

TAKING STOCK, CHARTING THE FUTURE

African Union
Commission
End of Term Report
2017-2021

In this report, we take stock of the past four years of the AU Commission and make recommendations for the Union in charting the future. As we do so, we are cognisant that we built on the work of the Commission that preceded us. We have made progress, but there is still work to be done in realising our Continent's aspirations and strengthening our Union.

We focussed on implementation of key priorities laid out in Africa's 50-year blueprint - Agenda 2063. We are making progress, albeit uneven, in beginning to realise its aspirations. In the last four years, the African Continental Free Trade Area was signed, and entered into force in the shortest time ever witnessed for negotiations of a trade agreement of this size. Coupled with the launch of the Open Skies Initiative and the Free Movement Protocol, the potential to accelerate integration is great and should be capitalised.

Our Continent made some progress on the path to Silencing the Guns in the last four years. We made some breakthroughs on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, in Sudan, and in South Sudan. We contributed to the conclusion of peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic, provided technical assistance to the DRC, and supported the transition in Somalia. We revitalised the AU Peace Fund and mobilised hundreds of millions in support of our Member States' struggles in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, among other regions, in the areas of capacity building, conflict prevention and peace support operations. However, the continent still endures structural challenges to attain lasting peace and sustainable development.

The continued and emerging threats to peace and security in several of our Member States remind us that silencing the guns will be a long process that should entail the concerted efforts of the AU, Member States, RECs,



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citizens and all stakeholders to commit to realise sustainable development, deepen democratic governance, and uphold peace and security. The re-emergence of military coups, civil unrest, and intra-state conflicts are of particular concern, which reaffirm the need to invest in structural conflict prevention, political dialogue, mediation and post conflict reconstruction and development. Equally important is the need to adapt our institutions and modalities for engagement to respond to violent extremism, cross-border crime, and cybersecurity risks.

Through the AU institutional reforms, we put in place mechanisms that will allow our

Union to be more effective, efficient and more fit for purpose. We made headways in restructuring, improving and putting systems in place that will yield greater results, while abiding by principles of transparency and accountability. While much work remains, we are bringing the AU closer to the people and strengthening Africa's place on the global stage. We are re-evaluating our partnerships and have worked to strengthen our voice and act as one. We have taken some steps forward in engendering our Union and making space for our youth.

This is not to say that there have not been obstacles in our path or that our work is done. Resource and capacity constraints, inadequate coordination, and the slow pace of implementing AU decisions as well as the AU institutional reforms can and must improve. Our resolve and commitment to address these challenges is our strength. Our work must continue in earnest, with renewed energy and vigour.

We end this term in a time of much disruption, uncertainty and unprecedented shifts in the way we operate due to COVID-19. We have had to adapt, reorganise and make changes to how we deliver our mandate. We have learnt that change and innovation is inevitable to confront the challenges of our time and are reassured that together, there is little we cannot overcome. We must come together to strengthen our resilience and mobilise and harness our capacities to reshape our world.

Together, united, we will realise The Africa We Want.

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ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfCHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
AfTCOR	Africa Taskforce on COVID-19 Response
Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AMA	African Medicines Agency
AMERT	Africa Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Tool
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA	African Union Development Agency
AUEOM	African Union Electoral Observer Mission
AUFIs	African Union Financial Institutions
AUHR	African Union High Representative
AUTJP	African Union Transitional Justice Policy
AUYVC	African Union Youth Volunteer Corps
AWLF	African Women's Leadership Fund
AWLN	African Women's Leadership Network
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAR	Central African Republic African Union
CIEFFA	International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa
CPC	Committee of Programs and Conferences
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSV/RA	Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessments
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMBs	Election Management Bodies

EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
Maputo Protocol	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
MPFA	Migration Policy Framework for Africa
MPSI	Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
ODA	Overseas development aid
PANVAC	Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PAVEU	Pan African Virtual and e-University
PBFA	Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting
PIDA	Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PRC	Permanent Representatives' Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SAATM	Single African Air-Transport Market
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SRR	Security Sector Reform
STC	Specialised Technical Committee
UN	United Nations

This report highlights key milestones achieved and challenges confronted by the outgoing Commission during its mandate from 2017-2020. The report provides reflections on lessons learnt in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its Flagship Projects as well as on Institutional Reform. It also proffers recommendations for consideration by the incoming Commission and Member States on the way forward, towards strengthening the Union and delivering on the Africa We Want.

The political and socio-economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have been far reaching. The Union's resolve to confront common challenges has been reaffirmed and manifests in the response, which has been exemplary. It has equally pushed the Commission to adapt and innovate its working methods, processes and modalities, embracing technology and innovation. Despite the challenges, it has presented the Commission with an opportunity to adjust its priorities, as well as enhance efficiency and effectiveness. COVID 19 has reaffirmed the AU's resolve to focus on strengthening the Union's capacities and self-reliance for sustainable development including in dealing with pandemics, emergencies, and emerging threats. With political commitment, innovation, and a focus on implementation of Agenda 2063 priorities, regional integration, sustainable peace and development are within reach.

During its tenure, the Commission focused on implementation of the First 10 Year Action Plan of Agenda 2063 and its flagship initiatives. The most notable milestones achieved towards regional integration were the launch of the AfCFTA, the Open Skies Initiative, and the adoption of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the African Passport. While trading is yet to commence due to COVID-19 restrictions as well as finalisation of outstanding issues, the coming into force of the AfCFTA holds a lot of promise for the continent's future. This requires, however, that Member States ratify and implement, without delay, the Free Movement Protocol which is a pre-requisite for intra-regional trade and integration.

The foundations of regional integration and sustainable development on the continent is hinged upon democratic governance, peace and security. During the last four years, the Commission focused on initiatives aimed at silencing the guns through the implementation of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA). A revitalised Peace Fund with enhanced governance and oversight has been established with \$179.5 million in AU Member State contributions since 2017. A PRC Sub-committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance was established and operationalised. Important policy frameworks, including the Transitional Justice Policy and the Protocol on Statelessness were adopted and submitted for consideration respectively. While the continent remained largely peaceful and several successes in preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts were registered, pockets of fragility remain, especially in cross-border areas. Several of our Member States are facing rising sectarianism and governance deficits leading to civil unrest and/or internal conflicts. Silencing the guns will require enhancing state-society relations and addressing structural causes and triggers of conflict and emerging threats in a sustained manner and should therefore become a rallying call for the Union beyond the current term of this Commission.

The importance of health, social development, science and innovation to the sustainable development agenda cannot be underscored. The Commission focused its efforts on strengthening the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), particularly in its response to Ebola and COVID-19, the Pan African University, the Africa Space Programme and adoption of the African Migration Policy Framework. The timely and coordinated response to Ebola as well as the solidarity exhibited provided precedent and capacity to address COVID-19, evidenced in the joint continental strategy and the speedy mobilisation of resources. Effective implementation of these

initiatives are works in progress and expected to feature prominently on the next Commission's priorities.

African citizens are exercising agency, demanding accountability and transparency in their own countries, across borders and in their institutions. This has presented the Union with a unique opportunity to live up to its promise to be a people-centred Union driven by its own citizens and a dynamic force in the world. During its tenure, the Commission made strides in bringing the AU closer to the people, engendering the Union, making space for young people and enhancing engagement with citizens and the diaspora. The Commission, for the first time in its history, appointed a Special Envoy on Youth. Accountability mechanisms for gender equality commitments were put in place and a new African Women's Decade on Financial Inclusion has been launched. A framework to shift Diaspora engagement from the current ad hoc model to a more systematic one across AU systems and organs has been drafted.

Africa's place on the global stage was enhanced through development of African Common Positions, a review of partnerships, continued efforts to reform international institutions, support to decolonisation efforts – namely that of the Chagos Archipelago, and the campaign for African candidatures in international organisations and continued solidarity with Palestine. The Commission became more strategic in its engagement and partnerships with global institutions and partners, reflecting Africa's needs and priorities. Speaking with one voice on issues of concern will require greater coherence and political commitment that should include pushing the agenda on reforms of global governance and financial institutions, as well as equitable representation. In a post COVID context, it should include coordinated action to negotiate external debt restructuring and debt relief.

Implementation of the AU Institutional Reforms including sustainable financing of the Union are key to strengthening the Union. Effective delivery of the mandate of the Union continues to face several challenges that include: lack of effective coordination, coherence and synergy amongst AU organs, institutions, RECs and specialised agencies; limited financial, human and technical resources; and low implementation of AU treaties, policies, decisions and resolutions. Strengthened coordination with the RECs, through the adoption of a new Protocol on AU/RECs Relations and the institutionalisation of a dedicated AU-RECs coordination Summit will go a long way in making this possible. Division of labour between the AU and the RECs will ensure that the principle of subsidiary, complementary and effective and effective deployment of resources achieves optimal impact.

The reform of the Union has commenced and a new departmental structure for the AU Commission has been adopted. A new scale of assessment for Member State contributions to the AU budget has improved overall burden-sharing and a stronger sanctions regime for non-payment of contributions has been put in place to enhance predictability and timeliness. Budget reforms aimed at improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the Union's resources have also been undertaken. The next Commission is expected to prioritise these reforms to support the Union to build back better in a post COVID 19 context by becoming leaner, more professional and effective as well as more accountable and transparent.

The incoming Commission should continue supporting Member States to implement Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects and strengthen the Union. In specific terms, it is critical to prioritise the strengthening of social safety nets through the implementation of the AU Social Contract Framework to enhance state-society relations and prioritise human security. The priority for 2021 and the years to come should continue to be long-term socio-economic prosperity; investments in public health governance including improving health care systems, capacities, infrastructure and legal frameworks; implementation of AU institutional and financial reforms to become fit for purpose and self-sufficient; and building equitable partnerships driven by Africa's priorities.

Key Milestones at a Glance

1. INTRODUCTION

The mandate of the African Union Commission (AUC), is to support, facilitate and advance the integration agenda of the African Union (AU), in line with Agenda 2063. The Commission inherited implementation of Agenda 2063, its First 10Year Implementation Plan and 12 Flagship Projects as its priorities from the previous Commission. The Commission prioritised its strategic activities to implement key Assembly Decisions related to Agenda 2063.

The Commission made significant progress in implementing Agenda 2063 strategic priorities as detailed in the next section. Despite notable milestones, the Commission faced several challenges and setbacks in carrying out its mandate. Many of the challenges are structural and long standing that precede this Commission and include inadequate financial and human resources; inadequate coordination and prioritisation; implementation gaps by Member States on their continental commitments, and the slow pace of restructuring the Union to ensure that it is fit for purpose, leaner, more accountable and effective. The implications of this are far-reaching and give greater impetus for the urgency of implementing the AU reforms and realising a self-sufficient Union.

2017

January

Assembly Decision for June/July AU Summit to be replaced with coordination meeting between Bureau, AUC, RECs and RMs

Assembly Decision on Institutional Reform of the AU Adopted
PAWO conferred status of an AU Specialised Agency

July

FEMWISE established

2018

January

Single African Air-Transport Market launched

Golden Rules for Financing Adopted

Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance and budget oversight function Endorsed

First Continental CAADP Biennial Review Report Endorsed

Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment and its Implementation Roadmap Endorsed

Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Adopted

Organisational Structure for Africa Institute of Remittances Adopted

March

Agreement to establish AfCFTA signed by 44 Member States

July

New AU Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment adopted

Governance structure for AUDA adopted

September

AU Trade Facilitation Strategy was adopted in Moroni, Comoros

2018

November

Africa Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) launched

Peace Fund Board of Trustees established

Sanctions regime adopted for non-payment of dues

First ever AU Youth Envoy Appointed

December

Election of ECOSOCC members

2019

February

New scale of assessment for contributions adopted (2019-2021)

ICJ advisory opinion in support of the full decolonisation of the Chagos Archipelago, Mauritius

African Union Transitional Justice Policy adopted

Guidelines for Issuance of African Passport adopted

First Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 Launched

Saleema Initiative on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation Launched

June

AfCFTA launched

July

First Mid-Year Coordination Meeting took place in Niamey, Niger

Plan of Action to Accelerate Ratification / Accession and Implementation of OAU/AU Treaties as well as the Guidelines on the Modalities for the Setting up, Liaising and Engaging with National Sectoral Committees adopted

August

Conclusion of AU-mediated Transition Agreement in Sudan

2019

December

Establishment of the AU Centre for PCRD (AUC-PCRD) with Headquarters based in Cairo, Egypt.

Launch of Pan African Virtual and e-University

2020

February

Africa Blue Economy Strategy Launched

Adoption of the Protocol on the Relations between the AU and RECs, Rules of Procedure Governing the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting

New AUC Departmental Structure Adopted

TOR and structure for Peace Fund Secretariat adopted

March

The Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak approved by the Bureau of the AU Assembly

June

WHO declared an end to the 10th Ebola virus outbreak

August

Comprehensive Juba Peace Agreement signed

December

Johannesburg Declaration and Assembly decision extending the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns for ten years.

