

**AFRICAN UNION**

**الاتحاد الأفريقي**



**UNION AFRICAINE**

**UNIÃO AFRICANA**

---

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

TELEPHONE: 5517 700

FAX: 5517844

Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

---

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Session**

**23 – 28 January 2016**

**Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**

**EX.CL/947(XXVIII)**

**Original: English**

**OUTCOMES DOCUMENT OF THE  
THIRD MINISTERIAL RETREAT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**OUTCOMES DOCUMENT OF THE  
THIRD MINISTERIAL RETREAT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
24-25 JANUARY 2016, MEK'ELE, ETHIOPIA**

*The Africa we Have, The Africa we Want*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

- A1.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Retreat of the Executive Council, hosted by the AU Commission and under the Chairpersonship of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was held in Mek'ele, Ethiopia from 24-25 January 2016.
- A2.** The Mek'ele Retreat builds on the 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Retreat of the Executive Council held in Bahir Dar from 24-26 January 2014 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Retreat in Johannesburg on 9-10 June 2015, and reflected on progress in building the Africa we want, set out in Agenda 2063.
- A3.** The Africa we have, the second largest continent in the world, remains one of vast and diverse resources, and therefore of opportunities and challenges. It has a rich diversity in its peoples, history, religions, languages, cultures, music and heritage, as well as its natural habitats, its fauna, flora and landscapes, its minerals and other resources. It has abundant human resources, men, women and youth, it is fast urbanizing, and it is the continent with the youngest population. Given current demographic trends, Africa in the coming decades will continue to have the youngest labour force in the world.
- A4.** The paradox that Africa is rich, yet Africans are poor, acknowledged by the Bahir Dar retreat, remains the burning issue that current generations of the African leadership and people must resolve, as we implement Agenda 2063.
- A5.** The Retreat in its initial discussion and self-introspection on this paradox, identified a range of responses, that must continue to inform our approach to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, which include:
- The centrality of African unity, ownership and resolve, to advance and defend continental aspirations and priorities;
  - The need for changing mindsets to build African self-believe, a can-do attitude, solidarity, striving for excellence and learning from each other;
  - The rich opportunities for continental renewal presented by Africa's young men and women, with their creativity, daring and innovation, presenting more radical takes on the African condition, challenges and solutions;
  - An unwavering and resolute focus on implementation of the Agenda 2063 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year Plan, so as to build a critical mass of success stories; and

- The importance of the empowerment of women and girls and their participation in all priorities of Agenda 2063, as drivers for inclusion, growth and social transformation.

**A6.** The Mek'ele retreat urged the Commission to organise another retreat this year, to allow for in-depth discussions on the paradox of rich Africa, poor Africans, on changing mind-sets and other issues raised in the debate.

**B. DOMESTICATION OF AGENDA 2063 AND THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**B1.** The Mek'ele Retreat noted that by the time of the Summit in January 2016, the Commission has undertaken domestication missions with twenty-three (23) Member States<sup>1</sup>, engaging with their Planning institutions in government, with legislatures, civil society and other stakeholders; and will continue to provide technical support to countries to assist with integrating the 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year plan, which incorporates Africa's obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals, into their national plans.

**B2.** Believing that the participation of African people, in all their sectoral and other formations, are critical to implementation of our continental mission, and request Member States, the AU Commission, the Pan African Parliament, the NEPAD Agency, the Regional Economic Communities, ECOSOCC and other Organs and institutions to continue popularizing the Agenda 2063 aspirations, priorities and flagship programmes.

**B3.** Actively engage all sectors - youth, women and men, trade unions, private sector, civil society, farmers, cultural organisations, faith-based organisations, the media - in the implementation and monitoring of the priorities and indicators of the Ten Year Implementation plan at local, sub-national, national, regional, continental and sectoral levels. More generally, we must in the context of building a People's Union, continually engage Parliaments, the media and our people on the relevance and work of the African Union.

**B4.** Urge Member States that have not yet started domestication, to do so as a matter of urgency, as they review and plan the next phases of their medium and long term plans, to mainstream the Agenda aspirations and priorities in their government-wide planning, budgeting and policy and legislative frameworks; to request support from the Commission where required for this endeavour, and for the Commission to provide a comprehensive report on the conclusions of domestication to the June/July 2016 Summit.

