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**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSEMBLY DECISION
ON POST-COTONOU NEGOTIATIONS (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI)),
BY H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, CHAIRPERSON
OF THE COMMISSION**

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSEMBLY DECISION
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Assembly of the Union, at its 11th Extraordinary Session, held in Addis Ababa on 18 November 2018, adopted Decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI) on the post-Cotonou negotiations. In that Decision, the Assembly called for a two-track approach to Africa's relations with the European Union (EU) post-2020. The two tracks are: (i) the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)-EU framework, which would continue to govern the post-Cotonou negotiations within the mandate agreed to by the parties; and (ii) the AU-EU framework, which should continue to govern the continent-to-continent (C2C) partnership post-2020, building on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted in Lisbon in December 2007 and the Declaration of the AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017.

2. The present report provides an account of the steps taken to follow up on the Assembly Decision and makes a number of proposals as a way forward. The report concludes with observations.

II. FOLLOW-UP ON THE ASSEMBLY DECISION

3. As a follow up to the Extraordinary Session, the Commission, through the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels, transmitted Decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI) to the members of the African Group in Brussels and the Secretary-General of the ACP. Furthermore, the High Representative of the Chairperson for AU-EU Partnership Post-2020 met with the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels, as well as the European Commission and the European External Action Service, to inform them of the contents of the Assembly Decision and discuss next steps.

4. The post-2020 partnership also featured in the discussions of the first AU-EU ministerial meeting held in Brussels on 21 and 22 January 2019. At the meeting, Ministers recalled the commitment made in Abidjan to promote an even stronger mutually beneficial partnership between the two Unions. They also recalled that the November 2018 Extraordinary Summit expressed its will to continue the AU-EU continent-to-continent partnership post-2020, backed by commitments on both sides and appropriate instruments and frameworks. While acknowledging the engagement of African states and regions in different cooperation frameworks and the need to preserve their interests, specificities, diversities and acquis, Ministers confirmed that the AU and EU would continue to work towards enhancing the continent-to-continent partnership post-2020, with a view to the next AU-EU Summit. The African and European Ministers agreed to hold their second meeting before the end of 2019, to report on

implementation of the Abidjan outcomes and review deliverables for the next AU-EU Summit envisaged in 2020.

5. Since the launch of their negotiations of the post-Cotonou agreement, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2018, the ACP and EU have held a number of sessions to discuss the structure of the post Cotonou agreement, its foundation, and timelines for concluding an agreement, among other relevant issues. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was informed that the ACP was planning to organize consultations to discuss the structure of negotiation for the African regional compact and exchange views on the contribution of the continental and regional organizations.

III. Way Forward

6. Over the coming months, the Commission will intensify its consultations with the EU towards the development of an enhanced continent-to-continent partnership post-2020. Such partnership should include the following features:

- i) Focus on the few areas of priority that enable Africa to progress on the regional integration path by ensuring greater coherence between its regional integration agenda and its international engagements;
- ii) Leverage the comparative advantage of Europe as Africa's neighbour and its largest trade partner;
- iii) Avoid fragmentation of instruments and approaches in areas of focus; and
- iv) Move away from the donor-recipient model.

7. While discussions are yet to start on the scope and structure of an enhanced C2C partnership, a few key areas emerge as continuing priorities post 2020, which conform to priorities of the AU institutional reform.

8. The EU has been one of the largest investors in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which is currently fully operational. An enhanced partnership should further align support to the needs of the continent, based on Africa's leadership and ownership. Particular attention should be paid to enhancement of the APSA and its coherence, based on the relevant provisions of the Peace and the Security Council Protocol, including those relating to the respective roles of the AU and the Regional Economic Communities. It should also aim at mobilizing support for the predictable financing for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the United Nations Security Council and African-led efforts to address the scourge of conflict on the Continent. The partnership should also help in fostering strategic dialogue on issues of mutual interest, including counterterrorism fight against transitional organized crime, and disarmament, among others.

