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EX.CL/517 (XV)

**REPORT OF THE FOURTH AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS
OF INTEGRATION (COMAI IV), YAOUNDE, CAMEROON,
4-8 MAY 2009**

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(COMAI IV), YAOUNDE, CAMEROON,
4-8 MAY 2009**

Introductory Note

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Integration was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 7 to 8 May 2009, on the theme: Partnerships and Integration in Africa.

The Conference, *inter alia*, adopted the Minimum Integration Plan (MIP) to be implemented according to priorities and four-year phases or periods, in conformity with the Strategic Plan of the African Union, and requested the Commission to consider the possibility of establishing a Continental Integration Fund meant essentially for its financing.

The Conference also requested the Commission, which is already doing so, to organize, in collaboration with Member States and the RECs, sectoral meetings to determine, based on the MIP proposals, the priority activities to be carried out during each phase.

The recommendations of the Conference of African Ministers of Integration contained in the Report and the Declaration attached hereto are submitted for consideration and adoption by the Assembly of the Union.

EX.CL/517 (XV)
Annex I

**REPORT OF THE FOURTH AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF
INTEGRATION (COMAI IV), YAOUNDE, CAMEROON,
4 – 8 MAY 2009**

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**Fourth Conference of African Ministers
In Charge of Integration (COMAI IV)
May 7-8, 2009
Yaoundé, Cameroon**

COMAI/MIN/ RPT (IV)

**REPORT OF THE FOURTH AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF
INTEGRATION (COMAI IV), YAOUNDE, CAMEROON,
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**REPORT OF THE FOURTH AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF INTEGRATION
(COMAI IV), YAOUNDE, CAMEROON,
4 – 8 MAY 2009**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration (COMAI IV) took place from May 7-8, 2009, at the Palais des Congrès, in Yaoundé, at the invitation of the Government of Cameroon.

II. ATTENDANCE

2. The following Member States were present: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, The Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.
3. The following RECs were present: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
4. Also represented at the meeting were the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (ADB), the European Union (EU), the World Bank, and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC).

III. OPENING CEREMONY

Opening Statement by H.E Mr. Gilbert Tsimi Evouna, Government Representative of the City Council of Yaoundé.

5. In his Statement, Mr. *Gilbert Tsimi Evouna*, the Government Delegate to the Yaoundé City Council, while welcoming the participants, expressed pride and happiness on behalf of all the people of Yaoundé, who were honoured to host the Conference and contribute to Africa's Continental integration efforts.

Opening Statement by His Excellency Mr. Louis Paul Motaze, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development of the Republic of Cameroon.

6. Taking the floor, the Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development of Cameroon, Honourable Louis Paul Motaze, also welcomed the Ministers and delegations participating in the Conference.
7. Referring to the results obtained in the area of regional integration, he acknowledged that despite the different initiatives, there was still much to be done particularly in the implementation of recommendations from previous COMAI. In that regard, he drew the attention of the Conference to the need to find ways and means to overcome the growing challenges impeding the integration process.
8. He concluded by stressing that, within the present international context, the Integration of Africa was a vital necessity and the consideration of *Partnerships and integration in Africa* as the theme of the Conference was an opportunity to identify ways and means to speed up the integration process.

Opening statement by His Excellency, Mr. Erastus J. Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission.

9. In his opening statement the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, His Excellency, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, thanked His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, the Government and the People of the Republic of Cameroon for hosting this important meeting and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all the delegations since their arrival in the country. He also stressed that Cameroon had been playing a very significant role in promoting Africa's integration through its active engagement in the activities and programmes of the African Union, as well as sub-regional organizations within the Central African Region. He also noted that Cameroon would host the African Monetary Fund, one of the three pan-African financial institutions created by the Constitutive Act of the African Union and its establishment was ongoing.
10. He commended the conclusions of the Tripartite Summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Eastern African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of October 2008, which called for the grouping of the three entities into a single Free Trade Area (FTA), eventually leading towards a single market among the three RECs. He noted that those efforts went a long way in rationalizing and harmonizing the activities and programme of the RECs, as decided during the June/July 2006 African Union Summit held in Banjul, and should be emulated by other RECs. He outlined the modest progress made in the integration process and acknowledged that a number of challenges still remained.

