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REPORT OF THE

JOINT MEETING OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND
MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT

ON THE

AFRICA AGAINST COVID-19: SAVING LIVES, ECONOMIES
AND LIVELIHOODS CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT BORDERS,
ECONOMIES AND SCHOOLS FROM COVID-19

18 AUGUST 2020

I. Introduction

The teleconference joint meeting of Ministers of Health and Ministers of Transport on the Africa Against COVID-19: Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods campaign to protect campaign to borders, economies and schools from COVID-19 was held on 19 August 2020 from 2:00-4:00 PM East Africa Time.

II. Attendance

The following participated in the teleconference: Honourable Ministers of Health and Transport, H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs; H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy; H.E. Professor Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs; H.E. Prof Sarah Anyang, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology; H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture; and H.E. Cessouma Samate, Commissioner for Political Affairs.

The following individuals and institutions were also represented: Dr Edem Adzogenu, AfroChampions, Oswald Jumira, Econet Group.

III. Opening of the Meeting

The teleconference meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs and H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, AUC.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs, welcomed and thanked the Commissioners and the Honourable Ministers for taking time to join in the meeting. She welcomed the Ministers of Health and Ministers of Transport for the close collaboration with the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (Africa CDC) for organizing the meeting. She stated that on the 26 March, 2020, the Bureau of the African Union Heads of State and Government endorsed the need for a Joint Continental Strategy that is underpinned by cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and communication in order to help African Union member states respond to COVID-19. This Joint Continental Strategy is led by H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, and is comprised of the Bureau of African Union Heads of State and Government. The Bureau also established an African Union COVID-19 Response Fund, three coordinating committees: a) Health, b) Finance and c) Transport and Logistics, as well as developed an African Task Force on Coronavirus (AFTCOR) which was launched to coordinate the preparedness and response efforts on the continent. The Joint Continental Strategy and AFTCOR were endorsed by the Emergency Ministerial Meeting of African Ministers of Health held on COVID-19 on 22 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Furthermore, she stated that Africa has now reached 1,128,245 cases, 25,884 deaths and 846,330 recoveries (75% of all cases on the continent). The pandemic continues to spread in Member States but as of today, 25 have reopened their borders and as such Member States need to be so vigilant in order to minimize the risk of spread in schools, travelers, and businesses, among others. She encouraged Member States to discuss the way forward in order to save lives and livelihoods.

She noted that, as of yet, there is no vaccine available on the continent and that the African Union and Africa CDC has engaged institutions and companies that are

working to develop these vaccines and are in the process of securing vaccines supplies for the continent. She emphasized that the meeting is so critical to enable Member states prepare for the next phase of the pandemic and hence need to work together in solidarity as Africa Member States.

H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, AUC, in her opening remarks, thanked participants for attending and their commitment to contain, as well as protect the continent from the ongoing pandemic and its implication. She stated that transport sector affects most sectors such as free trade and humanitarian activities.

The Bureau of the African Union Heads of State and Government endorsed the need for a Joint Continental Strategy that is underpinned by cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and communication to support Member States in responding to COVID-19. Thereafter, the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of Transport Ministers held a meeting in April 2020 in order to find a solution as the closure of the transport sector led to the disruption of the supply chain management systems, especially medical supplies and food and humanitarian activities, foreign currency, and trade. The air transport and tourism sectors suffered the most as USD billions were lost. She thanked the Governments who supported the transport sectors by ensuring the continuity of the sector. A Task Force was formed in collaboration with ICAO, IATA, ICA, AFCAC, AFRAA, RECs and aviation stakeholders to ensure that the air transportation is opened in a safe manner to ensure safe transportation of passengers. Some airlines have started opening and these sectors need support to implement these measures and standard operating procedures that were put in place to contain the spread. She emphasized the need to support Africa CDC in responding to COVID-19 pandemic on the continent.

In his opening remarks H.E. Mbalula Fikile, Minister of Transport for the Republic of South Africa, thanked the African Union and Africa CDC for implementing the Joint Continental Strategy. He further thanked Ethiopian Airlines and Egypt Air for transporting medical equipment as well as providing humanitarian flights for responders fighting the pandemic on the ground at the country level. He thanked partners for supporting the Anti COVID-19 campaign. He stated that following the rapid spread of the pandemic in South Africa, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairman of the African Union, launched consultations with stakeholders and partners – including the media – to ensure that Africa responds efficiently and effectively. He further stated that South Africa declared a total lockdown including workplaces, schools, social places transport including closure of the airspace except the essential services like health, welfare and distribution of food and humanitarian services. Immediately after the president of South Africa declared a total lockdown, the Ministry of Transport held a meeting to take measures on responding to the pandemic which led to closure of air transport as well as closed inter-provisio transport.