The establishment of a fully-fledged development agency AUDA-NEPAD is a critical milestone as the Agency is charged primarily with the coordination and execution of priority regional and continental projects with the aim of accelerating regional integration, which will improve impact and operational efficiency in the implementation of Agenda 2063

This report takes stock of the last four years of this Commission, spanning from 2017-2020. The implementation of Agenda 2063 priorities are explored, in particular regional integration; governance and peace and security; health and social development, science and technology; bringing the AU closer to the people; and enhancing Africa's place on the global stage. Strengthening the Union is viewed through the prism of AU reforms, financing the Union, AU treaties, coordination with RECs and other AU Organs, Institutions and Specialised Agencies. The report concludes with charting the future for the next Commission – informed by the lessons learnt along the way.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2063 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

During the period under review, the Commission prioritised accelerating implementation of Agenda 2063, guided by the First 10 Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 which identifies priority areas and flagship initiatives for the Union. Significant progress was made, including enhancing monitoring and reporting as exemplified in the annual progress reports as well as the First Continental Report that consolidates and reviews the implementation status of 31 of the 55 Member States and six RECs. This follows the adoption of an integrated Agenda 2063 M&E Framework, Indicator Handbook and data collection tool, facilitating reporting. Even so, the availability of quality, disaggregated data on the various indicators of Agenda 2063 remains a persistent challenge.

The establishment of AUDA-NEPAD is a critical milestone in the implementation of Agenda 2063 during this term. The AU is now endowed with a fully-fledged development agency which will improve impact and operational efficiency. AUDA-NEPAD is charged primarily with the coordination and execution of priority regional and continental projects enshrined in Agenda 2063 with the aim of accelerating regional integration. Going forward, it is imperative that the resources allocated to the Agency be significantly increased to meet the requirements for the successful implementation of AU's policies and Agenda 2063 flagship projects.

While efforts to popularise and harmonise Agenda 2063 with national and regional development strategies and plans have been made, much more needs to be done including appointing national and REC focal points. Due to the prioritisation of flagship initiatives of Agenda 2063 is critical, their prioritisation is critical. National statistical systems must be strengthened to close the data gap to

facilitate monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, strengthening the synergy and the division of labour between the AU and the RECs as well as the various stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2063 including the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, APRM, is paramount. The role of civil society in this process must equally be accorded adequate attention.

2.1 REGIONAL INTEGRATION |

Priorities on regional integration were related to the first two aspirations of Agenda 2063: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; and an integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance. The Commission focused on boosting intra-African trade; facilitating free movement of persons; and enhancing accountability mechanisms for agriculture.

Milestones:

- Entry into force of the AfCFTA
- Establishment and Implementation of SAATM
- Adoption of the Free Movement Protocol and African Passport
- Biennial Review Mechanism for Agriculture in place

Besides promoting sustainable development, intra-African trade has one of the highest potentials to spur regional integration in Africa. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was therefore one of the most significant milestones recorded during the reporting period. The AfCFTA was signed during the March 2018 Extraordinary Summit in Kigali, Rwanda and launched in Niamey in June 2019. As of October 2020, 54 Member States have signed and 28 have ratified the AfCFTA.

Due to COVID-19, trading under the AfCFTA has been postponed to 2021, with several outstanding negotiations before it can commence. The AfCFTA



H. E. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of Niger and Champion of the AfCFTA (Middle), H.E Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda (Left) and H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, AUC Chairperson (Right) at the Unveiling ceremony of the AfCFTA Plaque

Negotiations Support Unit has developed a calendar of meetings that will lead to finalisation of all outstanding issues on tariff offers, rules of origin, and trade in services. In addition, the AfCFTA Negotiations Support Unit is working to assist Member States in getting ready for the start of trading through engagement of national stakeholders, production of trade documents, establishment and strengthening of national AfCFTA Committees, development of national AfCFTA implementation strategies, and putting in place mechanisms for monitoring trade flows and trade statistics once the AfCFTA market becomes operational.

The AfCFTA Secretariat has been established in Ghana together with other institutions envisaged under the AfCFTA Agreement. The Common Africa Agro-Parks Programme was endorsed by Policy Organs to facilitate trans-boundary and trans-national mega industrial corridors for food production and free trade of agricultural products in support of the AfCFTA. In order to operationalise the AfCFTA however, several steps remain, including aligning national laws to the AfCFTA Agreement; ensuring required documents to enable trade under the AfCFTA are produced, distributed and brought to the attention of stakeholders such as producers, importers, exporters, freight and forwarding companies and customs administrations; and automation of customs and trade processes

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which would be a foundation for interconnectivity of Customs Administrations and other stakeholders on the continent. These should be a key priority of the incoming Commission.

Another achievement relative to boosting intra-African trade was adoption of the AU Trade Facilitation Strategy in 2018. The Strategy aims to boost intra-African trade and promote trade through trade facilitation and the improvement of customs procedures. Among its goals is the development of a harmonised digital system that will create cooperation between Customs Administrations across the Continent and mainstream African economies into the global system.

Infrastructure Development is pivotal for sustainable development and regional integration. The Commission pursued the implementation of the first Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Priority Action Plan (2012-2020) which resulted in an increase of 16,066 KM of roads, 4,077 KMs of railways, 3,506 KM of power transmission lines, and 17 additional Member States connected with regional fibre optic cables. Through constructed and operational PIDA projects, 112,900 jobs were directly and 49,400 indirectly created. The Commission coordinated the development of the next phase of PIDA (PIDA PAP 2, 2021-2030), including an assessment of the infrastructure needs on the continent and capacity building of RECs on the integrated corridor approach. Challenges with PIDA pertain to inadequate resourcing, particularly domestic resources, delays in agreements between countries as well as non-alignment of legal and regulatory frameworks. To enhance gender participation and inclusion in regional infrastructure development, the Commission supported the establishment of the African Network for Women in Infrastructure.

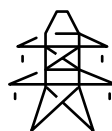
The launch of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in January 2018 was a significant milestone. SAATM creates a single air transport market in Africa through the liberalisation of air transport services in Africa and is an impetus to



+16,066km
of roads



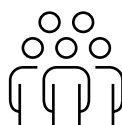
+4,077kms
of railways



+3,506km
of power
transmission
lines



+17
additional
Member States
connected with
regional fibre
optic cables.



+162,000 jobs
created

the Continent's economic integration agenda. To date, 34 Member States have signed the Solemn Commitment to establish it, and 18 have signed a Memorandum of Implementation to ensure the removal of any air service agreements that are not in line with SAATM. The 34 States that joined SAATM so far constitute a population of 800 million and 89% of intra African traffic. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the African air transport sector and the operationalisation of SAATM in particular. The full implementation of SAATM is one of the most important strategies for the restart and recovery of the African air transport sector.

The development of a detailed scoping study of the African **integrated high speed railway network**, one of Agenda 2063's flagship projects, as well as the development of a project master plan by the Commission in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD marks the setting of the technical objectives of the project. Together with UNECA, the Commission elaborated the Continental strategic directions for the Decade of Road Safety (2021-2030) aimed at reducing road deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030. The Strategic Directions will help in curbing the trend of 296,000 annual deaths by road accidents in Africa.

The Assembly approved the **Digital Transformation Strategy** for Africa which aims at harnessing digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies and economies. It intends to promote Africa's integration, generate inclusive economic development, stimulate job creation, break the digital divide, and eradicate poverty for the continent's socio-economic development as well as ensure Africa's ownership of modern tools of digital management. Resources were mobilised and a Commission-wide effort took place in 2020 to develop sectoral strategies for implementing the digital transformation, including in pan-African finance, infrastructure, trade and agriculture. The Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa was launched to foster universally accessible and affordable broadband across the continent to unlock future benefits of internet-based services.



Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility

US\$120 million
awarded to 30
projects, with a
potential of 2,800 MW
awarded grants

The Commission continued implementing the Continental Harmonised Regulatory Framework for the Energy Sector in Africa. The aim of the program is to identify gaps, recommend best practices and implement action plans in developing a harmonised continental and regional regulatory framework in the African energy sector, thus enabling an energy market and infrastructure development. In providing more renewable energy, the Commission pursued the promotion of Geothermal Energy in Africa through the **Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility** which awarded grants of approximately US\$120 million to 30 projects, with a potential of 2,800 MW.

In pursuit of Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063, "an integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance", the Commission prioritised the adoption and promotion of the **Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa** which is instrumental to promote intra-regional trade and regional integration. The Free Movement Protocol and its Implementation Roadmap was adopted in January 2018. While the Protocol requires 15 ratifications to come into force, it has so far only acquired 32 signatures and 4 ratifications. The

Free Movement Protocol emphasises the right of African citizens to reside and establish a business or economic activity in another country, with the use of a common travel document.

The African Passport, whose guidelines were adopted in February 2019, will be a major catalyst for accelerated relaxation of visa regimes and facilitation of the right of entry, in line with Article 10 of the Protocol. Several AU Member States have relaxed visa requirements for Africans, even before adopting the Protocol. For the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons to be successful, each REC has to improve the effectiveness of its policies before scaling up efforts continent-wide. A number of Africa's regional blocs have shown improvement, three maintained their open reciprocity scores, while four continued to improve their scores between 2016-2019. Although the adoption of the Protocol is a milestone, the low levels of ratifications remain an obstacle to realising its objectives. Despite the notable administrative flexibilities to facilitate Africans to travel within Africa, restrictive visa regimes persist, as do security concerns over opening borders.

During the period under review, efforts were made to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation in accordance with the 2014 Malabo Declaration. The Commission strengthened accountability mechanisms by establishing a **Biennial Review mechanism** to track progress towards achieving the provisions of the Malabo Declaration and presented two Biennial Review Reports to the AU Assembly in 2018 and 2020. The Commission also developed the Africa Food Safety Index and included it in the AU Biennial Review of agricultural transformation. In 2019, after building Member States capacity to report on it, 50 Member States submitted reports. This led to UN agencies following suit, working to include food safety indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Twenty-two Member States were supported to domesticate the Malabo Declaration and develop and/or update their National Agricultural Investment Plans.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the momentum for AfCFTA, albeit in its nascent stages, is palpable, the same cannot be said with the Free Movement agenda – as evidenced by the low level of ratifications. The potential of the AfCFTA will only be realised if complemented by full implementation of the Open Skies and Free Movement agendas. These three agendas are indeed inseparable and must be promoted jointly. Furthermore, Member States should strengthen national institutions earmarked for implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, going beyond the sectoral Ministries responsible for trade.

With the entry into force of the AfCFTA, investment coordination under negotiations of the pan-African investment code should be strengthened. Currently, each partner is negotiating its own investment standards with host governments, which results in diverse and non-harmonised standards. This affects the Continent's economic governance, transparency and predictability across borders and weakens the negotiating power of individual Member States, and hence the ability of the Continent to capitalise on regional value chains and cross-border economic opportunities. Partners need to stand behind the AU's efforts to negotiate an investment protocol to the AfCFTA.

This Commission welcomes with appreciation efforts by RECs to promote regional trade and facilitate free movement. While most RECs have thus far adopted relevant instruments in this regard, implementation requires greater political commitment at the Member State level to realise regional trade, which is impossible without free movement. Member States are encouraged to address the challenges that are hampering the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement. COVID-19 has demonstrated the implications of a lack of a harmonised approach to mobility and migration, issues that are addressed by the Protocol. The Commission aligns with RECs that have adopted and

are implementing the principle of variable geometry and Member States that have begun implementing the values enshrined within the Protocol prior to it coming into force. The remaining Member States are encouraged to follow suit. As the process of ratification is expedited, the incoming Commission should prioritise this initiative given the attendant benefits to Member States, citizens and the Union as a whole.

2.2 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY |

Priorities on democratic governance, peace and security were related to aspirations 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; and a peaceful and secure Africa. To realise these aspirations, the Commission engaged within the frameworks of AGA and APSA.

Milestones:

- Facilitation of peaceful settlement of disputes towards silencing the guns
- Operationalisation of Peace Fund with US \$200 million
- Establishment of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), with headquarters in Algeria
- Establishment and operationalisation of PRC Sub-committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance
- Protocol on Statelessness and Right to Nationality
- AU Transitional Justice Policy Framework
- Continental Results Framework on Women in Peace and Security and Operationalisation of Femwise-Africa
- AU Guidelines on Elections during Covid-19

2.2.1. DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE:

In 2018, the Commission led other members of the AGA Platform to develop an AGA Roadmap and workplan to highlight strategic areas of cooperation, collaboration and synergy. This was the first attempt at fostering collaborative planning by various organs of the Union with mandates on democracy, elections, human rights and governance on the continent. The Roadmap provides a mechanism for collaboration amongst Platform members on democracy consolidation, human rights, constitutionalism and rule of law, preventive diplomacy, and election observation, amongst others. Efforts have been made to strengthen the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) focusing on establishing predictable financing by integrating APRM into the AU budget and developing an annual State of Governance in Africa report as a tool to track governance trends in Africa.

A PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance was established and operationalised in 2019. The PRC Sub-Committee is expected to foreground democratic governance as a foundation to realising Agenda 2063 aspirations and to enhance closer coordination and collaboration of related initiatives among the AUC, RECs and Member States. Tracking of compliance of AU shared values instruments especially on gaps and measures taken by Member States to comply with their commitments is expected to feature more prominently in interactions between the AUC, PRC and PSC.

During the period under review, **electoral assistance** became more responsive to the needs of Member States, in particular to Election Management Bodies (EMBs), central institutions in promoting credible elections on the continent. At least ten EMBs, including those in post-conflict contexts, received direct technical and financial support from the Commission, contributing to strengthening institutional capacities for managing peaceful transitions in the concerned Member States.

¹ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania and Togo



African Union Election Observers in Ghana

While, the Commission coordinated AU election observation missions (AUEOMs) in 11 Member States holding general elections in 2017, this figure increased to 14 in 2018 and 15 in 2019. While 16 general elections were conducted in 2020, there were only 8 AUEOMs¹ deployed due to restrictions put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AU Guidelines for Elections during COVID-19 and other Public Health Emergencies have been drafted to support Member States to make sound decisions and take appropriate action in respect of elections during public health emergencies. Over the last four years, AUEOMs were deployed to 50 general elections across the continent.

Ahead of crucial elections, a number of preventive diplomacy missions were undertaken jointly with RECs and the UN. These missions encouraged stakeholders to pursue dialogue, compromise and peaceful resolution of political differences and helped to prevent electoral disputes from escalating into violent conflict. Peaceful transitions facilitated

in Member States include Sierra Leone in 2017, DRC in 2018, and Guinea Bissau in 2019. Periodic briefings to the PSC served as an early warning tool to prompt early response to avert electoral violence and further unrest.

Humanitarian affairs and its nexus with development, climate change, governance issues and peace and security was a major preoccupation of the Commission, resulting in the designation of 2019 as *the year of Refugees, Returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs): Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement*. The establishment of the AU/UN/EU Tripartite Task Force during the 2017 AU-EU Summit played a critical role in facilitating the voluntary return of over 50,000 migrants to their countries of origin and the humanitarian evacuation of more than 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Niger and Rwanda have shown exemplary solidarity and leadership, establishing Emergency Transit Mechanisms to facilitate the humanitarian evacuation of stranded refugees and asylum seekers

from Libya. The Commission also supported strategic coordination and undertook advocacy for broader regional solidarity.

Under this period, the **Protocol on Statelessness** and the Right to Nationality has been developed and submitted for consideration and endorsement. Statelessness and deprivation of a nationality constitute a breach of fundamental human rights, preventing affected people from accessing basic rights and services, including full and meaningful participation in societal affairs. Ensuring that every African enjoys a right to a nationality and belongs to a nation-state contributes to social cohesion and integration necessary for peace, stability and socio-economic development.

The AU **Transitional Justice** Policy (AUTJP) was adopted in February 2019. The AUTJP is conceived as a guideline for Member States to develop their own context-specific policies, strategies and programmes to achieve sustainable peace, justice, reconciliation, social cohesion and healing. The process of developing the Policy, which spanned over eight years, was inclusive, participatory and consultative, resulting in a comprehensive document. The AUTJP Roadmap has also been developed, supporting its implementation.

2.2.2. PEACE AND SECURITY:

In line with the AU Master Roadmap of 2017 on Practical Steps to **Silence the Guns** in Africa by 2020, the Commission engaged Member States, the PSC, RECs/RMs, UN, CSOs and private sector, with a view to addressing fundamental and structural causes of conflicts and fostering conducive conditions for socio-economic development in Africa. The adoption of UNSCR 2457 on Silencing the Guns in February 2019 gave impetus for the mobilisation of UN agencies and other partners to coordinate efforts to support implementation of the Roadmap. The designation of the theme of 2020 as *Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development* focused efforts on this agenda. Initiatives focused on the entire APSA continuum, from anticipation

and prevention of conflict, management and resolution of conflicts, to post-conflict stabilisation, reconstruction and development. Concerted efforts were made to enhance the role of women and youth in peacebuilding. Public private partnerships were pursued to engage private sector actors in peace efforts through corporate social responsibility initiatives, with an emphasis on youth employment and the inclusion of marginalised communities.

Since 2017, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) responded to conflicts and crises, as well as post-conflict situations, including those in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. The PSC has also been involved in addressing a variety of peace and security issues, including terrorism and violent extremism in the Horn of Africa, Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region; the Kenya/Somalia maritime dispute; climate change and foreign military presence; as well as outbreaks of the Ebola epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic. The PSC has authorised the deployment of several missions, including the G5 Sahel and continued to renew the mandate of existing missions such as the AU Mission on Somalia (AMISOM), the Multinational Joint Task Force and the AU-UN Mission Hybrid Operations in Darfur.

During the January 2018 Summit, the Assembly adopted the Peace Fund instrument based on the governance and management structure endorsed by the PSC, Executive Council and AU Assembly in 2017. As at November 2020, 54 Member States have contributed just over \$179.5m to the Peace Fund. This represents the largest amount of money Member States have ever contributed to the Fund since it was established in 1993. The target is to have the full \$400m Peace Fund Member State endowment in place by 2023. The Peace Fund will enable the AU to drive its own peace and security agenda based on its own assessment of the problems and its own determination of the appropriate solutions.

² Some of the high-level, preventive diplomacy missions undertaken during the period under review include Sierra Leone (2017), Kenya (2017), Mali (2018), Zimbabwe (2018), and Malawi and Guinea-Bissau (2019).

The Union continued to work collaboratively with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to mediate in the South Sudan Conflict; resulting in the establishment of the revitalised Transitional Government of Unity in South Sudan. The AU through the AU High Level Ad-hoc Committee on South Sudan led to the successful resolution of the contentious issue of number and boundaries of states in South Sudan, to ten states, two administrative areas and one area with a special administrative status. This has contributed to facilitate the effective implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan.

The Commission continues to engage in the Sudanese transition process, through strategic and political actions with the Sudanese government, various interlocutors and the international community. In addition to its role in the UNAMID process and high level dialogues with warring parties as well as the government of Sudan, the AU continued to support the peace process, hosted in Juba. This led to the signing of the comprehensive Juba Peace Agreement on August 21, 2020 and subsequent agreements between the transitional government and the SPLM-North al-Hilu rebel faction and SRF, SPLM-N. Notably, through the aforementioned strategic and political engagements and mediation processes, the AU contributed successfully to the removal of Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism by the US. It also contributed to the gradual UNAMID drawdown process to ensure civilian protection is guaranteed, and further ensuring that the new UN deployment mission in Sudan is under Chapter 6, as approved by the UNSC, in May 2020.

The Commission actively used its good offices and those of its Special Envoys in preventive diplomacy to achieve peaceful settlement of disputes including border disputes. The Commission built on gains made in resolving protracted conflicts by prioritising the implementation of peace agreements, post-conflict stabilisation strategies and providing technical assistance to support countries in transition. The Commission, through the Continental Early Warning System, supported Ghana to undertake the inaugural Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessments (CSV/RA) and the development of the Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies. The CSV/RA is one of the ground-breaking initiatives by the Commission to support Member States diagnose their structural vulnerabilities, identify coping and resilience mechanisms and importantly prognose mitigation strategies to prevent conflict. The Commission will continue to support Member States in undertaking the assessment and implementation of the identified mitigation strategies.

The Commission was fully engaged in counter-terrorism efforts, especially in the Horn of Africa,



Not to fund our peace efforts in a more substantial way would be tantamount to entrusting others with the essential levers of the continental sovereignty.

H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT,
Chairperson of the African Union
Commission.

Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region, working closely with RECs in line with principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. Furthermore, the Commission took concrete steps to improve cooperation, coordination and communications to harmonise continental interventions in conflict situations, mediation and counter-terrorism and meditation between it and the RECs. To promote religious tolerance, peace and social cohesion in the wake of religious extremism and related conflicts, the Commission worked to promote inter and intra religious dialogue. These dialogues complement peace support operations in tackling matters of religious or violent extremism and allow for a deeper understanding of the root causes and the crafting of innovative and contemporary approaches to counter it. The progress made, especially in resolving some of the protracted conflicts on the continent, has been achieved through close and well-coordinated partnerships with external partners and stakeholders, including NGOs, CSOs and Think Tanks.

A central tenet of the Commission's Peace and Security undertakings is the advancement of the **Women, Peace and Security Agenda** (WPS) in Africa. In 2018, the PSC adopted the Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Responding on the implementation of the WPS agenda. Subsequently the Chairperson produced the first ever AUC report on the Status of women, peace and security. Africa now has 30 countries with national action plans on WPS and 6 RECs with regional action plans.

FemWise-Africa was established by the July 2017 AU Assembly decision to strengthen the participation of women in conflict prevention and mediation processes. The Network has trained its members, or provided an opportunity for training in mediation and conflict analysis through its multiple partnerships. It has also offered practical avenues for trained members to implement their experience and training through deployment opportunities to various AUEOMs and AU Liaison Offices. Currently numbering 470 members across the five regions, the diversity of the Network provides an ample opportunity for cross-regional mentorship and

collaboration.

The work of advancing the governance and peace and security landscape across the continent faced a number of challenges that greatly hampered the fulfilment of the set targets of the Commission. Prime among these is the contentious but reoccurring issue of sovereignty and reluctance by some Member States to allow early mediation and political dialogue of internal as well as cross-border conflicts, one of the key factors contributing to the growing number of avoidable conflicts on the continent and negating the effectiveness of the AU's interventions. Related to this is the issue of capacity and willingness of Member States to bridge the gap between early warning and early response. One of the most nagging challenges that has transcended the tenure of this Commission is the issue of predictable and sustainable funding for PSOs. The Commission should continue to advocate for the UN to adequately provide predictable and sustainable funding for UN-mandated AU PSOs from UN assessed contributions.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the reform mandated merger of the Departments of Political Affairs and Peace and Security provides an opportunity to enhance the much needed nexus between AGA and APSA, care must be taken to ensure that one does not overshadow the other and that the merger strengthens their linkages and complementarities. In this regard, the AGA and APSA frameworks should be strengthened through provision of human and financial resources for a joint Secretariat to effectively coordinate and track implementation of priority initiatives.

Member States are urged to demonstrate increased and sustained political commitment and engagement to ensure the creation of requisite conditions for Silencing the Guns in Africa, which will facilitate realisation of a conflict-free continent, in line with Agenda 2063. The timeframes and modalities of the campaign must be reframed and reconceptualised,

considering that the deadline of 2020 set for realising this aim was not met. The incoming Commission must recommit to this aim and adopt it as a long term objective of the Union. The Peace Fund should be fully funded to finance capacity building in conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution as well as post conflict reconstruction and development. There should be greater coordination between early warning mechanisms at various levels to ensure triangulation of data and better informed decisions that result in timely and responsive action.

On the specific issues of peace, security and governance, the Commission should be proactive in its support to Member States. The support by the Commission to CSV/RAs and development of Conflict Mitigation Strategies as was done in Ghana in 2018 should be scaled up and promoted. The Union should also work more closely with RECs in this regard and consider de-investing in some of the areas it is currently engaged in and let the RECs take the lead. For example, in the area of elections, the Commission should let the relevant RECs take the lead in election monitoring and observation, while it focuses on providing pre and post-electoral technical assistance, to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximise use of resources. This is crucial in view of budget reductions and the need to be adaptive and build appropriate technical capacities and tools to cope with emerging realities.

Several Member States continue to endure humanitarian challenges that are either conflict induced or as a result of natural disasters. The recent conflict in Ethiopia brings to the fore the need for Member States and the Union to invest in early warning and early response as well as conflict prevention efforts to avert humanitarian disasters. The Union should work to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts through dialogue, mediation and respect for the rule of law and human rights. Cyclone Idai in Mozambique is testament to the ravaging impact of natural disasters, which is exacerbated by lack of effective coordination by and among AU, RECs and international partners. The locust invasion in East Africa and effects of climate change has had

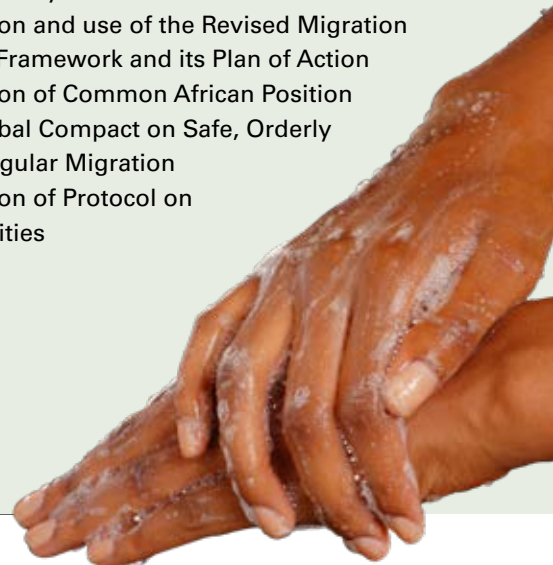
a devastating impact on food security, livelihoods and socio-economic development. This is particularly the case in the Horn, the Sahel and the Great Lakes Region. While the AU has made some contributions to address humanitarian crises as a result of disasters, its effectiveness remains wanting. The issue of coordination and effective response to those most in need is part of the challenge. The response to the Ebola crisis and the ongoing COVID-19 response by the Union illustrate that with better humanitarian coordination, greater results can be achieved. The incoming Commission should prioritise the African Humanitarian Agency considering the urgency of operationalising a mechanism designed to address emergencies.