11. He advocated better coordination, cooperation and coherence between the African integration stakeholders to enable the integration process to be pursued systematically and to ensure that commitments were delivered in a timely manner.

Opening statement by His Excellency, Mr. Ephrem Inoni, Prime Minister of Cameroon.

12. The Conference was officially opened by His Excellency, the Prime Minister and Head of Government of Cameroon, Mr. Ephrem Inoni. In his welcome address, the Prime Minister thanked the President of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, for accepting to host the Conference. He recalled all the initiatives undertaken to strengthen the integration process, from the creation of the Organization of African Unity, through the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, the Abuja Treaty, the Sirte Declaration, and the creation of the African Union, amongst others.
13. He reaffirmed the unswerving commitment of Cameroon to strengthening the regional integration process. In this regard, he mentioned the execution and launching of major infrastructure projects that contribute, among other things, to the construction of the trans-African highway.
14. He concluded by indicating that the Conference was taking place at a time when African countries were negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) and were hard-hit by the negative effects of the international financial crisis. In this regard, he stressed the need to negotiate development orientated EPAs to improve their economies.

IV. CONSTITUTION OF THE BUREAU

15. The Conference elected the members of the Bureau as follows:
 - i. Chair: Cameroon
 - ii. First Vice-Chair: Algeria
 - iii. Second Vice-Chair: Sudan
 - iv. Third Vice-Chair: Mozambique
 - v. Rapporteur: Ghana

V. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

16. The meeting adopted the following Agenda:
 - i. Opening Ceremony
 - ii. Election of the Bureau

- iii. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
- iv. Consideration of the Experts Report
- v. Adoption of the Report
- vi. Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Declaration
- vii. Date and Venue of the next Conference
- viii. Closing Ceremony

VI. PROCEEDINGS

CONSIDERATION OF THE EXPERTS' REPORT

17. The Conference deliberated on the report of the Experts and adopted the following recommendations:
- a) ***Report on the Status of Integration in Africa***
 - i. The AUC should conduct a more in-depth comparative analysis in order to identify what each REC was doing in relation to past activities, the challenges faced, and to make recommendations on the way forward, taking into account critical aspects of integration such as infrastructure development;
 - ii. Efforts should be made to ensure as much as possible that the report on the status of integration covers all eight RECs recognized by the African Union, including the AMU;
 - iii. In preparing future reports, the inclusive consultative approach used by the Audit Panel of the AU on the Government of the Union should be replicated;
 - iv. Other Member States and RECs should continue their on-going efforts to enhance the integration process;
 - v. Other RECs should follow the example of the ongoing integration efforts of COMESA-EAC-SADC in view of creating a single Free Trade Area (FTA); and
 - vi. Call upon AMU to participate in the meetings organized by the AU with a view to providing and sharing information on integration.

b) *Report on the Status of Implementation of the Recommendations of COMAI III*

- i. The dissemination of the final reports and Declarations from COMAI should be circulated within one month after their adoption by the Assembly of the Union;
- ii. Reiterate the COMAI III recommendation requesting all Member States to exempt all holders of African diplomatic and service passports from visa requirements as a first step and to gradually extend the privilege to all African nationals;
- iii. Urge Member States to enhance the security features of their national passports;
- iv. Urge the RECs to share their best practices and experiences on regional integration within the framework of the Protocol on Relations between the AU and the RECs; and
- v. Request the AUC to simplify the follow-up matrix on the implementation of COMAI recommendations forwarded to Member States to facilitate compliance.

b) *Report on the Minimum Integration Programme (MIP)*

- i. The adoption and the use of MIP as a dynamic strategic and Continental framework for the integration process;
- ii. The AUC in collaboration with Member States, RECs and its partners should organise sectoral meetings to identify the prioritized sectors which are considered as accelerators of the integration process within a defined time schedule in line with the African Union strategic Plan;
- iii. The AUC in collaboration with the ADB should explore the possibility of establishing a special continental fund for the implementation of the MIP, which will be partially maintained with existing continental and regional funds as well as other alternative sources of financing, which are being identified by the AU; and
- iv. Request the AUC to prepare a study on the financing of the Continental fund dedicated to the implementation of the MIP.