As of today, South Africa has eased the lockdown from Level 5 to Level 2, after achieving an 80% recovery taking into consideration the standard operating procedures.

In his opening remarks H.E. Dr Joe Phaahla, Deputy Minister of Health for the Republic of South Africa thanked all for attending and thanked the Commission for giving South Africa an opportunity to participate and give opening remarks in this important meeting. He stated that, as of the time of the meeting, the total cumulative COVID-19 cases reported in South Africa was 589,886, 11,982 deaths and 477,671 recoveries (80%). South Africa has been guided by saving lives and saving livelihoods and thanks the African Union for this campaign. He further stated that the lockdown created an opportunity to improve the health sector and reduce the spread of COVID-19 through the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), laboratory services, infection prevention and control, and clinical management. In his closing remarks, he emphasized that we are in a new normal where social distancing should be taken serious, as well as wearing masks.

IV. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted without any amendments

V. Commissioner Interventions

The AU Commissioners, H.E. Prof Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs; H.E. Amb Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture; H.E. Prof Sarah Anyang, Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology; and H.E. Cessouma Samate, Commissioner for Political Affairs, took the floor to highlight efforts by their respective departments developed to respond against the negative impact of the COVID-19.

For his part, H.E. Prof Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs noted that measures taken by Member States to slow transmission of COVID-19 – including lockdowns and closing of borders – have had considerable consequences on the import and export industry, impacting food security in Africa. He noted that while Africa has more than 60% of the world's arable and uncultivated land, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) spent nearly USD 49 million on food imports.

H.E. Prof Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, also noted that response measures to the ongoing pandemic have also impacted Africa tourism sector – which represents nearly 8.5% of Africa's GDP, as well as impacting Africa's informal sector, which he noted represents 66% of total employment in SSA, and 52% in North Africa. He recalled that H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chairperson of the African Union, appointed five Special Envoys, to mobilize additional financial resources and engage with the Paris Club, multilateral development institutions and private creditors to negotiate debt cancellation for low income countries, and request for a standstill on the servicing of external debt for a period of two years. For its part, the Department of Economic Affairs also supports the actions of Special Envoys by advocating and negotiating on the issue of African debts on various high-level discussion fora such as the Working Group – UNO. H.E. Prof Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, remarked that in the short term, African countries should: i) show solidarity, as local agricultural countries can supply other African countries; ii) develop intra-African trade; and iii) open up supply corridors despite border closures.

Next, H.E. Prof Sarah Anyang, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST), remarked that, while necessary, measures implemented to slow transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on economic, social and education systems. She noted that the effects are worst among poor people with limited income and marginal, vulnerable and deprived population.

Children and young people are affected the most and will live longest with the long-term impact of COVID-19. H.E. Prof Sarah Anyang, Commissioner for HRST shared that in response to the negative socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology initiated many activities, including an African Education Science, Technology and Innovation Response, in collaboration with Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Development Partners, launching a number of actions, including developing and sharing guidance with ministries of education to use Digital connectivity, Online and offline learning Teachers as facilitators and motivators of learning, Safety online and offline, Skills focused learning (DOTSS), to ensure continuous schooling and learning online and offline particularly for vulnerable children, girls and the disabled in deprived communities without access to electricity and internet.

In addition, the HRST department developed and is implementing the Youth Response to COVID-19 plan, in which objectives aim to (a) reduce health risk of COVID-19 among youth, (b) minimise the Impact of COVID-19 on young people and (c) mobilize & engage Youth to be responders to COVID-19. Furthermore, the Department, through the STC-EST3 has initiated a concerted effort for rapid research and development (R&D) and innovation response policies and Afrocentric programmes to boost R&D activities on (a) Diagnosis and Testing, (b) Therapeutic and Treatment, (c) Vaccines and local production of PPEs and medical supplies.

For her part, H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture noted that in addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Africa's agriculture sector has been hit by consecutive shocks in as many years, including the Fall Armyworm in 2018 and the desert locusts in the Horn of Africa in 2019, (the worst in the past 70 years). She noted that statistically, 256 million Africans or 20 per cent of the population were suffering from chronic undernutrition in 2018, 239 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa before COVID-19 hit. She noted that in order to ensure that we do not move from a health crisis to "hunger pandemic" as a result of the worsening trend by COVID-19, the African Union collaborated with FAO to hold a Ministerial Meeting on 16th April 2020 to evaluate the implications of COVID-19 on Food Security in Africa with recommendations in five areas: (1) social protection; (2) crop calendars; (3) supporting domestic markets (4) Taking advantage of the mechanism of the newly created African Continental Free Trade area (AFCFTA); and (5) Safeguarding input supply chains for small-scale agricultural producers, poultry, fisheries and livestock.

