

JUL
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2018

SUMMARY OF THE KEY DECISIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF THE 31ST AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

By Staff writer

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1. AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA)

- 49 of the 55 member states of the African Union (AU) have now signed the agreement establishing the AfCFTA. While six countries have ratified the agreement
- During the Summit South Africa, Namibia, Burundi, Lesotho, and Sierra Leone signed on to the agreement increasing the number of signatories to 49 countries
- Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and Chad deposited their instruments of ratification thereby increasing the number of states who have ratified the AfCFTA to 6. The other countries that have ratified the AfCFTA are Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda and Niger.
- The Assembly of Heads of State and Government (herein after referred to as the Assembly) adopted the five (5) services priority sectors - Transport, Communication, Finance, Tourism and Business services.
- Heads of State and Government, urged member states who have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the agreement, and urged all member states to abstain from entering into bilateral trading arrangements until after the entry into force of the agreement establishing the AfCFTA.

2. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS OF THE AFRICAN UNION

- The Assembly requested the finalisation of the proposals and recommendations based on the initial findings, on the following organs: the Pan African Parliament, the Peace and Security Council, the African Court on Human and People's Rights, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the African peer Review Mechanism and the Advisory Board on Corruption.
- For organizational effectiveness and efficiency, the Assembly requested the implementation of the roadmap on the clarification of the division of labour between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities, Member States and continental organisations.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

- The Assembly approved the establishment of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) as the technical body of the AU, and requested the AU Commission, in consultation with the NEPAD Planning and Implementation Agency, to develop a statute for AUDA and submit it for adoption at the January 2019 summit.
- The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency is the organisation responsible for the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and works to support the realisation of various development programmes and initiatives within African countries. Transition from NEPAD to AUDA will be undertaken as part of the establishment of the latter

4. PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

- South Sudan: The Assembly reaffirmed its support for the imposition of punitive measures against those obstructing efforts to achieve reconciliation and peace in the country. The Assembly commended the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on its efforts to revitalize the process of implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) and welcomed discussions between South Sudanese President Mr. Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar; as well as the Khartoum Declaration Agreement of 27 June 2018. It urged the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to implement their commitments as outlined in the 2012 Cooperation Agreement.
- Ethiopia & Eritrea: The Assembly commended commitments and progress made on the

implementation of the Algiers Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and reaffirmed its commitment to support the two countries in their efforts to normalise relations.

- Somalia: The Assembly welcomed the Somalia Transition Plan as a sound basis for the country to realize durable peace.
- Libya: The Assembly voiced deep concern over the persistent security situation in Libya, which continues to prolong the suffering of the Libyan people. While noting the progress in various situations of concern on the continent, the Assembly also outlined measures to be undertaken to resolve the crises, and allocated responsibilities to various stakeholders involved in the processes.
- The Assembly welcomed progress and gains registered in Guinea Bissau and Mali as well as in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group.
- The Assembly also endorsed the decision of the Peace and Security Council to designate the 7th of April each year as the African Union Day of Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda.
- Agenda 2063 Flagship Project Silencing the Guns by 2020
 - o Africa Amnesty Month September 2018: Member States urged to start planning for activities to mark, the day with a the view to mobilising citizens to voluntarily surrender illegally owned weapons.
 - o Zambia and Zimbabwe commended for being the first countries to submit their written reports on their efforts in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020, and called on other member states to emulate these examples.

5. AFRICAN UNION BUDGET

- A budget of US\$681,485,337 was approved for the AU for the financial year 2019. The budget will cover 3 components i.e. operational, programme and peace support operations.
- The Assembly commended the AU for reducing its budget by 12% compared to the 2018 budget which demonstrates an indication to adhere to the ongoing Institutional Reforms the AU which require effectiveness in managing resources

6. APPOINTMENTS

The Assembly made the following appointments:

- African Court on Human and People's Rights: 3 judges of the for six year terms; 1 judge of the same court for a term of two years, being the remainder of the term for another judge
- African Commission on International Law :5 members for five year terms
- African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: 4 members for five year terms
- Pan African University Council: 1 Vice President for a three year term
- AU Board of External Auditors: 5 heads of Supreme Audit Institutions from each of the AU regions to serve on the board

7. AFRICAN CANDIDATURES

- The Assembly urged all member states to support the candidature of Hon Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwandese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and East African Community on the post of Secretary General of the International Organisation of La

Francophonie.

8. THEME OF THE YEAR 2018

- In line with the 2018 theme “Winning the fight against corruption: A Sustainable Path for Africa’s Transformation,” the Assembly encouraged member states to combat illicit financial flows, strengthen their national anti-corruption agencies and invest in the demographic dividend amongst other measures.
- The Assembly undertook to adopt measures to ensure public personalities declare their assets, and to progressively abolish bank secrecy jurisdictions and tax havens.

9. THEME OF 2019

- 2019 was designated as the “Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement”.

Visit <https://au.int/en/decisions/assembly> [2] to see all decisions made by the Assembly

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