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**FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
(STC) ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND
ENVIRONMENT**

14-17 NOVEMBER 2023

HYBRID (VIRTUAL AND ADDIS ABABA)

STC5/ARDWE/MIN REPORT

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE) is one of the fourteen (14) STCs established by the Decision of the Twelfth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII)), which was held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 01-03 February 2009. The STC is composed of Ministers or senior officials responsible for sectors falling within its areas of competence. The Ministers approve projects and programmes submitted by the STC-ARDWE experts. They also have the duty to ensure effective supervision, follow-up, and evaluation of the implementation of decisions taken by the organs of the Union and the coordination and harmonization of projects and programmes of the Union. The STC is also expected to carry out any other functions assigned to it for the purpose of ensuring the implementation of the provisions of relevant African Union (AU) Decisions. The Commission convenes Ordinary Sessions of the STC once every two (2) years.
2. The Fifth Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE took place on 14-17 November 2023 in hybrid format. The meeting was organized into plenary and parallel sessions. The parallel sessions were clustered along two thematic areas for Experts/Senior Officials to facilitate deliberations and review of documents. The meeting began on Day 1 (14 November 2023) with an Opening Plenary Session followed by two presentations in plenary. Day two started off immediately with two parallel sessions:

Parallel Session on Agriculture and Rural Development: This session deliberated on reports and strategies on thematic areas in the Rural Development Division, Agriculture and Food Security Division, and on reports from the following Specialised Technical Offices (STOs): African Union Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development's (AU-SAFGRAD's); Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and The African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC).

Parallel Session on Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy deliberated on reports and strategies from Sustainable Environment and the Blue Economy Divisions under the following thematic areas: Biodiversity and

Wildlife; Climate Change and Meteorology; Disaster Risk Reduction; Sustainable Land Management; Water and Environment.

The Ministerial segment of the STC-ARDWE took place on the 17th of November 2023. The Ministerial segment deliberated on and adopted the report of the experts.

B. OBJECTIVES

3. The objectives of the 5th session of the STC-ARDWE were to: (a) review progress made in the implementation of previous AU and STC Decisions; (b) provide policy guidance, consider and adopt reports, strategies, frameworks, guidelines, and programmes.
4. The meeting reviewed and endorsed recommendations that were proposed for presentation to the Executive Council of the African Union for consideration.

C. PARTICIPATION

5. Delegates from the following Member States participated in the STC: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroun, Chad, Central Africa Republic, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Zambia and Zimbabwe
6. The STC was also attended by delegates from the AUDA-NEPAD and the following Regional Economic Communities (RECs): Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Arab Maghreb Union (UMA). Delegates from the STC's ministerial committee of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) also participated in the STC.

7. Other organisations that participated are: the European Union Delegation to the AU and United Nations Agencies such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR); Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); World Food Programme (WFP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

D OPENING SESSION.

Welcome Statement: H.E. Amb Josefa Sacko, AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy

8. H.E. Amb. Josefa Sacko, the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) warmly welcomed the delegates to the 5th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE). She presented the progress that the Department made in implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the previous sessions of the 4th STC.
9. She highlighted the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development, in collaboration with member states and strategic partners, has made tangible advancements in enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting sustainable farming practices, and addressing the critical issues of food security and rural poverty. On Implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), we successfully produced the CAADP 4th BR Report, in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD and the Government of Zambia we successfully convened the 14th Africa Day of Food and Nutrition Security and the 19th CAADP PP, in Lusaka, Zambia. To ensure the digital transformation of African agriculture, the Department developed the Digital Agriculture Strategy and its implementation Plan which covers the period from 2024 to 2027. She further highlighted important progresses made in the implementation of CAAPs programme, post-harvest and food safety, empowering youth and women in agriculture.

10. She also highlighted some of the progress made under the Directorate Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy. She informed the meeting that The Department coordinated the development of a comprehensive African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan for the next 10 years (2022-2023). The Department successfully convened the **Africa Climate Summit** which was hosted by the Republic of Kenya from 4-6 September 2023.
11. On Disaster Risk Reduction, substantial progress has been made she added. In response to increasing disaster losses, in 2021, the Africa Union Commission developed the AMHEWAS Programme and established four Multi-hazard Early Warning Situation Rooms to contribute to resilience building and reduce disaster losses by 2030. She further highlighted the progress made under thematic areas: environment, water, metrology, blue economy, the Great Green Wall Initiative, and transboundary Disaster Risk Management.
12. She emphasized that as we are drawing closer (just two years) to the timeline, our Heads of State set in 2014 for achieving the Malabo goals and targets. She stressed that the findings of the CAADP Fourth Biennial Report show that the continent is nowhere closer to achieving the Malabo targets. Against this bleak backdrop, I have committed myself to leading a post-Malabo planning process that has already started with a Regional Economic Communities Consultation meeting. The Concept Note is aptly titled “Propelling Africa Agricultural Growth, Agrifood Systems Transformation to Boost Economic Transformation, Food Sovereignty, and Resilience”, and the goal of the post-Malabo Agenda is to unleash ‘business unusual’ agenda that stimulates the result-yielding implementation of interventions based on a ten-year (2026-2036) Sector-wide Action Plan
13. As she concluded, the Commissioner expressed her gratitude to H, E. El Sayed El Quseir, Minister of Agriculture of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Chair of the 4th STC as well as other members of the Bureau. Highlighting that it was through their effort that we were able to record all our achievements. With these few remarks, she declared the 5th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) is officially open.

Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, Special Envoy of AU for Food system

14. In his speech, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki stressed that CAADP as a continental framework for African agricultural development is highly regarded internationally. He emphasised that there has been significant progress in the implementation of CAADP, especially in the area of increased agricultural productivity. The positive correlation between poverty eradication and agriculture development was highlighted as crucial in aligning the goals of the 2014 Malabo Declaration to achieving sustainable development in the continent. He harped on the need to involve Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in designing the post-Malabo Agenda.
15. Furthermore, the Special Envoy also addressed the challenges posed by population growth and changing demographics in African countries, highlighting the need for tailored agricultural and infrastructural development policies. He stressed the importance of increased infrastructure investment for holistic development, recognizing its impact on agricultural productivity and overall economic growth in the region.

E. STATEMENT BY PARTNERS AND INVITED GUESTS

European Union

16. In her speech, the representative of the EU, Ms Lana Zutelija, highlighted the wishes of EU to be AU partner of choice. She highlighted the cordial working relations between the EU and AU, noting that 90% of African exports enter EU duty free. She reported that EU has developed a number of interventions that support AU in several key areas within the STC-ARDWE thematic areas. She highlighted some interventions that include the continental strategies in Blue Economy, Biodiversity and Great Green Wall, among others. Other EU-supported initiatives of note include Team Europe Initiative.
17. She outlined several initiatives that the EU is supporting AU on, which focus on facilitating the pursuit of Agenda 2063 goals. She recalled the successful convening of the 5th EU AU Agricultural Ministerial summit and also

congratulated the AU on the successful convening of the Africa Climate Summit, whose high-level attendance reflected the commitment the African leadership is giving to Climate Change issues. The speech concluded by reiterating the EU's pledge to continue supporting the AU on various initiatives.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

18. Dr David Phiri, the Special Adviser to the Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Office for Africa, gave remarks on behalf of FAO. In his remarks, he welcomed the invitation by AU to the STC and indicated FAO is pleased to share perspectives with AU and stakeholders during the meeting.
19. He noted that despite remarkable progress by some MS Africa still lags behind in terms of meeting its goals on nutrition. Actually, more people are going hungry than in 2019. Africa food systems are also fragile and vulnerable to fluctuating weather conditions.
20. In his remarks, he enjoined Member States to re-commit to implementation of the Malabo Agenda if the Continent is to achieve the targets of the continental and global commitments to fight hunger and malnutrition. He cited the 2023 Report of the Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition, which confirmed that nearly 282 million people in Africa were undernourished in 2022, an increase of 57 million people since the Covid-19 pandemic. This substantiates the low probability of Africa to meet the food security and nutrition targets of Sustainable Development Goal 2 - Zero Hunger by 2030 - and the Malabo targets of ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2025. He called for urgent and profound to be taken at all levels to reverse the trend to reverse the trend. He also emphasised the huge opportunity offered by Africa's youthful population for agro-led industrialization through commercialization, agribusiness development and increased value addition.
21. Dr. Phiri pin-pointed specific policies that require a shift of mind, and this includes: i) a well thought implementation pathways and common position for the African foods systems transformation, ii) exploitation of existing opportunities including the available arable land, iii) enhancement of the interregional trade through the AfCTFA, iv) domestic resource mobilization and

the role of the African private sector and v) leveraging the population dividend especially the youth, innovation and technology.

22. Dr Phiri lastly indicated that FAO remains committed and will continue to provide predictable technical support to the acceleration of the implementation of the CAADP through 2025 and the designing of the post-Malabo agenda.

World Food Programme

23. The representative of the WFP, Mr J. Chris Toe, opened his speech by noting that Africa has not been on track in terms of the goal of reducing hunger. He emphasised the need to prioritise reducing post-harvest loss as one of the means towards reducing hunger in Africa.

24. Mr Toe noted that has the heaviest food insecurity burden. He observed that the key drivers of vulnerability in Africa have been conflicts and the increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme weather and climate events.

25. He took the opportunity to reaffirm the WFP's commitment to support the AU on various initiative to end hunger and to improve food security, emphasising that addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the food crisis needs various stakeholders to work together.

26. He concluded by thanking the African Union Commission's DARBE for the continued collaboration with the WFP.

F. OFFICIAL OPENING

Chair of the Bureau of 4th STC on ARDWE - Egypt

27. Egypt's Deputy Minister of Agriculture and land reclamation paid tribute to the role of the African Union Commission in advancing continental action to deal with the food crisis by holding the high-level conference on food security in October 2022. He informed the delegates about Egypt's request to the Commission, to extend the mandate of a working group that had been formed under the joint leadership of FAO and the African Union Commission to follow up and evaluate the repercussions of the Covid -19 pandemic on the continent as well as the food security crisis facing the continent. He thanked the

Commission and the STC, including the bureau and noted that the during their presidency of the STC, Egypt also cooperated with the Commission to mobilize resources and promote pioneering African programs related to the work of the Commission thanked the delegates for taking the time to attend the meeting.

28. He complimented Her Excellency Ambassador Josefa Sako, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, for her wise and enlightened leadership towards. achieving the goals of the African Agenda 2063, as well as efforts to respond to the crises facing the continent recently. He further thanked the express my gratitude for the support provided by the Bureau member states to the Egyptian presidency of the Committee during the past two years. pay tribute to the role of the African Union Commission in advancing continental action to deal with the food crisis by holding the high-level conference on food security in October 2022.
29. The Deputy Minister noted that Climate Change is a reality in the continent, despite the low contribution of the continent to factors driving Climate Change. He reported that as chair of COP27, Egypt highlighted African priorities that need to be focused on in order to balance between Development and considerations relating to Climate Change issues. The issue of water shortage was highlighted as a key priority to the continent.
30. During Egypt's tenure as Chair of the 4th STC, initiatives were launched that will facilitate funding for Agriculture programmes and Climate Change measures to improve Africa's resilience.

G. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTED BUREAU

31. The representative of the Office of the Legal Counsel announced the Bureau of the 5th STC-ARDWE, elected on the first day of the experts' segment in accordance with the Rules of Procedure governing STCs. The bureau of the 5th STC-ARDWE is as follows:

Chair: Republic of Uganda (Eastern Africa)

1st Vice Chair: Republic of Cameroun (Central Africa)

2nd Vice Chair: Republic of Cote d' Ivoire (West Africa)

3rd Vice Chair: Republic of Namibia (Southern Africa)

Rapporteur: Arab Republic of Egypt (Northern Africa)

32. The Bureau's tenure runs for the next 2 years, beginning November 2023

H. REMARKS BY THE INCOMING CHAIR OF THE 5th STC BUREAU

33. The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of the Republic of Uganda, and incoming Chair of the STC-ARDWE, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze, thanked African Union Member States for voting Uganda as the Chair of the 5th Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE). He also thanked the Dean of Ambassadors for Eastern Africa, for supporting and fielding Uganda's candidature, and congratulated the new members of the 5th STC-ARDWE.

34. The minister reiterated the challenges facing agriculture on the continent and emphasized that they could be overcome if Africans worked together in a concerted manner. He reminded all that for CAADP@20, some progress has been made, but more needs to be urgently implemented in cooperation with partners to make greater progress towards achieving the Malabo goals by 2025, and in appropriately designing the post Malabo agenda.

35. The minister proposed that the extra-ordinary summit that will endorse the post-Malabo CAADP agenda be held in Kampala, Uganda, and that Uganda would wait for the dates as advised from the AU Commission.

36. The minister suggested some areas of focus for the next two years: increase agricultural productivity, value addition to our produce, integrate our food markets and increase intra-Africa trade, create the enabling environment for private sector investment in agriculture and for trade, harness multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collective actions, practice climate resilient agriculture and climate resilient Africa blue economy,

37. The minister reiterated the request that African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorse the inclusion of coffee as a strategic commodity in the AU Agenda 2063 at the next AU Assembly in February 2024, as was requested from the Kampala Declaration from the 2nd Edition of the G-25 Africa Coffee Summit.

