

**AFRICAN UNION**

**الاتحاد الأفريقي**



**UNION AFRICAINE**

**UNIÃO AFRICANA**

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P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA Tel.: Tel: +251-115- 517 700 Fax: +251-115- 517844 / 5182523  
Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
**Thirty-Second Ordinary Session**  
**22 – 26 January 2018**  
**Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**

**EX.CL/1061(XXXII)**  
Original: English

**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION AND ITS ORGANS**

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**PART A:  
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. On behalf of the Commission, as well as the Organs and Specialised Agencies of the African Union, I have the honour to present the ***Annual Report on the Activities of the Union and Its Organs*** for the period of January to December 2017, pursuant to the decision of the Executive Council EX.CL./Dec.943(XXX) of January 2017.
2. Since this is my first report as the Chairperson of the Commission, I would like to extend my gratitude to the previous Commission and, especially, to its Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, for the sterling accomplishments realized during her tenure, which laid the groundwork for the activities of the Union and the Commission that I have had the privilege of chairing since March 2017.
3. At the outset, I would like to state that, since my assumption of office, I have been guided by the ambitious Agenda of the Union (Agenda 2063), which indeed has defined our roadmap towards a united, integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. I also realize the challenges ahead of our Commission which has to strive and give its best in achieving the set goals and aspirations during its tenure. The contribution expected from our mandate running up to 2021 is to resolutely enhance the pace of efficiency and effectiveness of this Commission, based on the priorities of the First ten Year implementation Plan (FTYIP) and the targets of the Mid-Term Plan 2018-2023 which is being submitted to the endorsement of this very Summit.
4. As a way of addressing the immediate challenges, I have been fully engaged, in close collaboration with all Member States, strategic partners and other stakeholders concerned, in the implementation of our flagship project: "Silencing the guns by 2020". Many commitments were made in this respect, including the agreement reached with the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, through the Memorandum of Understanding signed in New York on 19 September 2017, as well as other partners, so as to pull together efforts aimed at finding durable solutions to the crises in these regions.
5. The Commission is keenly conscious that without peace and security on the continent, no sustainable development can be achieved, which is also the priority of Africa. Indeed, peace cannot be achieved without development and vice-versa.
6. In the same vein, regional integration is key in pulling together resources for sustainable development. That is why, tremendous efforts have been deployed during the period under review, to push, in conjunction with H.E. President Mahamoudou Issoufou, for the early establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), together with the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The Commission has also promoted for the implementation of other flagship projects, including those related

to infrastructure and energy, agriculture and environment, industrialization and socio-economic transformation, health and education, to name just a few.

7. The Commission also embarked on the reform process based on the relevant Decision of the Assembly. To this end, I have established the Reform Implementation Unit in my Office to follow through on all issues raised in the Decision. The Commission will submit a full report on the activities undertaken, under the invaluable leadership of President Paul Kagame and working closely with all Member States and other stakeholders.

8. The Commission is determined to interact with Member States and in particular with the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), with whom it held a fruitful retreat in December 2017 in Cairo, Egypt, in order to improve working methods at all levels as well as undertake a thorough review of the African Union Strategic partnerships, which should be in consonance with our Agenda 2063.

### **2017 HIGHLIGHTS**

9. In 2017, the proportion paid by Member States vs. partners to the budget showed that progress towards greater financial self-reliance was being made and that the Union was on track according to the AU Reform's "Financing the Union" initiative. Indeed, Member States' contributions to the Programme budget have increased from 6% in 2016 to 15% in 2017, and are due to reach 37% in 2018. Member States have covered 100% of the operational budget. Member States contributed 45% of the Year 1 Target for the Peace Fund in 2017.

10. Activities focusing on the domestication of Agenda 2063 progressed steadily. So far, forty Member States have started the domestication process. The implementation of the flagship programmes and projects in the area of socio-economic development also gained momentum albeit unevenly and with many uncompleted objectives.

11. The report describes some notable advances, including in the following areas:

- i) The Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration has endorsed both the draft Agenda 2063 monitoring and evaluation framework, and the draft domestic resource mobilization strategy. The Ministers have recommended both for the Policy Organs' adoption at the January 2018 summit.
- ii) At the time of finalizing this report, twenty-one (21) Member States were at different stages of implementation of the Kigali decision of June 2016 on financing the Union with domestic generated resources. A few others were working with the Commission to assess the implication of implementing the Kigali decision in light of their other global obligations.
- iii) Tangible progress has been made on the integration agenda. Member States completed the negotiations on the Continental Free Trade Area in

December 2017. The draft legal instruments were endorsed by the relevant STC and will be submitted to the Policy Organs for adoption at the January 2018 summit.

- iv) The number of Member States that have undertaken to implement the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Single Africa Air Transport Market has also increased, standing now at twenty-three (23).
- v) On the free movement of people and the African passport, the draft *Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa* will be available for the consideration of the Policy Organs at the January 2018 summit. Meanwhile, eight Member States have already introduced a 30-day visa on arrival privilege for all Africans. The Heads of State of the *Communauté économique des Etats d'Afrique centrale* (CEMAC) ratified in October 2017 the CEMAC agreement on the free movement of their citizens in the CEMAC zone.
- vi) Substantial progress was also made in the implementation of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The ICT Priority Action Plan relating to internet exchange points was completed in thirty-three Member States. The NEPAD Agency's technical and financial support to Member States and the RECs resulted in the completion of several regional infrastructure projects. Financial support from the German Federal Government enabled the strengthening of technical capacity for further implementation of PIDA projects.
- vii) Collaboration between the Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the RECs continued to support Member States in the transport, energy, tourism and ICT sectors, to name but a few. Support was also given to Member States to facilitate the development of trade and customs policies in harmony with the CFTA agreement.
- viii) Several evolving projects were implemented in the ICT areas, including the operationalization of the dotAfrica domain name and the unveiling of a new set of Internet Infrastructure Security Guidelines for Africa during the Africa Internet Summit that was jointly organized by the Commission and the Internet Society in Nairobi from 30 May to 2 June 2017

**12.** In the area of peace, stability and governance, substantial progress was made in the operationalization of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and in enhancing its synergy with the African Peace and Security Architecture. Increased coordination between the two architectures, in addition to greater collaboration between Member States, the Commission and the RECs, enabled the African Union to improve its ability to address peace, stability, elections and governance issues in a holistic manner in several Member States.

**13.** Significant progress has been made in developing conflict prevention mechanisms, including the *Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework*, the

launch of FemWise Africa, and the validation of the Draft AU Border Governance strategy which is awaiting the endorsement by other Policy Organs. The AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) has also become fully operational and commenced the implementation of its program of work. The inauguration of the Continental Logistics Base for the African Standby Force in Douala, Cameroon, is also a milestone in the operationalization of the APSA.

**14.** The African continent continued to grapple with a range of transnational security threats, including the ramifications of global security developments. Terrorism has taken on greater proportions and expanded geographically, with the 2017 year being marked by some of the deadliest terrorist attacks ever witnessed on the continent. In response, actions were taken, through the Commission and specific regional security arrangements, to degrade the capability of terrorist and criminal groups in Somalia, the Lake Chad Basin and in the Sahel region.

**15.** With the adoption, in early 2017, of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020, the Policy Organs placed more emphasis on controlling illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of arms and ammunition, which are considered the main tools and enablers of violence on the continent. In this regard, the Commission appointed Mr. Ramtane Lamamra of Algeria as High Representative of the AU for Silencing the Guns to take the agenda forward. Nonetheless, a strong political will supported by robust efforts are required on the part of Member States to effectively and sustainably address this problem.

**16.** Efforts continued throughout the year to accelerate the implementation of the decision of the Policy Organs on the promotion and protection of African and international human rights instruments, with special attention paid to the rights of women and children. However, more cooperation is still needed from Member States to strengthen these instruments, as well as with the AU Organs that are mandated to implement them.

**17.** Presidential and legislative elections were held in a generally peaceful, transparent, free and fair environment on the continent. The Commission deployed short and long-term observation missions to all Member States that held elections this year. It also provided technical assistance to national electoral management bodies (EMBs) to help them build capacity and develop appropriate strategies for managing peaceful and credible elections.

**18.** The quality of elections and the credibility of their outcome generally improved in 2017. However, serious challenges remained, including the enduring lack of adequate funding from national sources, and contestations over the impartiality of the EMBs and the judiciary institutions responsible for adjudicating electoral disputes.

***Table I: 2017 Key Elections in Member States***

No	Member State	Elected Leader	AU Observers
1	Angola	H.E. President Joao Lourenço	Short-term

No	Member State	Elected Leader	AU Observers
2	Congo Brazzaville	H.E. President Denis Sassou-Nguesso	Short-term
3	Equatorial Guinea	H.E. President Teodoro Nguema Mbasogo	Short-term
4	The Gambia	H.E. President Adama Barrow	Short-term
5	Kenya	H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta	Short & long-term
6	Lesotho	H.E. Prime Minister Tom Thabane	Short & long-term
7	Liberia	H.E. President George Weah	Short & long-term
8	Rwanda	H.E. President Paul Kagame	Short-term
9	Somalia	H.E. President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed	Short-term

**19.** Young people from all over the continent took part in the launch of the 2017 theme, *Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in the Youth*. They contributed to the development of the **AU Demographic Dividend Roadmap** which they delivered to the Assembly. On their part, Member States, the Commission and other AU Organs initiated several activities during the year that provided a platform for young Africans to share their experience and discuss ways to increase their participation in the work of the Union and involvement in harnessing the demographic dividend. At the level of Member States, only Burundi, the Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone launched the theme of the year countrywide.

**20.** 2017 was also the year of substantial progress in the number of Treaty ratifications. Eighteen new signatures were appended to OAU/AU Treaties, and forty new instruments of ratification were deposited with the Commission. The Commission was also in the process of registering ten OAU/AU Treaties with the United Nations Secretariat in line with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter. Progress was also achieved in the implementation of the decisions of the Policy Organs on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Hissène Habré trial as well as the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

**21.** Member States' implementation of the Malabo-CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) Results Framework gathered momentum in 2017. In collaboration with the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the RECs, relevant AU agencies and other technical partners, the Commission facilitated the development of the first Continental Biennial Review Report, which was endorsed by the relevant STC. The report will be presented at the January 2018 Summit.

**22.** In addition to engaging with the youth on the Theme of the year, the Commission and other AU Organs carried out several sectoral activities in respect of the rights to education and health for all, particularly women, the youth and persons living with disabilities.

**23.** Strengthening collaboration with the private sector remains a strategic priority for the African Union. The Commission worked with various private sector partners to set up the African Business Council and convene the first trade policy dialogue. Contacts are also ongoing with the Pan-African Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The objective in 2018 is to establish the Pan-African Trade Observatory, which will serve as a repository of information on trade and industry in Africa.

**24.** Illegal migration by young African people remains an open wound for the continent and is a stark reminder of the urgency of renewed efforts to address the related challenges of employment and opportunities. Following the Assembly's declaration on migration – Assembly/AU/Decl.6 (XXV) – the Commission revised the AU migration policy framework and prepared a draft plan of action, which were subsequently endorsed by the relevant STC. Additionally, the draft protocol on the free movement of persons was endorsed by the relevant STCs. It will be submitted to the Policy Organs at the January 2018 summit.

**25.** The Commission carried out a review of the current gender policy, which was adopted in 2009, and developed a new AU gender equality and women's empowerment strategy that will be submitted to the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2018.

**26.** In compliance with their obligations under the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, Member States submitted twenty-eight reports during the period under review. As regards the Maputo Protocol, thirty-nine Member States have ratified it to date.

**27.** The AU Campaign to end child marriage is gathering momentum. In 2017, twenty-one Member States have now launched it. Some have also enacted national legislation and mechanisms to protect the girl child and outlaw child marriage.

**28.** With respect to the protection of other vulnerable groups, the draft *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa* was endorsed by the STC on Justice and Legal Matters. It will be submitted for the Policy Organs' consideration at the January 2018 Summit. However, more signatures and ratifications are needed for the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons to enter into force.

**29.** Efforts continued towards rebranding the African Union and increasing its visibility on the continent and elsewhere. The year 2017 witnessed an increase in civil society's engagement with the African Union, as well as an improvement in the AU engagement with the African diaspora. Projects were launched in order to support diaspora programs in Member States and diaspora networks in the Caribbean, the Gulf and Australia. The Commission established the Steering Committee of the Interfaith Dialogue Forum as way to engage more fruitfully faith-based communities in Africa in the work of the Union. In addition, the implementation of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project is ongoing.

**30.** Accreditation to the African Union continued, standing at one hundred and ten non-African states and international organizations altogether. Concrete steps were taken to reform the AU governance of partnerships and the institutional capacity of the Commission to implement the new partnership strategy. Meanwhile, the AU representational missions continued to enhance their efforts.

**31.** In addition to the initiatives described in this report on the relations between the Commission, the RECs and other AU Organs, the Chairperson of the Commission met in July, August and November, with the Chief Executive Officers of the RECs and Regional Mechanisms to discuss issues of common interest. Steps are being taken to ensure greater synchronization between the AU and the RECs in line with Agenda 2063.

### **2017 MEETINGS OF THE POLICY ORGANS**

**32.** In its capacity as the Secretariat of the African Union, the Commission facilitated the organization of the following meetings of the Policy Organs in 2017:

***Table II: Ordinary and Extraordinary Sessions of the Assembly and the Executive Council***

<b>No</b>	<b>Summit/Meetings</b>	<b>Date &amp; Venue</b>
1	28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government 30 <sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council	January 2017 AU Headquarters
2	29 <sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government	January 2017 AU Headquarters
3	31 <sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council	July 2017 AU Headquarters
4	Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council	June-July 2017 AU Headquarters
5		October 2017 AU Headquarters

**33.** The Commission also facilitated the following meetings of the Specialized Technical Committees:

***Table III: List of meetings of Specialized Technical Committees (STCs)***

<b>No</b>	<b>Specialised Technical Committee (STCs)</b>	<b>Date &amp; Venue</b>
1	STC on Transport Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism - <b>DIE</b>	13-17 March 2017 Lomé, Togo

No	Specialised Technical Committee (STCs)	Date & Venue
2	STC on Health, Population and Drug Control, <b>DSA</b>	20-24 March 2017 AU Headquarters
3	STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development" - <b>DEA</b>	23-28 March 2017 Dakar, Senegal and 23-27 October 2017 AU Headquarters
4	STC on Labor, Employment and Social Development, <b>DSA</b>	24-28 April 2017 Algiers, Algeria
5	STC on Youth, Culture & Sports - <b>DSA &amp; HRST</b>	13-15 September 2017 Nairobi, Kenya Extraordinary session 13-15 September 2017, Nairobi, Kenya
6	STC of ministers of agriculture, rural development water and environment, - <b>DREA</b>	2-6 October 2017 AU Headquarters
7	STC on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons – <b>DSA &amp; DPA</b>	16-21 October 2017 Kigali, Rwanda
8	STC on Education, Science and Technology – <b>HRST</b>	21-23 October 2017 Cairo, Egypt
9	STC on Justice and Legal Affairs - <b>OLC</b>	6-15 November 2017 AU Headquarters
10	STC on communication and ICT - <b>DIE</b>	20-24 November 2017 AU Headquarters
11	STC on Gender and Women Empowerment – <b>WGDD</b>	4-8 December 2017 AU Headquarters

34. Furthermore, in 2017, the Commission facilitated thirty-six meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and held two joint retreats with the PRC in December 2017, one on Working Methods, and the other on the evaluation of strategic partnerships.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR 2018-2023 MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

35. The Commission finalized its Medium-Term Plan 2018-2023. Efforts are underway to align the strategic frameworks of the Commission and all AU Organs and Specialized Agencies, as well as to enforce the application of AU administrative and financial rules by all AU Organs.

**36.** The Commission also initiated the process to centralize the management of all the funds currently housed in different departments and develop the modalities to ensure a single housing for all funds.

**PART B**  
**REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF**  
**THE COMMISSION, AU ORGANS AND**  
**SPECIALIZED AGENCIES**

**OUTCOME 1:**  
**DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND STABILITY**

1. Peace and stability, good governance, democracy and human rights as foundations for development and stable societies promoted.

**OUTPUTS:**

- Capacity for conflict prevention, management, response and peacebuilding in place.
- Participation of women, youth, civil society in peace building, conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery and development facilitated.
- Post-conflict reconstruction and peace building mechanisms enhanced.
- Good governance and democracy promoted.
- Legal and shared values instruments, based on African and universal instruments, promoted.
- Capacity of Africa to coordinate and respond to humanitarian situations and protect civilians in conflicts and disaster zones enhanced.

**Output 1: Capacity for conflict prevention, management, response and peacebuilding in place**

2. During the reporting period, the Commission achieved substantial progress in the operationalization of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and in enhancing its synergy with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Increased coordination and collaboration between the two architectures enabled the African Union to strengthen its capacity for conflict prevention and mitigation, and better address democratic governance issues on the continent.

3. Conceived as a mechanism for dialogue among Member States, civil society and other stakeholders, the African Governance Architecture has, through its Platform, continued to facilitate citizen engagement with the African Union. Comparative experiences and best practices sharing forums were among the tools used to improve democratic governance on the continent. Such forums included the annual High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa and its pre-forums,

as well as the institutionalization of social media platforms for virtual citizen engagement. The Commission, through the Department of Political Affairs, which serves as the AGA Secretariat, handled around 78,300 Twitter followers and continuous debates and discussions on democratic governance in Africa, particularly through the #DGTrends hashtag.

**4.** The Commission also carried out several activities aimed at strengthening the AGA's structures and improving their methods of work. During AGA statutory meetings convened in May-June 2017, participants reviewed the 2014-2016 AGA workplan and assessed its achievements, challenges and prospects for future consolidation. They also endorsed proposals by the AGA Secretariat to develop the AGA Roadmap for the 2018-2020 period. Similarly, the new Bureau of the AGA Platform, which was elected in 2017, is expected to endorse these proposals and adopt the internal evaluation guideline for state reports on the implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

**5.** Efforts to operationalize the State Reporting Mechanism under the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance continued with the development of internal review guidelines for State Parties' initial reports. The report's evaluation process will commence as soon as the internal review guidelines are endorsed. Meanwhile, the Republic of Togo has been the first Member State to submit its report on the implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The Commission congratulates the Government of Togo for this milestone and encourages other Member States to follow suit, thus demonstrating their commitment to the strengthening of the African Governance Architecture.

**6.** In order to strengthen cooperation with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the ratification, domestication, implementation and reporting on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, AGA Platform members reviewed the findings of the Scoping Comparative Study of the Charter and similar instruments at the level of the RECs. They also worked on a draft framework for cooperation between the Commission and the RECs on the implementation of the Charter at the regional and continental levels.

**7.** In furtherance of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and its synergy with the African Governance Architecture in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, the Commission intensified its efforts towards silencing the guns by the year 2020, in line with the letter and spirit of the AU Solemn Declaration adopted by the Assembly on 25 May 2013. More efforts were geared towards addressing emerging threats to peace and security, particularly terrorism, violent extremism, insecurity in Africa's maritime domain and transnational organized crime. In this context, the Commission intensified its engagement with all stakeholders, including the RECs and Regional Mechanisms as well as civil society organizations (CSOs).

8. Furthermore, the Commission, the RECs/Regional Mechanisms and the European Union convened a meeting in Cotonou, Benin, in mid-November 2017 during which they considered all issues that had impeded the implementation of EU Support Programme to APSA. The Programme is due to end in 2018, with the risk of creating a financial vacuum. This risk underlines, once more, the urgent need for the AU and the RECs/Regional Mechanisms to intensify efforts towards mobilizing reliable, predictable and sustainable funding for Africa's peace and security initiatives.

9. On its part, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) deepened its engagements with all the relevant stakeholders, including the all Commission's Departments that contribute to its work, as well as other AU Organs and the RECs, in fulfilment of its mandate to promote and maintain peace and security on the continent. Whenever necessary, the Peace and Security Council requested briefings from these Organs on issues under their purview to inform its deliberations. The briefings ranged from specific country situations to the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees, elections, women and youth, and post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts. The following cases illustrate some of the work of the Commission undertaken to facilitate the interaction between the APSA and the AGA.

**10. Mali and the Sahel Region:** During the reporting period, the Commission continued to promote the need for joint efforts between the countries of the region, the African Union and the international community to encourage all the Malian parties to implement without further delay all the provisions of the agreement reached within the framework of the Algiers process. These efforts provided support to the electoral process and ensured the organization of peaceful elections at the local, regional and presidential levels. Similarly, all obstacles, including logistical and financial, that hinder the deployment of the G5 Sahel Force should be resolved, so as to boost the region's determination to fight against terrorism, cross-border organized crime, human trafficking and extremism. In this respect, intensive consultations were undertaken by the Chairperson of the Commission, with the G5 Sahel and all concerned partners, in particular with the UN, aiming at the early operationalization of the G5.

**11. Burundi:** The Inter-Burundi Dialogue held in December 2017 under the auspices of the East African Community (EAC) and its mediator, former President Benjamin Mkapa, is yet to produce the expected results. The Commission remains convinced that only an inclusive dialogue based on the Arusha Agreement of August 2000 could help address and find a suitable solution to the prevailing situation and guide the constitutional reforms that may be required. The African Union will spare no effort to assist all Burundian stakeholders in this regard, including through the continued deployment of its human rights observers and military experts. Resources are needed to sustain their deployment throughout the national territory and their subsistence, with the cooperation of the Government of Burundi

**12. In the Central African Republic (CAR),** the absence of a lasting solution to the issue of politico-military groups remains a real concern and an obstacle to the consolidation of the state and its main institutions. The adoption in Libreville in July

2017, of the Roadmap of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, which was spearheaded by the AU with the support of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Republics of Gabon, Congo, Angola and Chad, provided a unified framework for the concerted resolution of the issue of armed groups and the restoration of state authority countrywide. The initiative also gave the African Union a key role to play in the search for a lasting settlement of the crisis in the CAR, while complementing the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). It is therefore imperative that the African Union and the stakeholders in the African Initiative join hands to mobilize the requisite resources for its effective implementation, particularly with regard to the active participation of all armed groups and coordination with the MINUSCA operations.

**13.** Following the working visit of the Chairperson of the Commission to the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** in September-October 2017, and that of the Peace and Security Council in October 2017, as well as the publication in November 2017 of the electoral calendar by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), it is of the utmost urgency that the African Union, concerned sub-regional organizations and the partners work together to ensure the smooth preparation and the holding of free, peaceful and credible elections. Furthermore, the African Union and its partners should work together to impress on all the Congolese political and social actors to fully commit to peace and tranquillity before, during and after the elections so as to facilitate the mobilization of international assistance for the country's economic recovery and the restoration of state authority nationwide. The resurgence of attacks by negative forces and the resulting dire humanitarian consequences highlight the need for the signatories of the *Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the Great Lakes Region* to accelerate their efforts towards neutralizing these forces. The Summit of Heads of State and Government in Brazzaville in October 2017 gave new impetus to the pooling of resources required for the achievement of this objective.

**14.** The political and institutional crisis in **Guinea Bissau** since 2015 remains a source of concern for the country, the region and the continent. Mediation efforts by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and others did not yield positive results. A genuine and inclusive dialogue based on mutual respect is imperative in this country to enable all the stakeholders to find a consensual solution to the crisis and to establish the necessary conditions to consolidate peace and stability. The Commission will continue to support the ECOWAS mediation efforts and call for the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and its roadmap, in order to ensure a smooth preparation of the 2018 legislative elections. Equally, the African Union should spare no efforts in mobilizing the financial resources needed to support the extension of ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) presence which is critical in providing an enabling environment for the capacitation of the national security forces.

**15.** In **Libya**, the political situation remained deadlocked, with added insecurity and a dire humanitarian crisis, despite strong and concerted international efforts to encourage Libyan stakeholders to engage in political talks to amend and implement the Libya Political Agreement (LPA). The African Union sustained its efforts for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through an inclusive political process. Through its High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete, and its High-Level Committee on Libya led by President Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo, the African Union intensified its engagements to bridge the political divide between the Libyan parties. The Roadmap of the High-Level Committee envisages the amendment of the Libyan Political Agreement to be followed by its adoption by a national reconciliation Conference. The Commission worked throughout the year in collaboration with partners, in particular, the ‘Quartet for Libya’ comprising the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the League of Arab States.

**16.** In 2017, the **African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)** made significant gains in degrading the capacity of Al-Shabaab terrorist group, as evidenced by the recovery of about 80% of the Somali national territory from the terrorist group. This achievement created a conducive environment for the smooth progression of the political process, notably the elections that took place in February 2017. Despite numerous challenges on the ground, progress was also achieved in enhancing the capacity of the state institutions at the federal and regional levels. AMISOM’s role remains critical in maintaining peace and security in Somalia, pending the full capacitation of the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) to take over this critical responsibility. In accordance with its exit strategy, AMISOM started transferring some primary responsibilities to the Somali national army and gradually reducing its troops on the ground. One thousand AMISOM soldiers were thus repatriated to their home countries between October and December 2017.

**17.** However, the transition of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali Federal Government should be done without haste, in a phased process and according to mutually agreed benchmarks. The Peace and Security Council, during its 741<sup>st</sup> meeting held on 26 December 2017, noted with concern that the Somali national army, in its present state, was not yet in a position to take over or sustainably hold forward operating positions that that may be handed over to it by AMISOM. In this regard, the PSC reiterated that the transition to Somali-led security and the drawdown of AMISOM needed to be conditions-based and gradual, to ensure that the hard-won gains so far made against al-Shabaab are not reversed. The PSC also strongly reaffirmed the need for AMISOM to be provided with predictable and sustainable funding, with a view to enabling it to more effectively discharge its mandate, in line of the conclusions of the Joint AU-UN Review.

**18.** With a view to expressing African solidarity to the Somali people under harsh conditions for decades of ravaging war, the Chairperson of the Commission paid a visit to Mogadishu soon after his assumption of office in March 2017 and made a token contribution to the country in its recovery efforts.

19. With the assistance of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for **Sudan** and **South Sudan**, led by former President Thabo Mbeki and comprising former President Abdusalami Abubakar of Nigeria, the Commission continued to support the search for peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, including by working with the parties on the *Roadmap Agreement* meant to bring about a ceasefire between the Sudanese government and armed movements as well as start an inclusive national dialogue on how to restore democracy and good governance in the Sudan. The AUHIP was also assisting the Sudan and South Sudan to fully implement the *Cooperation Agreement* of 2012. During the period under review, there was also a reduction of direct clashes between the Sudanese armed forces and the Darfur armed movements, leading to some downsizing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID). Finally, the Commission is pleased to report that in October 2017, the United States Government decided to lift all economic sanctions that were imposed on the Sudan twenty years ago.

20. While welcoming the progress made in the Sudan, the Commission remains deeply concerned about the lack of resolution of the conflict in **South Sudan**, and its tragic impact on the civilian population in terms of deaths and the displacement of millions in and outside the country. The socio-economic and humanitarian situation remains dire. Through the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Konare, and in support of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Commission sustained its efforts to persuade the parties to fully implement the *Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* of August 2015.

21. In this regard, the Chairperson of the Commission paid a visit to South Sudan in March 2017 in expression of African solidarity with the South-Sudanese people in dire situation and to see for himself the devastating effects of the conflict. On this occasion, he made a token contribution towards alleviating the sufferings of the people.

22. On 21 December, the first phase of the IGAD-led Forum for the Revitalization of the South Sudan Peace Process came to a close, marked by the signing of an *Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access*. This achievement remains nonetheless a small and fragile first step. The Commission will continue to work closely with IGAD and other stakeholders to ensure that the parties fully implement the Agreement and build on it to bring about a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan.

23. A series of initiatives towards the peaceful resolution of the dispute in **Western Sahara** between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO produced no real progress by the end of this reporting period. The Commission reiterates its hope that, with the welcomed return of the Kingdom of Morocco to the AU fold, a solution to this longstanding dispute may now be within reach.

24. The Commission also sustained its cooperation with Member States, the RECs and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations on **Silencing the Guns in**

**Africa by 2020.** With about three years left, the Commission strongly believes that this goal can be reached if given goodwill and support by all stakeholders concerned. The appointment of Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and former Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, as High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Silencing the Guns in Africa, is aimed at accelerating the drive for the realization of a conflict-free Africa and galvanize Member States and other stakeholders towards achieving this goal by its deadline. In this vein, the Commission wishes to remind Member States to commemorate the month of September of each year until 2020 as the "Africa Amnesty Month". This event was set by a decision of the Assembly for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons in line with African and international best practices.

**25.** The Commission continued to work with the RECs on the operationalization of the **African Standby Force** and its **Rapid Deployment Capability** as directed by the Assembly of the Union. It is worth noting that the verification process on the status of the Regional Standby Forces was successfully completed in November 2017. The outcome was adopted by the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security at its meeting in Addis Ababa on 9 January 2018. At the same time, the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) has remained in a state of readiness for deployment, depending on the Assembly's decision on the way forward.

**26.** The Commission also set up various **mechanisms for conflict prevention and early warning** to foresee and act swiftly on looming security threats and crises. But for their effectiveness, such mechanisms need to be matched by timely responses and adequate political will, as well as by enabling financial and material resources to prevent costly escalation in human and financial terms.

**27.** The first joint meeting of the Djibouti and Nouakchott Processes of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services (HISS) of participating Member States and Organizations took place in Addis Ababa in November 2017. The participants reviewed the security situation in the Sahelo-Saharan and the East African regions, and called for greater synergies, enhanced collaboration and information sharing between the two processes.

**28.** The African Union, in close collaboration with IGAD, convened a strategic consultative meeting on the Horn of Africa, which was held in Khartoum in October 2017. The participants launched a strategic consultative process that will culminate in the development of a regional strategy for peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

**29.** With respect to cross-border cooperation, the Commission encouraged Member States to sign, ratify and domesticate the African Union Convention on Cross-border Cooperation (also known as the Niamey Convention). Experts from Member States validated the draft African Union Border Governance Strategy at a meeting held in Addis Ababa in November 2017. The draft will be submitted soon for the consideration to the Policy Organs.

**30.** The Commission also worked with Member States, the RECs and international partners to strengthen the **AU mediation capacity**, pursuant to the Assembly's decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.558 (XXIV)]. Efforts are underway to establish a Mediation Support Unit within the Commission, which will provide substantive and operational support to all AU-led and/or supported mediation efforts.

**Output 2: Participation of women, youth, civil society in peace building, conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery and development facilitated**

**31.** Efforts continued in 2017 to enhance the implementation of African and international instruments and policies relating to the participation of women, the youth and civil society in conflict prevention, peace consolidation and post-conflict recovery.

**32.** As part of the activities under the Theme of the year 2017, the Commission, in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC), ECOWAS and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), organized three regional youth consultations meetings. The Consultations brought together over 250 young men and women from the five regions to deliberate on how to promote the meaningful participation of young people in electoral processes in Africa. The meetings took place in Tunisia for North Africa, Tanzania for East and Southern Africa, and Nigeria for West and Central Africa.

**33.** In collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the AGA Platform members based in South Africa – the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Pan-African Parliament (PA) and NEPAD, the Commission held its 2017 High-Level Dialogue in Pretoria in December 2017, under the theme, “Enhancing Youth Participation and Representation in Governance Processes in Africa”. Participants deliberated on the barriers hindering meaningful participation and representation in governance processes and proposed practical solutions to overcome them.

**34.** The Department of Political Affairs and the Women, Gender and Development Directorate teamed up in the organization in Lusaka of the 2017 AGA Gender Pre-Forum, to exchange views on how to enhance the participation of young women in political processes in Africa. It also enabled them to reflect on progress made so far and discuss ways to overcome the challenges to a more meaningful participation in the future.

**35.** Several short videos were produced throughout the year under review on selected thematic areas pertinent to young people, including young women, and their contribution to deepening democratic culture and good governance on the continent. The videos are available on the AGA website <http://aga-platform.org/engage>.

**36.** In conclusion, the year 2017 witnessed significant progress in the Commission's efforts to build synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture. At the operational level, there was increased

interaction between relevant Departments of the Commission, the RECs and other AU Organs and Specialized Agencies. At the policy level, the enhancement of the quality and outputs from the work program of the Peace and Security Council in 2017 showed how this Organ benefitted from this growing synergy.

