

AFRICAN UNION

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**Communique of the Bureau of the African Union (AU) Executive Council
Teleconference Meeting held on Thursday, 9 April 2020.**

Dr. Naledi Pandor, the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Executive Council and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa convened a teleconference Meeting of the Bureau of the AU Executive Council on 9 April 2020. All Members of the Bureau, as follows, took part in the teleconference: Mrs. Marie Tumba Nzeza, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Mrs. Rachelle Omano, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, and Mr. Tiébilé Dramé, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Mrs. Amira El Fadil, and the Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Dr. John Nkengasong also took part in the teleconference.

The meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Council was a follow-up to two successive meetings of the Bureau of Heads of State/Government which developed an overarching framework for Africa's response COVID19.

In line with the sentiment and decision of the Bureau of the Assembly, the Ministers underscored the importance of unity, cohesion in order to effectively implement the continental anti-COVID-19 strategy that is underpinned by coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and communications in order to prevent transmission, limit deaths, and mitigate harm. The Ministers also reiterated the need for African leader and ownership of the response to COVID-19.

They took note with satisfaction of the efforts of the AU Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to implement the Africa anti-COVID19 strategy, and encouraged the RECs to ensure synergy, complementarity and coherence in the fight against the Coronavirus through the Africa Taskforce for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response.

The Ministers welcomed the progress report on the establishment of Ministerial Task Forces on Health, Finance and Transport, which are critical for the comprehensive implementation on the continental strategy to fight COVID-19.

The Bureau of the Executive Council welcomed and recommended for approval the measures undertaken by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Faki Mahamat of putting in place all the necessary legal requirements for the operationalisation of the African Union Covid-19 Response Fund. In this regard, the Bureau noted that its Members are in the process of transferring a combined total of \$17 million, as seed capital to both the Fund

and the Africa CDC, as follows: \$12.5 million the Fund, and \$4.5 million to the Africa CDC. The Ministers urged members states to make contributions to both the Fund and the Africa CDC. They also invited regional development institutions, the African private sector, international financial institutions and bilateral partners to honour their financial commitments to the Fund.

The Ministers emphasised that the Africa COVID-19 Fund is a pan-African initiative that will mobilise financial resources for Africa's war against the novel Coronavirus. They agreed on a governance framework for the Fund, that will provide effective oversight and ensure the equitable distribution of these funds to Member States.

The Ministers expressed their deep appreciation to the Africa CDC for providing an invaluable platform for the exchange of real-time information and data regarding the spread of the virus. They welcomed the efforts of the AU Commission and the Africa CDC in coordinating the distribution of some vital medical supplies to Member States. In this regard, the Ministers reiterated the call of the Heads of State for international cooperation and support in the urgent provision of life-saving supplies including access to diagnostics, personal protection equipment (PPEs), masks, gowns, and ventilators and other support devices and the need for a continental process for pool emergency procurement and distribution through regional hubs. The also expressed the urgent need to establish humanitarian corridors to enable members to receive the critical supplies and other support.

The Ministers expressed grave concern about the spread of the novel coronavirus to African countries, particularly those hosting internally displaced people and refugees, and afflicted by terrorism. In this regard, they agreed that special measures need to be adopted with respect to these countries.

The Bureau expressed its appreciation and unequivocal support for the statement of the AU Chairperson, and President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa affirming the AU's support for the World Health Organisation (WHO), under the capable and inspiring leadership of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The Bureau of the Executive Council of the AU agreed to remain seized of this matter.

Ends.

2020-04-09

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