In addition, a Task Force was put in place to oversee the implementation of the actions identified by the Ministers in the Declaration and reporting back progress to the Ministers on a quarterly basis. It is composed as follows: African Union Commission (Co-Chair); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Co-Chair); European Union; African Development Bank (AfDB); World Bank; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); World Food Program (WFP); and AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). Finally, H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture noted that her department, in partnership with the Department of Economic Affairs and Trade and Industry organized a joint ministerial meeting, resulting in declarations to strengthen and complement the Agricultural Ministerial declaration of 16th April 2020. They called upon governments and partners to commit adequate resources to building greater

productive capacity in agriculture, strengthening resilience in Africa's agrifood systems through allocation of new resources or repurposing existing public resources.

H.E. Cessouma Samate, Commissioner for Political Affairs

VI. Presentations

A) Update by H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, AUC on the restart and recovery of the transport sector

H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid highlighted that the precautionary measures implemented by member States, while necessary, impacted all transport modes, causing disruption to the supply chains especially for medical and food supplies as well as for the necessary inputs to production. She noted that the hardest hit was the air transport and consequently regional mobility, trade and tourism — a main source of revenue for Africa. For her presentation, H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, AUC, highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of the transport sub-sectors, including air, land, sea, or urban transport. In the field of air transport, 51% revenue losses were estimated at USD 2.2 billion for African airports, due to restrictions in aviation activities. Moreover, cash liquidity challenges and fluctuations in foreign currencies have and will continue to result in job losses for the airlines, airports, and air navigation service providers.

The AU Infrastructure and Energy Department (IED) acted upon the recommendation of The Bureau of the African Union Heads of State and Government for a Continental Strategy that is underpinned by cooperation, coordination, collaboration and communication to support member states in their fight against COVID-19. In April 2020, IED convened extraordinary ministerial meetings of the bureaus of the Specialised Technical Sub-Committees in charge of Transport, Energy, Communication & Information Technology, and of Tourism in order to develop containment, resilience and recovery strategies and actions for the aforementioned sectors. IED also organised and participated in a large number of consultation meetings stakeholders and partners in Africa and globally in order to raise devise joint actions and help raise Africa's concerns.

Regarding air transport, AU Infrastructure and Energy Department led the continental initiatives to allow the restart of civil aviation in Africa together with specialised agencies AFCAC and AFRAA, RECs, ICA, and regional representatives of international organisations. IED actively participates in the global High Level Task Force convened by ICAO which drafted the global guidelines and reports to position the aviation sector on a path to restart, recovery and sustainability — and that in collaboration with stakeholders WHO, IATA, the air industry. The restart and recovery reports and guidelines have been shared with all Member States in July 2020. The Task Force continues to monitor the situation and adjust the guidelines and measures as the situation evolves.

As for roads and railways, the prevention measures that were put in place by the African States have resulted in, first, closure of borders between various African then long delays due to the necessary application of health measures. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid called for harmonised health and safety checks in order to allow for a more fluid

road transportation and movement across borders and consequently facilitate intra african trade, tourism and mobility.

The Commissioner recalled that the lockdown helped limit road accidents and reduced by 75% the death toll on african roads. She called on African governments to adopt and ratify the Road Safety Charter and to rethink urban planning to allow more pedestrian and cycling corridors and to continue road maintenance projects for their ability to create jobs.

H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy emphasised the importance of good communication campaigns regarding the applications of health and safety measures in transportation in order to restore trust of the public, as African countries continue to re-open. She repeated that priority is given to immediate actions that ensure the health and safety of transport staff and users. She also emphasised that the objective is to **recover better**. High importance in medium term should be given of reforming transport sectors to ensure viability and sound operation as well as to deployment and adoption of green and smart technologies. Thus, skilling and up-skilling the workforce should be an integral part of recovery strategies.

