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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

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REPORT OF THE PRC SUB-COMMITTEE ON

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE PRC SUB-COMMITTEE ON
MULTILATERAL COOPERATION
FEBRUARY TO JULY 2010**

1. During the period under review, the PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation, working in close collaboration with the AU Commission, engaged in a number of activities in accordance with its mandate.

2. This report therefore represents the joint activities undertaken by the Sub-Committee and the Commission on Africa's Strategic Partnerships. It covers the following:

- Africa-India Forum Summit, including the Pan-African e-Network Project;
- Africa-South America (ASA) Summit;
- Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit; and
- Africa – EU Partnership

AFRICA-INDIA FORUM SUMMIT

3. It is to be recalled that at the First Africa-India Forum Summit held in New Delhi, India, in April 2008, Officials of both sides were mandated to develop jointly, within a period of one year, a joint Plan of Action at a continental level and an appropriate follow-up mechanism to implement the Framework for Cooperation adopted at the Summit.

4. Over the period, Officials of both sides developed and agreed on a Plan of Action that was launched in New Delhi, India, on 10 March 2010. The African Union delegation comprised a combined team of members of the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation and Staff of the Commission. The objectives of the mission were four-fold, namely:

- (i) Conclude and launch the Action Plan of the Framework for Cooperation of the First Africa-India Forum Summit;
- (ii) Commence the implementation of the Plan of Action;
- (iii) Undertake exploratory visits to some Indian institutions and agencies that will implement the Plan of Action.
- (iv) Consolidate relations between Africa and India

5. It is significant to mention that, prior to undertaking the mission, the Sub-Committee presented the draft Action Plan and the expected deliverables of the mission to the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) on March 5, 2010, for consideration and endorsement. The PRC endorsed the Action Plan as well as the mission.

6. The African delegation was composed of the five members of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee and ten staff members of the Commission drawn from some of the Departments/Divisions whose thematic areas were covered in the Plan of Action.

7. The objectives mentioned above were achieved during the mission. Both the African and Indian sides used the opportunity provided by the mission to renew their commitments to fully implement the Joint Action Plan in order to record substantial deliverables in the count-down to the Second Forum Summit scheduled for 2011. The adopted Plan of Action, which had been earlier circulated to Member States, is attached as Annex I.

8. Another significant achievement recorded during the first half of 2010 was the successful selection by the Commission of candidates to benefit from the Indian government offered scholarships in the field of agriculture to 25 Doctoral students and 50 Masters Degree students in Indian universities in the academic year beginning in August 2010. During the mission to India, a detailed brief on the applicants, an analysis of their applications and selection criteria were handed over to the Indian side, which is now in the process of placing the students in various Indian Universities. The outcome of this exercise is now being awaited.

9. It is worth mentioning that Africa is yet to arrive at a decision with respect to the locations of the five institutions and ten vocational training centers (VTCs) that India has offered to establish in Africa. The Commission had made a proposal on this issue, which the Sub-Committee endorsed and recommended to the PRC for adoption.

10. It is recalled that, as requested by the Indian Government, the African countries that will be selected to host the proposed Institutions and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) will be required to meet the following criteria;

- Ability to provide:
 - Land for the Institutions;
 - Building infrastructure;
 - Budgetary provision for recurring costs;
 - Administrative and logistical support to the institutions; and
 - Facilities that would ensure the smooth functioning of the institutions
- They will also be required to put in place:
 - Governance structures for administration and running of the Institutions; and
 - Business plans for future development and sustainability.
- All hosting countries must be easily accessible to all Member States of the African Union.

11. The following outstanding issues require the urgent attention of the PRC:

- Early conclusion of the locations of the four institutions and the ten vocational training centers that India has offered to establish in Africa; bearing in mind that the distribution formula proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the Sub-Committee represents the most equitable way of ensuring equitable distribution of the institutions
- Speedy establishment of the follow-up mechanism in terms of its structure, mandate and work programme in order to fully implement the Action Plan; and
- The popularization of the Africa-India cooperation framework in terms of the inherent opportunities therein, in order for peoples of both sides to access the programme and activities for their maximum benefits.

