l'objectif 12 des Objectifs de développement durable), organisé dans le cadre de la septième session du Forum régional africain pour le développement durable (FRAAD).

Le 7^{ème} FRAAD a pour thème « **Mieux construire l'avenir : Vers une Afrique résiliente et verte pour la réalisation du Programme 2030 et de l'Agenda 2063** ».

Jean-Paul Adam plaide pour un investissement financier conséquent dans la recherche en Afrique, la modernisation des outils technologiques, une corrélation entre la production non durable et la consommation et une meilleure protection des océans.

« Il est nécessaire de traduire en actes concrets les souhaits exprimés dans les ODD12 », plaide le Directeur de la Division de la technologie, du changement climatique et de la gestion des ressources naturelles de la CEA.

Pour sa part, la Directrice régionale du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE) pour l'Afrique, Juliette Biao Koude-



noukpo, invite la Commission économique de l'Afrique (CEA) à prendre les devants en initiant un dialogue avec la Commission de l'Union africaine (CUA), sur des questions clés liées à la mise en œuvre concrète des décisions et résolutions adoptées au niveau continental et qui restent toujours sans suite.

« La plupart des recommandations formulées par les hautes instances continentales ne semblent pas toujours être orientées vers des actions concrètes. Très souvent, on signale ce qui doit être fait, mais là où on échoue, c'est lorsque l'on doit dire qui doit le faire et quand cela doit être fait », dit M^{me} Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo.

Elle donne en exemple la non mise en œuvre de la résolution de l'UA demandant aux États membres de consacrer, d'ici à 2020, au moins 15 % de leur Produit intérieur brut (PIB) à la santé.

« La Covid-19 a montré les limites de la fragilité des États afri-

cains dans ce domaine. Le développement durable en Afrique a été gravement entravé par la pandémie de COVID-19 », fait remarquer la Directrice régionale du PNUE.

M^{me} Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo reconnaît que des avancées notables sont notées dans la mise en œuvre de l'ODD12, mais que des progrès restent à faire, surtout dans l'accès au foncier pour les femmes et les petits exploitants.

L'évènement a notamment enregistré les interventions du représentant du Maroc, M. Ben Yahia qui a fait un exposé sur la mise en œuvre de l'ODD12 dans son pays

Le Coordonnateur sous régional pour l'Afrique de l'Est et Représentant de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) auprès de l'UA et de la CEA, M. Chimimba David Phiri, pour sa part, indique que le continent peut réaliser de « meilleures résultats » dans la mise en œuvre de l'ODD12. ■

COVID 19 has made it very clear that data are power

Data and statistics are the lifeblood of development planning. Without accurate, timely data, development planning and implementation is a shot in the dark.

A panel discussion at the 7th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development heard how Africa needs to invest in timely and quality statistics and analysis to better implement various programmes to achieve the SDGs. But often this is not the case and can Africa do better? Yes, believes Mr. David Everatt, Chair of the Statistics Council in South Africa, who participated in the panel discussion. He shares perspectives on why quality data and straight statistics are good for development planning and decision making:

ECA: Do we really need statistical data?

Mr. Everatt: You don't, but government does. Where is the right place to invest, who is showing high need - hunger, health, whatever - is this intervention working or having perverse outcomes - you can certainly do small scale qualitative studies, but they are not representative and you need accurate, representative stats to know what to do.

It is commonly accepted now whether you are in business or government, the most important commodity now is data. It is what people are paying the most for and what people are harvesting left right and centre. It can be used for bad purposes like Cambridge Analytica tried to do in unethical behaviour. It can be used for promotional behaviour like what people are buying, what they eat and where they go. The notion that we cannot do without data is unthinkable. We cannot ignore data.

Is there difference between data and statistics?



Statistics is one way of manipulating data.

What is the role of data and statistics in development planning?

You'd normally use qualitative and quantitative data in planning, to ensure that your plans match what local communities/beneficiaries want, unless you want a horrible mismatch and resultant wastage.

There are fears that data from Africa are not reliable, could this be an exaggeration?

There are mistakes made in data gathering in every country of the world and would not see that Africa is somehow worse or better than anywhere else. Other places are probably more advanced in terms of the collection of digital data. All over the world data are subject to manipulation and I do not see Africa is worse off. We have battled to get the technology working as fast as the rest of the world.

What can we learn from the South African experience?

The Statistics Council does nothing but advise and Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) does the work. We are there to verify statistics, they gather and analyse it and we sign

off on it. Stats SA had started on what was a five-year strategy to go digital, some of that was relatively easy for anyone who can link up data sets, for example, we are able to get live time data in real time. We were heading down that path and we thinning about the implications of going digital and COVID hit and we could not use field workers. Stats SA had to pivot really quickly. **Data and statistics have bandied about in discussions about SDGs and COVID19 pandemic, what insights can we gain from using data and statistics?**

COVID 19 has made it very clear that data are power. Learn to separate headlines from properly gathered, verified, analysed and carefully reported statistical analysis. Try and avoid anything that looks rushed, or headline-grabbing (often the modellers) or overtly political, such as the vaccine deniers etc.