2.3 HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION |

Priorities on health and social development, science and innovation were related to aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. The Commission focused its efforts on addressing health emergencies and strengthening education in science, technology and innovation.

Milestones:

- Timely, effective and coordinated responses to Ebola and COVID-19
- Enhanced accessibility to education through the Pan-African Virtual and e-University
- Adoption and use of the Revised Migration Policy Framework and its Plan of Action
- Adoption of Common African Position on Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- Adoption of Protocol on Disabilities



The Commission, through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), continued to support DRC in **responding to the 10th Ebola Virus**



AfricaCDC health workers navigating rough terrain to reach communities

Disease outbreak. In total, Africa CDC deployed 65 frontline healthcare workers and 27 staffers to support response to the outbreak. In collaboration with government and partners, these experts investigated 57,406 alerts, conducted active case-finding for 27,767 suspected cases, and supported tracing of over 8000 contacts. They received and tested 42,775 samples in the six laboratories supported by Africa CDC and trained 3,845 healthcare workers in infection, prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, point-of-entry and community-based surveillance, and contact tracing. Africa CDC continues to support responses to the 11th outbreak in the Equator Province of the country.

Since the first COVID-19 case in Africa was reported on 14 February 2020, Africa CDC has been collating and making data from Member States on various aspects of the pandemic and response public. The Africa **Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19**, which aims to prevent transmission, deaths, and mitigate against social harm was adopted by African health ministers in February 2020. An African Taskforce on COVID-19 Response (AFTCOR) to oversee the joint response to the pandemic in Africa has since been operationalised. The Commission has prioritised strengthening of the Africa CDC to be effective in providing guidance on treatment, testing and application of public health and social measures. To strengthen capacity at healthcare facilities and of healthcare workers, personnel were trained in different aspects of the COVID-19 response. As of mid-November 2020, Africa CDC had trained 1,288 healthcare workers in laboratory diagnostics, infection prevention and control, risk communication, clinical care and surveillance through face-to-face meetings and 67,161 through online channels. Also, Africa CDC deployed 188 experts, and 9,245 community health workers to support response activities in Member States.

To ensure an uninterrupted supply of diagnostics and medical supplies, Africa CDC has established a **logistics and supply network** within Africa that facilitates pool procurement, collection and distribution of diagnostics and medical supplies to Member States. As of mid-November 2020, Africa CDC had distributed 6,029,832 tests, 10,402,086 face masks, 743,443 face shields, 9,346 goggles, 536,111 protective suits, 395 thermal scanners, 3,533 infrared thermometers, 636 ventilators, 1,800,000 Dexamethasone tablets to Member States.

In response to Covid-19...



01 68,000 healthcare workers trained

02 9,000 community health workers deployed

03 6 Million tests distributed

04 11 Million units of PPE

05 4500 medical equipment

06 1.8 million units of medicines

A team of Special Envoys was constituted and mandated to mobilise financial support in the fight against COVID-19. Through the Special Envoys' efforts, several African countries have received grants and loans as emergency support including debt moratoriums, to enhance fiscal space on the path towards economic recovery. Furthermore, the Special Envoys have supported the setup of the



The Covid-19 Response Fund was launched in March 2020

Medical Procurement Platform for Member States to procure medical supplies and health equipment. Through Africa's **continental vaccine bank**, PANVAC, the Commission produced a Peste des Petite (PPR) diagnostic kit that reduces procurement costs for Member States by 75%. PANVAC has 2.5 million doses of Rinderpest vaccines available to Member States in the event of an outbreak. The Commission augmented Ethiopia's efforts to stem the COVID-19 pandemic through testing and production of hand sanitiser. The Africa CDC, in collaboration with the Special Envoys, has engaged the GAVI-led COVAX global initiative on securing vaccines for the continent, as soon as they are licensed and approved for use. In March 2020, the **AU COVID-19 Response Fund** was launched by the Chairperson of the AU, President Cyril Ramaphosa. To date, over US\$41,000,000 has been pledged and over \$16,000,000 has been received.

With the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the African continent, the AU is faced with a reversal of gains it has made in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights. The pandemic has brought to the fore many underlying gender inequalities which if not addressed, have the

potential to exacerbate the outbreak, and responses that do not incorporate gender analysis may in turn, worsen inequalities.

The **African Medicines Agency** was adopted in February 2019 and will enter into force once ratified by fifteen Member States. There are currently 18 signatories and 6 ratifications. The Commission is also working with the African Development Bank for Pharmaceutical Development in Africa to establish the fund to support African manufacturers so as to boost the production of medicines, medical products and devices in Africa.

The Commission developed a continental framework, the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019-2023). A major milestone was the establishment of the Pan African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use to systematically collect and disseminate comparable data on drug use and related problems to improve policy formulation and programming to address drug use disorders on the continent. The Commission also contributed to the establishment of four regional Organised Crime Observatories in Africa as well as the African Organised Crime Index to combat Transnational Organised Crime.

The **Migration Policy Framework** for Africa (MPFA), which was adopted by the Assembly in 2018, became a de-facto common position on Africa's priorities on migration issues. The MPFA formed the basis for the revitalised AU-EU dialogue on migration and mobility, and for strategic engagement with other key stakeholders on migration matters. It also formed the basis for an Africa-Arab migration programme and informed the Common African Position on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Internally, the AU Coordination Committee on Migration enhanced inter-departmental and inter-agency collaboration and coordination on migration governance. To address challenges related to regular and irregular migration, three migration centres are being operationalised: the Continental Operational Centre in Sudan, the African Observatory on Migration in Morocco, and the African Centre for Study and Research on Migration in Mali.

Despite significant resource constraints, notable milestones were recorded in **science, technology, innovation and skills**. An assessment of technical and vocational education and training was

undertaken in eight pilot countries to address skills mismatch and identify effective practices, strategic opportunities as well as gaps in capacity that could be addressed through technical assistance and spur transition from school to work. The Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship was launched in 2017 with 21 candidates (18 men and 3 women) awarded scholarships. In 2018, the scholarship was limited to women to encourage their enrolment in Masters and PhDs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, sixty received scholarships – 30 for PhDs and 30 for Masters Programmes. As of 2019, a total of 356 applications (75 female and 281 male) were received from 26 Member States. The scholarship was dedicated to refugees in 2019 in line with the theme of the year, with 15 scholarships awarded (6 female, 9 male).

Africa's **Space Program** has progressed with the adoption of the statute of the African Space Agency and National Space Agencies committing their efforts to the implementation of the Program. As of June 20, 2020, the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security & Africa Programme awarded 51% of the total grant of 17,500,000 EURO (8,921,378 EURO) to 12 Consortia representing over 122 institutions in 45 African countries involving 20 African private companies and 20 universities and training centres.

The launch of the **Pan African Virtual and e-University (PAVEU)** in December 2019 was a key step towards increasing accessibility of professional and academic education to African citizens. The online model that allows for access anytime anywhere becomes even more pertinent in the wake of COVID-19. The main challenge to the Pan-African University (PAU) is the limitation of its current regulatory framework to hire long-term academic staff. This challenge is unlikely to be resolved unless PAU is granted requisite exceptions to AU rules and regulations as it relates to staffing, contracting, procurement, financing, and full operationalisation of PAVEU.

The **Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in Africa was adopted in January 2018 followed by a new AU Disability Strategic Framework



The Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship

Since launch of the Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship in 2017, **96 candidates** have received scholarships for Masters and PHD programmes

in 2020. The Protocol promotes and protects the rights of people with disabilities, ensuring respect for their dignity. **A Plan of Action against Attacks on Persons with Albinism** was adopted to ensure the rights of persons with albinism in Africa. The Commission further implemented the AU Disability Architecture to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities. Similarly, the **2016 Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons** in Africa to promote and protect the rights of older persons in Africa was signed by sixteen Member States and ratified by two during this period.

The AU **Social Agenda 2063** was adopted by the Executive Council in February 2020 bringing all social agenda objectives under one implementation framework. **Africa's Agenda for Children, Agenda 2040**, is an inspiration to elevate the level of state compliance with the African Children's Charter by setting priority areas based on the assessment of the past 25 years and the current trends of child rights in Africa. The incoming Commission should continue to push for an Africa fit for children by ensuring that this Agenda, inspired by Agenda 2063, is implemented by Member States.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Africa CDC has come of age in coordinating responses to health epidemics and pandemics, especially Ebola and COVID-19. The timely and coordinated response to Ebola as well as the solidarity exhibited provided precedent and capacity to address COVID-19. Mobilising resources among the private sector in response to Ebola was one of the key achievements of the last Commission. While this Commission has not marshalled similar financial resources from Africa's private sector, it succeeded in tapping into non-traditional sources of funding – including crowdsourcing funds from citizens through the virtual solidarity concert. Innovative means such as these should be upscaled.

While the Continent is still grappling with post COVID-19 health and socio-economic ramifications,

Africa CDC will remain a key entity in Africa's efforts to address the pandemic. Enhancing its capacity including infrastructure and technical capacities through the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters is therefore paramount. Efforts should be made to enhance its capacity for research, testing, and development of vaccines and pharmaceuticals to address pressing health issues. The Commission should also invest in negotiations with patent holders and manufacturers for safe, affordable and widely accessible medicines and vaccines.

2.4 BRINGING THE AU CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE |

Bringing the AU closer to the people is guided by aspirations 5 and 6 of Agenda 2063: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; and an Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. The Commission focused its efforts on enhancing communications and outreach, engaging citizens and the diaspora, engendering the Union and making space for youth.

Milestones:

- Enhanced accountability mechanisms for gender commitments
- Appointment of a Special Envoy on Youth
- Revitalisation of campaigns to end harmful practices
- Framework for engaging the Diaspora
- Model law on the protection of cultural property and heritage


Over the last four years, several efforts were made geared at bringing the AU closer to African citizens. These include on and offline platforms, engaging with traditional as well as new media, popularising and championing the work of AU organs and institutions and streamlining AU's identity through its brand and various innovative communication products. To improve African citizens' understanding



Watch Films on Agenda 2063 and its Flagship Programmes on <https://au.int/en/videos>


of the structure of the AU, the work of the AUC as well as key institutions, profile films and audio content were developed, alongside communication and knowledge products, including annual publications, the AU Echo and the AU Handbook. The Commission, with the support of South Africa, has undertaken the immense task of digitisation of written, photographic and audio-visual material of the AU and its organs. The Project aims to create a digital repository of AU records since the founding of the organisation in 1963.

Anchored on Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 which seeks to enhance the strong cultural identity,



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common heritage, values and ethics of Africa, **the Africa Factbook** was launched under the theme Busting the Myths, in collaboration with Book of African Records. During this period, the draft statute for the **Great Museum of Africa**, which will be housed in Algeria was developed. The **model law on the protection of cultural property** and heritage to combat illicit trafficking in cultural goods was also adopted. The Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies increased its bibliographic resources for a better knowledge of African history and traditions. The African Academy of Languages similarly engaged in the harmonisation of writing systems of three vernacular cross-border languages, namely Ewe, Songhay and Soninke. The Academy launched an interactive platform for African languages and finalised the linguistic atlas of the sixteen countries in West Africa.