The Pan-African e-Network Project

12. One of the best illustrations of the fruits of the Continental Partnership between Africa and India is the Pan-African e-Network Project. This project, which had been previously reported upon by the Focal Department in the Commission, Infrastructure and Energy Department, has made considerable progress in its implementation, but not much seems to be known about it. A visit to the Indian Implementing Agency, Telecommunications Consultants, India Ltd (TCIL), during the joint Mission to New Delhi by the Bureau of the Sub-Committee and the Commission, referred to above, confirmed the fact that this project had actually truly taken off, and has huge potentials to contribute to the development of the continent.

13. A detailed report, indicating the progress already made, what remains to be done, which Countries have signed on and those that are yet to do so, is attached as Annex II. It is requested that the Annex be treated as an integral part of this report. Nevertheless, specific attention is drawn to paragraph 17 of the Annex which identifies the challenges being encountered, which affect the smooth and timely implementation of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. The following recommendations are made regarding both the Africa-India Forum Summit process and the Pan-African e-Network project as elements for the decisions required. The PRC may wish to request Council to:

- ❖ Welcome the launch of the Plan of Action and encourage both parties for the steps being taken to implement it.
- ❖ Request Member States to take an urgent decision on the locations of the Institutions and Vocational Training Centers in Africa (VTC), taking into account the requirements indicated by the Indian side¹, and inform the Commission of their decision.

¹ Adopted with reserves from Chad

- ❖ Ensure a sustained popularization of the Africa-India Cooperation Framework in terms of the inherent opportunity therein, in order for people from both sides to access the programmes and activities for their mutual benefit.
- ❖ Request Member States to determine the venue of the 2011 Summit in Africa.
- ❖ Note the report on the Pan-African e-Network project and to commend the contribution of the different stakeholders in the implementation of the Network.
- ❖ Encourage Member States that have not done so, to sign the agreement to participate in the Network and extend the network to more Learning Centers (LC) and Patient End Hospitals (PEH).
- ❖ Request the Commission to take appropriate actions to follow-up and to report on the implementation of this project on a regular basis.
- ❖ Request Member States and the African Union Commission to put in place a strategy that will allow a smooth transfer of the operation of the network from India to Africa and ensure the development, the expansion and the sustainability of the Network.

AFRICA-SOUTH AMERICA (ASA) SUMMIT

15. A full report on the Second Africa-South America Summit, which took place in Venezuela from 22 to 27 September 2009, was made to the January/February 2010 sessions of the PRC, the Executive Council and the Assembly. The main purpose of the current report is therefore to provide an up-date on activities that have taken place on the implementation of the decisions of the 2nd ASA Summit and the challenges that continue to exist.

16. However, in doing so, it is necessary to recall the main outcomes of the Summit as briefly highlighted here:

- Harmonization of the Implementation Programmes submitted by both the African and South American sides to be submitted to ASA Foreign Ministers for adoption at a meeting on the margins of the 2010 UN General Assembly Session in New York in September 2010.
- The establishment of the Bank of the South with an initial capital base of US\$20 billion. The Bank will be located in Caracas, Venezuela;
- The 3rd ASA Summit to be hosted by Libya in September 2011;
- The establishment of an ASA Summit Pro-Tempore Secretariat that will be located on a floor of Hotel Hilton, Margarita Island, Venezuela. The Secretariat will move to the next host country after every two (2) years;
- The scaling up of the Coordination Group of the ASA Summit to the Ministerial level as a follow-up mechanism;
- The establishment of a Presidential Committee that would develop the Strategic Plan of the ASA Summit (2010-2012). The core members of

this Group are Venezuela, the 2nd ASA Summit host country; Brazil and Nigeria (Regional Coordinators); Libya – the next host; the AU Commission and Ecuador as UNASUR Pro-Tempore Presidency; plus 2 or 3 countries each from Africa and South America.

