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**REPORT OF H. E. MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA AND LEADER ON THE
AFRICAN ANTI-CORRUPTION YEAR**

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the progress on implementation of the African Union 2018 theme of the year. It also aims to preliminarily assess /evaluate the implementation of the African Anti-Corruption Year. It concludes with some key findings and recommendations for consideration by African Union policy organs.

2. The thrust of the declaration of 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year as encapsulated in the concept note on the year was threefold;

- a) First and foremost, to deepen the resolve, focus and expertise for addressing the many facets of corruption facing Africa;
- b) Secondly, to scale up and increase effectiveness of advocacy efforts; and
- c) Thirdly, to enhance and broaden partnerships with all stakeholders through strategic collaboration aimed at fighting corruption on the continent.

3. These three pillars would contribute to the overall objective to promote the fight against corruption and impunity on the continent as a sustainable path to a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

4. The specific objectives of the African Anti-Corruption Year as drawn from the Concept Note on the theme of the year were;

- a) To evaluate the progress made in fighting corruption; and adopt best practices since the coming into force of the AUCPCC;
- b) Increased space, leveraging on ICT and new forms of communications, for civil society and private sector participation in the fight against corruption in Africa;
- c) To evaluate the level of ratification, domestication and implementation of regional, continental and relevant international instruments that have direct bearing on the fight against corruption at the national level. Encourage Member State to develop policies, plans of actions and programs so as to boost the fight against corruption in Africa;
- d) Develop an Africa Common Position on the recovery of African assets hosted in foreign jurisdictions;

- e) Provide technical support to Member States in the fight against corruption; particularly those seeking to develop policies, plans of actions and programs; and
 - f) Contribute to the strengthening of the implementation of anti-corruption policies.
5. The expected Outcomes of the African Anti-Corruption Year were;
- a) The number of citizen led and AU backed initiative on anti-corruption across Africa will double, with a correlated increased in knowledge across the continent on the dangers of corruption on socio, economic and political transformation of Africa;
 - b) There will be an increased number of citizen and state-based participation in the regional and relevant international anti – corruption instruments and measures;
 - c) There will be increased domestication and implementation of all AU and REC instruments that have bearings on anti – corruption at the local, national and continental levels; and
 - d) The fight against corruption will have contributed significantly to the realization of the Agenda 2063 and implementation of other relevant development agenda aimed towards Sustainable Development of the continent.
6. Activities were conceptualized and developed into the following three clusters;
- Cluster 1 constituted Knowledge generation and management which aimed to increase the pool of knowledge and best practices on Anti-Corruption in Africa;
 - Cluster 2 was advocacy and outreach aimed at improving the acceptance and appreciation of Anti-Corruption efforts in Africa;
 - Cluster 3 was Multi-Sectoral Dialogue which aimed to deepen the understanding of multi-stakeholder roles in strengthening of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Africa.
7. Activities were planned, conceptualized and implemented by a joint technical working team composed of representatives of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, the African Governance Architecture Secretariat and the Department of Political Affairs under the overall stewardship H.E Muhamadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and African Union Champion on the theme of the year.

8. Member States were appraised of developments in implementation of the African Anti-Corruption Year through a briefing and debate on the theme of the year which was carried out at the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Nouakchott, Mauritania in July 2018.

9. A total of 21 activities were selected to be implemented during the course of the year and a matrix of activities is annexed to this report. Several key activities and the resultant recommendations are highlighted in this report.

10. In January 2018 at the 30th Ordinary Summit of the African Union, the theme of the year was officially launched. This was followed by several press and media engagements that assisted in informing citizens of the priorities for the African Anti-Corruption Year. Also, in January 2018, a partner's roundtable was convened to concretize support for activities to be conducted in the year.

11. In March 2018, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) convened a meeting of the AGA Platform to discuss and among other the contribution of AU organs to the commemoration of theme of the year. Through this activity, the Unions organs were appraised on implementation strategies and were able to align their work plans to feature activities related to the theme of the year.

12. Nigeria in its capacity as the Chairperson of the AU Peace and Security Council for the month of April 2018, convened a Special Open Session of the Council on the agenda issue - The nexus between corruption and conflict resolution. The session reiterated the need for all Member States to promote the functional independence of national Anti-corruption Agencies as a step towards strengthening the criminal justice system to effectively prevent and combat corruption and to operate freely without political interference; All Member states were encouraged to sign, ratify and accede to the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC); and the critical need for the African Union to reinforce the link between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was stressed;

13. The AU marked the 2018 Africa Day on 25 May in Addis Ababa with focus on the theme of the year. The Chairperson of the AU Commission and Nigeria as champion, along with Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives accredited to the AU, and development partners, exchanged strategic policy measures to meaningfully rid our continent of the scourge of corruption.

