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**ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS OF THE
AFRICAN UNION IN TUNIS, REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA**
(Item proposed by the Republic of Tunisia)

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I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

1. Since the creation of the Organization of African Unity(OUA) in 1963, several decisions have marked the life of the continental Institution, namely, the Abuja Treaty adopted in 1991, the advent of the African Union in July 2000 and the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development(NEPAD) in 2001. These three major events are designed to give a boost to Africa's integration process in order to irreversibly position the continent on the path of economic growth and emergence, collectively address the multifaceted challenges facing the countries and enable the continent to play its active role on the international scene.

2. The establishment of the African Union(AU) can be considered as a major event in the continent's institutional development. Since its establishment, the AU has been working to consolidate the orientations defined by the Abuja Treaty and progressively achieve integration through the harmonization of sectoral development policies of Member States, the implementation of regional cooperation programmes with the RECs, the establishment of African financial institutions, the Comprehensive Programme for Africa's Development(CAADP), the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa(PIDA), the Minimum Integration Programme(MIP), the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality in Africa(CARMMA), the African Solidarity Initiative(ASI), the Framework for Coordination and Harmonization of the Information System and the realization of programmes with development partners.

3. In order to shed light on the strategic choices to be made by the African Union and to measure the performance of the progress made in pursuance of the conduct of all the above-mentioned programmes, it is vital to have, not only quality statistical information, but also comparable statistical data in time and space.

4. Countries, international organizations, enterprises, the civil society and the sector are cognizant of the fundamental role of statistical information. In fact, good statistics help to highlight the problems facing the population, design policies based on facts and evaluate their performances; improve the management of resources and governance of public affairs; afford the people the possibility to judge the success of the development policies implemented; predict the future and make strategic policy choices, etc. Currently the real issue consists in defining how the African Statistical System (ASS) can produce and disseminate relevant and reliable data in real time in order to meet the specific requirement of all the components of the society..

5. In recent years, the African statistical system has undergone significant developments and made some noteworthy strides in the production of quality statistics designed to shed light on the choices of public policies. However, these initiatives

notwithstanding, there is still a huge gap between supply and demand of statistical information which has widened in recent years for purposes of development and monitoring of the smooth running of the African integration process. Statistics are produced according to methodologies which do not always reflect African realities and are still not comparable from one country to the other. National statistical systems, primary sources of statistical data mostly use concepts, definitions and methodologies which differ from one country to the other, thus making comparisons difficult and generating aggregates without great relevance from the regional and/or continental point of view. Statistics harmonization programmes of the Regional Economic Communities(RECs) vary from one region to the other and hardly meet the demand in harmonized statistics. This really constitutes a handicap in the monitoring and evaluation of regional or continental integration..

6. In order to address these challenges, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union have adopted two major instruments for the development and coordination of statistical production on the continent, namely, the African Charter on Statistics and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa(SHaSA) respectively adopted on 4 February 2009 in Addis Ababa and the second on 25 July 2010 in Kampala. These two documents constitute the main frameworks for reference and guidance to regulate the production of quality statistics on the continent.

7. The Charter is in the process of being signed and ratified by Member States. With regard to SHaSA, it has several technical groups responsible for the implementation of the statistics harmonization process in Member States. The African Union Commission provides the technical secretariat of these various working groups as well as ensures the compliance of the statistical systems with the Charter's principles. Based on international standards, the Commission is developing, in partnership with Panafrican organizations(ECA, AfDB, ACBF, Afristat) and international organizations (UNDP, ILO, UNCTAD, UNSD, IMF, etc.), African concepts, definitions and methodologies for the production of statistics, taking into account Africa's specificities.

8. In order to accomplish this heavy mission which is the implementation of the Charter and the SHaSA in a bid to generate available, reliable and comparable statistical information at the appropriate time covering all aspects of Africa's cultural, social, economic and political integration, the establishment of an Institute for the development of statistics referred to as STATAFRIC seems vital within the African Union Commission like EUROSTAT in the European Commission. STATAFRIC will be at the heart of the African Statistical System and will coordinate all the statistical activities on the continent in collaboration with the other Panafrican Organizations like ACS(African Centre for Statistics, the AfDB(Department of Statistics) etc., and will really represent the African continent in international fora like the United Nations Statistics Conference in order to ensure that African specificities are taken into account in the definition of international standards . Moreover, STATAFRIC, a dependent structure of the African Union Commission, will promote the harmonization of statistics and provide quality statistics to the African Union, necessary for monitoring its political and economic integration programme.

