

**ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA:
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT
Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XIV)**

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting in the Fourteenth Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 31 January 2010 and from 1-2 February 2010:

Considering the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles and objectives as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and our collective commitment to achieve the development of the Continent through the promotion of research in all fields, particularly in the area of science and technology;

Determined to take all the necessary steps to strengthen our common institutions and provide them with the necessary resources to enable them fulfil their mission efficiently including the implementation of the Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);

Recalling our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to achieve the sustainable development of our Continent;

Reaffirming our determination to eliminate poverty, improve public health and education, increase agricultural production, as well as attain the MDGs;

Aware that the attainment of these goals depends not only on the ability of our States to make use of the enormous potential offered by Information and Communications Technologies but also on their will to provide this sector with increased and sustained investment;

Convinced of the powerful catalyzing role that Information and Communication Technologies can play in the development and integration process in Africa, especially in the establishment of a legal and regulatory framework that is harmonized and attractive for investments, shared telecommunications and ICT infrastructure and the convergence of networks, services and administrations;

Welcoming the various initiatives concerning the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the two phases of the World Summit on Information Society as well as the international partnerships, including in particular the Connect Africa Initiative, launched in Kigali, Rwanda during the Connect Africa Summit held from 29 to 30 October 2007, the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, NEPAD, the Africa-EU Partnership for Science, Information Society and Space, the African Information Society Initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Global Digital Solidarity Fund;

Recalling the Decision of the Executive Council which adopted the Oliver Tambo Declaration to establish a mechanism to accelerate and monitor the implementation of the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE), the Reference Framework for Harmonization of Policies and Regulations on Telecommunications and ICTs in Africa, the Strategies and Action Plans for the Development of Postal Sector in Africa;

Declaring the ICT sector as a sector of top priority in our development programs and therefore encouraging Member States and development partners to consider telecommunications and ICT infrastructure and services, as a basic public utility infrastructure.

1. UNDERTAKE TO:

- i) **INTENSIFY** the activities to implement the Reference Framework for Harmonisation of Telecommunication and ICT Policies and Regulations in Africa, the action for the development of postal sector as well as the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy;
- ii) **STRENGTHEN** national programmes and regional cooperation for the development and interconnection of broadband infrastructures, the deployment of Regional Internet Exchange Points, and the improvement of rural area connectivity based on the principles of technological neutrality, non discrimination and open access, in support of the PIDA and through the use of synergies with the transport and energy sectors;
- iii) **ACCORD**, in our Telecommunications/ICT development policies and strategies, particular attention to the postal sector, a vital vehicle for

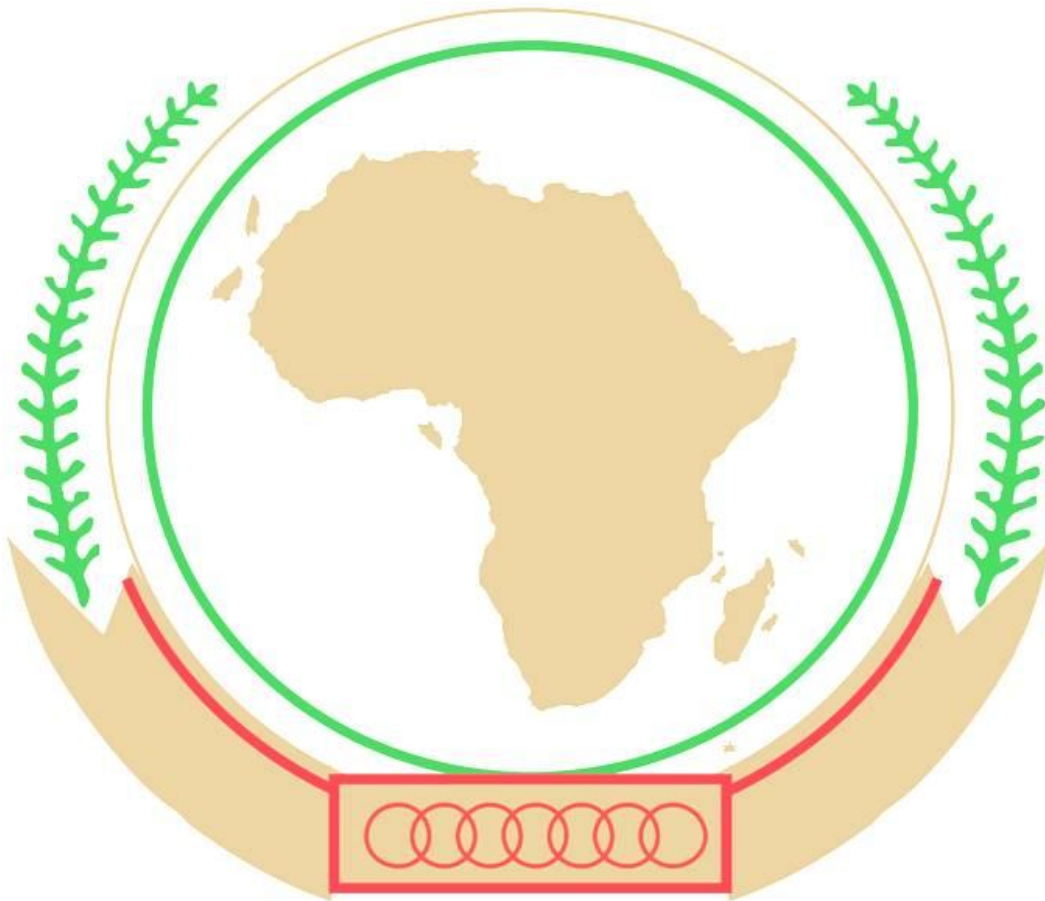
reaching out to our populations in rural areas and the digitalisation of the broadcasting technology in Africa;

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- iv) **DEVELOP** programmes and actions on training, acquisition of basic competences in Communication and Information Technologies and on capacity building, particularly for national and regional regulatory organs;
 - v) **PROMOTE** research and development actions as well as an environment favourable to innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector with a view to finding solutions and services suited to the conditions and needs of African users;
 - vi) **SUPPORT** the effective operationalization of the Forum of Telecommunications Regulators' Assembly as a non-binding Body, and the activities to create local content and socio-economic services adapted to Africa's development imperatives and implement cyber-strategies that guarantee security, freedom, confidentiality and the development of each and everyone;
 - vii) **ENCOURAGE** harmonization and efficient management of radio frequency spectrum, at both the national and the regional levels, of the scarce resources of the sector (radiofrequency spectrum, numbering plans, etc) and promote a coordinated approach for the efficient development of broad band services;
 - viii) **PROMOTE** favourable regulatory environment for the implementation of innovative public-private partnership and financing models, the sharing of infrastructure, favourable taxation on ICT equipment as well as all the measures needed at national and regional levels to lower the tariffs and provide better quality of service in the sector.

2. REQUEST the Commission to:

- i) set, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the International Telecommunication Union, higher education and research institutions and the ICT-sector specialised institutions in Africa, an African digital agenda identifying the main stages towards the establishment of an harmonized African ICT market by 2020.

- ii) develop a coherent and integrated approach as well as a coordination mechanism involving the key African stakeholders and development partners for the implementation and follow up of this Declaration.
3. **APPEAL** to the development partners, especially the financing institutions, to support the implementation of this Declaration and integrate Telecommunications and ICT into their priorities by granting them financing conditions similar to those of other basic public utility infrastructures.



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