14. Furthermore, the Government of Nigeria hosted two key advocacy multi sector processes of regional and global dimension in May 2018 in Abuja to increase awareness in relation to the annual theme:

- a) The 8th Regional Conference of Heads of Anti - Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa with the theme: Partnering towards Asset Recovery and Return; and

- b) Regional Consultations on Strengthening Institutional Capacity of National Anti - Corruption Agencies in West Africa towards enhancing judicial cooperation for operational efficiency, in partnership with the AU and ECOWAS.

15. In addition, the AU Member States actively participated in the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) - Organized 19th Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa in May 2018, in Addis Ababa which utilized the AU annual theme to advocate for structural economic transformation through winning the fight against corruption. The RCM agreed to mainstream anti-corruption programming into work areas in order to drive the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063. At the regional level, the Advisory Board on Corruption has also engaged regional economic communities (RECs) particularly ECOWAS and the East African Community.

16. African women as part of the processes of the 31st AU Summit organized in Nouakchott, a session on the impact of corruption and the way out for women, children and the youth. Likewise, the African Union in collaboration with the International Center for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa, earlier this month, engaged in a forum held in Addis Ababa on Fighting Corruption, to increase the gains of investing in girls and women's education, to ensure effectiveness of the demographic dividend. The advocacy event was held in partnership with the AU Commissioner for Human Resources and Science and Technology.

17. To raise greater awareness on the theme of the year, the Government of Nigeria through the Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption and the Nigeria NEPAD & APRM Office, convened the consultative forum held in Abuja, on the theme "Breaking the Anti-Corruption Chain". The forum deliberated on ways and means to achieve a corrupt-free African continent, through increased experience sharing in order to reduce its corrosive impact and implication.

18. On 11 July 2018, Member States commemorated Africa Anti-Corruption Day by organizing sensitization and promotional activities. In its capacity as the championing nation country, Nigeria and the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption convened a one-day symposium on the topic of asset recovery as well as organized a march around Abuja. The celebration of Africa Anti-Corruption Day has served to enhance the visibility of the Convention as well as pay attention to the specific challenges and opportunities that exist in fighting corruption in Africa.

19. In September 2018, Nigeria and the African Union convened a High Level Dialogue on "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: Leveraging International Cooperation to Achieve Sustainable Development in Africa" on the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly. The Dialogue led the Union and the UN to mainstream anti-corruption programming into work areas in order to drive the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. It also strengthened ties with key allies who support Africa's cause to end Illicit Financial Flows and ensure the return of stolen assets by leveraging

international cooperation and collaboration. In addition, a High Level Roundtable was co-organized by NEPAD and NEPAD Nigeria on Corruption, Migration and Bridging Africa's Infrastructure Gap on the sidelines of the 73rd UNGA

20. In October 2018, the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption supported the Pan African Parliament (PAP) in convening its 1st Ordinary Session of the 5th Parliament to which the theme was dedicated to fighting corruption. Through the session, parliamentarians debated and resolved to ensure transparency in the award of public contracts, strengthen oversight of government expenditure, advocate for greater political will in the fight against corruption and contribute to awareness raising in society.

21. In November 2018, the 7th edition of the African Governance Architecture High Level Dialogue was convened on the theme of the year. The High Level Dialogue provided an opportunity for the Board to engage with key stakeholders, reflect on the state of the fight against corruption in Africa and develop solutions and new approaches in curbing Illicit Financial Flows and corruption in Africa. Some of the key outcomes are recommendations from the High Level Dialogue included creating an enabling environment to enhance citizen participation budgeting, planning and utilization of public resources paying particular attention to gender specific goals and deliverables; strengthening cooperation between and among financial intelligence units, supreme audit institutions and national anti-corruption agencies including strengthening of the African Tax Administration Forum and the African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions; and advocating for the reform of global rules relating to finance, tax and secrecy jurisdictions in order to minimize the bleeding of African resources.

22. Finally on 9 and 10 December 2018, the African Continental Youth Congress was convened in Abuja, Nigeria, under the patronage of H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and African Union Champion for the Anti-Corruption Year, in conjunction with the African Union (AU) Commission. Over 400 youngpeople from over 45 AU Member States were convened to the Congress which coincided with the international anti-corruption day. The congress endorsed the establishment of the African Youth Community of Practice on Anti-Corruption (AYCPAC) as a framework for coordination of youth led efforts in the fight against corruption in Africa and invited H.E President Muhammadu Buhari to serve as patron of the community.

