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**REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF THE AFRICA-INDIA
PARTNERSHIP FORUM SUMMIT**

PROGRESS REPORT ON PREPARATIONS
FOR AFRICA-INDIA SUMMIT

Introduction

1. It would be recalled that on 23 March 2007, the Commission provided a briefing on preparations for the Africa-India Partnership Summit. In that briefing, the Commission presented the outcomes of the 1st Preparatory meeting held in New Delhi from 13-16 March 2007 for PRC information and consideration.

2. In the Delhi meeting, agreements had been reached between the African and Indian sides on the structure and framework of the Summit, the modalities for participation on the African side and level of involvement of Member States, as well as the expected outcome, regularity of the forum and key sectors of cooperation. These include agriculture, infrastructure, energy, trade, industry, SMEs and finance, education, health, ICT, Governance, Civil/Military relations and peacekeeping. The two sides also agreed on the need for a second preparatory meeting to be held in Addis Ababa in the second half of May 2007. This meeting would be enlarged to include the Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation of the PRC.

3. As part of the process of preparation for this meeting the Commission prepared a draft Declaration and Plan of Action that was communicated to Member States and the Indian Partners. This Declaration and Plan of Action were the main subject of discussion at the 2nd Preparatory meeting, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23-24 May 2007. The meeting with the Indian side was preceded, one day before by a meeting of the Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation and the Commission, to examine the draft Declaration and to arrive at a consensus on what to present to the Indian delegation.

4. The meeting with India was co-chaired by H.E. Amb. W.M. Mangachi, Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation and Amb. Dinkar Khullar, Joint Secretary in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. 15 Member States of the PRC Sub-Committee, as well as officials of the African Union Commission and members of the Indian delegation attended the meeting.

5. The meeting reviewed two draft documents – one by the AU Commission and another by the Indian delegation. The two drafts were broadly similar in terms of content as they were both based on the outcome of the 1st Preparatory meeting in New Delhi. At the end of the meeting, the Indian and African sides agreed on a new draft Declaration and Action Plan, which was restructured and contained additional proposals for cooperation.

6. In view of the fact that the Indian side had not taken a decision on the Preamble of the Declaration and the Follow-up Mechanism, these aspects were set aside for future consideration and discussion by the two parties. The African side also informed its Indian counterparts of its desire to send the Draft Declaration to its Member States for their comments and further inputs so as to enrich the document. The meeting further agreed that the harmonized draft Declaration remains work in progress and could be subjected to reviews and improvements on both sides until it was finally signed.

7. Aside from producing a harmonized Draft Declaration, which reflects the broad areas of cooperation agreed by the two sides, the meeting also reflected upon and updated the conclusions of the 1st preparatory meeting on the format and other organizational aspects of the Summit. Accordingly, it was agreed as follows:

a) Structure and Framework

8. The Forum would be held at the level of a Summit with a three layer-structure that would include the Summit proper, Ministerial Meeting and a meeting of Senior Officials.

b) Structure of Participation

9. Participation on the African side **at Summit level** would take cognizance of the decision of the Assembly at its 7th Ordinary Session in Banjul, The Gambia, which directed that a meeting of Africa and a single-country partner should be attended by the following :

- Chairperson of the Union
- Chairperson of the AU Commission
- Presidents or Chairpersons of the eight (8) recognized Regional Economic Communities; and
- Chairperson of NEPAD Heads of States Implementation Committee and the Presidents of the five initiating countries.

10. In addition, a proposal was made to include the participation of the immediate past Chairperson of the African Union in such Summits in order to ensure continuity. This last suggestion has to be endorsed by the Executive Council and the Assembly since it was not contained in the Banjul decision referred to above.

11. At the **Ministerial level**, participation would be restricted to ministers of those countries whose Heads of State and Government would participate in the Summit.

12. All Member States of the Union would be invited to participate at the **Senior Officials level** in order to facilitate inclusiveness.

c) Other Actors in the Consultation Process

13. Both the African and Indian sides agreed on the need for the active involvement of the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at the level of consultations leading up to the Summit and the Summit itself. Hence, all the RECs were invited to the Addis Ababa preparatory meeting but only COMESA attended.

14. Similarly, the African side noted the need for the active involvement of the African Group of Ambassadors in Delhi, which has already constituted an ad-hoc committee for this purpose, under the Chairmanship of the Ghanaian High Commissioner, who was expected to attend the 2nd Preparatory meeting but was unable to do so. The draft documents will be sent to the Group in Delhi for consideration and input.

d) Proposed dates of the Summit

15. The Indian side was unable to make a proposal on specific or precise dates for the Summit. The African side however, emphasized the need for this to be done as early as possible to enable African representatives to inform their governments in good time. However, India has undertaken to make a proposal soon, but the month of August is being suggested.

e) Logistics

16. The Indian side was requested to provide necessary information on hotel accommodation, transportation and the level of hospitality to be provided to African delegations to the Summit

Conclusion

17. The preparatory meeting on the Africa-India Summit has been very useful. As a result, a draft Declaration and Plan of Action has evolved concretely. More significantly, the pattern of close coordination between the AU Commission and the PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation has set the pace for this development. The continuance of this pattern of interaction and coordination will therefore, facilitate a successful preparation of the Africa-India Summit. The PRC may wish to take note of the progress report of this preparatory meeting and endorse the outcome and framework for the consideration of the Executive Council. The PRC may also wish to recommend that the Executive Council and the Assembly should consider including the immediate past Chairperson of the Union as part of the African Union delegation that would participate in future Africa-single country Summits, in order to facilitate continuity.

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