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**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE PREPARATIONS
FOR THE 2ND AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT SCHEDULED IN
LIBYA IN OCTOBER 2010**

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Introduction

1. The Afro-Arab Summit is the overall political structure for African and Arab regional engagements and cooperation. The Summit was first convened in Cairo, Egypt from 7th to 9th March 1977 and served to adopt a Declaration and Programme of Action, the foundations for institutional cooperation between the OAU and the League of Arab States.

2. Through the Declaration and Programme of Action, the Cairo Summit created the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation, composed of 12 Ministers from each side, to facilitate the implementation of the of the Afro-Arab Cooperation programmes. The Declaration also called upon Specialized African and Arab Institutions, such as the African Development Bank (ADB), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to take all necessary measures to support the cooperation.

3. The Cairo Summit agreed to hold the Afro-Arab Summit every three years. This decision did not unfold as anticipated and no Summit was held after this first historic gathering in Cairo. However, bilateral cooperation and engagements through relevant regional structures continued over the years.

4. Practical steps towards the convening of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit were taken by the 13th Session of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab cooperation held in Tripoli, Libya from 10 to 11 October 2009. The Committee welcomed the offer by the Government of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to host the Summit and agreed on the dates for the second historical gathering of Heads of State and Government from the African and Arab Regions.

Coordination of the preparation process

5. Preparation for the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit is coordinated at three levels: namely the Coordination Committee, the Preparatory Committee and Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation.

6. **The Coordination Committee** is composed of Officers from the African Union Commission, the League of Arab States and the Host Country (Libya). It was set up to follow up and guide the day to day activities relating to the preparation for the Summit, including the preparation of working documents and side events. The Committee held its first meeting in Cairo, Egypt in May 2010. The 2nd meeting is scheduled to take place in Tripoli, Libya on 7 August 2010 while the 3rd Meeting will be convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in September 2010. The Coordination Committee reports to the Preparatory Committee of the Summit.

7. **The Preparatory Committee of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit** is composed of Senior Officials from eight African and Arab Countries namely; Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco and Tanzania as well as Officials of the African Union Commission and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States. The Committee is responsible for the overall preparation of the Summit and reports to the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation. The Preparatory Committee held its first meeting in Cairo, Egypt in January 2010, the second in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2010, the third in Tripoli, Libya, in April 2010 and fourth in Cairo, Egypt in July 2010. The Committee is scheduled to hold its fifth meeting in Tripoli, Libya on 7 August 2010 and the 6th in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17 September 2010.

8. **The Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation is the Joint Policy Organ of Afro-Arab Cooperation** created by the First Afro-Arab Summit held in Cairo, Egypt in March 1977. The Commission is composed of 12 Ministers from the African side and 12 from the Arab Side. In the past ten months the Commission held its 13th Session in Tripoli, Libya in October 2009 and 14th and 15th in Cairo, Egypt, in March and July 2010, respectively. The past three Sessions were devoted to the preparation of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit. The Commission is scheduled to hold its 16th Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 18 September 2010, where it is expected to wrap up the preparation process and endorse the final draft agenda and working documents of the Summit.

Preparation of working documents

9. The Second Afro-Arab Summit is expected to provide a new vision and strategic direction to Afro-Arab Cooperation. It is anticipated that the Summit will adopt sector-focused Joint Action Plans and specific feasible projects in the most viable areas. The Summit will also issue a Declaration at the end of its deliberation.

10. In line with the above, five sectoral Technical Committees are established in the areas of Food Security, Energy, Human Resources Development, Water Development and Infrastructural Development to develop programmes to be considered by the Summit. The African Union and the League of Arab States have each recruited one Senior Consultant to compile the sectoral working documents, produce the draft Strategic Document and draft final document of the Summit.

Date and venue of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit and Pre-Summit Meetings

11. The 2nd Afro-Arab Summit is to be held in Sirte, Libya on 10 October 2010 under the General Theme "*Afro-Arab Cooperation: Towards a strategic partnership*". The Summit will be preceded by a meeting of Afro-Arab High Level Officials on 6 October 2010 and Afro-Arab Ministerial Meeting on 8 October 2010.

Focus of the Summit

12. The main focus of the Summit, as agreed, will be cooperation in Investment Promotion and Exchanges and Agricultural Development and Food Security. In this respect the following activities were accomplished:

- (a) A Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Meeting on Agricultural Development and Food Security was convened in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in February 2010 to consider and endorse an Afro-Arab Joint Action Plan on Agricultural Development and Security. The Plan is composed of four core initiatives namely Agricultural Intensification (food supply shifters) Initiative, Emergency and Strategic Food Reserve Initiative, Infrastructure and Trade Initiative and Agricultural Research Development and Technology Transfer Initiative and two cross cutting issues namely Climate Change and Capacity Building. 42 African and Arab Countries as well as 20 National and Regional Institutions participated at the meeting. The Plan will be presented to the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit for endorsement.
- (b) A High Level African and Arab Experts Meeting on Prospects of Investment in Africa and the Arab Regions was also convened in Cairo, Egypt in April 2010. The meeting developed an Afro-Arab Joint Action Plan on Investment Promotion and Exchange. This Action Plan is composed of five major initiatives. African Regional Economic Communities and a large number of African and Arab financial institutions and investment intermediary were present at the meeting. The Plan will also be presented for the consideration of the Summit.

Draft Agenda of the Summit

13. The draft agenda is still under consideration; however agreements were reached that the Summit will discuss issues under the following broad areas of cooperation:

- (a) Political, Peace and Security
- (b) Agriculture and Food Security
- (C) Economic Cooperation
- (d) Social and Cultural Cooperation

Involvement of the Private Sector

14. In order to ensure the full participation of the Private Sector in formulation of the five year Programme of Action (2011-2014) for Afro-Arab Cooperation, a High-Level Forum on Investment Promotion and Trade is planned for Libya from the 25th to 26th September 2010. Representatives of African and Arab private sector and relevant institutions will participate at the Forum to discuss opportunities and challenges of Trade and Investment Promotion and Exchanges between the African and the Arab Regions and provide recommendations for the consideration of the Summit.

Other issues

15. Modalities for the organization and popularization of the Summit were discussed and agreed upon and the Theme and Logo of the Summit were endorsed by the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation.

15. Communications have been addressed to all Member States informing them of the convening of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit in Sirte, Libya on 10 October 2010.

16. A request for additional budget for the Summit and pre-Summit and coordination meetings has been submitted by the Commission, as the minimal amount of US\$45,000 allocated for this important activity has been exhausted.

Way Forward

17. A Plan of Action for Political and Diplomatic as well as Social and Cultural Cooperation will be drafted in collaboration with relevant Departments of the Commission and the League of Arab States and the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute based in Bamako, Mali, for the consideration of the Summit.

18. All the Summit documents will be compiled in one compendium and forwarded for comments to Member States before the final drafts are prepared.

Conclusion

19. The Host Country, Libya is making all efforts to ensure that this all important event is held successfully. The Preparatory Committee is also working towards ensuring that the Summit is a historic event and serves to achieve the wider objective of effective African and Arab Cooperation.

20. The convening of the Summit is important to give added impetus to the political dialogue and to provide a new direction to Afro-Arab Cooperation.

21. The 15th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit is therefore respectfully requested to call upon all Member States to participate at this important meeting.

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