PARTNERSHIPS ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA:

d) *Which Partnerships for a successful integration?*

- i. Africa should rationalise its approach to its partnership engagements. To this end, the AUC should finalise on a priority basis the study on the evaluation of existing partnerships to determine their impact on the socio-economic development of the Continent and the integration process;
- ii. The AUC should create a strong multilateral framework within which the Member States, RECs and the AUC should engage partners based on the principle of subsidiarity;
- iii. The AUC should enhance existing mechanisms dedicated to the coordination of partnerships. The allocation of the management of the different partnerships within its Departments should be in accordance with their specific mandates;
- iv. Africa should put greater emphasis on domestic resource mobilization modalities such as alternative sources of financing to reduce dependence on external resources and engage regional financial institutions;
- v. The Member States, the RECs and the AUC should enhance coordination amongst themselves on their engagement with partners to put in place a common negotiating strategy;
- vi. Member States should respect the Banjul Decision of the Seventh AU Assembly of 2006 on engagement with external partners;
- vii. Partners should be encouraged to meet their commitments to Africa;
- viii. In negotiating partnerships, Africa should give priority to building its capacity, developing skills, and transferring technology at national, regional and Continental levels;
- ix. Negotiations with partners should be geared towards local processing to add value to Africa's raw materials, as well as empower African peoples, and push for market access for those processed goods in developed country markets; and
- x. The AUC in close collaboration with Member States and the RECs should work out a common strategy for engagement with partners in conformity with the objectives and programmes of AU-NEPAD.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

18. The Conference adopted the report after amendments.

VIII. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

19. The Conference considered and adopted the Declaration annexed to this report.

IX. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE

20. The representative from The Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, H.E Mr. Mohamed Taher H. Siala, Secretary for Cooperation Affairs, informed the Conference of the offer by his Government to host the Fifth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration (COMAI V). The Conference favourably welcomed this offer and expressed its gratitude to the Government of The Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The date of the next Conference will be determined through consultations with the competent Libyan Authorities and communicated to Member States by the AUC.

X. CLOSING CEREMONY

21. Dr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, delivered his closing remarks during this session. In his statement, the Commissioner conveyed thanks to the Government and people of Cameroon for the excellent hospitality extended to all the delegations. He also thanked the participants for having favourably accepted the invitation to attend the COMAI IV and for the commitment they showed throughout the deliberations. He further informed the Conference that the AUC would continue to play an active role in accelerating the implementation of Africa's integration agenda, and would work very closely with the Member States, the RECs, UNECA and AfDB in order to accelerate the integration agenda.

22. Lastly, H.E Mr. Louis Paul Motaze, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development of the Republic of Cameroon, on behalf of the Government of Cameroon and on his own behalf, expressed his gratitude to the Ministers, Ambassadors, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the AUC staff, the outgoing chairperson of the COMAI III, Chief Executives of the RECs and all delegates for their active participation towards the success of the Conference and their commitments to face all the challenges of integration in Africa. Before declaring the Fourth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration closed and wishing a safe return to all delegations, he urged all Member States, the RECs and the Commission to effectively implement the recommendations agreed upon.

XI. VOTE OF THANKS

23. During the closing session, a vote of thanks was delivered by H.E Mr. Mohamed Taher H. Siala, Secretary for Cooperation Affairs of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. He expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Cameroon for having accepted to host the Fourth Conference and for the traditional and legendary hospitality as well as facilities accorded to all the delegations since their arrival in Yaoundé, which contributed to the success of the Conference. He concluded by inviting all the Member States and all the stakeholders to effectively implement the recommendations of the Conference and ensure, through determination and solidarity, that the integration of the Continent was a success.