38. The minister concluded by thanking all for entrusting Uganda with the responsibility of chairing this important STC for the next two years.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE STC

39. The meeting adopted the agenda of the 5th Session of the STC-ARDWE.

J. PRESENTATION OF THE 4TH COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP) BIENNIAL REVIEW REPORT

40. The Commission presented the 4th CAADP Biennial Review Report. This was the same presentation made during the Technical Experts session. The Ministers and Country Representatives present in the ministerial segment of the 5th STC, endorsed and adopted the report.

K. PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF THE EXPERTS

41. The Chair of the Experts meeting, Mr Stephen Tibeijuka Byantwale, Director for Crop Resources, Republic of Uganda, presented the report of the deliberations of the Senior Officials and Experts which took place on 14-16 November 2023.

42. Below is the Experts' report that was adopted by the 5th STC-ARDWE

The 4th CAADP Biennial Review (BR) Report (Update and summary of Member States' implementation progress)

43. In the **PRESENTATION**, the Commission highlighted that the report was the fourth on the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The presentation indicated that 49 Member States reported in 2023 compared to 51 in 2021. Fifty-nine (59) indicators were tracked compared to 49 in 2021 and country progress was assessed based on the 2022 benchmark of **9.29 out of 10**. The report revealed that no country was on track towards achieving the Malabo Commitments by 2025, while 19 Member States were progressing well and 30 were not on track

44. **NOTED** the achievements for the 4th biennial review as compared to the first second and third biennial reviews in terms of number of countries reporting and number of indicators used for the performance assessment. The performance for the 4th BR was compared with the performance on the third biennial review for all the seven commitment areas.
45. **OBSERVED** from the findings that it is unlikely that the continent is going to end hunger by 2025 as no country is on track for this Commitment 3. There are however 7 countries making progress during the 4th BR Report, an improvement from only one in the last report. Fourteen of the African countries were progressing well to halving poverty by 2025 (Commitment 4).
46. **TOOK NOTE** of the progress and challenges in the African Continental Free Trade area (AfCFTA) implementation. The 4th BR report is aligned to the AUC theme of the year which was accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA. As of October 2023, 54 Member States had signed the agreement except Eritrea. By November 2023, 47 Member States had deposited ratification instruments for verification.
47. **TOOK NOTE** of the indicators for tracking the AfCFTA implementation in the CAADP BR and highlighted the newly introduced indicators in the 2023 BR report, emphasizing their significance in tracking AfCFTA implementation progress, and the need to accelerate implementation.
48. **TOOK NOTE** of critical success factors in the AfCFTA implementation including infrastructure development, harmonization of policies, institutional quality, and the resolution of non-tariff barriers, underscoring their importance in ensuring AfCFTA's success.
49. **REQUESTED** the AUC, Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and AUDA-NEPAD to mount a strong communication and dissemination campaign on the findings of the report, and the AU to improve communication, dissemination and dialogue based on the BR report. The use of the CAADP BR Communication Toolkit and fora such as the CAADP Partnership Platform and the Peer-to-Peer Malabo Policy Learning Event (MAPLE) should be encouraged to allow different stakeholders to view, observe and reflect on the findings of this fourth BR report in relation to the achievement of the Malabo Commitments.

To this end, the STC:

50. **ENDORSED and ADOPTED** the 4th CAADP Biennial Review report.
51. **CALLED UPON** all remaining Member States to ratify and sign the AfCFTA agreement.
52. **URGED** Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AUC, and all stakeholders to renew their commitments to CAADP as Africa's transformative plan for agriculture-led growth.
53. **CALLED UPON** Member States, AUC and RECs to use different available platforms to disseminate the report and use it as widely as possible to stimulate debate, discussions, and policy changes.
54. **REQUESTED** AU Member States, RECs, the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to strengthen the existing established central multi-sectoral coordination mechanism required for effective CAADP implementation.
55. **ENCOURAGED** the AUC and other stakeholders to document lessons learned and establish areas of successes and challenges that will provide priority areas to feed into implementation processes for the next two years until 2025. This will also feed into the development of the post-Malabo agenda for the next 10 years (2026-2035).
56. **REITERATED** the need for strong political leadership and commitment at all levels to drive implementation, mutual accountability, and, importantly, the financing required to achieve the aspirations of CAADP.
57. **ENCOURAGED** RECs to continue to play a critical role in the CAADP implementation and, in particular, the management of the Biennial Review process.
58. This report **CALLED FOR** the strengthening of financial and human resource capacities at all national, REC, and AUC to bolster their contributions in the process.
59. **REQUESTED** AUC and Member States to work on improving data quality and incorporating the BR process into the national statistical and monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, Member States, with support of AUC and technical partners should synergize the processes of the BR, National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP) and Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs).

Presentation of the Outcomes of the Africa Climate Summit and the Nairobi Declaration

60. The African Heads of State and Government gathered for the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4th to 6th September 2023. The Summit was attended by other global leaders, intergovernmental organizations, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations (UN) agencies, private sector, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local communities, farmer organizations, children, youth, women and academia.
61. The Africa Climate Summit was convened pursuant to two AU Summit Decisions, Assembly/AU/Dec.723 (XXXII) and Assembly/AU/Dec.764 (XXXIII). The Summit started with a keynote address intended to set the scene on climate change context of Africa. Climate change was highlighted as the single greatest challenge facing humanity and the single biggest threat to all life on Earth. and the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), referenced as indicating that the world is not on track to keeping within reach the 1.5°C limit agreed in Paris. and that global emissions must be cut by at least 43 percent in this decade. It was emphasised that Africa bears the brunt of climate change, and is warming faster than the rest of the world, despite not being historically responsible for greenhouse gas emissions.
62. The Summit underscored the need to adhere to the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and those of the Paris Agreement, which include equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. It also reiterated the concern that many African countries face disproportionate burdens and risks arising from climate change-related weather events and patterns which cause humanitarian crises with detrimental impacts on economies, health, education, peace and security, among others. The summit also noted with concern that Africa still has a long way to go in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and that extreme weather events and changes in water cycle patterns are undermining the continent's development efforts.
63. Other key areas of concern were centred on the rapid rate of urbanization and the need for investment in renewable energy. It was highlighted that the rapid

growth of African cities, which by 2050 will be home to over 1.0 billion people, limits planning capacities which increase people's exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards resulting in cities becoming disaster hotspots across the continent. Secondly, despite Africa having an estimated 40 percent of the world's renewable energy resources, only US\$60 billion or two percent of US\$3 trillion renewable energy investments in the last decade have come to Africa.

64. In light of the above, it was reiterated that Africa is ready to create an enabling environment, enact policies and facilitate investments necessary to unlock resources to meet climate commitments, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development including decarbonisation of the global economy. The summit recognised Africa's significant natural capital wealth such as the Congo River Basin, Miombo woodlands, coral reef, peatlands and mangroves, which contribute to the reduction of global carbon emissions and this value needs to be translated into monetary gain. Furthermore, it was noted that Africa's commitments to developing the blue economy including the sustainability of oceans as demonstrated in fora such as the Second UN Oceans Conference in 2022, and the Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa in 2023 will be critical in climate action.
65. The Declaration emphasises that Africa possesses both the potential and the ambition to be a vital player in the architecture of global climate change solutions. As a home to the world's youngest and fastest-growing workforce, coupled with massive untapped renewable energy potential, abundant natural assets and an entrepreneurial spirit, Africa has the fundamentals to spearhead a climate compatible development pathway.

On outcomes of the Africa Climate Summit and the Nairobi Declaration, the STC:

66. **TOOK NOTE** of the presentation by the Commission on the ACS and the Nairobi Declaration.
67. **NOTED** the endorsement of outcomes of the Africa Climate Summit
68. **REQUESTED** the Commission to hold consultations with member States, RECs and partners on the implementation matrix and financing of the Nairobi Declaration

69. **CONGRATULATED** the Republic of Kenya and the African Union Commission for successfully hosting the Summit

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS IN THE PARALLEL SESSION ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

SEMI-ARID FOOD GRAIN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (AU-SAFGRAD)

Guidelines for Inclusive Agricultural Value Chains Development (iAVCD) in Africa

70. The report on the guidelines for inclusive agricultural value chains development in Africa emphasized that African food systems cannot be sustainable and competitive if they are not developed and inclusive. That the aim of Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) development is to boost competitive advantages of produce and products by reducing the associated transaction cost and promoting chain efficiency. It highlighted that in the last two (2) decades many African countries have embarked on agricultural value chains development program. And, considering the critical role of the agricultural sector, it is imperative that value chains are developed not just to be sustainable but, also, to be inclusive. The Guidelines for inclusive agricultural value chains development (iAVCD) in Africa frames policy, markets and other institutional interventions needed to achieve inclusive and sustainable agricultural (crop, livestock, and fisheries) value chains development pathways based on actors and activities performed (farm to fork).

On iAVCD, the STC:

71. **ENDORSED the** Guidelines for inclusive agricultural value chains development in Africa as a continental blueprint to frame value addition, enhance product competitiveness boost intra-African trade in agricultural products

72. **REQUESTED** AUC, through its specialized technical Office, AU-SAFGRAD, to domesticate the Guidelines, and to mobilize Partners to support RECs and MS

to develop and implement inclusive agricultural value chains for competitive produce and products development

73. **URGED** RECs and Member States to domesticate and internalize the Guidelines into their agricultural development plans

74. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to consider and ADOPT the Guidelines for inclusive agricultural value chains development (iAVCD) in Africa.

Development of an African Common Position Towards a Legally Binding Protocol on Drought Under the UNCCD

75. Drought remains a major disaster causing huge damages to humanity, the environment, and the economy, despite considerable progress on monitoring, forecasting and mitigation of droughts across the world. Its frequency, severity and spatial coverage have seen an upward trend in the recent decades throughout the world largely attributable to the phenomenon of climate change.

76. In Africa, the number and duration of droughts has increased by 29% since 2000, as compared to the two previous decades (WMO, 2021). More important, severe drought affects Africa more than any other continent, with more than 300 events recorded in the past 100 years, accounting for 44% of the global total.

77. The prolonged drought in the Horn of Africa (HoA) left 23.4 million people acutely food insecure and 5.1 million children acutely malnourished. Between 2018 and 2019, food insecurity increased by 28% across the SADC region, which constitutes 7.4% higher than it was during the severe El Niño-induced drought of 2016/17, hence the call for a Common Position towards a legally binding Protocol on drought, under the auspices of the UNCCD.

78. This report aims to provide arguments and a foundation for the concept of drought that will help the Parties to understand the complex aspects of this natural hazard as they are discussed in subsequent bodies among representatives of all regions.

On African Common Position Towards a Legally Binding Protocol on Drought Under the UNCCD, the STC:

79. **ENDORSED** the report on development of an African Common Position towards a legally binding protocol on drought under the UNCCD presented by AU-SAFGRAD in collaboration with the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) of the UNCCD through the members of Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on drought
80. **REQUESTED** Members States to call for an International Legally Binding Instrument on Drought in the relevant United Nation's conventions, in particular UNCCD.
81. **URGED** the Members States to advocate with other Member Parties and Strategic Partners to have their support throughout the Process
82. **REQUESTED** AU-SAFGRAD to form an advisory board on Drought
83. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to consider and ADOPT the Report on Development of an African Common Position Towards a Legally Binding Protocol on Drought Under the UNCCD

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

On the African Union Digital Agriculture Strategy, the STC:

84. **RECALLED** that in 2020 the Executive Council decided that AU departments develop continental sector strategies and plans, under the Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA), and that Agriculture was identified as a priority sector.
85. **RECOGNISED** the Vision of the African Union Digital Agriculture Strategy (DAS) to provide for inclusive, resilient, and transformed agricultural sector with access and connectivity to digital agriculture tools.
86. **AWARE** that digitalising the Agriculture Sector contributes to improved rural livelihoods, food security and nutrition, reduction of poverty and hunger, increased resilience to climate change, youth employment and social inclusion.
87. **ENDORSED** the African Union Digital Agriculture Strategy (DAS) and its Implementation Plan 2024-2027.
88. **CALLED UPON** the AUC, RECs and Member States to mobilise resources for implementation of the above Plan.
89. **REQUESTED** AUC to support Member states and RECs to develop or harmonise their Digital Agriculture strategies in line with the AU DAS

90. **CALLED UPON** the RECS and Member States to establish regional digital initiatives, particularly addressing cross-border challenges (e.g., forecasting, IPDM).
91. **REQUESTED** the AUC to biennially organise a Conference on Digital Agriculture with specific emphasis on promoting gender inclusion, climate-smart agriculture, and youth employment.
92. **CALLED UPON** the AUC to regularly report on the implementation of the Strategy.
93. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to endorse the Digital Agriculture Strategy and its Implementation Plan

On the Rural Infrastructure Policy Framework, the STC:

94. **AWARE THAT** African leaders have clearly indicated that among their priorities are infrastructure and agriculture; the two have an interface where adequate and well-functioning Rural infrastructure is essential for agriculture to be competitive due to reduced costs of delivering inputs to it and of taking produce out to markets, including any storage that this may entail; Rural infrastructure also plays a crucial for agriculture, agro-industries and overall economic development of rural areas;
95. **CONCERNED THAT** the lack of Rural infrastructure in Africa is widely recognised and the deficits of infrastructure have a clear impact on African competitiveness;
96. **CONCERNED THAT** African countries, particularly those South of the Sahara, are among the least competitive in the world, and infrastructure appears to be one of the most important factors holding them back;
97. **TOOK NOTE** that policy frameworks provide modalities for a gradual revitalisation of rural areas through the promotion of economic activities and natural and human heritage, on the basis of new relationships between public and private actors for accountability partners involved and enrolling in an upward and decentralised process and a dynamic integrated and participatory development.
98. **ENDORSED** the Rural Infrastructure Development Policy Framework for Africa
99. **REQUESTED** REC and MS to harmonise their Rural Infrastructure Policy Framework with the Continental framework.