State of Play of the Partnership

(a) *Harmonization of the Implementation Programme:*

17. On this subject, it is noted that the South American side, working in collaboration with African Missions resident in Brasilia, Brazil, produced a merged Implementation Programme, which was sent to Addis Ababa. Since the African Missions in Brasilia did not consult with their Colleagues in Addis Ababa or the AUC, it was decided that the draft from South America should be examined by each of the eight Working Groups, with a view to ensuring that Africa's concerns and proposals are fully taken into account in the harmonized implementation Plan. A number of the Working Groups have already completed their examination, but others have, at the time this report was being prepared, not yet done so. When all eight Working Groups have completed their work, a consolidated Implementation Plan will be considered by the PRC.

18. It is necessary that the harmonized Implementation Plan is considered by Senior Officials of both sides so that the ASA Foreign Ministers can consider and adopt it at the margins of the next United Nations General Assembly Session in New York in September this year. Every effort should therefore be deployed to ensure that this happens.

(b) *Invitation to the African Union to Participate in the Inauguration Ceremony of the Presidential Working Group and the ASA Permanent Secretariat in Venezuela from 16 to 17 March and on 8 or 14 April 2010:*

19. In March 2010, Venezuela invited the African Union, through Libya as the next host of the ASA Summit; Malawi as current Chair of the Union; Nigeria as Coordinator for Africa, and the AUC, to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the Presidential Strategic Working Group and the ASA Permanent Secretariat in Venezuela. When told that the notice was too short, the ceremony was shifted to 8 or 14 April 2010. Besides, Venezuela was informed that there was no clarity on the functions of the two Institutions it wanted to launch. Consequently, and at the request of the Commission, Venezuela submitted the draft Statute of the Permanent Secretariat and the Rules of Procedure of the Presidential Working Group, which the Legal Counsel of the Commission was requested to study and to proffer preliminary advice, which was done.

20. The Sub-Committee also considered the two drafts in early April 2010, and recommended that:

- ❖ Taking into account the structure and the decision-making procedures of the AU, there was need for the South American proposal to be presented to the policy Organs of the Union at the forthcoming AU

Summit in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010 for the needed political guidance.

- ❖ The establishment and operations of the two institutions would have financial implications, hence the need for the policy organs of the Union to consider and approve the institutions.
- ❖ In the light of the foregoing two points, the proposed mission to Venezuela should be postponed and the South American side should be informed accordingly..

21. The above concurred with the views from the Commission and were shared with Libya, Malawi and Nigeria, which also endorsed them. This information was conveyed to Venezuela by the Commission. However, during a meeting which took place in Caracas, Venezuela, on 19 April 2010, between the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission and the Deputy Foreign Minister (Africa) of Venezuela, during the celebration of Venezuela's bi-centenary (200) independence anniversary, the AUC indicated again that the Margarita Decision was for the establishment of a Pro-Tempore Secretariat, which would rotate between hosting Countries, and not a Permanent Secretariat which was being proposed for inauguration. It was also said that there was no clarity on what the functions of the Presidential Working Group would be and that the approval of the AU Organs was required before Africa could consent to inaugurating them.

22. In reaction to this, the Deputy Foreign Minister indicated that:

- (i) The Pro-Tempore Secretariat was for the hosting country to facilitate the organization of the Summit;
- (ii) The Permanent Secretariat now being proposed was to provide technical services for the Presidential Working Group and that Venezuela undertook to finance it for three years, and
- (iii) The Presidential Working Group was to supervise the implementation of selected concrete projects which the Permanent Secretariat would support.

23. It is Venezuela's continued view that the inauguration of the two Institutions should take place and more discussions could continue on their functioning thereafter. As this report is being prepared, Venezuela is still of this view, but has not proposed any date for a visit to Caracas.

24. In the light of the foregoing, it is strongly recommended that these outstanding proposals be examined in Kampala and a decision conveyed to the South American side.

