

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

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**SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (STC-CICT)
THIRD ORDINARY SESSION,
22 - 26 OCTOBER 2019,
SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT**

**AU/STC-CICT-3/MIN//Decl.
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

**2019 SHARM EL SHEIKH DECLARATION
STC – CICT-3**

DRAFT
2019 SHARM EL SHEIKH DECLARATION
STC-CICT-3

PREAMBLE

We, the Ministers in charge of Communication and Information and Communication Technology (CICT) and Postal Services, meeting in the Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information & Communication Technologies, **(STC-CICT-3)** in Sharm El Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 22 to 26 October 2019;

Guided by the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU);

Recalling Decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) and Assembly/AU/Dec.365(XIVI), adopted in January 2009 and July 2011, respectively, on the configuration of the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) and the modalities for their operationalization;

Bearing in mind Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XIV), adopted at the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU on Information and Communication Technologies in Africa, Challenges and Prospects for Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2010;

Considering Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XVIII), adopted at the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012, on the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA);

Recalling Decision EX.CL/Dec.987(XXXII) of the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Executive *Council* on the reports of the Specialized Technical Committees, including the Second Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information & Communication Technologies **(STC-CICT-2)** held in Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, from 20 to 24 November 2017;

Considering AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.739(XXII), requesting the AU Commission to develop an updated, integrated and coherent AU strategic Communication and Information Communications Technologies (CICT) framework for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA - NEPAD), Regional Economic Communities (RECs,) Specialized Institutions (SI), African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), taking into account existing frameworks of all African CIT stakeholders;

Noting that while the digital revolution is well underway in Africa and is promising to be a positive multiplier for Africa's socio-economic development, the current digital landscape on the Continent still faces many challenges, despite the significant progress in some areas;

Recognizing the efforts of the Continent's leadership to prioritize and accelerate digital transformation, and conscious that achieving digital transformation in Africa will require political commitment at the highest level, aligning of policies and sector regulation and a massive scaling-up of investment and dedication of resources;

Reaffirming that digital technologies and innovation can be harnessed to contribute to the achievement of the vision and goals of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, by transforming Africa’s societies and economies to promote Africa’s integration, generate inclusive economic growth, stimulate job creation, erase the digital divide and accelerate poverty eradication;

Further noting that harmonization of ICT policy, legal and regulatory frameworks is a prerequisite for the creation of common Digital Single Market, and that Internet and Digital Infrastructure are an essential component for the development of Africa’s digital ecosystem;

Bearing in mind the importance of cybersecurity to secure our cyberspace and foster trust and confidence in digital services to AU Citizens;

Acknowledging that the postal sector is an essential component of the digital economy, as well as part of the financial inclusion ecosystem;

Further noted the important role of the postal sector as a frontier for governance services;

Recognizing that the AU needs a coherent Digital Transformation Strategy to guide a common, coordinated response to reap the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR);

Taking note of the Report of the Experts’ Session held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 22 to 24 October 2019;

Having elected the following Bureau of the STC-CICT for a period 2 years:

NORTHERN AFRICA	
Egypt	Chair of the Bureau
CENTRAL AFRICA	
Burundi	1 st Vice Chair of the Bureau
SOUTHERN AFRICA	
Malawi	2 nd Vice Chair of the Bureau
WESTERN AFRICA	
Sierra Leone	3 rd Vice Chair of the Bureau
EASTERN AFRICA	
Djibouti	Rapporteur of the Bureau

HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

1. **CONTINUE** to promote the implementation of previous Decisions and Declarations adopted by the Assembly of the African Union, the Executive Council and the Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information & Communication Technologies, particularly those relating to:
 - i. Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA);
 - ii. Cybersecurity, Cybercrime, and Personal Data Protection;
 - iii. Dot Africa ownership and use by Member States and African people and

- Businesses;
- iv. Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Postal Sector in Africa, including the implementation of projects on Addressing and Postcode Systems, Connectivity and Electrification of Post Offices in rural areas, Financial Inclusion of the Low-Income Population and e-Commerce Development in Africa;
 - v. African Union (AU) Communication and Advocacy Strategy;
 - vi. Building the AU brand identity and promoting Agenda 2063
 - vii. Improving corporate visibility: Advocacy and public relations
 - viii. Human resources capacity and competency in communication
 - ix. Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA);
 - x. Support of the African Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOM);
 - xi. Efficient management of Spectrum and harmonized use of the digital dividend;
 - xii. Access to rural communities and cooperation with Transport and Energy sectors on conduits and alternative ICT Infrastructure respectively;
 - xiii. Development and distribution of African Local Content and to further provide funding, infrastructure and skills development;
 - xiv. African Internet Governance to contribute to Africa digital economy ;
 - xv. Cooperation with the African private sector and institutions for coordinated mobilization of resources for Communication and ICT projects;