**B5.** Urge Member states and RECs to strengthen national and regional planning systems to drive implementation - establishment of national focal points, and for government wide mainstreaming and domestic resource mobilisation and allocation. Member states and relevant continental institutions, including the higher education sector, are urged to continue strengthening capacity of

---

<sup>1</sup> List...

planning systems at all levels, and to develop and build a Pan African methodology and ethos of planning and monitoring.

- B6.** Recognise the convergence between Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the work done by the Commission to embed the 17 SDGs in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year Implementation Plan, and in its results and monitoring and evaluation framework.
- B7.** Request the Commission, RECs, all AU Organs and continental institutions to align their Strategic and Master Plans (if not done yet) to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year Implementation Plan and ensure maximum coordination in its implementation, in the spirit of complementarity and subsidiarity.
- B8.** Notes progress in the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Framework for Agenda 2063, with the involvement of the national planners, RECs and sector experts, with its reporting mechanisms that allow for tracking progress, challenges and ensure accountability. It welcomes the measurement framework by the African Statisticians-Generals on the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, for the 1<sup>st</sup> Ten Year Implementation Plan.
- B9.** The Retreat took note of the report by the African Capacity Building Foundation on '*The Assessment of Internal and External Risks associated with the implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063*' and the mitigation strategies proposed: (i) build state capacity for effective governance; (ii) build human capital, (iii) focus on trade and industrial policy; (iv) develop a new coalition for growth; (v) make regional integration meaningful; and (vi) develop African diplomatic capacity.
- B10.** Request the Commission to gather reports from Member States and to present a progress report to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee on the margins of the July 2016 Summit.

### **C. AGENDA 2063 FLAGSHIP PROJECTS**

- C1.** The flagship projects<sup>2</sup> emanate from Bahir Retreat of the Executive Council in 2014 where the *E-mail from the future* was first presented, captured in Agenda 2063 Popular version adopted by Summit and embedded in the results framework of the Ten Year Implementation plan. They are potential game-changers because of their strategic impact on (a) the integration project, (b) their contribution to rising living standards and skills development; (c) to peace, security and democratic and developmental governance and (c) on the African mindset and narrative.
- C2.** The Retreat noted the progress report of the Commission on the flagship projects, and made the following observations:

---

<sup>2</sup> Agenda 2063 Flagship projects: (1) Pan African Integrated High Speed Train network; (2) Grande Inga Dam; (3) Single Aviation Market; (4) Outer Space; (6) Africa Economic Dialogue Platform; (7) Free movement of persons, services and goods, and the African Passport; (8) Pan African E-Network; (9) Virtual University; (10) Commodities Strategy, (11) the Continental Free Trade Area; (12) Silencing the Guns by 2020; and the (13) Continental Financial Institutions

- ▶ **On the Pan African High Speed Rail Network:** notes the MOU signed between the Commission and China in 2015, the technical work and engagement with China on the concept, the plans to conduct a pre-feasibility study and urged the Commission to work with the RECs to ensure that (i) new and revamped national and regional railway projects and infrastructure are compatible with high speed rail, (ii) that the Masterplan for the project is in line with the integrated continental transport network, and (iii) identify countries ready and with capacities to start the network.
- ▶ **On the Grande Inga Project:** notes the progress on the legal and institutional framework in the DRC, the agreements with countries to purchase electricity, and the target date for commencement of construction of June 2017. Further notes that the investment conference of the Great Lakes that will be held on 24-25 February 2016 in the Kinshasha, DRC that will engage with the private sector on the Grande Inga project.
- ▶ **On the annual Economic Dialogue Platform:** notes that this platform is aimed at facilitating a strategic dialogue amongst governments, business and academia on the priorities of Agenda 2063, including but not exclusively the issues of industrialization, the CFTA, and bridging the critical skills gap. It notes that the inaugural session of the AU Economic Dialogue Platform will be hosted in Mauritius on 14-15 April 2016.
- ▶ **On Outer space:** affirms the importance of this project to continental development, and welcomes the contribution of such initiatives as the Pan African University Center of Excellence on Space and the Square Kilometer Array, to the development of scientific skills and research and the opportunities it provides for young Africans to have ecosystems to innovate and research.
- ▶ **On the Single African Aviation Market:** congratulates the thirteen countries that have signed up to the Solemn declaration to make this a reality by 2017, notes the technical documents that have now been completed to facilitate the single aviation market, urges other countries to join, and reaffirm the importance of this initiative to free movement of people and to Africa increasing its market share of global tourism.
- ▶ **Commodities strategy:** reaffirms the importance of this strategy to facilitate African industrialization, in the context of the discussion on Africa's mineral resources, pricing, and the move from raw materials exports to beneficiation. Calls on the Commission to facilitate and engage Member states to ensure the implementation of the decision for at least 25% of all commodities produced on the continent, be benefited on the continent.
- ▶ **On the Continental Free Trade Area:** urges the Commission and Member states to move with speed on this project, so that we meet our deadline of the launch by 2017. Noted the dangers posed by the current global trade rules, and by regional trade agreements for Africa's

industrialization, transformation and integration; and the need for Africa to defend the development of its local industry, and to pool its sovereignty through common positions in global and regional trade negotiations.

