

**DECISION ON THE REPORTS OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEES (STCs) AND OTHER MINISTERIAL MEETINGS**

The Executive Council,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Reports of the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) and other Ministerial Meetings;
 2. **RECALLS** Decision EX.CL/Dec.1186(XLI) para 12, adopted at the 41st Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2022, regarding the moratorium on establishing new structures;
 3. **STRESSES** that the following Decisions should not bear any financial, legal and structural implications to the AU and **FURTHER CALLS UPON** the STCs and all technical ministerial councils and meetings to refrain from adopting any structures or budgets that were not considered by the AU Policy Organs through the due process;
 4. **REQUESTS** that all STCs adopt their Reports at the end of their meetings.
- I. **FOURTH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STC) ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ARDWE)**

The Executive Council,

5. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the 4th Extraordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment held on 29 May 2023 and endorses the recommendations there in;
6. **COMMENDS** the Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment for successfully holding the 5th Extraordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment;
7. **COMMENDS** the Commission for the progress reported on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the 4th Ordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in December 2021, and requests further progress to be reported during the 5th Ordinary Session of the STC of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment to be held on 13-17 November 2023;

On the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit;

8. **APPRECIATES** the Republic of Kenya for accepting to host the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2023;
9. **COMMENDS** the Commission for the progress made in organizing the Summit, in particular for ensuring wide consultation and ownership of the documents for the Summit;

10. **TAKES NOTE** of and recommends three documents for consideration by the Summit:
 - (i) the Draft declaration on Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health
 - (ii) the Draft 10-year Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan
 - (iii) the Soil Initiative for Africa
11. **APPRECIATES** the technical and financial support from technical and development partners to the Commission to organize the Summit;

On the Common African Agro-Parks

12. **TAKES NOTE** of the progress made in advancing the work on the Common Africa Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative;
13. **APPRECIATES** the technical and financial support from technical and development partners to the Commission to advance the CAAPs initiative;
14. **ENDORSES** the request for the CAAPs initiative to be a flagship program under the second 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063;
15. **REQUESTS** the Commission to mobilize financial resources to support further advancement of the CAAPs initiative;

On Food Security

16. **APPRECIATES** the presentation made by FAO, on behalf of the AUC-FAO Taskforce, on the status of food security on the Continent and NOTES with concern the implications of global food crisis on food security in Africa,
17. **APPRECIATES** the efforts of H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and former Chair of the African Union, including by hosting the Dakar Food Security Summit in January 2023 and the valuable outcomes contained therein;
18. **UNDERLINES** the importance of expediting the implementation of the Africa Common Position to the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and the CAADP objectives and requests the African Union Commission to report on progress of the implementation of the Africa Common Position during the next 5th Ordinary STC of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment;
19. **ALSO ENCOURAGES** the African Union Member States to advocate for the African Common Position on food systems transformation and its priority areas during their participation in the World Food Forum in October 2023;

On Environment and Climate Change

20. **CONGRATULATES** H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs and COP 27

President and the people of Egypt for hosting a successful COP 27 and delivering critical decisions to advance climate action and implementation;

21. **TAKES NOTE** with appreciation of the political guidance and preparatory meetings convened by the Committee of the African Heads of States and Governments (CAHOSCC), the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and meetings of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change (AGN) in preparation for COP 27;
22. **WELCOMES** the strong participation of the African Union Commission, AU Policy Organs and African Civil Society in COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh that contributed to successful and rebalanced outcomes for the African countries and the developing world at large and requests the incoming COP 28 Presidency to build on this momentum and to ensure Africa's strong presence;
23. **ALSO WELCOMES** the decisions of COP 27 that recognize the importance of food and water security in the context of global climate action; and calls for expedited concessional and predictable finance to address the growing adaptation needs in Africa against climate change impacts,
24. **ENDORSES** the COP 27 Presidency's initiatives on Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) and Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) as guiding frameworks to boost climate action and accessing climate finance without financial, legal or structural implications with the other existing initiatives such as the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the African Union Climate Change Strategy and the Africa Agriculture Adaptation Initiative and the 3S initiative and also **INVITES** the Member States to join the implementation of the two initiatives.

II. FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

The Executive Council,

25. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment held on 14-17 November 2023;
26. **COMMENDS** the Ministers responsible for Agriculture Rural Development, Water and Environment for the successful holding of the 5th STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.
27. **TAKES NOTE** of the proposal to rename the STC Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) to STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, Water and Environment (ARBWE) and **RECOMMENDS** its consideration to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

28. **TAKES NOTE** of the achievements of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme as presented in 4th Biennial Review (BR) Report and **EXPRESSES CONCERN** that the continent is not on-track to meet the CAADP goals and targets by 2025.
29. **NOTES** that despite significant progress over two decades, the continent's ambitions and aspirations under the Maputo and Malabo CAADP agendas have not been met. This challenge has been compounded by global issues, including climate change, conflicts, epidemic outbreaks, and economic downturns; and therefore, there is a need to retain the strengths of the CAADP agenda while adjusting and deepening it to respond to emerging issues.
30. **TAKES NOTE:**
- (i) that the Post-Malabo Agenda must meet the needs of sustainable food systems transformation in the context of climate change and shocks from multiple sources. This can only be accomplished by building on previous successes while tackling ongoing and new challenges;
 - (ii) of the postponement of the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit that was supposed to be held in 2022/2023 and **ENDORSES** the request to convene the Summit in May 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya.
31. **ENDORSES** for submission to the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in February 2024, the following documents:
- (i) Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) 4th Biennial Review Report;
 - (ii) 2022 Annual Report of the Commission on the July 2008 Assembly Declaration regarding the Sharm El-Sheikh;
 - (iii) Swakopmund Declaration on "Accelerated Action for Inclusive, Sustainable, Resilient and Safely Managed Sanitation and Hygiene Services Delivery in Africa";
 - (iv) The Kampala Declaration on the 2nd Edition of the G25Africa Coffee Summit held on 8 August 2023 on the inclusion of coffee as a strategic commodity in the AU Agenda 2063 and for the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO) be appointed as an AU designated agency responsible for coffee to work with the African Union Commission (AUC) and Member States on effective transformation of the coffee value chain in Africa.
32. **CONSIDERS and ENDORSES** the following frameworks, guidelines and strategies to accelerate agricultural transformation, rural development, water and environment management:
- (i) the Post-Malabo CAADP Agenda and Road Map;
 - (ii) Guidelines for inclusive agricultural value chains development (iAVCD) in Africa;
 - (iii) the Digital Agriculture Strategy and its implementation Plan (2024-2027);

- (iv) the Rural Infrastructure Development Policy Framework for Africa;
- (v) the ten-year action of the Partnership for Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa (PISSA);
- (vi) the pan African programme on eradication of Peste des petits ruminants and control of other priority small ruminant diseases (2023-2027);
- (vii) the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP);
- (viii) the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) which intends to facilitate Africa's transition to a circular model;
- (ix) the Strategy and the Ten-Year Implementation Framework for the Great Green Wall Initiative.
- (x) the Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP);
- (xi) the digital one health information policy and associated one health information architecture framework for improved digitalised one health governance and management;
- (xii) mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in regional, continental, and global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes;
- (xiii) the guidelines for developing Public-Private Partnership models for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in Africa;
- (xiv) the framework for Harmonized minimum terms and conditions for fisheries access in the African Union Member States;
- (xv) the Strategy for rational management of African inland fisheries;
- (xvi) the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) as a continental platform of AU directors of aquaculture to promote coherent sustainable aquaculture development in Africa;
- (xvii) establishment of the Pan-African Network of nationally registered civil society organizations (NCSOs) in the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector (AFRIFISH-NET);
- (xviii) establishment and operationalization of the African pastoral markets development (APMD) platform;
- (xix) urgent Actions to Address Feed Shortages and Avert Future Feed Related Disasters;
- (xx) commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa;
- (xxi) the outcomes of the Inaugural Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum;
- (xxii) the recommendations of Abuja meeting in July 2023 on harmonization of standards for registration of veterinary vaccines and certification of vaccine manufacturing facilities in Africa, which are based on the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH) and the Veterinary International Conference on Harmonization (VICH) for International Cooperation on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products;
- (xxiii) the outcomes of the Inaugural Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum held under the auspices of the African Union Commission with the view of promoting modernization and harmonization of food regulatory practices in the continent.