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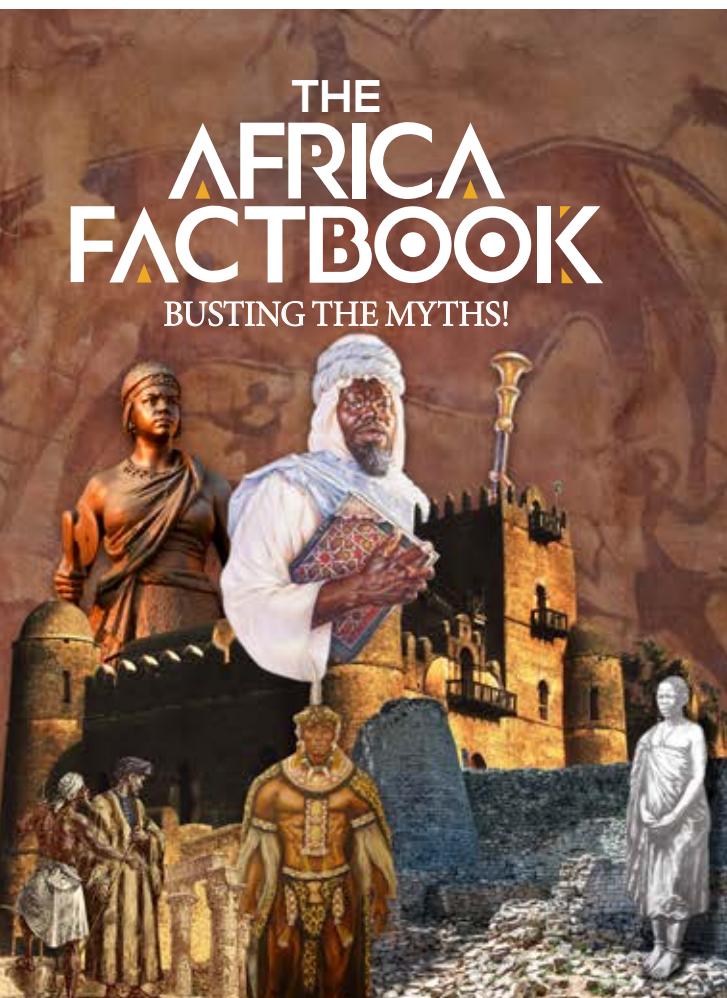
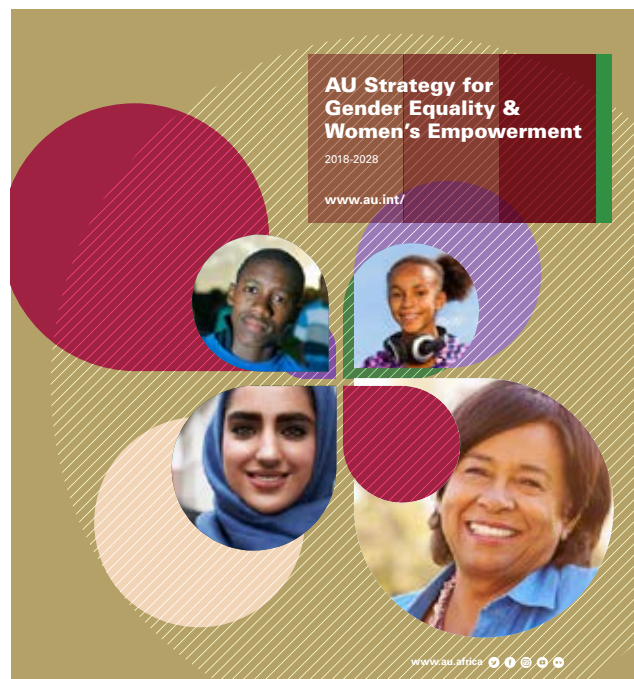
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2.4.1 ENGENDERING THE UNION |

The Commission continues advocating for the ratification, domestication and implementation of AU Instruments on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). As part of efforts to promote compliance and accountability for implementation of women's rights continental instruments, several mechanisms have been established including the Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index (MPSI). The AU Gender Online Reporting Platform provides a one-stop reporting platform for the various and complementary accountability tools including the Gender Scorecard, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) reports, the AUC Chairperson reports and the MPSI. These tools have supported the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the obligations and allow an assessment of the extent to which gender equality and women's



rights obligations are implemented.

The Member States Synthesis³ and AUC Chairperson's reports on the SDGEA also provide highlights from Member States, AUC and RECs in implementing gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. While notable achievements were made in implementing the SDGEA, gender parity still requires greater attention, especially in the AUC and other AU Organs. As part of the Institutional Reforms, the Assembly in 2018 adopted the Parity Decision requiring 50% women and 35% youth quotas by 2025. As of 30 September 2020, out of 1744 staff members at the AUC, including Headquarters, Regional and Liaison offices, 634 are women (36%) and 1110 are men (64%). Young people aged 35 and below were 16%, or 271. Out of 271, 143 are young women (53%) and 128 are young men (47%). Out of 14 Directors, 5 are women (36%) and 9 are men (64%). Gender parity has been achieved at the level of Commissioners since 2003.

³ During the period under review, 60 Member State Synthesis Reports were received.

The extension of the campaign to **end child marriage**, as well as the launch of the Saleema Initiative to **end female genital mutilation** reinforce the Union's resolve to bring an end to these harmful practices. The campaign has resulted

Progress notwithstanding, some countries have regressed – a case in point being Somalia where lawmakers put forth a bill to legalise child marriage. Such occurrences make it clear that much work remains to be done to eliminate the practice.



Whereas progress has been made in some Member States to end Child marriage and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation challenges remain due to lack of prioritisation on the implementation and enforcement of laws against child marriage as well as lack of proper data collection and reporting and some countries have regressed e.g in Somalia where lawmakers put forth a bill to legalise child marriage.

in a compendium of laws on child marriage, national strategies to end child marriage as well as progressive amendments to laws that raise the age of marriage. To date, Gambia, Guinea, Malawi and Zimbabwe have adopted laws and policies that criminalize child marriage. Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zambia have strengthened pre-existing laws and policies by enhancing the involvement of traditional and religious leaders and local civil society actors. Chad is notable for its commitment to end child marriage by 2030. Challenges to further progress include Member States not prioritising the implementation and enforcement of laws against child marriage as well as lack of proper data collection and reporting, creating a gap in the campaign's evaluation reports.

In 2017, the **African Women Leaders Network (AWLN)** was established to harness the wealth of African women's experiences of leadership to strengthen their contributions to building and sustaining peace, security, political, economic and social processes on the continent, towards the realisation of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. AWLN is an unprecedented movement of African women in leadership positions who aim to serve as a vector for increased mobilisation of women in diverse sectors. The network will make it possible for women to shape the path to peace and development on the continent.

While progress has been made in the implementation of the AU Gender Agenda, challenges persist. The burden of multiple reporting on various international and regional instruments leads to Member States reporting less on regional instruments. Slow progress in implementing commitments on women's rights such as those enshrined in the Maputo Protocol enables the persistence of practices that hamper the realisation of women's rights and their full potential. Financing for gender equality remains inadequate with budgetary allocations not being commensurate with the cross-cutting nature and the demands of the mandate to promote GEWE. The alteration of the decision to allocate 0.5% instead of 1% to the Fund for African Women (FAW), along with delayed disbursement of funds, has hindered envisaged progress in women's empowerment. Furthermore, the Executive Council concluded in 2019 that the Commission should be granted sufficient funding from Member States to avoid dependence on partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to reverse most of the gains made over the years in promoting GEWE. Diversion of resources to COVID-19 may delay implementation of gender commitments that are not seen as urgent. Sexual and gender-based violence has increased drastically during the period of lockdowns and has led to a secondary pandemic across Africa. Women's financial inclusion has suffered with the closing of many women's enterprises and cross-border trade, giving greater impetus for the recently adopted Decade on Women's Financial Inclusion (2020-2030). The development and implementation of AU Guidelines on Gender-Responsive Responses as a framework to integrate gender equality and women's agency in decision-making processes in Africa COVID-19 responses and Post COVID-19 recovery plans as called for by the AU Assembly will be useful in addressing these concerns.

2.4.2 MAKING SPACE FOR THE YOUTH |



Several policy frameworks emphasise the need to make space for young people – to shape their own future and the policies that impact them. The development of the AU Demographic Dividend Roadmap in line with the 2017 theme of the year on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth continues to be an instrumental strategy in addressing the youth bulge faced by Member States.

In November 2018, AU's first **Special Envoy on Youth** was appointed with the mandate to serve as a representative of and advocate for the voices and interests of African youth to the relevant AU decision-making bodies. The Office of the Youth Envoy (OYE), with its Youth Advisory Council, youth volunteers and networks, has become a Pan-African collaborative mechanism for African youth to engage with and

influence the work of the AU and global actors. This includes briefings to both the UNSC and the AU PSC on youth contributions to silencing the guns and outlining recommendations for national plans on youth, peace and security. Member States were mobilised to recommit to the full and accelerated implementation of the African Youth Charter through African Youth Charter Hustlers that are supporting continental monitoring and reporting. The initiative strengthens youth-led accountability for policies that affect their lives.

The AU **Youth Volunteers Corps** (AU-YVC) recruits, trains and deploys young African professionals for a period of 12 months across the continent, promoting volunteerism and deepening the status of young people as key actors in Africa's development. In 2017, 137 volunteers (87 female and 50 male) were deployed to serve with 44 completing their service. This number increased in 2018 with 208 (116 female and 92 male) AU Youth Volunteers serving across various organs and departments of the Commission, Member States and partner organisations. In 2019, 231 (121 female and 110 male) AU Youth Volunteers were deployed, with 169 (95 female and 74 male) deployed in 2020. Young African professionals have also been trained and deployed to the five regional collaborating centres of Africa CDC in 2020. Over 9000 applications have been received from 53 Member States for the 2021 cohort.

The **1 Million by 2021** initiative aims to reach one million young Africans with concrete opportunities in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement by 2021. This initiative has bolstered youth development in these critical areas and set the continent on a path of accelerating interventions towards improving the lives of youth in Africa. Looking ahead to the last year of the initiative in 2021, it is important to recall the main objectives of the initiative: accelerating opportunities for youth; emboldening stakeholders to consider new perspectives; testing new ideas and scaling-up existing successes; and building continental ecosystems of efficiencies. It is recommended that high level mobilisation in partnership with the private sector is rekindled

and intensified to sustain interest, and action at technical levels of the partnership continue. It is also recommended that more resources are allocated to the initiative to enable delivery and demonstrate ownership and commitment from Member States and the Union.

2.4.3 ENGAGING AFRICAN CITIZENS & THE DIASPORA |

The consultative approach of the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 was an important way of involving African citizens in the work of the Union. This was done through the participation of civil society and Diaspora organisations in promoting peace and security, democratic governance and human rights as a foundation for inclusion, integration and the development of Africa and its people. The Union should continue to communicate its vision, policies and programmes to African citizens and the world, building a Pan African perspective that is critical to its mission and enabling the continent to own the African narrative to reflect continental realities, aspirations and priorities and its position in the world.

A draft legal and political framework to support the participation of the diaspora in the AU has been developed. The framework aims to fulfil a key outcome of the 2012 Global African Summit, and allow the Commission to transition from the current ad hoc mode of diaspora engagement to an institutionalised approach to be implemented across the AU system. Of the five AU legacy projects that were identified during the 2012 Summit and Agenda 2063, four have commenced: **the Diaspora Investment Fund; the African Diaspora Volunteer Corps Project; Diaspora Marketplace** and **the African Institute of Remittance**. The African Institute for Remittances (AIR) assisted Member States to improve their procedures for the statistical measurement of remittances; to develop and/or upgrade their remittance market regulatory frameworks; and to develop and implement appropriate policies for leveraging remittances for social and economic development. The activities of AIR continue to be hampered by the acute shortage of staff which has

greatly affected the implementation capacity of the Institute.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite efforts to strengthen civil society engagement in the affairs of the Union, it is far from realising a people-centred Union, as called for by Agenda 2063. The reform of ECOSOCC offers some opportunities in this regard. Similarly, greater efforts must be made to better integrate the Diaspora and enhance their linkages with policy organs. African citizens across the continent, and beyond, are exercising agency, demanding for accountability and transparency in their own countries, across borders and in their institutions. Supported by the digital revolution, citizens are organising and mobilising for change through innovative means. The Commission would be remiss not to recognise and embrace the people driving the change as well as the tools, means and mechanisms they use.

This Commission has embarked on an advocacy and communication strategy that seeks to demystify the Union, popularise Agenda 2063, as well as the mechanisms for implementation. While much remains to be done, progress is notable. This includes the revamping of the online presence of the Union, the rebranding of the Union's identity and use of new media and tools to communicate with African citizens. The Commission should develop a robust system to seek and curate citizens' opinions, inputs and ideas on how to better the Union.

Building upon the progress of the previous Commission, notable milestones to promote women's equality and equity have been recorded. This includes the appointment of Special Envoys and Representatives, the establishment of Femwise-Africa and establishment of a High-Level Committee to investigate allegations of harassment against women at the AUC. Much more remains to be done to engender the Union at all levels and, address the challenges that women face, including working conditions, sexual harassment and career progress. The Commission must commit to fully implement

the outstanding recommendations of the High Level Committee and create a conducive environment for women by strengthening the system of ethics and accountability for violations within the Commission. Other initiatives including Femwise-Africa equally need to be allocated sufficient space, resources, and capacities to achieve their mandate.

The ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol should be accelerated if the Union is to deliver on any of its promises to advance women's rights. There are opportunities to realise gender parity across the AU organs with the rules set out in the institutional reform process. With the timeframe set at 2025 – coinciding with the end of term for the incoming Commission, it is critical that this is prioritised. The new African Women's Decade provides an opportunity to continue to push the agenda forward. As FAW has come to an end with the first African Women's Decade, a transitional mechanism to repurpose FAW into a Trust Fund should be developed to address outstanding disbursements. A strong and innovative accountability mechanism should accompany the redefined Trust Fund.

Throughout the Commission, various departments and programmes have sought to harness the youth demographic dividend. Guided by the recommendations of the theme of the year for 2017, the Commission implemented several initiatives such as appointment of a youth envoy, 1 Million by 2021, strengthening the AUYVC Programme and adoption of various strategies and plans of action on the African Youth Decade. The Commission should continue to support initiatives that provide young people with opportunities for jobs, entrepreneurship, skills and capacities to exercise leadership. The Commission should follow through on commitments to implement joint programmes with its partners such as the UNDP-AU Young Women Fellows Program and the proposed AU-UN young professionals' programme.

The appointment of an AU Youth Envoy was an important step in making space for young people to inform, shape and drive the policies and practices

of the Union. The Office of the Youth Envoy has enhanced the engagements and interactions of young people and the Union through a variety of on and offline engagements. Moving forward, the Office, and the designation must be institutionalised and given further support and the transition between Envoys facilitated to ensure continuity and gains are built upon.

2.5 ASSERTING AFRICA'S PLACE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE |

The Commission's work on asserting Africa's place on the global stage is driven by aspirations 2 and 7 of Agenda 2063: An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance; and Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner. The Commission focused its efforts on reviewing and enhancing its partnerships, advancing the decolonisation agenda and pushing for greater representation in global spaces.

Milestones:

- Evaluation of partnerships
- Decision to decolonise Chagos Archipelago
- Successful African candidates in the International system

2.5.1 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS |

The Commission was preoccupied with review and building of partnerships with development partners, international organisations and bilateral partners. Through high-level engagements and visits, the Commission was able to push continental positions in the global agenda for peace, development and sustainable environment. The Commission forged new institutional partnerships, including with the UK, France, the Russian Federation and Eurasian Economic Commission and Norway. Further, the Commission signed two MOUs with the UN framing

cooperation on peace, security and governance; as well as on economic cooperation. Additionally, the Commission supported existing Member State-led partnerships with the EU; the Arab region through the League of Arab States; India, and Turkey, and enhanced the coordination of the African position in TICAD (Japan) and FOCAC (China).

The Union successfully concluded the evaluation of AU partnerships and embarked on preparation of a strategy and policy for partnerships. The aim of this exercise was to (i) enable Africa to speak with one voice; (ii) better target partnerships to the needs of Africa and the partners' comparative advantage; and (iii) apply better working methods in management of Africa's strategic partnerships. The year 2020 marks the end of all instruments of EU-Africa partnership, notably the historic ACP-EU Cotonou agreement. The AU and EU continued to converge positions on their enhanced continent-to-continent partnership post 2020. In line with AU Assembly Decisions, the AU also supported the negotiations of the Africa pillar under the post-Cotonou agreement to ensure a strong and united African position in redefining the partnership between Africa and Europe. Due to the significance of this partnership, the AU Commission Chairperson appointed a High Representative and is in the process of renegotiating a new partnership with the EU based on principles of equality, mutual respect and shared interests – that should be anchored on a continent to continent instrument for accountability and tracking of implementation of commitments.

Separation between resource mobilisation and partnership functions has caused unnecessary duplication and often contradiction in approaches, particularly considering that the subcommittee on multilateral cooperation focuses on partnerships and not resource mobilisation. A directorate of partnership and resource mobilisation was created under the new structure as a way to overcome that problem and ensure harmony. The creation of the AU Development Agency, AUDA, necessitated that partners adjust how they work with the AU as the role of project implementation is gradually moving

from the Commission to AUDA-NEPAD, while the Commission retains policy and political engagement.

The Commission has taken steps to revitalise, in concert with non-state actors across regions of the world, the process of civil society engagement in

International System. As a result, this situation has undermined the endorsement by the competent global organs of common African candidates for key positions.

The Union remains committed to solidarity with

Fight Against Colonialism: Case of Chagos Archipelago

Reaffirming the Union's commitment to the fight against all forms of colonialism, the Commission supported Mauritius in its fight against the continued colonisation of its territory, the Chagos Archipelago by the United Kingdom. This resulted in the ICJ delivering its advisory opinion in support of the full decolonisation of the Chagos Archipelago. The UN General Assembly subsequently adopted a resolution demanding that the UK unconditionally withdraws its colonial administration from the area within six months and to further "facilitate the resettlement of Mauritian nationals, including those of Chagossian origin, in the Chagos Archipelago, and to pose no impediment or obstacle to such resettlement." The Commission remains seized of the matter to ensure the implementation of the Advisory Opinion.

the AU's international partnerships. This process has faltered in recent times as increasing emphasis was placed on state-to-state relationships in FOCAC, TICAD and the Africa-League of Arab States. The Union now has representation offices in Beijing, Brussels, Geneva, New York and Washington DC. The establishment and operationalisation of the Beijing representation office marks the first ever south-south cooperation office outside the continent.

In furtherance to aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063, the Commission is providing continued support to the Committee of Ten on UN Reform, calling for limits on veto powers and more permanent seats for Africa towards equitable representation. It also supported campaigns to facilitate the election and/or nomination of African candidatures for various posts and positions within the international system, as endorsed by the Assembly. However, in some cases, conflicts among Member States have adversely affected the smooth operation of the Ministerial Committee of African Candidatures within the

Palestine and its people, calling for an immediate end to the Israeli occupation and annexation of Palestinian lands, and reaffirming Palestine's right to exist. The Commission continues to call on the international community to assume its responsibilities concerning the question of Palestine and the implementation of all UN resolutions adopted from 1948 to date, to compel Israel to comply with international law. The African support to the Palestinian cause is premised on the values of dignity, freedom and justice as well as upholding human rights and humanitarian principles. Moving forward, the Commission should continue to exert efforts towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the borders of June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital. Using its place in the global arena, the Union should push forward the agenda of self-determination for Palestine.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Union has made significant progress in asserting Africa's place on the global stage. Through, among others, development of African Common Positions and solidarity and partnership with the Global South on addressing racism globally. Developing and sustaining partnerships on an equal footing with some of the traditional partners is work in progress. The push for international institutional reforms, in particular with the UNSC, WTO, and IFIs should continue to be a priority of the incoming Commission. Renewing strategic partnerships with traditional partners such as Europe should be based on a framework based on equity, mutual respect, shared interests and driven by the priorities of Agenda 2063. African voices and representation in global spaces and institutions should be supported beyond endorsement of African candidatures to influence policy making through negotiations and generation of knowledge. The Commission should support and collaborate with African universities and think tanks in this regard.

Delay in approval of the evaluation of strategic partnerships, and the associated decision to hold off on forging any new partnerships until it is completed, made it difficult for the AU to diversify. The AU needs to find better models for country-to-continent partnerships, as well as its meetings. The Reform has called for outcomes of partnership summits to be tangible and substantial to ensure that African resources, including the finite resource of time of African leaders, are well invested. In the absence of a coherent partnership information system, the AU finds it difficult to report on the impact of partnerships. Annual reports therefore remain at activity and output levels. It is necessary for the AU to move forward on the design of an information system that aims to enhance internal exchange of information within the AU as well as with RECs to avoid duplication of efforts, enhance Africa's performance in its dealing with the rest of the world, and enable strategic decisions about priorities, resource allocations, and performance

of partnerships.

Partnerships will play a key role in pulling out of the pandemic and its social and economic repercussions. Numerous partners have stepped up to support Africa through the Africa CDC, notably China, USA, EU institutions and Member States. Going forward Africa will need investments rather than ODA. Trade, investment, job creation, and skills development priorities of the AU need to be repositioned to respond directly to revive sectors most affected by the pandemic. Instruments to enhance such collaboration should be signed between the AU and its partners to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated economic response. Cooperation with partners must include support towards strengthening health systems and social safety nets; building capacity, exchanging information and data, and jointly planning technology development and access to pharmaceuticals and vaccines. The AU must continue to lead the dialogue on debt reform especially considering the COVID-19 crisis.

3. STRENGTHENING THE UNION

Milestones:

- Budget and Institutional Reforms undertaken
- Increased signatures and ratifications on AU instruments
- Enhanced coordination between AU and RECs

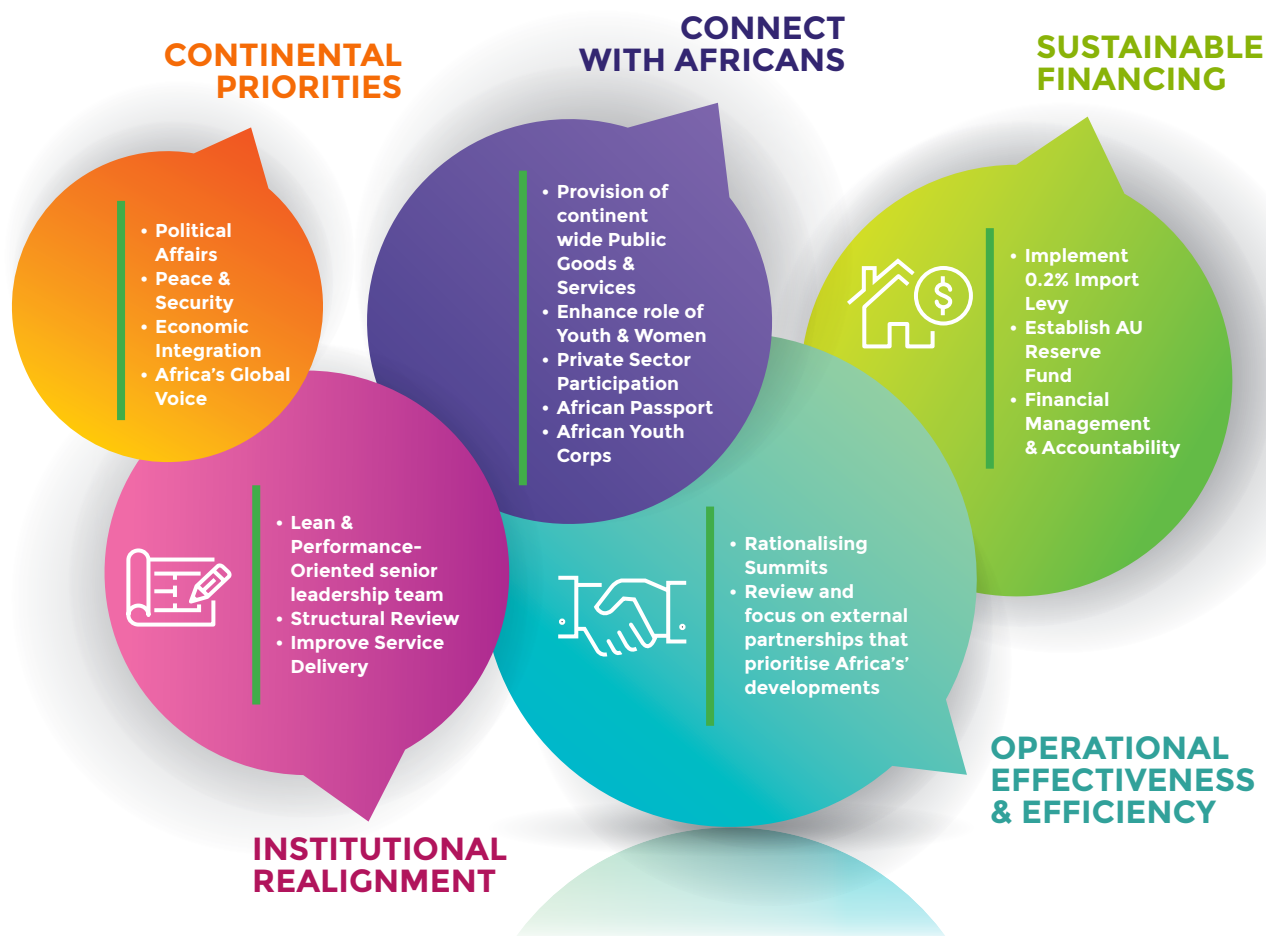
3.1 IMPLEMENTING AU REFORMS

The January 2017 AU Assembly Decision on the Institutional Reform of the AU sets out a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at fundamentally re-positioning the organisation to meet the evolving needs of its Member States and its people. The reform aims to establish an efficient and effective Commission that is able to deliver on agreed continental priorities, attract and retain the

best quality staff that are committed to delivering to the highest standards while operating within a strong accountability and performance-based framework.

