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**DRAFT MINUTES OF INCOMING AND OUTGOING BUREAU MEETING OF THE
AFRICAN GROUP OF AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS HELD AT THE AU
PERMANENT MISSION ON 17 JANUARY 2019**



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1. An Incoming and Outgoing Bureau meeting of the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels (GAAB) was held on 17 January 2019 at 10:00 am at the Permanent Mission of the African Union (AU) in Brussels, under the chairmanship of H.E Ms. TENENG MBA JAITEH , Ambassador of the Republic of The Gambia.
2. In attendance were the Ambassadors and/or Representatives of the following Member States: Angola, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Rwanda.
3. The President invited Incoming and Outgoing Bureau members to observe a minute of silence in memory of:
 - Dr. René N'Guettia Kouassi, AUC Economic Affairs Director who passed on recently, and;
 - The victims of the terrorist attack perpetrated on 15 January, 2019 in Nairobi, which caused the death of 21 persons and several wounded.

I. Adoption of the Agenda

4. The following Agenda was adopted:
 - 1) Adoption of the Agenda;
 - 2) Adoption of Minutes of the Previous Bureau Meeting of the African Group and Consideration of Matters Arising;
 - 3) Introduction of the Activity Report of the Outgoing Bureau;
 - 4) Installation of the Incoming Bureau Members;
 - 5) Upcoming Meetings:
 - Consultative Meeting Between the African Group and the African Union Delegation Scheduled on 20 January 2019, as part of the Preparation of the AU-EU Ministerial Meeting to be held on 21-22 January 2019;
 - Retreat of the African Group on the Cotonou Post-2020 Negotiations scheduled on 30 January 2019 with the participation of Dr. Carlos LOPES, AU High Representative in the Negotiations with the European Union on Cotonou Post-2020 Agreement;
 - 6) Any Other Business.

II. Adoption of Minutes of the Previous Bureau Meeting of the African Group and Consideration of Matters Arising

5. Minutes of the Bureau meeting held on 2 October 2018 were adopted by the Incoming and Outgoing Bureau Members.
6. No issue was raised under « Matters Arising ».

7. The Ambassador of Cameroon informed the Bureau Members that the former Ambassador of the Republic of Gabon, Ms. Félicité ONGOUORI NGOUBILI, who was candidate in the legislative elections in her country, was elected as Member of Parliament (MP) during the 1st round of the elections.

III. Introduction of the Activity Report of the Outgoing Bureau

8. The Activity Report of the Outgoing Bureau was introduced by the President of the Group, Ambassador of The Gambia. She requested the correction of some typographical errors contained in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of the English version of the Report (copy in attachment).
9. She seized this opportunity to launch an appeal to all the Ambassadors, Members of the African Group, to attend meetings of the Group in person.
10. H.E Ms. TENENG MBA JAITEH availed herself of the opportunity of this last meeting of the African Group under hers presidency to:
- Extend her thanks to all the Members of the African Group of Ambassadors, the Bureau Members and the AU Permanent Representative and his team for their valuable support under her tenure.
 - Assure the Incoming President, the Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea of her full support in the discharge of his mandate.
11. No further comments were made on the Activity Report. The presidency of the African Group was formally hand over by outgoing President to the President-elect, H. E. OUSMANE SYLLA, Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea.

Installation of the Incoming Bureau Members

12. The Chargé d'Affaires a.i of the AU Permanent Mission read out the composition of the new GAAB Bureau for the period from 17 January 2019 to 17 April 2019 which is composed as follows:

President:	Republic of Guinea,
Vice-Presidents:	Kenya (East Africa), Nigeria (West Africa) Mauritania (North Africa), Angola (Southern Africa), Democratic Republic of Congo (Central Africa).
Ex-officio Members:	Rwanda (current AU Presidency- will be replaced by Egypt as from February 2019), Cameroon, (Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps).
Troika:	Republic of Guinea (Incoming President), The Gambia (Former President), Guinea-Bissau (Next President).

12. In his introductory remarks, the President of the GAAB paid tribute to the Outgoing Bureau and its President in particular, for her leadership. He also commended the AU Secretariat for the work achieved over the past three months.
13. He indicated that the new GAAB Bureau is taking office at an important period marked with several major milestones in the coming months, including the preparation of the AU-EU ministerial meeting to be held on 21-22 January 2019 in Brussels and, the Retreat of the African Group on Post-Cotonou Negotiations scheduled on 30 January, 2019.

IV. Upcoming Meetings:

a. Consultative Meeting Between the African Group and the African Union Delegation Scheduled on 20 January 2019, as part of the Preparation of the AU-EU Ministerial Meeting to be held on 21-22 January 2019

14. The Chargé d'Affaires a.i of the Permanent Mission emphasized that the Permanent Representative was committed to ensuring the largest possible interaction between the GAAB and the AU high-level delegations during their missions in Brussels. He indicated that the consultative meeting of 20 January 2019 enters within this framework and is intended to discuss substantive issues related to the AU-EU ministerial meeting scheduled on 21-22 January and the best ways and means to further strengthen the AU-EU Partnership. He added that all the ministerial meeting related documents were compiled by the AU Permanent Mission in a brochure which was circulated to all the Embassies of the Member States.
15. The President of the GAAB shared some logistical information with the Bureau Members and recalled that the format for the participation of Member States in the ministerial meeting is 1+2 delegates in the meeting room plus 2 other delegates in the listening room.
16. The Ambassador of the Republic of Congo read out a message sent by the EU the same morning concerning the revision of the Agenda of the Ministerial Meeting. It was noted that the 3 parallel thematic sessions initially planned were deleted in the revised version of the Agenda.
17. The Ambassador of Rwanda confirmed the revision of the agenda of the Ministerial Meeting. He indicated that the matter was discussed between the Foreign Minister of his country and the EU High Representative and an agreement was reached between the two sides on the above changes.

b. Retreat of the African Group on the Cotonou Post-2020 Negotiations scheduled on 30 January 2019 with the participation of Dr. Carlos LOPES, AU High Representative in the Negotiations with the European Union on Cotonou Post-2020 Agreement

18. The President of the Group recalled that the Retreat was proposed by Dr. Carlos Lopes, AU High Representative in the Negotiations with the European Union on Cotonou Post-2020 Agreement during the meeting held with the GAAB Members in December 2018.

19. The AU Permanent Mission Chargé d'Affaires a.i emphasized that the main objective of the retreat is to allow an exchange with the African Group on the post-Cotonou negotiations and to ensure coordination and coherence between the AU-EU negotiations and those in progress at the ACP level to avoid possible overlaps. He indicated that the documents for the retreat will be sent shortly to all the Embassies of Member States.

V. Any Other Business

20. The Delegate of Kenya informed the meeting of the terrorist attack perpetrated at a hotel in Nairobi on 15 January 2019, which caused the death of 21 dead persons and several wounded.
21. The President of the Group informed the meeting of the post-election latest developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He indicated that a high-level meeting is scheduled this afternoon at the EU Commission Headquarters.
22. Finally, the President of the Group recalled the appeal launched by the Outgoing President, the Ambassador of The Gambia, on the importance of the participation of Ambassadors in person at the various meetings of the Group. He requested the AU Permanent Mission to prepare a Note Verbale to that effect.
23. As the agenda was exhausted, the President thanked the Incoming and Outgoing Bureau Members and the Permanent Mission for their support. The meeting was adjourned at 11.15 am.

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