100. **FURTHER REQUESTED** AUDA NEPAD, RECS, and Member States to mobilise resources and implement the policy framework.

On the JobAgri Initiative: Understanding and measuring the labour content in agriculture and agrifood systems in Africa for Improved knowledge and informed policy-making and investment, the STC:

101. **WELCOMED AND COMMENDED** the initiation of JobAgri initiative: Understanding and Measuring the labour content in agriculture and agri-food chains in Africa for improved knowledge for informed policymaking and investment.

102. **REQUESTED** the AUC to undertake further consultation with Member States, RECs and AUDA-NEPAD and collaborate with Development Partners to mobilise resources for the implementation of this initiative.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY DIVISION (AFSD)

On the Post Malabo Agenda Road Map /Outcome of AUDA-NEPAD, RECS Consultation Meeting; the STC:

103. **RECALLED** the facilitation of AUC and AUDA-NEPAD in conducting the first, second, and third CAADP-Malabo Biennial Reviews reports in 2017, 2019, and 2021, respectively, whose reviews revealed limited progress in advancing the CAADP-Malabo Agenda.

104. **CONCERNED THAT** 2021 BR Report underscored that only one country was making substantial headway toward achieving the composite indicator of agricultural transformation by 2025.

105. **AWARE THAT** despite significant progress over two decades, the continent's ambitions and aspirations under the Maputo and Malabo agendas have not been met. This challenge has been compounded by global issues, including climate change, conflicts, epidemic outbreaks, and economic downturns.

106. **RECOGNISED THAT** 20 years on, it is important to retain the strengths of the CAADP agenda while adjusting and deepening it to respond to emerging issues.

107. **TOOK NOTE THAT** the Post-Malabo Agenda must meet the needs of sustainable food systems transformation in a context of accelerating climate

change and risks of shocks from multiple sources. This can only be accomplished by building on previous successes while tackling ongoing and new challenges.

108. **ENDORSED** the Post Malabo Agenda and Road Map

109. **ADOPTED** the Report of the AUC, RECs, STC-ARDWE Bureau Consultation Meeting on the CAADP Post-Malabo Agenda Development Process, held on 10 November 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

110. **REQUESTED** Executive Council to endorse the Post Malabo Agenda and Road Map

111. **FURTHER REQUESTED** for the Executive Council to request the February 2024 AU Assembly to convene an Extra Ordinary Summit on the Post Malabo Agenda and the Road Map in the last quarter of 2024 or at the margins of the regular AU Assembly in 2025.

Report on the Convening of the Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit in 2024, the STC:

112. The AU Commission made a brief presentation to inform the meeting on the ongoing preparation of the AFSH Summit, initially scheduled for November 2023, however postponed to 2024.

On the Convening of the Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit in 2024, the STC:

113. **RECALLED THAT** following the Abuja Summit, a multi-stakeholder's approach was deemed necessary to address the fertiliser market and soil health constraints. Consequently, the 4th Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE, held in December 2021, requested the AU to convene an Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit in 2022-2023.

114. **FURTHER RECALLED** that in February 2022, the 40th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council endorsed the convening of the Summit for either 2022 or 2023.

115. **APPRECIATED** that the Republic of Kenya has accepted to host the Summit.

116. **RECOGNISED** the Endorsement of the 10-year Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the Soil Initiative for Africa (SIA) Framework Document by Ministers responsible for ARDWE, at their Extraordinary Session held in May 2023.

117. **NOTED** the postponement of the Summit in 2022/23 to a later date.
118. **ENDORSED** the request to convene the Summit in 2024.
119. **REQUESTED** AUC to follow the due process to have the decision endorsed at the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly in February 2024.

On Inaugural Meeting of African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum; the STC:

120. **CONCERNED** of the disproportionately heavy burden of unsafe foods on public health, trade in agricultural goods, food security and nutrition in Africa;
121. **RECOGNIZED** that producing safe and nutritious food for Africa's population and increasing intra-regional trade of food and agrifood products within the African continent were also identified as some of the objectives pursued by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA);
122. **UNDERSCORED** that collaboration between food competent authorities is imperative to address an increasingly complex and interdependent public health, food production and food trade environment;
123. **ACKNOWLEDGED** the initiative taken by the Arab Republic of Egypt through its National Food Safety Agency of Egypt (NFSA) in collaboration with and under the leadership of the African Union Commission, to convene a meeting of African food competent authorities at the heads of authority level, with the aim to facilitate engagement and discussions amongst leaders of African food regulatory authorities and to create an African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum;
124. **TOOK NOTE** of the Inaugural Meeting of the "African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum" successfully held from 11-13 October 2023 in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt;
125. **URGED** African Union Commission to provide continued support to Member States to make the Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum functional and to expedite the operationalization of the Africa Food Safety Agency without further delays;
126. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to consider and **ENDORSE** the outcomes of the Inaugural Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum held under the auspices of the African Union Commission with the view of promoting modernization and harmonization of food regulatory practices in the continent.

On the report on the Status of Implementation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP), the STC:

127. **RECALLED** that the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29-30 January 2007 endorsed the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) as a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec. 135(VIII)).

128. **FURTHER RECALLED** the 40th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held on 2-3 February 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia endorsed the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform and accompanying Operational Guidelines as the coordination mechanism; Guidelines on the use of Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture in Africa and Continental Guidelines for the harmonization of Seed Regulatory Frameworks in Africa.

129. **REITERATED** the ASBP's overall goal is to contribute to increased food security and nutrition and to poverty alleviation in Africa, through the establishment of effective and efficient seed systems and enhanced application of biotechnologies and methodologies within the seed sector.

130. **EXPRESSED APPRECIATION** to the African Group of Negotiators for their sustained commitment and selfless dedication that ensures a highly coordinated and effective engagement in negotiations involving Multilateral Environmental Agreements and for representing the interests of Africa on matters of Biodiversity, Biosafety and Access and Benefit-sharing of genetic resources etc.

131. **REQUESTED** AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to support African negotiators in ensuring synergies among Multilateral Environmental Agreements that are agriculture-, biodiversity- and biotechnology-related, e.g., UNCBD, ITPGRFA, IUCN, UNFCCC, UNCCD, CITES.

132. **REQUESTED AUC and AUDA-NEPAD**, working in close collaboration with Member States, RECs, and partners, to continue the work on domesticating guidelines that are risk-proportionate and can enhance the uptake of Biotechnology.

133. **ENDORSED** the ten-year action of the Partnership for Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa (PISSA).

134. **APPROVED** key plans for ASBP 2024 and 2025, noting the planned Actions at:

Continental: i) Implement priority activities in alignment with the Partnership for Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa (PISSA); ii) Mobilize technical and

financial support for the platform, Coordination Unit and Secretariat; iii) align activities with SPS and AfCFTA; iv) Foster Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in the seed sector.

Regional: i) Establish Regional Gene banks ii) Leverage strategic partnerships for scaling key innovations (e.g., multi-harvest rice).

National: i) Domestic guidelines on and enhance uptake of Biotechnology, ii) Implement activities on Humanitarian Development and Peace (HDP) Nexus, iii) Strengthen Farmer-Managed Seed System (FMSS).

135. **RECOMMENDED** that particular focus should be on pasture seeds development and improvement.

136. **RECOMMENDED** the adoption and use of earth observation technologies, e.g., Remote Sensing, and geographic information systems (GIS) tools under the ASBP Component on M&E, Knowledge Management and Communication.

On the Report on the External Audit of the BR process, the STC:

137. **NOTED** that since the Malabo declaration in 2014, four Biennial Review (BR) cycles have been undertaken in 2017 (inaugural BR), 2019 (second BR), 2021 (third BR), and 2023 (fourth BR), respectively;

138. **COGNIZANT** of the fact that the CAADP Biennial Review Report has gained popularity and interest from stakeholders as the main reference document, not only on the state of agricultural transformation in Africa, but also for evidence-based planning and the formulation of National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) in Member States and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIPs) within Regional Economic Communities;

139. **RECALLED** that the fourth Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) held in December 2021, requested the STC Bureau and the AU Commission to undertake an independent (external) audit of the overall CAADP Biennial Review (BR) process, to establish the efficacy of the self-reporting system and to suggest measures to strengthen the quality and robustness of the process at national, regional and continental levels

140. **TOOK NOTE** that the report provides a synthesis of the feedback received from consultations with various CAADP stakeholders, and documents the lessons learned and best practices from the first three biennial review (BR) cycles,

141. **OBSERVED** that the audit revealed that the overall design of the BR process is well-structured with clear workflows and timelines, communication and coordination systems, and includes key performance indicators in line with the Malabo declaration;
142. **AFFIRMED** that the focus of the BR should be more on introspection for improving the performance of Member States, rather than laying emphasis on comparing results across member states;
143. **EMPHASISED** that the Member States perceived that the technical guidelines and country report template used for the BR data collection process are clear to support the effective implementation of the BR process;
144. **AFFIRMED** that the CAADP BR is a very dynamic and iterative process whose current design is complete for supporting the mutual accountability for actions and progress. Each new cycle of the BR process capitalizes on the previous one, clearly demonstrating a learning process;
145. **OBSERVED** that the various recommendations arising from the different reports have inspired actions as well as policies and laws in different countries;
146. **APPRECIATED** that the availability and quality of data remain major concerns among stakeholders, requiring strengthening the data collection and communication systems at national and regional levels
147. **URGED** fostering commitment from governments, development partners, and all relevant stakeholders, along with adaptive strategies that address challenges, as crucial to realizing the full potential of agriculture for sustainable growth and the AU 2063 Agenda towards “The Africa We Want”
148. **EXPRESSED SUPPORT** to explore the options of providing the opportunities for Member States to report on areas that support agricultural transformation but are outside the CAADP Malabo framework such as leadership support, political will, infrastructure development.
149. **ENDORSED AND ADOPTED** the report on the independent (external) audit of the overall CAADP Biennial Review process, **with additions** to the inclusion and clear documentation of the successes of the Biennial Review process, and **with the exception** of the reporting period that will remain biennial up to 2025. A change of the reporting period may be discussed during the Post Malabo development process.

The African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC)

Report on Harmonization of Standards for Registration of Veterinary Vaccines and Certification of Vaccine Manufacturing Facilities in Africa,

150. The AU-PANVAC presented the report from the meeting that brought together RECs, National regulatory authorities (NRAs) of AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Veterinary vaccine manufacturing facilities, Director of Veterinary Services (DVS), AU-IBAR, African Secretariat of Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations and the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed) in Abuja, Nigeria in July 2023. This meeting which was organized by AU-PANVAC, discussed the development of a continental harmonized approach for the registration of veterinary vaccines; and auditing of vaccine manufacturing facilities in Africa.

On the report on Harmonization of Standards for Registration of Veterinary Vaccines and Certification of Vaccine Manufacturing Facilities in Africa, the STC:

151. **COMMENDED** the work done by AU-PANVAC for quality control of vaccines, production, and distribution of essential diagnostics for control, surveillance, and eradication of animal diseases in Africa.

152. **STRESSED** the need to have harmonized standards for the registration of veterinary vaccines to benefit the African continental free trade market.

153. **ENDORSED** the recommendations of Abuja meeting in July 2023 on harmonization of standards for registration of veterinary vaccines and certification of vaccine manufacturing facilities in Africa, which are based on the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH) and the Veterinary International Conference on Harmonization (VICH) for International Cooperation on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products.

154. **ADOPTED** the expansion of AU-PANVAC mandates to include auditing and certification of vaccine manufacturing facilities in collaboration with national regulatory authorities in Africa

Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

The pan African programme on eradication of Peste des petits ruminants and control of other priority small ruminant diseases (2023-2027)

155. The 5th STC recalled previous decisions (Ex.CL/Dec.610(XVIII) and EX.CL/1041(XXXII) that urged AU-IBAR, RECs and technical partners to mobilize resources for the control and eradication of PPR and other priority trans-boundary animal diseases (TADs). It further noted the Decision of the 4th STC on Agriculture Rural Development Water and Environment (ARDWE) that requested the AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs and Member States with the support of FAO, WOAHA and stakeholders, to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a continentally coordinated program for the eradication of PPR from Africa by 2030.

156. The STC noted that despite commendable progress made since 2021 by the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Pan African Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC), in collaboration with Member States, RECS, and in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) among others in leading, coordinating, mobilizing resources, PPR remains a major constraint to food and nutrition security and livelihoods.