33. FURTHER CONSIDERS AND ADOPTS the following Reports:

- (i) the Report on Development of an African Common Position Towards a Legally Binding Protocol on Drought Under the UNCCD;
- (ii) the AMCEN report and the outcomes of the AMCEN 19th Ordinary session;
- (iii) the Report on the Establishment of the African Centers of Excellence on Disaster Risk Reduction;
- (iv) the 2023 Report on the Implementation of the 2015 Ngor Declarations;
- (v) the independent (external) audit of the overall CAADP Biennial Review process, with additions to the inclusion and clear documentation of the successes of the Biennial Review process, and with the exception of the reporting period that will remain biennial up to 2025.
- (vi) the expansion of AU-PANVAC mandates to include auditing and certification of vaccine manufacturing facilities in collaboration with national regulatory authorities in Africa;
- (vii) Preparedness of African countries to eliminate rabies by 2030;
- (viii) Donkey species preservation in Africa: “DONKEY IN AFRICA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”;
- (ix) Continental strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management;
- (x) Improving Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity;
- (xi) the Statute for Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism on Disaster Preparedness and Response;
- (xii) the new coordination Strategy and Ten Years Implementation Framework for the Great Green Wall Initiative.

34. DIRECTS the AUC to:

- (i) allocate US\$1 million annually from Member States contribution to support the operations of the AMHEWAS Situation Room in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
- (ii) organize a pledging conference for Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine (SEAF) to mobilize support for AMHEWAS;

35. REQUESTS the February 2024 AU Assembly to convene an Extraordinary Summit on the Post-Malabo CAADP Agenda and the Road Map in the last quarter of 2024 or at the margins of the regular AU Assembly in January/February 2025;

36. ENDORSES the 10-year Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the Soil Initiative for Africa (SIA) Framework Document adopted by Ministers responsible for ARDWE, during the Extraordinary Session of the STC on ARDWE that was held on May 29, 2023.

37. REQUESTS the 37th Ordinary Session of AU Assembly in February 2024 to endorse the decision to host the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit from May 7-9, 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya.

38. REQUESTS the Commission:

- (i) to collaborate with members of the Bureau of the 5th STC Session to develop a plan of action and roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations;
- (ii) to develop a monitoring framework on the implementation of the decisions of all relevant sectors of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment;
- (iii) and Development partners, RECs to support and facilitate Member States in the implementation of the decisions of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.
- (iv) to execute the change from Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel initiative (GGWSSI) to the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) and **REQUESTS** for adoption of a biennial review and score board.
- (v) to present the Statute of the Joint Africa-Arab Fund on Disaster Risk Reduction for consideration by the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs;
- (vi) to expand and diversify the scope of the Situation Room to include other hazards besides meteorological hazards;
- (vii) in collaboration with the AMCOMET Secretariat, to operationalize a continental monitoring mechanism providing status reports for implementation of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology every two years.

39. URGES the AUC:

- (i) to accelerate the operationalization of the already approved Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Angola, Cameroon, Gabon and Namibia, taking into consideration the moratorium on establishment of new CoEs;
- (ii) to mobilize requisite resources in collaboration with relevant regional and global stakeholders, including non-state actors, to implement the newly outlined Strategy and Ten-Year Framework, facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building among Member States, fostering synergies and collective action and bolster the impact and outreach of the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI);
- (iii) to develop an African Water Policy that can provide strategic framework towards inclusive and climate resilient water security in the continent;
- (iv) and AMCOW to further strengthen the Partners Coordination Platform (PCP).

40. URGES all African Union Member States to:

- (i) join AUC's initiative of multi-country program to access climate finance;
- (ii) develop national climate resilient water investment programs and in developing programs access climate finance for climate resilient and inclusive water security programs.

41. URGES Member States and RECs to join the GRAP implementation through the submission of their proposals.

42. **APPROVES** the proposal to adopt “Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063” as the African Union Theme of the year 2026.

