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**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE OPERATIONALIZATION
OF SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES (STCS)**

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES (STCS)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Specialised Technical Committees (STCs), which constitute an important technical organ of the African Union (AU), were established under Article 25 of the African Economic Community Treaty (the Abuja Treaty). With the transformation of the Organization into the AU, the STCs were carried over by the Constitutive Act of the African Union under Articles 14 to 16.

2. The STCs are expected to work in close collaboration with the various departments of the Commission so as to provide well-informed inputs in their areas of specialisation to the work of the Executive Council. They should also, be involved in monitoring programme development and implementation by the AU and RECs on behalf of the Executive Council.

II. CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF STCS

3. The new configuration and nomenclature that was arrived at following the various inputs and endorsed by the Assembly through Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in February 2009, is as follows:

- (1) *Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment;*
- (2) *Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration;*
- (3) *Committee on Trade and Industry and Minerals;*
- (4) *Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism;*
- (5) *Committee on Gender and Women Empowerment;*
- (6) *Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs;*
- (7) *Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment;*
- (8) *Committee on the Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization;*
- (9) *Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control;*
- (10) *Committee on Migration, Refugees and IDPs;*
- (11) *Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports;*
- (12) *Committee on Education, Science and Technology;*
- (13) *Committee on Communication and ICT;*
- (14) *Committee on Defence, Safety and Security.*

4. By the same vein, the Assembly decided the following:

- “2. *REQUESTS the Commission to prepare a detailed breakdown of the financial implications of STCs meetings getting out the figures if the STCs were to be convened on an annual or biennial basis;*

3. *ALSO REQUESTS the Commission to prepare detailed activities of the STCs with a view to avoiding overlap and ensuring coherence and harmony with the portfolios of the Commission;*
 4. *FURTHER REQUESTS the Commission to work with the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and make appropriate recommendations on the periodicity of the meetings of the STCs to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly through the Executive Council in July 2009”.*
5. In implementation of the above Decision of the Assembly, the Commission considered and prepared a report setting out the detailed activities, the periodicity of meetings and financial implications in accordance with the above paragraphs 3 and 4 of the decision of the Assembly. This report was submitted to the Assembly which adopted Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365(XVII) as follows:
- “2. *ADOPTS, in principle, the proposed detailed activities of the fourteen (14) STCs as contained in the Report of the Commission;*
 3. *DECIDES that each STC should meet at the level of ministers and experts once every two (2) years, with the exception of the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration, the STC on Gender and Women Empowerment and the STC on Defense and Security which shall meet once a year in ordinary session and an extra Ordinary Session if need be;*
 4. *REQUESTS the Commission in collaboration with the Permanent Representatives” Committee (PRC) through its Sub-Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters to determine the financial implications of meetings of each STC;*
 5. *DECIDES that the Coordinating Mechanism of the STCs shall be made up of the Bureaus of the various STCs in order to ensure that the STCs have a global view of the policies, programmes and activities of the African Union; AUTHORISES that it meets once every year and that the Chairpersons of the various STCs attend the sessions of the Executive Council;*
 6. *ALSO DECIDES that the Commission be responsible for convening and servicing all the meetings of the STCs in order to ensure synergy with other Organs and in particular with the Executive Council as well as other institutions;*
 7. *REQUESTS the Commission to operationalize the STCs from January 2013 and that thereafter the Sectoral Ministerial Conferences be abolished”.*
6. However, during its Twenty-First Ordinary Session held in July 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Executive Council adopted Decision EX.CL/Dec.701(XXI) deferring

the operationalization of the STCs from January 2013 to January 2014 as recommended by the Commission.

7. Following the adoption of the decision deferring the operationalization of STCs, the new Commission (Elected Officials) considered the issue of the operationalization of STCs during an ordinary meeting held in November 2012. In this regard, it was decided that Departments which have problems to implement Decisions on STCs should bring those to the attention of the Policy Organs.

8. It is to be recalled that in the past, the Commission raised difficulties relating to the configuration of STCs as adopted by the Assembly in January 2009. Indeed, when the issue was raised in June 2011 during the PRC meeting before the Malabo Summit, some Members States argued that no request for reconfiguration should be entertained before the Commission starts implementation of the new reconfiguration of STCs. It seems critical to operationalize STCs and to assess them after, with a view to making recommendations for their possible reconfiguration to the AU Policy Organs.

III. STATUS OF THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF STCs

9. To date, only the STC on Defence, Safety and Security has been operationalized upon the reconfiguration of STCs and the adoption of their detailed activities by the Assembly Decisions adopted in January 2009 and July 2011 respectively. It should be noted that this STC was operationalized before the decision of the Council deferring the operationalization of STCs.

10. As requested by Decisions of the Policy Organs, the first session of STC on Justice and Legal Affairs is scheduled for May 2014 in order to consider its Draft Rules of Procedure and various Draft Legal instruments.