Finally, H. E. Dr, Amani Abou-Zeid proposed five key actions in the medium and longer terms. First, she proposed the establishment and/or reinforcement of national plans and national facilitation committees to implement continental relief measures in all modes of Transport. Secondly, she proposed to ensure access to sufficient financial, human resources and equipment to support operations. Third, she recommended resource mobilization by AUC, African States, financial institutions, international partners and stakeholders to contribute to the financial package to competitively reposition and enable African transport sector to survive as well as recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Fourth, prioritization of transport sector needs by governments and strengthening of dialogue to implement the proposed restart and recovery measures. Finally, the harmonization of procedures on the continent is essential to strengthen public and passenger air travel. Member States should establish and enforce Aviation public health procedures aligned to WHO and Africa CDC guidelines.

B) Update by Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC, on the epidemiological situation of COVID-19 outbreak in Africa and introduction of Africa Against COVID-19: Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods campaign

In his presentation, Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC provided brief high-level updates on the epidemiological situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, noting that Africa has marked the milestone of over 1.1 million reported cases with over 25,000 deaths and over 830,000 recoveries. He noted that we have reached a critical juncture in the pandemic as a continent, as number of cases continue to increase and because Member States are beginning to, or already have begun easing the lockdown of their economies. As such, we have to shift our strategies and adapt it to what the current economic imperatives require.

With regards to testing, Dr Nkengasong remarked that on 04 June, H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC, rolled out the Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing in Africa (PACT). He recalled that at the time PACT began, the continent

as a whole conducted just about 350,000 COVID-19 tests. As of the time of the meeting, the Africa CDC had exceeded its PACT goal of seeing 10 million COVID-19 tests conducted on the continent within four months, a remarkable achievement, and noting that the Africa CDC helped to facilitate approximately 4.5 million of those tests.

Dr Nkengasong recalled that the Africa CDC established the African Task Force for Novel Coronavirus (AFTCOR), as part of the Joint Continental Strategy on COVID-19, with the Steering Committee comprised of members from public health and research institutions, Ministries of Health and NGOs. The group uses science and evidence-based strategies to guide the group's response efforts and coordinate across the continent. Dr Nkengasong reminded participants that one of the first strategies from the AFTCOR working group was to prepare the continent through the PACT initiative, underpinned by testing, tracing, and treating those diagnosed with coronavirus. He highlighted other achievements of the group, including the successful deployment of the African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP), where Member Nations can procure essential medical supplies for their respective countries.

He then remarked on the continent's current vaccine efforts, noting that on 11 June, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AUC, provided a mandate for the Africa CDC to host a conference on Africa's leadership in the development and access of a COVID-19 vaccine. The director noted that the virtual two-day conference, chaired by H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chair of the African Union, was highly successful and resulted in two goals set for Africa CDC: 1) to secure sufficient vaccine supplies for the continent, and 2) to remove barriers to vaccine roll-out.

Dr Nkengasong stated that the continent is transitioning into the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby Member States are beginning to ease their lockdowns and thus, increasing travel across borders. He then recalled the earlier statement of H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC regarding the need to develop a harmonized strategy through partnership and coordination throughout the entire African society. Dr Nkengasong next illustrated various travel restrictions (including full border closures, travel restrictions to/from specific countries, entry and exit restrictions, differing testing requirements and more), currently imposed by Member States, again underlining the necessity for coordination across all countries.

Dr Nkengasong then moved forward with the introduction of the campaign, Africa Against COVID-19, Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods, stating that the AFTCOR technical working group helped to develop the core pillars of the campaign and then to vet and endorsed those ideas through a technical discussion forum held jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO AFRO), in partnership with peer organizations, in the prior week. The director remarked on the three overarching goals of the campaign: 1) protecting borders and travel through harmonized testing procedures and certification, 2) protecting economies and livelihoods through enhanced surveillance and exchange of information at inter- and intra-economic regions and business points, and 3) protecting schools through risk assessment and management and strengthening of resources to protect staff and students. The director emphasized that all three goals of the campaign will be supported through the continued implementation and of the PACT initiative and through innovative partnerships with the private sector.

Dr Nkengasong moved forward to explain the high-level asks of Honourable Ministers in order to see the campaign come to fruition, including, for Ministers of Health: 1) the need to ensure that we have the necessary laboratories that are conducting COVID-19 testing in any Member State, so that the results can go into a platform and becomes a legitimate testing site and certification can be validated and uniform, 2) the need to deploy a cross-border tool or platform to ensure verifiable and credible COVID-19 information (e.g. test results), and 3) a mechanism to collect additional data and evidence to guide focused interventions, (such as serosurveys and rapid mortality surveillance).