III. THE 4TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, TRANSCONTINENTAL AND INTERREGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ENERGY (STC-TTIIE) HELD FROM 12TH TO 15TH SEPTEMBER 2023 IN ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

The Executive Council:

43. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the 4th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy (STC-TTIIE) held in Zanzibar-United Republic of Tanzania from 12th to 15th September 2023 and the related Declaration.
44. **COMMENDS** the Ministers responsible for Transport and Energy for the successful holding of the 4th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy (STC-TTIIE) and achieving notable outcomes for the development of the Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy in Africa.
45. **ENDORSES** the change of the name of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) to Specialised Technical Committee on Transport and Energy (STC-T&E).

Under Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure

46. **ADOPTS** the updated PIDA Quality Label (PQL) methodology incorporating the Green Check Methodology (GCM) of the PIDA Service Delivery Mechanism (SDM) as a tool to assess climate risk mitigation potential and climate adaptation potential for PIDA projects.
47. **REQUESTS** the AUC to organize high-level engagement meetings with Member States and RECs to advocate for more commitment to their priority infrastructure projects.
48. **REQUESTS** the AFRI-RES Partnership, continental and regional institutions, and development partners to increase the scale and pace of support to Member States and infrastructure stakeholders to climate-proof investments and accelerate the flow of climate finance for PIDA-PAP2 and other infrastructure projects.

Under Transport Sector

49. **ADOPTS** the roadmap for a comprehensive and integrated regulatory framework of road transport in Africa; The report on Ports Efficiency and Competitiveness in Africa; The African Green Ports Forum (AGPF) Terms of Reference (ToRs) and Implementation Roadmap; The continental Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) Development and Deployment Action Plan.
50. **CALLS** on the remaining 18 Member States to sign the Solemn Commitment to join the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).
51. **ALSO CALLS** on all SAATM Member States to join the Project Implementation Pilot (PIP) initiative to accelerate the implementation of SAATM.
52. **FURTHER CALLS** on all remaining Member States to complete the ratification process for the Road Safety Charter, the Revised Maritime Transport Charter and the Luxembourg Protocol on railway rolling stock.
53. **CALLS FOR** the change of name of the AU flagship project, the "African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network" to "African Integrated Railway Network".
54. **CALLS** on the AUC and partners in collaboration with a host Member State to mobilise resources to convene a high-level forum on African Road Safety in 2024.
55. **REQUESTS** the AUC in collaboration with Africa Transport Policy Programme (SSATP), International Transport Forum (ITF), Africa Transport Development & Policy (ITDP), UNHABITAT and other partners to develop continental policy and standards for sustainable urban mobility providing opportunities to develop smart urban mobility solutions including public transport, non-motorised transport, e-mobility initiatives and improving road safety.
56. **ALSO REQUESTS** the AUC in collaboration with partners, Ports Associations and Maritime Organizations to implement the roadmap on the Africa Green Ports Forum (AGPF).
57. **FURTHER REQUESTS** AFCAC in collaboration with AUC-Office of the Legal Counsel and the Yamoussoukro Declaration on SAATM monitoring body to convene meetings of legal experts from Member States to discuss the challenges faced in the implementation and enforcement of the Yamoussoukro Declaration on SAATM legal and regulatory instruments.
58. **REQUESTS** AFCAC in collaboration with AUC and ICAO to finalise the process for the amendment of the Abuja Safety and Air Navigation Targets including the associated performance framework required to align with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) as amended once every triennium.
59. **DELEGATES** to the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) /SAATM Monitoring Body the responsibility of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) including the selection and appointment of the members of the Administrative Council and

approve the Administrative Council's budget, work plans and periodic reports in line with Annex 2 of the YD and report back during subsequent STC meetings.

60. **ADOPTS** the 2024-2025 Action Plans for the transport (road, railway, maritime and air).

