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**REPORT ON THE FINALIZATION OF THE AU PARTNERSHIPS POLICY
AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (AUPPSF)**

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Background

1. In January 2008, the Executive Council Decision No. EX.CL/Dec.397 (XII) called for a comprehensive review of all African Union's existing strategic partnerships. This initiative aimed to refine implementation strategies, streamline the number of summits, and establish coherent criteria for partnerships. Notably, the decision referred to as instituting a ***Moratorium for the AU to establish New Partnerships*** was intended to optimize and ensure alignment between Africa's goals and its collaborative international engagements.
2. The PRC through its Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation, in collaboration with the Commission undertook an Evaluation of AU Partnerships from 2014 to 2016, and submitted a Report on the Evaluation of Africa's Strategic Partnerships to the Executive Council in July 2016.
3. During its 36th Ordinary Session held on 6-7 February 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Executive Council took Decision No.: EX.CL/Dec.1073(XXXVI), requesting ***“the PRC, in close collaboration with the Commission, to develop a Partnership Policy and Strategic Framework document to be considered by the Thirty-Eighth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in February 2021”***.
4. The PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation, in close collaboration with the Commission, followed up on the implementation of Executive Council Decision 1073 and developed a draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework (AUPPSF), which has already been the subject ***of five Decisions of the Executive Council as follows: (i). EX.CL/Dec.1107(XXXVIII) of February 2021; (ii). EX.CL/Dec.1126(XXXIX) of October 2021; (iii). EX.CL/Dec.1143(XL) of February 2022; (iv). EX.CL/Dec.1168(XLI) of July 2022 and (v). Decision EX.CL/Dec.1189(XLII) of February 2023.***
5. The underlying commonality across the aforementioned Decisions is the absence of a unified consensus regarding the **classification, participation, and nomenclature** pertinent to AU Partnerships.

Current State of Play of Partnerships on the Continent

6. In view of the current lack of a comprehensive continental Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework, intended to align with Aspiration 7 of the AU Agenda 2063 for "an Africa as a Strong, United, Resilient and Influential Global Player and Partner," African States have been observed in engaging in international partnership events that assemble African states, such as the "1st Africa – Korea Summit," "the Africa – Italy Summit," "the Africa – Russia Summit," "the Africa – Saudi Arabia Summit," "the Africa – France

Summit," "the Africa – UK Summit," and "the Africa – Germany Summit." These events have often been initiated without the coordination and involvement of the AU.

7. This situation has, unfortunately, compromised Africa's collective and unified stance on the global stage. It has allowed individual countries to convene summits with African leaders without adhering to the established processes at the AU level. Such processes are crucial for ensuring that Africa's common positions are effectively articulated and promoted, and that the continent upholds its mechanisms and institutions to maintain unity and coherence in international engagements. It has become therefore urgent to tackle the issue through the adoption of the AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework, which will provide a mechanism to properly handle invitations unilaterally sent by potential partners to participate in Summits with Africa without undertaking a due process at the level of the African Union.

Process followed in the development of the Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework

8. In February 2023, the Executive Council deliberated on a Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework submitted by the PRC. However, the Chairperson of the Commission indicated that the mandate of the Commission was not properly reflected in that draft document. Subsequent to the debates, the Executive Council adopted Decision EX.CL/Dec.1189(XLII) of February 2023 as follows:

- a) *TAKES NOTE with satisfaction of the development of the draft strategy and policy framework for AU partnerships;*
- b) *NOTES the lack of consensus on questions of **classification and participation**; And*
- c) *REQUESTS the PRC and the Commission in close collaboration to continue the examination of the document and to report to the forty-third ordinary session of the Executive Council, which is to be held next July in Nairobi.*

9. In accordance with the Decision of the Executive Council and in line with the Roadmap adopted by the Retreat of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee held in Nairobi, in May 2023, which requested the Commission to establish a high-level Committee with a view to providing its contributions, the Commission, through an inclusive approach, reviewed the Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework under the guidance and validation by the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, aiming to:

- (i). Ensure the document reflects the statutory role and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Commission, as inferred in the Constitutive Act and outlined in the Statutes of the Commission, particularly Article 8. This article grants the Chairperson specific prerogatives, especially in promoting cooperation with other organisations and achieving the Union's objectives.

- (ii). Clarify the distinction between intergovernmental partnerships led by Member States in collaboration with the Commission and institutional partnerships initiated by the Commission under the Chairperson's guidance.

10. In line with the above decision, following due process, the Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework, incorporating the Commission's inputs, was **submitted** to the PRC notwithstanding the lack of consensus among Member States during its consideration at the level of the Sub-Committee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation.

Way forward

11. The Sub-Committee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation proposes to the PRC to recommend to the Executive Council to:

- (i). **Address** the main divergent issues related to the “Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework”, in particular, the issues related to the ***nomenclature, classification and participation*** in partnerships meetings as the PRC has exhausted all possible avenues to reach a consensus at this juncture.