- ▶ **On Silencing the Guns:** emphasized the importance of human security and development, the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA), promote the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and international organized crime, and the importance of involving our people, especially women and youth in making and guaranteeing peace; and notes that the Summit of Heads of State and Government in January 2016 will have a strategic discussion on Silencing the guns.
  
- ▶ Notes the work in progress on other Flagship projects such as the Establishment of African Financial Institutions, the Virtual University and the Pan African eNetwork.

#### **D. CAPACITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2063**

- D1.** The retreat noted the comprehensive report on Capacities for Implementation of Agenda 2063 by the African Capacity Building Foundation, which was commissioned by the AU Commission.
  
- D2.** It confirms the definition of capacities in this context as embracing skilled, educated and qualified human capital, the values, productivity and attitudes of our continental labour force (in the public and private sector), as well as the institutional context in which they practice their skills. Capacities for the implementation of Agenda 2063 also include the soft societal issues, such as the transformational readiness of our leadership; institutions and people; the Pan African perspectives; African solidarity; ownership of development; a culture of results and accountability for performance; transformative and accountable leadership; responsive institutions; and ownership of the African narrative and brand.
  
- D3.** Specifically, the retreat discussed capacity for implementation of Agenda 2063 based on 10 key areas and drawing on Ethiopia's experience, namely: (i) Leadership, commitment and ownership; (ii) Design of the right policies for each priority sector; (iii) Capacity building strategies based on goals and related strategies and specialized sectoral institutions to take these forward; (iv) Domestic resources to finance national priorities and use of development aid; (v) Changing mind-sets; (vi) Education and training with a focus on critical technical and high level skills to drive Africa's development; (vii) Capacity building linked to the value-addition and beneficiation strategies; (viii) Performance management and building capable state institutions; (ix) Role of the diaspora and building knowledge networks; and (x) Role of Regional Economic Communities.
  
- D4.** The retreat made the following additional contributions:

- a) To deal with the complexity of capacity challenges, capacity retention and utilization strategies that address the flight of human capital, the illusion of lack of capacity, as well as mobilizing diaspora capacity would need to be developed and implemented.
- b) The issue of mind-sets is of such importance that a full day of a ministerial retreat is required.
- c) An education dialogue involving academia, private sector and government should be initiated in order to develop an Education agenda for Agenda 2063.
- d) Massive investment in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), as well as the development of Africa-focused professional skills such as regional integration, Pan African values, domestication; and greater cooperation between countries especially in the area of science and technology.
- e) Mobilize diaspora capacity by implementing the Legacy projects adopted by the Diaspora summit held in South Africa in May 2012.
- f) Knowledge exchange networks and promoting exchanges between countries should be encouraged and should be extended to the Diaspora. The retreat in this regard noted the example of the partnership that Ethiopia has with its diaspora through G-KEN (Global Knowledge Exchange Network).
- g) Mutual recognition of professional and academic qualifications is a priority regardless of differences in language of instruction. In this connection the Retreat urged Member States to ratify the Addis Ababa Convention on Harmonization of Higher Education as soon as possible.
- h) The need for an institutional audit in order to put in place adequate institutions to drive Agenda 2063. Key related questions are: What institutional framework do we need to drive Agenda 2063? Are current institutions fit for purpose? Is the current arrangement of AU organs and RECs the right mix? Are there other arrangements, such as concentric ones that may be more effective? Should we encourage a coalition of the ready to set up institutional arrangements to fast-track implementation in key areas such as transport and infrastructure and industrialization? Tackle restructuring of AU institutions holistically, rather than through a piece-meal approach.
- i) A vibrant civil service plays a critical role in spearheading development transformation by attracting the best and most skilled from all sectors of society. This requires innovative incentives, linked to performance management.
- j) The need to share experiences and learn from each other. In this regard, the Retreat recalled the offer from Ethiopia to share its national development plan with other Members of the Executive Council.