**37.** However, the two architectures suffered enormously from a lack of Africa's own financial resources. The justification for the establishment of the Peace Fund was to address the perennial issue of unpredictable resources and inadequate staffing. In this regard, the Commission expresses its gratitude to Member States that have made their assessed contributions to the Peace Fund and operational budget of the Commission, and encourages other Member States to do the same.

**38.** Overall, Member States are encouraged to accelerate the implementation of the Assembly's Kigali Decision on 0.2%. The Commission is grateful to AU partners for their continuous support to the AU programs. However, the African Union cannot continue to defer to its partners on its core responsibility. The late Julius Nyerere, warned that "Independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gift". In 2018, Member States are expected to finance the AU program budget to the tune of 61%. In 2020, this should rise to 75% for our Member States and the remaining for AU partners. This was the decision of the Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa, in June 2015. It must be implemented. Consequently, all Member States are urged to meet their financial obligations as this will greatly help strengthen the AU's ability to execute its programs and assist those Member States going through or emerging conflict, as well as those encountering difficult political transitions.

### **Output 3: Post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building mechanisms enhanced**

**39.** Overall, the AU's role on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding has become increasingly recognized, attracting greater attention from the Policy Organs, particularly the PSC, as well as Member States and both bilateral and international partners despite a dearth of resources.

**40.** In the year 2017, the Commission's efforts on post-conflict reconstruction and development focused, among other areas, on strengthening joint planning, needs assessment, implementation, coordination and partnerships with the RECs. To this end, the Commission developed a results-based framework, and a post-conflict reconstruction and development guidelines to make AU interventions more comprehensive, integrated and better coordinated. The Commission also supported the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the development of a strategy for the stabilization of areas affected by the Boko Haram terrorist group.

**41.** The African Union plans to scale up its stabilisation efforts on the continent as it aims to manage transitions from initial stabilisation which often has a heavy military footprint to, short to medium-term socio-economic and political development and long-term peacebuilding with a focus on reconstruction, revitalisation of public service

institutions. In this respect, the Commission, in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission, convened a regional conference in Ndjamena in November 2017, as a first step in the process of developing a *Regional Stabilisation Strategy* for areas affected by Boko Haram. The Conference will be followed by a second regional conference in the first quarter of 2018 to finalise a comprehensive regional strategy that will rationalise the various initiatives aimed at stabilising the areas affected by Boko Haram's activities in the Lake Chad Basin region. In the same vein, the stabilisation efforts in Somalia and Sudan within the framework of the AMISOM and the UNAMID, respectively, will also be scaled up.

**42.** In the Sudan, the Commission was developing a joint fundraising strategy for the implementation of the Integrated Strategic Framework (2017-2019) that identified common priorities for sustainable peace in Darfur. The strategy aims to scale up resources for peace consolidation in the next two years for a phased transition in Darfur, and will also include an outreach to non-conventional donors, engagement of international and regional financial institutions, and wider scope of financial resources. Funding for consolidation of peacebuilding efforts in Darfur should be treated as a political issue of high priority by Members States to protect to date investment in peace and to avoid relapse into conflict.

**43.** The Commission continued to provide operational and technical support in the area of security sector reform to States emerging from conflict, in line with the AU Policy Framework. In this respect, the Commission commends Madagascar for the progress made to date, including the official launch, in September 2017, of the implementation of the national policy paper on SSR and the establishment of the national coordination office that will lead the implementation of the operational plans. In Guinea Bissau, the Commission has continued to assist the authorities in preparing potential retirees at the defense and security institutions for disengagement from active service as part of the overall plans to gradually reduce and restructure the defense forces and security services. In this respect, skills acquisition training and material support was extended to retiring and demobilized personnel in late 2017. Where the political and security conditions are conducive, the Commission will continue to extend such support in close collaboration with the RECs and international partners within the framework of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program.

**44.** In undertaking PCRD implementation, some key mechanisms within the AU PCRD architecture have played a critical role in ensuring an effective implementation of the PCRD Policy Framework. It should be noted that some mechanisms are not yet established. The Commission, therefore, supports the establishment of a functional multidimensional AU Committee on PCRD, which would ensure that engagement and coordination on PCRD implementation will be taken to a strategic level, between the leadership of the AUC and the RECs/RMs and its Organs. This would address the complexities of PCRD initiatives and strengthen current technical and operational level efforts.

#### **Output 4: Good governance and democracy promoted**

**45.** The Commission undertook a number of technical assessment missions to Angola, Liberia, Kenya and Djibouti ahead of elections in these countries. The objective was to assess the state of preparedness for the elections, review the broader pre-election political context, and determine whether a conducive environment existed for the conduct of transparent, free and fair elections in conformity with the principles of the African Union governing democratic elections. Pre-election assessment missions also made recommendations that formed the basis of the decision by the Chairperson of the Commission to deploy AU election observation missions.

**46.** In accordance with existent practice, the Commission observed all national elections (presidential and parliamentary) in 2017 by deploying either short-term or long-term election observers. The decision to deploy either short-term or long-term observers is generally based on a number of criteria, including the type of elections (presidential or parliamentary), the nature of elections (contentious or highly competitive), the overall political situation in the country (post-conflict or transition phase), availability of funds, and specific request from Member States. For 2017, the Commission deployed short-term observers to all the elections, while long-term observers were deployed to Lesotho, Kenya and Liberia only.

**47.** During the period under review, the Commission also provided technical assistance to the electoral commissions in the Republic of The Gambia and the Kingdom of Lesotho in carrying out post-election evaluation exercises. The objective was to help election management boards in these countries to undertake a comprehensive review of the conduct of previous elections, identify challenges and areas for reforms, and develop appropriate strategies for efficient and effective management of future elections. In the DRC, the Commission deployed a short-term election expert to provide technical assistance to the Bureau of the Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission in its planning and preparations for the elections now rescheduled for 2018.

**48.** The Commission also carried out BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) trainings to staff of the electoral management boards in Somalia and Central African Republic. The aim was to build internal capacities of staff to deliver credible democratic elections in accordance with international standards.

**49.** In November 2017, the Commission convened the Fourth Annual Election Management Board Forum in Kigali under the theme *“Harnessing the Democratic Dividend through Enhanced Youth Participation in Electoral Processes in Africa”*. The theme was chosen in recognition of the important role the youth can play in deepening democratic governance and shaping socio-economic development on the continent. Since election management boards are key in facilitating the participation of young people in electoral and governance processes, the Commission deemed it necessary to provide a platform to reflect on barriers, opportunities and strategies for meaningful youth participation in electoral processes. The Commission has observed in the last few

years that, despite the conduct of regular elections on the continent, youth participation in electoral processes is on the decline. If not addressed, this and other negative trends affecting youth participation in electoral and political processes could be a threat to the consolidation and sustainability of democracy, peace and stability on the continent.

**50.** The Commission also continued to ensure that women participate equally in all its election-related activities, including observation, trainings, and technical assistance programs.

**51.** Quarterly briefings were organized for the Peace and Security Council on the state of elections in Africa, providing updates on progress made in the organization of peaceful, free and fair elections, and alerting this policy organ to emerging challenges that could have an impact on democratic governance, peace and stability.

**52.** Overall, 2017 was a year of generally peaceful and accepted elections, with the exception of a few Member States where their credibility was challenged in courts. While the regularity and overall quality of elections had improved, challenges still remained. They included (i) difficulty for election management boards to secure enough funding and safeguard their independence; (ii) challenges faced by national judiciary mechanisms and other election-adjudicating bodies to establish or assert their independence in dealing with election-related disputes; (iii) the existence of electoral measures and practices that sometimes disenfranchise women, youth and the poor; and (iv) policies that fail to adequately ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state resources.

#### **Output 5: Legal and shared-values instruments, based on African and universal instruments promoted**

**53. Status of ratifications and accessions to OAU/AU Treaties:** During 2017, a total of eighteen (18) new signatures were appended and forty (40) new instruments of ratification were deposited compared with eighty (80) signatures and forty-one (41) ratifications during the previous reporting period. The Commission is also in the process of registering ten (10) OUA/AU Treaties with the United Nations Headquarters in line with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter.

**54.** The Commission was also finalising the AU Treaty Book, which is expected to be published in 2018, as well as a Treaty Digest that will provide a summary of key elements of each treaty, including its objectives, Member States obligations, including reporting obligations if any, financial implications, responsible line ministries and other relevant information. Efforts on creating a treaty database on the AU website, with a view to making it interactive and include more and updated information on OAU/AU Treaties, are also in progress.

**55.** In order to promote the ratification of OAU/AU Treaties pursuant to the Executive Council decision EX.CL/Dec. 837 (XXV), the Commission in collaboration with the Ministerial Committee on the Challenges of Ratification/Accession and Implementation

of OAU/AU Treaties, continued its engagement with Member States on the establishment of their respective National Sectorial Committees. Once established, the National Sectorial Committee will liaise with national stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of national policies, AU decisions related to treaty ratification, and advocate for the adoption of necessary legislative and administrative measures to give effect to these treaties.

**56.** The Commission commends Member States for the increased number of signatures and ratifications of OAU/AU Treaties. This enhances the implementation of AU norms and standards and the harmonisation of national laws, thus facilitating the integration process. It also supports the AU commitment to strengthen criminal accountability and respect for the rule of law.

**57. Implementation of AU decisions on the International Criminal Court:** In view of the lack of progress with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in addressing concerns of the Organization, the Commission developed an Action Plan for the ratification of the Protocol on the Statutes of the African Court of Justice and Human and Peoples' Rights. Once it enters into force, it will create a permanent continental international criminal justice mechanism to enhance the rule of law as a foundation for good governance, peace and security. The Action Plan outlines actions to be undertaken to ensure fifteen (15) instruments of ratification are obtained to guarantee the entry into force of the Protocol by 2018. The Plan was endorsed by the Open-ended Ministerial Committee on the ICC in September 2017 and its implementation is expected to commence in January 2018.

**58.** In its previous Annual Report, the Commission had indicated that Burundi, South Africa and The Gambia had notified the UN Secretary General, as depository of the Rome Statute of the ICC, of their intention to withdraw from the ICC. Since then, South Africa and The Gambia have withdrawn their respective notifications while Burundi has effectively withdrawn and is no longer a State Party to the ICC.

**59.** The Commission continued to engage with relevant stakeholders within the Rome Statute regime, to ensure the decisions of the AU Policy Organs are conveyed and implemented. A comprehensive report is being submitted to the Assembly through the Executive Council for consideration.

**60. The Hissène Habré Trial:** Pursuant to its decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.103 (VI) of January 2006 and Assembly/AU/Dec.127 (VII) of July 2007, the Assembly mandated the Republic of Senegal to prosecute and ensure that Hissène Habré is tried, on behalf of Africa, by a competent Senegalese court with guarantees for fair trial. The Assembly also requested the Chairperson of the Union, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission, to provide Senegal with the necessary assistance for the effective conduct of the trial.

**61.** The Extraordinary African Chambers (EAC) on 30 May 2016, ruling in the first instance (Assises Chamber), found Hissène Habré guilty of crimes against humanity,

rape, forced slavery, intentional homicide, massive and systematic practice of summary executions, abduction of people followed by enforced disappearance, torture and inhumane acts. He was also found guilty of the following war crimes: murder, torture, inhumane treatment and unlawful detention. On the basis of the crimes for which Hissène Habré was convicted, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**62.** On appeal, the Appeals Chamber confirmed the ruling rendered by the Assises Chamber, particularly concerning the sentencing of the accused to life imprisonment, but acquitted him of the charge for the crime of rape. The Appeals Chamber ruling on the issue of reparations partially overturned the judgement of the Assises Chamber and carried out the necessary corrections by recognising seven thousand, three hundred and ninety-six (7,396) victims as civil plaintiffs, to whom the amount of CFA *eighty-two billion two hundred and ninety million* francs (CFA 82,290,000,000) was determined as compensation. While ruling that Hissène Habré is to pay this amount, the Chamber acknowledged that the accused's assets could not cover all the compensation to victims.

**63.** The Appeals Chamber, inter alia, (i) directed that the Trust Fund established by the African Union should implement the individual reparations, (ii) ordered that the proceeds of confiscated property and any other of the Defendant's assets that might be discovered should be deposited into the Fund, (iii) invited the Fund to contact the Government of Chad, interested States and organizations, and civil party associations on the possible realisation and implementation of collective and moral reparations.

**64.** In implementing Decision EX.CL/Dec.972 (XXXI) of July 2017, the Commission submitted the draft Statutes of the Trust Fund for victims of Hissène Habré crimes to the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for consideration. These will now be submitted to the current Session of the Assembly for adoption. In addition, the Commission is in consultation with the Government of the Republic of Chad on the establishment of the Secretariat of the Trust Fund, bearing in mind the ruling of the Extraordinary African Chambers that the Senegalese Courts will have jurisdiction over all matters arising from the implementation of that decision.

**65. Establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan:** In accordance with the Communiqué of the 547th meeting of the Peace and Security Council and the *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan* (ARCISS), the Commission, in collaboration with the Transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan, concluded negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which includes a Statute establishing the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. The MoU and the Statute annexed to it are awaiting approval by the National Council of Ministers and domestication by the Transitional Legislative Assembly of South Sudan.

**66.** Meanwhile, the Commission launched the Hybrid Court's preliminary activities that included, among other things, the identification of the seat of the Hybrid Court, as well as the development of its structure, budget and a resource mobilization strategy and preparation for a donor conference.

**67. Draft Annexes to the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa:** By its decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (VI), the Assembly adopted the Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development during its Extraordinary Session of 15 October 2016 in Lomé, Togo, and requested that the Commission takes all necessary measures to convene the relevant Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) in order to develop annexes to the Charter on the specialised areas of maritime to accommodate the developmental aspects, which were not duly covered under the Charter.

**68.** The Commission thus developed eight (8) draft Annexes in the following areas: (i) Definitions; (ii) General Provisions; (iii) Living marine resources; (iv) Extraction of non-living resources; (v) Climate and Environmental Sustainability; (vi) Poverty Eradication, Employment and Social Development; (vii) Blue Economy; and (viii) Cabotage. The draft annexes will be submitted to the relevant STCs prior to consideration by the Policy Organs through the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs in 2018.

**69. Implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Chagos Archipelago:** Pursuant to the International Court of Justice Order no.169 dated July 2017, and in accordance with various decisions of the Assembly on the Chagos Archipelago in support of the full decolonization of the Republic of Mauritius, the Commission sent a request to Member States that are willing to furnish relevant information on the question before the International Court of Justice to submit their written statements by 30 January 2018.

#### **AFRICAN COMMISSION FOR HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS (ACHPR)**

**70.** As of this reporting, the ACHPR had completed over 58.6% of the activities planned for 2017. Other activities were also undertaken that were not originally in its 2017 workplan, such as those related to Special Mechanisms and meetings organized by partners and various Departments/Directorates of the Commission which fell within its mandate.

**71.** Notable achievements included the following:

- The celebration of the 30-year anniversary of the operationalization of the ACHPR and its contribution to human rights promotion and protection on the continent;
- The adoption of nine (9) additional important soft law instruments, among them: (i) General Comment No. 4 on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: The Right to Redress for Victims of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment (Article 5) (General Comment No. 4); (ii) Guidelines for the Policing of Assemblies by Law Enforcement Officers in Africa; (iii) Guidelines on Freedom of Association

and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in Africa; (iv) Study on Extractive Industries, Land Rights and Indigenous Populations/Communities Rights; (v) Guidelines on Combatting Sexual Violence and its Consequences in Africa; (vi) Joint General Comments on Child Marriage between the ACHPR and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; (vii) the Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections for Africa; (viii) Principles on the Decriminalisation of Petty Offences; and (ix) the convening of the first Regional Seminar on Implementation of the Commission's Decisions and Concluding Observations on States Reports;

- Consideration, for the first and second time, of four (4) APRM Reports on States in accordance with APRM Base Document which allows to publicly table concluded reports of participating Member States to key regional bodies like the ACHPR;
- Consideration of twenty-eight (28) Communications (i.e. complaints of human rights violations) and granting of Provisional Measures for 10 of the Communications;
- Consideration of four (4) States Reports in accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter;
- Numerous letters of urgent appeal were sent and Press Releases issued;
- Granting of Affiliate Status to one (1) National Human Rights Institution and Observer Status to eleven (11) Non-Governmental Organizations;
- Adoption of twelve (12) Country and Thematic Resolutions by May 2017;
- Publication in KiSwahili of the Guidelines on Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-Trial Detention in Africa (Luanda Guidelines) in April 2017.
- Furthermore, the ACHPR continued to increase awareness of human rights through mobilization for more participation at its public Session; in 2017, a total number of one thousand one hundred and fifty-eight (1,158) delegates of which 221 delegates were from 25 Member States of the Union, participated in the public Sessions of the ACHPR.

**72.** The Country and Thematic Resolutions, letters of urgent appeal, Press Releases issued by the ACHPR served as interventions in emerging human rights situations across the continent. The Concluding Observations on State Reports assisted different levels in the concerned Governments to review their Charter implementation strategies and ensure that enabling legislative measures are taken.

**73.** The various decisions and recommendations on Communications brought before the Commission resulted in the increase of human rights protection in the concerned Member States of the Union when there is implementation.

**74.** The major challenges that affected the work of the ACHPR during this reporting period included the following: (i) difficulties in getting the required prior authorization by Member States for undertaking promotion and protection missions; (ii) low level of implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the ACHPR; (iii) acute staff shortage due to delay in recruitment to vacant positions within its approved structure, as well as the inadequacy of the current structure of the ACHPR to effectively meet the mandate entrusted to it and the expansion in its work over the years.

**75.** The ACHPR's impact as an effective human rights organ of the African Union depends primarily on the support and cooperation it receives from Member States. This includes authorisation for its missions and concrete steps by Member States to implement ACHPR decisions and recommendations.

**76.** Priority activities for 2018 are outlined in the Strategic Plan 2015-2019. They are essentially focused on the promotion and protection of human rights in line with the African Charter. In broad strokes, they continue and expand on similar priorities reported hereunder.

#### **AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS (AfCHPR)**

**77.** The African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR) became operational in 2006 and is composed of eleven Judges appointed by the Assembly. As at 31 December, 2017, the Protocol establishing the Court has been ratified by thirty (30) Member States of the African Union, namely: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Comoros, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo and Tunisia. However, of the 30 State Parties to the Protocol, only eight have made the Declaration under Article 34(6) of the Protocol accepting the jurisdiction of the Court to receive cases from individuals and non-governmental organizations. They are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania and Tunisia.

**78.** During the period under review, the Court was seized with thirty-six (36) new cases. The number of applications registered by the Court since its establishment now stands at one-hundred and fifty-six (156), while the number of requests for advisory opinion stands at twelve (12). The number of cases discharged by the Court as of December 2017 stands at forty-one (41), including four (4) cases transferred to the African Commission in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Protocol, while one-hundred and fifteen (115) cases are still pending before the Court.

**79.** The Court also delivered nine (9) judgments on the merits, issued four (4) Orders and five (5) Advisory Opinions. It also examined and deferred one-hundred and fifteen

(115) applications for further consideration. The Court has also installed an e-case management system to ensure speedy and transparent consideration of cases. The Court is closely reviewing ways to accelerate finalization of cases without undermining quality of its decisions on judicial work.

**80.** The Court organized the Third African Judicial Dialogue in Arusha in November 2017, on the theme *'Improving Judicial Efficiency in Africa'*, which was attended by over 150 participants, including representatives of the judiciaries of 30 Member States of the African Union, current and former judges of the African Court, judges of regional judicial institutions, academics, media personalities, human rights practitioners and civil society organizations. The Dialogue adopted concrete measures on, among other things, the promotion of judicial education in Africa, the establishment of an African judicial network and the use of ICT in effective justice delivery.

**81.** The Court also undertook sensitization visits to Member States during which its delegation held fruitful discussions with high-ranking government officials, including the President of the Republic of Tunisia, the President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde and the Foreign Ministers of all the countries visited. The authorities of Egypt, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde undertook to take necessary measures to ratify the Protocol, while the President of the Republic of Tunisia signed the Article 34(6) Declaration. During the visits, the Court, in collaboration with the respective host governments, organized half-day sensitization seminars for human rights stakeholders in those countries.

**82.** As previously indicated, the lack of universal ratification of the Protocol and the very low number of Declarations are the major challenges that affected the operation of the Court in 2017. Essentially, this means that, out of a total of 55 Member States, the Court can receive cases from individuals only against 8 countries. This severely undermines the mandate of the Court in ensuring the protection of human rights on the continent and compromises the rationale for its establishment in the first place.

**83.** Another challenge relates to the implementation of the judgements of the Court: while some Member States complied, others failed or refused. If the Court is to be the judicial arm of the Union and contribute to the realization of its objectives, all Member States of the Union must cooperate in the effective implementation of the judgments and orders of the Court as required by Article 30 of the Protocol.

**84.** The priorities of the Court for 2018 are to: (i) streamline Court processes to drive efficiency and improve understanding among parties on the proceedings of the Court; (ii) provide access and adequate relief/remedies to victims of human rights violations; (iii) enhance the coordination and the relationship between the Court, Commission and ACERWC in the protection of human rights; (iv) encourage additional ratifications of the Protocol and deposits of the Declaration; and (v) diversify and increase the volume of funding for the Court.

**AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)**

**85.** During the reporting period, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) focused its work on (i) improving the ratification of, reporting on and domestication of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child at national level, and (ii) accelerating progress towards the promotion, protection and respect of the rights and welfare of African children.

**86.** A three-day advocacy forum seminar on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was held in Mauritius in September 2017, to share various experiences on the ratification of, reporting on, and implementation of the Africa Children's Charter and create a platform to share challenges and good practices. The ACERWC also undertook an advocacy mission to Sao Tome and Principe where it held fruitful discussions with the Government authorities and various partners working on child issues and chartered the way forward on the ratification of the ACRWC.

**87.** During the reporting period, there was an increase in the reporting by Member States. 38 out of the 48 Member States that have ratified the Charter submitted their initial reports, and eight (8) submitted their first and second periodic reports. In 2017, the ACRWC considered six State Party Reports and seven Complementary Reports. Concluding observations and recommendations were submitted to the Member States concerned.

**88.** The ACERWC appointed a new AU Special Rapporteur on ending child marriage in January 2017. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur includes responding to information on allegations of human rights violations resulting from child marriage practices in particular countries.

**89.** The ACERWC also undertook an investigative mission on issues pertaining to the rights of children in situations of slavery in a Member State. The mission was undertaken as part of the communication procedure that was instigated on behalf of children kept in slavery.

**90.** In 2017, the ACERWC launched the findings of its study on the impact of conflicts and crises on children in Africa. The study originates from a decision made by the Executive Council which requested the Peace and Security Council to take into account the rights of the child in its agenda and cooperate actively with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Decision EX.CL/Dec.712 (XXI)). The ACERWC also carried out a comprehensive continental study on the impact of conflicts and crises on children over the last ten years as well as the measures by State and non-State actors to protect the rights of children during and in the aftermath of such conflicts. The study addressed the psychological impact, education, health, nutrition/food security, separation from parents/caregivers, and sexual and gender-based violence. Child rights underlie its analysis, particularly the best interest of the

child; the rights to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child as evidenced through children's voices.

**91.** The ACERWC mobilized Member States for the commemoration of the Day of the African Child (DAC) 2017 whose theme was "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating Protection, Empowerment and Equal Opportunity". A concept note was shared with Member States to guide them and other stakeholders on how to commemorate the Day.

**92.** To accelerate progress towards Children's Rights in Africa, the ACERWC strengthened its collaboration with other African Union Organs, particularly the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, as well as with UN Agencies. On 03 November 2017, the ACERWC organized a side event on the margins of the 61st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in Banjul, in order to popularize Agenda 2040. The event brought together the ACHPR, civil society organizations, National Human Rights Institutions and various other participants. The objective of the meeting was to create awareness on the contents of Agenda 2040 to pave the way for increased commitment by state and non-state actors for its implementation.

**93.** The ACERWC and the ACHPR also worked together to develop a Joint General Comment on child marriage. The document was duly considered and adopted by the two Organs. The aim of the Joint General Comment is to elaborate on the nature of State Party obligations that arise from Article 6(b) of the Maputo Protocol and Article 21(2) of the African Children's Charter, both of which prohibit child marriage. The document describes legislative, institutional and other measures that should be taken by States Parties to give effect to the prohibition of child marriage and protect the rights of children affected.

**94.** A joint consultative meeting between the AU Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was held in Banjul in October 2017 to outline a framework of cooperation between OHCHR and the AU on human rights in conflict situations.

**95.** The major challenges impacting the operations of the ACERWC include failure to undertake planned activities due to lack of adequate funding. Activities affected include: the development of an implementation handbook for the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the implementation of the ACERWC communication plan; and amendment of Article 5 of protocol to allow the ACERWC to access the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights. Insufficient political will and cooperation of Member States are also a challenge. For example, only one country ratified the Charter during the period under review, despite the ACERWC's universal ratification campaign. Despite these challenges, the ACERWC will continue to ensure an effective implementation of the Charter by undertaking the following activities by: (a) continue lobbying for the universal ratification of, and reporting on the Charter; (b) strengthen collaboration with other AU Organs and UN partners (to undertake joint activities); (c)

monitor the implementation of Concluding Observations and Recommendations adopted by State Parties; (d) undertake advocacy visits to States Parties and others organs on communications (complaints) and investigations; (e) commemorate the 2018 Day of the African Child; (f) develop a General Comment on a provision of the Charter; (g) undertake the study on the situation of children on the move; and (h) strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat.

### **AFRICAN UNION BOARD ON CORRUPTION (AUACB)**

**96.** Member States adopted the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (or The Convention) at the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Maputo in July 2003. The Convention entered into force on 5 August 2006, thirty (30) days after the deposit of the fifteenth (15th) instrument of ratification. To date, thirty-eight (38) countries have ratified the Convention and are State Parties to it.

**97.** The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC) was created on 26 May 2009 under Article 22 (1) of The Convention. It is the unique continental institution mandated by the African Union to deal with corruption and related themes in Africa. Its main mandate is to promote and encourage the adoption of measures and actions by State Parties to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in Africa, as well as to follow-up on the application of those measures and regularly submit a report to the Executive Council on the progress made by each State Party in complying with the provisions of the Convention.

**98.** The AU Advisory Board on Corruption has eleven part-time Board Members who elect one among their number as Chairperson. The Bureau is composed of three Board members namely the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the Rapporteur.

**99.** One of the major activities of the Board in 2017 was the preparation of *Project 2018*, which has been declared as the Theme of the year - 2018, namely the African Anti-Corruption Year. Based on submissions by the Board, the Executive Council endorsed the proposal, including the nomination for the Champion for the Year, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Executive Council requested that the Board not only holds further consultations with Member States on its proposals for the Strategic Plan for 2017-2021, and on the Concept Note for Project 2018, but also submits an update on its proposals.

**100.** Subsequently, the Board hosted a Continental Consultative Workshop to enrich the Concept Note and the draft Strategic Plan. The workshop also brainstormed on an African Corruption Measurement. Thirty-two (32) Member States took part in the workshop, alongside civil society organizations and development partners.

**101.** During the year 2017, the Board held three ordinary sessions at which a new Bureau was elected in July 2017 (Inaugural session). Board members, having been elected by the Executive Council in January and July 2017 respectively, were subsequently sworn in, in the inaugural session of the Board held in July 2017. The

Board also established Working Groups on Project 2018, Resource Mobilization and Mechanism Review.

**102.** Challenges faced by the Board include inadequate funding for its programs; difficulty in securing the full collaboration by Member States; and the lean structure of its Secretariat. However, despite these constraints, the Board is committed to executing its mandate. In 2018, the main focus will be to raise awareness, increase ownership of the various anti-corruption initiatives and celebrate the year as the African Anti-Corruption Year. These activities will enhance the efforts of Member States in combating corruption, as already adopted by them under the theme “Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”.

### **AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM (APRM)**

**103.** The mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is to promote good governance in Africa by encouraging Member States to adopt policies and practices that can lead to political stability, strong and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental integration. APRM facilitates good governance by promoting adherence to norms of conduct contained in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

**104.** As observed in the recently completed AU Impact Study commissioned by UNECA, “The APRM has the potential to transform African governance and development in a number of areas. One is freeing them from undue external influence on their governance. A second area is liberating them from excessive elite domination and bringing the population into active participation in the political process. The third area is grounding policy-making on empirical realities of African countries.”

**105.** As of November 2017, thirty-six (36) Member States participated in the Mechanism. Four countries were peer reviewed in a row in January 2017, with the first second-generation review of Kenya. As a result, by the end of 2017, twenty (20) out of the 36 members had been reviewed. The Gambia and the Comoros are set to accede in January 2018, with Uganda to become the second country to be peer-reviewed for the second time at the same meeting, along with first reviews of Sudan and Liberia.

**106.** At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo in June 2014, the Assembly adopted a decision to integrate the APRM as an autonomous entity within the AU System. This decision catalysed the ability of the APRM to take its place as a specialized agency of the African Union. As a result, the Mechanism is now firmly grounded on a legal instrument in the form of the Statute of the African Peer Review Mechanism, which was provisionally adopted by the African Peer Review Forum on 26 August 2016.

**107.** Subsequently, at its 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in January 2017, the Assembly decided to extend the mandate of the Mechanism to include tracking the implementation and undertaking the monitoring and evaluation of the continent’s key governance areas,

specifically Agenda 2063 and the 2030 SDGs. This decision further solidified the Mechanism's position to drive the governance agenda in Africa, and restored confidence in the value, credibility and the prominence of the APRM as a continental governance tracking mechanism. This role entails the following measures:

- incorporating various governance reports from the African Governance Architecture platform and other AU Organs in the annual AU Governance Report highlighting the four thematic areas covered by APRM;
- providing country-specific governance briefings currently being developed to be domiciled at the APRM; and
- providing access to credible and legitimate knowledge products on the four thematic areas covered by APRM. A knowledge hub is currently being established and will include a broad variety of electronic policy papers, research and other AU institutional documents.

**108.** Despite recent progress achieved in dealing with governance and socio-economic development since the APRM's establishment in March 2003, the African continent faces some challenges that are of a persistent and recurring nature, potentially posing threats to sustained socio-economic development and attainment of the goals of Agenda 2063. Underlined by several APRM reviews, these cross-cutting issues include (i) violence induced by contested election processes; (ii) management of diversity, (iii) gender inequality and gender-based violence; (iv) state of the public service, and the scourge of corruption that impedes public service delivery; (v) issues of access to land ownership; and (vi) youth unemployment. If not addressed, these challenges can be a trigger for political instability and violent conflicts on the Continent.

**109.** The APRM therefore assists Member States to share their experience and learn from each other on how to deal with these challenges. Working with its strategic partners, including the African Development Bank, UN-ECA, UNDP, African Capacity Building Foundation and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the APRM also assists Member States in implementing programs designed to deal with these and other persistent governance challenges in a holistic manner.

**110.** In addition to its high-level target to complete four to five governance reviews and operationalize its governing and research structures, the APRM will accelerate its drive towards accession to the Mechanism by all AU Member States. Additionally, the APRM will continue to strengthen its cooperation the AGA and APSA Secretariats in the following areas:

- addressing the root causes of conflicts by using APRM Country Review reports as reference tools, and assisting countries that had undergone the APRM reviews to implement their National Programmes Plan of Action (NPOAs) in order to address the root causes of looming crises;

- early warning and early action by using the mandate of the APRM to address early signs of impending political or economic crisis;
- research on election best practices to examine elections and violence in Africa with a focus on elections as a source of instability and conflict in Africa. The project is a joint activity managed by the AGA-APSA-APRM Joint Secretariat. It will feed Agenda 2063 and, in particular the drive towards Silencing the Guns by 2020.

## **PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT (PAP)**

**111.** During the period under review, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) embarked on an advocacy programme to sensitize Member States on the need to ratify all legal instruments of the African Union, including the revised Pan-African Parliament Protocol. As a result, many Member States had signed the revised Protocol and were now in the process of ratification. They include Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Cameroon and Togo. This brings the total number of signatures to fifteen (15). However, only five (5) countries ratified and deposited the instruments with the African Union Commission. They are Gambia, Mali, SADR, Sierra Leone, and Sao Tome and Principe. At the current rate of ratification, the revised Protocol will require at least 18 years to achieve the required number of ratifications, which is twenty-eight (28), even though Speakers and Presiding Officers of national parliaments have committed to ensuring the ratification of the revised Protocol by August 2018. The Speakers and Presiding Officers have also committed to facilitating the ratification of legal instruments signed by their respective governments.