The working methods of the AU Summit have been reformed. A decision was made by the Assembly that there would only be one Ordinary Summit per year, a decision that has been implemented since 2019. A streamlined agenda for the Summit focusing on only three key strategic issues for the Assembly's attention has been instituted. The systematic categorisation of decisions has been established to improve the quality of decision-making processes, enhance implementation and tracking of progress.

Efforts have been made to streamline the structure and portfolios of senior leadership to remove overlaps and duplication and improve overall efficiency. As of 2021, the Commission will be reduced from 10 to 8, with senior leadership being composed of 6 Commissioners, a Deputy Chairperson and a Chairperson. Reviews have been undertaken to



institute a credible and robust recruitment and selection system, to improve the meritocracy and transparency of the selection, as well as to strengthen performance management and clarify termination procedures at the senior leadership level. Women and youth quotas for posts across the AU, at 50% and 35% by 2025 respectively, have been established and recruitment is being undertaken with these quotas in mind.

An initial review of the Pan-African Parliament and the judicial organs has been completed. A more detailed assessment is underway to develop more detailed recommendations on how to strengthen the effectiveness of these key Organs. The PSC is deliberating on how to strengthen its working methods and role in conflict prevention and management. An initial review of AU Partnerships has been completed. The PRC sub-committee on Multilateral Cooperation is now developing an overall Partnerships strategy with a view to establishing clear partnership principles, capacity to negotiate effective partnerships and monitor implementation and impact.

3.2 FINANCING THE UNION |

The need for financial reforms that ensure accountability and results is just as critical for the AU as the need for adequate resourcing of the Union and should be addressed with the same urgency.

The Commission has since 2017 continued to carry out various reforms aimed at modernising its budgeting, financial and accounting systems and functions. Significant progress has been made

in terms of implementing many of the financing reform decisions. In 2018, the main effort was on operationalising the new budget process and the golden rules that were adopted in the January 2018 Summit. As a result of the application of the golden rules, the AU budget process began to generate more credible budgets considering performance metrics, execution rates and actual revenue flows. The introduction of finance experts from Member States and oversight from Ministers of Finance (F15) to oversee the budget process in 2018 has significantly improved the quality of the AU budget process.

A new scale of assessment 2019 – 2021 was adopted in February 2019 in line with the 2017 AU Ministers of Finance recommendation that ‘caps’ and ‘minima’ be introduced to improve overall burden-sharing, and to avoid risk concentration among Member States with respect to their annual contributions. A strengthened sanctions regime was adopted in November 2019 with a view to improving the timeliness and predictability of Member States’ contributions.

Twenty-six Member States are now at various stages of implementation of the 0.2% levy. Since 2017, 51 Member States have contributed a total of \$179.5m to the Peace Fund, out of an endowment target of \$400m.

Excluding PSOs, Member States have since 2017 been contributing more to the Union budget. This is an attestation to meeting targets set during the June 2015 Assembly decision on self-financing, ie funding 100% of the operational budget, 75% of the program

Type of Budget	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Projected	Approved	Projected	Approved	Projected	Approved	Projected	Approved
Operational Budget	163	163	165	191	174	171	182	157
Program Budget	312	290	327	311	344	237	361	217
Total	475	453	492	502	518	408	543	374

Table 1: AU Budget (In USD mil. excl. Peace Support Operations)⁴

⁴ The projected figures in the table were made in 2016 when preparing for the adoption of Kigali Decision on Financing the Union

Partner	Contributed Amount (US\$)
European Union	125,676,836.54
Covid Response Fund	43,144,623.44
JPA/JFA	7,083,809.33
South Korea	3,735,274.39
Member States	1,319,271.75
Spain	1,112,585.00
United States of America	994,847.00
World Bank	696,673.00
Germany	585,671.22
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	570,961.47
United Kingdom	184,330.73
Other	65,845.42
Grand Total	185,170,729.29

Development partners remain the major contributor to the AU budget (including PSOs) with an average of 62%.

and 25% to PSOs with locally generated funds.

Although Member States contributions are now more than those contributed by partners, the following are noteworthy:

1. There has been a collection rate of an average of 76% since 2016.
2. Collections have never reached 100%, the highest being 79% recorded in 2019.
3. Number of MS defaulting went down to 15% in 2019 from an average of 33% per annum.
4. In 2020, collections from Member States reached 61% as of October 2020 compared with 73% received during the same period in 2019. This is the lowest ever to be collected at this period of the year, despite the fact that the amount assessed to Member States in 2020 was lower



than in 2019. The highest collection at this stage of year was 84% recorded in 2018. The average has been 68% by the end of October. The COVID-19 crisis has had devastating effects on African economies resulting in disruption of production and a sharp reduction in demand. The spillovers from a sharp deterioration in global growth and tighter financial conditions as well as severe decline in commodity prices have largely affected the revenue generation capacity of most Member States, and hence their contributions to the AU.

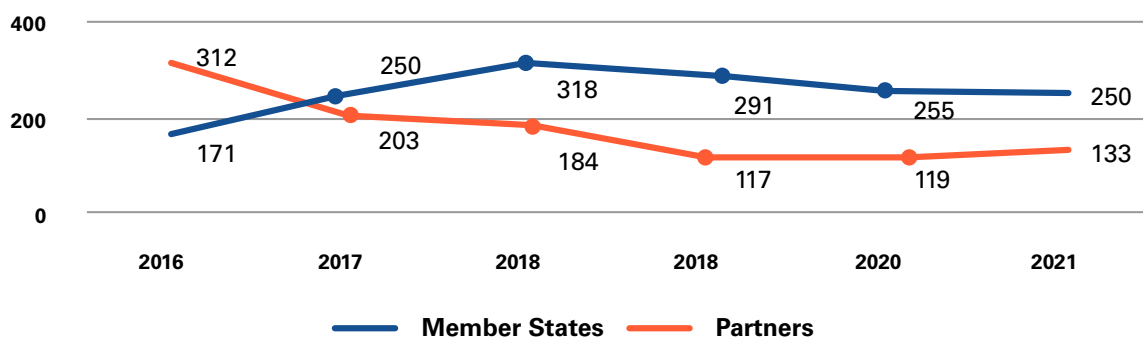


Figure 1: MS Assessed Contributions vs funds received from Partners (US\$ m – excl. PSOs)

3.3 MOVING FORWARD ON AU TREATIES |

Learn about

all the AU treaties and their status of ratification by countries on <https://au.int/treaties>



www.au.int    

An accelerated ratification/accession rate is a crucial factor towards the implementation of the values embodied in the treaties and the attainment of Agenda 2063. During the period under review, the rate of signature and ratification/accession increased significantly, with 2018 and 2019 registering the highest number of signatures and ratifications respectively.

Despite the growing ratification rate, the pace of ratification remains such that most legal instruments adopted from 2012 have not entered into force. The Constitutive Act of the AU is the only treaty that has achieved universal ratification, followed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, nearing universal ratification with fifty-four States

Parties.

In 2019, the Executive Council endorsed the Plan of Action to Accelerate Ratification/Accession and Implementation of OAU/AU Treaties as well as the Guidelines on the Modalities for the Setting up, Liaising and Engaging with National Sectoral Committees. These Committees are expected to facilitate the implementation of national policies and AU decisions related to the ratification/accession and implementation of OAU/AU Treaties and to advocate for the adoption of the necessary legislative and administrative measures to implement OAU/AU Treaties. Through the same decision, the Executive Council extended the treaty signing week to the month of December, every year.

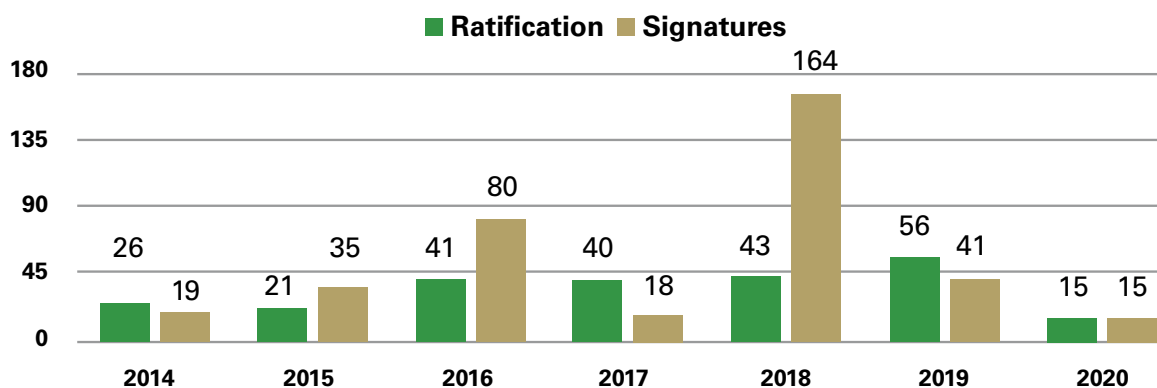


Table 1: Status of Signatures and Ratifications (2014 - July 2020)

3.4 COORDINATING AU AND RECs

In January 2017, the Assembly agreed that there should be a clear division of labour and effective collaboration among the AU, RECs, RMs, Member States, and other continental institutions. They also decided that in place of the June/July Summit, the Bureau of the Assembly shall hold a coordination meeting with the RECs, the AUC and RMs. It was decided that the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting shall be the principal forum for the AU and RECs to align their work and co-ordinate the implementation of the continental integration agenda.

A more collaborative mechanism has been developed to chart how the AU and RECs can work in alignment rather than creating overlaps and duplicating efforts. Efforts have been made to streamline their work so that there is a clear division of labour based on subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage. The AUC has fostered a close working relationship between RECs and AUDA-NEPAD, particularly in the areas of project implementation of Flagship projects and resource mobilisation. The Commission provides technical assistance to RECs to undertake upstream pre-investment work to move projects to bankability, financing and implementation through the Capacity Building Programme. To further enhance this new relationship, the Assembly adopted a revised Protocol on Relations between the AU and RECs in February 2020. This will improve the implementation of the Institutional Reforms and assist in addressing the gaps identified in the AU Institutional Reforms report.

The PSC has continued to engage RECs and RMs for conflict prevention, management and resolution to make contributions in its activities in which the particular REC/RM is concerned. In several situations, such as Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Sudan and South Sudan, the PSC has complemented or been guided by the decisions of the concerned REC/RM. This has helped in further enhancing and cementing the relationship between the PSC and REC/RM policy organs, as well as consolidating peace efforts for better outcomes for the continent and its people. In

May 2019, the PSC held its inaugural meeting with the RECs/RM policy organs in charge of peace and security in their regions. This was a historic meeting, coming eighteen years after the establishment of the PSC in 2002. The meeting provided an opportunity for the two sides to exchange views, establish a common understanding as well as shared perspectives on the way forward that would lead to common parameters for taking decisions. The PSC and RECs/RMs have agreed to continue with annual consultations.

Despite achievements towards regional integration of Africa, the Continent continues to face several challenges. Limited implementation of Assembly and Executive Council Decisions and slow reporting to AU treaty monitoring bodies on measures undertaken by Member States to implement their commitments remain persistent challenges. Unless the rate of Member States complying with and implementing decisions of the Union is accelerated, it will be difficult to realise regional integration. This is compounded by slow ratification and domestication of key legal instruments of the Union.

The multiplicity of membership by Member States in different RECs poses a significant challenge. While the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 divided Africa into five Regions; Northern, Eastern, Western, Southern, and Central Africa, the AU recognised eight RECs at the July 2006 Banjul Summit. To compound this problem, several Member States belong to more than one REC with some having membership in as many as three. This creates a multiplicity of actors, duplicating efforts and often competing for the same resources. The overlapping membership is costly and hampers the ability of RECs to work in harmony.

3.5 COORDINATION WITH AU ORGANS, INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIALISED AGENCIES

One of the critical challenges identified by the current Commission is the issue of limited coordination and coherence of key policies and institutions particularly in the area of governance and human rights. To begin to understand the structural issues on limited coordination and coherence, the Chairperson of the

Commission appointed, for the first time, an adviser on policy coherence. Through this advisory portfolio, the Commission undertook studies and held several consultations with relevant Organs, institutions and stakeholders including a) an evaluation of the relationship between the AUC and Specialised Agencies; b) policy coherence between the AUC and other AU organs; and c) governance arrangements in selected AU organs, reviewing issues and options for each. The Commission has embarked on the development of an operations manual to enhance role clarification and process improvement within the Bureau of the Chairperson.

The overarching findings of these studies is that the AUC and AU organs, institutions and specialised agencies need to strengthen their horizontal and vertical collaboration and relationship. This would entail review of and deeper reflection on implementation of mandates, capacities and resources to enhance efficiencies, avoid duplication and achieve results. Recommendations emerging from these studies are currently under review for further consideration through the respective AU administrative and policy making processes. The incoming Commission should follow up the process of consideration, adoption and implementation of these recommendations, which would serve as useful insights to inform the institutional reform process.