(c) Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism:

25. It has been proposed that the meeting of the Coordination Mechanism should take place in order to consider all outstanding issues, including the harmonized Joint Implementation Plan; the modalities for holding a Summit meeting and its

organization; ASA calendar of meetings; strategies for improving the Coordination Mechanism; and the role of Africa's representatives in South America, among others.

26. Venezuela has proposed to consult all concerned parties with a view to securing their concurrence for her to host the meeting within the first half of this year. As at the time this report was being prepared, no proposal had been received from Venezuela.

CHALLENGES

27. The above illustrates the challenges that continue to exist in the ASA process, which have stalled concrete action. Another challenge remains the practice of the South American side, aided by African Missions in Brasilia, of setting up programmes and meetings and fixing dates without reference to or consultation with the African side in Addis Ababa and the Commission. For example, Brazil organized a meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of Africa and Brazil in Brazil in April 2010, which some 46 African countries attended. On the other hand, a meeting of African and South American Ministers of Finance, which was to hold in Abuja, Nigeria, did not take place. There is absolute need for the programming of events to be centralized through the Coordination Mechanism, and dates, and venues, which should rotate between Africa and South America, should be agreed to by all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. The following recommendations are made for consideration and adoption:

- ❖ In the light of what has been stated above, there is an absolute need for a meeting of the ASA Coordination Mechanism to take place urgently, with a view to obtaining clarity on all the outstanding issues. Africa should insist that programmes, meetings and venues, as well as dates, must be mutually agreed upon and meetings should rotate between the two continents.
- ❖ Need for the Sub-Committee and the Commission to meet with Africa's Representatives in Brasilia in order to clarify the role of the latter in the ASA Summit process.
- ❖ The Organs of the Union should reaffirm the implementation of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat and pronounce themselves on the proposal on the functions of the Presidential Working Group and the Permanent Secretariat, in the light of the submission by the Commission on the subject.
- ❖ The ASA Senior Officials should meet and agree on the Implementation Plan so that ASA Foreign Ministers could endorse it in New York in September 2010.
- ❖ Preparation for the next ASA Summit in Libya in 2011 should begin. In this respect, Libya, the African Coordinator, the *Multilateral Cooperation* Sub-Committee and the Commission should take the initiative to make proposals for consideration.

AFRICA-TURKEY PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

29. It is recalled that, the First Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit took place In Istanbul, Turkey, from 18 to 20 August 2008, at the levels of Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State and Government. The objectives of the Summit were the following:

- To consolidate and further expand Africa-Turkey cooperation at all levels and in all fields;
 - To establish between Africa and Turkey a long-term stable partnership based on equality and mutual benefits; and
 - To promote Africa-Turkey cooperation with vigour in specific fields for the mutual benefits of the two sides.
- The Summit adopted two outcome documents, namely:
- The Istanbul Declaration; and
 - The Framework of Cooperation

30. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the programmes and activities agreed to in the Framework of Cooperation, the two sides were to develop, within one-year of the Summit, an appropriate follow-up mechanism or Plan of Action. The Sub-Committee and the Commission have considered the draft provided by the Turkish side and forwarded it to the Turkish side for their reaction. It is expected that before the Kampala meeting the draft plan would be examined by the two sides. It is hoped that a Plan of Action agreed to will contain specific projects and programmes that could attract deliverables to both sides.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ It is recommended that the engagement with Turkey should be heightened so that not only will the Plan of Action be finalized, but it will also be implemented.
- ❖ There is need to emphasize the continental nature of the partnership while at the same time promoting the bilateral dimension of the partnership.

AFRICA – EU PARTNERSHIP

31. Issues related to the Joint Africa – EU Strategy and implementation of the Action Plan of the Africa-EU Strategy were usually handled by the Follow-up Committee and presented directly to the PRC for consideration. The PRC has now directed that the Follow-up Committee should work closely with the Sub-Committee, the Commission, and Member States and ensure that necessary guidance is provided by the PRC throughout the process.