II. STATAFRIC'S OBJECTIVES

9. STATAFRIC's objectives are therefore the following :

- i) Coordinate the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa(SHaSA);
- ii) Subject National Statistics Institutes of Member States to the harmonisation of concepts and nomenclatures and the production of specific statistics :
- iii) Collect statistics from National Statistics Institutes of Member States
- iv) Supervise the smooth running of the African Statistical System in order to provide necessary, reliable and harmonized statistics for the monitoring of Africa's integration policies; and
- v) Provide the African Union, the RECs, universities and African research centres with quality statistics, vital for the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and decision-making in Africa..

III. MAIN MISSIONS

10. STATAFRIC'S main missions are the following:

- i) Advocate for statistics and promote the decision-making culture based on statistical facts at all levels;
 - ii) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the principles of the African Charter on Statistics by the National Statistics Systems;
 - iii) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of sectoral strategy action plans for the harmonization of statistics in Africa;
 - iv) Coordinate and supervise the activities of the African Statistics System;
 - v) Work for the elaboration of scientific methodologies in order to harmonize production and compilation techniques by Member States;
 - vi) Gather, develop and analyse the statistical data from Member States for a better knowledge of Africa's social, financial, economic and demographic situation;
 - vii) Compile quality and harmonized statistical data comparable in time and space in a data warehouse (continental database) from Member Countries;
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- viii) Technically and financially support Member States in the organization and execution of industrial, agricultural and population censuses and all other socio-economic and statistical surveys :
- ix) Technically support African countries in the elaboration of national accounts and other socio-economic indicators;
- x) Make an annual report on the status of statistical development in Africa to the Committee of Directors General, Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union;
- xi) Study and monitor Africa's economic and financial trends, establish economic accounts and produce useful quantitative information for the elaboration of economic development programmes;
- xii) Ensure the dissemination of statistical data, particularly the periodical publication of statistical information in the form of bulletins, directories, journals, communiqués, catalogues and others;
- xiii) Facilitate and encourage the study of statistical sciences and information techniques and provide training for the technical staff for statistical research and information processing;
- xiv) Produce the statistical data necessary for the elaboration, monitoring and the evaluation of policies and programmes of the African Union and the RECs in pursuance of the implementation of the integration process;
- xv) Build institutional and operational capacities of the African Statistics System;
- xvi) Make macroeconomic predictions on Africa's economic situation;
- xvii) Make cyclical predictions on African economies;
- xviii) Provide a Research Unit (monitoring unit) responsible for impact studies faced with Africa's various internal and external shocks;
- xix) Enable Africa to have a Social Accounting Matrix(SAM) and a computable general equilibrium model and models applicable to the African economy;
- xx) Contribute to the mobilization of finances for the development of statistics in Africa.

IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

- 11.** The following results are expected from STATAFRIC's implementation:
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- i) The implementation of the African Charter on Statistics for the Harmonization of statistics in Africa(SHaSA) is well coordinated;
- ii) The African Statistics System(ASS) is better coordinated;
- iii) The statistics harmonization process in Africa is better coordinated;
- iv) The institutional and operational capacities of the ASS are enhanced;
- v) Harmonized statistics comparable in time and space are compiled in a database, available and accessible to all users, particularly the AU and the RECs : and
- vi) Africa has a monitoring unit for various internal and external shocks to the social, economic and political situation;
- vii) Africa has proven expert Statisticians in all the social, demographic and economic areas capable of supporting countries in the elaboration of any macroeconomic indicator.

V. THE INSTITUTE'S ESTABLISHMENT

12. This institute is likely to play a pioneering role in the harmonization, collection and processing of all the statistical data in Member States and thereby enhance the scientific function of statistics in the evaluation of the economic and social aggregates necessary for the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the common policies of the countries of the continent.

13. The establishment of the Headquarters of the African Institute of Statistics in Tunis provides a new opportunity to enhance the outputs of common African institutions, particularly in light of the success chalked by the African Development Bank which has its Headquarters in Tunis for several years now.

14. Tunisia has the necessary capabilities to ensure the success and smooth running of the African Institute of Statistics. Its geographical location between Europe and Africa places it in an ideal position. Besides, Tunisia is a founding Member of the OAU /AU. It has highly qualified human resources and all the amenities of life. Its democratic transition is a model. All these are advantages which predispose Tunisia to enjoy the confidence of the African society.

15. Based on the foregoing, Tunisia is committed to :

- i) Provide a Headquarters to host the African Institute of Statistics;
 - ii) Grant privileges and immunities to the Headquarters and its staff as spelt out in the texts of the African Union;
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- iii) Bear the management and operating costs of the Institute at its start-up phase;
 - iv) Fast-track the ratification of the African Charter on Statistics;
 - v) Speed up the ratification of all the treaties, the implementation of which requires the production of statistics like the African Investment Bank, etc.
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