**112.** With respect to the budget, the Pan-African Parliament noted that the budget of the PAP – an organ of the African Union – is less than that of Departments of the African Union Commission. And the largest portion of the budget was reserved for salaries and not programmes. The Pan-African Parliament would like to organize programmes that accelerate continental integration. Limited resources are a real constraint.

**113.** From 22 to 25 August 2017, the Pan-African Parliament – under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, H.E. Paul Biya – organized a High-Level Consultative Meeting in Yaoundé in partnership with IDEA, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the European Commission. The High-Level Meeting noted that the key to deepening integration is the full ratification of all relevant continental and legal instruments; the establishment of the Pan-African Parliament as a legislative body of the AU; and ratification of AU instruments pertaining to Human Rights. Other major recommendations included in the final communiqué addressed the need for Member States to pool their individual sovereignties on agreed priorities to achieve a stronger common good - an integrated Africa with a common socio-economic development agenda and infrastructure capabilities to harness its vast resources and

overcome the current paradox of resource richness in an environment of high levels of poverty.

**114.** With respect to the issue of the “The Future of Africa-EU political partnership in the perspective of the Post-Cotonou Negotiation”, the conference declared that there is need to recognize the unity of Africa and fully-capacitated Pan-African institutions as the key partners and actors of the future political and cooperation agreements. In this perspective, there is further a need to negotiate a comprehensive Partnership Agreement encompassing the whole of Africa and to elaborate a unique binding cooperation framework for the political dialogue that is also based on a unique financial instrument covering all local and continental initiatives for Africa.

**115.** At the recently concluded AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, the Pan-African Parliament noted the limited success of the Joint Africa-Europe roadmap due to limited resources. It recommended that resources be committed to continental programmes in line with Agenda 2063. The Pan-African Parliament also called for a revised Cotonou Agreement which allows for effective partnership rather than dependency. The Joint Parliamentary Meeting further called on the AU-EU summit to reach an ambitious agreement which opens the door to a better future for young people in the 21st century. That agreement must deliver on the pledges made in the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, leading to real improvements in peoples’ lives and the sustainable use of resources. It must also pave the way for the electrification of the African continent, which is the basis for any future development.

**116.** The Joint Parliamentary Meeting noted that overcoming the root causes of migration required massive joint investments to create more employment opportunities for youth. The two Parliaments called upon EU and AU Member States to ensure that any migratory movement is safe, legal and voluntary. Countries that receive migrants should make an effort to integrate them, based on a fair burden sharing.

**117.** The Pan-African Parliament continued to face many challenges during the period under review, the first being the slow ratification of the revised PAP Protocol – only five Member States have so far done it. This situation reduces the effectiveness of the oversight role of the Parliament as its recommendations remain non-binding and without force. Secondly, the Protocol establishing the PAP requires the officials of the Commission to submit reports and attend its sessions. However, the Parliament remains powerless because the Commission’s officials did not respond to its invitations. A budget must therefore be allocated to enable regular interactions between the Commission’s officials and the Parliament’s Committees.

**118.** Members of the Pan-African Parliament remain outside the categories of persons working in the African Union and are therefore not covered by the financial rules and regulations. This creates problems when they are undertaking official duties.

**119.** The Pan-African Parliament continued to experience high turnover of its members, currently losing at least 25% of MPs after national elections. There is need

for a pool of African MPs with an understanding of Pan-African issues to ensure the integration of the continent. Additionally, Member States struggled to send full delegations to the Pan-African Parliament sessions and Committee meetings. As a result, it was often difficult to have a quorum. This delayed the adoption of resolutions and recommendations.

**120.** The Pan-African Parliament is mandated by the Assembly to ensure ratification and domestication of all AU legal instruments, but it lacks financial resources to perform this responsibility. As a result, the PAP depends on partner funds to undertake statutory work, and such activities as ratification of AU instruments, engagement with Member States, Speakers' Conferences and regional Parliamentary engagement.

**Output 6: Capacity for Africa to coordinate and respond to humanitarian situations and protect civilians in conflicts and disaster zones enhanced**

**121.** The Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa is the organ which is mandated on all matters pertaining to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons and other humanitarian issues. It undertook field assessment/solidarity missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Sudan. The purpose of the Sub-Committee's field assessment missions was to observe first-hand the scope and extent of the humanitarian situation in the countries visited in order to enhance the quality of its reports and recommendations to the highest Policy Organs of the African Union. The Commission, through the Department of Political Affairs, supports Member States in building national resilience in humanitarian response.

**OUTCOME 2:  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AGRO-PROCESSING, ENVIRONMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Expand agricultural production, developing the agro-processing sectors, increase market access and attain Africa's collective food and nutrition self-sufficiency through promotion of small-holder agriculture, sound environment, natural resource and climate change management.

**OUTPUTS:**

- Member States implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) priority programs, including animal resources as an instrument to boost agricultural production and productivity for food and nutrition, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty supported;
- Implementation of priority programs on environment, natural resources management and climate change facilitated.

**Output 1: Member States implementation of CAADP priority programs including animal resources as an instrument to boost agricultural production and productivity for food and nutrition, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty supported**

**CAADP IMPLEMENTATION**

**122.** In 2017, the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) gathered momentum through the following seven (7) Malabo Commitments: (i) re-committing to the principles and values of the CAADP process; (ii) enhancing investment finance in agriculture; (iii) ending hunger in Africa by 2025; (iv) cutting poverty in half by 2025 through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation; (v) boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services; (vi) enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other related risks; and (vii) strengthening mutual accountability to actions and results.

**123.** The Commission, in collaboration with the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the RECs and technical partners, facilitated the development of individual country reports and the first Continental Biennial Review Report that was endorsed by the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, and will be presented to the Assembly in January 2018. The report is one of the steps in the preparation of the CAADP Results Framework, develop technical materials to guide Member States in data collection and analysis, and equip them with the requisite skills and competencies for tracking and reporting.

**124.** Thirty-four (34) experts received certification to provide technical support to the biennial review processes. Twenty (20) Member States were already on track to achieve the goals and targets of the Malabo Declaration by 2025. Only ten Member States out of the 47 that submitted their report have allocated at least 10% of public expenditure to agriculture. Of the thirty-four (34) Member States that reported on growth rates of yields of national commodities, thirteen (13) reached the minimum increase of 10 percent required to be on-track for 2017. Out of the twenty-two (22) Member States that reported progress on reducing the proportion of the population that is undernourished, only nine (9) countries are on track.

**125.** On the recommitment to achieving 6% annual growth of the agricultural GDP, eighteen (18) Member States reported an increase in agricultural GDP of at least 6% in 2016. Out of the twenty-nine (29) Member States that have reported, only three (3) reached the minimum of 20% in growth rate increase, which is a milestone to be on-track for the commitment in intra-regional trade of agricultural commodities and services within Africa. Thirty (30) Member States are on-track for reaching more than the minimum of 10 for the Trade Facilitation Index (TFI) for creating an enabling environment for intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities and services in 2017. The STC endorsed specific recommendations based on the findings of the reports. One of the recommendations is that Member States requested the African Union and the NEPAD Agency to mobilize technical and financial resources aiming at strengthening country data systems, evidence-based planning and mutual accountability mechanisms through capacity building programs and knowledge sharing among countries.

### **Food Security, Nutrition and Food Safety**

**126.** In the past two years, African food security has been challenged by external shocks, especially those related to climate change and variability. Most of African countries have been experiencing unprecedented droughts, outbreaks of pests and disease. The devastating fall army worm, for example, has been reported in about thirty (30) countries. In addition to that, most parts of the continent are still affected by conflicts which trigger food insecurity and malnutrition.

**127.** The Commission pursued several initiatives/projects whose objective was to promote agricultural development, food security and nutrition through the Malabo-CAADP Results Framework. This framework was designed to facilitate and expedite implementation and track progress towards achieving the CAADP vision of ending hunger by 2025. Remarkable progress was made in a number of areas.

**128.** The Commission deliberated on the three-year work plan for the African Union Nutrition Champion with His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho when he visited the Commission in August 2017. The work plan aims to advance the implementation of the revised Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy and provides a roadmap that outlines the role of the Commission and other stakeholders in the elimination of hunger and malnutrition in Africa. The Nutrition Champion is expected, inter-alia, to promote the AU's Africa Renewed Initiative for Stunting Elimination in Africa

(ARISE) and advocate for increased investment in nutrition which will include private sector engagement in nutrition initiatives that build on studies on the Cost of Hunger in Africa. The Champion will also render support to the initiative of the Chairperson of the Commission to address nutrition and humanitarian needs in areas of conflict as well as support the Commission's sustainable school food and nutrition initiative which aims to scale up continental school feeding programs.

**129.** Food security, nutrition and food safety are inextricably linked. Unsafe food creates a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition, particularly affecting infants, young children, the elderly and the sick. Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining health care systems, and harming national economies, tourism and food trade.

**130.** In Africa, food-borne diseases represent a serious health threat to millions of people. Estimates show that more than 91 million people fall ill and 137 000 die each year of food-borne illnesses, representing one-third of the global death toll from food-borne pathogens. Diarrheal diseases alone are responsible for up to 70% of food-borne diseases in Africa. Children under 5 years are the most affected, accounting for almost 33% of all food contamination deaths.

**131.** Several outbreaks of food-borne diseases such as cholera, shigellosis, konzo (an acute paralysis caused by consumption of high cyanide cassava) and acute aflatoxicosis continue to occur in several parts of the African continent. For example, aflatoxins contribute to about 30% of liver cancer cases in Africa, making liver cancer the number one cause of cancer mortality. The presence of chemical contaminants in food and drinking water is another worrying development.

**132.** The burden of diseases due to contaminated food is highest in Africa. A single food safety threat, such as aflatoxins, is estimated to cause damages of up to 25% of the world's food crops, resulting in large economic losses in many developing countries. In Africa, losses in export trade earnings due to aflatoxins are estimated at over USD 670 million. With the globalization of food trade, diseases that happen in one part of the world can spread rapidly to other parts of the globe. The global spread of food-borne diseases also results in bans in food trade, with loss of market access and exports earnings. The African continent remains highly vulnerable to all such threats.

**133.** The AU target, as contained in the Malabo Declarations, of tripling intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities by 2025 will be difficult to realize as long as there is no structured continental or regional mechanism to provide coordination or leadership on food systems control in Africa. Food supply chains now cross multiple national borders. However, Member States have different food control regimes which do not achieve the same appropriate level of protection or facilitate intra-regional trade. In addition, Member States and the RECs have commenced the implementation of regional and national programmes to build sanitary and phytosanitary capacity,

particularly in relation to food safety, but these programmes are proceeding at different paces.

**134.** In recognition of these challenges, the AU-EU Heads of State and Government decided, at the Lisbon Summit in 2007, to establish a continental food safety body within the AU Commission to address food safety challenges on the continent. The challenge is that Member States continue to experience serious difficulties in implementing the reforms necessary to meet modern food safety requirements. On the other hand, the RECs have not yet built their technical capacity to lead continent-wide reforms on this issue. It is, therefore, imperative to ensure a uniform, coordinated approach and harmonization of food safety standards across the continent. There is also need to establish or strengthen government regulatory agencies on food safety as well as enhance cooperation among Member States in order to ensure the production, consumption and trade of safe foodstuffs across Africa and globally.

**135.** The AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) based in Nairobi and the Inter- African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) based in Yaoundé, are mandated to coordinate animal and plant health measures. In 2012, the Commission launched the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), an initiative that aimed to coordinate and support aflatoxin mitigation across the health, agriculture and trade sectors in Africa. In addition, the Commission plans to co-organize with the FAO and WHO, no later than in 2019, an International Food Safety Conference in line with the high-level importance placed on food safety by the AU Policy Organs.

### **Development of Animal Resources**

**136.** The Commission drafted standard operating procedures for the proper management of gene banks, which include (i) technical, legal and administrative procedures, and (ii) draft Material Transfer Agreements to enable the movement and exchange of genetic materials among Member States. Approximately, 85 breeds of cattle, sheep, goat, pig, poultry, camel grass-cutter and fish are being characterized. Information sharing and debate on various aspects of Animal Genetics Resources [AnGRs] management and development is on-going through the five regional Domestic Animal Diversity Networks (DAD-NET). In view of the need to harmonize surveillance and disease control, countries in the Greater Horn of Africa continued to implement the Standards, Methods and Procedures [SMPs] frameworks for surveillance and disease control related to trade. Uganda and South Central Somalia received laboratory equipment and materials.

**137.** Dissemination and utilization of a laboratory manual on standard operation and the development, validation and implementation of the quarantine standard operating procedures were undertaken. Twenty-five (25) members of the National Livestock Identification and Traceability Systems [LITS] teams from IGAD Member States were trained on LITS application and implementation. In addition, 35 front-line actors were trained on the use of mobile phone in disease reporting in Uganda as a pilot country. In Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, National Peste des Petits Ruminants [PPR] control

and eradication committees were established by the Directorates of Veterinary Services with the Support of AU-IBAR within the framework of the surveillance for trade sensitive diseases (STSD) Project.

**138.** The Commission disseminated scientific information for improved control of tsetse, human and animal trypanosomiasis through the publication of volume 127 and 128 of the proceedings of the International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC) conferences held in Khartoum in 2013 and Ndjamena in 2015. This project has, among others, produced the following results: (i) the development of a national livestock policies and animal welfare strategy for Africa; (ii) the establishment of an African platform for animal welfare; (iii) the conduct of research to provide evidence in support of policy decision-making; (iv) the update of national veterinary legislation in beneficiary countries; and (v) the operationalization of continental networks and regional animal health centers.

**139.** The Commission conducted a review of national and regional fish trade policies and related frameworks for their harmonization in four regions: West, Central, East and Southern Africa. It also helped to establish an African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network for the purpose of encouraging women involved in this sector and improve their share in intra-regional fish trade.

**140.** The NEPAD Agency launched the African Chapter of the World Aquaculture Society at a high-level continental fish trade policy platform. Nineteen countries took part in the launch, namely Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda. The policy platform focused on improving continental and regional trade in fish and fishery products.

**141.** With respect to fish harvest and trade, the NEPAD Agency initiated the adoption of regional certification, standards and regulations for areas that are critical for promoting intra-regional fish trade. These included pre-assessment of shrimp for certification standards using the Africa Eco Label Mechanism (AEM) in Nigeria, Gabon and Cameroon. The Agency also helped boost the production of octopus in the Indian Ocean through applied innovations, as well as modernize capacity and work environments in post-harvest handling of fish products. In Guinea, for example, twenty (20) officers received training in fish handling and sanitary control. In Côte d'Ivoire, the impact of fish smoking on health was assessed and in Senegal, equipment for fish handling and processing was purchased.

## **Output 2: Implementation of priority programs on environment, natural resources management and climate change facilitated**

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

**142.** In terms of climate change, Africa is the worst hit region, with recurring droughts, floods and extreme heat. The reliance on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, raises the need for urgent actions to combat climate change and promote resilience on the continent. To address these challenges, the Commission encouraged Member States to adopt policies on climate change, disaster risks, land degradation, depletion of natural resources and biodiversity.

**143.** African countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement. As of October 2017, over 40 Member States had already ratified it and embarked on the implementation of their nationally determined contributions.

**144.** The NEPAD Agency contributed to Africa's unified position in global negotiations on climate change through, among others, the provision of technical and financial support to strategic platforms and to targeted groups. The latter included the African Group of Negotiators in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), and African experts at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Parties (COP) during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bonn, Germany.

**145.** The Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) convened at the AU Permanent Observer Mission in New York on 18 September 2017, on the margins of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Committee assessed progress on Africa's engagement in the global climate change negotiations at the 22nd Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP22). It also defined strategies for Africa's effective participation at the 23rd Conference (COP23), which took place in Bonn, Germany, from 6 to 17 November 2017. CAHOSCC adopted these Messages, which encompassed the aspirations of Africa, as a basis of negotiations at COP23. It also called for elaboration of a High-Level Framework for monitoring and evaluating climate support, the acceleration of the development of governance and institutional arrangements, as well as the operating modalities for the Adaptation Fund to serve the Paris Agreement.

**146.** On 6 October 2017, the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment adopted the action plans for CAHOSCC Women and Gender Program on Climate Change and for CAHOSCC Youth Program on Climate Change – which were developed to implement the Malabo 2014 Decision on the High-Level Work Program on Climate Change Action in Africa. The action plans will soon be submitted for the consideration of CAHOSCC. Furthermore, the Commission continued to facilitate the work of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change, the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and the Youth on climate change.

**147.** Similarly, the Commission finalized a draft program to secure the European Union support under the Global Climate Change Alliance plus (GCCA+) in the 11th Intra ACP-European Development Funds. This support aims to assist the Commission's capacity to coordinate, facilitate and advocate for the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement in Africa by working with Member States on their nationally determined contributions. It also aims to track implementation of the Paris Agreement in Africa through a common reporting, monitoring and evaluation framework.

**148.** In 2017, the Commission focused on the need for Africa to strengthen its ability to access reliable and near real time data and information for the environment dimension of sustainable development. In this regard, the Commission supported the efforts of the RECs to integrate earth observation in their regional development planning. The Commission also facilitated the acquisition and installation by Member States of strategic infrastructure for the access to, processing and disseminating of satellite-based environmental and climate data.

**149.** So far, 49 Member States benefitted from this support, and over 1500 national experts received the training. Member States now utilize satellite-based earth observation technologies for the following: in their policy decision-making and their development planning in agriculture and food security, climate monitoring, conservation, coastal and marine resources management, disaster risks reduction, flood and drought monitoring, water resources management, and land degradation mitigation. The Commission will expand this support in the coming year. At the same time, Member States should implement measures that will sustain this technological infrastructure and retain national expertise in operating it.

### **Disaster Reduction**

**150.** The Commission made significant strides in helping Member States build national resilience to natural hazards. In January 2017, the Assembly endorsed the Africa Program of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030. The program of action aims to facilitate the implementation of Sendai Framework, Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Agenda 2063.

**151.** To enhance its capacity in implementing disaster risk reduction programs on the continent, the Commission developed an African position on disaster risk reduction, which was presented to the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Cancun, Mexico, in May 2017. The Commission also drafted a roadmap for the creation of the Africa Centre of Excellence for Disaster Risk Research, Prevention and Management.

**152.** In close collaboration with the Republic of Cameroon, the Commission initiated a continental monitoring and reporting system for disaster risk management. The draft Roadmap will be validated by the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2018. The Commission is coordinating implementation of a multi-million euro EU-ACP resilience program on the continent as a contribution to strengthening the

Commission's capacity, the RECs and Member States on disaster risk reduction. Four (4) RECs have already set up their disaster risk reduction structures. Twenty (20) Member States established disaster-induced losses databases, and twelve (12) developed risk profiles.

**153.** Although the Commission achieved tremendous progress in this area, much remains to be done to strengthen the continent's resilience to multi-faceted hazards against the backdrop of an ever-changing climate coupled with rapid and unplanned urbanization, and inadequate disaster early warning and response mechanisms. In the coming year, the Commission will work with partners to accelerate the domestication and implementation of the Africa Program of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in Member States and local communities, and support the development of Africa risk assessment and reporting capacity. The Commission will also endeavour to help Member States strengthen their disaster preparedness and recovery mechanisms, especially those recovering from complex humanitarian disasters and vicious vulnerability cycles.

**154.** To ensure resilience in agricultural production systems and livelihoods and improved agricultural risk management, the Commission and the NEPAD Agency provided technical support with guidance on mainstreaming adaptation to climate change and resilience to the national agricultural investment plans. Gender experts from five countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger and Rwanda – also received training on managing gender climate change agriculture.

**155.** Member States received technical support to mobilize resources for addressing the challenges of adaptation to climate change. Furthermore, the Commission facilitated various conferences to explore ways of enhancing the resilience of the agricultural production systems and scaling up of good practices in climate-smart agriculture. Initiatives were also underway to build the capacity of Member States to define proper indicators and metrics for building resilience that can be used for the biennial review and report.

### **AFRICAN RISK CAPACITY (ARC)**

**156.** The African Risk Capacity (ARC) is a pan-African risk pool designed to help Member States of the African Union to improve their capacities to plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters such as drought, floods and cyclones. The work of the African Risk Capacity is undertaken by two entities: the **ARC Agency**, a Specialized Agency of the African Union, and its financial affiliate, the **ARC Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd)**, a mutual insurance company. ARC Agency provides capacity building services to Member States, as well as the political oversight and strategic direction for ARC, while ARC Ltd carries out the insurance and risk transfer functions of ARC.

**157.** ARC Agency was established by the Agreement for the Establishment of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency (the Treaty) in November 2012, pursuant to a

resolution adopted by the Fifth Joint African Union Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance, and a subsequent decision by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government (Assembly/AU/Dec.417 (XIX)) on 16 July 2012. Through these and other decisions, the African Union leadership expressed its desire to develop an African solution to respond to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters by establishing a continental disaster risk financing mechanism. In 2013, ARC Agency spearheaded the establishment of ARC Ltd as a mutual insurance company, pursuant to a decision of the ARC Agency Conference of the Parties (the CoP).

**158.** In addition to fulfilling its mandate, the African Risk Capacity supports Agenda 2063 to minimize the vulnerability of people to natural disasters as part of a structural transformation of Africa. Its work is also a major contributor to the continent's efforts to strengthen peace and security, by increasing the resilience of vulnerable people, helping to safeguard the livelihoods of rural populations, thereby keeping people in their communities during climate induced crisis because they are supported during difficult times.

**159.** The activities of African Risk Capacity for the reporting period focused towards its three key strategic objectives, namely research and development, scalability and sustainability, and improvement of disaster risk management on the continent.

**160. Research and Development:** This programme focuses on developing and continually improving ARC insurance products and other risk management tools so that they continue to be relevant to ARC Member States. During the reporting period, ARC continued to improve its core software product, *Africa RiskView*. It also made progress on the development of a parametric insurance river flood model, as well as a product to respond to the risk of outbreaks and epidemics.

**161. Scalability and Sustainability:** During the reporting period, ARC Agency convened the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties in Abidjan in March 2017. The ARC Agency Governing Board (the Board) met three times during the reporting period. In addition to overseeing the activities of ARC Agency, the Board worked with the ARC Ltd Board (collectively referred to as the Boards) to improve the governance and operations of the ARC. Furthermore, ARC engaged more closely with the RECs and contributing to international discussions on climate policy through the InsuResilience initiative.

**162. Improving Disaster Risk Management on the Continent:** ARC advocated an increase of the resources available to its Member States, including through discussions with the African Development Bank and other partners to establish a premium financing facility. ARC also continued to make progress on the Replica Initiative Pilot, under which international organizations and non-governmental organizations can take out insurance that matches the insurance taken by ARC Members, thereby contributing additional resources to disaster response in ARC Member States.

**163.** To date, eight countries have participated in ARC's four drought risk pools, and ARC Ltd has underwritten over USD \$400 million of drought risk. African governments paid US \$52 million in insurance premiums. 95% of this amount came from national budgets without any international support, thus demonstrating that there is a strong interest among African countries in such instruments and in proactively managing risks.

**164.** ARC Ltd made insurance pay-outs of US \$34 million to four countries: Malawi, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, supporting over 2 million people and 1 million livestock through the scale-up of cash transfer, food distribution and subsidized livestock feeding programmes. But ARC is not just about insurance. It is about advanced preparation and improving risk management on the African continent.

**165.** As a Specialized Agency of the African Union, Africa Risk Capacity should be fully involved in initiatives and work streams relating to its mandate when they are put forward by other AU bodies, including: better integrated reporting; designations of ARC Champions within the AU; and integration of ARC into the AU reform process.

**166.** Following ARC Member States' decisions encouraging ratification of the Treaty, eight (8) countries have completed, or made substantial progress on, the national ratification process, but only 4 ARC Member States have completed the process at the Commission level. The Treaty is currently in force provisionally and will not come into force definitively until ten (10) instruments of ratification have been deposited with the Commission.

**167.** Several Member States with low resilience faced serious resource constraints to pay premiums to ARC Ltd and may require premium financing support. This facility will support sustained pool growth in the early years, and, when tied to commitments on embedding risk management in sovereign systems, will help the pool to become sustainable in the medium term. The African Development Bank offered its support to this endeavour, and ARC is also in discussions with multiple alternative channels, including the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Islamic Development Bank and the European Union.

**168.** ARC proposes the following priority areas and recommendations for the consideration of the Policy Organs:

- Emphasizing the work of the ARC Agency among Member States by, among others, establishing a ministerial committee to champion its mandate, increasing financial contribution to, and African ownership of, its programmes, and integrating ARC in the AU reform process;
- Encouraging more signatures and ratifications of the ARC Treaty by Member States so that they can benefit from ARC Agency membership, including access to services to help better prepare for and respond to natural disasters, and to address climate change;

- Further encouraging AU Member States, organs of the AU and other continental bodies to extend necessary support to and work with the ARC to improve responses to natural disasters on the continent, and, in particular to involve ARC in discussions, events and decisions relating to natural disaster risk, climate change and innovative finance;
- Requesting development finance institutions and partners to support this critical contribution to the continent's disaster risk management and climate change adaptation infrastructure, including through premium support, and to channel their support to risk management in Africa through the ARC, an existing African-led institution;

Inviting donor partners to support coordination between ARC initiatives and the work of the humanitarian community on the continent.

## Land Policy

**169.** The Commission organized an inaugural Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) on 14-17 November 2017, bringing together leading land African experts to share research findings and good practices on key drivers of land policy development and implementation. Land issues and governance are now being mainstreamed in regional protocols and programs. As a result, there are dedicated or joint programs on land governance by the RECs and other AU Organs like the Pan-African Parliament. The Pan-African Farmers' Organization, a key organization that informs policies on land development, developed its work plan on land governance, and a continental platform of civil society organizations on land governance is now in operation.

**170.** Africa has a better understanding of the factors that influence land-restoration. Investors and other key stakeholders quantified national land-restoration targets based on analyses of locally available maps. Twenty-four (24) Member States and communities took part in this exercise. These countries are also participating in the 100 million hectare African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR) project. Following this initiative, millions of hectares of land on the continent have been committed for restoration through the application of the restoration opportunities assessment methodology.

**171.** During the reporting period, the following commitments were realized: Benin - 0.5 million ha, Burundi - 2 million ha, Cameroon - 12 million ha, CAR - 3.5 million ha, Chad - 1.4 million ha, Cote d'Ivoire - 5 million ha, DRC - 8 million ha, Ethiopia - 15 million ha, Ghana - 2 million ha, Guinea - 2 million ha, Kenya - 5.1 million ha, Liberia - 1 million ha, Madagascar - 4 million ha, Malawi - 4.5 million ha, Mozambique - 1 million ha, Niger - 3.2 million ha, Republic of Congo - 2 million ha, Rwanda - 2 million ha, South Africa - 3.6 million ha, and Uganda - 2.5 million ha.

**172.** On its part, the Commission put in place a Forum for African Seed Testing (FAST), which aims to strengthen the capacity of African seed health laboratory

scientists and facilitate the development of the Forum's operationalization plan for 2015–2017.

### **Enhancement of Agri-Business**

**173.** The Commission developed a draft policy framework on rural infrastructure and access to markets, as well as a continental agribusiness strategy. These documents will guide the agribusiness sector and add value to primary produce, generate employment and income, thus contributing to economic growth and reduction of food dependency in Africa.

**174.** The Continental Geographic Indications Strategy and its policy framework were also adopted by the Second Ordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in October 2017. Also adopted was its action plan which will serve as a tool for sustainable rural development and transformation within the context of the CAADP and Agenda 2063. The European Union had expressed its desire to support the implementation of the action plan, while the STC endorsed it as one of the deliverables for the November 2017 AU-EU Summit.

### **THE GREAT GREEN WALL FOR THE SAHARA AND SAHEL INITIATIVE**

**175.** Encouraged by the positive impacts of implementing the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) in the last ten years, the Commission extended the Initiative to assist the Southern Africa region, which has been affected by some of the worst drought, land degradation and desertification phenomena on the continent. The launch of GGWSSI in Southern Africa provided a platform for exchange of best practices and peer-to-peer learning among involved Member States and the RECs.

**176.** In collaboration with FAO and the African Development Bank, the Commission initiated consultations that were aimed at promoting the development of renewable energy within the framework of the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, making use of the solar, wind and geothermal potential of the Member States. In the same vein, the Commission is in contact with a Canadian-American group, the Trans African Pipeline, for support in the implementation of a project to enable the desalinization and use of the sea water for irrigation.

**177.** During the course of the year under review, the Commission worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Permanent Inter-State Committee for the Control of Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) and Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) to support a number of sub-projects within the initiative to enhance livelihoods. The increasing awareness of the nexus between drought, land degradation, poverty, conflicts, internal displacements and migration contributed to raising the profile of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative regionally and globally.

**178.** Furthermore, the Commission provided substantial support to Member States in their participation in the COP13, which resulted in the adoption of a separate strategic objective on drought that will enable the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to support African countries to address with drought.

#### **AU-SAFGRAD**

**179.** The African Union's Specialized Agency on Semi-Arid Food Grains Research and Development (SAFGRAD) is actively involved in enhancing regional partnerships and networks, providing support to Member States in their efforts to promote agricultural research for development and building resilience of rural livelihoods in semi-arid zones of Africa.

**180.** SAFGRAD worked with its partners to strengthen the capacity of Member States, the RECs and other relevant actors on the resilience to climate change and desertification. It partnered with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt and the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance for African Countries to train young researchers from fifteen (15) Member States in the area of modern irrigation. SAGFRAD also conducted policy dialogue in combating desertification in Africa, in collaboration with the government of Burkina Faso and the UNCCD. It published research on challenges and opportunities in agricultural value chains in Africa. SARGRAD also coordinated the adoption of the African common position for the UNCCD-Conference of the Parties (COP13) held in China, in September 2017.

**181.** Furthermore, through SAFGRAD, the RECs had an opportunity to identify the main challenges and opportunities of strategic value chains development in their respective regions, and agree on the main criteria for the prioritization of agricultural commodities. The activities of the Agency also included linking the Pan-African Farmers' Organization with the research and extension services at national, regional and continental levels.

**OUTCOME 3:  
INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE,  
INDUSTRIALIZATION AND TRADE**

Infrastructure development, environment for inclusive economic development, industrialization, private sector-led intra-African trade, sustainable utilization of natural resources created.

**OUTPUTS:**

- Enabling policy frameworks for inclusive development formulated, promoted and implementation capacity of Member States enhanced.
- The Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa facilitated.
- Access to modern energy services for the majority of African population enhanced.
- Trade and customs facilitation policies developed and promoted and CFTA negotiations facilitated.
- Policies for private sector engagement and improved business climate developed and promoted.
- Women, youth and persons with disabilities entrepreneurship promoted and supported.
- Policies for sustainable utilization of mineral and other resources developed and promoted.

**Output 1: Enabling policy frameworks for inclusive development formulated, promoted and implementation capacity of Member States enhanced**

**182.** The Commission has set for itself the ambition of building for Africa by the year 2030 an integrated infrastructure of transport, energy and communications that is safe, reliable, efficient and affordable, capable of promoting regional and continental integration and sustainable development of the continent. This is a long-term aspiration focuses on the key challenges facing the continent, namely, its integration, economic and social development and its full participation in the global economy.

**183.** To fulfil this aspiration, the Policy Organs adopted several key instruments – decisions, declarations and frameworks – on infrastructure and energy programs and projects, which the Commission had since been implementing. They include the following: (i) the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and Agenda 2063 First Ten-Year Plan; (ii)

Declarations of AU Assembly on Transport and Energy and ICT Development in Africa; (iii) Declaration of the 4<sup>th</sup> Africa-EU Summit; (iv) Transport, Energy and ICT sector and sub-sector Declarations, Decisions and Plans of Action; and (v) Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

### **Output 2: Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa facilitated**

**184.** The Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is the main cross-cutting activity of the Commission in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA). It is designed to help address the infrastructure deficit in transport, energy, ICT and trans-boundary water. PIDA provides a common continental strategic framework and blue-print for inter-connecting and integrating Africa through priority infrastructure programs and projects and aims to boost trade, spark growth and jobs, and unleash Africa's economic and social transformation. The PIDA Priority Plan of Action (PAP) is composed of 51 actionable projects and programs of transport, energy, ICT and trans-boundary water. Its implementation will promote regional integration between 2012 and 2020.

