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**PROPOSAL ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE AFRICAN
CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION (ACBF)
AS A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) was established by African Governments and their Development Partners to help build sustainable human and institutional capacity for good governance and development management. Established in 1991, ACBF builds human and institutional capacity for good governance and economic development in Africa. To date the Foundation has empowered governments, parliaments, civic society, private sector and higher education institutions in more than forty-five (45) countries and six (6) Regional Economic Communities (RECs). ACBF supports capacity development through investments, technical support, knowledge generation and sharing across Africa.

2. ACBF is the ‘go to place’ for capacity needs assessments, capacity profiling and coordination of capacity building projects and programs at national and regional levels in Africa. The Foundation provides tailor-made solutions to address capacity challenges across Africa thus supporting the continent’s economic transformation process.

II. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

3. The ACBF Executive Board requested its Secretariat to explore the best possible legal relationship for a mutually reinforcing partnership between the Foundation and the African Union (AU). The intention of the ACBF Executive Board is to establish a legal relationship that provides a solid basis for technical cooperation in areas of mutual interest but without undermining the authority and autonomy of either entity regarding their respective mandates as defined in their constituent legal documents.

4. The overall objective of the partnership is to move away from ad hoc engagement and to further strengthen the relationship between ACBF and the AU in a more holistic and coordinated structure within the matrix of the pan African architecture for sustainable development of the continent.

5. During the last two decades and a half, the ACBF has provided innovative and cutting edge support on capacity development in Africa, with the resolute support of some 40 African countries, members of ACBF, a significant number of bilateral and multilateral development organizations, the achievements of ACBF spans many areas in capacity development which are well documented.

6. ACBF has played a pivotal role in helping the African Union define the capacity imperatives for agenda 2063, an area identified as one of the critical success factors for agenda 2063. The ACBF has facilitated the preparation of capacity building needs for

AU organs and the regional economic communities for the implementation of the roles assigned them. In addition, it has prepared a report on the division of labor between the AU organs and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with respect to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the African agenda.

7. Indeed the vision of ACBF: “Africa capable of achieving its own development” is compatible with the spirit and thrust of agenda 2063.

III. KEY MILESTONES & EVOLUTION OF AU-ACBF RELATIONSHIP

8. In July 2002 in South Africa, the AU adopted a Resolution on: “*Decade of Capacity Building*” - ACBF was identified as a key partner as reflected in the operative paragraphs:

“CONSIDERING the tremendous results already achieved by multilateral institutions, particularly African-based institutions, notably the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in the area of socio-economic policy analysis development and development management on the Continent,

FURTHER AGREE to promote the multilateral organizations, particularly those based in Africa, namely the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) whose task is to strengthen and develop capacities on the Continent”

9. In November 2002, during the 11th ACBF Board of Governors meeting held in Gabon, granted the AUC Honorary Member status.

10. In July 2010, ACBF and AUC signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing collaborative framework for engagement on capacity development issues.

11. In 2014, the Executive Council requested ACBF to provide technical support in addressing the capacity challenges of Agenda 2063.

12. In 2015, ACBF was tasked by the AUC to provide support on key aspects of the African Union’s Capacity Development Agenda.

13. Since 2015, ACBF now participates in the Coordination Mechanism involving the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and Economic Commission for Africa.

IV. RATIONALE FOR AU SPECIALIZED AGENCY STATUS

14. In light of the foregoing, it is apparent that there is a solid record of collaborative engagement between ACBF and the AU. Regrettably, in the absence of concrete implementation plan and coordinated institutional approaches, the partnership envisaged may not fully exploited.

15. To create a robust and solid basis to comprehensively respond to the capacity challenges on the continent and to jointly mobilise the resources needed to effectively implement agreed interventions, it is necessary to formalise the existing institutional arrangements between ACBF and the AU. It is envisaged that such an approach may provide impetus for a common platform for harmonised continental approach in addressing the capacity dimension of Agenda 2063 and other pressing developmental challenges.

16. ACBF has now joined African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD Agency, together with the traditional partners AfDB and UNECA, to work along-side the RECs and in the Bahir Dar Agenda 2063 Ministerial Follow-up Committee, tasked by African Union Heads of State and Government to oversee implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063.

17. It is clear that greater demands are henceforth being placed on ACBF to fulfill its role in this partnership in support of Agenda 2063. ACBF will need to intensify its support to creating the requisite capacities for the joint implementation of agenda 2063 and the SDGs through the first ten year implementation plan, and do so with innovation and sustained action

18. To this end, designation of ACBF as a Specialized Agency of the African Union will, among others:

- i) Enable the ACBF maintain its independence (legally, institutionally, financially and administratively);
 - ii) Facilitate comprehensive response and better coordination of mapping of the capacity challenges on the continent;
 - iii) Create platform for joint mobilization of the resources needed to effectively implement agreed capacity development interventions on the continent;
 - iv) Establish a common platform for harmonized continental approach in addressing the capacity dimension of Agenda 2063;
 - v) Provide a formal relationship and reporting mechanism from ACBF to the AU Policy Organs and thus establishing a framework for monitoring and tracking progress;
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- vi) Create a platform for accountability and better coordination and effective use of resources;
- vii) Ensure the long term sustainability of capacity development interventions on the continent; and
- viii) The possibility of the AU becoming a full member of the ACBF Board of Governors, like the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

V. WAY FORWARD

19. Adoption of a decision of the Assembly will require the AUC to include same on the agenda of the upcoming Summit. In view of the support that this initiative currently enjoys in both organizations, it is advisable that is tabled before the upcoming AU Summit in July 2016.



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