32. Following the PRC's mandate, the Sub-Committee met on 5 and 7 April 2010 to, among other items, consider three issues within the framework of the Africa-European Union Dialogue. These were:

- The report of the Meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Africa-EU Dialogue that was held on 1st March 2010;
- The Options Paper for Improving the Implementation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy; and
- The draft Agenda of the 14th Africa-EU Ministerial Troika that was to be held in Luxembourg on 27 April 2010.

33. The Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the Commission presented all three items to the Sub-Committee. With respect to the Report of the Meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Africa-EU Dialogue, the Sub-Committee, following the suggestion by the Commission, endorsed the report and recommended it to the PRC for consideration and adoption.

34. With respect to the Options Paper, the Sub-Committee considered and adopted the Paper with amendments. Some of the significant highpoints of the Paper are the following:

- The Joint Strategy should remain unchanged in substance except for a few areas such as possible changes to the Troika format on the EU side. The African side will continue to maintain its current Troika format;
- The 1st Action Plan should continue to subsist but it should be streamlined and focused;
- The 8 partnerships should be maintained; and
- Proposals for improving the implementation of the Dialogue were accepted by the Sub-Committee.

35. The Sub-Committee also considered and adopted the Agenda for the Ministerial Troika and Political Dialogue. All the foregoing recommendations as well as the Agenda were subsequently endorsed by the PRC before the Ministerial Troika/Political Dialogue was held in Luxembourg on 27 April 2010.

36. The Sub-Committee is of the view that it is necessary for the Africa-EU Partnership to be treated like other partnerships. Consequently, the Sub-Committee should be more involved in the management of this partnership.

37. It is noted that during the period under review, the Joint Task Force of the two Commissions met in Brussels in March 2010 to review the state of relations between the two sides in order to better deliver on specific projects and programmes and thereby enhance the strategic dialogue and cooperation between Africa and the European Union.

38. The meeting referred to above and the Ministerial Troika/Political Dialogue which took place in Luxembourg on 27 April 2010, as well as the various meetings of the Joint Experts Groups (JEGs), were in furtherance of the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and to prepare for the 3rd Africa-EU Summit scheduled to take place in Libya in November 2010.

39. It is also to be noted that the First College-to-College meeting between the two Commissions since the new European Commission was installed, took place in Addis Ababa on 8 June 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Due note should be taken of the developments taking place in the partnership between Africa and the EU, and encourage the process of identification programmes/projects for early implementation.
- ❖ To enhance better coordination of this partnership, the Follow-up Mechanism should prepare and report to the PRC through the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee;
- ❖ Preparations for the successful hosting of the third Africa-EU Summit should be intensified.

CONCLUSION

40. There is no gainsaying that the Sub-Committee and the Commission worked in close collaboration and were engaged in the implementation of the programmes of the above-mentioned partnerships during the period under review. All actions were geared towards forging closer and deeper relationship with Africa's strategic partners.

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON COOPERATION WITH SOME COUNTRIES
AND SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

1. The Activity Report submitted by the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee covered some aspects of the activities jointly undertaken by the Sub-Committee and the Commission on Africa's partnerships. The purpose of this report is to provide additional information on other activities carried out by the Commission with some partner countries and cooperation with some countries and some International Organizations.

A. PARTNERSHIPS WITH CHINA, SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN

2. With regard to the partnership with China and South Korea, it should be mentioned that there were no significant developments within the period under review. This is not to say that nothing is happening within the bilateral framework with the two.

3. With reference to China, it is to be noted that the dialogue on the implementation of the Assembly decisions to give a coordinating role to the AUC continues between the Commission and China. While there seems to be some movement on this, there is still apparent reluctance on the part of the Group of African Ambassadors in Beijing to let this happen. Since Member States have taken the decision to involve the AUC and the PRC, it is recommended that they inform Africa's representatives in Beijing of the need to abide by that decision.

4. With respect to the Korea-Africa Forum, there is need to engage with the Republic of Korea to ensure implementation of the decisions adopted in Seoul last November.