- D5.** The Retreat acknowledged the role of the African Capacity Building Foundation in building and strengthening African capacities, through its programmes with AU institutions including the AU Commission, the RECs and Member States to develop capacity, pledged the support of Member States to ensure that the ACBF is strengthened and call on continental and international partners to continue to provide financial support to the ACBF in pursuance of its mandate.
- D6.** Calls on Member States to urgently develop a continental initiative on Critical Technical Skills, and to prioritise investments in the development of skills, especially in the STEM areas, essential for implementing Agenda 2063, including vocational skills and trade technicians, and the design and management of large-scale projects;
- D7.** The Retreat tasked the Commission to extract concrete and actionable decisions, which can be presented to the Executive Council for consideration.

**E. ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND AFRICAN PASSPORT**

- E1.** The retreat noted the presentation by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and welcomed the report of the Commission on this issue, including the lessons from countries such as Rwanda, Seychelles, Mauritius, the Gambia and the RECs like ECOWAS, EAC and SADC on free movement of people, and the process outlined towards the adoption of a Protocol on Free Movement by January 2018.
- E2.** Reaffirms that the issue of free movement of people, of Africans having free access to all African countries, is amongst the enduring project of Pan Africanism and African integration, and that its benefits include facilitating tourism, intra-African investments and trade, people to people integration and cooperation, and the circulation and utilization of skills in the continent.
- E3.** Notes the concerns raised with regards to security and the threat of terrorism and international crime, the need to develop parameters to deal with security concerns, and recalls the discussion at the Johannesburg Ministerial retreat on this matter. We should learn from continental best practice and other experiences, and continue to work with security and intelligence agencies on this and other matters.
- E4.** The Retreat:
- a) Recommended the adoption of the process outlined towards the adoption of a Protocol on Free Movement of People by January 2018, which should come into immediate effect.
  - b) Requested the Commission Chairperson to present a draft decision to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for the introduction of visa on arrival with a right to stay in the country for up to 30 days for all AU member states passport holders from all Member states, taken into



account the security concerns of each country, within the following parameters:

- Receiving countries retain their right to refuse entry at their borders, for national security and other reasons;
  - All countries to do preparatory work to ready their systems, to ensure national discussions on the matter, attend to the security and other concerns, and to report back at the next Summit;
  - Member states that are not immediately ready to implement this or that have security concerns be allowed flexibility to enter when they are ready;
  - To request security and intelligence institutions to advice on measurers required in complicated security situations.
- c) Agreed to the proposal from the Commission for the presentation of the African passport to Heads of State and Government at the Summit by the Commission Chairperson, and African passports for other categories such as Foreign Ministers, AU organs, the PRC and other categories in the near future.
- d) Encouraged more countries to follow the examples of Rwanda, Seychelles, (the Gambia) and Mauritius, and of the relevant RECs.

## **F. TOURISM AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**

- F1.** The Retreat noted and discussed the presentations from the Minister of Tourism of Zimbabwe on African tourism and branding, by the Minister for Sustainable Development from Congo Republic and the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNEP on Wildlife Conservation.
- F2.** On Tourism, the Presenter noted that despite Africa's huge potential for tourism, it attracts a negligible percentage of global tourist arrivals and revenue. Africa has great tourism potential from its unique and diverse wildlife, magnificent landscapes, natural vegetation, beautiful beaches, a rich cultural heritage and indigenous populations and ways of life and knowledge, that have survived for centuries. Yet today, Africa only accounts for 15% of the world global share, and receive only 3% of global tourism revenues. Given the huge potential of tourism for job and wealth creation, we need a concerted strategy to promote tourism across Africa.
- F3.** To achieve the goal of making Africa the preferred tourist destination, of both African and global tourists, and building a strong Brand Africa, the AUC was urged to ensure the following:
- Allocation of adequate resources to tourism activities in the Commission budget and mobilise support of all stakeholders in the continent, including international partners like the UNWTO;

- The elaboration of a continental Tourism policy and strategy as a priority activity, and mainstreaming of tourism in Agenda 2063 and other AU programmes, and to advocate for greater investment in tourism;
- Convene the Ministers responsible for Tourism before the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017 within the framework of the relevant STCs, to review progress and provide guidance.