EX.CL/517 (XV)
Annex II

DECLARATION

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Fourth Conference of
African Ministers in Charge of Integration (COMAI IV)
May 7-8, 2009
Yaoundé, Cameroon

COMAI/MIN/DECL.(IV)

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

We, African Ministers in Charge of Integration, meeting in our Fourth Ordinary Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 7 and 8 May 2009;

Recalling the commitments of African Heads of State and Government regarding the development and integration of our continent contained in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), the Sirte Declaration of 9-9-99, and the Constitutive Act of the African Union;

Recalling the determination of the AU Assembly to accelerate the economic and political integration of the African continent, to streamline and strengthen Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as contained in the Accra Declaration adopted by its Ninth Ordinary Session, in July 2007;

Considering the Assembly/AU/Dec.112 (VII) and Assembly/AU/Dec. 113 (VII) Decisions of the Fourth Session of the Assembly of the Union, imposing a moratorium on the recognition of RECs and institutionalizing our Conference respectively;

Recalling the Declaration of our Third Conference (COMAI III), of May 23, 2008;

Recognizing the fundamental role of the RECs as pillars of the African Union as well as the need to rationalize and harmonize their programmes and activities for the purpose of speeding up the economic integration of the continent;

Noting, to this end, the efforts made in the area of integration by the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the other organs of the United Nations System and development partners in carrying out programmes and activities;

Having undertaken a constructive exchange of views and made in-depth reflections on the ways and means of rationalizing the programs and activities of Member States, RECs, the AUC and other stakeholders, through a Minimum Integration Programme (MIP) to accelerate the continent's integration;

Having taken note of the report and recommendations of experts relating, among other things, to the study of AUC on a MIP;

Having deliberated on the theme: Partnerships and Integration in Africa;

Noting, the frankness and cordiality that marked our deliberations with satisfaction;

HEREBY:

Status of Integration

Commend COMESA, EAC and SADC for their efforts to create a single Free Trade Area (FTA) and **Request** other RECs to follow their example so as to give impetus to their own integration; and

Also Commend efforts and various initiatives made by Member States and other RECs to enhance the integration process;

Implementation of Recommendations

Urge each REC, in addition to the periodic reports presented at meetings of the Coordination Committee, provided for by the Protocol on Relations between AU and RECs, to submit, at the end of March every year, a report on the implementation of COMAI recommendations; and

Further urge the AUC to transmit the COMAI recommendations to Member States, RECs, and stakeholders one month after their endorsement by the Assembly of the Union;

Minimum Integration Programme

Adopt the MIP as a dynamic strategic framework for the Continental integration process in line with the AU Strategic Plan;

Urge the AUC, in collaboration with Member States, and all the RECs, to work out the practical modalities to enrich the MIP and ease its gradual and sequential implementation per priority sector;

Request the AUC in collaboration with AfDB to explore the possibility of establishing a Special Continental Fund for the implementation of the MIP, which will be partially maintained with existing continental and regional funds as well as other alternative sources of financing, which are being identified by the AU;

Call upon all Member States to comply with the COMAI III recommendation by requesting the exemption of all holders of African diplomatic and service passports from visa requirements on the one hand and on the other hand to gradually extend this privilege to all African nationals as endorsed by the 11th AU Assembly; and

Urge Member States to enhance the security features of their national passports;

Management of Partnerships

Call upon Member States to strengthen intra-African cooperation and solidarity before their engagement with partners;

Call upon Member States, RECs, and the AUC to ensure Africa's development, and regional and Continental integration interests are secured in all strategic partnership arrangements; and

Finally request the AUC, in close collaboration with Member States and the RECs, to work out a common strategy for engagement with partners in conformity with the objectives and programmes of AU-NEPAD;

Relations between the AU and the RECs

Encourage all RECs and the AUC to enhance coordination and collaboration amongst themselves, in the spirit of the revised Protocol on Relations between the AU and the RECs, signed in January 2008; .

Vote of Thanks.

Express to His Excellency, Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, the Government and the People of Cameroon, our sincere gratitude and recognition for having accepted to host our Fourth Conference and for the traditional and legendary hospitality as well as facilities accorded to all the delegations, which contributed to the success of our Conference.

Done in Yaoundé (Cameroon) this day of 8th May 2009.

2009

Report of the fourth AU conference of ministers of integration (COMAI IV), Yaounde, Cameroon, 4-8 May 2009

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