5. On TICAD, it is noted that there has been considerable engagement with Japan on giving a more active role to the AUC than is presently the case. There also has been some discussion with the Group of African Ambassadors in Tokyo. The point has been emphasized that the involvement of the AUC in the TICAD process will not be contradictory to the role the Group plays at the bilateral level. It is expected that the role of the AUC will be clearly defined shortly.

6. In the meantime, the AUC participated in the mid-term Ministerial review of TICAD which took place in Arusha early May 2010. The Deputy Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Trade and Industry participated in that meeting and met the Japanese Foreign Minister and representatives of the Group of African Ambassadors. It is also noted that H.E. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, in his remarks at the opening session of the Arusha meeting, clearly emphasized the need for the AUC to be more associated with and to play a lead role in the TICAD process. This reinforces the process of providing the appropriate niche for the AU and the AUC in the TICAD process

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ The nature of AUC's participation and role in the partnership with both China and Japan should be finalized as soon as possible. Member States also need to bring AU decisions to the attention of their Ambassadors in Beijing and Tokyo for implementation.

B. AU COMMISSION'S COOPERATION WITH SOME COUNTRIES

I. AUC – USA RELATIONS

7. It is to be recalled that during the last UN General Assembly Session, President Barrack Obama hosted a lunch for several African Heads of State and Government and the Chairperson of the AUC. In the exchange of views that took place during lunch, a number of African leaders proposed that a forum should be created, at the highest level, for dialogue on an annual basis between the US and Africa. This idea was welcomed by the American leadership.

8. Thus, in pursuit of this objective, and at the invitation of the US Government, the First Annual African Union Commission (AUC)-USA High Level Bilateral Meeting took place in Washington, DC, from 21 to 23 April 2010. The African Union Commission (AUC) delegation was led by H.E. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission, while the USA delegation was led by H.E. Jacob Lew, Deputy Secretary of State.

9. The AUC delegation met Senior Officials of the USA Administration and discussed a wide range of issues that ranged from Peace and Security; Infrastructure Development; Regional and Continental Integration; Food Security, Climate Change and Agriculture; Energy Security; Diversification of the Economy and Industrial Development to Social Sectors such as Health and Human Capital Development.

10. It is to be noted that even though the USA and Africa have had a long history of Cooperation and are bound together by strong economic, social and cultural ties, such cooperation has been mainly at the bilateral level. Given Africa's aspiration for continental integration and unity, it became necessary to give more emphasis to the Regional and Continental dimensions of our cooperation, with the African Union Commission playing the central coordinating role.

11. This development has been made possible by the new "American Diplomacy" that recognizes the changing nature of the world and upholds the principles of mutual respect, mutual interest, shared responsibilities and shared challenges in a world which is increasingly becoming inter-dependent and multi-polar in nature.

12. The historic First Annual AUC – USA High Level Bilateral Meeting has laid a solid foundation for a Strategic Partnership that provides a framework for follow-up interactions between the two sides in addressing issues not only of concern to Africa and USA, but also issues of a global nature as well.

13. The visit to Washington also afforded the AUC delegation the opportunity to engage the African Diaspora, which is considered as the "Sixth Region" of the African

Union; The Chamber of Commerce; the Black American Caucus and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Council is requested to take note of this important development, which has the potential of strengthening the relations not only between the US and the AUC but also between the US and Africa as a whole.

II. AUC – AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

14. In the recent past, the Government of Australia has shown considerable interest in intensifying its relationship with Africa. In this respect, Australia recently adopted its policy on Africa, spelling out the ways and manner in which it would engage the Continent. The message was conveyed to the Executive Council by the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs when he attended the Council Session in January 2009. Since then, the Australian Government has decided to open a Diplomatic Mission in Addis Ababa that will work closely with the AUC in order to enhance collaboration with both the Commission and the Continent. A public announcement was made on the establishment of a Mission in Addis Ababa in a statement by the Australian Foreign Minister to mark this year's Africa Day on 25 May 2010. In addition to this, Australia intends to increase its presence in Africa by establishing more missions in other African Capitals. It will also increase its assistance to Africa, particularly in the areas of peace and security, education, including scholarships, and participation in the private sector.

