

Kigali, Rwanda | July 25, 2021

### CONFERENCE AND LAUNCH OF REPORT ON

### [Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries - Leave No One Behind Outlook](#)

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On July 22, 2021, The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (The SDGCA) with support from KOICA (Korea international cooperation Agency), the premier the development agency of the Korean government, hosted a virtual international conference to discuss social inclusion in Africa with a theme *Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries*.

The main objective of this conference was to present the key findings of the report: *Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries – Leave No One Behind Outlook* and create a multispectral platform to debate on the progress made, challenges faced and what should be done with perspective of advancing social inclusion in Africa. It also provided a forum to reflect honest perspectives on progress made on achievement of SDGs, lessons learnt, and the right way forward in advancing social inclusion in Africa. The key thematic areas of discussion revolved around education for all, youth and agriculture, food system and food security, inclusive health, energy and women in Africa, universal and equitable access to infrastructure, financial inclusion and women inclusion across SDGs.

The conference also gathered senior officials of UN agencies (UNECA, UNDP, FAO and UNEP), Professor Jeffery D. Sachs, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University and the Board Member of The SDGCA, Eng. Hani Salem Sonbol, Chief Executive Officer, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, Acting Director General of The SDGCA, Ms. Caroline Makasa, distinguished academicians from renowned universities, financial institutions and development actors. During this event, speakers highlighted efforts and strategies instigated by countries and organisations in implementing SDGs, challenges and status of social inclusion in Africa; and ultimately proposed strategies to ensure SDGs are met within social boundaries without leaving anybody behind.

In her welcoming remark, Ms. Caroline Makasa, Acting Director General of The SDGCA thanked all the participants and panelists for honoring the invitation and their readiness to contribute their experience and views which are critical to success of the conference. She said that the *Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries – Leave No One Behind* report is the fourth in series of an annual production of The SDGCA that reflects comprehensive assessment of critical issues that impeded the

achievement of SDGs in Africa. The key findings of this report will serve as a platform to debate on the progress made on SDGs with specific focus on social inclusion at aggregate and sectoral level. She pointed out that leave no one behind, a UN Agenda 2030 principle is a transformative promise and commitment of all UN member states; and emphasised that: *"It strives to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and humanity as a whole"*. She concluded by appreciated KOICA for generous financial support for organizing the conference and passed special thanks to Honorable Board Members and staff The SDGCA.

This conference was dually officiated by Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, the Minister for General Duties & Focal Point Minister for SDGs, Office of the Prime Minister, the Republic of Uganda and Hon. Dr. Uzziel Ndagijimana, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, the Republic of Rwanda who delivered a keynote address on Leave No Behind Outlook and launched the *"Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries – Leave No One Behind"* report.

In her opening remarks, Hon. Lumumba from Uganda appreciated that the conference was a timely initiative and listed plans that her government put in place such as the parish development initiative, development of national SDGs framework and integrated SDG model, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), progress of integrating SDGs in the national development plans and sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and wealth creation. She also retreated the progress of the collaboration with The SDGCA to adopt a continental Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) System which she suggested should be scaled up to other countries.

Hon Dr. Uzziel Ndagijimana, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, the Republic of Rwanda, in his remarks and launch of the report, he highlighted key challenges faced by African countries in realization of SDGs and how COVID-19 is worsening the already fragile situation and put achievement of SDGs at risk. In this regard, Hon. Dr. Uzziel emphasized the importance of key stakeholders at national, regional and global level to come together and find political and financial means to address the worsening situation and leave no country and no one behind. He also said that: *"Inclusiveness has always been at the heart of Rwanda's development priorities, in this regard it is strongly embedded in the vision 2050 and the national strategy for transformation 2017 - 2024; one of the three key pillars is social transformation"*. He also pointed that, during COVID-19 emerging challenges, social inclusiveness became more relevant than even before in development endeavors of Rwanda. Hon. Dr. Uzziel urged for need of synergy and learning from one other in order to accelerate achievement of national ambitions while reflecting deeply on how to curb persistent low

human development in Africa; and other issues such as rising poverty and lack of demographic transition.

While giving remarks on the role of trade finance in promoting social inclusion in Africa, Eng. Hani Salem Sonbol, Chief Executive Officer of International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation discussed on how the issue of social inclusion is particularly meaningful during this time and he emphasised that: "*The COVID-19 pandemic has shed more light on the importance of inclusive and sustainable development*". He shed light on how COVID-19 affected lives people in which it is estimated that 62 million people in Africa will be in absolute poverty and in Sub-Saharan, 29.4 per cent (estimate at 411.8 million people) of the population are now at risk of undernourishment. He reminded participants that the pandemic has interrupted progress towards achieving the SDGs on a substantial scale and proposed three dimensions of inclusive in trade which are *economic inclusion* -- by fostering regional integration, *financial inclusion* -- addressing the trade finance gaps; *social inclusion* -- by targeting the most vulnerable people.