2. **WORK** together towards an integrated and inclusive Digital Society and Economy in Africa that improves the quality of life of Africa's citizens;
3. **COMMIT** to develop and implement policies and regulations that create an enabling environment required to stimulate and accelerate digital transformation for national, regional and continental development;
4. **ENCOURAGE** development partners to continue providing support to ensure digitalization is for everyone, everywhere, and is affordable and ubiquitous, thereby creating equal access to opportunities and mitigating risks of exclusion;

HEREBY REQUEST MEMBER STATES TO:

5. **PROMOTE** and implement the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) as the common digitalization agenda for the Continent upon its adoption;
6. Promote the adoption of green ICT Infrastructure
7. **SUPPORT** and facilitate the implementation of PRIDA activities at national, regional and continental levels;
8. **USE the PRIDA Digital Platform** as a space to build an African Common Position, coordinate and distribute roles to each stakeholder, share experiences and best practices, and exchange lessons learned on ICT and digital policies;
9. **INCLUDE** postal digitalization in both national priorities and national digital strategies, pursue the digitization of postal financial services, and set up a cashless system;
10. **ACCELERATE** the establishment of national IGFs, and support national and regional IGFs;

11. **ACCELERATE** the ratification of the AU Convention on Cyber Security and personal Data protection (Malabo Convention);
12. **TAKE STOCK** of the provisions of the AU Convention and the Guidelines on Internet Infrastructure Security, in order to promote a safer African Cyberspace;
13. **REQUEST** Member States to encourage the use of DOT Africa
14. **ENCOURAGE** National Broadcasters to support dissemination of content produced by the AU, including supporting the editing of produced films to make them available in national and local languages in order to reach the widest audience;
15. **ESTABLISH** a working group on Artificial Intelligence (AI) based on existing initiatives and in collaboration with African Institutions to study:
 - a. The creation of a common African stance on AI
 - b. The development of an Africa wide capacity building framework
 - c. Establishment of an AI think tank to assess and recommend projects to collaborate on in line of Agenda 2063 and SDGs.
 - d. **COMMEND** the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe for funding the process for the creation of the first edition of the Africa Factbook, and call upon Member States to fund subsequent publications on a rotational basis;
16. **COMMEND** the Republic of South Africa on her offer to assist the AUC to hasten the refurbishment and operationalization of the AU Studio;
17. **CONTRIBUTE to the** validation of the PIDA PAP 2 studies;
18. **SUPPORT** the organization of the Universal Postal Union 27th Congress to be held in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire in August 2020.

FURTHER DIRECT THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION TO:

19. **MOBILIZE** the necessary resources to implement the Comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa and develop the matrix for the implementation of the Strategy;
20. **COLLABORATE** with UNECA, RECs, Member States, Specialized Institutions and all African ICT and Communication stakeholders, to accelerate the implementation of the digital transformation strategy, the AU communication and advocacy strategy, the Brand Identity Style and Communication Guide and key projects of the continent.
21. **ACCELERATE** implementation of the Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA) and promote the development and use of the PRIDA Digital Platform;
22. **DEVELOP** guidelines on Privacy and Over The Top services (OTT) in collaboration with relevant continental and regional institutions, and submit the guidelines to the STC-CICT 4 in 2021;
23. **DEVELOP a** continental framework on data policy and submit to the STC-CICT 4 in

2021;

24. **WORK** with the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) to develop a road map and guidelines for spectrum harmonization and deployment for current and future mobile and wireless broadband networks such as IMT2020 /5G;
25. **MOBILIZE** resources in collaboration with PAPU to support connectivity and Electrification of Post Offices in rural areas;
26. **SPEED UP** the transfer of the AUC Website from au.int to au.africa and the mail services from africa-union.org to au.africa.
27. **COMMIT** an annual budget for the organization and support of the Annual African IGF and African School of Internet Governance;
28. **DEDICATE** appropriate resources for the implementation of a comprehensive Cybersecurity program related to this critical flagship project, including assistance to AU Member States to adopt cyber strategies and Cyber legislation and to establish CIRTs/CERTs ¹;
29. **PROMOTE** the formulation of strategy and pilot projects for Unlocking Access to Basic Infrastructure and Services for Rural and Remote Areas including Indigenous Community Networks, and develop guidelines on legislation on deployment of technologies and ICT applications, to accelerate infrastructure role out in collaboration with ATU and other regional institutions;
30. **TRANSFER** the common assets of the Pan African e-Network to the management of the Regional Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOM);
 - xvi. **DEDICATE** realistic and appropriate resources (human, material and financial) to capacitate the AUC to enable it to better and more effectively communicate to various stakeholders and audiences on different media platforms, in a strategic, consistent and timely manner;
 - xvii. **ENSURE** that the Brand & Communication Style Guide and the Communication Policies and Procedures are instituted within the organization;
 - xviii. **PROVIDE** the necessary support to ensure the effective implementation and launch of the AU Media Awards within the period 2020-2021;
 - xix. **Finalize** the production of, and launch the first edition of the Africa Factbook:

APPRECIATION:

EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO H.E. ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI, PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT and Chairperson of the African Union (AU), the Government and the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of this conference.

¹Computer Incident/Emergency Response Team

Done in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 26 October 2019