

DECISION ON THE MEKELE RETREAT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Doc. EX.CL/947(XXVIII)

The Executive Council,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the outcomes of the Retreat of the Executive Council held in Mekele, Ethiopia on 24 and 25 January 2016;

a) *The Africa We Have, The Africa We Want*

2. **UNDERScores** the paradox that Africa is rich, yet Africans are poor remains the burning issue that the current African leaders and people must resolve, as we implement Agenda 2063, as acknowledged by the Bahir Dar retreat;

3. **REQUESTS** the Commission to:

i) Ensure with the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), and in collaboration with the United Nations Economic for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Member States that the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 integrates the centrality of African unity, ownership and, resolve to advance and defend continental aspirations and priorities;

ii) Organise another retreat before the next ordinary session of the Executive Council scheduled for July 2016, to allow for in-depth discussions on the paradox of rich Africa, poor Africans as well as on changing mind-sets and other relevant issues.

b) ON DOMESTICATION OF AGENDA 2063 AND ITS FIRST TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4. **TAKES NOTE** of the progress made in the domestication of Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP);

5. **UNDERScores** the importance of participation of African people, in all their sectoral and other formations, for implementation of the continental mission, and **REQUESTS** Member States, the Commission and NPCA, the Pan African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and other AU Organs and institutions as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to continue popularizing the Agenda 2063 aspirations, priorities and flagship programmes;

6. **URGES** Member States that have not yet started domestication, to do so and **REQUESTS** the Commission to continue to provide support on the same, and report on the conclusions of domestication to the ordinary session of the Executive Council scheduled for July 2016;

7. **REQUESTS** the Commission and all other AU Organs, RECs and continental institutions to align their Strategic and Master Plans to the FTYIP and ensure

maximum coordination in its implementation, in the spirit of complementarity and subsidiarity;

8. **ENCOURAGES** Member states and RECs to strengthen national and regional planning systems to drive implementation by establishing national focal points, and for government wide mainstreaming, and domestic resource mobilisation and allocation;
9. **RECOGNISES** the convergence between Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the work done by the Commission to embed the seventeen (17) SDGs in the FTYIP, and in its results and monitoring and evaluation framework;
10. **TAKES NOTE** of the following:
 - i) Progress in the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Framework for Agenda 2063, and **WELCOMES** the measurement framework by the African Statisticians-Generals on the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, for the FTYIP;
 - ii) The report by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) on *'The Assessment of Internal and External Risks associated with the implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063'* and the mitigation strategies proposed therein.
11. **REQUESTS** the Commission to gather reports from Member states and to present a progress report to the 2nd Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee on Agenda 2063 to be held before the next ordinary session of the Executive Council scheduled for July 2016.
 - c) **ON AGENDA 2063 FLAGSHIP PROJECTS**
12. **TAKES NOTE** of the progress report of the Commission on the flagship projects, and **REQUESTS** the Commission to fast-track development of the proposals to catalyse implementation of Agenda 2063 and facilitate integration.
 - d) **ON CAPACITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2063**
13. **TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the comprehensive report on Capacities for Implementation of Agenda 2063 by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) commissioned by the Commission;
14. **ACKNOWLEDGES** the role of ACBF in strengthening African capacities, through its programmes with AU Organs including the Commission, the RECs and Member States and **PLEDGES** the support of Member States to ensure that ACBF is strengthened, and **CALLS ON** continental and international partners to continue to provide financial support to ACBF in pursuance of its mandate;

15. **CALLS ON** Member States to urgently develop a continental initiative on Critical Technical Skills, and to prioritise investments in the development of skills, especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas, essential for implementing Agenda 2063, including vocational skills and trade technicians, as well as the design and management of large-scale projects.

e) ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND THE AFRICAN PASSPORT

16. **WELCOMES** the report of the Commission on this issue, including the lessons from countries such as Rwanda, Seychelles, Mauritius, the Islamic Republic of The Gambia and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) on free movement of people, and the process outlined towards the adoption of a Protocol on Free Movement of People by January 2018;

17. **REAFFIRMS** its commitment to free movement of people and goods, and of Africans having free access to all AU Member States, as amongst the enduring project of Pan Africanism and African integration, and that its benefits include facilitating tourism, intra-African investments and trade, people to people integration and cooperation, and the circulation and utilization of skills in the continent;

