

AFRICAN UNION

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**3RD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION SPECIALIZED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGIES (CCICT),
SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT,
25-26 OCTOBER 2019**

MINISTERIAL REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information Communication Technologies (STC-CICT-3) was held at the "Rixos Premium Seagate" hotel, Sharm El Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 25 to 26 October 2019. The experts' meeting held from 22th to 24th October 2019 preceded the Ministerial Conference. The Ministers deliberated on the report of the experts' session and other agenda items as per Annex 1.

II. PARTICIPATION

2. The following Member States took part in the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. Seychelles, South Sudan and Tunisia sent apologies. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

4. The following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were also in attendance: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

5. The following African and International Organizations and Agencies also took part: African Telecommunication Union (ATU), Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

6. The following organizations were also present: Internet Society (ISOC), Association of Progressive Communications (APC) and Intel

III. OPENING CEREMONY

7. The official opening was officiated by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who also gave the keynote address. The following officials also delivered opening statements: the representative of the outgoing Chairperson of the STC Bureau, represented by H.E Dina Mufti, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E Houlin Zhao Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission.

Remarks by H. E, Dr. Amr S. Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt

8. H.E. Dr. Amr S. Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt extended his gratitude to the AU Member States for having bestowed trust to Egypt to serve as Chair of the Bureau. He warmly welcomed the delegates to Sharm El Sheikh and conveyed the greetings of H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Chairperson of the African Union (AU).

9. The Honorable Minister highlighted the strategic importance of ICTs in the socio-economic development of Africa and further highlighted the transforming power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and called for the creation of an African Expert Working Group to develop a common African approach on AI as well as capacity building framework that supports the adoption of AI by Africans to achieve SDGs.

10. The Honorable Minister concluded his remarks by thanking the outgoing Bureau, Member States Experts and the African Union Commission for the support rendered during their tenure and welcomed all African Ministers and delegates to participate in the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) hosted by Egypt.

Remarks by H. E Houlin Zhao Secretary General of ITU

11. H.E Houlin Zhao recalled that ICTs today are on the top of the agenda of all international meetings and summits notably the FOCAC, TICAD and the very recent Africa-Russia summit, he also stressed on the significant progress made by African countries in increasing access to their populations.

12. H.E Houlin Zhao reiterated the support of ITU to work with the African Union and all African nations to speed up the digital transformation and enable the continent to reap the social and economic benefits of new technologies. He concluded by congratulating Africa and Ethiopia for the award of Nobel Peace Prize to H.E Abiy Ahmed Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Remarks by H.E. Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission

13. In her speech, the AUC Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, outlined the contributions of the African Union Commission to the development of the ICT and Communication Sectors in Africa and noted a number of AU programs and projects that have been implemented in this regard.

14. H.E. Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID seized the opportunity of addressing the Ministers to highlight the need for African countries to work together to ensure connectivity and access to all African citizens before 2030. She further emphasized on the importance of adopting a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa to serve as blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa's economy and societies.

Remarks by H.E Dina Mufti, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

15. The Ambassador H.E Dina Mufti representing Ethiopia as the Chair of outgoing bureau, gave an overview of the activities of the STC Bureau since the last session of the STC and highlighted how they set the directions towards establishing the roadmap and ICT vision for Africa.

16. He noted that ongoing ICT and communication initiatives are taking Africa forward and assist Member States in their endeavor to build connected and secure Africa. He also briefed the meeting on Ethiopia's plans to develop green ICT infrastructure and

indigenous ICT technology which fits the human need of current century and will help to connect Africa with full-fledged security.

IV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

17. The session adopted the agenda and work program attached as Annex II.

V. ELECTION OF CCICT-3 BUREAU

18. Following due consultations within the region and taking into account the geographical rotation in accordance with the rules and procedures of the STC-CICT-3, the bureau has been elected. The Central African Region ceded the chairmanship of the bureau for the next two years to the Northern region. . Egypt was nominated by the Northern region. Accordingly, the composition of the bureau of the STC (2019-2021) is as follows:

NORTHERN AFRICA	
Egypt	Chair of the Bureau
CENTRAL AFRICA	
Burundi	1st 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
VI. CONSIDERATION OF EXPERT REPORT	

19. The Rapporteur of the outgoing bureau (Ghana) presented the Report of the Experts' Session highlighting progress attained on various ICT and Communication projects and programs as well as the outcome of the discussions on the draft Africa Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) and the implementation of the African Union communication and advocacy strategy.

20. Following very constructive discussions on the Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS), Member States commended AUC for the initiative and requested more time to provide inputs to the DTS.

21. It has been agreed to open the DTS for online contributions until 8 November 2019. The AU Commission is requested to duly consider the received inputs and finalize the document by 15 November 2019 and submit for consideration and adoption by the AU Summit in January 2020.

22. The Report of the Experts was endorsed by the session with amendments (Annex III):

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE 2019 SHARM EL SHEIKH DECLARATION

23. The draft Declaration was presented by the rapporteur of the Bureau (Djibouti). Following discussions the Ministers adopted the **2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration (Annex IV)**

VII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24. The STC expressed its support for Cote D'Ivoire for hosting the UPU congress in 2020. It also took note of Burkina Faso's concern about the increasing use of ICTs for criminal activities and terrorism in the Sahel region and Mauritania's request for the AU Commission to support the exchange of best practices and experiences among Member States.

VIII. VOTE OF THANKS

25. On behalf of all the delegations, the Minister of Communication of Sierra Leone gave a vote of thanks (Annex V).

IX. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE MINISTERS' REPORT

The Ministers adopted this report.

X. CLOSING CEREMONY:

26. In her closing remarks, the AUC Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy expressed her gratitude for the presence and active participation of all delegates. She thanked the Egyptian Government for the excellent preparation and support to the meeting. The Commissioner observed that the Ministerial Declaration shows the collective endorsement and consensus for digital transformation as an impetus for the integration of the continent.

27. The Chairperson of the STC-CICT-3 thanked all Members of the Bureau, the Ministers and all delegations of the Member States and Organisations that participated and worked hard for the success of the meeting. He observed that the results of the meeting not only spoke for themselves as a testimony of the effort put into preparing for the meeting but also as a demonstration of what needs to be done over the next two years to effectively enable Africa to embrace its digital future.