OBSERVATIONS / FINDINGS

23. The implementation of Project 2018 was a considerable success and it served to enhance the visibility of the African Union and Member States in their role in fighting corruption. The adoption of the Nouakchott Declaration on the African Anti-Corruption Year serves as an important public statement on priority areas in the fight against corruption in Africa and has ensured the Continent speaks with one voice.

24. The designation of 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year also contributed to further policy action by member states on anti-corruption. This was evidenced by the receipt of three (3) new ratifications from Angola, Mauritius and Sudan bringing the total number of states parties to the Convention to 40. Other states including Morocco and Tunisia also expressed their willingness to ratify the Convention. At least 25 other Member States who took the floor during the debate on the theme of the year undertook to implement domestic reforms to strengthen anti-corruption measures.

25. The African Anti-Corruption Year also enhanced citizen participation and engagement in the fight against corruption. Most notably, over 1000 youth were engaged during the AGA regional youth consultations as well as the African Anti-Corruption Youth Congress. The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption was also able to curate the work of civil society organization and develop a better understanding and appreciation of actions at the national level by non-state actors. The Board was also able to strengthen its relationships with civil society organizations as well as encourage citizen and state partnership in the fight against corruption at various meetings and forums. The engagement of the private sector however remained a key gap.

26. The designation of 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year also allowed the AU to reflect on the effectiveness of the approach to fighting corruption on the Continent. To this end, agreement was reached on the need to review the Convention, state reporting questionnaire as well as further capacitate the Board including review of tenure of Board members and staffing the secretariat through the ongoing reform process. The studies being conducted on the state of implementation of the convention will provide further evidence to assist the board to understand the challenges of Member States in ratifying and domesticating the Convention. The study related to the impact of corruption on children will also add a human rights dimension to the fight against corruption.

27. The Anti-Corruption Year also enabled the continent to identify and designate priorities notably the development of a Common African Position on Asset Recovery, the development of an African Anti-Corruption Methodology as well as continued advocacy on the issue of Illicit Financial Flows through the Consortium on Illicit Financial Flows.

28. The convening of the High Level Dialogue by Nigeria on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly as well as participation of the African Union at the International Anti-Corruption Conference also contributed to amplifying the African voice to the global anti-corruption agenda.

WAY FORWARD / RECOMMENDATIONS

29. Prevention is better than a cure. To this end, greater effort is encouraged in the areas of education, sensitization and the identification and inculcation of positive traditional practices in the fight against corruption. Member States and national anti-corruption agencies are encouraged to explore traditional and newer forms of anti-

corruption sensitization campaigns including through social media and the arts to drive home the message.

30. The AU should continue its engagement with the youth as a key demographic in the fight against corruption. Member States should ensure youth participation at all stages in the corruption prevention chain. The establishment of anti-corruption clubs in schools and universities, the development of youth specific anti-corruption content and messaging as well as the mainstreaming of youth in national bodies are seen as priority areas.

31. The fight against Illicit Financial Flows and the imperative to ensure the swift return of stolen assets remain key priorities for the African Union at the international level. To this end, greater synergies between and African Union and the United Nations are needed to speed up the implementation of the recommendation of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows. Where possible, technical support should be provided by relevant organs to Member States that are desirous. The work being done to develop the Common African Position on Asset Recovery should continue and Member States and development partners are encouraged to support this process.

32. Member States are encouraged ramp of ratification and implementation of the Convention. Non-States Parties to the Convention namely Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, South Sudan, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan, Eswatini and Tunisia;were encouraged by the Champion H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, through special letters to take appropriate measures to accede to the Convention within a reasonable time. The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption should consider the development of a specific/ targeted strategy to achieve universal ratification of the Convention. In particular, it should work with the Office of the Legal Counsel, Department of Political Affairs and the Pan African Parliament to identify countries most receptive to rapid ratification of the Convention. States Parties to the Convention are also encouraged to report frequently to the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption on their implementation of the Convention.

33. Member States are encouraged to continue to support and capacitate national anti-corruption agencies through the provision of adequate human, financial and technical resources. Member States are also encouraged to support national bodies responsible for the fight against corruption by ensuring they are shielded from undue political influence as a key requirement to enable them to conduct their functions independently. Finally Member States are encouraged to put in place measure to support inter agency cooperation.

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