**185.** Activities carried out in the context of PIDA in 2017 included: (i) the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> PIDA ICT Priority Action Plan (ICT PAP3) related to internet exchange points (IXPs) in thirty-three (33) Member States; (ii) the adoption by the NEPAD Infrastructure Projects Preparation Funds (NEPAD-IPPF) of a prioritized and sequenced pipeline of regional infrastructure projects for possible support by NEPAD-IPPF for the five-year period, 2016-2020, and enhanced working modalities between NEPAD-IPPF and stakeholders to ensure coordinated and results-driven partnerships to strengthen project preparation and delivery and measures to enhance resource mobilization; (iii) capacity-building funded by the African Development Bank and the German Government for implementing PIDA-projects, including provision for a period of three years of experts for RECs to support PIDA projects preparation and experts for NPCA and AUC for PIDA management.

**186.** There were, however, some challenges, namely weak resource mobilization for project preparation, particularly of domestic resources, and delays in agreements between countries and non-alignment of legal and regulatory frameworks for concerned countries. Going forward, efforts will focus on the finalization of the PIDA mid-term review whose outcome is expected to be submitted to the AU Policy Organs at the July 2018 Summit.

### **Output 3: Access to modern energy services for the majority of the African population enhanced**

**187.** In the energy sector, the focus of the Commission was on the following main areas of activity: (i) the operationalization and implementation of Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) adopted at the COP21 in Paris in December 2015; (ii) facilitation of Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL); (iii) advocacy for the implementation

of the Africa Bioenergy Policy Framework and Guidelines; (iv) elaboration of a Continental Harmonized Regulatory Framework for the Energy Sector; (v) implementation of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership; (vi) implementation of the Regional Geothermal Program and establishment of the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility (GRMF); (vii) implementation of the Hydropower 2020 Initiatives, including advocacy for the development of Inga Hydropower project as part of Agenda 2063.

**188.** Achievements in 2017 included: (i) operationalization, with the support of AU partners, of Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) by developing its governance structure documents and staffing its technical experts and Board of Directors; (ii) follow up and facilitation of the implementation of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative by developing its Action Agendas and Investment Prospectus for several Member States; (iii) finalization and validation of the strategy document and action plan for the harmonization of regulatory frameworks, which was adopted by the Ministers at the STC- on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) first meeting in Lomé in March 2017; (iv) launch of the second phase of the study on harmonized tariff along transmission lines, policy in mini-grid and establishment of Coordination Unit; (v) Support to Member States in preparing bioenergy projects and mobilization of resources for project development.

**189.** The Commission also partnered with the German Ministry for economic cooperation and the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund in the establishment of Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility (GRMF). The Commission supported 26 projects in five countries in East Africa with total grant amount of USD 80 million. The Commission also provided technical and financial support to the Agency for the Development and Promotion of the Grand Inga Project (Agence pour le Développement et la Promotion du Projet Grand Inga) established in the Office of the President of the DRC. It also assisted in the convening of the first STC on Energy, Transport and Tourism held in Lomé in March 2017.

**190.** In the energy sub-sector, implementation arrangements began in 2017 for the design of a rooftop solar system to power government buildings in Madagascar. A renewable energy access program was launched and implementation began for the thirty-three (33) high priority renewable energy projects that were identified. The Gambia, Kenya and Tanzania received technical and financial support from the NEPAD Agency to undertake a feasibility study on renewable energy financing. Madagascar also received assistance for a similar study for rooftop solar systems.

**191.** In general, however, limited financial resources and the lack of data on the energy sector in many African countries remains a major challenge for tracking progress in this sector. With the upsurge of international attention to African energy issues, ranging from initiatives such as the United Nations-led Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG7) and the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), there is an urgent need for Member States to enhance their ability to collect and disseminate accurate data on their energy needs, potential and

consumption. Furthermore, Member States are encouraged to adopt national policies on renewable energy, including bioenergy.

### **AFRICAN ENERGY COMMISSION (AFREC)**

**192.** The activities of the African Energy Commission (AFREC) in 2017 focused mainly on developing the African Energy Information System and Database to facilitate the exchange of information among Member States, as well as among the RECs.. The African Energy Commission was thus able to disseminate energy statistics data and contribute to the preparation of the International Energy Agency's 2017 World Energy Statistics as well as the Africa Energy Outlook 2040. AFREC contributed to the preparation of the 2017 African Statistical Year Book, within a joint project of the Commission, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

**193.** Training and capacity building for national focal points were also among the activities of the African Energy Commission during 2017. These activities helped improve the competency of hundreds of statistical experts and, thus, the production of reliable energy data by Member States. 81 statisticians from Member States, the RECs, Regional Power Pools and Regional Centers for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency participated in these sessions. In addition, 28 national focal points recently nominated by African Energy Ministers for collecting energy statistics database and energy balance also benefitted from AFREC expertise. In collaboration with the Joint Organization Data Initiative (JODI), AFREC trained 25 African energy experts in the collection of monthly oil and gas data for the African Oil and Gas producing countries. It also provided a one-month internship to two Master's degree students from the Pan-African University of Water and Energy Sciences based in Tlemcen, Algeria.

**194.** Some of the challenges AFREC had to deal with include difficulty in retaining the services of national focal points, and limited funding for training.

### **AFRICAN ELECTRO-TECHNICAL STANDARDIZATION COMMISSION (AFSEC)**

**195.** The African Electro-Technical Standardization Commission (AFSEC) was established with the support of the Commission to provide a collaborative framework for stakeholders in Member States, through their national electro-technical committees, and to harmonize electro-technical standards and the associated conformity assessment requirements of Africa.

**196.** During 2017, there was an increase in membership from eleven (11) full members at the end of 2016 to fifteen (15) in 2017. Additionally, 80% of Member States endorsed the AFSEC standards after the commissioning of the AFSEC database in the middle of the year. The number of standards approved for common adoption now exceeds 140, while their actual appropriateness and need is still to be tested over time.

**Output 4: Policy and standards to promote continental integration facilitated**

**197. Single African Air Transport Market Project:** The Assembly, at its 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in January 2015, adopted the Declaration on implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision towards establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) by 2017, as well as the Solemn Commitment made by eleven (11) Champion States towards advancing concrete and unconditional implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market. At the time of finalizing this report, twelve (12) more Member States had joined the initial eleven (11) to reach twenty-three (23) States.

**198.** A Ministerial Working Group was set-up with three main functions: (i) to lead the implementation process in their States, (ii) to provide guidance, and (iii) to spearhead the advocacy campaign to urge the rest of the Member States to join the single market and ensure the right conditions are established in their State. The Ministerial Working Group elaborated an activity road-map for establishing the single air transport market, including resource mobilization for the start-up activities of the Executing Agency, and its launching in 2017.

**199.** The Commission is pleased to report that the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market will now take place at the January 2018 Summit. The regulatory and institutional texts of the Yamoussoukro Decision, which also constitute the regulatory and management framework of the single air transport market, were cleared by the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs (STC-JLA) and would be submitted to the AU Assembly of January 2018 for adoption. The Commission commends the twenty-three Member States that are currently implementing or have implemented the Yamoussoukro Decision and urges the rest to do the same without delay. It has taken too long for this great initiative to enter into force. Yet it is a critical vector towards Africa's economic integration and a powerful lever for Africa's economic growth and development. In a globalized, rapidly transforming world, Africa will survive only if united.

**200.** The launch of the Single African Air Transport Market will hopefully increase membership but also accelerate the mobilization of adequate resources for the full implementation of the initiative, especially the elaboration of a continental aviation infrastructure master plan.

**201. African Integrated High Speed Railway Network:** The Africa Integrated High Speed Railway Network (AIHSRN) Project is designed to interconnect African capitals, economic and other industrial hubs and major tourism locations with appropriate high speed rail technology, with complementary electrical power and ICT broadband infrastructure and services. It is another flagship of the AU Agenda 2063 whose implementation is due during its first ten years.

**202.** Current and planned activities in this area include: (i) conducting a comprehensive pre-feasibility study of the project – the procurement of consultancy services for a preceding detailed scoping study was almost finalized at the time this

report was completed; (ii) finalizing the concept note and assessment of training needs; and (iii) drafting the preliminary action plan for the industry scope including its local content.

**203.** However, the main challenge was to determine the feasibility of the project. To address it, the Commission initiated a detailed scoping study which is in progress, following which there will be a need to mobilize substantial human and financial resources for a full feasibility study of the project across the continent.

**204.** In line with the AU integration agenda, the NEPAD Agency initiated a campaign to increase the allocation of African assets to African infrastructure. The target is to increase the allocations from the current base of approximately 1.5% of assets under management (AUM) to 5%. A roadmap was drawn, showing feasible steps to increase the African Pension and Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) investment in African infrastructure to the target of 5%. The roadmap also includes a defined pathway for setting up and coordinating a Co-Investment Platform for African Pension and SWF investment in African infrastructure. The campaign was carried out at various platforms, including the Continental Business Network Meeting at the 72<sup>nd</sup> UN General Assembly meeting.

**205. Support to the Program on Transport Sector Development in Africa:** This activity was completed in July 2017. To recall, this program was launched in April 2015 with financial support from the European Union. It had two packages: Lot 1 for support to the Commission's Department of Infrastructure and Energy and the PIDA-Pan-African Parliament Smart Corridors activities with two components; and Lot 2 for the editing and publishing of comprehensive transport sector guidelines. This task was successfully completed in November 2016.

**206.** Under Lot 1 Component 1: the Commission completed the drafting of the following frameworks: (i) a continental transport sector policy paper; (ii) capacity building (transport knowledge portal and terms of references); transport sector governance; (iii) transport infrastructure financing and public-private partnership options, (iv) road maintenance; and (v) sustainable transport and climate change challenges.

**207.** In Lot 1 Component 2: support was given to PIDA and Pan-African Parliament for the start-up of Smart Corridors activities. It was completed with the following notable outputs: (i) corridor assessment (Smart Corridor definition and characteristics); (ii) corridor coordination and management; and (iii) design and costing of the Pilot Smart Corridors for implementation (North-South and Dar es Salaam corridors).

**208.** Furthermore, under component 1, the program also provided support to the Department of Infrastructure and Energy in accomplishing some of its major activities, including dissemination of harmonized road standards for trans-African highways and the African Road Safety Charter, and facilitating the logistical support for the STC meeting and at the Joint AU-EU Strategy Infrastructure Reference Group (IRG) which met in March 2017.

**209.** Lack of adequate resources, including staffing, and delays in approving program events, especially some validation workshops, led to postponement and even cancellation of many important activities. However, in 2018, the Commission will make every effort to convene continental validation workshop for the transport policy framework and submit it for the consideration of the Policy Organs. The Commission will also follow up with the RECs regarding the implementation of the SMART Corridors project.

**210. Information and Communication Technologies:** The key activities in the ICT sector in 2017 were as follows:

**i) Harmonization of policies and regulations:**

Terms of reference (TORs) were drafted and negotiations concluded with the European Commission on the funding of a project related to capacity building on internet governance and on a digital platform for regulators for 5 million euros. This project, called “Policy and Regulation for ICT Development in Africa” (PRIDA), should start in January 2018.

**ii) The African Internet Exchange System (AXIS):**

Worth mentioning here is the continuation of the implementation of the African Internet Exchange System (AXIS) project financed by Euro-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund and the Government of Luxembourg, whose objective is to keep Africa’s internet traffic local to the continent by facilitating the establishment of national internet exchange points and regional internet exchange points in Africa.

The following activities were completed in 2017: (i) development of the East African Community (EAC) cross-border interconnection regulations and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) interconnection policy framework; (ii) establishment of eight (8) internet exchange points (IXPs) with financial grants to grow into Regional Internet Exchange Points (RIXPs); (iii) two (2) national Internet Exchange Points were set-up, adding to the previous 14 IXP and increasing the total number of internet exchange points on the continent from 18 to 34 Member States.

**iii) The Pan African e-network (PAeN):**

During 2017, the Commission continued the implementation of the action plan for the sustainability of the PAeN. As of March 2017, the implementation status was as follows: (i) forty-eight (48) Member States had signed an agreement to participate in the project; (ii) a satellite hub-earth station in Dakar and up to 150 VSAT equipment were installed as follows: three VSAT in each of the 48 participating country, one in AUC, 5 in the five selected Super Hospitals and 5 in the five leading universities, all selected after an open bid; (iii) 22,000 students enrolled in 39 user countries in various undergraduate and graduate programs in different Indian

universities graduated through the network; and (iv) 771 telemedicine consultations and 6771 continuous medical education (CME) sessions were conducted.

In April 2017, the Commission received a notification from the Government of India that it had decided to close the existing satellite VSAT and hub station operations effective 1 July 2017. The Commission transferred the hub station infrastructure from Dakar to the AU Headquarters after a hand-over process signed by the parties in August 2017. Subsequently, the Commission signed another agreement with the Republic of Senegal on the PAeN hub station custody. Consultations are ongoing between the Commission and Member States to find a strategy for the use of the hub station handed over to the Commission.

- iv) **Cybersecurity:** The Commission organized two (2) workshops for internal staff on e-governance and cybersecurity through funding and expertise both by Estonia and Sofrecom. It developed an explanation guide (toolkit) of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention) and produced a booklet for dissemination to Member States. The Commission also completed a comprehensive study on the status of cybersecurity and cybercrime in Africa and in cooperation with Information Society (ISOC), a global cause-driven organization governed by a diverse Board of Trustees based in Reston, Virginia, USA. With the African Regional Bureau, the Commission developed guidelines on security of internet infrastructure in Africa. In the promotion of its initiatives on cybersecurity, the Commission collaborated with the US Department of State, the Government of France, the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, and the Global Forum from Cybersecurity Expertise (GFCE).
- v) The NEPAD Agency developed a cybersecurity assessment framework which was submitted to the ministers responsible for communication and information technology. Currently, nine (9) countries – Benin, Chad, Congo, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia – have signed the Malabo Convention and two (2) - Senegal and Guinea - have ratified it. The Malabo Convention will come into force after a minimum of fifteen (15) ratifications.
- vi) **Dot Africa:** After eight (8) years of technical and legal battle, the Dot Africa was finally delegated to ZACR/RA (ZA Central Registry, the administrator of the South African internet domain names), the operator sponsored by the Commission following an open bid process – and launched on 10 March 2017. A roadshow for the promotion of Dot Africa was also launched during the July 2017 Summit.
- vii) The Commission developed guidelines for the harmonized use of the digital dividend spectrum in Africa. Furthermore, in collaboration with the African

Telecommunication Union, the Commission developed a common African position in relation to spectrum re-allocation for the upcoming World Radio Communication Conference (WRC-19) in Egypt, from 28 October to 22 November 2019.

- viii) **Internet governance:** The Commission worked with major African stakeholders to prepare a draft Declaration on Internet Governance. It will be submitted to the Second Session of the STC on Communication and Information & Communication Technologies for endorsement and onward transmission for the Assembly's consideration.
- ix) A framework for driving the digital transformation agenda in Africa has also been defined, with an initial focus on trade. Priority in 2018 will focus on building capacity on the continent to access open data and data centers as a foundation for entrepreneurship and job creation.
- x) **Postal Sector:** The Commission focused its work on the implementation of the Declaration of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly on ICT which, in relation to Telecoms/ICT development policies and strategies, gave particular attention to the postal sector.
- xi) Achievements in this area included the preparation of the evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan adopted in 2008 for the Sustainable Development of Postal Sector in Africa, and submission of ad hoc reports on various issues: (i) on postcode systems to the STC on Public Services, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization; and on leveraging postal networks to foster socio-economic development in rural areas through electrification and connectivity of post offices to the STC on Finance, Economic Planning and Integration, as well as the STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism.

#### **Output 5: Trade and customs facilitation policies developed and promoted and CFTA negotiations facilitated**

**211. Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation:** In the area of customs cooperation and trade facilitation, the Commission continued to facilitate meetings of the AU Subcommittee of Directors-General of Customs. These meetings proposed a number of recommendations that were subsequently adopted by both the STC on Trade, Industry and Mineral Resources, and the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration.

**212.** The Commission held consultative meetings with Customs Departments of the RECs with the aim to enhance cooperation in the spirit of the Abuja Treaty. This allowed the Commission and the RECs to share their experience in the implementation of their

work programs to avoid duplication and channel resources to needy areas on customs and trade facilitation.

**213.** In order to facilitate the movement of goods and people across national borders with minimum hurdles, and enhance exchange of information between respective customs administrations, the Commission worked with Member States and the RECs on the modalities of interconnectivity of computerized customs clearance and information systems. A roadmap and draft strategy are already in place and under implementation. In November 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Alliance on e-Commerce was signed on the margins of the meeting of the Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs in Yaoundé.

**214.** As part of its efforts to promote trade facilitation on the continent, the Commission organized the 3rd Customs Experts Trade Facilitation Forum in Africa. The Forum was attended by Customs Experts from AU Member States, representatives of the private sector, civil society, RECs and cooperating partners. Participants shared experiences and best practices on trade facilitation and were briefed on the boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) programme, as well as on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

**215.** On its part, and with a view to ensuring that customs procedures are consistent with the CFTA, the Commission carried out a study of customs procedures and cooperation, trade facilitation and transit instruments in Member States. The study provided the status of implementation of customs instruments in Africa and highlighted existing gaps with respect to custom cooperation, trade facilitation and transit. It also identified areas of convergence and divergence while providing necessary information on areas of focused interventions.

**216.** The coming into force of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in February 2017 was an important milestone of the Doha Development Agenda. The Agreement seeks to promote faster movement of goods and people across national borders, reduce transaction costs and encourage cooperation between and among various border agencies. To date, 22 out of 44 African WTO members have ratified the Agreement.

**217.** In this regard, the Commission convened the 1st Extraordinary Meeting of the AU Subcommittee of Directors-General of Customs in Abuja in May 2017, on the theme *“Entry into Force of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) - Implications for the African Customs Administrations.”* The Sub-Committee, inter alia, recommended that Member States should endeavor to employ a regional approach in the implementation of the WTO Agreement and that Customs Administrations should continue to share best practices in the implementation of trade facilitation measures.

**218.** In the same vein, the Commission organized the Second Annual Trade Facilitation Forum in Port Louis, Mauritius, in September 2017, where it provided a progress report on the process of developing an AU Trade Facilitation Strategy with the

main objectives of assisting AU Member States to positively respond both to the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade, and the Continental Free Trade Area.

**219. Intra-African Trade and CFTA Negotiations:** On intra-African trade, the Commission made recommendations to the Policy Organs on the implementation of the Action Plan for Boosting intra-African Trade (BIAT). These recommendations related to trade policy, trade finance and trade information clusters. Going forward, the Commission will work with Member States, the RECs and cooperating partners to develop comprehensive programs aimed at addressing the impediments to intra-African trade.

**220.** The Commission also continued to support Member States' negotiations on the CFTA and coordinate their discussions on its legal instruments. The Commission regularly provided technical and administrative assistance and carried out technical studies as requested by the CFTA negotiating institutions. Of note is the facilitation by the Commission of a common understanding with the seven countries that had expressed reservations on the level of ambition of 90% on modalities on trade in goods. This assistance resulted in the development of a draft Addendum to the Modalities on Trade in Goods for the Champion of the CFTA Process, H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou of the Republic of Niger, to use when engaging the Heads of State and Government of those seven countries.

**221.** It should be recalled that during the 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2017, President Mahamadou Issoufou informed the Assembly that AU Ministers of Trade approved the modalities for the CFTA tariff liberalization and trade in services negotiations. He also reported that the Ministers had agreed on an ambitious target of 90% for tariff liberalization, which takes into account the overall goal of an integrated continent. President Mahamadou Issoufou also pointed out that seven Member States had registered reservations on the level of ambition of 90 percent, proposing instead 85 percent in view of their economic circumstances.

**222.** The Commission also helped Member States reach a consensus on the form and structure of the CFTA Agreement, the level of liberalization ambition under the CFTA, as well as the development of draft texts of the Agreement, its Protocols and Appendices, which were either completed or in the final phases of negotiations by the end of 2017.

**223.** Ministers of Trade met in Niamey in December 2017 to review the draft legal texts and prepare their report to the AU Policy Organs. At the time of writing this report, the Ministers had adopted the draft Agreement on the CFTA and the Protocol on Trade in Services. These will be submitted to the Assembly at the 2018 January Summit during which the Assembly is expected to launch the CFTA. Negotiations will resume thereafter with a view to finalizing the draft Protocol on Services by March 2018. Also, an extraordinary session of the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs was planned to review

the legal aspects and finalize the draft Agreement, Protocols and Appendices before their submission to the Assembly.

**224.** The Commission expresses its gratitude to Member States for their substantial financial contribution to the CFTA project. This includes USD 3 million in 2016, USD 4.9 million and a supplementary contribution of USD 3 million in 2017, and USD 7.4 Million in the 2018 budget. It also includes contributions in-kind through the hosting of meetings and sponsorship of technical experts and delegates participating in all meetings.

**225.** By creating one single market through the CFTA, Africa is at a historic juncture to change economic relations among all the countries of the continent and position itself to overcome the historical legacy of marginalization in the global economic system. The CFTA will expand in scale and competitiveness; and in the process, position Africa to be a major trading and investment hub.

**226.** There are, however, some urgent tasks ahead for Member States. They include:

- Need for expeditious ratification of the CFTA Agreement. The CFTA is expected to come into force after 15 Member States have ratified it;
- Setting up the secretariat shortly after the Agreement comes into force. The secretariat will develop the program of work for the CFTA;
- Immediate commencement of the Phase Two negotiations covering Investment; Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); and Competition Policy after adoption of the Phase One package at the January 2018 Summit;
- Provision of adequate financial support of the CFTA process due to the fact that support from cooperating partners will come to an end very soon. State Parties to the CFTA Agreement need to take full ownership on the CFTA. This is in line with the African Union Institutional Reforms aimed, at among others, making the African Union and its organs become self-financing.

**227.** With regard to international trade, the Commission supported Member States in their preparations of the 16th AGOA Forum that took place in Lomé, Togo, from 7 to 10 August 2017. The Commission also helped to coordinate an African common position in the preparation of the 11th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 10 to 13 December 2017. The Commission will serve as a platform for Member States to coordinate their approach for the implementation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and trade relations with the European Union after the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020.

**Output 6: Policies for private sector engagement and improved business climate developed and promoted**

**228.** During the year under review, the Commission continued to implement the Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), notably by addressing supply-side constraints which constitute a persistent obstacle for African industrial development and, therefore, require the attention of Member States in creating a coherent policy environment conducive for a better business climate. Along with the African Mining Vision (AMV) and the AIDA, the Commission continued the development of the AU Commodities Strategy, which is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 29063. The outputs will be submitted to the Policy Organs in 2018.

**229.** Deepening the engagement with the African private sector remains a strategic priority for the African Union. In this regard, the Commission worked with various private sector stakeholders on the establishment of the African Business Council (ABC). The first Trade Policy Dialogue took place in Addis Ababa in November 2017, as part of the process of establishing the BIAT/CFTA architecture currently under development.

**230.** The Commission also reached out to the Pan African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PACCI) and the Afro-Champions Club. A draft concept note was prepared with the support of the International Trade Centre (ITC) to facilitate development of a resource mobilization strategy for the Pan African Trade Observatory (PATO), which will serve as a repository of information about trade and industry in Africa. We anticipate the establishment of the Pan-African Trade Observatory in 2018.

**Output 7: Women, youth and persons with disabilities entrepreneurship promoted and supported**

**231.** As requested by the Assembly, the Commission identified several actions to tackle the prevalent underemployment in Africa, particularly with a focus on the informal economy where women and the youth are dominant. According to the International Monetary Fund, the average share of the informal sector in AU Member States reached almost 38% of the GDP during the 2010–2014 period, and close to 50% in oil exporter countries. The Commission began working on an initiative to transform the informal economy to the formal economy through decent work and the extension of social security to workers and their dependents in the informal and rural economy sectors.

**232.** The Commission also developed the Mid-Term Plan of Industrial Development Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Strategy and Master Plan 2017-2021. This strategy aims to promote entrepreneurship and industrial development on the continent. Together with the Master-Plan, it is designed to utilize the potential of small and medium-sized enterprises and industries (SME/Is), as well as microenterprises (informal sector) and entrepreneurs to create employment and promote intra-regional and intra-African trade by integrating African small and medium enterprises and industries into regional and global value chains.

**233.** The vision is to develop competitive, diversified and sustainable economies underpinned by dynamic, entrepreneurial and industrial sectors that generate employment, reduce poverty and foster social inclusion, as well as innovation and business incubation. This strategy will be submitted for the consideration of the Assembly in 2018, after its endorsement by the STC on Trade, Industry and Mineral Resources.

**234.** The Commission also developed a roadmap on the establishment of the Enterprise Africa Network, a small and medium enterprise online platform through public-private partnership. In addition, during the First African Union Symposium on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Development, the Commission developed a policy paper on Special Economic Zones Development in Africa and an Action Plan for the creation of an African Platform of Special Economic Zones. The Commission is also developing a roadmap on how to support start-ups as part of youth and women economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.

**235.** The NEPAD Agency, on its part, prepared business incubators for women empowerment. It provided technical and financial support to Burkina Faso and Liberia within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Sudan, Kenya, Swaziland and Burundi within the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA). The project will impact more than 50 000 women and youth, and will be scaled-up to more countries on the continent.

**236.** The NEPAD Agency began the implementation of phase 1 of the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund in four countries: Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger. Skills-gap analyses were conducted to identify existing policies and stakeholders for the development of national action plans for youth. Furthermore, partnerships with local training institutions have been fostered, and training began for the first cohort of students. To facilitate the exchange of good practices, communities of practice and data collection on youth employment on the continent via a Skills Portal for Youth Employment (SPYE) have been developed.

#### **Output 8: Policies for sustainable utilization of mineral resources and other resources developed and promoted**

**237.** The Commission continued supporting Member States in the implementation of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) that was adopted by African Heads of State and Government in 2009. The Vision continues to be Africa's blueprint for cooperation in mineral resources and for transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development.

**238.** The African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC) is the Specialized Agency in charge of coordinating the implementation of the Africa Mining Vision. Its statute was adopted in 2016 and the AMDC is now transitioning into a permanent structure of the African Union. Five countries – Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Sudan and Zambia – have offered

to host it. The evaluation was completed, and the report will be submitted to the Policy Organs at the January 2018 Summit. The Commission urges Member States to expedite the signature and ratification of the AMDC Statute in order to have it fully operational as an AU institution.

**239.** With regard to the Mining Legal Regimes and Regulatory Frameworks, the Commission continued to work on the African Mining Legislation Atlas (AMLA) in partnership with the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF) and the assistance of a consortium of other partners, including the World Bank. The objective of the AMLA is to assist Member States to review their mining laws and mining codes in line with the Africa Mining Vision. This project also provides capacity building as well as a guiding template during the review process.

**240.** Along the same line, the Commission prepared the Model Law for Mineral Resources Development in line with the Assembly's decision – Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII) of July 2016 in Kigali – requesting the Commission to provide guidance to Member States in reviewing their royalties and fiscal regimes. The Commission also worked on a Geological and Minerals Information Systems (GMIS) Strategy that will coordinate all the continental GMIS initiatives and programs. Related to this, the Commission continued its activities under the joint AU-World Bank African Minerals Geoscience Initiative (AMGI), which was endorsed by the Assembly in January 2015. The following projects are currently under implementation: the Pan African geo-scientific knowledge and skills in African Geological Surveys (PanAfGeo), the AMGI Pilot Project; and the African Resources Geoscience Initiative (ARGI).

**241.** Regarding Mineral Resource Governance, the Commission developed an African Mineral Resource Governance Framework (AMGF) which is ready for implementation after the endorsement of the Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Mineral Resources.

**242.** The NEPAD Agency contributed to increased awareness and strengthened competence among key actors in contract negotiations and tax policies related to the extractive and mining industry. Various platforms, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> regional dialogue on contract negotiations, were used to strengthen capacities in eleven (11) countries, namely: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, DRC, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan and Tanzania.

**243.** The Commission also facilitated the development of the AMV Private Sector Compact that will provide a framework for broader partnership and mutual trust between the public and private sectors. This was validated and endorsed by the newly established continental Association of Chamber of Mines and other Mining Associations in Africa (ACMMAA). The buy-in of the private sector is critical for ensuring that optimal mutual benefits will accrue for all stakeholders and help reduce the endemic illicit financial flows from Africa.

**244.** In addition, the Commission partnered with UNDP in the Development Minerals Program. This is an African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Capacity Building Project being implemented by UNDP and the ACP Secretariat. It is within the EU-Africa Strategy and supports the development of the 'Development Minerals' that were previously known as low value minerals and materials (LVMM). These natural resources – industrial minerals, building and construction materials, gem stones and lime, *inter alia* – have the potential to stimulate intra-Africa trade and boost development through employment creation at the local and sub-regional levels for millions of people. Conservative estimates indicate that more than 8 million people in Africa are engaged in this sector, with women making up more than 40 percent of the work force. Forty ACP members, of which 25 from Africa, are set to benefit from this program.

## OUTCOME 4: EDUCATION AND HEALTH FOR ALL

**245.** Policies and programmes to enhance access to health, education and employable skills underpinned by investment in services, science, research and innovation implemented by Member States

### OUTPUTS:

- Implementation of the African Health Strategy promoted;
- Strategies for quality education, skills development and services, particularly for women and youth designed and promoted;
- Policies and strategic programmes for investment in science, research and innovation designed and promoted to enhance Africa's global competitiveness;
- Framework for social security and protection of vulnerable groups promoted.

### Output 1: Implementation of the African Health Strategy promoted

**246. Health:** The campaign for the reduction of maternal mortality in Africa (CARMMA) gained momentum in 2017. As part of the 2017 CARMMA Week commemorations, the Commission initiated a preliminary evaluation to determine its impact and sustainability nine (9) years after its official launch. The evaluation will also determine how the campaign should move forward within the context of Agenda 2063.

**247.** The Commission, in collaboration with the Republic of the Sudan, organized in August in Khartoum a high-level CARMMA event for North African countries. On that occasion, the Republic of the Sudan also launched its own CARMMA campaign, making it the 47<sup>th</sup> Member State to do so. And the Republic of Cape Verde did so in November 2017, to become the 48<sup>th</sup> Member State. Going forward, the Commission will intensify its engagement with the remaining Member States to launch their CARMMA process. We look forward to working together towards ending preventable maternal and child mortality by 2030.

**248. Nutrition:** Following the extension of the mandate of the AU Nutrition Champion, His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho, from January 2017 to January 2020, the Commission held discussions on his new three-year work plan during his visit to the Commission in August 2017. The work plan aims to advance the implementation of the revised Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy and provide a roadmap that outlines the role of the Commission and other stakeholders in the elimination of hunger and malnutrition in Africa.

**249. Population:** With the fifth anniversary of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD) coming up in 2018/19, consultations have started between the key stakeholders – the Commission, UNECA and UNFPA – about the need for a comprehensive review of the implementation of AADPD and concrete suggestions on how to move forward.

**250. HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and Other Infectious Diseases:** The Technical Advisory Group was established to advise the Commission on the development of the Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health. Advocacy on the elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV (eMTCT) has been given prominence. In the context of 2030 targets and “leaving no one behind” AU-Aids Watch Africa (AWA) joined the Organization of the African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) to lead the Africa Campaign on eMTCT. African First Ladies will be the champions for domestic financing for eMTCT and the attainment of related targets by 2030. Their efforts will be complemented by the Digital Campaign that is running for two years (2017-2019). The Africa eMTCT campaign will be launched in 2018 during the OAFLA General Assembly.

**251.** Five communities of practice were set up in 2017 to facilitate knowledge sharing in the following areas: mining, regulation and occupational health; continuum of care for TB and occupational lung diseases; laboratory strengthening and surveillance; TB research monitoring and evaluation; and the economics of TB and sustainable financing for health.