11. To implement the Decision of the Council of July 2012, the Commission through the Office of the Legal Counsel developed the Draft Rules of Procedure of various STCs. The said draft Rules will be submitted to each STC for consideration and subsequently to the Council for adoption as provided for by Article 16 of the Constitutive Act. Thereafter, some difficulties relating to the current configuration of STCs may be addressed by their respective Rules of Procedure.

IV. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

12. The operationalization of STCs shall be effective in January 2014 and subsequently the abolition of Sectoral Ministerial Conferences under their current format from the same date. By virtue of the above mentioned Decision of the Council, if it remains into force, there will be no legal basis to convene Sectoral Ministerial Conferences outside STCs and submit their outcome to the Policy Organs since Malabo Decision on STCs abolished Sectoral Ministerial Conferences upon the operationalization of STCs.

13. Since it is not possible to operationalize some STCs from January 2014, the Policy Organs should consider deferring the operationalization of some STCs to January 2015 taking into account the fact that the STC on Defence, Safety and Security has been operationalized and the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs will held its first Ordinary Session from 6 to 16 May 2014 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

14. Against this background, the Commission would like to propose for consideration by the Assembly through the Executive Council the following recommendations:

- i) *The Assembly should take note of the Status Report of the Commission on the Operationalization of STCs;*
- ii) *The Assembly should request the Commission in collaboration with the Bureaus of the various Sectoral Ministerial Conferences to pursue and finalize the process of operationalization of the remaining STCs from January 2014 to December 2014 after which all Sectoral Ministerial Conferences will be abolished and decide subsequently that no budget proposals for holding Sectoral Ministerial Conferences from January 2015 will be considered;*
- iii) *The Assembly should also request to operationalize all STCs and to assess them after, with a view to making recommendations for their possible reconfiguration to the Assembly through the Executive Council;*
- iv) *The Assembly should request the Commission to submit to the Executive Council through PRC a Progress Report on the operationalization of STCs in July 2016.*

ANNEX
MATRIX ON THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES (STCs)

| NAME OF THE STCS (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in January 2009) | COMPOSITION | MEETING ON ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL BASIS | STATUS OF OPERATIONALIZATION | RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 1. STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment | 1. Ministers responsible for Water, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC | once every two years (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Rural Economy and Agriculture |
| 2. STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration | 1. Ministers responsible for Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | Annual (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Economic Affairs |
| 3. STC on Trade and Industry and Minerals | 1. Ministers responsible for Trade, Industry, Mining and Mineral resources. 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC | once every two years (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Trade and Industry |

| NAME OF THE STCS (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in January 2009) | COMPOSITION | MEETING ON ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL BASIS | STATUS OF OPERATIONALIZATION | RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 4. STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers responsible for Transport, Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism; Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | <p>once every two years</p> <p>(Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Infrastructure and Energy |
| 5. STC on Gender and Women Empowerment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers responsible of Gender and Women Empowerment Issues; Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | <p>Annual</p> <p>(Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Gender and Women Directorate |
| 6. STC on Justice and Legal Affairs | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General, Ministers responsible for issues such as human rights, constitutionalism and Rule of Law; Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC | <p>Biennial (once every two years)</p> <p>(Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st Session will take place from 6-14 May 2014 (Experts) and 15-16 May 2014 (Ministers) - Draft Rules of Procedure developed and be considered by the first session before submission to the Executive Council for Approval in accordance will Article 16 of the Constitutive Act. | <p>- Office of the Legal Counsel</p> <p>-Political Affairs</p> |
| 7. STC on Social Development, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers responsible for Labour, Social | Biennial(once every two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not yet operationalized; | Social Affairs |

| NAME OF THE STCS (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in January 2009) | COMPOSITION | MEETING ON ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL BASIS | STATUS OF OPERATIONALIZATION | RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labour and Employment | Development and employment; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC | years) (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - -Draft Rules of Procedure developed | |
| 8. STC on the Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization | 1. Ministers responsible for Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Political Affairs |
| 9. STC on Health, Population and Drug Control | 1. Ministers responsible for Health, Population and Drug Control; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Social Affairs |
| 10. STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs | 1. Ministers responsible for Migration, Refugees and IDPs; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | - Social Affairs - Political Affairs |

| NAME OF THE STCS (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) adopted in January 2009) | COMPOSITION | MEETING ON ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL BASIS | STATUS OF OPERATIONALIZATION | RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 11. STC on Youth, Culture and Sports | 1. Ministers responsible for Youth, Culture and Sports; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | -Social Affairs -Human Resources Science and Technology |
| 12. STC on Education, Science and Technology | 1. Ministers responsible for Education, Science and Technology; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Human Resources Science and Technology (HRST) |
| 13. STC on Communication and ICT | 1. Ministers responsible for Communication and ICT; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | once every two years Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Not yet operationalized; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | -Infrastructure and Energy -Information and Communication |
| 14. STC on Defence, Safety and Security | 1. Ministers responsible for Defence, Safety, Security and Border issues; 2. Experts responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC. | Annual Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.365 (XVII) adopted in July 2011) | - Operationalized since October 2011; - Draft Rules of Procedure developed | Peace and Security |

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Report of the commission on the operationalization of specialized technical committees (STCS)

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