157. The STC appreciated that there is an urgent need to enhance investments, capacities, partnerships and coordination towards the eradication of PPR given that only 7 years are remaining before the global target of eradicating PPR by 2030.

158. The STC noted that working with partners, AU-IBAR. has led the development of the 2nd phase of the Pan African PPR eradication programme and control of other priority small ruminant diseases to ensure Africa is not let behind in meeting the global target of eradicating PPR by 2030.

On the pan African programme on eradication of Peste des petits ruminants and control of other priority small ruminant diseases (2023-2027), the STC;

159. **TOOK NOTE** of the report on the formulation of the Pan African Programme on Eradication of Peste des Petits ruminants and the control of other priority small ruminant diseases (2023-2027);

160. **COMMENDED** the development of the second phase of the Pan African Peste des Petits Ruminants Eradication Programme led by AU-IBAR, AU-PANVAC, FAO and WOAHA and preparations to fully execute the Pan African Program especially through the support of Member States, Regional Economic Communities, international technical and development partners;

161. **REAFFIRMED** the Nairobi and Yaoundé Declaration on the Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants by 2030, which amongst others, directs Member States to include PPR eradication as a priority in their National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) and to ensure adequate budgetary allocations and disbursements for the effective and timely implementation of the PPR National Strategies; and the Paris Declaration on the establishment of the Pan African Secretariat for the Eradication of PPR in Africa at AU-IBAR;

162. **ENDORSED** the Pan African Programme for the eradication of PPR and control of other priority small ruminant diseases for immediate implementation in our respective countries and regions and by partners;

163. **ENDORSED** the establishment of Pan African PPR Secretariat at AU-IBAR to lead, plan, and coordinate all activities related to PPR eradication initiatives in order to have a dedicated, focused and effective centre for a better harmonized disease control effort on the continent and to eradicate the disease with desirable outcomes and impacts among them, enhance food and nutrition security, job creation, youth and women empowerment, eliminate poverty and improve the well-being and livelihoods of the people of the African Union member States;

164. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs and partners, with the support of Member States, to mobilize resources for the eradication of PPR on the continent by 2030; and to this end, **WELCOMED** and strongly supported the current resource mobilization discussions initiated by AUC with the European Union and other partners such as AfDB, WB, Islamic Development Bank, BMGF among others.

Report on preparedness of African countries to eliminate rabies by 2030

165. The 5th STC on ARDWE noted the socio-economic burden of Rabies in Africa especially in rural areas. It further noted that previous attempts to eliminate Rabies have not been successful due to low vaccination coverage and inadequate

surveillance due to inadequate investments. The STC further noted that a recent study by AU-IBAR to assess the preparedness of Africa to eliminate Human Rabies deaths by 2030 in line with the global target indicated that Africa is unprepared to do so. The study recommended the formulation of a continental rabies elimination strategy which will support implementation of the global strategy, that will guide Regional Economic Communities and AU Member States to develop and or refine regional and national rabies control and elimination strategies, enhance coordination and harmonization of rabies elimination efforts on the continent, enhance advocacy, capacity development and resource mobilization for rabies elimination efforts.

On the report on preparedness of African countries to eliminate rabies by 2030, the STC:

166. **TOOK NOTE** of the report on the preparedness of Africa for the elimination of dog-mediated rabies by 2030;

167. **URGED** the Commission to lead, plan, and coordinate all activities related to elimination of dog-mediated rabies by 2030; as well as, supporting the tripartite of WHO, FAO and WOAH, and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control and other partners, to domesticate the Global Rabies elimination Strategy at the Continental, Regional and National levels by developing and implementing a continental strategy to guide a coordinated program to eliminate dog-mediated rabies in the African Union Member States by 2030;

168. **REQUESTED** the Commission and partners to mobilize resources for supporting the coordinated program to eliminate dog-mediated rabies in the African Union Member States by 2030.

Donkey species preservation in Africa: “DONKEY IN AFRICA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”

169. The 5th STC urged AU Member States to increase their commitment to protect all animals, including wildlife and other living species, and the Global Community to ensure that any use of natural resources, including terrestrial, ocean, sea and marine resources, is ecologically sustainable and humane, particularly the humane and sustainable farming practices. Further, the STC noted that the Global

Plan of Action (GPA) for Animal Genetic Resources underlines the importance of animal genetic resources for the development of animal production to meet future challenges. The STC recalled the Strategic Priority 10 of the GPA that highlights the need to establish national conservation policies, strategies and establish or strengthen in situ and ex situ national conservation programs.

170. The STC further noted that despite the significant contribution made by the donkey in Africa, especially in rural areas, the donkeys are now faced with a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin, propelled by a traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties. Also, the STC noted that donkey farming to meet the demand for skins is scientifically proven to be unsustainable as donkeys have low fertility and long reproduction cycles, low welfare awareness and cross border smuggling between neighbouring African Member States.

On the report on donkey species preservation in Africa, the STC:

171. **TOOK NOTE** of the report of the 2022 Pan-African Conference on Donkey Species exploitation in Africa “Now and in the future”;

172. **RECOGNIZED** the socio-economic contribution of the donkey to livelihoods in Africa, and the concern about their welfare and unsustainable utilization in Africa, the lack of data to inform evidence-based policies, strategies, legislation and programs and the inadequate inclusion of donkeys in the national animal resources development policies, strategies, programs, and investment plans;

173. **RECOGNIZED** the alarmingly rapid decline in donkey population in Africa caused by the demand for their skins for international trade **AND ALSO RECOGNIZED** that unlike other animals, donkeys have very low reproductive rate affecting their population numbers and **URGED** the Commission to spearhead research on breeds and establish breeding programmes for the donkey species;

174. **REQUESTED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to lead, plan and coordinate an African common position and moratorium on the exploitation of the donkey through its slaughter in Africa for the exploitation of its skin to anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of the donkey skin trade so as to ensure the preservation of the species with the ultimate goal of improving food and nutrition security, safeguarding the livelihoods of the donkey dependent communities, and to ensure its contribution to sustainable economic growth;

175. **REQUESTED** the Commission through the relevant technical office to develop a Pan African Strategy for the Development of Donkey Species in Africa and action plan for increased production and productivity;

176. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission, RECs and MSs with the support WOAHA, FAO and animal welfare organizations and other key relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts to mobilize resources for a continentally coordinated program to enhance the conservation, development and management of the donkey and other working equid resources in Africa.

The African Union digital one health information policy and associated one health information architecture framework for improved digitalised one health governance and management

177. The 5th STC took cognizance that 75% of the emergent pathogens have an animal origin and in Africa, and over the last decade a 63% jump in disease spread from animals to humans has been reported. It recognized that solutions to these challenges lie beyond sectoral and disciplinary boundaries, and it is therefore imperative for the AU MSs to embrace comprehensive multisectoral and multidisciplinary interventions to optimize the health of animals, humans and the environment under the “ONE HEALTH” umbrella. In addition, it reaffirmed that for the One Health approach to be more effective, there should be a paradigm shift from a narrow focus on zoonoses to a more system-based approach that embraces innovative joint solutions as well as technological approaches.

178. The STC further noted that One Health data has largely remained under analysed, underutilized, and under disseminated in respective sector silos and this has slowed the pace in creating information thereby affecting evidence-based decision making to trigger early detection, prevention, preparedness and response to zoonoses and other OH concerns. The STC reiterated that One Health actors need to establish strategic partnerships and collaborations to enhance sharing and exchange of One Health data and information for improved preparedness, detection and response for diseases especially those with pandemic potential. The need for data harmonization, integration and access across sectors and disciplines at national, regional, continental and global level was emphasized. The 5th STC also noted that digitalization, integration, and harmonization of One Health data systems

will improve the delivery of holistic One health services and evidence-based recommendations and policies

179. The 5th STC recalled that the overall objective of the **Africa Union Digital Transformation Strategy - DTS (2020-2030)** was to harness digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies and called upon African Member states and Regional Economic Communities to promote the stimulation and acceleration of digital transformation in core areas including digital health and digital governance at national, regional, and continental levels as well as building digital technical and infrastructural capacities. The STC also recalled the Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1144(XL) on the **AU Data Policy Framework** which emphasizes on consolidated data environments and harmonized digital data governance systems that uphold security, equitable access and benefit sharing as well as inclusive, transformational and forward-looking data. The STC noted that the continental instruments provided a sound foundation for the development of the African Union Digital One Health Information policy and associated information architecture.

180. The STC noted that the African Union digital One Health information policy aims to improve One Health governance and management and is informed by three over-arching components;

- **One Health Information Architecture** component will be the foundation of the designing of national, regional, and continental digital One Health platforms founded on key guiding principles including data security, privacy, harmonization, scalability, interoperability amongst others;
- **Capacity Building and Enhancements of Digital One Health** component that will feature priority technical and infrastructural competencies and capacities for improved One Health management and governance including building capacities on Data Science, Data governance, Data analytics;
- **Enabling digital One Health co-ordination environment and sustainability mechanisms** component that will drive establishment, operationalization and adoption of co-ordination mechanisms and sustainability actions including the Joint One Health Secretariat, the One Health Governance unit and the One Health Technical Working Groups.

On the African union digital one health information policy and associated one health information architecture framework for improved digitalised one health governance and management, the STC:

181. **TOOK NOTE** of the validated report on the formulation of “*The African Union Digital One Health Information Policy and associated One Health Information Architecture Framework for improved digitalised One Health governance and management*”;

182. **TOOK COGNIZANCE** that the African Union Digital One Health Information policy is aligned to key continental instruments such as **African Union Data Policy Framework and African Union Digital Transformation strategy (2020 – 2030)** which highlight the need to embrace data and digital tools that promote animal health and Human Health within nature-positive food systems;

183. **ENDORSED** the African Union Digital One Health Information Policy and associated One Health Information Architecture Framework for improved digitalised One Health governance and management in Africa for use in respective countries and regions;

184. **ENDORSED** the development and operationalization of the Digital One Health Platform for Africa hosted at AU-IBAR that promotes national, regional and continental data interoperability, integration, exchange, harmonization and utilization;

185. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission to support targeted competency and capacity building of African Specialists for operating and maintaining Digital One Health Continental, regional and national information platforms;

186. **ENDORSED** the establishment of a continental One Health Secretariat hosted at AU-IBAR to drive the continental vision of Digital One Health governance and management;

187. **URGED** the AU Commission to Support the development of an African Union One Health Strategy;

188. **URGED** the AU Commission to support the development of African Union One Health Communication and Advocacy strategy;

189. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the AU Commission, in collaboration with Member States, Regional Economic Communities and partners to support resource mobilization and foster strategic collaborations for the adoption of Digital One Health in Africa.

Continental strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management

190. The 5th STC noted the report on the continental strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, that was developed to guide AU Member States and Regional institutions in the coherent formulation of strategies which promote equal and equitable gender participation in the conservation and management of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems. The STC also noted that the formulation of the strategy was guided by previous decisions (EX.CL/Dec.842 (XXV) and (EX.CL/Dec.1073-1096(XXXVI), recommendations (AU/JMARF&A/EXP/I) and the 2014 Malabo Declarations; all of which urged the empowerment of women and youth to participate equally in Africa's transformational development.

On the Continental strategy for mainstreaming gender in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management, the STC:

191. **TOOK NOTE** of the Continental Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management that was presented by AU-IBAR;

192. **ENDORSED** the Continental Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management and **ENCOURAGED** the AUC to also present the Strategy to the next STC on Gender;

193. **REQUESTED** the Commission to mobilize resources for its implementation.

Report on improving aquatic animal health and biosecurity

194. The 5th STC took note of the threat of emerging transboundary aquatic animal diseases (TAADS) as a risk for the sustainability of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture resources, was among the issues raised at the *Fish for all Summit* (2005). The STC noted that Holistic approaches involving improving management of natural fish stocks, promoting aquaculture development, and enhancing fish trade

in domestic, regional and global markets were among the recommendations of the summit.

195. It further noted that the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) advocates the adoption of international norms and standards to facilitate access to markets, and equitable safe free-intra-regional fish trade in Africa.

196. Furthermore, the STC noted that increased number TAAD outbreaks in new geographical areas as well as recurrence requires that substantive data and information on the continents status be obtained to enable evidence-based decision making including to guide the development of regional policies and strategies across the continent.

On the report on improving aquatic animal health and biosecurity, the STC:

197. **TOOK NOTE** of the presentation by AU-IBAR on the need for strengthening capacity, establishing coherence and regional co-operation for the control of aquatic animal diseases, pests and invasive species;

198. **REQUESTED** the Commission to lead, plan, and coordinate all activities related to aquatic animal health in Africa; and strengthen continental and regional policy and governance to promote aquatic animal health and biosecurity control and improve access to markets; including:

- undertaking a continental assessment on the status of transboundary aquatic animal diseases and aquatic antimicrobial resistance to facilitate evidence-based decision making for their control,
- reviewing the current continental water and aquatic environmental management guidelines to strengthen and promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management, aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health,
- developing a continental Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity Control Strategy;

199. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the Commission to mobilize resources for coordinating the implementation of aquatic animal health and biosecurity control activities in Africa.

Mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African union member states in regional, continental, and global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes

200. The 5th STC-ARDWE noted that Global, Continental and Regional Frameworks safeguard Africa's highly productive marine ecosystems including the Large Marine Ecosystems, Rivers, Lakes, Seas, and Oceans. It was further noted that several Regional Policies, Legislation and frameworks have been developed to operationalize Global and Continental frameworks into National strategies and implementation plans; Many Countries on the Continent have ratified these Conventions and are Party to several Regional and Global Conventions, Fora, and Regimes; However, despite ratification, most of the African Union Member States (AU-MSs) struggle to comply with the requirements of these Fora / Regimes and do not always participate in these Fora effectively; Moreover, implementation, surveillance, monitoring, tracking, and scientific research is limited in most African Countries, making it challenging to make evidence-based decisions for negotiations in relevant meetings.

On mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African union member states in regional, continental, and global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes, the STC:

201. **TOOK NOTE** of the presentation by AU-IBAR on the report on mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of AU-MS in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora by AU-MS;

202. **ENDORSED** the mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora by AU-MS;

203. **URGED** AU Member States, RECs, RFBs, RSC, RFMOs to utilize the mechanisms and prescribed Strategies for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related Fora;

204. **REQUESTED** the Commission to coordinate and monitor the implementation and impacts of the mechanism on the sector through awareness raising activities;

205. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the Commission to mobilize resources to support operationalization of the mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of AU-MS in Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora by AU-Member States.

Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in fisheries and aquaculture: a guide for developing and implementing public-private partnership models for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in Africa

206. The 5th STC noted the need for an enabling business environment together with stable legal and regulatory frameworks as pre-requisites for effective and efficient PPP arrangements to create an enabling environment for sustainable management and rational utilization of Africa's fisheries and aquatic resources in order to harness the full potential that accelerates economic growth, create jobs and fight poverty.

207. The STC also recalled the recommendations of the *Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture* that was adopted by African Union Member States at the Fish-For-All Summit in Abuja, 2005 which prompted the Conference of Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) to spearhead the development of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) and the establishment of Africa Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM); which were subsequently approved by African Union Heads of State and Government at Malabo in 2014.

208. The STC acknowledged the relevant provisions of the 2014 Ministerial decision (CAMFA AU/JMARF&A/EXP/I) which *Recognized* that growth in fisheries and aquaculture sector is mainly private sector led and therefore *Urged* member states to establish mechanism for active involvement of private sector in research and extension and further *Recommended* that AU, RECs Member States to develop innovative approach for increasing private sector investment in fisheries and aquaculture

209. The STC took into cognizance the aspirations of the Agenda 2063 in particular, emphasizing 'A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and

Sustainable Development' and focusing on Goal number 5 on Modern Agriculture for increased productivity and production; Goal number 6 on Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth in Africa's strategic framework, as well as Goal no. 20 on Africa taking full responsibility for financing her development

On Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in fisheries and aquaculture: a guide for developing and implementing public-private partnership models for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in Africa, the STC:

210. **TOOK NOTE** of the presentation by AU-IBAR on 'A Guide for Developing and Implementing Public-Private Partnership Models for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Africa';

211. **ENDORSED** the Guide for Developing and Implementing Public-Private Partnership Models for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Africa;

212. **URGED** the Commission to:

- support AU Member States, RECs, RFBs, RSC, RFMOs to utilize the Guide for Developing and Implementing Public-Private Partnership Models for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Africa
- support AU Member States to develop or amend overarching legislation such as PPP law, and, as appropriate, agriculture specific policy frameworks for implementation of PPPs to reflect fisheries and aquaculture sector
- support AU Member States to internalize for guidance the AU-IBAR's "Guide for Developing and Implementing Public-Private Partnership Models for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Africa"
- coordinate implementation and monitor impacts of the Guidelines on the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector;

213. **REQUESTED** the Commission to mobilize resources to support implementation of the Guide for Developing and Implementing Public-Private Partnership Models for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Africa.

Report on the framework for Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions for fisheries access in African union member states

214. The 5th STC noted that many African Union Member States - coastal and Island states- are endowed with very rich marine fisheries stocks, many of which are straddling and migratory in nature with of the potential wealth of their marine fisheries resources and that many of the fishery resources are unsustainably utilized due to overexploitation;

215. The STC also noted that the issues of shared resources are closely interrelated and need to be managed collectively and uniformly hence the obvious need for co-operation among the AU Member States and regional fisheries organizations in managing fisheries and enforcing fisheries laws and regulations;

216. The STC took cognizance of the recommendations of 2014 Joint Ministerial Conferences ((AU/JMARF&A/EXP/I) requesting Member States and RECs to design fisheries access strategies which encourage secure rights and sustainable harvesting of fisheries resources to harness the wealth-generating potential of the resources

On the Report on The Framework for Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fisheries Access in The African Union Member States, the STC:

217. **TOOK NOTE** of the Framework for Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fisheries Access in The African Union Member States;

218. **ENDORSED** the Framework for Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fisheries Access in The African Union Member States;

219. **REQUESTED** African Union to mobilize resources for AU-IBAR to support the operationalization of the Framework for Harmonized Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fisheries Access in the African Union Member States.

Report on the Strategy for Rational Management of African Inland Fisheries

220. The 5th STC noted the consensus of the Stakeholders Consultative Workshop which was attended by a wide spectrum of institutions, academia, development partners and donor agencies, private sector, non-state actors, African

Union Member States (AU MS) and individual experts that took place from 26th to 29th March 2018 in Kampala, Uganda; and the, articulation of the valuable recommendations and outcomes of that workshop leading to a 'Continental Strategy for Rational Management of Inland Fisheries in Africa'.

221. The STC also noted the recommendations of 2014 Joint Ministerial Conferences ((AU/JMARF&A/EXP/I) requesting AU member states to develop sector-wide strategies at national level for expansion and intensification of aquaculture and inland fisheries.

222. The STC further noted that small-scale fisheries development is a key policy objective of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa (endorsed by Executive Council Decision Doc. EX.CL/842(XXV)

223. The STC appropriately recognized that the sector represents a significant source of food and nutrition security, employment and income for poor rural communities; and, the potential of small-scale fisheries to contributing to poverty reduction, food and nutrition security and socio-economic benefits of fishing communities and beyond;

224. The STC took cognizance of the fact that despite current benefits and opportunities accruing from the inland fisheries sector, the sector is still beset by challenges that require major governance and policy reforms, underscored by improved governance, enhanced capacity, in order to unlock and unleash the full potential of the sector;

225. The STC acknowledged the need to strengthen capacity and governance of inland water bodies with special attention to shared water bodies and the imperative need to protect rights of fishers, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children and physically impaired, and formulate policies to achieve equality.

On the Report on Strategy for Rational Management of African Inland Fisheries; the STC:

226. **TOOK NOTE** of the report on the strategy for rational management of African inland fisheries;

227. **ENDORSED** the strategy for rational management of African inland fisheries;

228. **REQUESTED** African Union Commission to support the African Union Member States and the Regional Economic Communities to implement the strategy for rational management of African inland fisheries;

229. **FURTHER REQUESTED** Commission to coordinate and monitor the implementation and impacts of the Strategy on the sector and to mobilize resources for AU-IBAR to support the operationalization of the strategy for rational management of African inland fisheries

The Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) a continental platform of AU directors of aquaculture to promote coherent sustainable aquaculture development in Africa

230. Aquaculture in Africa is constrained by the limited supply and access to key inputs notable, feed, seed, human resources, appropriate technology and finance; difficulties of producers in accessing markets; inadequate physical and sectoral infrastructure such as weak policies within both the public and private sector and lastly sub-optimal utilization and management of the available natural resources for aquaculture.

231. The Fish for all Summit that was held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2005 highlighted the importance and contribution of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture sector to Africa's economic development, livelihoods, and food and nutritional security; and identified the need to "establish a regional network of aquaculture policy practitioners to provide the needed skills, technology and information for future development of aquaculture in the African region.

232. Subsequently, Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) was formally established in 2008, during the 15th Session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa (CIFA), with the objectives of: (a) maximizing and optimizing utilization of the scarce resources for aquaculture development in Africa; and, (b) foster sustainable aquaculture development in the region as a means to fight poverty, ensure food security, provide employment and ensure rural development.

On the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF), the STC:

233. **TOOK NOTE** of the presentation on the role of the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) to provide the needed skills, technology and information for future development of aquaculture in the African region;

234. **ENDORSED** the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) as an AU platform of Directors of Aquaculture whose role is to support, facilitate, coordinate and promote the establishment of partnerships, including public-private partnerships on Sustainable Aquaculture Development with One Voice, and Africa's Non-State Actor Networks for the coherent implementation of AU policies and strategies on sustainable aquaculture development in Africa;

235. **RECOMMENDED** that AU-IBAR be the designated secretariat for the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF);

236. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission to mobilize resources for operationalizing the ANAF Secretariat within AU-IBAR to support effective implementation ANAF's activities.

Report on Pan-African Network of nationally registered Civil Society Organizations (NCSOs) in the fisheries and aquaculture sector (AFRIFISH-Net)

237. The 5th STC recalled the previous decisions of the AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture (AU/JMARF&A/EXP/I), Africa's Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) (EX.CL/Dec.1073-1096(XXXVI)), The Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (Doc. EX.CL/842(XXV)) and AU Agenda 2063, emphasising the need *to (i) facilitate the equal participation of Civil Society Organizations in fisheries and aquaculture in decision-making processes and as being critical for the sustainability of the sector (ii) empowering Civil Society Organizations including development of advocacy strategy to facilitate the inclusion of fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders in management and decision-making process both at national and regional levels (iii) developing the African private sector through engagement and a conducive climate, fostering Pan-African businesses.*

238. The STC noted the importance and challenges faced by Civil Society Organizations in fisheries and aquaculture at national, regional and continental

levels and welcomed the establishment of Pan-African Network of Nationally Registered Civil Society Organizations in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (AFRIFISH-Net) by AU-IBAR, AUDA-NEPAD, EU and FAO.

On the report on Pan-African Network of nationally registered civil society organizations (NCSOs) in the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector (AFRIFISH-NET), the STC:

239. **TOOK NOTE** of the Report on the Pan-African Network of nationally registered civil society organizations (NCSOs) in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (AFRIFISH-Net);

240. **ENDORSED** the Report on Pan-African Network of nationally registered civil society organizations (NCSOs) in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (AFRIFISH-Net);

241. **ENDORSED** the establishment of the Pan African Network of nationally registered Civil Society organizations engaged in Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (AFRIFISH-Net);

242. **REQUESTED** the Commission to mobilize resources for the operationalization of AFRIFISH-Net.

Establishment and operationalization of the African pastoral markets development (APMD) platform

243. The STC noted that the African Pastoralists face major challenges including that the pastoral trade is often undervalued, and pastoral regions are often neglected for investments; droughts and political shocks have reduced rangeland and water access and have led to significant productivity losses in the pastoral system. On the other hand, pastoralist have great potential and several opportunities including that the pastoralists contribute to 60 - 80% of meat across Africa (up to 50% of meat exports in many geographies); there is a predicted increase in the demand for meat and milk in Sub-Saharan Africa by more than 250% by 2050; pastoralists provide valuable ecosystem services, using indigenous climate adaptive resources and marginal lands, sequestering carbon, and managing water scarcity to produce high quality animal sourced products. Despite the potential benefits of the pastoral system, pastoral-supporting programmes have

focused on humanitarian and social aid interventions but not on integrating pastoralists with livestock markets to attain resilience and sustainability.

244. Therefore, the STC noted that the “African Pastoral Markets Development (APMD) Platform” would drive meaningful sustainable progress in the pastoral sector by emphasizing market-focused interventions, strengthening the enabling policy environment and functional data actions. It further noted that the APMD-Platform builds on the: Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme, CAADP, 2013 (AU/Dec.490-516(XXII)/2013); Livestock Development Strategy for Africa, LiDeSA, 2014, (EX.CL/Dec.792(XXIV)/2014); and Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa, 2010”, (EX.CL/Dec.631(XVIII)/2010).

On the Operationalization of the African Pastoral Markets Development (APMD) Platform, the STC:

245. **TOOK NOTE** of the Commission’s presentation of report on the establishment and sustainable operationalization of the African Pastoral Markets Development Platform;

246. **ENDORSED** the establishment and operationalization of the African Pastoral Markets Development Platform at AU-IBAR, in collaboration with RECs and Member States, as a Pan-African constructive engagement and coordination mechanism to build on recent momentum for supporting pastoralists and accelerating market-enabled and adaptive transformation of the African pastoral sector; and,

247. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission to mobilize resources to support the establishment and operationalization of the African Pastoral Markets Development Platform at AU-IBAR.

Report on Urgent Actions to Address Feed Shortages and Avert Future Feed Related Disasters

248. The 5th STC noted that the report outlines the vulnerability of the African livestock feed and fodder systems. It also noted that Feed constitutes over sixty percent of the total cost of livestock production; but the sub-sector remains unstructured, with inadequate policy, regulatory, and institutional support and inadequate public sector expenditure and private sector investment. Further, it

noted that emergency alerts are largely tied to drought and flood (a climate change disaster narrative) and are based on outcome and impact level indicators, at which stage it is not possible to take concrete action to address feed shortages. The Report underscored the delink of human nutrition and food security targets from livestock production targets and feed supply targets, which perpetuates the high cost of nutritious livestock sourced foods.