**252.** Centres of excellence were also established for TB control. Lesotho is hosting a Centre of Excellence on Community-Based Management of TB, and Malawi one Community TB Care and Integrated Disease Surveillance. Mozambique houses a Centre of Excellence on Multi-Drug-Resistant (MDR) TB and Childhood TB Management, while Zambia is host to a Centre of Excellence on Occupational Health and Safety.

**253.** The NEPAD Agency also provided assistance in identifying cross-border disease surveillance zones for disease surveillance along shared borders and facilitation of information sharing as well as capacity building amongst the countries. The zones are in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**254.** Ahead of the UNGASS high-level meeting on tuberculosis in 2018 and the Global Ministerial Conference in Moscow next year, the Commission, through the Department of Social Affairs, prepared the *Common African Position on TB (CAP-TB)* to build consensus among AU leaders on the priorities on TB during the implementation of the SDGs. Cognizant that HIV infection rate is still high in Africa, a prevention advocacy session was organized at the International Conference on Aids and Sexually Transmitted Infections (ICASA) in December 2017. AIDS Watch Africa’s strategic framework (2016-2030) was adopted by the Assembly in 2017.

**255.** There is increased awareness and renewed commitment by Member States, the RECs, the private sector and civil society to tackle tuberculosis (TB) as a national and regional challenge, with a target of eradicating the scourge by 2030. The fight against TB will target particularly vulnerable groups such as mining communities, front-line actors in the transport industry, and migrant communities. The NEPAD Agency supported these efforts through awareness drives and the provision of policy and technical information during the African Union's commemoration of World TB Day in March 2017 that was run under the theme "United and Renewed Action to end TB".

**256.** The current upsurge in disease outbreaks calls for strengthened health systems and elaborated health emergency preparedness plans at the national level. Domestic financing for health should therefore remain a high priority. Funding for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria declined by almost 50% over the past two years, owing to a shift of focus among donors.

**257.** Additionally, Member States should strengthen their capacity for local production of medicines in order to achieve universal access by African citizens to essential medicines. As part of the efforts to ensure the supply of safe and effective medicines in Africa, the NEPAD Agency prepared a draft treaty for establishing the African Medicines Agency (AMA) for endorsement by the Policy Organs. This followed a series of consultative meetings with legal and medicines regulatory experts from 33 countries. Twelve (12) Member States – Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, the Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, the Gambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Mozambique – had either reviewed or were in the process of reviewing their national laws on medicines regulation - in line with the AU Model Law. Additionally, the Commission facilitated the identification of opportunities to expand national and regional capacity to scale up pharmaceutical manufacturing across Africa. These were presented during the First Continental Forum on Access to Medicines and Health Commodities held in December 2017.

**258. Africa Centre for Disease Control:** The Africa CDC was officially launched on 31 January 2017 by H.E President of Guinea and Chairperson of the African Union, Prof Alpha Conde, and H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, former Chairperson of the AU Commission.

**259.** Regional visits were subsequently conducted to the five Africa CDC Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs) in West, East, Southern, Central and North Africa. The Africa CDC and host countries agreed on the governing structure of the RCCs and the priority public health activities for the regions. They also assessed regional assets and capacities at the disposal of the RCCs. The Africa CDC, in collaboration with the Commission's Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST), deployed 35 youth volunteers to support the operationalization of the RCCs and strengthen their initial capacity.

**260.** One major function of the Africa CDC is to support Member States during outbreaks. In 2017, the Africa CDC deployed epidemiologists to countries in Africa to

assist outbreak investigation and response efforts. These include lassa fever, meningitis and monkey pox in Nigeria, ebola virus disease and cholera in the DRC, malaria control in Namibia and Mozambique, cholera in Ethiopia, plague in Madagascar and the mudslide disaster in Sierra Leone. During these deployments, Africa CDC epidemiologists assisted the countries in strengthening surveillance, outbreak response and emergency operating centre capacities. They also helped develop epidemiological bulletins and disease monitoring dashboards in addition to conducting surveillance data analysis and training and support to health systems strengthening.

**261.** To strengthen partnership and collaboration with other partners working on public health in Africa, the Africa CDC participated in different workshops and trainings organized by partners.

**262.** During the year under review, the operating budget and staffing of the Africa CDC were very minimal. This constraint limited its ability to carry out its mandated activities in support of the efforts of Member States to strengthen their health systems and capacity during disease outbreaks. There is therefore a need to (i) adequately equip and staff the RCCs, (ii) fast track the signing of host agreement for those RCCs which have not signed yet, and (iii) support the full operationalization of the RCCs. Furthermore, the Africa CDC should be better introduced across the different Policy Organs to create awareness of its existence and functionality.

**Output 2: Strategies for quality education, skills development and services, particularly for women and youth designed and promoted.**

## **CESA IMPLEMENTATION**

**263.** The objective of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) is to ensure quality transformative education and lifelong learning opportunities for all as a human right, as well as the development and retention of African intellectual capital and human resources through harmonized education systems and intra-African networking. Implementation of the CESA is coordinated through a coalition of partners and stakeholders working on education in Africa. The Commission has established several thematic clusters based on CESA Objectives, which bring together Member States with agencies and experts working in those particular areas to develop and implement transformative education programmes. The establishment of an African Education Fund, initially called for by the Assembly in 2007, was reiterated in 2017 for implementation of CESA by Member States attending the ADEA Triennial Conference on Education. The AfDB is carrying out a feasibility study on the proposal.

**264.** The STC on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) held its second meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2017. It called on Member States and Regional Economic Communities to (i) popularize the Continental Education Strategy for Africa as Africa's domestication of the global SDG 4 and Education 2030; (ii) support the work of the Commission and assign the responsibility of Focal Agency for CESA to National UNESCO Commissions in order to promote alignment of the local, continental and

global frameworks; (iii) participate in cluster activities and share experience and better practices in major areas of CESA.

**265.** The STC also decided to strengthen TVET, school feeding, a culture of reading, the promotion of African writers and African content in education curricula. Member States were requested to utilize the UNESCO General History of Africa manuals in schools and colleges.

**266.** The following were some of the achievements under this output:

**267. Higher Education:** The Higher Education Cluster was launched in 2017 and is coordinated by the Association of African Universities (AAU) with the support of the International Network for Higher Education in Africa (INHEA).

**268.** The AU **African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM)** for facilitation of a culture of continuous quality improvement in African higher education institutions, through self-evaluation and external validation, is now available for full scale implementation, following extensive piloting with over 40 Universities.

**269.** The **Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)** was developed towards establishing a Continental Accreditation Agency for higher education. It was validated by national and regional quality assurance agencies and adopted by the 2016 January Summit. An African Credit Transfer System has been developed and is undergoing peer review.

**270.** The **Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme for young people to study science based programmes** at Masters and PhD levels in African countries outside of their own, continued to award students every year since 2012. In 2017, the focus was on education sciences. So far, students from nearly 40 Member States have benefitted from this scheme, with special calls being made for female applicants and students living with physical disabilities.

**271.** The **Intra-African Academic Mobility Scheme**, launched in 2010 as an extension of the Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship Scheme, completed its 3<sup>rd</sup> Call in 2017. Currently, 72 universities are participating, thus facilitating mobility for over 1,000 students and 140 academic staff.

**272.** It is worth noting that the STC on Education, Science and Technology also called on Member States to publicise widely the education and other opportunities offered by the AU Commission so that all African citizens can benefit. More importantly, Member States are encouraged to ratify the **Addis Ababa Convention for mutual recognition of degrees and certificates.**

**273. Pan-African Virtual and e-University:** The Pan African Virtual University (PAVU), also called the African Virtual and E-University is designed to accelerate the development of human capital, science and technology and innovation through

increasing access to tertiary and continuing education. In 2017, the PAU Council adopted e-University as its open and e-learning arm. Niche areas for operationalization of the project include managing the common courses of the PAU; teacher development, and other degree programmes, certificate courses and executive education.

**274. Teacher Development:** Africa's education system is short of over two million teachers. Additionally, a significant number of existing teachers are either underqualified or untrained, with serious shortages in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and certain geographic areas. The Teacher Development Cluster is coordinated by the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), and Education International, with support from the African Federation of Teacher Associations. During its meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2017, the STC-EST 2 commended the study carried out by the Commission on Teacher Training, Working and Living Conditions in Member States and endorsed all its recommendations, including the need to professionalize teaching, develop a continental teacher mobility protocol and establish a Teachers without Borders Corps; promote teacher motivation, and develop teacher standards and Qualification Frameworks at continental regional and national levels. The STC also called for the establishment of an AU Teachers Prize.

**275. STEM Education:** Scientific literacy is critical for employability, innovation and entrepreneurship in the 21st century. Enhancing STEM education for all is therefore a priority for the Commission. However, STEM education is undermined by inadequacies in teacher preparation and in the instructional materials. A STEM Cluster was launched in 2017 to further STEM education in Africa and placed under the coordination of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences, the African Academy of Sciences, and the Centre for Strengthening Science and Math Education in Africa (CEMASTEAM).

**276. ICT in Education:** The ICT Cluster was also launched in 2016 and is coordinated by the Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) with strong support of the @Edu Sustainable Education organization. The African Digital School Initiative was launched in 80 high schools in Kenya. Two learning activities were organized in 2017, including a mission to Portugal where participants from twenty (20) Member States were exposed to the acclaimed Portuguese process of digitization of schools and communities. The second activity was a meeting in New York which facilitated engagement with key agents of ICT and digitization of education, where important partnerships were forged to assist Member States efforts in promoting ICT in education. The African Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education and training is scheduled for February 2018 in Rabat, Morocco.

**277. Peace and Education:** The Cluster was also launched in 2017 and is coordinated by Save the Children International. It cuts across several Departments of the Commission. Its objective is to encourage the endorsement and implementation of the tenets of the Safe Schools Declaration and other related instruments which Member States have already ratified; to promote peace education and use of education to prevent violent extremism and radicalization, and to promote media literacy and critical

thinking for pan African citizenship. There is need to establish safe school requirements such as appropriate standards for infrastructure, school environment safety and management.

**278. School Feeding:** Hunger and poverty are among the many factors that negatively affect the performance of children in school as well as their retention and ability to access and complete their education. The Assembly, at its January 2016 session, declared the 1<sup>st</sup> of March as African School Feeding Day. In 2017, this day was observed in Congo Brazzaville, while Zimbabwe has offered to host the 2018 event. With support from World Food Programme (WFP), the Commission completed a continental study on school feeding in Member States. The Commission also launched the School Feeding Cluster with WFP as coordinator. A multi-sectoral and multi-partner committee was set up to promote Home Grown School Feeding. The Commission urges Member States to implement innovative domestic financing and effectual multi-sectoral programming that will bring together different concerned ministries, including the ministries in charge of education, agriculture, health and nutrition, social affairs, youth development, finance, to harness the multifaceted benefits of Home Grown School feeding.

**279. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS):** EMIS is a critical tool for ensuring quality education development and the realization of the skills revolution. The Commission initiated staff recruitment for the Education Observatory at IPED in Kinshasa, DRC. Software and other tools for data collection, rescue and analysis have been developed, and will be 'piloted' in willing Member States preceding capacity building and full scale implementation. The CESA monitoring and implementation framework has been adopted through discussions with major stakeholders. The Education Planning Cluster has now been launched, and the Commission has produced the CESA Indicators Manual to be used by Member States, RECs and agencies to monitor and generate quality timely data on the education system.

**280.** However, it should be pointed out that IPED still owes USD 3 million to its former staff. Moreover, the host agreement with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to be reviewed before the situation is conducive for work.

**281. Capacity Building Trainings in Legal Affairs:** Working with its partners, the Commission, through the Office of the Legal Counsel, conducted capacity building programmes for Member States, including on humanitarian law and policy; the rule of law in conflict, instability and peacebuilding; and international and African Union law.

**282.** The Commission established an Africa-wide legal capacity development initiative known as the Legal Associates Programme (LAP), located in the Office of the Legal Counsel. The essence of this programme is to provide young Africans lawyers with professional legal expertise in the area of African integration law. Now in its third year, the programme will bring additional ten (10) young African lawyers (two from each AU region in equal gender distribution).

**283.** In collaboration with the Loyola University Chicago School of Law, the Commission offered young professionals from within the Commission, AU Organs, Member States and the RECs a one (1) year scholarship to gain a Master's Degree in Rule of Law for Development at the Loyola University Chicago's John Felice Rome Center in Italy. This unique program develops leaders to advance social justice across the globe, through effective, sustainable governance and rule of law reform. Currently in its third year, the programme has benefitted sixteen (16) officials from Member States while an additional five (5) have been admitted into the 2017/2018 academic year

**284. Technical Vocational Education and Training:** The NEPAD Agency launched the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) program in four pilot countries, namely Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria and Tunisia, to support technical and vocational education and training to increase employment opportunities.

**285.** The NEPAD Agency also assisted in the design of a curriculum on Agriculture Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVET) that is tailored to the country's skills needs and based on its high-priority value chains. In Kenya, the focus is on dairy, horticulture and aquaculture. In Malawi, the value chains of mangoes, pineapples and aquaculture were selected. In Ghana, the focus was on pineapples and citrus, while in Benin, rice and meat (chicken, pork, sheep) were the selected value chains. In Burkina Faso, the focus was on rice, sesame and cashew, while in Togo, it was rice and aquaculture. Accordingly, a total of 250 training modules have been developed for 10 agricultural value chains. Training modules are not only skills-based; they also address specific occupations within a value chain. To date, over 6200 students from Kenya, Ghana, Benin, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Togo have received training. The competencies for women in rural regions in vocational activities related to agriculture were also emphasized through knowledge sharing and the development of practical guidelines for women in ATVET.

**286.** A study on gender stereotyping in technical vocational education and training outlined some of the factors, myths, and educational practices that hinder access, retention, and success of girls in male-dominated TVET programmes. The study suggested that STEMitization of the curriculum from the lower levels of the education system would empower and expose young girls to a wider array of vocational careers outside the traditionally female-dominated occupations. Targeted research on the role of parents, peers, role models, culture and tradition on the choice of TVET programmes by girls will provide more evidence-based information and data to minimise gender stereotyping in TVET.

**Output 3: Policies and strategic programs for investment in science, research and innovation designed and promoted to enhance Africa's global competitiveness**

**287.** The Commission continued its collaboration with Member States, the RECs, NEPAD Agency and other regional institutions in the implementation of the Science,

Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024). Activities included the following:

**288. Launch of AU Kwame Nkrumah Science Awards:** The rules of procedure for the Kwame Nkrumah Scientific awards were reviewed and applied to the 2017 edition. Awards for the regional and continental editions were to be presented in December and at the January Summit, respectively.

**289. The African Union Research Grant Programme:** In 2017, the AU Research Grant programme received 265 proposals on the theme of Sustainable Agriculture. Assessment of the proposals by external assessors continued throughout the year. Nine institutions in a partnership network of over 27 collaborating institutions were selected to be awarded grants ranging from USD 500,000 to USD1 million by December 2017. The programme is currently being audited. Another research call on the theme of “agriculture and food systems for nutrition” will be launched as soon as the audit was concluded.

**290. AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation:** The Commission and the EU are partners on Science, Technology and Innovation. In 2017, the two institutions conducted a joint review of the implementation status of the first joint project on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). They also agreed on a second roadmap on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) that was expected to be endorsed during the AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in November 2017.

**291. African Union High Level Panel Report on Emerging Technologies:** In a bid to advise Member States on how Africa should harness emerging technologies for economic development, the AU High-Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) produced a progress report with recommendations on the first three technologies namely: gene drive for control and elimination of malaria; drones in the horizon and transforming Africa’s agriculture and micro-grid to empower communities in Africa.

**292. Global Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa:** The first phase of Global Monitoring of Environment and Security & Africa (GMES & Africa) support program was operationalized in May 2017 with the launching of an open call for proposals. At the time of this reporting, the Commission was preparing to issue grants to the successful Regional Implementation Centers. Several implementation arrangements, including data sharing cooperation with the European Commission space systems, were identified to facilitate the implementation process.

## **THE AFRICAN SPACE AGENCY (ASA)**

**293.** Following the adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy, the Commission worked with Space Experts from Member States to develop the Draft Statute for African Space Agency. The draft was considered by the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST) in October 2017. The Commission has

opened applications for interested Member States to host the African Space Agency. In parallel, a series of instruments were developed to assess the African space technological heritage.

## **AFRICAN OBSERVATORY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (AOSTI)**

**294.** During 2017, AOSTI, based in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, implemented its programmes on the *Strengths and Weaknesses of the ECOWAS, SADC and ECCAS in Scientific Production (2008-2013)*. Assistance was also extended to the Republics of Seychelles and Equatorial Guinea in collecting data, building and using adequate S&T indicators for policy making. Additionally, the Operational Model for the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework of the Implementation of STISA-24 was developed. The process of strengthening national innovation systems as part of the implementation of STISA-24 started with the ECCAS member states. It aims to enable them identify their capabilities in science, technology and innovation, and strengthen their skills in policy formulation and evaluation in line with national, regional and continental development plans.

**295.** The first activity took place in N'Djamena in May 2017. So far, three training workshops have been organized in Gabon, the Republic of Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad, respectively. The training in Cameroon was scheduled for November 2017. In total, 75 representatives of the innovation systems in these countries were trained on methodological frameworks and their use in measuring macroeconomic performance and framework conditions for innovation.

**296.** On its part, the NEPAD Agency continued its interactions with the Committee of Ten (10) Heads of State – Egypt, Tunisia, Gabon, Chad, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia and Malawi – who were designated to champion education, science and technology through technical briefs. In turn, the Committee provided policy guidance to specialised institutions such as the Coalition of African Research and Innovation (CARI) and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS).

**297.** This interaction resulted in the improvement of science, technology and innovation (STI) data systems among four (4) countries, namely Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and the Seychelles through skills training and in-country capacity building on the use of new and innovative data collection tools, data analysis, storage and dissemination. The Republic of Seychelles, for example, undertook its first national research and development (R&D) and innovation survey using in-country expertise. Equatorial Guinea also embarked on preparations to conduct its first national R&D and innovation survey, slated for 2018. A continental-level validation exercise was followed by two in-country validation sessions held in Swaziland and the Seychelles. Initiatives were also underway to strengthen the linkages between R&D investments and national strategic goals in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The NEPAD Agency provided technical support to senior Science Granting Councils (SGC) officials to assess the

relevance of STI policies and devise appropriate advocacy strategies for increased research, development and innovation.

### **AFRICAN UNION SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH COMMISSION (AU-STRC)**

**298.** Work on the second phase of the AU Network of Sciences (AUNS), which requires development of the Network's portal, modules, data base and digital library is ongoing. A working group on mitigating the impact of natural hazards with the participation of scientists from Africa, the African Diaspora and the EU was put in place to focus on seismic and volcanic hazard, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. The first meeting on mitigating the impact of natural risks in Africa was co-organized by AU-STRC, UNESCO and National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics of Egypt in October 2017. Additionally, a delegation from the Lancaster University and STRC had a bilateral meeting on cooperation in October 2017 on modalities of institutional capacity-building; and building research leadership initiative through the enhancement of high level research and development skills in African academia. The Commission and the Lancaster University agreed to jointly organize in September 2018 the first Africa Conference on academia, industry and policy makers and lunch the Lancaster AU-STRC innovation award.

**299.** It should be noted, however, that the AU-STRC had never received any AU funding for its programmes since 2012. Its operational budget, which amounts to about USD1.4 million USD, is funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria. As a result, the STRC faced serious challenges to run its programmes and activities. As a way forward on this issue, the STRC submitted to the Commission a proposal for an alternative source of fund on utilizing its owned properties in Lagos. The proposal is under consideration.

### **AFRICAN UNION – INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN (AU-CIEFFA)**

**300.** The High-Level Dialogue on "Gender Equality and Education" was held in January 2017 in the margins of the 28th AU Summit. In May 2017, the Commission organized in Burkina Faso a dialogue with the local leaders on retention of girls at school. The goal was to work with community leaders to identify the obstacles to girls' education and retention at school, drawing upon their experiences to implement innovative approaches to eradicate these barriers.

**301.** During the breakfast meeting on "Reaping Demographic Dividend: Why Invest In Girls' Education", which the Commission held in the margins of the 29th Summit in June 2017, pledges were made for further investments in girls and women's education, and for developing policies underlying return on investment in human capital as the main actor of development.

**302.** A forum also took place in Mauritius in July 2017 on strategies for retention and completion of girls and young women in the educational system. Previous meetings had underlined the challenges faced in retaining learners at all levels and the “how” in the process of bringing solutions to the challenges. Beyond sharing experience, testimonies were delivered by female role models

#### **Output 4: Framework for social security and protection for vulnerable groups promoted**

### **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

**303.** The year 2017 was placed under the theme *Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in the Youth*. The theme was officially launched at the 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in January 2017. H.E. President Idriss Déby Itno was nominated as the Leader of the Theme of the year and tasked to champion its implementation. Young people from all over Africa played an important role in the launch of the Theme and presented copies of the AU Demographic Dividend Roadmap to Heads of State and Government.

**304.** The Roadmap is anchored on four thematic pillars: (i) employment and entrepreneurship; (ii) education and skills development; (iii) health and well-being; and (iv) rights, governance and youth empowerment. The logo for the Theme of the year was selected from a competitive logo competition of African youth. The winning logo was developed by a Zimbabwean.

**305.** To ensure effectiveness in coordinating the commemoration of the Theme and implementation of the Roadmap at the continental level, the Commission set up a Technical Steering Committee chaired by the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) and comprising other Departments within the Commission. This technical body has taken the lead in the implementation of the continental agenda on the demographic dividend. It also aims to sustain an effective model of resource engagement towards positive youth development agenda, and strengthen youth contribution in advocacy initiatives at regional and continental level. To ensure harmonization and synergy of the activities, and to avoid duplication among partners, an integrated Continental Demographic Dividend work-plan was developed in line with the thematic pillars.

**306.** The Commission also developed an integrated Demographic Dividend Work plan that identified the activities of all partners on the theme of the year in line with the Roadmap. The work plan facilitated the synchronization of activities among various partners and avoided duplication and the existence of parallel processes.

**307.** The roadmap mandated launching of the Theme of the year at country level through multi-stakeholder engagements. The national launches and consultations are to guide and facilitate the preparation of National Demographic Dividend Roadmaps. So far, only Burundi, Congo (Republic of), Guinea and Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana have

launched the theme at country level. The development of national demographic dividend profiles aims to enhance informed decision-making and planning and to define country-specific responses.

**308.** In addition to the implementation of the Theme of the year, the Commission carried out the following activities on youth empowerment:

**309. Youth Development Mainstreaming Framework:** The Commission set up an inter-departmental task team to spearhead youth development mainstreaming and the demographic dividend agenda throughout the Union. Implementation guidelines and reporting tools were developed to ensure periodic reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the progress made on youth matters. The guidelines are part of the mandate to implement the Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009-2018) of the Africa Youth Charter.

**310. Youth Plug-in Initiative:** The Youth Plug-In Initiative is a project of the Commission and the European Union to create a process that actively involves the youth on both continents as "agenda-setters". It comprises a group of 36 young people – called Fellows – from Africa, Europe and the African Diaspora who are tasked to develop deliverables and concrete initiatives and solutions to the challenges faced by young people. The overall objective of the YPII is therefore "to provide a platform for African and European Youth themselves to identify common deliverables to be brought forward for State Leaders at the 5th AU-EU Summit and beyond." The fellows worked in Addis and Brussels organized in six clusters focusing each on a priority theme in accordance with the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES). Recommendations developed by the YPII were submitted to 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

**311. Youth Employment:** The Africa Economic Platform (AEP) brought together African political and business leaders and academia to discuss issues affecting Africa and how the continent can harness its vast resources. Among the key issues deliberated on was African Skills Revolution – Empowering Youth for Employment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The platform proposed fast-tracking the creation and strengthening of centres of excellence with emphasis on skills acquisition across the continent. It was also proposed to enhance harmonization of competencies across national borders to promote labour and skills mobility.

**312.** There is a need for a tripartite summit on education – governments, the private sector and academia – in order to address the disconnect between education systems and labour markets, coupled with technological disruptions. Such a forum will also help revamp education systems in the continent with emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It would also tailor technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to the needs of Africa.

**313. Pan African Youth Employability Conference:** This Conference drew the participation of about 120 youth from 47 African countries, as well as representatives of governments, development partners and the private sector. It provided a space for

young people to explore opportunities for job creation, entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

**314. Skills Initiative for Africa:** This is an initiative of the Commission with the support of the German aid agency GIZ to strengthen occupational prospects for young people in Africa. The centerpiece of the project is a financing facility for skills development to be implemented by the NEPAD Agency. In addition to the financing facility, GIZ is supporting the Commission and the NEPAD Agency to provide services in the area of employment-oriented TVET and opportunities for knowledge exchange to Member States. Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia have been identified as the pilot countries. However, the project has not started because the pilot countries are yet to confirm their participation.

**315. Continental Dialogue on Education and Skills Development for Employment:** In partnership with the NEPAD Agency and the continental umbrella organization for the private sector – Business Africa –, the Commission organized a conference dubbed “Africa Talks Jobs.” More than 400 representatives of youth, business, education practitioners and policy-makers from over 44 countries across the African continent as well as European partners took part in the conference held at the AU HQ in Addis Ababa. The highlight of the Conference was the commitment 120 African companies and business associations, under the auspices of Business Africa, to invest in skills development and partner with education institutions for education and skills development that will enhance employability prospects.

**316. African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC):** The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps is a continental development program that recruits and deploys youth volunteers in all Member States. The programme promotes volunteering as a way to deepen the status of young people in Africa as key participants in the delivery of Africa's human development targets and goals. It brings people together to share skills, Knowledge and creativity. In 2017, the Departments of Social Affairs and Human Resources, Science and Technology cooperated in the recruitment, training and deployment of youth volunteers to assist Member States in strengthening their capacity in health and disease prevention areas.

**317.** The Commission, working with the UN Volunteer Unit, conducted an evaluation of the first phase of the AU youth volunteer corps. The outcome of this exercise will be presented to the next STC on Youth, Culture and Sports in 2018. Linkages and new partnerships were established with France Volunteer to promote volunteerism in Africa. Finally, the Commission secured a grant of USD500,000 from the Ford Foundation in 2017 devoted to the activities of the youth volunteer corps.

**318.** The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps continues to grow in visibility and strength. Financial ownership of the program by Member States is therefore needed to reduce its current 100% dependence on partners. It is also important for the RECs to increase their participation in the program, as this will expand and add value to the involvement of the youth in the activities of the Union.

## **GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

**319.** The priority activities that the Commission carried out during the reporting period came from the decision of the Assembly on operationalizing Agenda 2063, the Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and the Theme for 2017 "*Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth*". They aimed to advance the mainstreaming of gender instruments to ensure their alignment with Agenda 2063 and the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

**320. Alignment of AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy with Agenda 2063 and Harmonization with national and regional policies:** Agenda 2063 requires the establishment of institutional mechanisms to achieve the objective of an integrated approach to gender equality and women's empowerment. The Commission, through the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD), undertook the evaluation of the current gender policy adopted in 2009 and initiated in line with Agenda 2063 a new gender equality and women's empowerment strategy with a stronger emphasis on tangible results, innovative practices and greater accountability. Member States, RECs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), youth and development partners took part in the formulation of these two initiatives to ensure buy-in and set the path for harmonization with existing regional and national policies. The final strategy and its operational plan together with a communications strategy will be validated by the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2018.

**321. The AU Gender Observatory:** The Gender Observatory aims to increase the capacity of Member States to generate knowledge to support policy formulation and decision-making, monitor and foster greater compliance with commitments and enforce accountability.

**322.** Although the full establishment of the Observatory is still delayed owing to procurement requirements and resources constraints, the Commission was able to secure necessary technical expertise to conceptualize and implement this important assignment. As part of its efforts in generating knowledge on progress made by Member States in implementing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the Commission has produced the third edition of the African Union Gender Scorecard. This document highlights the progress and success stories achieved by Member States on gender equality with a particular reference to the AU 2017 Theme and its roadmap. A joint effort between the Commission, UN-ECA, the African Development Bank and UNFPA, the Gender Scorecard was presented during the 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

**323. Alignment of the Fund for African Women with Agenda 2063:** The Fund for Africa Women was set up in 2011 to support the operationalization of the African Women's Decade. It is funded through the collection of 1% of Member States' assessed contributions and managed by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of

Member States experts and the Commission's Women and Gender Development Directorate. The current funding schedule is closely linked to the implementation of the 2010-2020 African Women's Decade and its related themes.

**324.** In 2017, the Commission launched a call for proposals on the 2016 and 2017 themes on 'Finance and Gender Budgets' and "Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be Champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment", respectively. The Steering Committee received over 200 proposals. In addition, the AUC commissioned a situational analysis of the financing of the projects to better proceed with the granting of 2014-2015, 2016-2017 projects.

**325.** The Fund for Africa Women was also designed as a resource mobilization vehicle for Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects, which raises the need to enhance the resource mobilization capacity of the Fund to yield higher benefits for women's economic empowerment. In this regard, the Commission initiated an evaluation of the Fund's current operations and design new modalities to be implemented in 2018.

**326. Strengthening of AU institutional learning capacity:** The Commission's Women Gender and Development Directorate worked with the newly established AU Ethics Office to improve an enabling work environment for women based on AU norms and values. As a result, the Ethics Office was able to draft several key policies, including the policy on sexual harassment, which will form part of the Gender Toolbox. The Commission also set up an inter-departmental team to ensure that internal policies, procedures, recruitment tools and performance management systems are gender sensitive.

**327. Enhancement of partnerships and advocacy:** The Commission convened a number of gender policy platforms between Member States, CSOs and other partners whose objective was to review progress and propose the way forward in the implementation of gender decisions. The Ninth Gender Pre-Summit and the Fourth High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment brought together high-level policy makers at national level and the youth to identify concrete actions needed to implement the AU Roadmap on the Demographic Dividend, with a special focus on young women. Some of the policy recommendations included the prioritization of financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment, the empowering of women to break into male-dominated fields such as mining, and the strengthening of the Fund for African Women to support women's economic empowerment. These recommendations will be submitted for the consideration of the Policy Organs at the January 2018 summit.

**328.** The participation in the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Status of Women (CSW61) provided an advocacy opportunity for the African common position on gender equality and women's empowerment to be included in global decision-making platforms. Working with UN and development partners, the Commission convened in January 2017, an Africa pre-CSW consultation meeting to consolidate the African common position on the priority and review themes of CSW61 and to build consensus on a coordinated African strategy to influence the Agreed Conclusions of

CSW61. The Commission also launched the African Women Leaders' Network at UN Headquarters in June 2017.

**329.** The Commission celebrated International Women's Day (March 8) and Pan African Women's Day (July 31) to mark the continued struggle by women to achieve the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment, and raise awareness on key issues related to women's rights and violence against women. The African women's sculpture garden was also launched during International Women's Day as a recognition of African women's contribution to the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles. A portrait of the founding mothers of the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) was also unveiled during the celebration of International Women Day. It is now displayed alongside the portraits of the OAU founding fathers in the AU Conference Centre.

**330.** From 25 November to 10 December 2017, the Commission observed the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign to call for an end to violence against women and girls as well as to advocate for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment successfully convened from 4 to 8 December 2017, and adopted key decisions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa.

**331. Knowledge Generation:** During the period under review, the Commission partnered with the UN on two important reports: one on the *State of Women's Rights in Africa* while the second was on *Rapid Assessment on Funding Status of Gender Machineries in African Union Member States*. These reports were aimed at strengthening advocacy for women's rights and national gender machineries. The first report was launched in the margins of the International Women's Day. The second report was scheduled to be presented to Ministers of Gender during the 2<sup>nd</sup> STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in December 2017.

**332. Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:** The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) reaffirms the AU's commitment to gender parity at all levels, guarantees the right to girls' education and women's literacy, as well as the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace building processes.

**333.** This instrument is the AU's main reporting framework on gender issues. Reports on the Solemn Declaration by the Chairperson of the Commission and Member States are annually presented to the AU Summit by the Chairperson of the African Union. During this reporting period, Member States submitted 28 reports, the highest number since reporting on this instrument started in 2006. The reports are available on the AU website.

**334. Ratification and domestication of the Maputo Protocol:** The Commission organized in June 2017 a consultation meeting with Member States, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and Civil Society Organizations to plan for

the in-country advocacy missions on the ratification and domestication of the Maputo Protocol. The participants produced a draft advocacy strategy on the Maputo Protocol and identified Member States that have not ratified the Protocol for further assistance in the ratification process. To date, 39 Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol.