Under Energy Sector

61. **CALLS** for the adoption of the African Single Energy Market (AfSEM) with its Continental Power Systems Masterplan (CMP) component by the AU Summit as an AU Agenda 2063 Flagship Project.
62. **REQUESTS** the AUC and partners in collaboration with a host Member State to mobilise resources to convene an African Energy Summit in 2024, which will bring together all ministries and stakeholders relevant to energy infrastructure development.
63. **ADOPTS** the AfSEM strategic and action plans, establishment of the AfSEM Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit (SPCU) within the AUC Department of Infrastructure and Energy, the Five-Year Business Plan and Year-1 Work Plan for the SPCU, and the AfSEM Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism.
64. **FURTHER ADOPTS** the AUC study report on the technical, economic, social, and political implications of green hydrogen development in Africa.
65. **ALSO ADOPTS** the continental regulatory framework for crowding-in private sector investment in Africa's electricity markets.
66. **ALSO ADOPTS** the CMP Mwanga Database Data Classification Paper and the CMP Synthesis report, along with its associated Specific Support Studies (SSS).
67. **CALLS** on Member States to allocate financial resources for the implementation of AfSEM, CMP, and to ratify the Convention of the African Energy Commission (AFREC), and to strengthen their collaboration and communication with AFREC for effective implementation of its mandate.
68. **REQUESTS** the AUC and its partners to mobilize financial resources for implementing the second phase of the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility (GRMF) and establish the geothermal capacity building programme to enhance policy and regulatory frameworks in the Member States, and to encourage private sector investment.
69. **ALSO REQUESTS** AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, and development partners to establish a more encompassing Continental Renewable Energy Risk Mitigation Facility by expanding the existing GRMF to de-risk and expedite the adoption and integration of renewable energy sources within the African energy system.

70. **FURTHER REQUESTS** AFREC and AUDA-NEPAD in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and other partners to develop the Clean Energy Value Chains in Africa (CLEVA) initiative.
71. **REQUESTS** AUC, ECA, AUDA-NEPAD, AFREC, AfDB, Regional Power Pools (RPPs) and development partners to develop a continental energy security policy framework as called for by the 41st Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and develop an Energy Security Index and Dashboard to track advancements in achieving Africa's energy security.
72. **ALSO REQUESTS** AUDA-NEPAD, AUC, AFREC, ECA, AfDB, power pools and development partners to conduct a comprehensive assessment of local manufacturing of renewable energy technologies and beneficiation of critical minerals for battery manufacturing.
73. **FURTHER REQUESTS** AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, the Government of DRC and other key stakeholders to establish a Strategic Coordination Committee on the Grand Inga project based on the recommendations from the STC Energy Sub-Committee meeting of March 2018 to ensure challenges within the project are addressed and implementation is accelerated.
74. **ADOPTS** the 2024-2025 Action Plans for Energy.

IV. THE FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION AND ICT HELD IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023.

The Executive Council:

75. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information & Communication Technologies (**STC-CICT-5**) held from 20 to 23 November 2023 and the 2023 Declaration;
76. **COMMENDS** the Ministers responsible for Communication, Information and Communication Technology for the successful holding of the Fifth meeting of their Specialized Technical Committee (STC) and achieving notable outcomes for the development of the Communication, Information and Communication Technology sectors in Africa;
77. **ENDORSES the:**
 - (a) DTS Institutional Architecture, Implementation and MEL Frameworks;
 - (b) Continental Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Single Digital Market; Its Implementation Plan and M&E Framework.
 - (c) Guidelines on the Integration of Data Provision in Digital Trade Protocols.
 - (d) Policy on Child Online Safety and Empowerment

- (e) Review Report of the Malabo Convention
- (f) Conceptual Framework of the Continental Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy
- (g) Implementation Plan and Self-Capacity Assessment Tool of the AU Data Policy Framework along with its Responsibility Matrix.
- (h) Continental Report on "Harmonization of Market Entry Conditions and Data
- (i) Protection & Localization".
- (j) Study Report on Improving the Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa

78. REQUESTS THE AU COMMISSION TO:

- a. Develop an African Digital Compact as a contribution to the Global Digital Compact in preparation for the United Nations Summit of the Future
- b. Organize an Extra-Ordinary STC on Communication and ICT in the first half of 2024 to consider and approve the African Digital Compact as a contribution to the Global Digital Compact for adoption by the AU Summit.
- c. Develop and implement strategies to utilize digital solutions to address climate, food security and energy access crises.
- d. Expedite the development of the Continental Cybersecurity strategy and the Continental Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy with their implementation roadmaps;
- e. Work towards strengthening regulatory cooperation and enhancing harmonization of digital legal and regulatory frameworks to integrate Africa to a Single Digital Market in line with AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 goals.
- f. Cost the implementation of the components of the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa and coordinate the development of its Resource Mobilization Strategy
- g. Organize an African Digital Transformation Summit every two years taking into account the principle of rotation among the 5 AU regions
- h. Work with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to include indicators of press freedom, access to information and the safety of journalists in its Governance Index
- i. Develop and implement an integrated Knowledge Management Strategy and Process for the African Union to ensure that the information about the Union and its activities, mandates, decisions, programmes, research and other key data is available to the public and Member States in an open and easily accessible platform to promote the use of African data and information in policy making and promoting Africa's development agenda;
- j. Support AU Member States in domesticating the AU Data Policy Framework and developing national data governance systems and capabilities.
- k. Coordinate the development of a Cross Border Data Flows Mechanism that considers the different levels of digital readiness, data maturity as well as legal and regulatory environments of AU Member States.