Do we need new models of data collection in the light of COVID19?

Absolutely. Fieldworkers are now perceived as vectors of disease - so a population in lockdown,

Les pays africains exhortés à construire des systèmes de santé résilients au climat

La nouvelle pandémie de coronavirus a révélé des fragilités énormes dans le système de prestation de soins de santé en Afrique, avec les participants au 7ème Forum africain de développement pour le développement durable (ARFSD) en cours appelant le continent à commencer à construire des systèmes de soins de santé résilients au climat pour relever les défis de l'avenir.

Contribuant au débat, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, Directrice régionale de l'OMS pour l'Afrique, fait remarquer que la pandémie a sérieusement entravé la prestation de soins de santé sur le continent, avec les confinements et la fermeture des frontières affectant la circulation des biens et des services, ce qui a entraîné des répercussions sur la fourniture de produits et services de santé.

Dr Humphrey Karamagi, du Bureau régional de l'OMS pour l'Afrique, quant à lui, donne un aperçu de l'ODD3 qui a pour objectif d'assurer une vie saine et de promouvoir le bien-être de tous à tout âge.

Il indique que la COVID-19 perturbait d'autres services qui à leur tour, affectaient le bien-être des populations. Dr Karamagi ajoute que les services de santé sexuelle et génésique pour les femmes ont également été touchés avec celles-ci n'ayant pas accès aux services de santé sexuelle et génésique en raison de la pandémie.

Les effets, dit-il, ont également affecté le personnel de santé, car les praticiens ont été infectés par le virus, laissant le continent avec un personnel de santé insuffisant pour aider à combattre la pandémie.

La longue fermeture des écoles, affirme-t-il, aura un effet à long

terme sur la santé, même si la pandémie a conduit à une amélioration de l'hygiène personnelle car les gens se lavent désormais fréquemment les mains.

Alors que la pandémie a révélé les inégalités en matière d'accès à la santé et d'accès à l'information, il est temps d'aller vers des soins de santé universels, d'appliquer des approches intersectorielles et de construire des systèmes de santé résilients au climat, déclare-t-il.

« Nous devons commencer à penser à des systèmes de santé résilients au climat », dit-il.

Dr Maha El Rabbat, Envoyé spécial du Directeur général de l'OMS pour la COVID-19, notant que si des progrès ont été réalisés sur le front de la santé, au cours des dernières années ces progrès, ont été affectés par l'épidémie de COVID-19. La pandémie a ajouté aux défis déjà existants en Afrique des systèmes de santé tels que les disparités et les inégalités.

« Ces défis ont souligné la fragilité et la disponibilité des services de santé, et personne n'est en sécuri-



té tant que tout le monde ne l'est pas », déclare-t-elle.

Elle dit que les pays africains doivent s'attaquer aux inégalités et doivent avoir une nouvelle vision pour pouvoir bâtir plus solide à l'avenir.

Dans sa contribution, Julitta Onabanjo, du FNUAP, indique que la COVID-19 a mis l'accent sur les soins de santé primaires et les services d'urgence sur le continent. Elle appelle à un accès universel accéléré à des services complets de santé génésique pour les femmes.

Les membres du panel conviennent qu'il est nécessaire que les pays africains s'orientent vers l'intégration, la résilience et la construction d'un système de santé adapté aux objectifs. ■

COVID 19 has made it very clear ... (cont. from page 7)

and in fear of infection, is not going to welcome a stranger into their house. We are currently doing all fieldwork outside, under gazebos etc., as we gather call phone numbers to switch to CATI (computer aided telephone interview).

What advice would you give for African countries in terms of investing in data collection tools?

Get ahead of the technology curve and make sure we are equipped - if not, the private sector, which has its own interests at heart, will dominate the field. ■

Africa must and can develop better... (cont. from page 1)

more resilient health care system following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ECA has been working with the African Union Commission, the Africa Centres for Disease Control, Afreximbank and other partners through the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team to help African countries to secure vaccines to tackle COVID-19 with over 500 million doses having been sourced so far.

Africa seeks to vaccinate 60 % of the population to achieve herd immunity, a feat estimated to cost over 20% of GDP of most countries.