Next, Dr Nkengasong then moved to explain the asks of the Honourable Ministers of Transport, with the goal to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on economies and livelihoods by: 1) employing digital frameworks for the tracking and sharing of critical information in order to create a safe public health corridor, 2) supporting mutual recognition of health information provided across countries, 3) and strengthening risk communication. Finally, Dr Nkengasong noted the need to ensure that schools are re-opened safely and highlighted the need for Member States to 1) develop a school safety plan underpinned by the scaling of testing through the PACT initiative, 2) to guarantee enough resources are allocated to protect students and staff, and 3) for the establishment and engagement of a multi-sectoral committee to continuously assess risk and mobilize resources for continuous improvement of infrastructure.

C) Presentations on private sector partnership and technologies

Mr Oswald Jumira, Econet Group

Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC invited Mr Oswald Jumira of Econet Group to share the work they've done with regards to digital innovations that would help support the campaign's goals. Mr Jumira discuss the solutions developed, aimed at helping Member States to reopen borders and resume economic activity and creating the confidence for citizens to move freely around the continent. The Econet Group has operationalized a digital tool known as the COVID-19 Health Status Report (HSR), across Southern and Eastern Africa which allows an individual to travel across borders or within the county, and shows the individual's health status including COVID-19 test results, where they were tested, and more. Mr Jumira explained that this technology is equivalent to the digitization of the yellow fever card and is integrated to airlines, hotels, ride hailing companies, and more, and captures critical information to generate a report that the individual can share across borders to enable movement of travelers. The system includes fast turnaround and authentication of data from test kits to ensure that Member States have the most accurate, up to date information with regards to COVID-19 traveler data. Mr Jumira also highlighted the fact that the platform is developed in partnership with other the private sector organizations in order to decentralize testing.

Mr Jumira also noted the establishment of a call center to help facilitate COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, where multi-lingual call-center operators work to collect relevant data and facilitate communication with affected individuals. Finally, Mr Jumira shared information regarding wearable technology in the form of a COVID-19 wristband tracker that aims to track those who have been tested positive for coronavirus, but are in violation of or avoid quarantine regulations. This data is entered in to the HSR system and is blockchain protected. Mr Jumira noted that they are

offering the platform for free for countries and looking to partner with governments and private sector organizations to deploy the solution and promote sharing of information.

Dr Edem Adzogenu, Chairman and Bright Simons, AfroChampions

Next, Dr Nkengasong invited Dr Edem Adzogenu, Chairman and Bright Simons of AfroChampions to introduce and explain the PanaBios technology platform they've developed and will be donating to the African Union Commission and Member States to support the Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods campaign. Mr Simons discussed three areas to highlight 1) we need to harmonize entry restriction controls 2) the PanaBios team has developed a common API for validation of test results across the continent, so that Member States can pool testing results and data into a common, validated laboratory registry system, and 3) the establishment for a connected hotspot surveillance system that enables the continent to build a common response system, that notifies individuals of potential exposure to COVID-19.

VII) Closing remarks

In his final remarks, Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to introduce the Africa CDC's latest campaign and for alignment among Honourable Ministers and partners. The director reiterated that the plans and partnerships for the Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods campaign to protect border and travel, economies, livelihoods, and schools have been the result of fruitful discussions by the AFTCOR technical working group, and proper vetting by peer institutions and partners. Dr Nkengasong expressed his heartfelt appreciation to both AfroChampions and Econet Group for their generosity in donating their technologies to the AU and Member States, supporting efforts to develop a unified strategy for easing the lockdown of economies, borders and schools. Dr Nkengasong then thanked H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs, for her continued leadership, support, and serving as a champion in promoting innovation within Africa CDC's response efforts.

Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC concluded with the following key messages: i) the whole of African society is needed to develop a coordinated strategy in order to make this engagement successful, including health, political, and civil society sectors, ii) the campaign will require collaboration and multiple partnerships with the private sector in order to develop innovative solutions, and iii) the Commission will be leaning on Ministers of Health and Ministers of Transport to help implement the campaign from a technical point and encouraged them to join in the harmonized approach to reopen Member States.

In her closing remarks H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs expressed her gratitude to H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy for co-chairing the teleconference and for her updates on the restart and recovery of the transport sector since the onset of COVID-19. H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs then thanked the Honourable Commissioners, Ministers, speakers, and participants of the meeting, and expressed the need for the Commission to take preemptive steps in easing the lockdowns of economies as the continent moves into the next phase of the pandemic. She urged the Honourable Ministers to work alongside the Commission to implement goals of the campaign outlined earlier in the meeting by Dr John Nkengasong, Director for Africa CDC.

H.E. Amira Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs then announced the launch of the Africa Against COVID-19: Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods campaign and moved to close the meeting.