LESSONS LEARNT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Significant progress has been made on the reform agenda of the Union. The incoming Commission should prioritise implementation of the outstanding elements of the reforms process, according significant attention to:

- Alignment of implementing Agenda 2063 priorities, including its flagship initiatives, with the strategic plans of the newly structured Commission, taking into consideration the division of labour outlined in the reforms process, with regard to priority focus of the AU vis a vis the RECs
- Strengthening of the AU recruitment system to

enhance efficiency, accountability, competency-based hiring practices and diversity and prioritising the staff skills and competency audit and implementation of its recommendations

- Strengthening and adoption of new working methods, tools and infrastructure, including use of technology and innovation to deliver results efficiently and cost effectively
- Implementation of the budgetary and finance reforms to ensure financial sustainability

Africa's development potential is hampered by the delayed establishment of AU Financial Institutions and illicit financial flows (IFFs) which number as much as US\$50 billion annually. The Commission worked with partners to build Member States capacities to improve tax collection and expand their tax base. Much more attention should be paid to promoting domestic resource mobilisation efforts and stemming IFFs through a coordinated approach. In this regard, the Commission should amplify efforts to advocate for and implement the Common African Position on Asset Recovery, a critical step to combat and reverse illicit financial flows.

The election of the incoming Commission provides a unique opportunity for alignment of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 with the institutional needs and capacities of the Union. The newly restructured Commission should function, operate and engage with a results mind-set and a focus on transparency and accountability. The reforms process already provides a framework to undertake change management of the Commission that has started at the top. The incoming Commission will need to cascade the reorganisation and restructuring to all levels of the Commission.

In light of different but complementary mandates of AU bodies and RECs, it has been critical to enhance their coordination, coherence and synergy. The decision to replace the June/July Summit with a coordination meeting between the AU, RECs and Member States is a testament to the importance given to coordination between these bodies. The adoption of the Protocol on the relations between the AU and RECs along with the Rules of Procedure for

the Mid-Year Co-ordination Meeting gives impetus to strengthening AU-RECs relationship on the basis of complementarity and subsidiarity. Of particular importance for the incoming Commission is the necessity of implementing the division of labour at the strategic level as mandated in the reforms process.

The coordination among AU organs has improved especially within the AGA framework. AU organs and institutions with a governance and human rights mandate have held annual coordination meetings and consultations aimed at improving their relations. The merger between the departments of political affairs and peace and security provides an opportunity to further broaden and strengthen coordination, collaboration and complementarity between AGA and APSA pillars and platform members. The same opportunity exists with the merger of the departments of trade and industry and economic affairs for better coordination of economic integration initiatives. The incoming Commission should implement the recommendations of the three studies undertaken on strengthening the relationship and coordination of the AUC, AU organs and Specialised Agencies.

4 CHARTING THE FUTURE

The incoming Commission should continue to focus on supporting Member States to implement Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects. Strengthening the Union to find innovative ways to promote and realise inclusive economic development, democratic governance, peace and security and social development while ensuring the meaningful inclusion and engagement of women, youth and other marginalised groups is paramount. In specific terms, it is critical to prioritise the following key areas:

a. Building Back Better: It is of utmost importance that the Commission assists Member States to mitigate future and emerging

socio-economic threats by strengthening social safety nets and health care systems and prioritising human security to guarantee the well-being of its citizens at all times. Efforts should be invested in care economies that put people at the centre of policies. Investments should also be made in digital governance – including digitising services and enhancing reliable and affordable access to internet. The disruptive impact of COVID-19 on Africa's food supplies underscored that food security, and by extension food sovereignty remains a high priority for the continent. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for national governments to build solid social contracts with their citizens to avoid unnecessary hardships, social unrest and to silence the guns. The foundation of building back better should be anchored on promoting and upholding democratic governance, rule of law, human rights, peace and security. Effective implementation of the strategic priorities of the Union will require greater political commitment, resource mobilisation, ownership, innovation, and engagement with African citizens and leveraging sustainable partnerships.

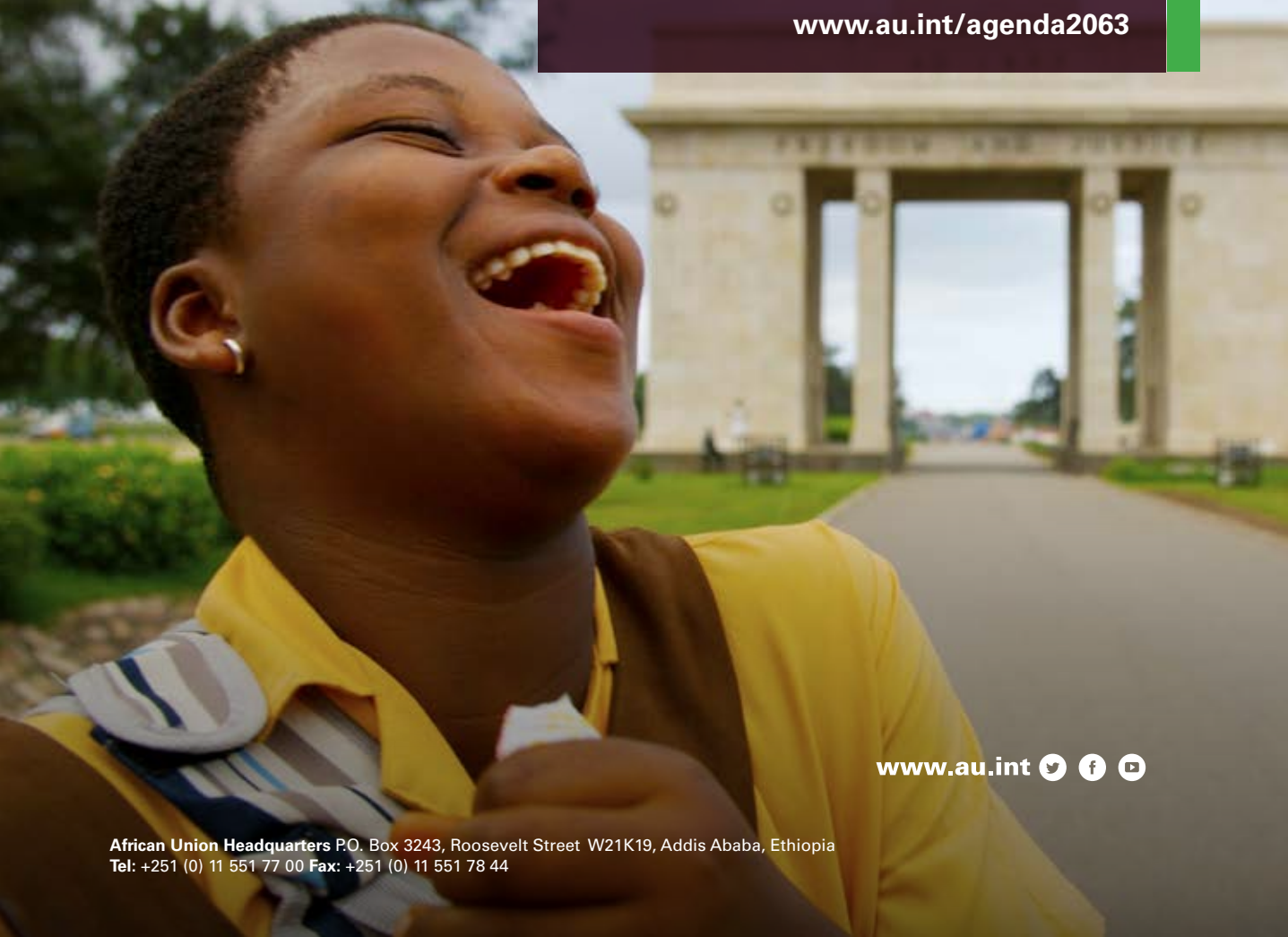
b. Public Health Governance: In view of the devastation caused by the pandemic, a critical priority for the Commission is to support its Member States to build healthcare capacities, infrastructure and the legal frameworks to adequately respond to and end COVID-19. It is important for the Commission to facilitate the strengthening of continental capabilities to deal with future pandemics by making the Africa CDC fully operational and capacitated to become a reference and coordination point for African regional and national CDCs. The Commission should encourage Member States to ratify and implement the AUC Treaty on African Medicines Agency and build global partnerships and solidarity in health security, innovative social and health investment platforms, facilitate the production of medicines, vaccines, medical



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supplies and logistics to address the growing trends of pandemics.

- c. Implementation of AU Institutional Reforms:** The election of the incoming Commission provides a unique opportunity for alignment of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 with the institutional needs and capacities of the Union. The newly restructured Commission should function with a results-oriented mind-set. Inevitably, that will entail a re-emphasis on results-based management. The reforms process already provides a framework to undertake change management of the Commission. The incoming Commission will need to provide technical, administrative, financial and logistic support to the implementation of the new departmental structure. The focus of the next Commission should be on the implementation of the outstanding elements of the reforms such as coordination and division of labour between the AU and the RECs; and the staff skills and competency audit to enhance efficiency, accountability, competency and diversity through the strengthening of AU recruitment system. Greater efforts should be placed on implementation of existing AU decisions and treaties. The Financing of the Union is also a key priority, which should not only focus on mobilisation of funds, but also the full endowment and operationalisation of facilities such as the Peace Fund and the implementation of budgetary and finance reforms, to ensure prudent utilisation of scarce resources to enhance financial sustainability of the Union.

- d. Towards a People-Centred Union:** The Union must accord greater attention and priority to realising its aim of a people-centred Union by allowing greater space for citizen and diaspora engagement in shaping its affairs and influencing its decision-making processes. While attention should not be diverted away from young people, the Commission should

be forward-looking, putting in place measures to prepare for the resultant aging bulge in the decades to come that will result from the current youth bulge. Engendering the Union should continue in earnest, with implementation of the Gender Parity decision across the Commission and organs, but also with systems in place to guard against discrimination, harassment and violations of rights.

- e. Building Equitable Partnerships:** The Union must invest in and reshape its partnerships to ensure that they are based on equity and mutual respect, driven by the priorities of Africa. The Commission should facilitate the signing, ratification and implementation of agreements that reflect the interests of the continent, both for current and future generations. Another key priority is the continuation of negotiations and dialogue on debt relief and forgiveness, especially in light of the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on AU Member States. The Commission should continue pushing for reform of international organisations – including for greater representation in the UN Security Council, allowing for African positions to have greater weight in the global arena. Solidarity with Palestine should not falter, aligning with the Union's values of self-determination for all people and the pursuit of justice, dignity and respect.

5 CONCLUSION

The next few years are going to be crucial due to uncertainties and the dwindling respect for multilateral institutions. The key is the transformation of the organisation to engender trust and confidence of Member States and ensuring that the organisation remains relevant to African citizens. Most importantly, in the post-pandemic era, the Commission needs to cultivate transparent and accountable partnerships with development partners and other stakeholders in a way that reflects Africa's needs and priorities. Mobilising both domestic and external resources and solidarity is critical to ensure that the pandemic does not roll back decades of progress made in human security, particularly among vulnerable groups.

The prospects that exist for the Commission to perform more effectively and efficiently through the implementation of its Institutional Reforms are great. Once fully implemented, the AU has the potential to become a high performing, professional and self-financing organisation capable of being a reliable global partner. This is even more imperative today with the international system becoming increasingly characterised by nationalistic and unilateral sentiments rather than the age long principles of multilateral cooperation. There is now a greater need and urgency for the Commission to step up in the face of the unforeseen and unprecedented negative health, socio-economic and peace and security challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Going forward, the Commission has to develop capacities to support its Member States mitigate the impact and the aftermath of this pandemic and other future emergencies.

With 2021 being the year of the arts, culture and heritage, greater efforts should be invested and focused on aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063. In line with this, much more needs to be done to broaden the space for civil society participation as way of realising a people-centred Union that is driven by its citizens – particularly its young people and its women. While much progress has been registered with the AfCFTA,

the Protocol on Free Movement which is not only complementary but necessary to realise the aims of AfCFTA is lagging behind. Ensuring that the Protocol is widely ratified, implemented and domesticated should be prioritised. The campaign to silence the guns should become an overarching objective of the Commission with a long term objective of a more peaceful continent.

While the outgoing Commission acknowledges the responsibility bestowed on its leadership with great honour, it recognises the contribution made by the entire staff to achieve these milestones. The progress made by the Commission is the result of the political leadership of Member States, guidance and direction from AU policy organs and support from African citizens and partners. Challenges remain to realise the Africa we want, however the commitment to surmount these challenges is assured. It is therefore paramount that the recommendations contained in this report are accorded due consideration by the incoming Commission and the Policy Organs. This report documents milestones, challenges and opportunities of the current Commission. It will also serve the incoming Commission lessons learnt and recommendations to build from and move Africa's agenda forward.



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