

DECLARATION ON THE AFRICAN ANTI-CORRUPTION YEAR

WE, Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at our 31st Ordinary Session in Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, following our debate on the 2018 theme of the year: *“Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”*:

Recalling decision Assembly/AU/Dec.657(XXIX) taken at the 29th Ordinary Session of the African Union, that declared 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year;

Establishing the scope of the phenomenon of corruption, its universal nature and its specificity in Africa as one of the pressing governance and development challenges confronting the Continent given its harmful and corrosive effect on progress, stability and development while impeding economic growth by discouraging foreign investments, promoting inequality, creating distortions in resource allocation, increasing the cost of doing business and reducing the net value of public spending;

Recognizing that corruption seriously gets in the way of the normal functioning of economic and social activities, reduces the volume of public income, promotes the misappropriation and misallocation of scarce resources, undermines the rule of law and weakens government institutions;

Recalling the Assembly Special Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.5.(XXIV) on Illicit Financial Flows which pointed out that illicit capital flight is exacerbated by corrupt tendencies of government agencies, lack of or weak African institutions and lack of capacity to monitor and curb such criminal activities;

Further acknowledging that the African Continent has made significant strides to combat corruption by putting in place legal and policy frameworks, notably the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) while **Further noting** that adoption of the legal and policy frameworks have not had the desired success in effectively tackling corruption in many member States and that adoption and implementation of the AUCPCC has been uneven across the continent;

Bearing in mind that the fight against corruption is a collective responsibility of Africa as a whole;

HEREBY:

1. **EXHORT** all African Union Member States to empower national anti-corruption agencies, financial intelligence units, audit firms and relevant bodies by strengthening their independence and adequately financing and capacitating them to be able to perform their duties in a hitch-free manner;
2. **APPEAL** to Member States to strengthen South-South cooperation through voluntary information exchange, mutual legal assistance and sharing of best

- practices among national anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions or relevant bodies devoted thereto;
3. **DECIDE** to combat illicit financial flows through measures such as the establishment of effective ownership registers, country-by-country reporting of financial information, participation in automatic exchange of tax information agreements, and support in strengthening tax authorities through the work of the African Tax Administration Forum;
 4. **UNDERTAKE** to implement inclusive development planning and policymaking that includes open, participatory and transparent budgeting processes to allow citizens participate in budget development and monitor the implementation thereof;
 5. **RECOGNIZE** the imperative of investing in demographic dividend through anti-corruption education and sensitization campaigns targeting young people as a means of catalysing attitude change;
 6. **STRESS** the need to address detection of corruption in defence contracting and procurement, exploitation of natural resource and in all transactions in the extractive industries sector, as well as in the private sector and the education sector as priority areas;
 7. **REQUEST** the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, the Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) together with other stakeholders to work to speed up implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa;
 8. **CALL UPON** our international partners and allies to agree on a transparent and efficient timetable for the recovery and return of stolen assets to Africa with due respect for the sovereignty of States and their national interests;
 9. **UNDERTAKE** to adopt measures to ensure that public personalities declare their assets and that such assets are verified;
 10. **UNDERTAKE** to progressively abolish bank secrecy jurisdictions and tax havens on the Continent;
 11. **REQUEST** the Advisory Board on Corruption to make appropriate recommendations on amendment of the Convention to strengthen the Board and its mandate;
 12. **EXPRESS SATISFACTION** to H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Champion of the theme of the year, for his stewardship and commitment towards the commemoration of this theme;
 13. **INSTRUCT** the Commission to report regularly on the implementation of this Declaration.

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