249. The STC also noted that the report recommended development of structured economic feed and fodder sectors; emergency response based on explicit feed and fodder sector indicators; and linkage of human nutrition and food security objectives to feed and fodder production. It also recommended more coordinated multi-stakeholder actions, mutual accountability and annual reporting on feed and fodder as a means to track progress in development of the sector and highlight issues of strategic importance.

On the report on Urgent Actions to Address Feed Shortages and Avert Future Feed Related Disasters, the STC:

250. **TOOK NOTE** of the report and the URGENT NEED to address the animal feed and fodder situation on the continent which has been exacerbated by the impact of the triple crises (COVID-19, climate change instigated drought, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict) on the already vulnerable sector. **FURTHER NOTED** that the feed and fodder shortages have led to massive loss of livestock, negatively impacted livestock production and productivity affecting food and nutrition security, decimated livelihoods and businesses, and affected livestock contribution to economies;

251. **ENDORSED** the formulation of '*Guidelines for the Development of Feed and Fodder Sectors or Industries*' as a critical strategic action to enhance the stabilization, efficiency of production of quality livestock sourced foods, resilience and protection of livestock-based livelihoods, businesses and economies and for youth employment';

252. **ENDSORSED** the formulation of '*Guidelines to Enhance Emergency Response within the Feed and Fodder Sector*' utilizing tools that are explicitly based on feed and fodder sector indicators and linked to human food and nutrition security indicators that define livestock production targets, and with clear remedial actions to address feed and fodder shortages 'the establishment of a Continental African

Alliance of Multi-Stakeholder Feed and Fodder Associations' to guide the growth of more robust African Feed and Fodder systems;

253. **ENDORSED** the *'institutionalization of a monitoring and mutual accountability framework that generates an annual status report on the African Feed and Fodder Sector'* and highlights issues of strategic and emerging importance in view of the dynamic environment and growing threats;

254. **REQUESTED** the Commission to work with Development Partners to support URGENT mobilization of resources for addressing the feed and fodder situation on the continent; including, the development and implementation of the above mentioned Guidelines; establishment of an appropriate African Alliance of Multi-Stakeholder Feed and Fodder Associations, a Feed and Fodder Monitoring and Mutual Accountability System, and funding and finance to support/ enable increased private sector investment and public-private partnerships.

Consideration of the Kampala Declaration on the 2nd Edition of the G25Africa Coffee Summit held on 8 August 2023

255. The African Heads of state and Government of the 25 African Coffee producing countries, convened the 2nd edition of the G25 Africa Coffee Summit in Kampala Uganda on 8th of August 2023 under theme Transforming the African Coffee Sector through Value Addition to marshal support for integrating coffee as a strategic agricultural commodity in the African Union (AU) in harmony with African Union agenda 2063 to give Africa leverage to address the challenges associated with value addition, requested the STC-ARDWE that;

- The African Union assembly of Heads of State and Government to endorse the inclusion of coffee as a strategic commodity in the AU agenda 2063 at the next AU assembly
- The Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO) be appointed as an AU designated agency responsible for coffee to work with the African Union Commission (AUC) and Member States on effective transformation of the coffee value chain in Africa as part of the implementation of the AfCFTA strategy on boosting Intra Africa Agricultural Trade

- The AfCFTA private Sectors Strategy that anchors the development of regional value chains, prioritise coffee value addition as key deliverable in the aforementioned strategy and
- African Development Bank and the African Export and Import Bank to provide dedicated financial resources to boost coffee production

256. **The STC ENDORSED** the declaration subject to adding other African countries that do not produce coffee to participate in the value addition and trade of coffee and coffee products

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND BLUE ECONOMY

Outcomes of the High-Level Conference on the Implementation of the CBD COP 15 and CITES COP19

257. The Commission reported on the African Union convened a high-level conference on the implementation of the outcomes of CITES CoP19 and CBD COP15 held in November and December 2022 respectively. The High-Level session was chaired by H.E. Kereng Philda Nani, Minister of Environment and Tourism for Botswana

258. The objective of the Conference was to:

- Review the outcomes of CITES CoP19, CBD CoP15 and Ocean Treaty and identify cross-cutting strategic issues that emerged among them including those related to issues such as IPLC engagement, livelihoods, sustainable use, zoonotic diseases, illegal trade and one health approach.
- Identify priority actions that need follow-up from Member States potential gaps and problems in implementation that need to be addressed;
- Identify support needed for effective implementation and identify the coordination and collaboration mechanisms necessary to effectively implement the action plan;
- Develop an action plan that can support and drive the effective implementation of the key commitments and decisions made, including actions to ensure adequate capacity building and resource mobilisation from both public and private sectors; and

- Ensure alignment, synergies and complementarity in financing, developing and implementing of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as the national instruments to implement the GBF

259. The Conference was attended by **19** Government Ministers, as well as other high-level representatives from **44** AU Member States as well as representatives from RECs, UN Agencies International and Regional Conservation Organizations, Civil Society Organisations

260. Key recommendations by the conference included the need to speak with one voice in the global negotiations on biodiversity and wildlife. The main outcome was the Ministerial Declaration and the development of an Africa Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – a regional strategy to support the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

On the Outcomes of the High-Level Conference on the Implementation of the CBD COP 15 and CITES COP19, the STC:

261. **TOOK NOTE AND WELCOMED** the outcomes of the High-Level Conference on Biodiversity held from 30 May – 2 June 2023 at the AU HQ

262. **CALLED** upon all African Union Member States to work together in ensuring that Africa domesticates the GBF and implements it taking into account national circumstances.

263. **ENDORSED** the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP) and **REQUESTED** the AUC to ensure that amendments and recommendations from member States are included in the Strategy

264. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the AUC to present an update on the Strategy at the next meeting of AMCEN.

265. **REQUESTED** the African Union Commission to support Member States through resource mobilisation, capacity building and facilitating sharing of best practices

266. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the African Union Commission to develop a programme to facilitate the implementation of the ABSAP as a vehicle for supporting member States' efforts to implement the GBF at national level.

267. **CALLED UPON** development partners to support the implementation of the ABSAP and the revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and their implementation.

268. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission and partners to put in place mechanisms for supporting countries with special circumstances to implement the ABSAP and the GBF.

269. **REQUESTED** AU Member States to cooperate with one another and collaborate on trans boundary management of biodiversity and wildlife.

270. **URGED** AU Member States to honour the resolutions of African Union Heads of State and Government for Unity and solidarity when engaging in global fora, including speaking with one voice on diverse Multilateral Environmental Agreements and CITES in particular.

Report on the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy

271. The Africa Blue Economy Strategy was developed and endorsed by the 3rd session of the STC-ARDWE in October 2019 and adopted on the 33rd Summit in February 2020. The Strategy has five pillars, namely:

- fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems
- shipping, transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement
- coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure
- sustainable energy, mineral resources and innovative industries
- policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

272. In terms of progress in the implementation of the Strategy, the Commission reported that a Blue Economy Division has been established at the AUC. With support from Expertise France, the AUC developed the Blue Economy Strategy the Commission has supported 3 SADC countries (Eswatini, Malawi and Zambia) in developing their National Blue Economy Strategies. Other key achievements include; Co-organisation of the Blue Future- Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy and climate change, held in Moroni, Jun 2023, resulting in the Moroni Declaration; Validation of the Policy guidelines on curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and promoting transparency in fisheries in Africa;

On the Report on the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the STC:

273. **URGED** all African Union Member States to support the Blue Economy Division, by seconding technical experts with specialization, among others in fisheries and aquaculture, fisheries agreement, fisheries management, law enforcement, monitoring control and surveillance, port management and maritime transport, environmental protection, biodiversity, Eco-tourism and environment and sustainable resource utilization in order to enhance the Division's capability to effectively carry out its mandate.

274. **URGED** the Department of ARBE to continue facilitating the exchange of technical experts and enhance knowledge-sharing mechanisms between Member States and the AUC/SEBE-Blue Economy Division, aiming to promote collaborative approaches towards achieving the sustainable development goals related to the Blue Economy;

275. **ACKNOWLEDGED** the proposal from the Republic of Mozambique in regard to the Grow Blue Conference and proposal to make it a continental Conference and **REQUESTED** the AUC to ensure that due process is completed.

276. **URGED** the AUC to accelerate the Operationalization of the already approved Centres of Excellence in Angola, Cameroon, Gabon and Namibia, taking into consideration the moratorium on establishment of new COEs;

277. **ENDORSED** the renaming of the STC Agriculture Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) to STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, Water and Environment (ARBWE).

278. **CALLED UPON** Member States to contribute with voluntary funds to support the activities of the Blue Economy Division.

279. **APPLAUDED** the efforts of the Republic of Angola in seconding staff to the Blue Economy Division

280. **REQUESTED** the AUC to work with the Member States and RECs in the implementation of the Blue Economy Strategy

Presentation of the draft AU Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP)

281. The Commission presented on draft AU Circular Economy Action Plan (2024-2034) which was developed in response to a Decision adopted by the 3rd

Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) to broaden the scope of the collaborative work on facilitating the ban of single use plastic and embrace the circular economy approach due to its environmental and economic benefits.

282. It was highlighted that the AU CEAP was developed through an iterative stakeholder consultation exercise with National Focal Points (NFPs) and other circular economy experts, and with the support of AUC Regional Experts Working Group on Circular Economy. The Action Plan will provide direction to the continent towards a competitive and cleaner development pathway by setting out Africa's key priorities and intervention areas for an enhanced circular economy approach to development. It was highlighted that the AU CEAP contains the (i) Vision, (ii) Mission Statement, (iii) Continental goals and actions, (iv) Priority sectors, (v) Cross-cutting and enabling elements, (vi) Governance and institutional arrangements, (vii) Resource mobilisation strategy and (viii) Implementation steps. Three priority horizontal sectors for circular economy were highlighted, namely (1) water, (2) waste and (3) energy, and five priority vertical sectors, namely (4) agri-food and fisheries, (5) transport and mobility, (6) tourism and (7) industry, with the following subsectors (7.1) construction, (7.2) packaging and plastics, (7.3) electronics and (7.4) textiles, and (8) mining. Enabling and cross-cutting elements were elaborated as inclusivity, education and capacity development, finance and business support, trade and collaboration.

283. For the successful and effective implementation of the AU CEAP, a governance structure was proposed. It proposed that a Circular Economy (CE) Secretariat within the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) be established. The CE Secretariat will be responsible for organising bi-annual continental CE Implementation Forums to track progress of the actioning of the proposed interventions by members states and RECs. Regional Economic Communities will coordinate Regional CE multi-stakeholder Sector Working Groups (RSWGs). The Member States, through their respective lead ministries and supported by inter-ministerial groups will be responsible for the development and implementation of national Circular Economy Action Plans.

284. The Resource Mobilisation Strategy was presented. It highlighted the general approach for resource mobilisation namely, Estimation of total costs, Identification

of internal and external funding sources, Outreach and intentional engagement dialogue with financial partners, including the private sector, Terms and conditions for external financial support, Monitoring and auditing of resources used. The implementation steps for the CEAP were also presented.

285. Egypt: reiterated Egypt's keenness to cooperate with the AU. However, it highlighted the need to have the AU CEAP presented at the next AMCEN meeting before its endorsement.

286. Algeria: Algeria highlighted that the development of the AU CEAP had been very comprehensive in terms of stakeholder engagement by involving National Focal Points through two workshops and follow up emails. Therefore, the Party proposed that the Action Plan should be endorsed.

287. AUC clarified that it would consult with Legal Counsel for clarity on the need to present the AU CEAP at the next AMCEN meeting before its endorsement by the STC. This is because it had been mentioned in previous AMCEN meetings that the AU was developing the CEAP.

On the Draft AU Circular Economy Action Plan, the STC:

288. **TOOK NOTE and ENDORSED** the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan which intends to facilitate Africa's transition to a circular model with key guiding principles, priorities, and intervention areas and help set the continent on a competitive, cleaner resilient development pathway.

289. **CALLED UPON** Regional Economic Communities and AU member States, with the support of the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Environment Programme and other development partners, to implement the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan.

290. **URGED** the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations Economic Commission and other partners to mobilise and provide financial and technical resources to facilitate and support the implementation of the continental Circular Economy Action Plan.

291. **ENDORSED** the above recommendation for the implementation of the continental Circular Economy Action Plan.

Status Report on the Implementation of the AU Green Recovery Action Plan

292. The Climate Change unit presented an overview of the Green Recovery Action Plan (GRAP) and highlighted the overall objectives of the Transformative Climate Finance Program in support of the GRAP operationalization. The presentation alluded to the impact of COVID-19 as one of the biggest global economic shocks that strongly impacted Africa and exacerbated vulnerabilities within the continent.

293. The Green Recovery Action Plan tackles the combined challenges of the COVID-19 recovery and climate change, by focusing on critical areas of joint priority including climate finance, renewable energy, resilient agriculture, resilient cities, land use and biodiversity. Through the Transformative Climate Finance Program, the operationalization of the GRAP will reset traditional approaches to economic development and shift towards greener, more sustainable initiatives. The GRAP provides a strategic pivot towards a more resilient and equitable future that addresses equitable recovery and transformation.