**335.** The contradictions existing between the Maputo Protocol and certain customary laws and practices constitute a challenge to its full ratification and need to be resolved. Several initiatives exist, such as the AU Gender Scorecard and the Gender Indexes from the African Development Bank and UN-ECA, but there is still a need to improve the collection of gender statistics at the national level and stimulate Member States' reporting on gender instruments.

**336.** African Civil Society Organizations are key partners in delivering on the promises of the African Union gender agenda. But many among them face significant funding challenges that need to be addressed in order for them to effectively play their roles in advocacy, monitoring, reporting and implementation of the AU gender agenda.

### **PAN-AFRICAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION (PAWO)**

**337.** The Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO) was founded in Dar es Salaam on 31 July 1962, one year before the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), by the first Conference of African Women. PAWO is Africa's first and oldest collective women's organization established to "unite all African women's organizations into a single platform to share good practices, promote human rights with a goal of eliminating any forms of discrimination against women, support Africa's liberation and to promote the full integration of African women in economic, social and political development of the Continent". PAWO sustained women's struggle for their freedom beyond the attainment of political independence.

**338.** During its 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in January 2017, the Assembly conferred to PAWO the status of a specialized agency of the African Union (Decision Ex.Cl/Dec. 621 (XXVIII)). The Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) is the lead entity within the Commission to support the operationalization of PAWO into a specialised agency. With the support of the Office of the Legal Counsel, the Directorate assisted PAWO in drafting its new instruments which will cover, among other aspects, its legal status, governance structure, finances and ratification procedures, among other issues.

**339.** In 2017, PAWO carried out advocacy activities with Member States. They included the celebration of its 55th anniversary in Conakry in August 2017, as well as the organization of a high-level event hosted by H.E. President Alpha Conde of the Republic of Guinea and Chair of the Union. In 2018, the Commission will work with PAWO to achieve its transformation into a Specialized Agency and help build its capacities to operate in line with its new status.

## **Social security and protection of vulnerable groups**

**340.** The draft Protocol to the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Security and Social Protection* will be considered by the Commission on Human and People's Rights at its first session in 2018. Progress has also been made with the drafting of the Social Agenda 2063.

**341.** Africa must step up its efforts to eradicate child labour on the continent. In 2012, 59 million children were working in Africa. In 2016, the numbers rose to 72 million. The Plan of Action to End Child Labour (2018-2022) will be considered by the Policy Organs in 2018. As requested by the Assembly, the Commission worked with UNECA, the African Development Bank and ILO on the framework of the Employment and Social Cohesion Fund. The draft will be submitted to the next session of the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration.

## **MIGRATION**

**342.** The 25<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly issued a Declaration on Migration (Assembly/AU/Decl.6 (XXV)) which reaffirmed commitments to accelerate mobility and integration on the continent while addressing regular and irregular migration. This Declaration called for, among others, (i) speeding up the implementation of continent-wide visa free regimes; (ii) expediting the operationalization of the African passport; and (iii) strengthening efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. It further requested the Commission to undertake the development of a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and, in collaboration with Member States, to acquire the capacity to manage migration flows within the continent.

**343.** In recent years, Africa has witnessed changing patterns of migration, as this phenomenon becomes both dynamic and complex. In recognition of the rapidly changing migration trends and characteristics, as well as its nexus to development, the Commission initiated an evaluation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa between October 2016 and February 2017, in order to determine the effectiveness and relevancy of the policy in the current state of affairs. Member States meeting in Zanzibar in November 2016 recommended that the Commission should review the policy framework to take into account the current context of migration on the continent in line with Agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs, and further develop a plan of action for its implementation.

**344.** In implementing this recommendation, the Commission convened in April and June 2017, respectively, a meeting of the AU Migration Working Group – comprising Member States, the Commission and independent experts – to draft a revised migration policy framework and draft a ten-year plan of action for its implementation. Member States experts met at Victoria Falls in September 2017 to validate and consolidate the revised drafts. They then submitted them to the STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs in Kigali in October 2017, where the policy and plan of action were eventually adopted.

**345.** The Commission, through the collaboration of the Departments of Political and Social Affairs, prepared the Draft AU Protocol of the Free Movement of Persons in Africa and its Implementation Roadmap, in line with Assembly's decision, Assembly/AU/Dec.607 (XXVII) of July 2016. This decision reiterated the Assembly's commitment to the acceleration of mobility and integration on the continent, and requested the Commission to develop a Protocol on Free Movement by January 2018. The draft Protocol was validated by the STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs and reviewed by the STC on Legal and Justice Matters. It will be submitted to the Assembly for consideration at the January 2018 Summit.

**346.** The Common African Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) was validated and consolidated by Member States experts in Victoria Falls in September 2017. It was further reviewed by the STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs in Kigali, Rwanda, in October 2017. The CAP will act as a guide for Member States in preparations for negotiations that have commenced already, as well as to adequately guide and equip the Permanent Observer Missions of the AU in New York, Brussels and Geneva. The negotiations at the UN level should conclude a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility.

**347.** The Commission, in collaboration with IOM and UNHCR, launched a needs assessment study of the AU Horn of Africa Initiative during a meeting held in Nairobi in July 2016. The assessment explored the possibilities of cooperation among law enforcement agencies around the Horn of Africa Initiative. It also explored ways to sustain the efforts of law enforcement agencies operating along the three Horn of Africa migratory routes – North, South and East – against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. The findings of the needs assessment and resulting plan of action were adopted at the second meeting of the AU Horn of Africa Initiative technical working group on law enforcement held in Khartoum in May 2017. A progress report was presented to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session of the STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs that convened in Kigali, Rwanda, in October 2017 for onward transmission to the Executive Council at the January 2018 Summit.

**348.** The African Union needs to speak with one voice on migration issues. At the moment, there are different processes and mechanisms on the continent that target specific migratory routes. Varying interests and priorities of different stakeholders in the migration area leads to duplication of efforts and interventions. Inadequate financial and human resources to implement a common continental agenda on migration results in overreliance on donor/partner funding.

**349.** There is also a need to fast-track the harmonization of the different processes and initiatives on the continent (AU Horn of Africa Initiative, Khartoum Process and Rabat Process). Adequate resources need to be dedicated to the development and implementation of an African migration agenda aimed to maximize the development benefits. It is necessary for the Commission to take charge of the continental mobility and migration dialogue.

**350.** Finally, enough human and financial resources should be allocated to the Commission, both financial and human resources, to enable it undertake the migration agenda in a more effective way so as to address the current migration challenges in the continent.

### **Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa**

**351.** H.E. President Edgar Chagwa Lungu of the Republic of Zambia hosted a high-level breakfast meeting on ending child marriage on the side-lines of the 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session. Subsequently, President Lungu presented the two-year report of the campaign at the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly. By its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.659(XXIX), the Assembly requested President Lungu to keep matters on child marriage under active consideration and to present an update during the 31<sup>st</sup> Assembly Ordinary Session.

**352.** So far, twenty-one (21) Member States have launched the campaign. 70% of the 21 Member States have launched their national AU Campaign to End Child Marriage. Of those who have launched the campaign, 30% strengthened and enacted their laws and mechanisms to protect the girl child.

**353.** The campaign to end child marriage witnessed notable progress across the continent in 2017. However, not all activities could be implemented due to financial constraints. Furthermore, feedback from national focal points posed a challenge to the Commission's ability to follow-up. Access to civil society organizations working on this issue was also limited owing in part to lack of resources.

**354.** There is need to increase the budgetary allocation to the Campaign. National governments also need to facilitate contact between the Campaign team and CSOs. This also applies to the implementation of the Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019) and the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control which has been extended to 2019.

### **Disability**

**355.** The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa was adopted by the STC on Justice and Legal Matters. It will be submitted for the consideration of the Executive Council in January 2018. Capacity was developed for senior officials of Member States in North Africa on the implementation of the Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019). The finalization of the Protocol is a major achievement for the Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) that have been involved throughout the negotiations.

### **Older Persons**

**356.** The Commission sent communications to all Member States during the January and July Summits in 2017, requesting them to consider signing and ratifying the

Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa as soon as possible. Member States are urged to all the necessary measure to advance the protection and empowerment of Older Persons through priority programmes and projects.

### **Drug control and crime prevention**

**357.** The Commission established the AU epidemiology network on drug use and offered training to data collection focal points in ten (10) Member States. A continental drug demand reduction consultation was conducted with all Member States in November 2017.

**358.** The Drug Epidemiological Network is operational in ten (10) Member States in all the five regions. Its presence helped in the collation of the first AU Epidemiological Report on Drug Use. The report on the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) was also adopted by the STC on Health, Population and Drug Control in March 2017. The AU will host the first International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) workshop sometime in 2018.

### **Culture and Sports**

**359.** Pursuant to decision EX.CL/974 (XXIX) on the establishment of the African Audio Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC), the Commission convened in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2017, the Extraordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sport was organized to consider the Draft Statute of the AACC. The Commission further engaged the Government of Algeria for the establishment of the Great Museum of Africa as a flagship project of the Agenda 2063. The Technical Committee on the Great Museum of Africa will meet in early 2018. The Commission further organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the African Union Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage to review the draft Model Law. Member States were sensitized to ratify the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance which was adopted in 2006 but is yet to enter into force. To date, only twelve (12) Member States have ratified the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, while twenty-eight (28) have signed it.

**360.** The slow pace in the ratification of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance remains a major constraint for the implementation of culture programmes. The ratification of the Charter will enable Member States to provide the needed attention to the sector and ensure that their creative economy sector grows and increases its contribution to the economy of the continent. The Commission therefore advocates for the speedy ratification of the Charter by appointing an Arts, Culture and Heritage Champion at the level of Heads of State and Government, who will sensitize Member States on the urgent need to provide support to Algeria and the Commission on the establishment and launching of the Great Museum of Africa, as well as to other culture and arts continental programmes.

**361.** With respect to Sports, the Commission focussed its efforts in 2017 on capacity building for women in sport administration, on strengthening strategies and programmes

to fight doping in sport and on including a Faculty of Sport in the Pan African University. The Commission also contributed towards the strategies and programmes of Member States to empower women in sport leadership and administration, and generally towards human capacity development through inclusion of Sports Management and Administration programmes in the Faculty of Sport in the Pan African University. The mechanism and strategies to fight doping in Sport was strengthened at continental level.

**362.** The withdrawal of Equatorial Guinea as the host of the 2019 African Games has affected preparations for the 2019 African Games. Willingness of Member States to implement proposed strategies and programmes for sport for development remains a challenge. Delays were encountered in the recruitment of regular staff of the AU Sports Council, resulting in slow pace of operationalization of the AUC and the AUC Regions with only one Region being fully operational. Delay in payment of arrears owed by Member States to the Former Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) impeded AUC efforts to liquidate audited liabilities payable to former SCSA staff.

**363.** Member States are urged to conform and comply with anti-doping code requirements and to implement anti-doping programmes. They should also continue to promote the participation of girls, women and people with disabilities in sports and effectively develop monitoring and evaluation tools to assess the implementation of the previous decisions on a minimum quota of 20% of women and people with disabilities in their Sport Management structure.

### **ACADEMY OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES (ACALAN)**

**364.** In the course of 2017, the Academy of African Languages focuses its activities on the development of corpus for Fulfulde, Wolof and Yoruba vehicular cross-border languages in West Africa. It also translated in African languages a terminology for use in the domains of health, human and people's rights. The Academy advocated the use of the harmonized orthographies of African languages, and completed the planning for the linguistic atlas of the ECOWAS and SADC regions to be carried out in 2018. The Academy expanded the Assembly of Academicians to make it more efficient, as recommended by the Governing Board and Scientific and Technical Committee meetings held in July 2015 and December 2016, respectively.

**365.** The continental dimension and strategic nature of the Academy's mandate requires an amendment of its Statutes to grant it financial and operational autonomy and subsequently transform it into an AU organ or agency of the African Union. This was the recommendation of the Academy's statutory meetings. It is also recommended that vacant positions, including that of the Executive Secretary, should be filled as soon as possible.

## **OUTCOME 5: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND FINANCING THE UNION**

**366.** Strategies for resource mobilization, including special emphasis on alternative sources of funding, and/or additional funding sources to enable Africa to finance its programmes and development.

### **OUTPUTS:**

- Financially sustainable and viable Commission and Organs attained;
- Alternative sources of funding for Africa to finance its development identified and implemented.

### **Output 1: Financially sustainable and viable Commission and Organs attained**

**367.** For decades, the continental organization has been grappling with the need for self-reliance in funding its activities and programmes. This issue has gained renewed drive with, among other initiatives, the adoption by the Policy Organs of decisions on alternative sources of funding, the establishment of the African Institute for Remittances and more recently, the mobilization of domestic resources for the financing of Agenda 2063 by Member States.

**368.** During the year under review, key issues that preoccupied the Commission included (i) the domestication of Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan, (ii) the evaluation of the AUC Strategic Plan 2014-2017, (iii) the implementation of AU Reforms, and (iv) the development of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018-2023.

### **DOMESTICATION OF AGENDA 2063**

**369.** Progress was achieved in the domestication of Agenda 2063 during 2017. The exercise is aimed at enabling Member States to begin the process of integrating the goals, priorities and targets of Agenda 2063's First Ten Year Implementation Plan into their national development plans. The Commission conducted support missions in this regard to forty (40) countries. Following the initial rounds of these technical visits, it is expected that the forty Member States are now aligning their national development plans to Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan. Working with the RECs, the Commission has increased efforts to provide further Agenda 2063 domestication follow up technical support to the forty Member States and to bring the remaining on board.

**370.** A progress report on the domestication of Agenda 2063 was presented to the Ministerial Follow up Committee on Agenda 2063 at its meeting held in Namibia in October 2017. The Ministers made several recommendations that will help to speed up implementation.

**371.** It is important to recall that the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) was adopted by the Assembly in June 2015, exactly two years after the adoption of Agenda 2063. In other words, the domestication and implementation process only started in the last two and half years. This means that the FTYIP will produce a lot of uncompleted objectives that will have to be carried over into the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan.

**372.** The Commission wishes to emphasize the need for Member States, the Commission, the RECs and other AU Organs, including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), to accelerate the domestication, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan in Member States. This can only be achieved if they align their various development plans to Agenda 2063 FTYIP.

### **EVALUATION OF THE AU STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-2017**

**373.** The evaluation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Framework was carried out in order to identify challenges it encountered during its implementation and outline lessons for the next Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2018-2023. The evaluation highlighted the following challenges: (i) a persistence of the 'silo mentality'; (ii) difficulties for recommended technical clusters to function adequately; (iii) the non-development of micro-plans at cluster level; (iv) limited availability of resources, which led to the suspension or non-implementation of most of the envisaged cluster projects; (v) limited implementation of the results-based management; (vi) the lack of discipline in adhering to reporting deadlines; and (vii) low but gradually increasing contribution of Member States to the AU program budget, which resulted in heavy dependence on partnership funding.

**374.** The evaluation of the current strategic plan generated important lessons for the MTP. Mechanisms for improved coordination and exploitation of synergies within and among the Commission's Departments, other AU Organs and RECs have been developed. Capacity building programs focusing on both staff numbers and quality will be implemented as well as implementation of the decision on financing the Union.

### **DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY**

**375.** The draft domestic resource mobilization strategy for Agenda 2063 was endorsed by the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration in October 2017 and will be submitted for the consideration of the Policy Organs in January 2018.

**376.** One of the options in the strategy is to develop a clear and robust roadmap with value propositions to equip the Commission in engaging and partnering with the private sector in the implementation of the Agenda 2063 programmes and projects.

**377.** More domestic resources are needed for widespread roll out and domestication of Agenda 2063. The technical and financial support provided by external partners, including the UN system, to the SDGs gives them higher visibility at national level, thus posing a challenge with respect to the domestication of Agenda 2063. Additionally, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs may be perceived as parallel and competing frameworks at the national level. This can become a serious challenge for Member States about what to prioritize for implementation as they seek to domesticate Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

### **AGENDA 2063 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

**378.** In 2017, in collaboration with the RECs, as well as the NEPAD Agency, the APRM, UN-ECA, the African Development Bank, the African Capacity Building Foundation, the Pan-African Parliament and the Joint Secretariat Support Office, the Commission drafted a common monitoring and evaluation framework for Agenda 2063, a rigorous process initiated by the Commission since September 2015. The framework integrates both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 through a prioritized set of sixty-three converging indicators. It implies that Member States will only produce a single report on the implementation of both agendas. Activities related to the development of tools, training materials and rolling out the M&E Framework to Member States, (through the RECs) have since commenced.

**379.** The Agenda 2063 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and its Indicator Handbook were finalized and validated by planning experts from the Member States in May 2017. The draft documents were tabled before the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration in October 2017, which were recommended for adoption by the Executive Council in January 2018.

### **MEDIUM-TERM PLAN (MTP) 2018-2023**

**380.** The Commission began the process of developing its Medium-Term Plan. Consultations with AU Organs and the RECs had taken place. A zero draft was produced and discussed in-house. It will soon be presented to the Commission for review and submitted to the Policy Organs for adoption in January 2018.

**381.** The Commission has finalized the development of its Medium-Term Plan 2018-2023. The Plan heavily aligns itself to recommendations of the AU reforms as well as Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan, but with inbuilt flexibility to accommodate new decisions and declarations of the Assembly. The Medium-Term Plan also refocuses the Commission on fewer high level and high impact strategic and policy issues, leaving the responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and evaluation to Member States, the RECs, and other AU Organs.

**382.** The key principles that will drive the execution of the Medium-Term Plan are prioritization, accountability, transparency, harmonization (processes and systems), flexibility/adaptation, coordination and control. Staff performance will be aligned to the

delivery of the Plan with concomitant reward and motivation competency-based system. Implementation arrangements require that departments translate the imperatives of their deliverables into work plans and budgets and execute their budgets at their own initiative but in conformity with the approved results-based framework.

**383.** The evaluation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan generated important lessons for the Medium-Term Plan 2018-2023. As a result, the new Plan includes mechanisms for improved coordination and synergy within the Commission. Furthermore, the Commission will take the necessary measures to ensure the operationalization of the MTP Steering Committee and activate the functioning of the technical clusters. Efforts will also be increased towards the full implementation of the decisions of the Policy Organs on financing the Union.

**384.** An issue of concern for the Commission during the reporting period was that its funds are currently housed under different Departments. The Commission initiated the process to centralize their management and developed modalities to this effect. The process is carried out in close collaboration with the Commission's technical Departments which are custodians of partners' funds.

## **Output 2: Financing of the Union**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KIGALI DECISION ON 0.2% OF ELIGIBLE IMPORT LEVY**

**385.** As a very important element of the Union's reform agenda, improving domestic revenue mobilization with AU Member States is paramount to the success of the Union. In order for Africa to realize its transformative development agenda, financial independence that ensures better risk management, accountability and sustainability is needed. Furthermore, sustainability is also needed in order to reduce over dependence on development partners.

**386.** Following the bold decision taken by Heads of State and Government in Kigali in June 2016 to finance the AU budget with locally generated resources, a number of Member States have embarked on its implementation. As of November 2017, the Commission has on record 15 Member States that are at different stages of implementing the Decision, namely: Kenya, Rwanda, Chad, Djibouti, Guinea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Gabon. Other Member States such as Malawi, Seychelles, SADR and Mauritius sought the support of the Commission to assist with understanding the implication of implementing the Decision in light of global obligations they are affiliated to.

**387.** A set of 'golden rules' establishing clear financial management and accountability principles has been prepared by the Committee of Ten Finance Ministers (F10) by the Assembly and will be tabled for endorsement at the January 2018 Summit, along with a proposal for the oversight mechanism of the AU budgetary process.

**388.** During the same period, the Commission also visited five (5) Member States to follow up on the on the implementation of the Kigali Decision. The lessons learnt from such visits assisted the Commission to mitigate challenges faced by some Member States wishing to start implementing the Kigali Decision.

## 2017 AND 2018 BUDGET

**389.** In 2017, the proportion paid by Member States vs. partners to the budget showed that progress towards greater financial self-reliance was being made and that the Union was on track according to the AU Reform’s “Financing the Union” initiative. Indeed, Member States’ contributions to the Programme budget have increased from 6% in 2016 to 15% in 2017, and are due to reach 37% in 2018. Member States have covered 100% of the operational budget. Member States contributed 45% of the Year 1 Target for the Peace Fund in 2017.

BUDGET	2016 (actual) (USD / %)		2017 (actual) (USD / %)		2018 (planned) (USD / %)	
	MS	Partners	MS	Partners	MS	Partners
Operational budget	151,349,515/ (99.5%)	681,600 (0.5%)	163,412,983 (100%)	-	190,679,838 (100%)	-
Programme budget	20,140,904 (6%)	310,780,631/ (94%)	43,213,425/ (17%)	210,259,101/ (83%)	115064253/ (37%)	195,554,603/ (63%)
AMISOM Budget	-	-	-	335,965,041/ (92%)	12,532,704/ (5%)	255,550,495/ (95%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171,490,419/ (35%)</b>	<b>311,462,231/ (65%)</b>	<b>206,626,408/ (27%)</b>	<b>546,224,142/ (73%)</b>	<b>318,276,795/ (41%)</b>	<b>451,105,098/ (59%)</b>

**390.** While this trend is encouraging, there are areas of concern. By the end of 2017, only 67% of the current year’s assessed contributions were paid by 39 Member States. Actual contributions by Partners were on the increase, but most of these contributions were made towards the end of 2017, which hampered implementation of AU plans during the first semester. According to the financial situation at the end of December 2017, partners have contributed 85% of the AU programme budget (amounting to about USD 247 million), and a significant amount of the AMISOM Budget.

**391.** To remedy this situation, the Commission will continue engaging Member States in the context of the reform process and the reports to be discussed by the Policy Organs, including the report of the Committee of Ten Ministers of Finance and the one on the overall reform process. Furthermore, the Commission will hold a retreat with its development partners to look into the causes of delayed payments and chart solutions that will improve financial performance in 2018.

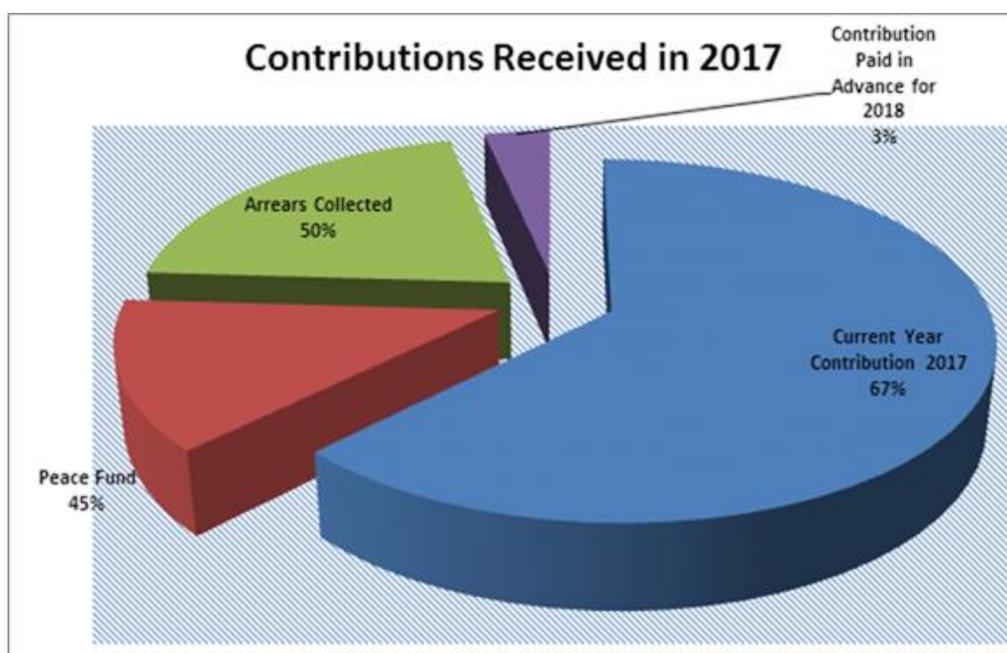
**392.** Figure (2) below details contributions received from Member States and partners.

**Figure 2: Actual contributions received from Member States and Partners**

**Member States:**

During the period under review, payments and credits totalling **US\$220,336,699.13** had been received for as total collection in 2017. Out of that amount, **US\$137,821,617.21** constitutes payment against the current year's assessment, representing **67%** of the 2017 budget assessed to Member States. The balance that is **US\$82,515,081.92** is composed as follow:

- US\$ 45,621,602.50 constitutes the arrears collected from the previous year's budget;
- US\$ 29,530,655.97 constitutes collection for the Peace Fund. This amount is kept in a separate bank account pending the establishment of the Peace Fund Governance structure
- US\$ 7,362,820.44 constitutes payments and credits against the 2018 Budget as advance payment received in 2017.



**Partners:**

During 2017, the African Union received a total amount of **\$567,043,210** in contributions from international partners. This is broken down as follows, **US\$259,736,7284** for programmes and projects and **US\$307,306,926** for AMISOM.

**AU-EU STEERING COMMITTEE**

**393.** On 24 May 2017, the Commission hosted the Third Steering Committee meeting on the Aide-Memoire between the Africa Union and the European Commission on Measures to Strengthen the Financial Management of the African Union Commission (official signing of the revised Aide-Memoire). The AU requested this exercise as it will help its management of Member States and Partner Funds. At this meeting, both parties discussed the implementation rate of the agreed-upon roadmap towards Full Pillar

Assessment Compliance as part of the detailed Aide-Memoire Monitoring Action Plan. In addition, discussions were held on EU's support to Institutional and Administrative Capacity Building activities and the Africa Peace Fund Projects, which include: MNJTF, AU Human Rights and Military Observers in Burundi, C3IS, AMISOM. Status of APSA III implementations, Joint Force G5 Sahel, and the RCI-LRA.

**394.** To ensure continued dialogue and timely implementation of the activities underscored in the Aide-Memoire, focal points across the Commission, including the Departments of PBFA, Strategic Planning and AHRM, held regular technical meetings and preparations are underway for the second bi-annual Steering Committee meeting to be held in January 2018.

### **COORDINATION MEETING OF AU ORGANS**

There is an urgent need for the consistent application of the Financial and Management rules across the different Organs and Agencies of the Union. The rules stipulate that all Organs are expected to apply the AU administrative and financial rules and regulations covering recruitment, finance procurement travel and medical coverage etc. However, there appears to be some discrepancies in the interpretation of these rules.

**395.** Accordingly, Deputy Chairperson Kwesi Quartey, held a meeting of Heads of Organs on standardized application of AU Financial and Administrative Rules and Regulations in Addis Ababa in August 2017. The purpose was for the Heads of Organs to discuss the Staff Regulations and Rules (SRR) and the AU Financial and Administrative Rules and Regulations. Additionally, the meeting provided the Heads of Organs and the staff from the relevant Departments the opportunity to discuss the unique problems faced by the various AU Organs in applying the SRR. A follow-up meeting at a technical level took place in November 2017 to discuss critical areas of concern and the progress made on harmonizing a wide range of administrative and financial matters across Organs.

**396.** There is a need to institutionalize regular meetings with all the Heads of Organs and their administrative and financial managers to discuss both policy alignment issues and financial and administrative challenges with a view to clarifying and resolving some issues. There is also a need for AHRMD, PBFA, Legal Counsel, Medical and Health Services and Internal Audit to work closely with the Executive Heads of Organs to ensure strict compliance with the Administrative policies and the financial rules and regulations.

**OUTCOME 6:  
BUILDING A PEOPLE'S UNION**

**397.** Strengthen a people centered Union through active communication of AU programmes, the branding of the AU, participation of Member States and other stakeholders in defining and implementing the African agenda, respecting cultural and linguistic diversity

**OUTPUTS:**

- Rebranding of the AU Commission, effective communication and increased visibility achieved;
- Stakeholder involvement in African agenda implemented, which reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, equal participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups improved.

**Output 1: Rebranding of the AU Commission, effective communication and increased visibility achieved.**

**398.** In 2017, in order to raise awareness and interest amongst African citizens on the work of the African Union, the Commission carried out several activities through social media, outreach programs and audio visuals. It focused mainly on promoting a positive image of the African Union and of the continent by popularizing key projects and achievements in line with the strategic priority of Agenda 2063.

**399.** A two-day workshop for African senior media professionals was held in Addis Ababa in November 2017, to reflect on how they could translate their role as envisaged in Agenda 2063 into concrete activities, and to exchange views on how to increase the interest and engagement of common African citizens in the work of the African Union.

**400.** Currently, the AU Media Centre serves 64 journalists accredited to the AU and more than 3,000 visiting journalists who cover events at the AU Headquarters, thus ensuring that the activities of the AU are widely disseminated through national, regional and international media houses. The Media Centre is equipped with 50 computers, individual workspaces, facilities for live video and audio transmission of open sessions of major meetings, audio recording in four AU working languages, cable and wireless internet access, as well as access to the latest news, publications and media resources.

**401.** The Commission's tradition of media briefings and press conferences also continued. Over 50 media briefings were held during the year in review, 31 of which were held during Summits. As of November 2017, a total of 383 press releases were also issued and disseminated, including through social media platforms.

**402.** The AU Headquarters has become a major centre of attraction for a wide range of visitors from all over the world. Over 600 people visited the AU Headquarters, seeking to learn about the organization. Information and guided tours were organized throughout the year in order to promote the corporate image of the Commission.

**403.** Numerous radio and television interviews were organized for AU senior officials and resource persons who use the occasions to further elaborate on specific key issues and projects and, thus, enhance public awareness of the work of the Union, and its position on African and global issues.

**404.** The African Union's online presence was also a major area of focus through the development of various digital platforms to channel information to audiences across the continent and beyond. Improvement of the AU website received greater attention in this regard. Currently, information materials are posted in the four working languages of the AU on the website: – English, French, Portuguese and Arabic – The AU website also features audio-video content, publications and key policy documents, as well as AU financial statements. The website counts more than 2.1 million hits and 1.5 million unique page views have been recorded.

**405.** Social media also helped reach out to African citizens on the continent and in the diaspora. As of November 2017, the AU counted about 320,000 followers on Facebook, 249,000 on Twitter, 1500 on YouTube and 1,516 subscribers on Flickr. The photo archive increased by 72 percent.

**406.** Furthermore, the "Know Your AU" Campaign, which aims to popularize and educate African citizens on the history, structures and functions of the Union, remained on social media until the end of 2017. Its objective was to increase engagement with African citizenry by directing online traffic to AU digital platforms.

**407.** Key messages from the African Union leadership during different events were recorded and documented electronically and posted on AU digital platforms for wider dissemination. Similarly, videos and animated creations of Agenda 2063 flagship projects, the status of their implementation and their expected impact on the lives of ordinary African citizens and the economies of African countries were produced.

**408.** Other products screened at all major AU events included 'From OAU to the AU,' 'Agenda 2063' and 'Treaties of the AU'. Currently, documentaries on four flagship projects are under production as part of the 'Know the AU Campaign'. They are on (i) Formulation of a Commodities Strategy; (ii) Silencing the Guns by 2020; (iii) Establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area; and (iv) Grand Inga Dam Project and the integrated High Speed Train Network. There is also an on-going project to establish a modern AU studio through the refurbishing and purchase of new audio-visual equipment to increase production capacity and quality.

**409.** The AU ECHO newsletter is a platform for Member States and African citizens to tell Africa's story and comment on key programmes and initiatives by the Union. In

2017, approximately 2000 hard copies were distributed at the Summits and other different events, and electronic versions were posted on the AU website for a wider reach.

**410.** The AU Handbook is published annually by the Commission in partnership with the Government of New Zealand. It is intended to act as a reference guide on people working in all parts of the AU system, as well as AU's partners and wider civil society. 2500 copies were produced in 2017 and distributed during the Summits and at various internal and external events. An Electronic copy of the AU Handbook was also available on the AU website. Similarly, thousands of branded items, including calendars, were distributed at various AU events, meetings and tours at the AUC Headquarters during the course of the year.