Professor Jeffery D. Sachs, a Board Member of The SDGCA and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University provided remarks on global lessons for Africa in accelerating SDGs in COVID-19 era and how to effectively leverage on global partnerships for SDG results. Prof. Sachs illustrated that SDGs are an investment agenda in key sectors which requires mobilization of finance for implementation. Prof. Sachs highlighted that the tragedy and the central challenge is that African countries are left behind without access to finance as they are not considered credit worthy to borrow from international market. In addition, developed countries have not delivered what they have affirmed in Paris agreement to mobilize \$100 billion annual contribution to scale up climate finance. He further underscored that similar trends have been observed in COVID-19 vaccine that the vaccines are hoarded by rich countries and any tangible plan has not been put in place as a way forward to reach out poor countries. According to Prof. Sachs, acceleration of SDGs in Africa requires mobilization of adequate financing and one of the ways of realizing this objective is pressing the representation of AU (like European Union) to be a part of G20 and participation of AU in the imminent financial meetings.

A Senior Economist at The SDGCA, Dr. Enock Nyorekwa Twinoburyo presented the findings of "*Africa 2030: SDGs within Social Boundaries – Leave No One Behind*" in which parameters and status of social inclusion in Africa were spelt out. His presentation indicated that poverty, inequality, and broader exclusions are evident everywhere in Africa exacerbated by COVID-19. Poverty is expected to remain an African phenomenon with 90% of global poor found in Africa. Inequality (wealth, income, land, consumption expenditure, and wage) remains in Africa high relative to the world. The

majority of the labor force remains in vulnerable employment situations and the working poor still makes up a high proportion of the labor force. Additionally, social protection coverage remains low, and the associated fiscal provisions remain limited. Human development inequalities are vast and commence at birth. On average, nearly 2 in 10 children born in 2000 are likely to be dead by the end of this 2020. Health per capita spending in Africa is low, in part explaining the high catastrophic spending. The achievement of zero hunger, attainment of universal access to energy, water and sanitation by 2030 for Africa is becoming an increasingly daunting challenge. As a result of COVID-19, nearly 7 million students from primary and secondary education could drop out of school. Furthermore, an estimated 6 in 10 adults do not have a bank or mobile money account. Across all sectors, women, rural and youth are most excluded.

The presentation of key findings of the report was followed by a panel discussion that focused on state of social inclusion, lessons learnt and, the best practice lessons and how policy measures, strategies and examples of good practice can be scaled-up and realized. The panel eight experts discussed social inclusions in with focus on youth and agriculture Prof. Elliot Jack, food systems and food security by Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel; inclusive health by Prof. Freddie Ssengooba; energy and women in Africa by Dr. Meseret Teklemariam Zemedkun; universal and equitable access to infrastructure by Mr. Joseph Mouanda; financial inclusion by Dr. Fodé Ndiaye; women inclusion across SDGs by Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo.

The panelists' discussion concluded that significant social inequality prevails in almost all sectors. It was noted that inequalities are across gender, rural against urban, young and adults as well as by education level, people with disabilities, income inequalities and others which could be difficult to come up on an exhaustive list. The panel of experts called for the need for more resource mobilization and strengthened partnerships with global players, earmarked and increased investment in human development sectors, gender, rural and marginalized groups responsive budgeting, invest in technical and scientific research and data to inform sound decision-making policies, promote effective governance, infusion of public and private investment, scalable science, technology and innovation (STI) to make things happen and adopt business model in delivery of public services including risk management tools.

In closing remarks, Mr. Chon GyongShik, Country Director of KOICA Rwanda Office expressed his appreciation and congratulated The SDGCA for timely organising the conference and launch of comprehensive report; and said it indicates genuine efforts by The SDGCA to make the world more inclusive and sustainable. He cited the importance of solidarity as a good base to start steps forward together; and emphasised that: *"It is not just for Koreans but for the Africans too; and Africans already*

*have a good cultural background to foster social inclusion"* Mr. Chon equally explained how modern technology is vital in tracking and analysing the situation that could accelerate the efforts to leave no behind. He said that: *"Applying ICT as a cross-sector technology and facilitating innovative methods of financing such as blended financing which has enormous leveraging effect might be the crucial keys to open a new and prosper future"*. He concluded by asking all people in conference to go together to the way forward and more.

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