9. Europe is Africa's largest trading partner. African economies represent nearly three percent of the EU's external trade. African exports to the EU doubled between 2000 and 2017, but they remain mostly composed of commodities, with 58 percent of those exports being mineral products. Despite the increase in trade, African countries have accumulated trade deficits with the EU in recent years. An enhanced partnership with the EU would better reflect African priorities in terms of regional economic integration and be conducive to deeper integration of African companies into global value chains, and greater value addition in products and exports, thereby enhancing economic growth and reducing poverty. An enhanced partnership should also explore deepening trade relations between Africa and Europe, while supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area and empowering AU Member States to take full advantage of it. It should enable a forward leap towards digitalization, an essential prerequisite for reaping the benefits of the AfCFTA. An enhanced partnership should also contribute to shaping the global trade rules, and speak to Africa's quest for reform of the World Trade Organization in favor of developing countries.

10. On the investment front, the EU has launched a number of instruments aimed at reducing risk to investors in Africa, including European investors. Those were consolidated in 2016 into the "European External Investment Plan (EEIP)." Other partners have also launched cooperation instruments that aim to mobilize foreign investments to Africa, by putting forward standards for an enabling investment environment, but the various standards proposed by different partners are not necessarily harmonized. The AfCFTA's second negotiation phase will help Africa to adopt clear, transparent and harmonized standards and procedures across borders, which would provide a predictable environment for sustainable investment. The post-2020 partnership with the EU should encourage Africa's own efforts in that regard.

11. Europe is a key partner in the area of migration. It is important that both continents support a multilateral policy process that governs migration in a way that protects our nationals across the globe, and changes the narrative to highlight the positive trajectory about African migration. An enhanced partnership, post-2020, should consolidate the numerous instruments Africa currently has with the EU under the continent-to-continent migration framework to emphasize the following:

- a comprehensive, multi-dimensional dialogue on migration and mobility that sets the standards and principles for managing the different aspects of migration, and enables the AU to deliver on its Migration Policy Framework for Africa;
- joint mechanisms to track migration and other relevant data, and support policy making in Africa and in Europe, which would be coordinated under the AU-EU partnership, building on existing mechanisms; and
- instruments to fund programmes jointly agreed to in the framework of the continental partnership.

12. Promotion of multilateralism and Africa's global voice will continue to be a feature of the C2C partnership beyond 2020. The first AU-EU Ministerial meeting, held in Brussels, laid out a number of features and areas of cooperation in this area. African and European Ministers reiterated that multilateralism is the most effective mode of international cooperation to address global issues, level the international playing field and to contribute to common, sustainable and ambitious solutions to today's challenges. In delivering on the Abidjan commitment to boosting joint cooperation on the global scene, both sides agreed to work together to promote the crucial role of the rules-based global order, with the UN at its core, and to support effective multilateralism at a time when it is being particularly challenged. Cooperation on the global scene will continue to advance the climate agenda and, more broadly, will be considered a crosscutting theme in the above areas of cooperation.

13. Based on the above, I will propose to Member States tentative timelines and modalities of concluding the enhanced partnership, including preparation and review of draft documents describing the partnership scope and structure.

14. In parallel, the Commission will continue the engagement with the African members of the ACP, including through regular dialogue and the provision of technical support, as maybe requested. This is in fulfilment of the Assembly Decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI) of November 2018, which stressed the need to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice in the various platforms of partnership with the EU, so that this partnership can be leveraged for the benefit of Agenda 2063.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

15. The above are core priorities of the regional integration agenda, as determined by the AU Member States. In order to deliver on those priorities, it is imperative that Africa continues to speak with one voice in the different platforms, and to derive benefits from different frameworks, including the continent-to-continent partnership, as well as association agreements between the EU and African States and regions. The Commission will spare no efforts towards the achievement of that objective.

2019-02-11

Report on the Implementation of the Assembly Decision on Post-Cotonou Negotiations

**(Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI)), By H.E.
Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson
of the Commission**

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