

**DECISION OF THE SANDTON MINISTERIAL RETREAT OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL ON THE FIRST 10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN OF AGENDA 2063  
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**The Executive Council**

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the outcomes of the Ministerial Retreat held in Sandton City, Johannesburg, South Africa, and:

**ON FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

2. **CALLS UPON** Member States to promote Intra-African trade and the development of productive capacities for regional growth on the continent; and fast track the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area, (CFTA) and its operationalization; Member States to urgently review their tariff regimes and dismantle all non-tariff barriers;
3. **UNDERScores** the need to promote women empowerment in order to facilitate inter-border trade through issuing women traders with special identification cards that will allow them to access the market in other countries, and effectively reduce difficulties experienced at border posts to enhance border trade;
4. **REQUESTS** Member States to focus on investment in value chains, and give preferential treatment to investors in Africa, and promote African brands (made in Africa) for Africa in order to join the global value chains. In that regard, encourage respect for the rule of law in Member States in order to create the favourable regulation frameworks needed confidence and trust among investors;
5. **EMPHASIZES:**
  - 1) the need to ensure the protection of Intellectual Property Rights to safeguard African innovation and strengthen standards;
  - 2) the need to establish an African Economic Forum for African Business people to hold periodic meetings so as to engage in discussions that promote understanding and forge ties within the private sector across the continent. To facilitate this process establish a trade observatory for the free flow of trade information, as well an African Business Council;
6. **URGES** Member States to sensitize their African Ambassadors in Geneva on issues related to negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in order to forge an African Common Position with a view to changing the WTO rules and make them less cumbersome, and urgently propose mechanisms for the holding of an African Trade Conference similar to the WTO in Africa;

7. **UNDERScores** the need to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice on issues related to WTO negotiations. In this regard, Ministers of Foreign Affairs should work closely with their counterparts in the Ministry of Trade to ensure effective coordination;

#### **ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE**

8. **ENCOURAGES** Member States to start offering visas to Africans on arrival at ports of entry and based on the principle of reciprocity where those countries that offer free movement should receive the same;
9. **URGES** Member States to, begin within three (3) years but not later than five (5) years offer all Africans the same opportunities they have accorded to the citizens of countries within their respective Regional Economic Communities (RECs), on the understanding that migrants shall also be bound by all national laws;
10. **CALLS UPON :**
- i) Member States in collaboration with the Commission to engage in the process of developing capacity to manage the flow cross border migration, as this is set to increase, especially among women and the youth;
  - ii) the Commission to ensure that the Agenda 2063 framework includes a component that Free Movement of people should have explicit inclusion of gender and empowerment of vulnerable groups (women, youth and people with disabilities);
11. **REQUESTS:**
- i) the Commission to undertake a comprehensive research on free movement of people to generate empirical evidence to inform the development of the AEC, its structure, resources and other requirements, etc. for its implementation;
  - ii) the Commission to urgently organize a Retreat of the Executive Council to consider the issue of free movement of people in Africa;
12. **EXPEDITES** the operationalization of the African Passport that would, as a start facilitate free movement of persons in different categories, which would be issued by Member States;

#### **ON HARMONIZATION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA**

13. **REQUESTS** Member States to establish a harmonized mechanism to ensure that higher education in Africa is compatible, comparable, with acceptability and enable recognition of credentials that will facilitate transferability of knowledge, skills and expertise. In addition, there is need to harmonize teacher education and set up

quality assurance processes, which should spell out how higher education should be managed, with emphasis on diversity;

**14. UNDERTAKES:**

- i) the need to establish a mechanism on practical modalities for the empowerment of African women and youth in education and, encourage their sustained growth in knowledge acquisition. In the same vein, ensure that issues relating to tradition, the state and relevance of education in various African countries are taken into consideration in the process of harmonizing education;
- ii) to include exchange programmes and self-employment in the education curriculum, while ensuring that the process of harmonization is also used as a tool to deal with language barriers;

**15. REQUESTS** the Commission to ensure that issues of harmonization of education are constant features on the agenda of the Specialized Technical Communities (STCs) so as to enable concerned Ministers to make inputs and receive feedback;

**16. CALLS UPON** Member States and the Private Sector to support funding of research in key fields of knowledge, especially in sciences and technology, which will enable Africans to find solution to African problems;

**70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE STATE OF MULTILATERALISM**

**17. UNDERSCORES** the importance of the multilateral system as underlined by the principle of equity, inclusivity, sustainable development, improvement of human conditions based on the equality of States;

**18. EMPHASIZES:**

- i) the need for Africa to continue to work together, speak with one voice and to play an even greater role in giving impetus to the Intergovernmental Negotiations within the context of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In this context, the African Union Member States Ambassadors Groups should respect and implement AU positions and decisions and be involved in the implementation of Agenda 2063;
- ii) the need to work together on strategic issues such as Financing for Development, the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Climate Change and the International Conference on Trade;
- iii) the right of all AU Member States to participate in all AU joint meetings and those in which the AU is a stakeholder.

