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COMMUNIQUE ON THE VISIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (8-9 FEBRUARY 2018)

Addis Ababa, 9 February 2018: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, concluded a two-day visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Wang Yi. He was accompanied by the Commissioners for Peace and Security and Social Affairs, Smail Chergui and Amira El-Fadil, respectively, the Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Implementation Agency, Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, as well as by other senior African Union officials, including the Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkengasong.

On 8 February 2018, the Chairperson held a meeting with Minister Wang Yi, followed by Strategic Dialogue consultations between the African Union Commission and China. The Chairperson also met with Ms. Li Bin, Minister of National Health and Family Planning, and interacted with the African Group of Ambassadors in Beijing. On 9 February, he met with Mr. Wang Yong, Councillor, Council of State, while members of the delegation visited the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and the Huawei Beijing Executive Briefing Centre.

The meetings with the Chinese interlocutors provided an opportunity to review various aspects of the partnership and agree on steps to enhance it, in furtherance of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Agenda 2030.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to promote multilateralism and the role of the United Nations against the backdrop of evolving and complex global challenges. They expressed the conviction that their partnership is an example of solidarity among peoples based on mutual respect and benefits, noting that Africa and China together represent more than one third of humanity and share a history of external domination – in this respect, the African Union Commission delegation reiterated its gratitude to China for its support to the liberation of the Continent. They agreed to proactively work towards a better representation of Africa in the international system, including in the United Nations Security Council, as part of a new global governance system.

China welcomed the planned establishment of an African Union Office in Beijing to ensure effective and timely follow-up of the China-Africa partnership, and committed to support the setting up of this Office. This representation will also support the work of the African Group of Ambassadors in Beijing, to ensure alignment with African Union positions. It should be noted that China had established a Permanent Mission to the African Union, since 2015.

The two sides also discussed China's support to the African Union Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). China agreed to expedite the construction and equipping of the Africa CDC, within the framework of the five-year strategic plan developed by the Africa CDC in collaboration with international partners, including China. China committed to earmark RMB 500 million to that end and in support of other projects.

The Africa CDC was launched in 2017, with support from China and the United States. In its short lifespan, it has made commendable contributions, including technical support to Member States in response to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

The two sides commended the results achieved within the Forum on Africa - China Cooperation (FOCAC), and looked forward to the Fourth FOCAC Summit scheduled to take place in Beijing, in September 2018. They acknowledged the important role of the African Union Commission, and agreed to work together in further strengthening this mechanism.

In that context, the two sides pledged to redouble their efforts to boost Chinese investments in Africa, based on a win-win approach. In this respect, particular focus will be placed on infrastructure projects at regional and continental scale, including railways, roads and aviation. The two sides agreed to finalize shortly a list of regional and cross-border infrastructure projects as part of a five-year action plan within the framework of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The two sides also agreed to accord high priority to investments in energy transmission corridors, industrialization, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and tourism.

To achieve the above-mentioned objective, attention will be paid to measures that can improve the overall policy environment. The African Union Commission delegation informed the Chinese side of its ongoing efforts to develop a pan-African Investment Code, as well as of the planned second phase of negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which, among others, will address investment-related issues.

China hailed the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market during the African Union Summit of January 2018, acknowledging the anticipated increase in the volume of air traffic, flight operations and emergence of new routes. China agreed to support Africa's efforts, largely through investing in the development and operation of aviation infrastructure. The two sides underlined the need to significantly scale up air connections between China and Africa. This would include promoting an open skies agreement, which would allow carriers of both sides wider access to their respective markets and support the increase in the number of Chinese tourists to Africa.

Furthermore, China agreed to continue supporting institutional capacity at the African Union. This is in addition to their ongoing support for African Union infrastructure, including the New Conference Centre and the renovation of other buildings in the African Union compound.

The two sides exchanged views on peace and security issues of mutual concern. China pledged its full support to African-led initiatives to promote peace, security and stability, including the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the African Union Mission in Somalia. The African Union Commission delegation welcomed the soon-to-be-received Chinese equipment, worth USD 25 million, to be delivered at the African Union Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, for use by the African Standby Force. This forms part of China's USD 100 million contribution in support of peacekeeping in Africa.

The Chinese side also reiterated its commitment to continue supporting African positions at the United Nations Security Council, including the request for use of assessed contributions to finance African-led peace support operations undertaken with the consent of the Security Council. The two sides agreed to work towards establishing a consultation mechanism between the African members of the Security Council (A3) and China, to facilitate coordination of positions on issues of common interest.

During his meeting with the African Group of Ambassadors, the Chairperson of the Commission briefed them on his mission, including the planned establishment of an African Union representational office in Beijing. The Chairperson also led an interactive discussion on the institutional reform of the African Union.

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