- l. Coordinate the development of Common Data Categorization and Sharing framework to foster data flows while considering the associated levels of protection and security.
- m. Collaborate with UNESCO to encourage inclusion in the next version of the Internet for Trust guidelines a set of obligations for Tech platforms to safeguard, support and advance public interest news and journalism as a public good in society.
- n. Implement the Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1069(XXXV) of July 2019 that all AU activities relating to communications shall be managed by the Information and Communication Directorate and task the Human Resources Department to ensure adherence in all forms of staffing including recruitment, contracting, secondment, internship and volunteering for better accountability and coordination of AU communication activities.
- o. Allocate adequate financial resources to capacitate the ICD to enable it to better and effectively communicate to various stakeholders and audiences on different media platforms in a strategic and consistent manner;
- p. Undertake a benchmarking exercise of communication budget allocations for institutions of a similar nature and size as the African Union to establish a baseline for communication budget to be used as a guide on recommendation for adequate funding and to present their report to the Sub-Committee on General Supervision and Coordination on Budgetary, Financial and Administrative Matters
- q. Capacitate key service departments such as the Information and Communication Directorate in the first phase of the Institutional Reforms
- r. Enhance media education at a continental level by incorporating within the curricula of the Pan African University and the Virtual University, modern training course for policy makers, media practitioners and content creators that takes into consideration emerging developments in technology so as to upskill African media and communicators to make them fit for purpose in the digital age, promote Agenda 2063 through developmental journalism and support the dissemination of balanced narratives about Africa
- s. Implement Executive Council Decisions EX.CL/Dec.1143-1167(XL) (2022) and EX.CL/Dec.1073-1096(XXXVI) (2020) and Ensure the AU Brand & Communication Style Guide and the AU Communication Policies and Procedures are instituted within the AUC and the organs and institutions of the African Union and adopted and used in all Member States and ensure adherence by partners in their support to the AU.
- t. Work with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to undertake a 10-year review and update of the 2013 African Model Law on Access to Information, to ensure compliance with the 2019 Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, and particularly to make it fit for purpose in the digital age.

79. REQUESTS AUDA-NEPAD TO:

- a. Implement the African Cybersecurity Capacity Building Agenda and to work with Member States to mobilise resources from private sector and development partners for its implementation.
- b. Prepare a country engagement plan on the AU Data Policy Framework and sensitize Member States on its implementation.

80. CALLS UPON: Multilateral financial institutions, development partners and the private sector, including the AfDB, the World Bank and Afrexim Bank to mobilize necessary resources to implement continental strategies, frameworks and Programs adopted by AU Policy Organs.

V. THE 8TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE STC ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (STC ON GEWE)

The Executive Council,

A. Report on the 2022 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)

- 81. TAKES NOTE** of the progress made in implementing the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.
- 82. FURTHER ENCOURAGES** Cabo Verde which has not yet submitted its initial SDGEA report to do so to the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate.
- 83. ADOPTS** the 2022 reports of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

B. High-Level Presidential Initiative on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls

Preparations for the 3rd Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls

- 84. REQUESTS** the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate to develop an Implementation Framework for the outcomes of the Men's Conference to facilitate implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Updates on the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

- 85. REQUESTS** the Commission to facilitate wider consultations with Member States, including on the structure of the Convention before the draft is submitted for official negotiations.
- 86. PROPOSES** the Convention to address key thematic areas such as hate speech and violence in the cyber/ digital space; financing to end violence against women and girls; as well as dealing with negative social norms.