**Output 2: Stakeholder involvement in African agenda implemented, which reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, equal participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups improved**

**411.** The Commission continued its efforts to create effective platforms and mechanisms for the inclusive participation of the African diaspora and the African civil society in AU activities. During the course of 2017, it invited the contribution of the interfaith community in achieving peace, security and development in Africa. In response, the Steering Committee of the Interfaith Dialogue Forum adopted a 10-year Interfaith Development Agenda to be implemented by the interfaith community in all Member States on Agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs 2030.

**412.** The Commission also convened the inter-continental Civil Society Organizations Forum in the lead up to the 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, in November 2017. Civil society organizations from Africa and Europe issued a joint declaration that calls upon institutions and leaders on both continents to act upon their political commitments to facilitate and expand civil society participation in the AU-EU partnership. The Forum also developed recommendations in the five thematic areas of the AU-EU Summit that were submitted to the Summit for the consideration of member states.

**413.** As part of the effort to build up a knowledge base on diaspora engagement and provide Member States with policy tools, resources and information on this matter, the Commission launched three projects to support diaspora policy and programme development in Member States, namely (i) African Diaspora Engagement Toolkit; (ii) African Diaspora Research and Mapping Study in Europe (UK, France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands); and (iii) African Diaspora Business and Professional Network.

**414.** Furthermore, a legal and political framework for diaspora participation in the AU was drafted. Once adopted by the AU Policy Organs, this framework will fulfil a key outcome of the Global African Summit and will allow the Commission to transition from

the current ad-hoc method of diaspora representation to a standardized mechanism across the AU system.

**415.** On its part, the AU Mission to the United States worked with key diaspora organizations and individuals – women, faith-based and in academia \_ in an effort to build the African Diaspora constituency and promote African programs in the United States. In 2017, the AU Mission launched a few diaspora projects within the framework of Agenda 2063, such as the Grand Africa Tour from Cape Town to Cairo, which was launched in Kigali, Rwanda, in August 2017 and the AU Diaspora Internet TV/Radio Station. These were among the platforms initiated by the AU Mission to influence the narrative on Africa in the United States and for the African Diplomatic Corps to engage effectively with the Diaspora.

**416.** Following the Government of Zambia's gracious donation to the Commission of 132 acres of land in Livingston (on the Zambian side of Victoria Falls), the AU Mission in the United States engaged the African Diaspora in raising funds to develop five (5) diaspora villages in the five (5) regions of Africa. Additionally, each village is expected to comprise one tertiary care centre of a thousand-bed and state-of-the-art hospital, a cardiac care center, and an ambulance service including emergency helicopters. A pharmaceutical plant to address the issue of bad drugs is also planned. Each of the villages will also have three (3) 5-star hotels to promote health tourism in Africa, with banks, power plant, housing units for staff, real estate projects and infrastructure to support the facility. This is a long-term project, with a current plan to raise USD10.00 per month per person.

### **AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR REMITTANCES (AIR)**

**417.** In 2017, the African Institute for Remittances (AIR) developed strategic partnerships with African central banks through the Association of African Central Banks (AACB), which accepted to be represented at the Governing Board and Consultative Forum of the African Institute for Remittances. The draft Statute of the African Institute for Remittances was endorsed by the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Justice and Legal Affairs and will be considered by the Assembly in January 2018. African central banks also reviewed the technical assistance programme of the African Institute for Remittances, whose implementation began with seven (7) Member States, namely the DRC, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

### **ECOSOCC**

**418.** The Commission facilitated the convening of the Second Ordinary Session of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC held in Cairo in March 2017. On the agenda was the mid-term election of new leadership for the organ, as well as the commencement of the reform of ECOSOCC and the relocation of its Secretariat to Lusaka. These issues were given added impetus by the Decision of the Executive Council taken during the July 2017 summit (EX.CL/Dec.975/XXXI).

**419.** The General Assembly of ECOSOCC elected a new Bureau and members of its Standing Committee; inaugurated new CSOs into the General Assembly; and adopted a Strategic Plan of Action and constituted Working Groups to review the Statutes and other framework documents as part of the ongoing ECOSOCC reform process. The General Assembly also adopted its strategic action plan, which will help this Organ of the Union effectively deliver on its advisory role.

**420.** Work has also been completed on the first phase of the implementation of the Executive Council Decision on ECOSOCC reform. A multi-stakeholder consultation to develop the framework for, and provide guiding input into the second and final phase of implementation is currently scheduled for the first quarter of 2018.

**421.** ECOSOCC is also working with the Commission on the implementation of the Assembly's decision on the relocation of the ECOSOCC Secretariat. The current Secretariat helped to coordinate the preparation of the financial, legal and structural implications of the relocation in fulfilment of the directives of the Policy Organs. These assessments, together with the detailed report of the evaluation mission to Zambia, as well as related budgetary estimates, have been submitted for the consideration of the Sub-Committees on Structure and Budgets.

## **OUTCOME 7: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFORMS**

**422.** Institutional capacities of the AU Commission improved, and relations with RECs, AU Organs and with strategic and other partners strengthened

### **OUTPUTS:**

- Institutional capacity of the AU Commission strengthened;
- Relationships with the RECs, AU Organs and strategic partners improved;
- Africa's participation in multilateral affairs enhanced.

### **Output 1: Institutional capacities of the AU Commission strengthened**

**423.** The Commission took steps to facilitate the implementation of the reform process led by H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda with the establishment of a Reform Implementation Unit within the Bureau of the Chairperson. The Unit's Head and Deputy Head are already in post and have started their work, in the implementation of the Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 635 (XXVIII) of January 2017.

**424.** During the period under review, the Commission strived to implement the decision of the Policy Organs to streamline the work of the Organization through the ongoing reform process, mainstream gender and enhance relationships with the RECs. The main purpose of the reform agenda is to increase the efficiency of the African Union so that it can better deliver on its core missions, make an impact on the lives of its people and contribute to world affairs.

**425.** The Commission made significant inroads in the following areas: human resources management, administration and financial management, the upgrading of AU policies and guidelines, enhancing staff learning and development, and modernizing information technology and emergency response to cyber threats. In the years ahead, the Commission will focus on the enforcement, implementation and regular update of these policies and guidelines, taking into account the directives of the AU reform exercise, as well as ongoing changes in Africa and the world at large.

**426.** During the reporting period, the Commission significantly improved its efforts on governance and transparency. Nine policies were developed or implemented in this regard, including on travel, promotion, advancement and upgrading, the security and safety of the Union, ICT, Security, Plant, Property and Equipment Management. The AU Code of Ethics, the AU Code of Conduct, the AU Anti-Harassment Policy and the AU Procurement Manual were also part of these new policies. Additionally, as this report was being finalized, ten (10) additional policies were in progress, out of which four (4) were already endorsed by the Commission.

**427.** Popularization of the approved policies among the AU staff also commenced with the distribution of the procurement manual, code of ethics and anti-harassment policies. However, there is need for the new policies to secure without further delay the approval by the relevant organs of the Union to help with the standardization of all Union policies and the attainment of efficiency in the work of the Organization. In this connection, harmonized processes using automated processes to improve efficiency are also being undertaken to improve timeliness, transparency and increased efficiency.

### **Youth Empowerment at the African Union**

**428.** The Commission focused greater attention on collaboration and coordination with AU Organs and Specialized Agencies, with higher emphasis on gender parity and diversity, as well as the inclusion of youth in the activities of the Union.

**429.** A record 137 youth volunteers – 87 females and 50 males – were deployed to serve across eleven (11) Member States in 2017. This was an increase by 46% over the previous year. In addition, 44 volunteers completed their service at the AU at the end of the reporting period.

**430.** Last July, the Commission launched the call for AU youth volunteers for 2018. Over 37,000 applications from 52 Member States were received, for only a meagre total of 100 positions to be filled. The 8<sup>th</sup> batch of training took place in Accra, Ghana, in December 2017.

**431.** The Commission's Departments of Social Affairs and Human Resources, Science and Technology, collaborated with the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps to train and deploy 35 young African professionals to the five Regional Collaborating Centres of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The training took place in the nearby Ethiopian town of Debrezeit in November 2017. Thirty-five (35) youth volunteers were subsequently dispatched to their respective duty stations to serve for a period of 12 months. The Commission also instituted in-house training and peer-to-peer staff exchange and leadership programmes with partners such as the EU, the UN and the World Bank. More than 400 AU staff took part in these sessions in 2017.

### **Human Resources**

**432.** The transformation of the African Union requires the development of staff skills across the board. As the figures above suggest, youth volunteers and staff exchange programmes are gaining visibility and interest. The Commission thanks those partners who already participate in these programmes. In particular, the Commission is grateful to Egypt for the support in sponsoring 50 staff members. The Commission urges all Member States to contribute voluntarily to the funding and expansion of these programmes as they promote the vision of the AU as people's driven, especially through the youth and women.

**433.** Efforts were also undertaken to upgrade the personnel's remuneration and benefits package so as to attract and retain the most qualified and talented Africans. The revised package was submitted for the consideration of the Policy Organs during the July 2017 Summit and, thanks to the Executive Council's Decision – EX.CL/Dec.967(XXXI) – the new package should be effective from 1 January 2018.

**434.** It calls for an increase of the AU basic salary by 6.1%, the creation of a new D2 salary scale, the revision of the monthly basic salaries of elected officials, of the housing allowance rate for the various AU duty stations, of the education allowance rates, and the installation allowance for internationally-recruited AU staff members. It also introduces a conflict zone allowance and rent for official residence of the AU Commissioners. Moreover, the Commission accelerated the creation of a new AU pension scheme for effective implementation during 2018. The new pension scheme will be more inclusive and would allow greater returns and benefits for the staff of the Union.

### **Information Technology**

**435.** Finally, efforts were under way to upgrade processes, systems and infrastructure required for a better work flow and the management of staff performance. The Commission has established an IT Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery Mechanisms to enhance the Organization's response to information security threats and breaches.

**436.** Two major cyber incidents occurred in 2017. One was the attack by a ransomware of the IT and security system of the African Commission for Human and People's Rights, which resulted in a loss of data. The other was the crash of the Commission's firewalls – a protection system against external and internal security threats – that left the IT infrastructure and systems vulnerable to cyber-attacks. This incident had negatively impacted the connectivity with all AU offices outside the Headquarters and significantly affected the quality of the Commission's transactional operations (financial management systems, procurement systems, human resources systems).

**437.** The Commission wants to reassure Member States that it quickly took emergency remedial measures and was successful in tackling these threats. Firewall devices were thereafter installed in AU Offices in Washington DC, Brussels, Geneva, at the African Commission for Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR) in Arusha and IBAR in Nairobi. In order to prevent another threat in the future, more sustainable actions need to be implemented such as upgrading the Commission's emergency response system, creating a second Data Center and, more importantly, modernizing and enhancing its cybersecurity infrastructures and capacity.

### **Compliance, Operational Efficiency and Service Delivery**

**438.** Lastly, the Commission, with the financial support of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Kaizen Institute, launched several initiatives to

reduce waste and ensure greater operational efficiency within the Union. Activities include all aspects of human resources management; procurement, travel and asset management; guest tracking mechanisms in terms of security and safety services; medical services delivery, and enhanced management of the Union's financial assets, in general.

**439.** With respect to the enhancement of medical services delivery, the Commission completed Phases 1 and 2 of the renovation of the AU Clinic. The Clinic is now equipped with ENT, dental, physiotherapy facilities, with improvement of the night duty services. It will also save cost for the Commission as the number of referrals abroad will decrease. Improvement of AU facilities will help save cost and even produce internally generated revenues. For example, in 2017, the Commission collected around USD300,000 in income from renting AU facilities.

**440.** The Organization has undergone various audits and assessments during the year 2017, including KPMG audit reports on the state of play, external auditors report for the year of 2016, as well as VII Pillar assessment conducted by Ernst and Young on behalf of the EU. These audits flagged, among other things, the need to improve the segregation of duties and the revision of the role matrix based on tasks, which is underway.

**441.** The Commission also continued to implement the recommendations of the 2015/2016 Board of External Auditors. Currently, 43% of the recommendations were fully implemented. Compliance with these audit recommendations contributed to improving the compliance to existing rules and regulations, as well as developing manuals and policies, as well as the hiring of competent compliance and quality control officers. It also helped improve the control mechanisms of the internal audit.

**442.** The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) has made impact on the AU operations by ensuring maintenance of adequate internal controls through the various audits carried out and recommendations made for improvements, as well as capacity building of audit staff and audit tools. The internal audit reports have also assisted in saving the amount of time and cost incurred on audit of the AU financial statements through sharing of its reports with external auditors.

## **Output 2: Relations with AU Organs, RECs, and Strategic Partners Strengthened**

### **AU Relations with RECs, Organs and Specialized Agencies**

**443.** During the reporting period, the Commission continued to enhance collaboration, cooperation and exchange of information with other AU Organs and the RECs. Activities included providing administrative support and servicing meetings of the Policy Organs, negotiating host agreements in preparation of Summits and other meetings of the Organs being hosted by Member States.

**444.** During the course of the year under review, the Commission held joint retreats with the PRC, which helped improve the working relations between the two Organs and their working methods.

**445.** As noted in this report, the Commission, AU Organs and Specialized Agencies enhanced their collaboration with Member States in accordance with their respective mandates. Host country agreements, however, remain one area that calls for greater attention. It should be recalled that these agreements are more or less of the same standards, and the obligations of host countries the same. However, some host countries tend to require amendments that are often at variance with these general standards. To avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, the Commission is preparing a standard agreement to ensure the same requirements for all AU meetings held outside the Headquarters. It will be submitted soon for the consideration of the Policy Organs.

**446.** As regards relations with the RECs, the Commission held several policy harmonization and coordination meetings with the RECs, including at the highest level. Following the decision of Policy Organs, the RECs are now participating in all the meetings of the Policy Organs and contributing to their decision-making processes. The proposal by the Assembly on AU reform – Assembly/AU/Dec. 635 (XXVIII) – to replace the July Summit with a co-ordination meeting with the RECs with the participation of the Chairpersons of the latter, the Commission and Regional Mechanisms is a substantial step towards ensuring the harmonization of strategic plans and ensuring effective coordination and mainstreaming of the RECs in the work of the African Union. It will also help the RECs establish inter-linkages amongst themselves to build synergy and address their overlapping mandates and multiple memberships.

**447.** On the other hand, it is imperative to agree on a clear division of labor and effective collaboration between the Commission, the RECs, Regional Mechanisms, and other continental institutions in line with the principle of subsidiarity. In the same vein, as the Policy Organs are considering the AU reform proposals, they should be reminded that many Member States RECS continue to hold membership in multiple RECs and that the latter often carry overlapping mandates. This situation often results in unnecessary duplication of work and wastage of resources.

**448.** Collaboration initiatives with the RECs were also undertaken by other AU Organs. The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) conducted several regional training sessions, including (i) the development of a module on trade and finance in collaboration with COMESA and Afreximbank; (ii) two regional projects with the Mano River Union and ECCAS in partnership with the African Development Bank; (iii) the finalization of one project document on combating illicit financial flows in partnership with the UNECA and other partners. Other regional projects included capacity building training program for fragile states, in partnership with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

**449.** At the initiative of the African Capacity Building Foundation for Africa, the 17<sup>th</sup> International Economic forum on Africa jointly organized by African Union and the

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognized the need to intensify investment in capacity development in Africa as a catalyst for the continent's transformation. Specific focus was put on capacity development for science, technology and innovation, the theme of 2017 edition of ACBF's Africa Capacity Report. This flagship report was launched in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2017 on the theme "Building Capacity in Science, Technology and Innovation for Africa's Transformation." Its findings were based on data from 45 countries and eight (8) country case studies. The Conference also highlighted the role of private sector in Africa's structural transformation. In this perspective, it emphasized the key role of entrepreneurship in industrialization process in Africa.

**450.** Looking ahead, capacity building initiatives by the Commission and the African Capacity Building Foundation will focus on resource mobilization and capacity development for the successful implementation of the First Ten Years of Agenda 2063. Priority activities will include the production of critical technical skills, including in science, technology and innovation, and support to the capacity to re-engineer training curricula to fit private sector needs. Strengthening governance and leadership capacity and helping RECs improve their capacity to achieve regional integration agendas will also be on the work plan, as well as enhancing women and youth capacity to engage the private sector.

**451.** Furthermore, the Commission and the RECs recognize the need to strengthen their cooperation with a view to accelerating the integration process in Africa. Accordingly, the Commission envisages to involve strongly the RECs in the domestication, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda 2063. The RECs hold a key role in the reporting process of the implementation of this Agenda.

**452.** There is also a need for the Commission and the RECs to speak with one voice in their cooperation with various partners. In this dynamic, a common front should therefore be built by rationalizing projects to be submitted to the partners for financial support.

**453. Joint Support Secretariat Office (JSSO):** During the period under review, the JSSO worked towards the following key expected outcomes:

- Effective co-ordination, collaboration and partnership amongst the three institutions of the AUC, UNECA and AFDB in order to ensure coherence, effectiveness and efficiency in development efforts;
- Strengthened joint implementation and monitoring of continental initiatives such as the Agenda 2063, 2030 and High-5 priorities;
- In this respect, JSSO organized the Joint Secretariat in January 2017 and the Steering Committee the meeting in March 2017, which served as an opportunity for dialogue amongst the top Executives and the Deputies of the three institutions, respectively;

**454.** Furthermore, JSSO, through consultations and engagement with the Steering Committee, Directors and technical experts of the three Joint Support Institutions, formulated the terms of reference and operationalized three (3) thematic working groups, namely communication, regional integration and Youth employment.

#### **NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATION AGENCY (NPCA)**

**455.** During the reporting period, the NEPAD Agency worked closely with the Commission to accelerate the implementation of continental initiatives towards economic integration and development. On their part, Member States and the RECs continued to rely on the financial and technical assistance of the NEPAD Agency to strengthen their capacity in critical development areas. Activities performed in 2017 focused on five critical programmatic areas, namely (i) skills revolution and enhanced entrepreneurship; (ii) sustainability and resilience capacity; (iii) improved health and nutrition; (iv) transformed agriculture and food systems; and (v) integrated corridor infrastructure, trade and markets.

**456. Skills revolution and enhanced entrepreneurship:** The African Union High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies, comprising the Commission, the NEPAD Agency and ten (10) African leading experts selected in Accra in July 2017, the first ten technologies for further research and up scaling. They include gene drives, micro-grids, drones, precision agriculture, next-generation medicines, next-generation batteries, water purification, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence and nano-technology. Out of the ten, the panel recommended three for harnessing, namely: the application of gene drives for eliminating malaria; the application of drone technology for agriculture and food security; and the promotion of micro-grids for expanding Africa's access to energy.

**457.** With respect to malaria eradication, trials have been successfully conducted in laboratories using gene drive technologies to effectively alter anopheles mosquito populations. They have successfully demonstrated the capacity of the technologies to halt transmission of malaria parasites and to suppress and rapidly crash entire mosquito populations in laboratories. The next step is to develop systems for testing the effectiveness of such technologies outside the laboratory environment.

**458.** There is also increased knowledge of the factors that influence the emergence of innovation strategies in Africa. A study jointly conducted by the United Nations University (UNU-MERIT) and the NEPAD Agency provided remarkable insights on innovations in Africa. The findings are captured in the report entitled, "Innovations in Africa: Measurement, Policy and Global Issues".

**459.** As noted elsewhere in this report, a major outcome in the enhancement of entrepreneurship was the preparation of business incubators for women empowerment, which will be tested in selected ECOWAS and COMESA member states with the financial and technical assistance of the NEPAD Agency.

**Sustainability and resilience capacity:**

**460. Sustainable land and water management:** The NEPAD Agency contributed substantially to enhancing the capacity of the RECs towards sustainable governance and management of natural resources. ECCAS and ECOWAS received technical and financial support for tracking, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the design, planning and implementation of systems and practices related to sustainable land and water management, as well as climate change and agriculture. In addition, the following countries – the Comoros, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Malawi – received assistance in strengthening their country platforms for sustainable land and water management (SLWM) investment planning.

**461.** The NEPAD Agency also increased its SLWM awareness campaigns in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Malawi, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo and Uganda, while enhancing the technical capacities in Malawi, Kenya and Uganda in the restoration of degraded landscapes. Other initiatives included strengthening planning capacities for SLWM investments in Burundi, the DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria and Uganda.

**462. Green Climate Fund:** The NEPAD Agency carried out a gap assessment based on the fund's fiduciary standards, environmental and social safeguards, and gender policy as part of its initiative to facilitate countries to access Green Climate Fund. The results of the assessment showed that while some moderate adjustments are required, to enhance its application of environmental impact assessments, NEPAD's fiduciary function is strong. The fund was established by the UNFCCC to make a paradigm shift towards low emission and climate resilient development pathways by providing financial support to developing countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

**463. Improved health and nutrition:** As part of the efforts to ensure the supply of safe and effective medicines in Africa, the NEPAD Agency developed a draft treaty on the establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) for the consideration of the Policy Organs in September 2017. This exercise followed a series of consultative meetings with legal and medicines regulatory experts from thirty-three (33) Member States.

**464.** At the regional level, some RECs were able to develop their own regulatory frameworks for the supply and distribution of safe medicines. ECOWAS adopted such a framework for its region and enhanced the attendant capacities for its enforcement. In collaboration with the West African Health Organization and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, ECOWAS also initiated the harmonization of medicine regulations across all its fifteen (15) member states.

**465.** A framework for tracking, monitoring and reporting the manufacture, import, export and distribution of medicines was also endorsed by Member States in September

2017. The framework, which promotes the circulation of safe medicines on the African market, was piloted in the five Member States of the East African Community (EAC), and will be rolled-out to other RECs soon.

**466.** The NEPAD Agency also contributed to the enhancement of Africa's capacities in research and development for collaborative work by providing assistance to eleven (11) Regulatory Centers of Research Excellence (RCOREs) in various disciplines related to health and nutrition in East, South and West Africa.

### **Transformed agriculture and food systems:**

**467. Agriculture and food insecurity risk management:** The NEPAD-ARCH (Africa Resilience Coordination Hub), which is the implementation vehicle for risk management in agriculture and food insecurity, was established through a partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) and Periperi University, a partnership of twelve (12) African universities. The ARCH aims to support national and local governments in converging complementary measures related to agriculture risk management for effective implementation at community level. The first implementation phase will cover Uganda, Tanzania and selected Sahel countries.

**468.** Grow Africa, on its part, launched platforms to promote specific agriculture value chains in various countries, including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria and Rwanda. Ten countries - Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Madagascar, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Malawi, Ghana, Sudan and Kenya – were selected as the first-wave cohort that will implement the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA). The initiative is geared towards better coordination of food and nutrition interventions and support to priority areas defined at national level. The IFNA secretariat is housed at the NEPAD Agency.

**469.** The NEPAD Agency finalized a blueprint to implement rural development policies in Africa, whose implementation will commence in 2018. The 'Rural Development Blueprint Operational and Implementation Strategy and Plan for Africa' consists of a set of 'country self-assessment and implementation' tool. Each Member State will be supported in crafting and/or strengthening their rural transformation agenda using such tools. The vision is of "people-centred rural transformation based on equity and inclusiveness, where rural men and women can develop their potential and reach their aspirations".

**470. Food and environmental safety:** The African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) hub continued to provide technical support on food safety, environmental safety, and salient socio-economic, legal, and communication matters pertaining to biosafety at the country- and regional-levels, particularly in promoting standards in food production and consumption.

**471. National agriculture investment plans:** The formulation of national agriculture and food security investment plans (NAFSIPs) – as recommended by the Malabo

Declaration Implementation Strategy and Roadmap – was among the main achievements recorded at the regional level in 2017. ECOWAS Member States were able to develop their new generation of NAFSIPs. Similarly, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda launched theirs, while Malawi and Mozambique completed the development process. Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, Ethiopia and Rwanda received additional training and education to improve their agriculture skills.

**472.** The new generation of NAFSIPs places countries in a stronger position for more effective implementation, peer-learning, resource mobilisation, and overall management of agriculture transformation. The focus is also to ensure improved support to youth and women – specifically to meet the target of 30% preferential entry for youth and women in viable agribusiness along prioritized value chains.

**473.** In an effort to mobilize investments aligned to the national agriculture investment plans, Grow Africa partnered with several private sector groups such as the Nigeria Agribusiness Group, the Ethiopia Private Sector Development Task Force, and the Ghana Private Enterprise Federation.

### **Integrated corridor infrastructure, trade and markets**

**474. PIDA Implementation:** In line with the campaign for the allocation by Member States of 5% of assets under management to infrastructure development, the NEPAD Agency made the necessary technical preparations to fast-track various regions through the implementation of selected Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) projects. These projects include Batoka Gorge, the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya (ZTK), Beira Bridge to Harare Road Toll under the North-South Corridor, and Ruzizi 3.

**475.** Resource mobilization commenced for the implementation of five (5) PIDA Priority Action Plan (PAP) projects, namely: Batoka Gorge Hydropower, ZTK, Beira Bridge to Harare toll road under the North-South Corridor, Ruzizi 3 and Congo (Brazzaville and Kinshasa) Bridge, following the completion of the technical project preparation for bancability and packaging. Subsequently, the five projects were marketed among public and private investors at different fora, including the PIDA Week.

**476.** The PIDA Week, held in Namibia in December 2017 under the theme “Enhancing Trade and Economic Transformation through Regional Infrastructure Development”, discussed the following six (6) projects in depth: the Central Corridor (Dar es Salaam to Chalinze Toll Road), Kinshasa-Brazzaville Rail and Road Bridge, Abidjan-Lagos Multimodal Corridor, Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya Power Interconnector, Batoka Gorge Hydropower Project, and Inga III Dam. In January 2017, the Technical Task Team had unanimously endorsed the Namibian Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) project. The PICI was subsequently endorsed by the Ministerial Working Group and approved by the Chair of the PICI.

**477.** In May 2017, Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo reached a consensus on defining a common institutional and legal instrument for the Abidjan-Lagos

Multimodal Corridor. The instrument, dubbed the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Management Authority (Alcoma), will oversee the implementation and management of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor. Advocacy and visual and written communication materials on the corridor are available in order to mobilize technical and political support for the project.

**478. Cross-border harmonization:** The NEPAD Agency pursued its cross-border harmonization efforts to enable viable project operations across countries. The efforts focused essentially on aligning regulatory, legal, procurement, and institutional frameworks using the Service Delivery Mechanism (SDM). The SDM is an instrument created out of Dakar Financing Summit (2015) to fast-track for early stage infrastructure project preparation and development.

**479.** The establishment of a One Stop Border Post (OSBP) network and traffic light system (TLS) was a positive step, as it will enhance the mobility of goods and people across borders through simplified and integrated logistical operations. The NEPAD Agency also developed principles and guidelines for the operationalization of the One Stop Border Post and organized domestication sessions for SADC and COMESA Member States. Working sessions with the EAC, COMESA and IGAD countries produced action plans for prioritization at the national level. On its part, SADC adopted a traffic light system with the aim to address the challenges faced on the North-South Corridor and the Beira Development Corridor. The NEPAD Agency also developed a TLS tool using turnaround time as a key performance indicator of corridor attractiveness. The TLS tool will be deployed in 2018, initially in the following six areas: Beit Bridge, Martins Drift, Kasumbalesa, Nakonde, Chirundu and Kazungula.

**480. Regional infrastructure projects:** The year under review also witnessed an acceleration in the implementation of the projects in the Central Corridor, the Beira Development Corridor, the North-South Corridor and the Dakar-Abidjan-Lagos Multimodal Corridor. The NEPAD Agency contributed to these advances with technical expertise and training to fill capacity gaps at the national and regional levels. Forty (40) infrastructure experts from the RECs and national project implementation teams benefitted from this assistance.

**481.** The NEPAD Agency and SADC signed memoranda of understanding, enabling the establishment of corridor management institutions for the North-South Corridor and the Beira Development Corridor, respectively. In IGAD, preparations were well-advanced to undertake GIS mapping of key regional infrastructure and corridors. A set of projects was compiled under the Priority Project Pipeline for the Djibouti Corridor. COMESA developed a strategic plan for the corridor, which is awaiting the approval of its member states. The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) received technical support to update the status of the aquifer system of Lullemeden and Taoudent/Tazrouft.

**482.** By the end of 2017, technical studies were underway to complement the Lilongwe-Lusaka fiber cable and other fiber links throughout the SADC-EAC-COMESA regions. A feasibility study and detailed engineering designs for the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA) Uvira-Kamanyola-Bukavu road were in

their final stage. The feasibility study of the Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya (ZTK) Power Transmission project was also in its final drafting stage. A gender guide for infrastructure projects has introduced important gender considerations in the ZTK feasibility study and the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor.

**483. Forward Planning:** Growing expectations placed on the NEPAD Agency as the AU Development Agency (AUDA) require an augmentation of its material, human and financial resources. At the national level, Member States at the highest level are urged to sustain and reinforce their financial and political support to the NEPAD Agency in order to facilitate the delivery of its mandate. At the regional level, the NEPAD Agency will continue to work with the Commission to strengthen the synergies already existing with the RECs within the global context of NEPAD's mandate. In 2018, the Commission will enhance the synergy with the NEPAD Agency so as to accelerate the realization of the continental development ambitions as decided by the Policy Organs.

## **PART C: AFRICA AND THE WORLD**

### **ACCREDITATION TO THE AFRICAN UNION**

**484.** The Commission continued to enhance the relationship between the Organization and non-African States and other organizations with due regard to the interests of the Union. In accordance with Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria for Granting Observer Status and for a system of Accreditation within the African Union (the Criteria), adopted by the Executive Council in July 2005, the Commission has continued to receive and consider requests for accreditation from various non-African States and Organisations.

**485.** To date, the total number of non-African States and international organizations accredited to the African Union is now one hundred and ten (110) i.e. eighty-nine (89) non-African States and twenty-one (21) Regional Integration and International Organizations.

### **MULTILATERALISM AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

**486.** The year 2017 witnessed greater dynamism and focus in the AU relationship with its partners. At the same time, the Commission continued its efforts to enhance the effectiveness and scope of its engagement with its partners and, more importantly, align such engagements with Africa's strategic development goals as contained in the African Union Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan. The AU Reform has guided the entire process.

**487.** During the period under review, the Commission promoted closer collaboration with AU Strategic Partners and maintained seamless continuity in advancing the process of implementing the agreed areas of cooperation. However, more efforts are expected towards improving the process of engaging and sustaining Africa's Strategic Partnerships with a view to achieving the continental development and integration agenda.

**488.** By its Decision EX.CL/Dec.942 (XXX) of January 2017, the Executive Council directed the PRC, in collaboration with the Commission and the RECs, to hold special sessions within six months to allow for an in-depth discussion and analysis of all aspects of strategic partnership in order to formulate appropriate proposals and recommendations. The Executive Council also mandated the Commission, in collaboration with the PRC, to undertake an in-depth evaluation of all partnerships and submit concrete recommendations in July 2018. In accordance with the above-mentioned Decision, the PRC and the AUC decided to convene a joint retreat in Cairo from 13 to 14 December 2017, to consider the report of the PRC Subcommittee on Multilateral Cooperation on the evaluation of Africa's strategic partnerships and to make recommendations to the January 2018 Summit, in line with the AU Reform agenda.

These recommendations defined an AU strategy for the establishment, management and coordination of strategic partnerships.

**489.** Several concrete steps were taken for strengthening the institutional capacity of the Commission to implement the new strategy, and to reform the AU governance of partnerships. Formal procedures were put in place, compelling the AU, RECs and NEPAD to work together on management of AU strategic partnerships. A recipe was drawn up for strengthening the AUC's ability to analyze and negotiate cooperation scopes with partners on behalf of Africa, while fostering coherence with other related functions of resource mobilization and diaspora relations.

**490.** During the period under review, the Commission (co-)organized the following summits and meetings listed below.

**491. Africa Union-China Cooperation:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, Mr. Wang Yi, visited the African Union Commission on 21 June 2017. He held a bilateral high-level dialogue with the Chairperson of the Commission. The two Principals highlighted the complementarity between the development agendas of Africa and China. They discussed bilateral cooperation between the African Union and the Government of China, based on five pillars, namely consolidating gains made under the outcome of FOCAC Johannesburg Summit of 2015; peace and security cooperation, cooperation in public health to support Africa in strengthening disease control and prevention system; human resource development in the AU and Africa, and intensifying coordination in international and regional affairs.