294. The presentation also gave an overview of the Climate Finance Programme, which will be achieved through progress in three intermediate outcomes, namely (a) Strengthening the AUC's ability to implement the GRAP (b) Enhancing skills of national and regional policymakers to develop inclusive green growth policies, plans and programs in alignment with their nationally determined contributions and climate change strategies; (c) Improving the ability for governments and partners to access climate finance for Africa's green recovery, aimed in particular at initiatives that support women and youth.

295. In partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), The Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) will collaborate closely to improve coordination and significantly improve the impact of the Green Recovery Action Plan.

296. The presentation stressed the commitment of the project to gender equality and social inclusion in every aspect of the GRAP implementation to ensure that gender is fully embedded in the shift towards greener and more sustainable initiatives.

297. Through the transformative Climate Finance Program, a climate finance unit is established along with a steering committee to oversee the operationalization of

the GRAP. A call for proposal to participate in the implementation of the GRAP was launched to all member states and RECs.

298. The commission is in the process of evaluating the member states submissions and the selected member states will be officially informed to participate in the first phase of the GRAP implementation.

On the Status Report on the Implementation of the AU Green Recovery Action Plan, the STC:

299. **WELCOMED** the progress made in the implementation of the AU Green Recovery Action Plan

300. **URGED** member states and RECs to join the GRAP implementation through the submission of their proposals

301. **WELCOMED** the members states to participate in the Africa Green Economy Summit which will be held in Cape Town in South Africa from 21-23 February 2024

302. **REQUESTED** the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to support the African Union Green Stimulus Programme as a complimentary initiative to enhance the implementation of the GRAAP

Status Report on the Operationalisation of the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022 – 2032)

303. The report on operationalising the Climate Change Strategy, focused on the Efforts aimed at mobilising Climate Finance for the implementation of the Strategic Pillars of the Strategy. The presentation focused on the Africa Multi-country GCF Readiness Program.

304. The Programme seeks to address ***Strategic Intervention Axis 4: Leveraging Regional Flagship Initiatives*** and ***Axis 3: Enhancing Means of Implementation towards Climate Resilient Development*** of the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032).

305. The Africa Multi-country GCF Readiness Programme seeks to enhance African climate resilience through developing climate-resilient water investment programmes. The program is expected to (i) strengthen the capacity of the Nationally Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Climate Change Focal Points of Member States in coordinating GCF programs; (ii) support Member States in

identifying priorities for GCF investment; (iii) support Member States in developing GCF investment project pipelines; and (iv) strengthen knowledge sharing and learning among Member States. Over 20 African Member States expressed interest to be supported through the Programme, but out of these, 11 Member States completed the requirements. The 11 countries to benefit from the Programme are: Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Eswatini, Guinea, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and Tunisia. Other AUC initiatives to support Member States in accessing climate finance include the Regional Climate Resilience Program to be supported by The World Bank.

On the report on the Implementation of the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy – Financing, the STC:

306. **NOTED** with concern the limited capacity of Africa to access climate finance since Africa is not directly accessing GCF funds through its local institutions. The vast majority of the GCF supported projects in Africa were accessed through the internationally GCF accredited institutions.

307. **WELCOMED** the Commission's effort in the implementation of the Africa multi-country GCF Readiness Program; and the Regional Climate Resilience Program as part of implementing the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy; and **FURTHER WELCOMED** Regional Climate Resilience Program to be supported through the World Bank;

308. **RECOGNISED** the significant contributions and efforts made by the Kingdom of Morocco in Climate finance matters, and commend it for its role in the AUC's initiative of multi-Country programme as the first nation to submit their national programme.

309. **URGED** Member States to join AUC's initiative of multi-country program to access climate finance; and

310. **CALLED UPON THE COMMISSION to** further support Member States in developing programs to access climate finance for resilience building

311. **EXPRESSED SUPPORT** to the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev Africa) Programme as one of the main platforms for implementation Climate Change Initiatives and Strategies and request AUC, UNECA and AfDB to provide regular reports on progress on the implementation of the initiative alongside reports on the implementation of the Africa Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy

Draft Implementation Matrix for the African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action

312. The Commission made a presentation of the abridged version of the implementation plan for the African Leaders Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action highlighting the key thematic components that the commitments have been clustered into. The Commission presented what the desired outcomes of the declaration are alongside with the key indicators that will be measured to track progress.

On the draft implementation matrix for the African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, the STC:

313. **TOOK NOTE** of the matrix for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration.

314. **CALLED** upon the AUC to undertake consultations with AU member States, relevant partners and other stakeholders to refine the matrix and support the implementation of the proposed actions therein

Report on the Completion of the Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa and its Implementation

315. The presentation by the Commission indicated that the assessment was developed in response to decisions on the need to improve air quality at AMCEN, UNEA and WHA, with contributions from over 100 African authors and an international modelling team. Results of the assessment show the multiple benefits of air pollution and greenhouse gas emission reductions by 2030 and 2063 for human health, crop yields and regional climate in Africa (temperature and rainfall benefits).

316. The report builds on the progress report for the Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa that was submitted to the STC ARDWE in December 2021. The 2021 report was adopted by the member states, and this follow up report outlines the subsequent completion of the Assessment, its results and plans for implementation of its recommendations

On the Report on the Completion of the Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa and its Implementation, the STC:

317. **TOOK NOTE** of the completion of the Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa by the African Union Commission (AUC) in partnership with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Africa (ROA) and the UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), and coordinated by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

318. **URGED** the African Union Commission to:

- **Lead** collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities, and African Union Member States to mobilise financial and technical resources to facilitate the development and implementation of the 37 recommended measures as a continent-wide Africa Clean Air Program.
- **Collaborate** with its assessment partners, the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, the CCAC and the Stockholm Environment Institute to continue capacity building actions to support African Union Member States in undertaking integrated modelling and national planning for air pollution and climate change emission reductions and associated development benefits.

319. **RECOMMENDED that** the Executive Council consider and **ADOPT** the above recommendations for the implementation of the results of the AUC, UNEPROA, CCAC Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa.

AMCEN Report to the STC

320. The AMCEN Report to the STC was presented by the representative of Ethiopia. The meeting was held in Addis Ababa on 17-18 August 2023, under the theme, *"Seizing Opportunities and Enhancing Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa"*. The outcome of the meeting was a declaration that seeks to emphasise strengthening AMCEN's Role and commitment to implement its decisions through concrete action. The meeting endorsed the African Forum of Environment Protection Agencies' Blueprint. The meeting made

commitments on Biodiversity, Marine Biodiversity and Blue Economy, Great Green Wall Initiative, Forest Conservation, Drought and Desertification, Loss and Damage Fund, Three Basins Summit, Climate for Development in Africa Initiative and on UNEA Engagement.

321. The meeting adopted five decisions on: seizing opportunities and enhancing collaboration to address environmental challenges in Africa; participation of Africa in the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; preparations by Africa for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management; engagement of Africa at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; and on Climate change.

On the AMCEN Report to the STC, the STC:

322. **WELCOMED and ENDORSED** the AMCEN report and **ADOPTED** the outcomes of the AMCEN 19th Ordinary session

323. **REQUESTED** the AUC to continue to coordinate with AMCEN on the above issues.

Financing for the Implementation of Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) Programme in Member States

324. The Commission presented the overview of the AMHEWAS Programme, highlighting the financing gaps that need to be filled for the Programme to be fully operational. Key decisions that prompted the development of the AMHEWAS Programme were outlined. The Commission also presented on the need for resource mobilisation for the programme.

325. Following the presentation, a number of interventions were made that either sought clarity or made recommendations to strengthen the AMHEWAS Programme:

- Algeria recommended that AMHEWAS should extend beyond the coverage of hydrometeorological hazards to cover other hazards. Algeria also noted that there is need to record and share with Member States data during and after the events, to compare what was forecasted and the reality.

- Cameroon emphasised the need for the AMHEWAS to focus on capacity building of Meteorological and Hydrological services. Cameroon sought to know what the role of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) would be under AMHEWAS. Clarity on the collaboration with the Early Warning for all was sought by the Cameroon representative.
 - The AUC informed the STC that an AMHEWAS Steering Committee was established and that NMHS experts are part of it. The upcoming meeting of the Steering Committee will clarify the role of NMHS
 - On the complementarity with the Early Warning for All Initiative, AUC reported that the understanding was that the latter was expected to support the AMHEWAS Programme.
- Morocco took the opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the support AU gave the country during the earthquake disaster that affected it in September 2023.
- The Gambia stressed the need to develop national response plans.
- Malawi noted that SADC seemed to have been left out in the plan in the establishment of AMHEWAS situation rooms and requested that SADC be considered in the future plan. Malawi proposed the establishment of a 5th AMHEWAS situation room in SADC.

On Financing for the Implementation of Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) Programme in Member States, the STC:

326. **DIRECTED** the AUC to allocate US\$1 million annually from member states contribution to support the operations of the AMHEWAS Situation Room in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

327. **FURTHER DIRECTED** the AUC to organize a pledging conference for Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine (SEAF) to mobilise support for AMHEWAS.

328. **URGED** Member States to prioritise development of preparedness and response plans at national level

329. **REQUESTED** the AUC to expand and diversify the scope of the Situation room to include other hazards besides meteorological hazards.

330. **FURTHER REQUESTED** the AUC to record and share with Member States data during and after the events, to compare what was forecasted and the reality.

Draft Statute for the establishment of Pan African Civil Protection Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response

331. The Commission presented a report on the implementation of the action points specified by the 4th STC on the establishment of the Pan African Civil Protection Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response. The 4th STC adopted the proposal by Algeria and directed the AUC to organise meeting of national services of Member States in charge of civil defence and disaster management. Before being brought to the STC, the proposal had been adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (CPS/IHJ/COMM.104 3/2021) at its 1042nd Session that was held on 29 October 2021.

332. Reporting back, the AUC informed the STC on the outcomes of the meeting of national services of Member States in charge of civil defence and disaster management was convened in Algiers/Algeria in December 2022. Furthermore, the Commission engaged consultants to develop a statute for the establishment of the Pan African Civil Protection Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response.

On the draft Statute for the establishment of Pan African Civil Protection Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response, the STC;

333. **TOOK NOTE** of the Report on the Statute for Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism on Disaster Preparedness and Response ;

334. **REQUESTED** the AUC to present the statue for consideration by the STC on Justice and Legal affairs

335. **RECOMMENDED** to the Executive Council to consider and adopt the Statute for Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism on Disaster Preparedness and Response.

Roadmap for the establishment of Africa Centres for Disaster Risk Reduction

336. In 2018, the AU Commission submitted a draft roadmap for the establishment of the centre of excellence to the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC - ARDWE). The STC took note of the report and requested the Commission to

develop the roadmap for the establishment of the centre of excellence with details on the financial and legal implications.

337. The Commission presented a report on the roadmap to establish five regional centres of excellence to spearhead DRR research and capacity building in Africa. The centres will include research and capacity building on Climate Change.

338. Mindful of the moratorium on establishment of new Centres of Excellence, the Commission specified that the plan is to strengthen existing centres in the AU five Regions and not creating new ones from scratch. There will be procedures to be followed in terms for identification of centres of excellence and hosting modalities.

339. Extensive resource mobilisation was anticipated for this undertaking. The STC advised that there will be need to mobilise resources from partners.

On the Roadmap for the establishment of Africa Centres for Disaster Risk Reduction, the STC:

340. **TOOK NOTE** of the Report on the Establishment of the African Centres of Excellence on Disaster Risk Reduction

341. **FURTHER TOOK NOTE** of the legal, structural, and financial implications of the centres of excellence on DRR and the research priorities to be implemented for state resilience against disasters.

342. **URGED** AUC, in consultation with the Member States, Regional Economic Communities and partners, to ensure setting up of the regional centres of excellence on Disaster Risk Reduction, and their operationalization within a reasonable time.

343. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to consider and **adopt** the Report.

Statute of the Africa- Arab Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction

344. The meeting of the leaders of African and Arab Countries, in the Fourth Africa-Arab Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 22 to 23 November 2016, under the Theme “Together for Sustainable Development and Economic Cooperation”, emphasised the need to establish a joint mechanism to assist national efforts in preventing, monitoring and mitigating the effects of such calamities and to demonstrate solidarity with the affected countries and people. Following this meeting the AUC and the League of Arab States (LAS) met in 2019

to discuss the modalities and operationalization of the Africa-Arab Disaster Risk Reduction Fund. The AUC gave an update to the 5th STC ARDWE on the progress in the establishment of the Joint Africa-Arab Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction. A draft statute has been developed and was presented to the STC.

345. The Commission was encouraged to look into other possibilities on how to operationalise the Fund, taking cognisance of the moratorium on new establishments (Egypt)

346. While they welcomed the statute, the STC recommended that the legal documents follow due process for MS to consider the documents. AUC was advised to involve STC on Justice, and that consultations should involve the relevant government ministries.

347. There was a recommendation to add wildfires and forest fires in the list of hazards. It was further suggested that there be a link between this Fund and the Pan African Civil Protection Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response, whereby the fund becomes one of the funding mechanisms for the later (Algeria).