**ANNEX TO THE REPORT ON THE FINALIZATION OF THE AU PARTNERSHIPS POLICY
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	Proposals made in the Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework submitted to the Executive Council in February 2023	Proposals made in the Draft AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework validated by the Commission
Nomenclature	It is proposed that in advancing a standard and consistent approach in the engagement with partners, the nomenclature African Union should be the core identity.	In advancing a standard and consistent approach in engaging with partners, it is also proposed that the nomenclature African Union should be the core identity. (paragraph 3)
Classification	<p>Strategic Partners</p> <p>The classification of strategic partners should be determined by the level of seriousness and commitment of partners, the alignment with the Union’s priorities and Aspirations of Agenda 2063, its Flagship programmes and projects, joint formulation of programmes, projects and priorities, tangible deliverables and impact, the institutionalization of joint Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms and the amount of committed resources.</p> <p>AU strategic partnerships must, therefore, be based on the level of engagement, nature and scope of the relationship and in accordance with the following:</p>	<p>Intergovernmental partnerships:</p> <p>This category contains all partnerships where Member States are involved at different levels and that are, in general, sanctioned by a declaration negotiated between Member States and the Partner. This broad type of Partnership contains, at this stage, two main consensual categories (as per Assembly Decision 762) that the AUC proposes to update as follows:</p> <p>a) Continent to Continent/Regional Organisations (African Union – European Union Partnership; Africa – Arab Partnership; Africa – South America Partnership)</p> <p>b) Continent to Country/Country Plus (Africa – Korea Partnership; Africa – Turkiye Partnership; Africa – India Partnership; TICAD)</p> <p>There are other partnerships where AUC is invited. In the particular case of FOCAC: FOCAC is a cooperation</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Focus specifically and exclusively on the goal of equitable transformation of Africa through tangible deliverables and impact on the continent; b) Make a specifically defined and significant contribution towards African integration and the upliftment of the African people as a whole; c) Contribute significant technical, financial, industrial and other resources to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its Flagship Programmes; d) Level of commitment, institutional arrangements, scope and depth of relationship, clarity of purpose; Commitment to technology transfer and reinforcement of capacities and facilitation of people to people exchanges; e) Willingness to meet a minimum threshold/percentage of contribution towards AU's Flagship projects and capacity to contribute in a sustained manner (GDP); f) The partnership should intervene in all strategic areas of the African Union, impacting all five regions of the continent; g) The resources mobilized should be substantial, and Policy Organs might 	<p>between China and African countries that have Diplomatic relations with China, and does not involve the African Union in the preparatory process, the AUC is only invited to attend to FOCAC meetings. Participation in the cooperation is by formal invitation from China.</p> <p>Institutional Partnerships:</p> <p>This broad type of Partnership categories contains all the engagements led by the African Union, under the leadership of the AUC Chairperson as the legal Representative and Chief Executive Officer of the AU. Some major categories of institutional partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) High-Level Dialogue (bilateral and multilateral); b) African Financial Institutions; c) College to College; d) Coordination Frameworks; e) Technical Cooperation; f) Private Sector and Institutions.
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	<p>develop measurable/quantitative criteria if deemed necessary to assess the significance of the contribution.</p> <p>All strategic partnerships should take into consideration all of the above strategic criteria. Furthermore, the relationship must be driven by Africa; it must be the AU that determines and accords a 'strategic' status to the relationship.</p> <p>Level of Engagement – Summit</p> <p>Cooperation Forum</p> <p>All partners that do not qualify in terms of the above listed criteria will then engage with the AU under the platform of a Cooperation Forum.</p> <p>Level of Engagement – Ministerial</p>	
<p>Participation</p>	<p>For purposes of ensuring inclusivity and in accordance with the guiding principles for partnerships, it is proposed that the current arrangement above be reflected as follows:</p> <p>a) All AU Member States have the right to participate in all Statutory Meetings, related to partnerships between the African Union/African Continent and</p>	<p>Intergovernmental Partnerships</p> <p>Continent to Continent/Regional Organization (AU-EU; Africa-Arab; Africa-South America)</p> <p>In accordance with Assembly Decision No. Assembly/AU/Dec.762(XXXIII), of February 2020, which: "REAFFIRMS the right of all AU Member States to participate in Statutory Meetings, related to partnerships</p>

	<p>another Continent or Regional Organization.</p> <p>b) All AU Member States have the right to participate in Strategic Partnerships Meetings</p>	<p>between the African Union/African Continent and another Continent or Regional Organization”, all Member States will participate at Senior Officials, Ministerial and Summit level. Member states can decide to be represented in any of the above-mentioned partnerships through the formula identified in Decision 762.</p> <p>Continent to Country/Country Plus (India, Turkey, Korea, TICAD)</p> <p>In accordance with Assembly Decision No. Assembly/AU/Dec.762(XXXIII), of February 2020, which “DECIDES that African Union/African Continent shall be represented at the Statutory Meetings of partnership between the African Union/African Continent and a partner country by the Members of the Bureau of the Assembly of the Union, the Chairpersons of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Chairperson of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) of AUDA-NEPAD and the Chairperson of the AU Commission”, all Member States would be represented by this representational formula at Senior Officials, Ministerial and Summit level .</p> <p>The internal preparatory process of the Statutory Meetings shall be inclusive with the participation of all AU Member States.</p> <p>In the particular case of FOCAC: FOCAC is a cooperation between China and African countries that have Diplomatic relations with China, and does not involve the African Union in the preparatory process, the AUC is only invited to attend to FOCAC meetings. Participation in the cooperation is by formal invitation from China.</p>
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Report on the Finalization of the AU Partnerships Policy and Strategic Framework (AUPPSF)

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