**19. CALLS UPON** the Secretary General of the United Nations to facilitate, with the Host Country the United States of America, the granting of the same level of privileges and facilities to the AU Permanent Observer Mission as those granted to UN Mission to the African Union, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.

#### **ON STREAMLINING OF THE AU SUMMITS AND THE WORKING METHODS OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**20. REAFFIRMS** the importance of holding Retreats at Ministerial Level at least once (1) a year, as a mechanism for consensus building among Ministers, and the importance of the Executive Council to meet in order to follow up on the implementation of decisions;

**21. DECIDES** to improve time management of the Executive Council Sessions to ensure efficiency and effectiveness as well as ensuring that their meetings are attended at the appropriate level to ensure a higher commitment to decisions taken and effective implementation thereof;

**22. RECOMMENDS** the following recommendations for approval by the Assembly,:

- i) decision-making by the Executive Council and the Assembly to be clearly delineated, and the Assembly to delegate their decision-making powers and mandate to the Executive Council to take decisions, except on key strategic issues;
- ii) empower the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) of Ministers to take decisions on issues falling under their competence, except where there are attendant legal, financial and structural implications. However, the Executive Council may, if necessary, consider decisions of the STCs at the request of any Member State;
- iii) the Assembly to focus on strategic policy issues such as Continental Integration, Peace and Security, Governance and Financial matters; and those decisions taken at the Executive Council are not repeated at the Assembly;
- iv) consider holding “closed sessions” meetings to discuss some strategic issues accompanied by one or more members of their delegations, as the issue to be discussed may require; In this regard, the Assembly may also decide to convene in a Retreat format to afford sufficient time to deliberate on strategic issues and to interact;
- v) allow the full participation of the Regional Economic Communities in the deliberations of the Summits to share experiences, successes and constraints, in the advancement of the continental integration agenda;
- vi) to continue with the two Summits, which should be streamlined with one,

focusing on Policy Issues with participation of partners in accordance with the Rules of Procedure; and the other Summit focusing on the implementation of decisions;

- vii) the Subcommittees of the Assembly report to only one session of the Assembly in a year; and the membership of these sub-committees to rotate within 2-3 years cycle to allow for burden sharing;
- viii) the Opening Sessions of the Assembly be conducted in a business-like manner and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, with only the Secretary General of the United Nations and the President of the Palestine Authority based on historical African solidarity with their struggle, being allowed to address the Assembly in-Person; within that context, other Invited Guests should be provided with alternative platforms, other than the Opening Sessions, to address the Heads of State and Government;

**23. URGES** Member States to allocate additional resources for interpretation and translation in order to increase the number of personnel in the Directorate of Conference Management and Publications and ensure documents are properly translated and are ready on time;

#### **ON FIRST TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF AGENDA 2063**

**24. CALLS UPON** the Assembly to adopt the First Ten Year implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, taking into consideration input from Member States, including review of some of the targets proposed (e.g. establishment of the blue/ocean economy) and with the understanding that the document will undergo continuous refinement, taking into account the need for alignment with the Agenda 2063 Framework document (e.g. the issues of sovereignty), existing Continental frameworks and national visions, inclusivity, particularly in terms of the involvement of Women and Youth, the needs of small island States, emerging risks and threats, existing capacities and available financing as well as tourism and port operations and transport in the context of the blue economy;

**25. UNDERSCORES:**

- i) the importance of ownership of Agenda 2063 and Ten Year Implementation Plan by Member States and the RECs and therefore the need to take measures to popularize Agenda 2063, establish timeline to monitor progress and facilitate its domestication in national plans and regional frameworks. The Commission should continue to work with Member States and the RECs on the domestication of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan; In the same vein, the African Union Regional Representations and the African Union<sup>3</sup> Member States Ambassadors Groups should be fully involved in the promotion and implementation at the Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

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<sup>3</sup> Senegal entered reservations on the appellation under paragraph 25 (i).

- ii) the need to come up with a comprehensive strategy to address the capacity deficit at all levels for the implementation of the Ten Year Implementation Plan;
26. **CALLS UPON** the Commission to continue to engage in actions necessary towards expeditious finalisation of the capacity assessments work, including at the important level of Member States towards a consolidated Capacity Assessment Document and a Capacity Development Plan; highlighting critical skills and training required as well as arrangements to involve Universities and the role of youth and women; for consideration at the next Summit in January 2016;
  27. **URGES** the ACBF and other institutions, such as UNECA and AfDB to continue to provide necessary support on capacity building dimensions for Agenda 2063;
  28. **CALLS UPON** Member States to provide adequate financing and human resources that would enable the implementation of the First Ten Year implementation Plan of Agenda 2063;
  29. **REQUESTS** the Commission to undertake baseline research studies across all priorities of Agenda 2063, in and between the RECs and at national levels, with a view to developing scorecards on the implementation of all the priorities and report progress to the next Ministerial Retreat.