15. During the period under review, the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Erastus Mwencha, undertook a mission to Australia from 15 to 18 March 2010, at the invitation of the Australian Government.

16. While in Australia, the Deputy Chairperson met with a wide spectrum of sector representatives, ranging from senior government Officials to the private sector and academia. His discussions focused on issues relating to Peace, Security and Humanitarian Assistance; Investments; Food Security; Water and Sanitation, Education, Maternal and Child Health, initiatives aimed at improving Africa's efforts to achieve the MDGs, as well as Australia's support to Africa on the Doha Round Trade negotiations.

17. The Deputy Chairperson's mission to Australia achieved its objective of enhancing relations between the AUC and Member States on one hand and Australia on the other, as the Australian Government committed itself to broadening and deepening engagement with Africa bilaterally and continentally.

18. A framework of cooperation is being developed between the AUC and the Australian Government, which will spell out some specific areas in which Australia will engage Africa.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Council is requested to take note of this important development, which has the potential of strengthening the relations not only between Australia and the AUC but also between Australia and Africa as a whole.

C. AU COMMISSION'S COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

I. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION OF THE AU AND THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

19. It is recalled that in order to formalize the cooperation taking place between the Commission of the African Union (AUC) and the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, UK, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Addis Ababa on 31 October 2009. That MoU replaced the one signed with the OAU General Secretariat several years earlier and spells out the areas of cooperation the two organizations would like to engage in.

20. According to Article I of the MoU, the two Organizations agreed to cooperate in the following areas and activities – peace and security, good governance and elections, human and peoples' rights, gender and youth, information and communications technology, education and institutional capacity building, economics, trade, agriculture, and social and cultural matters.

21. Until recently, not much was done to implement the MoU. However, the first major step to do this was taken in December 2009, when an AUC delegation met with Officials of the Commonwealth Secretariat. That meeting prepared the ground for a follow-up meeting in Addis Ababa, which took place on 4 February 2010, where a Commonwealth Secretariat delegation had wide ranging discussions with a wide spectrum of Departments and Units of the Commission.

22. During the two meetings, the two organizations confirmed the broad areas of cooperation they would engage in as contained in the MoU. However, it was agreed that action would focus first on areas where cooperation already exists. These include election monitoring and observation, governance and related matters, trade issues, capacity building and peace and security.

23. Additional exchanges have taken place since the February 4 meeting and there are great prospects for an extremely mutually beneficial relationship between the AUC and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

24. The purpose of the report is to bring to the attention of Member States the collaboration the Commission is developing with the Commonwealth Secretariat, an organization whose membership includes twenty AU Member States.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Council is requested to take note of the collaboration existing between the AUC and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Comments would also be

appreciated on how this cooperation could be strengthened to the mutual benefits of the AU and the Commonwealth Member States.

II. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

25. It will be recalled that the African Union Commission and the Organization of American States (OAS) signed an MoU in Washington, DC, on 1st October 2009. It was agreed at that time to finalize a draft Plan of Action that would be developed by both Organizations.

26. In this respect, Ms Sherry Stephenson, Head of Institutional Relations, Department of International Affairs, Organization of American States (OAS), visited the African Union Commission (AUC) Headquarters between 31st March and 2nd April 2010. During the visit, she had substantive exchanges with the Office of the Chairperson as well as with various Departments of the Commission.

27. A follow up meeting between the African Union Commission and the Organization of American States (OAS) General Secretariat was held at the OAS Headquarters, at the margins of the AUC visit to Washington, DC, for the first AU-USA High Level Bilateral Meetings.

28. The aim of the programmatic exchange was for the two organizations to better understand ongoing work of each organization in specific areas, as well as to discuss ideas for strengthening ongoing and creating future additional collaboration.