18. **URGES** all Member States to adopt:

- i) Necessary measures to ensure the issuance of Visas on arrival for citizens of AU Member States with the option to stay in a Member State for up to thirty (30) days. **NOTING**, however, the concerns raised with regards to security and the threat of terrorism and international crime, **ACKNOWLEDGES** the need to develop parameters to deal with those concerns, and **ENCOURAGES** all Member States to continue to work with security and intelligence agencies on this and other related matters with a view to availing the facility of issuance of Visas on arrival for citizens of Member States as soon as practically possible;
- ii) The process outlined towards the adoption of a Protocol on Free Movement of People by January 2018, which should come into immediate effect in Member States.

19. **REQUESTS** the Commission to present the ordinary African passport to Heads of State and Government at the next ordinary session of the Assembly scheduled for July 2016 and the passports for other categories such as Foreign Ministers, Heads and staff of AU organs, and Members of the PRC.

f) ON TOURISM AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

20. **REQUESTS** the Commission, to ensure the following, to achieve the goal of making Africa the preferred tourist destination, of both African and global tourists, and building a strong Brand Africa:

- i) Allocation of adequate resources to tourism activities in the Commission budget and mobilise support of all stakeholders in the continent, including international partners like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO);
- ii) The elaboration of a continental Tourism policy and strategy as a priority activity, and mainstreaming of tourism in Agenda 2063 and other AU programmes, and to advocate for greater investment in tourism;
- iii) Convene the Ministers responsible for Tourism before the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017 within the framework of the relevant STCs, to review progress and provide guidance.

21. UNDERLINES as follows:

- i) Wildlife, through ecotourism, is and can be, a source of revenue if properly and sustainably managed;
- ii) The importance of conservation as it benefits local communities, including women.

22. DECIDES that poaching, illicit trade in wildlife products and bio-piracy should be vigorously combatted and **CALLS FOR** a review of the total ban for acceptable social and economic gains.

g) ON THE COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE AFRICAN UNION WORKING METHODS AND STREAMLINING BUSINESS OF SUMMITS

23. TAKES NOTE of the Report on the Comparative Study on the Working Methods of the African Union (AU) and the Streamlining of the AU Summits and **ENDORSES** the recommendations contained therein;

24. URGES Member States to:

- i) Expedite the ratification of the revised Protocol on the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) adopted in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014 in order for its speedy entry into force and **REQUESTS** the Commission to distribute the Malabo Protocol to Member States after the Retreat;
- ii) Implement in collaboration with the Commission, the Assembly decisions on the working methods of the AU.

25. REQUESTS the Commission to establish an internal Technical Committee to study the recommendations contained in the study and facilitate implementation of Decision 582 (XXV) adopted by the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2015 and report to the next ordinary session of the Executive Council through the Ministerial Follow-Up Committee on the Implementation of Agenda 2063.

h) ON THE RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE OF THE BAHIR DAR MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE ON AGENDA 2063

- 26. RECALLS** the decision of the Executive Council endorsed by the Assembly on the 1st Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee, composed of Cameroon (Central), Rwanda (East), Algeria (North), Angola (South) and Ghana (West), , the outgoing and incoming Chairpersons of the Executive Council, namely Zimbabwe and Chad as well as the AU Commission Chairperson, the Chairpersons and Executive Secretaries of the 8 RECs¹, the CEO of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the President of the AfDB, that the membership be renewed every two (2) years to allow for rotation and regional balance;
- 27. ENDORSES** the Mekele Retreat recommendation for membership of the 2nd Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee as follows: the five (5) rotating regional representatives are Cameroon (Central), Rwanda (East), Algeria (North), Namibia (South) and Burkina Faso (West). The other Members of the Committee shall remain as listed in the above paragraph 26.



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No	REC	CURRENT CHAIR	Until
1	IGAD	Ethiopia	
2	ECCAS	Gabon	May 2016
3	EAC	Tanzania	January 2016
4	COMESA	Ethiopia	March 2016
5	ECOWAS	Senegal	May 2016
6	SADC	Botswana	August 2016
7	CEN-SAD	Chad	Until 2016
8	UMA	Libya	

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