**F4. On Wildlife conservation,** the Presenters highlighted the key issues, challenges and opportunities – including Africa’s rich biodiversity, fauna and flora, and the threats that this face from poaching, illegal trade and environmental degradation.

**F5. The Mek’ele Retreat:**

- Reaffirmed the commitment of Agenda 2063 to the sustainable exploitation and management of Africa’s diversity for the benefit of its people, and for future generations;
- Noted that wildlife, through ecotourism, is and can be, a source of revenue if properly and sustainably managed;
- Agreed that poaching, illicit trade in wildlife products and bio-piracy should be vigorously combatted;
- Noted the recent adoption of the African strategy for Conservation and Stopping Illicit Trade in Wildlife;
- Agreed on the importance of conservation which benefits local communities, including women;
- Called for a review of the total ban for acceptable social and economic gains;
- Study the Lusaka agreement towards the creation of an African institution in charge of dealing with environmental crimes.

## **G. COMPARATIVE STUDY ON AU WORKING METHODS AND STREAMLINING BUSINESS OF SUMMITS**

**G1.** The Mek’ele Retreat noted the presentation by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kenya, and Secretary General of COMESA and facilitated by the Minister of Rwanda on the Comparative Study on AU Working methods and Streamlining the Business of Summits.

**G2.** The Retreat made the following recommendations:

- a) The need to revise and review the Constitutive Act in order for it to be an effective tool to accelerate, facilitate and deepen the efficiency and the integration process on the continent.

- b) Expedite the ratification of the revised protocol on PAP adopted in Malabo in June 2014 in order for its speedy entry into force and request the Commission to distribute the Malabo Protocol after the retreat.
- c) Encourage all Member States to ratify the Protocol on the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights – including its additional mandate to address international crimes. This will also assist in deepening integration on the continent.
- d) That items proposed by Member States be subjected to the due process of prior analysis of policy, legal, financial and structural implications by the Commission before being submitted to Policy Organs and they should only relate to the Theme of the Year. The Commission should continue to exercise its responsibility to initiate the Agenda of the Policy Organs also taking into consideration the necessary legal, structural and financial implications.
- e) The Drafting Committee as currently constituted should be dissolved. The AU has since improved its decision making process with the Commission proposing draft decisions which are considered by the PRC, then submitted to the Executive Council and onwards to the Assembly.
- f) Expedite the work of the PRC subcommittee on Rules, Standards and Credentials to incorporate the decisions of the Executive Council and the Assembly on the working methods and streamlining of Summits.
- g) Enhance the implementation of the Decisions of the AU Summits using the Scorecard approach to be presented by the Executive Council to the Assembly on the implementation of decisions.
- h) Empower the general citizens, through these reforms, to directly petition the African Court on the implementation or otherwise on the Decisions taken by the Policy Organs.
- i) Take note of the Report on the Comparative Study on the Working Methods of the African Union and the Streamlining of the AU Summits and request Member States and the Commission to implement its recommendations agreed to by the Assembly.
- j) The Retreat also recommends that the Chairperson of the Commission establish an internal Technical Committee to make recommendations on the implementation of the recommendations contained herein and implementation of Decision 582 of the Assembly adopted in Johannesburg Summit in June 2015. This Committee will report to the Ministerial Follow-Up Committee on the Implementation of Agenda 2063,

which will submit recommendations to the next Ministerial Retreat of the Executive Council, which should be held between March and May 2016.

**H. RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE OF THE BAHIR DAR MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE ON AGENDA 2063**

- H1.** The retreat recalled the decision of the Executive Council, ratified by Summit on the 1<sup>st</sup> Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee, consisting of Algeria (north), Angola (south), Cameroon (Central), Ghana (west), and Rwanda (East) as well as the outgoing and incoming Chairperson of the Executive Council, the AU Commission Chairperson, the Chairpersons and Executive Secretaries of the 8 RECs, the CEO of the NEPAD Agency, the Executive Secretary of the UNECA and the President of the AfDB, to be renewed every two years to allow for rotation and regional balance.
- H2** The Mek'ele Retreat recommended the following members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bahir Dar Ministerial Follow-up Committee: the five rotating regional representatives are Namibia (south), Burkina Faso (west), Cameroon (central), Algeria (north) and Rwanda (east). The other members of the committee remain as listed in paragraph H1.

AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

---

Organs

Council of Ministers & Executive Council Collection

---

2016

# Outcomes document of the third ministerial retreat of the executive council

African Union

African Union

---

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/4935>

*Downloaded from African Union Common Repository*