29. During substantive exchanges, the OAS staff and the AUC delegates put forward ideas for furthering mutual cooperation between the two organizations in the areas of democracy, electoral observation, human rights and social development. Additionally, suggestions were made for undertaking new cooperation in areas centering on the promotion of Women's rights, drug trafficking, outreach to Civil Society and conflict resolution, among others.

30. Agreement was reached on the holding of the second "Democracy and Human Rights Forum", tentatively planned to take place in Addis Ababa in first quarter of 2011, as agreed at the first "Democracy Bridge Forum" held in 2007.

31. In addition to this, the Commission and the OAS Secretariat agreed on the following:

- (i) Collaboration between the African Union Commission on Human and People's Rights and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights should continue and be deepened;
- (ii) Collaboration and exchange of views and experience should be encouraged between the African Court of Human and People's Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- (iii) Collaboration between the two Organizations in the area of election monitoring should continue. In this regard, the AU should consider making OAS participants in election monitoring teams in Africa part of the AU team as the OAS does for AU Observers in election observation in OAS Countries;

- (iv) The AU should take a more active part in the annual meeting of the Declaration of Principles for the observation of elections, to which it is a signatory;
- (v) The OAS General Secretariat will invite two representatives each of the PRC and the AUC to a session, of the OAS Permanent Council, the OAS equivalent of the PRC, in the third week of September 2010 after the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly, to deliver statements on agreed subjects with the aim of informing OAS members of the role of the AU Commission;
- (vi) The AU agreed to invite the OAS to a workshop on Reflections on the Peace Process in Africa to be held in Maputo, Mozambique, later in 2010;
- (vii) The need for the revision of a draft Work Plan that will be expanded and circulated, with a view to its finalization.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Council is requested to take note of the on-going collaboration between the AUC and the OAS General Secretariat, and to endorse the activities therein.

III. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

32. It is to be recalled that the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) had established a working relationship from the 1970s. Indeed, in 1974, the OIC granted observer status to the OAU during the Fifth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In turn, the thirty-first Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Khartoum, Sudan, in July 1978, adopted Resolution CM/Res.669 (XXXI), authorizing the OAU Secretary General to negotiate with the OIC General Secretariat a cooperation agreement between the two organizations.

33. To this end, a draft cooperation agreement was prepared, which was submitted to the thirty-second Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 1979. Council deferred deliberation of the document but approved it at its 2000 Session. The approved draft agreement by Council was sent to the OIC for signing but the latter failed to do so. Consequently, although the OAU and the AU since its establishment in 2002 have collaborated with the OIC, no formal agreement has been signed to provide a framework for cooperation between the two Organizations. To rectify this anomaly and in order to strengthen institutional cooperation between the AU and OIC, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Secretary General of the OIC decided to re-invigorate the relations between their two institutions.

34. It was in this respect that a two-member delegation from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) met with officials of the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 22-23 October 2008. All the Departments and Units of the Commission participated in that meeting.

35. In the meantime, the Commission has revised the 2000 Agreement, taking into account developments since then and the current realities being faced by the two Organizations. The Agreement is still being negotiated with the OIC Secretariat and the agreed draft will be presented to the policy organs of the AU for consideration and adoption before being concluded with the OIC.

36. It should be noted that the OIC is made up of 57 members, out of which 26 are AU members and 22 are members of the League of Arab States (LAS). It also has 21 affiliated organizations and agencies, including the Islamic Development Bank, all of which would be brought into the partnership between the AU and OIC. Consequently, a partnership with the OIC will be very helpful to the activities of the AU.

RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ Council is requested to take note of this development and endorse the conclusion of an MoU between the two institutions.

CONCLUSION

37. From the foregoing, it is evident that Africa's Strategic Partnership with a number of Countries, Organizations and other bodies is being strengthened. It also shows that there is a clear willingness on the part of our partners to engage and increase collaboration with Africa. Therefore, Africa should seize the momentum in order to derive maximum benefit from this growing partnership.

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