**492.** The two Principals then inaugurated the Africa-China Think Tank Forum entitled "Fighting against Poverty for Common Prosperity." The Forum focused on the way poverty has been addressed in China and in Africa. It drew lessons from the two decades of poverty alleviation experience of government and civil society organisations. Particular focus was placed on rural poverty and the type of policies and programs that have made the most impact.

**493.** The Chairperson of the Commission will visit Beijing in the first quarter of 2018 to discuss means of increasing Chinese investments on the Continent, promoting two-way tourism, and enhancing cooperation in peace, security and on the international issues of mutual concern.

**494. Tokyo International Conference of African Development (TICAD):** the Commission co-organized with Japan, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, the TICAD VI Ministerial Follow up Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, in August 2017. The meeting reviewed progress made in implementing the TICAD V Plan of Action adopted in Yokohama, Japan, in 2013, and the implementation plan of TICAD VI, adopted in Nairobi in 2016. The TICAD VI Follow-up Ministerial Meeting also identified actions aimed at facilitating preparations for the upcoming TICAD VII Summit planned in Japan in 2019.

**495.** Although the Ministerial Meeting was held as planned, objections over the full participation of all Member States to the meeting led to the cancellation of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) that should have preceded the Ministerial Meeting. After intensive negotiations to overcome the deadlock, all AU Member States were finally able to participate under some restrictions.

**496. AU-Germany Annual Consultations:** In September 2017, the Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson (BDCP), in collaboration with the various technical Departments and Organs across the Union, provided coordination during the Annual High Level Negotiations on Development Cooperation between the African Union and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

**497. Africa –Korea:** following the 4<sup>th</sup> Africa – Korea Forum held in Addis Ababa in December 2016, the two sides met in Seoul in September 2017 during the first Policy Consultation meeting as directed by the Ministerial Forum. The Policy Consultation meeting discussed concrete projects and programs that both sides agreed to implement during the coming two to three years.

**498. AU Commission-US High Level Dialogue:** the 5th Annual AUC-US High Level Dialogue was held in Washington, DC, in November 2017, followed by a bilateral meeting between the Chairperson of the Commission and the U.S Secretary of State. The meetings were organized by the AU Permanent Mission to Washington, D.C., the Partnership Management and Coordination Division, together with the U.S. Department of State. The two partners took stock of progress made in the four areas of dialogue and cooperation, namely peace and security; democracy and governance; opportunity and development; and economic growth, trade and investment.

**499.** On peace and security, the partners agreed to the importance of an orderly well-supported transition in Somalia, further support to the G5 Sahel on counterterrorism and development, and agreed on the need for broader dialogue and cooperation between the AU and US on cases such as South Sudan, and more generally areas of conflict prevention, DDR, reconciliation and reintegration; non-proliferation; and counterterrorism.

**500.** On opportunity and development, the partners pledged to continue cooperation on empowering women in peace and security; and opening up opportunities for young people, in addition to maintaining dialogue and cooperation on migration.

**501.** On democracy and governance, the two partners discussed the African Governance Architecture, human rights, elections, rule of law, and agreed to continue cooperation in those areas.

**502.** On economic growth, trade and investment, the partners reflected on the AGOA Forum held in Lomé, Togo, in August 2017, and its preparatory mid-term review, The U.S. reconfirmed their commitment to AGOA in the ten-year reauthorization period. Cooperation on CAADP was an agreed priority, particularly on helping African

agriculture to withstand shocks and disasters through technology and biotechnology. The importance of cooperating on cybersecurity was an agreed priority.

**503.** The Chairperson of the Commission held meetings with other stakeholders, organized by the AU Permanent Mission to Washington D.C., including members of the bipartisan Congressional Black Caucus, who reconfirmed their support to the AU and its programmes and priorities. His meeting with the African Group of Ambassadors provided an opportunity to outline the priorities of the new Commission in light of the First Ten Year Plan of Agenda 2063 and the AU Reform.

**504. USAID Project Coordination:** The Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson continued to work closely with the Departments of Programming, Budget, Finance and Accounting (PBFA) and the Resource Mobilization Division to ensure continuous timely implementation of USAID-funded activities in the Women and Gender Directorate, Department of Social Affairs, Youth Division, Division of Health, Nutrition and Population. Data and information received from regular consultations were used to develop quarterly progress reports on the USAID Assistance Agreement. Funding obligated through the USAID Assistance Agreement increased to USD 12.16 million to date. As part of the 2018 budget preparation process, consultative meetings were held with USAID, and technical and financial support was secured for capacity building, youth and CARMMA activities across the Commission.

**505. African Union-European Union:** the 5<sup>th</sup> African Union – European Union (EU) Summit was held in Abidjan from 29 to 30 November 2017. The Summit was placed under the theme “Investing in Youth for accelerated inclusive growth and sustainable development”.

**506.** The AU and EU sides reiterated their determination to give a new impetus to their partnership through the establishment of effective and inclusive joint mechanisms and structures, which include annual Joint Ministerial meetings. The Summit also requested the two Commissions to develop an action plan, within three months of adoption of the 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit Declaration, to detail joint projects and programs within the AU-EU Joint Priority areas of cooperation that both sides agree to implement, and to establish a joint follow-up mechanism. An ambitious first draft of the priority projects was developed within two weeks of the Summit, which detailed cooperation on a number of Agenda 2063 flagship projects, particularly education and skills development; silencing the guns; governance, domestic resource mobilization, fight against corruption and illicit financial flows; building climate resilience; managing mobility and migration; investing in PIDA, CAADP and AIDA; supporting the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA); and fast tracking the AU 2050 Integrated Maritime strategy (AIMS2050).

**507. Post-Cotonou:** The next major milestone in the African Union – European Union partnership will be the end of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) between the EU and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) on 29 February 2020. That agreement is a legally binding treaty that covers trade, development cooperation and a political dimension. Since 2007, the Joint Africa Europe Strategy (JAES) has

complemented the CPA in scope. The EU foresees that a post-Cotonou agreement would replace both instruments (CPA and JAES).

**508.** Debates in both Africa and Europe have questioned whether a Post-Cotonou agreement is needed, but opinions are converging towards the importance of having one that reflects current issues facing both continents and progress made since the last revision of CPA in 2010.

**509.** The African Union has been tasked with facilitating a common African position, which is currently in progress based on a paper prepared by the African Group in Brussels. The CAP will be built on the premise of a partnership between two independent and sovereign blocs, who commit to upholding their values and respective regulations and instruments, and who seek to maximize their interests, thereby moving away from a paternalistic or donor-recipient relationship.

**510.** Since the CPA was signed, Africa has been through considerable progress. The African continent has demonstrated higher economic growth rates than world average. The continent has also built its own institutions, where the African Union was operationalized as a successor to the Organization of African Unity, just after the signing of the CPA, and has been growing since then as the Continental organization in charge of facilitating regional integration and continental development. It has increasingly supported Africa in coordinating its strategic partnerships with the rest of the world, and enabled its global voice to be heard. The AU expects to see any new agreement to fully trust and invest in African institutions, as this is critical for the next phase of Africa's development.

**511.** The AU has made it clear in public statements, as well as in the declaration of the 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit, that Africa should be treated as a whole continent in its cooperation with Europe, and not divided. At the same time, the Commission recognizes that more work and effort is required to appropriately incorporate sub-regions that were not originally part of the CPA, and to do away with the lack of clarity surrounding their involvement under a post-Cotonou agreement.

**512.** The AU also emphasized the importance of maintaining Africa's independence in its relationship with Europe, and not being bound to other regions of the world. The AU will insist on the importance of not subjecting Africa to any external influence in expressing its position vis-à-vis world politics or in managing its own affairs.

**513.** The African Union insisted that any cooperation instrument with Europe should promote African objectives in the form of Agenda 2063, which was largely harmonized with the UN Agenda 2030. In connection with continental integration objectives, any free trade arrangement is expected to complement and strengthen the Continental Free Trade Area.

**514.** Finally, the African Union highlighted the importance of building on gains made at the AU-EU Summit and not building a parallel process that would dilute the political commitment invested by leaders of both continents. The legal and institutional framework for a post-Cotonou agreement would be part of the negotiations.

**515.** Procedurally, the EU High Representative/Vice-President published a communication supporting an umbrella agreement defining common values and interests, with distinct tailor-made partnerships with ACP regions. Subsequently, the EU Foreign Council will discuss negotiation modalities in January 2018, after which they will seek to open negotiations with the African Union on behalf of the Continent with regards to modalities. In the meantime, the African Union will be preparing its position in order to be ready to engage in substantive negotiations of the agreement starting July 2018, subject to Member States readiness and approval.

**516. Africa–Arab:** In December, a General Cooperation Meeting was held at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo between the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States and their teams. The Meeting, organized by the AU Permanent Delegation (AUPD) to the League of Arab States, discussed implementation of the Resolutions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Africa-Arab Summit held in Malabo, November 2016, and developed a timeline leading up to a joint Ministerial Meeting in early 2018 to examine a draft action plan for cooperation between the two partners and adopt the agenda for the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa-Arab Summit to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2019.

**517.** In 2017, the Commission facilitated cooperation between the two partners which resulted in re-operationalization of the Africa-Arab Cultural Institute and discussed ways of enhancing its business plan.

**518. Africa-Turkey:** the Africa-Turkey Think Tank Forum did not take place as planned in 2017. However, the 7<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials was held in June 2017 during which the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation on focused areas. The Turkey Africa Ministerial Review Conference will be held in February 2018.

## **AU REPRESENTATIONAL OFFICES**

**519.** It will be recalled that the African Union ran Permanent Missions/Representations in Brussels, Cairo, Geneva, at the UN Headquarters in New York and in Washington, DC as well as Lilongwe Regional Office. The Permanent Missions promote AU programmes, image and decisions of the Policy Organs and advocate for common African positions and interests. They represent the African Union in multilateral and bilateral forums, engage with the African diaspora where appropriate, and support the work of the group of African ambassadors.

## **AU OBSERVER MISSION AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**520.** The signing in April 2017 of the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security laid a firm foundation for partnership and cooperation between the AU and the UN in matters of peace and security on the continent. The Joint AU-UN framework, facilitated by the AU Observer Mission to the United Nations (The New York Office), is in line with the recognition by the UN High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations of the role the AU as a key UN strategic partner and, the two organizations' common aspirations for close coordination and cooperation based on their comparative advantage.

**521.** Both the UN and the African Union have embarked on steps towards implementation of the Joint Framework, in particular working together to evolve a joint framework on sustainable development aimed at joint implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 to be considered at the next United Nations-African Union Annual Conference in 2018.

**522.** The true test of AU-UN strategic partnership in matters of peace and security resides at the level of the UN Security Council and how it understands and appreciates the role of regional organizations as provided for in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter including its relationship with the African Union Peace and Security Council. Clearly, the increasing contribution by regional organizations and sub-regional organizations demonstrates that enhanced partnership based on the principle of burden-sharing can indeed improve collective security and thus vindicates the incessant appeals by the African Union for predictable, sustainable and flexible financing for regional organizations when undertaking UN mandated peace keeping/peace support operations.

**523.** The African Union is encouraged by steps taken by the three African Members of the UN Security Council (A3) in advancing progress on the African Union position on securing predictable and sustainable financing through UN Assessed contributions, for UN-authorized AU-led peace support operations, through the adoption of Security Council Resolutions, 2320 and 2378 under the Presidency of Senegal and Ethiopia, respectively. The AU envisions further progress in this regard by securing a substantive UN Security Council Resolution on the principle of the use of UN assessed contributions to support AU peace support operations mandated by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII on a case by case basis.

**524.** Recent steps by the UN Secretary-General on the reform of the UN Peace and Security Architecture is duly noted and followed with keen interest particularly in areas related to structural reform of the Department of Peacekeeping and Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Africa's interest in this process cannot be overemphasized especially in addressing the question of the under-representation of Africa in these structures. The appointment of an African Country, Rwanda, as co-facilitator representing the global south to drive the intergovernmental process is encouraging.

**525.** In terms of enhancing working relations between the two institutions, we remain deeply committed to building on and further strengthening existing mechanisms of coordination through, notably, the Annual Retreats, Annual desk-to-desk and, the Joint Task Force, including regular consultations at the level of Principals.

**526.** The New York Office continued to support the alignment of Agenda 2063 with the global 2030 Agenda. This is central to the collective efforts towards effective implementation through an integrated and holistic approach that delivers results on the ground, at regional and national levels. The AU's ongoing efforts to domesticate Agenda 2063 in all its member states should be viewed in this context. Effective means of implementation as provided for in the Addis Ababa Action Plan continues to be challenged by impediments associated with Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM), amongst others. The African Union, therefore, looks forward to significant African participation in the UNGA's Financing for Development Forum scheduled to be held in April 2018, followed by the SDGs financing to be held in June 2018.

**527.** The AU's effort to mobilize international support and build alliance around the question of illicit financial flows from Africa, through the work of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, remained a high priority. Global political will and response deserves collective attention and will aid in delivering on the commitments of Agenda 2063 and its Ten Years Implementation Plan as well as the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, the Commission looks forward to the implementation of General Assembly Resolution adopted in December 2016 on "Illicit Financial Flows", which was initiated by the African Group. The Commission calls upon the African Group to sustain its leadership in driving this important issue towards logical conclusion.

**528.** The New York Office continued to facilitate the collaboration between relevant Departments of the Commission and the UN. Joint planning and organization of thematic events featured Africa's priorities as outlined in Agenda 2063 and its Ten Years Implementation Plan.

**529.** The adoption of the General Assembly Resolution entitled, "Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027(A/71/L.50), also initiated by the African Group, as a successor to the Ten Year Capacity Building Program, provides a solid basis for more effective partnership between the AU and the UN in supporting Africa's integration and development agenda.

**530.** The AU reform agenda pre-supposes a review of the current structures and organs of the Union in order to render them more fit for purpose to respond to current day realities. Re-alignment of programs and policies will remain a central part of this process. Representational Offices should be re-strengthened to deliver on the core mandate of supporting the African Union's global voice and representation.

## THE AFRICAN UNION PERMANENT DELEGATION TO GENEVA

**531.** In 2017 the Permanent Delegation of the African Union in Geneva (the Geneva Office) participated in the activities organized by the Geneva-based International Organizations and Diplomatic Missions, and specifically in those of the African Group to which it lent support in various ways in all the topics being addressed in the multilateral arena. The Geneva Office was also involved in the main activities organized in Paris and Vienna, particularly in campaigns in Madrid and Rome for the election of AU endorsed African candidatures in the international system.

**532.** Human rights situation in several African countries occupied an important part of the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) throughout the year under review. In general, the Member States concerned were able to reflect a positive spirit of engagement and cooperation, while highlighting the specificities and advances they had been able to achieve.

**533.** The Geneva Office also lent support and provided technical assistance to the African Group on thematic issues of importance to the continent, including the right to development, the fight against racism, the fight against gender-based and sexual violence, and the exploitation of natural resources by multinational corporations.

**534.** The initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Swiss Confederation, with the support, in particular, of European Union Member States, was the subject of difficult negotiations. This initiative aimed to strengthen the respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) with a view to setting up a mechanism for monitoring States' compliance with their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols. Several delegations, including the African Group, expressed concern over the risks of politicisation and contextualisation that could characterise this new mechanism. They argued that the potential of existing mechanisms to ensure respect for International humanitarian law – regional mechanisms, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – needed to be explored further before envisaging to establish a new mechanism. It is particularly around these views that negotiations will continue to try to reach an agreement that will be validated in December 2019 by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

**535.** With regard to intellectual property (WIPO), during 2017, the Geneva Office provided technical and logistical assistance to the African Group during the negotiations on this issue in the areas of traditional knowledge, exceptions and limitations to copyright, patents, industrial designs and development issues. This enabled the African Group to make its voice heard in a coordinated manner and to effectively defend Africa's interests. As a result, the African Group obtained that a diplomatic conference on industrial design law would only be convened if there was an agreement on technical issues, including the disclosure of the origin of the traditional knowledge contained in the applications for registration of such designs.

**536.** The Geneva Office contributed to the preparation of the African position prior to the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) by providing all the necessary assistance to the African Group. It organized a retreat of the Ambassadors and Experts of the African Group in Geneva on 6 and 7 July 2017, with the participation of a strong delegation from the Commission. During the retreat, the African Group undertook an in-depth review of all Doha Round negotiating issues and other trade-related matters, and held a series of brainstorming sessions in order to develop common positions towards MC11 deliverables. The outcome of the retreat informed the deliberations of the informal Ministerial Meeting that later took place in Addis Ababa in September 2017, with the aim of preparing Africa to speak with one voice during the upcoming negotiations.

**537.** Concerning the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Geneva Office assisted the African Group for a better implementation of the Nairobi "Maafikiano" outcome that will ensure that Africa draws maximum benefits from UNCTAD decisions. The Geneva Office will participate in the meetings convened by this UN agency, using among others the outcome of UNCTAD XIV which was held in Nairobi as a guide.

**538.** The Geneva Office prepared the reports on the activities of the African Union members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment, which were used in preparation of the annual ILO International Labour Conference. One major issue of concern during the reporting period was the slow progress in the ratification of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment of the ILO Constitution, which once entered into force will, inter alia, democratize the ILO Governing Body by eliminating 'permanent seats' occupied by ten countries – Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy, India, Japan, Russia, the USA and the United Kingdom. Through the insistence of the African Group, this issue remains a standing item on the ILO agenda. Another issue of importance to the African Union was the review of rules of regional meetings. The African Group has proposed principles governing the participation of non-African states in the African regional meetings. The amendments to the rules itself will be based on these principles adopted by the ILO Governing Body.

**539.** In a bid to increase coordination and cohesion between the Commission and the Geneva Office on the issue of migration, the Geneva Office facilitated the contribution of the African Group experts to the draft Common African Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). The contributions were submitted to the STC on Migration, Refugees and IDPs and integrated into the current draft to be considered by the January 2018 summit. The increase in south-south migratory flows led the African Ambassadors in Geneva to reflect on a joint contribution of the global south to the GCM process. This work is ongoing in coordination with countries from Asia and South America in areas of common concern.

**540.** With respect to the African candidatures in the international system that were endorsed by the Executive Council in 2017, two eminent sons of Africa were elected at the helm of two international organisations, namely H.E. Mr. Gilbert Fossoun HOUNGBO, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo, as President of The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) based in Rome, and H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, as Director General of the Geneva-based World Health Organization (WHO).

**541.** The success of the campaigns was the result of the solidarity and cohesion of all African missions in Geneva, in coordination with the African Group at the United Nations Headquarters. The Geneva Office acted as a catalyst for the mobilization of the African Group in Geneva, which involved African ambassadors and the Geneva Office in lobbying hundreds of Member States represented in Geneva. It could not be replicated in Paris and, especially, Madrid where the African Union ended up with two candidates vying for the same position and in Paris where, despite an intensive campaign, the African candidate did not benefit from all the African voices. It would therefore be opportune for the Organization to initiate a reflection with the RECs and other stakeholders on the broader issue of supporting African candidatures in the multilateral system.

#### **AU PERMANENT MISSION IN BRUSSELS**

**542.** The AU Permanent Mission in Brussels (the Brussels Office) serves as the Secretariat for the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels and convenes monthly meetings of the Group to sensitize them on AU positions and ensure a follow-up of implementation of AU decisions. The Office also continued to facilitate the activities of the African Group.

**543.** During the period under review, the Brussels Office focused on the implementation of the cooperation instruments between Africa and the European Union, in addition to the monitoring of the AU's working relations with the EU institutions, notably in the context of implementation and follow-up of the AU-EU Partnership and its Roadmap 2014-2017, as well as preparation of the 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, in November 2017.

**544. AU-EU Summit Preparations:** The Brussels Office participated in all EU coordination meetings to follow-up on activities, projects and programmes in the various sectors defined in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. It supported the work of the Joint AU-EU Steering Committee for organization of the Summit and the PRC's negotiating position. The Brussels Office also coordinated several meetings and briefings between the African Group and the PRC both in Brussels and in Addis Ababa, which resulted in an enriched contribution to the AU-EU Summit outcome documents, which were adopted by the Executive Council.

**545. Post-Cotonou:** Regarding the expiration of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement by February 2020 and the need to reflect on the post-2020 relations, the Brussels Office and the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels set up a working group to help define an African common position on this important matter. Detailed reports and documents, including a Concept Note on the various possible options and scenarios on the future of the ACP Group and ACP-EU post-2020 relations, were provided by the Brussels Office to the Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation and the PRC. The Brussels Office briefed the PRC and its Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation on this issue in Addis Ababa and Brussels.

**546.** Meanwhile, the Brussels Office continued to attend the meetings of the ACP Group, particularly the meetings of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, in order to guide African Ambassadors on AU positions on the items under discussion. The Mission was present at the sessions of the ACP Council of Ministers held in May 2017, during which it helped to sensitize the African Ministers on the need to defer any decision on the future of the ACP Group until a final decision is taken by the Policy Organs. The Brussels Office also attended the meeting of the ACP Committee of Ministers of Trade held in October 2017 in Brussels, as well as the ACP and the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assemblies during which the Brussels Office stressed the need to harmonize the positions of African Member States in these institutions in line with the decisions of the Policy Organs.

**547. Representation, Advocacy, Public Relations:** During the period under review, the Brussels Office regularly reached out to international partners, the media and other stakeholders in the EU to communicate and advocate for AU positions in all relevant spheres of interest. It also set up an AU Diaspora Youth Platform to strengthen relationship with the African Diaspora in Europe.

**548.** Several actions are needed by the AU to address the discrepancy between the ACP, the EU and the AU and their parallel processes on the ACP relations post-2020. On this matter, the Policy Organs should accelerate the consideration and adoption of an African Common Position on the issue.

## **AU REPRESENTATIONAL MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES**

**549.** The AU Representational Mission to the United States supports the partnership and dialogue between the U.S. Government and the African Union Commission.

**550. High level partnership meetings:** The Mission organized the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual African Union Commission-United States High-Level Dialogue in Washington, D.C., in November 2017, followed by a bilateral meeting between the Chairperson and the Secretary of State.

**551. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA):** AGOA was re-authorized under President Barack Obama for another ten years (2015-2025). The Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) continued to encourage Member States

to adopt national AGOA strategies in order to maximize benefits from AGOA. The Commission, UNECA and the Africa Group of AGOA Eligible Countries organized in Washington, D.C, in July 2017, a Mid-Term Review meeting to prepare for the Forum. One of the recommendations was to set up a consultative committee comprising of representatives from the African Ambassadors Group (AAG), US agencies involved in AGOA implementation, the private sector, civil society and NGOs in Washington, D.C. to monitor all AGOA related issues. In August 2017, the Commission took part in the AGOA Forum that was held in Lomé.

**552. Coordination of African positions:** The Mission continued to play a key role in coordinating the African Ambassadors Group (AAG) to advance the common African interest. It serves as a Secretariat for the African Diplomatic Corps and hosts the latter's monthly meetings. The Mission also hosts meetings of the AAG's various committees on AGOA, Capacity Building, Media and Africa Day celebrations.

**553. Outreach:** The Group supports the AU Diaspora outreach programmes through various media channels. An Editorial Board composed by media officers from Embassies is created to implement the initiative.

#### **AU PERMANENT DELEGATION TO THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES**

**554.** The African Union Permanent Delegation (the Cairo Office) to the League of Arab States (LAS) coordinates and manages relations with the Secretary General of the LAS, the embassies of the observer countries to the AU, as well as the institutions of the host country.

**555. Africa-Arab Partnership Meetings:** In 2017, the Cairo Office continued to coordinate the Africa-Arab partnership with the League of Arab States. Together, they facilitated the meeting of the partnership coordination committee at the ministerial level in New York in September 2017. The ministers examined resolutions of the Malabo Summit (2016) and drew up plans to implement those resolutions. The Cairo Office also facilitated the meeting between the Chairperson of the Commission and the LAS Secretary General. The two principals exchanged views on issues of common concern, including conflicts and crises agitating the two regions and progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Malabo Summit. They also took the opportunity to commemorate forty years of Africa-Arab partnership.

**556. The** Cairo Office also continued to follow up on cooperation between the two Organizations on the Palestinian question, through its contribution to the Commission's reports and draft resolutions on this issue.

**557. Support to the African Group:** The Cairo Office hosted and took part in the meetings of the African Group of Ambassadors.

**558. Communication and Outreach:** the Cairo Office conducted communication and outreach activities in order to popularize the work of the AU and Agenda 2063, including the following:

- Drafting of press releases on all partnership meetings and other significant events;
- Sponsoring research and training sessions organized by Egyptian research institutes on African affairs at the Universities of Cairo, Assiout and Alexandria;
- Strengthen relations with the African Affairs Committee of the Egyptian Parliament and exchanges on current issues and collaboration between the Egyptian Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament.

#### **AU OFFICE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA LILONGWE (AU\_SARO)**

**559.** In order to assist Member States in addressing problems of conflict and insecurity, as well as promoting economic growth, AU-SARO, in collaboration for UNECA office for Southern Africa, has conducted a series of activities in 2017, listed below:

- **INDUSTRIALIZATION:** Various meetings were organized to promote regional industrialization strategies and plans, in line with Agenda 2063. A programme called "100 young people in the world of real business every year", which has a direct bearing on the theme of the year on youth and the need for industrialization, was initiated and promoted by the African Union Regional Office. The programme aims to systematically introduce 100 young people into the private sector every year, specifically into industry, agro-processing, manufacturing of goods etc. With the assumption that these young people will create jobs for themselves and then for other young people. The programme is also geared towards the production of goods at national level, which could be exported to the sub-region.
- **ELECTRIFICATION THROUGH GEOTHERMAL ENERGY:** Informational campaigns were carried out in the countries where the project was targeted, through the distribution of different project related documents to the ministries concerned.
- **DOMESTICATION:** Sensitization on various key AU and African documents were conducted with a view to facilitate their domestication. Target groups for the sensitization were relevant ministries within Member States of the region. Documents included projects of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), as well as Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan. Working meetings were also organized with SADC, the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) to define a

common strategy for domestication of the legal instruments of these institutions by Member States.

- **SOUTHERN AFRICAN YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:** To ensure greater visibility of the AU and participation in activities of the Union, AU-SARO promoted the creation of youth clubs in universities. Currently, 11 clubs are operational and 380 young people are members. Countries where the clubs exist are: Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique.

## **CONCLUSION: FOCUS FOR THE YEAR 2018**

**560.** The Commission has come a long way as an institution, and has made a tremendous amount of progress particularly at the level of development of strategic and normative frameworks. However, the continent continues to be faced with numerous challenges with respect to poverty alleviation, growth, inequality, fragility of democratic governance in some of its countries. The continent is also not as integrated as it should be. Clearly, a gap exists between the grand strategic promise of Agenda 2063 and reality and execution on the ground.

### **Recommendations and issues for decisions**

**561.** Member States, the RECs, and all AU Organs need to align their development plans with Agenda 2063 and its first ten-year implementation plan. The Agenda 2063 monitoring and evaluation framework will be submitted for the adoption of the Policy Organs at the January 2018 summit. It was endorsed by the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration in October 2017.

**562.** Domestic resources are also needed to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2063 flagship programs and projects. The STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration adopted the draft domestic resource mobilization strategy for Agenda 2063 in October 2017 and recommended it for the adoption of the Policy Organs at the January 2018 summit.

**563.** The Policy Organs should encourage Member States to apply without delay the Kigali Decision on financing the Union. There is an overriding need within the Union and its Organs for adequate human and financial resources to enable them carry out their mandate. Implementation of the Kigali Decision aims to reduce the Union's dependence on partner funds for its programs.

**564.** AU Organs should also comply strictly with AU financial and administrative rules and regulations, as well as the recommendations of audit reports. The Commission has initiated the holding of regular meetings with the Heads of Organs to discuss policy alignment issues, as well as financial and management challenges.

**565.** Lastly, the Policy Organs should encourage Member States to sign and ratify all OAU/AU treaties and human rights instruments. In fulfilment of the Union's integration agenda, the Policy Organs should pay special attention to the signing and ratification of the CFTA agreement, the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, to enable their speedy entry into force. Member States should also conclude without delay the remaining negotiations on the draft Protocol on Goods and submit it for the adoption of the relevant Policy Organs.

### **2018 Priorities Forecast**

**566.** In 2018, therefore, the Commission's attention will be focused identifying key levers and vectors for bridging the gap between ambition and aspiration, on the one hand; and action and concrete delivery, on the other hand. This, in itself, is a mammoth

task and involves introducing changes both within the Commission and in relation to its engagement with AU Organs and other stakeholders.

**567.** The following are areas that the Union will focus its attention on, in addition to the mandates of the Commission and its individual Departments, the Organs and Agencies:

### **(1) Policy Coherence**

**568.** Acknowledging that the objectives of Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved without effective governance and management systems, the Commission will give dedicated attention to addressing internal coherence challenges that impede the effectiveness and efficiency of the Commission.

**569.** As a starting point, the Commission intends to address two major areas: first, the patent policy and programmatic overlaps and gaps that exist between the AUC and other Organs of the Union. The Commission has initiated a study to produce a range of options for streamlining mandates, strengthening joint strategic planning and budgeting, priority-setting, programme implementation, information-sharing and reporting of legislative, judicial and human rights Organs. This exercise is directed at introducing more opportunities for closer and effective collaboration between other AU Organs.

**570.** The second area pertains to the relationship between the Commission and its Specialized Agencies. In this regard, the Commission will shortly commence an evaluative study to determine and strengthen the current and potential value to be derived from Specialised Agencies. Aspects of these studies will contribute towards the achievement of a number of milestones of the roadmap for institutional reform of the Union.

### **(2) Governance and Management**

**571.** There is need for the Commission itself as an Organ to give dedicated attention to the overall improvement of its organization, systems and procedures. Diagnostic work has already been done in this area to identify the gaps and challenges that need to be addressed in order to improve overall institutional performance. The result of this work has been the production of a “State of Play Report” that has provided the Commission with a range of reforms that need to be undertaken in order to render the Commission fit for purpose. This year, the Commission will put much effort into the first phase of the implementation of the organizational reform options provided.

### **(3) Visibility**

**572.** The Commission is mindful that a large proportion of the African population is unfamiliar with the work of the African Union. In 2018, the Commission will enhance and expand existing modes of stakeholder communication, feedback and participation. The Commission will focus its attention on developing expanded platforms for information sharing with private and public stakeholders in the continent and beyond. A key vector for achieving this will be structured agreements with mainstream media platforms in

Member States to publicize the Commission and its work, expanding digital communication with disaggregated sectors of Africa's population, particularly the youth, women and the diaspora, creating an interactive website for the Union, re-branding the Union including all its Organs, and introducing town hall meetings for the Chairperson of the Union and the Chairperson of the Commission to engage with citizens in Member States. These measures, in addition to others, will serve to bring the AU to the people.

#### **(4) Regional Integration**

**573.** The transformation of the continent's economic growth to an inclusive continental economy is a critical imperative for Africa. The RECs are pivotal vectors to ensure that this goal is actualized. Therefore, the Commission intends to scale up its levels of engagement with the RECs in order to jointly agree on division of labour between the RECS and the AUC. Specifically, the Commission intends to introduce regular meetings schedule between the AUC and the RECS. Alongside these engagements, an in-depth study has been commissioned to produce a comprehensive and effective framework for strengthened collaboration.

#### **(5) Peace, Security and Governance**

**574.** The Commission will continue in 2018 to associate the AU with peace efforts in Member States by playing a supportive role in securing sustainable peace, security and governance in the continent. To do so, the Commission will continue to make sustained efforts towards conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as advance the implementation of the AU instruments relating to governance, democracy and human rights. Efforts will also continue to prevent and combat terrorism.

#### **(6) Partnerships**

**575.** In line with the strategic imperative of strengthening of the AU's role as a preeminent regional institution, and Africa's position in the global arena, the Commission will develop a strategy on Africa's global voice and representation for AU Policy Organ's approval. Furthermore, the Commission will strengthen the effectiveness of AU Representational Offices to enable them to deepen the AU's global engagement and advocacy. This will entail bolstering of the capacity of these offices, strengthening performance, accountability and reporting mechanisms, and demanding evidence-based outcomes that demonstrate the strengthening of Africa's relations with other continental blocs and its influence at the global level.

**576.** In this endeavour, the Commission and other AU Organs will continue to depend on the good will and support of the Policy Organs, as it has been the case in the past.

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2018-01-26

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