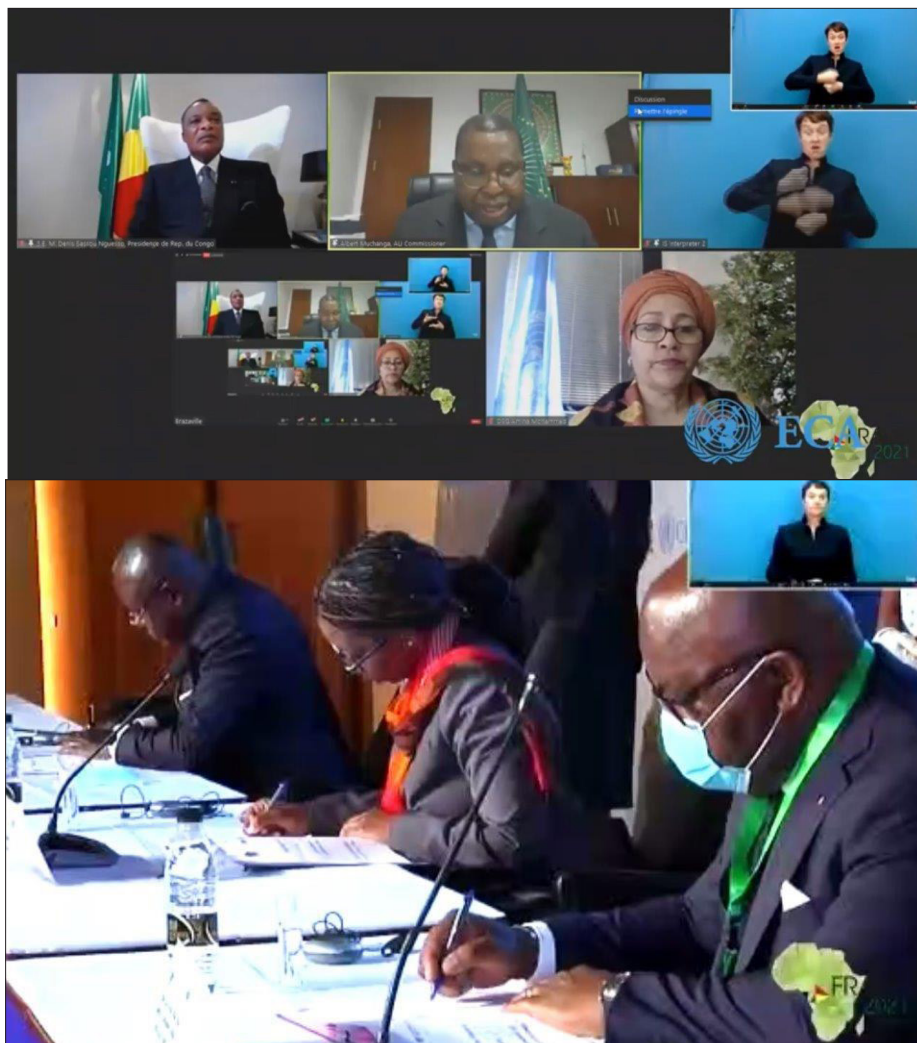
"Africa is facing its first recession in 25 years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic consequences," Ms. Songwe said, calling for massive domestic resource mobilisation for the continent to respond to the health, climate and economic crises.

"But with the right policies and strong effective multilateral system reset, Africa can recover well from the triple crises of climate, health and economy to build forward very resilient economies."

Urging for a reset of economic models within a transformed multilateral development framework, the ECA Chief called for an extension of Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) to beyond end of 2021 so African countries can have extra liquidity to respond to the pandemic.

For the recovery and investment in transformative green actions, we need additional issuances of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), including on-lending and the creation of more affordable financial vehicles for Africa, Ms. Songwe emphasized, pointing to the need for blended finance and opportunities for debt swaps and SDG Bonds.

Outgoing chair of the 6th ARFSD Bureau and Zimbabwe's Labour and Social Welfare Minister, Paul Mavima, said Africa has made substantial but insufficient progress in implementing SDGs. It needs to redouble efforts, especially on



High level participants of the Forum (top) and signing of a partnership framework between the Government of the Republic of Congo and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for the creation of the African Centre for Research on Artificial Intelligence within the University Denis SASSOU NGUESSO

goals relating to poverty alleviation, health, decent work and economic growth.

"Despite the challenges there is need for resilience in Africa in order to build forward better," Mr. Mavima told the Forum, highlighting that COVID-19 has worsened the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

The biggest accelerator to the finishing line is changing the mindsets of our people for the need to develop local solutions, he said, calling on Africans to own their development agenda and optimise resource mobilisation because Africa has the resources to achieve the 2030 and 2063 Agendas.

"Africa should use its capital and human resources to develop its own medical solutions, includ-

ing production of vaccines given the vaccine nationalism that we are witnessing. It is in that regard that I call for the equitable distribution of vaccines irrespective of the political and economic considerations of a country."

The opening ceremony was capped by the signing of a partnership framework between the Government of the Republic of Congo and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for the creation of the African Centre for Research on Artificial Intelligence (CARIA) within the University Denis SASSOU NGUESSO.

The ARFSD is being held under the theme: "Building forward better: Towards a resilient and green Africa to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063". ■

ARFSD in pictures