On the Statute for the Africa-Arab Fund for DRR, the STC;

348. **ENDORSED** the Statute of the Joint Africa-Arab Fund on Disaster Risk Reduction,

349. **REQUESTED** the AUC to present the statute for consideration by the STC on Justice and Legal affairs

350. **URGED AUC** and LAS to operationalise the fund, following due diligence and endorsement by AU Executive Council

Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP)

351. The Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP) is the AUC's dedicated and strategic effort to develop extensive and long-term capacity for member states to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into development planning, in cities and urban centres. It responds to the current and growing impacts of disasters which take a significant toll on cities and urban areas across the continent, causing loss to lives, livelihoods and an erosion of development progress. The programme considers and condenses the AU's ambitious efforts to promote urban resilience under a five-pronged set of objectives ('pillars'), which summarise

the ambition, interests and priorities of the AUC and also strongly correlate to the PoA for the implementation of the Sendai Framework and other ongoing efforts to promote resilience on the continent. The AURP has been technically validated by AU member states in February 2023.

352. The AURP will significantly reduce losses from disasters and will make African cities and urban centres thriving socio-economic hubs and set them on the path of sustainable long-term development.

On the Africa Urban Resilience Programme, the STC:

353. **TOOK NOTE** of the Technical Validation of the programme by AU member states in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (20 – 23 February 2023).

354. **ENDORSED** the Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP).

355. **DIRECTED** the African Union Commission to commence the operationalisation of the Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP).

Report on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) - including the Climate Services and Related Applications (ClimSA) Programme

356. The Commission presented the progress made in the implementation of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and the Climate Services) as well as engagements of the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) since the 4th Session of the STC-ARDWE. It highlighted the advocacy and guidance role which AMCOMET, led by its Cameroon - AMCOMET Chair - played in the development and application of meteorology in Africa, including mobilising resources.

357. The Commission also highlighted the central role of the development and delivery of timely and reliable weather and climate information services for decision making and practice in socio-economic development areas such as agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction, energy, health, and infrastructure, among others. In the face of climate change and increasing frequency and intensity of hydrological and meteorological hazards, there is need to enhance capacities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in order for the them to be able to provide timely and reliable weather, water, and climate information services:

- Few and scattered observation infrastructure;
- Inadequate capacity and resources (human, technical, technological and financial) in some National Meteorological and Hydrological Services
- African continued vulnerability to climate variability and change

On meteorology, weather and climate services, the STC:

358. **REQUESTED** the African Union Commission to continue supporting member states in efforts towards improving their capacities in weather observation and forecasting, production and delivery of reliable, timely, sector-specific weather and climate information services, national early warning systems, and National Climate Reports

359. **ENCOURAGED** Member States to enhance investments in hydrometeorological infrastructure and services delivery towards attainment of advanced functional capacities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in support to early warning and decision-making in the various socio-economic development sectors including agriculture and food security, health, infrastructure, energy, water, etc.

360. **REQUESTED** the AU Commission, in collaboration with the AMCOMET Secretariat, to operationalise a continental monitoring mechanism providing status reports for implementation of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology every two years.

361. **CALLED** upon partners supporting production and delivery of climate information services in Africa to prioritise, among others, accelerated investments in the production and uptake of climate information services for Africa's regional and national programming, and early warning and early action systems in accordance with the African Union frameworks

Presentation of the Draft Great Green Wall Strategy and Ten Years Implementation Framework

362. At the 4th STC, upon the presentation of the report on the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the (STC4/ARDWE/MIN), the STC took note of the SADC GGWI Strategy and framework and requested the AUC to develop a continental

strategy and implementation plan for the GGWI. The AUC presented the Draft Great Green Wall Strategy and Ten Years Implementation Framework to the 5th STC.

On the Draft Great Green Wall Strategy and Ten Years Implementation Framework, the STC:

363. **TOOK NOTE** Of the report outlining the New Strategy and the Ten Years Implementation Framework for the Great Green Wall Initiative

364. **URGED AUC to:**

- Mobilize requisite resources, both technical and financial, ensuring efficient and timely implementation of the newly outlined Strategy and Ten Years Framework;
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building among Member States, fostering synergies and collective action.
- Actively collaborate with relevant regional and global stakeholders, including non-state actors, to bolster the impact and outreach of the Great Green Wall Initiative.
- Execute change from GGWSSI to GGWI

365. **REQUESTED** the Executive Council to CONSIDER and ADOPT the new Strategy and Ten Years Implementation Framework for the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Report of the Sectorial Committee on Water and Sanitation

366. AMCOW presented the report of the sectoral committee on Water and Sanitation to the STC. The report highlighted Member States' progress on realising the targets of the Africa Water Vision 2025 and related continental and global commitments. Overall, as a continent, we are off-track to actualise the Africa Water Vision by 2025. Efforts are underway to collect sufficient information from all Member States on the unfinished business of the Africa Water Vision 2025. This information will guide the process to formulate the post-2025 Africa Water and Sanitation Vision to strengthen the delivery mechanisms to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 and Aspiration 1 in particular.

367. Similarly, under the leadership of the AUC, activities are ongoing to initiate implementation of the Africa Water Investment Programme, which aims to close the funding gap by leveraging US \$30 billion in investments to the sector by 2030. Against this background, the process was initiated to launch the post-2025 Africa Water Vision during the 39th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in 2026.

On the report of the Sectorial Committee on Water and Sanitation the STC:

368. **ENDORSED** for submission to the to the Assembly the 2022 Annual Report of the Commission on the July 2008 Assembly Declaration regarding the Sharm El-Sheikh Commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa, as per Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Decl.1 (XI)).

369. **ENDORSED** for submission to the Ministerial Committee on Agenda 2063 the request to adopt an African Union theme on Water and Sanitation for 2026

370. **ENDORSED** the 2023 Report on the Implementation of the 2015 Ngor Declarations

371. **ENDORSED** for submission to the Assembly the Swakopmund Declaration on “Accelerated Action for Inclusive, Sustainable, Resilient and Safely Managed Sanitation and Hygiene Services Delivery in Africa”

372. **APPROVED** the proposal to adopt “Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063” as the African Union Theme of the year 2026.

373. **UNDERSCORED** the key role of The Member States and encourage them to actively engage in the ongoing processes to formulate the Post-2025 Africa Water Vision.

374. **NOTED** the importance of the Dakar Declaration "the Blue Deal for Water and Sanitation Security for Peace and Development" in achieving water and sanitation objectives.

Presentation of the Report on Water and Sanitation

375. The presentation by the AUC was on the progresses related to the Africa Water Investment Program (AIP). AIP was adopted during the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government in February 2021

as part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Priority Action Plan. The main objective of AIP is to mobilize US\$30 billion per year by 2030 towards closing the investment gap and transforming the investment outlook for water security and sustainable sanitation.

376. The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa which was established with the objective to drive global political mobilization and international engagement to close the water investment gap in Africa launched its report at UN 2023 Water Conference outlining the actionable pathways and sources of finance to raise an additional US\$ 30 billion per year for water investment in Africa.

377. The High-Level Panel Campaign “***Mind the Gap - Invest in Water***” was launched during the UN General Assembly in September 2023. Nineteen Member States submitted 53 priority projects for consideration in the Africa **Water Investment Action Plan** by way of supporting countries to leverage US\$30 billion/year to close the water investment gap in Africa. The Investment Action Plan is planned to be launched at COP-28 in Dubai. At the national level, Member States have been developing water investment programs. Following the launch of the US\$6 billion water investment program for Zambia, other countries such as Tanzania, Botswana and Malawi are preparing their Water Investment Programs.

378. The African Water Vision 2025 is coming to an end, and there is a need to get a continental water policy framework post 2025.

379. The 4th Partners’ Coordination Platform (PCP) for Water and Sanitation in Africa was organized, which facilitated the sharing of information, collective learning, and partnerships among stakeholders.

380. The 7th Africa Sanitation Conference (Africa San) took place in Namibia with the Theme ***Strengthening Systems and Partnerships for Accelerated Action on Safely Managed Sanitation and Hygiene.***

On the report on Water and Sanitation the STC:

381. **URGED** AUC to develop an African Water Policy that can provide strategic framework towards inclusive and climate resilient water security in the continent.

382. **URGED** AUC to continue its leadership role in the implementation of the Africa Water Investment Program (AIP), including supporting Member States to develop national climate resilient water investment programs;

383. **URGED** Member States to develop national climate resilient water investment programs;

384. **URGED** AUC to further support Member States in developing programs access climate finance for climate resilient and inclusive water security programs.

385. **URGED** AUC and AMCOW to further strengthen the Partners Coordination Platform (PCP)

L. DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS REPORT

386. A few comments were made by the delegates prior to adoption of the Experts report. It was emphasised that documents that have a legal and financial implication have to go through the relevant STCs for consideration. It was recommended that statutes and treaties be considered by the STC for justice and legal affairs for consideration.

387. There was emphasis on the need to follow due process and to avoid duplication of efforts

388. Botswana and South Africa gave feedback on the consultations they were to hold regarding the recommendation on the expansion of the mandate of PANVAC.

389. The representative from the Office of Legal Counsel clarified the process of adoption legal statutes. He noted that recommendations with financial, legal and structural implications cannot be adopted by STC. Rather the Executive Council is the one to adopt recommendations at which they turn into decisions

390. The STC can only adopt recommendations/reports within its mandate that do not have financial, legal and structural implications. He emphasised that the STC therefore cannot adopt any statute. Legal statutes have to be submitted to the STC on Justice and Legal affairs for consideration, after which it submits them to the Executive Council.

M. STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATION

South Africa

391. South Africa congratulated the incoming chair for his election. The South African minister for Agriculture went on to appreciate the work of the experts in

compiling the report and recommendations. She also reiterated the call to make sure that the legal documents follow due process and are in line with AU procedures.

392. She confirmed South Africa's endorsement of the recommendation of the Abuja July meeting on the expansion of the mandate of PANVAC. She conveyed the endorsement of the Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy sections of the report by the respective minister in South Africa.

393. The minister thanked the Commissioner for ARBE for the role she played in advocacy within the UN with AU ambassadors in Italy and expressed gratitude over the appointment of Africa's chair in the UN Committee on food Security. She attributed this to the advocacy by the Commissioner for ARBE. She further We need to consider role of AU participation as a member of the FAO, noting that AU may need to upgrade its status to a more influential position than to be observers.

Nigeria

394. Nigeria congratulated the ne STC Bureau for their election. She revisited the discussion on the donkey n Africa, noting that there is need to conduct research to inform breeding of the donkey.

Eritrea

395. Eritrea joined the other delegates in congratulating the Bureau for their election, and thanked the chair of the experts for leading the technical sessions as well as the Commissioner for ARBE for the leadership.

396. Eritrea reiterated the need to avoid duplication of efforts, and recalled the important role of the reform unit in ensuring that due process is followed and that the moratorium on new establishment is observed.

Botswana

397. Congratulated the Chair for his election and also thanked the outgoing chair Egypt for the work done in the previous STC-ARDWE. Botswana also thanked the Experts for the report. She confirmed that after consultations, Botswana was accepting the recommendation on the expanding of PANVAC mandate.

Cote D'Ivoire

398. In his declaration, the Cote D'Ivoire delegate made the following pronouncements concerning the declaration on donkeys in Africa:

- underscored the importance of the donkey especially in the rural setting
- Noted with concern the prevailing trends whereby the donkey is being trafficked for its skin
- Further noted that donkey was one of the most sought-after species due to beliefs that it was being used for traditional medicines.
- Noted that the donkey is used to transport products and that its disappearance this affect access to basic commodities like portable water
- Appealed to the African Union Commission to put in place measures and policies aimed at preventing the destruction of the Donkeys through illegal exports
- Urged the African Union Commission to invest enhanced production for donkeys to save this species from extinction.

Ethiopia

399. As chair of AMCEN for the coming three years, Ethiopia highlighted the outcome of the AMCEN meeting held in August 2023, which passed the Addis Ababa Declaration which sought to strengthen the role of AMCEN and made various key recommendations on thematic areas in the environment sector.

N. CLOSING SESSION

CLOSING REMARKS: Commissioner, DARBE

400. H.E. Josefa Sacko thanked the Chair of the STC and all the delegates for attending the meeting. She is looking forward to working with the newly elected Bureau. In relation to the 4th CAADP Biennial Review, she congratulated Rwanda, the only country on track, as well as other countries that have made tremendous progress.

401. She further informed the meeting that the theme for the coming year is on nutrition. She is confident that the outcomes of the meeting will enable the

Commission and all stakeholders to contribute to the AU theme of the year on nutrition.

402. She urged member states to recommit on CAADP and she expressed that she will rely on the STC to provide guidance. She alluded to the comprehensive reports and guidance documents presented during the course of the 4th STC and confident it will allow member states to effectively contribute to CAADP implementation.

CLOSING REMARKS: Chair of the 5th STC ARDWE

403. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the 5th STC-ARDWE reiterated the proposal that the next extra-ordinary session of the STC-ARDWE be held in Uganda. He requested the AUC to incorporate the changes made during deliberations in the finalisation of the report. He further requested the AUC to develop a roadmap for the implementation of the decisions of the STC and present it to the STC Bureau in 2024. He closed his remarks by thanking delegates for participating in the 5th session of the STC-ARDWE.

The meeting was declared closed at 18.30pm EAT.