87. **CONVENES** a Consultation meeting of the AU Ministers in charge of Gender and Women's Affairs to engage the draft text of the Convention before its submission for negotiations.
88. **TAKES NOTE** of the process and progress to develop the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

C. Regional Action Plan for Africa with a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

89. **TAKES NOTE** of the Regional Action Plan for Africa on EVAWG as a continental framework to guide Member States efforts in translating global and regional commitments into strategies and actions at regional and national levels to end violence against women and girls.
90. **RECOMMENDS** that the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate develop a Compendium of best practices to accompany the Regional Action Plan without prejudice to its future consideration and adoption by Member States.

D. AU Women and Youth Financial Mechanisms

Fund for African Women (FAW)

91. **REQUESTS** the AU Commission to provide the list and disburse grants to the currently verified beneficiaries in line with EX.CL/Dec.1190(XLII), working together with the Ministries in charge of Gender and Youth to coordinate.

E. Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Maputo Protocol - Maputo Protocol @20

92. **TAKES NOTE** of the High-Level Conference to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.
93. **RECOGNISES** the forty-four (44) Member States that have ratified the Maputo Protocol
94. **ENCOURAGES** the eleven (11) Member States which have not ratified, while reaffirming their sovereign rights in this regard, to consider, to sign and ratify/ accede to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

F. Gender and Youth Statistics

95. **ENSURES** that there are national gender and national youth indicator frameworks that reflect the gender and youth strategies and programs of Government and can be used as leverage for the funding of gender data and statistics production and use.

96. **PROMOTE** the mainstreaming of gender in the national statistical system, survey questionnaires and administrative data systems.
97. **FACILITATES** the establishment of coordination committees for gender and youth statistics respectively.
98. **ENSURES** adequate support and capacity building to National Statistical Offices for gender data collection and analysis.

VI. THE 8TH AND 9TH EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS, and 9TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The Executive Council,

I. THE 8TH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE STC ON JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

99. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report and recommendations of the Eight Extraordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs held from 11 to 13 December 2023 (Meeting of Government Legal Experts) and from 18 to 19 December 2023 (Ministerial Meeting) in hybrid format (in Addis Ababa and via videoconference);
100. **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the *Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa*;
101. **DECIDES** to recommend the same to the Assembly for consideration and adoption.

II. THE 9TH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE STC ON JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

102. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report and recommendations of the Ninth Extraordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs held from 07 to 09 February 2024 (Meeting of Government Legal Experts) and 10 February 2024 (Ministerial Meeting) in Durban, South Africa;
103. **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the following *Draft Legal Instruments*:
 - i. *Protocol to the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Women and Youth in Trade*; and
 - ii. *Protocol to the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Digital Trade*.
104. **DECIDES** to recommend the same to the Assembly for consideration and adoption.

105. FURTHER DECIDES to refer the bracketed Articles 5 and 6 of the Draft Protocol on Digital Trade, dealing with rules of origin and customs duties, to the Assembly for consideration.

III. THE 9TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE STC ON JUSTICE AND LEGALAFFAIRS

106. TAKES NOTES of the Report of the 9th Ordinary Session of the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs held from held from 14 to 16 December 2023 (Meeting of Government Legal Experts) and from 18 to 19 December 2023 (Ministerial Meeting) in hybrid format (in Addis Ababa and via videoconference);

107. ALSO TAKES NOTE of the following Draft Legal Instruments:

- i. *Proposed amendment of Article 22(4) of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; and*
- ii. *Draft Revised Statute of the African Union Administrative Tribunal.*

108. DECIDES to recommend to the Assembly for consideration and adoption the *Proposed amendment of Article 22(4) of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption* to revise the term of office of the members of the African Union Board against Corruption (AUABC) from two (2) to six (6) years renewal once;

109. ALSO DECIDES to refer the Draft Revised Statute of the African Union Administrative Tribunal back to the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and **REQUESTS** the STC to reconsider it taking into account the proposals submitted by the Commission;

110. NOTES with concern, the low rate and pace of ratification / accession of Treaties establishing AU Judicial Bodies;

111. REQUESTS the Commission, through the Office of the Legal Counsel, to continue advocating for the ratification of the *Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights*, and the *Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights*, to secure the requisite threshold of ratifications for their entry into force.