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Concept Note

Sixth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE)

21-24 October 2025, AUC Headquarters, Addis Ababa

Introduction

The Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture¹, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) was established as one of the 14 African Union STCs by the Decision of the 12th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly (Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII)) which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 1st to 3rd February 2009. The STC, as a ministerial Committee is composed of Ministers and senior officials from African Union Member States responsible for the sectors falling within its areas of competence. The STC-ARDWE is organized by the Department of Agriculture, Rural development, Blue economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) and the Ordinary Sessions convenes once every two (2) years (biennially) while Extraordinary STC sessions can be convened between the years based on urgent issues.

The 6th Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE will be held from 21- 24 October 2025, to review progress made in the implementation of previous AU and STC Decisions and recommendations; provide policy guidance; adopt reports, frameworks and programmes as well as provide recommendations that will guide the activities of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) for the next two years. The STC-ARDWE leads the supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of AU decisions related to the sectors of the STC, while reviewing strategic goals, identifying synergies and linkages, and ensuring coherence and alignment with AU declarations and commitments related to Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment.

Context

The 6th Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE is being organized at a pivotal moment, marking the end of the Malabo CAADP Agenda (2014–2025) and the transition to the

¹ Agriculture encompasses forestry and wildlife, crop, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture production

Kampala CAADP Agenda (2026–2035). The Session is auspicious as it is the first under the new AUC leadership and so will provide the platform to familiarize and update on implementation progress of the department's activities. It is in this context that the 6th STC-ARDWE Session is being held. Outcomes from the Session will be submitted as recommendations for endorsement by the AU Executive Council and Summit of Heads of State and Government at the February 2026 Summit.

Objective of the Meeting

The main objective of the meeting is to review and recommend key policy and operational documents related to agriculture, rural development, water, and environment to the Executive Council. Specifically, the 6th STC ARDWE will:

- Consider and validate the report on the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the 5th STC-ARDWE
- Review and endorse report on progress of on-going programs and projects being implemented to actualize previous Decisions and Declarations.
- Consider and approve new programs and projects to be implemented in reference to specific Decisions as it relates to Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.
- Provide guidance on program harmonization and rationalization in the light of emerging resource challenges affecting implementation for impact.
- Approve relevant Policy and/or Common AU positions submission as recommendations to the February 2026 AU Summit

Format and Structure of Meeting

The 6th Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE will be held in hybrid format from the 21st to 24th of October 2025 at the AUC Headquarters, Addis Ababa. The 4-day session will be

structured with 2 days of technical meetings involving Senior Officials/Experts, the 3rd day will be dedicated to reporting and documentation and the 4th day for the Ministers' meeting. The Senior Officers/Experts meeting will receive and consider all technical reports that will be presented to it and produce a review report on each presentation for endorsement by the Ministers on the 4th Day of the session.

In order to ensure a detailed review of all the reports presented and to effectively deploy available expertise, the 2-day senior Officers/Experts meeting will adopt a plenary and Parallel format. Only Implementation reports of the two Department Strategic program- CAADP and DRR strategy will be presented at Plenary while all other reports will be considered in the separate parallel sessions. All documents for information will be consolidated into two (2) presentations (ARD and SEBE) and presented as a single presentation at the plenary session. Individual presentation at the parallel sessions will accommodate only documents for Decisions only from the 2 Directorates. The 1-day Ministerial session (Day 4) will adopt a plenary format only to encourage inclusive and interactive conversations and dialogue among the Ministers. The plenary format will also provide opportunities to consider the intra-departmental programmatic linkages and foster synergy building for implementation

Participants

The Closed session of the STC will be attended by Member State Ministers and Experts in-Charge of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, rural development, water and sanitation, environment, natural resources management, meteorology, climate change, disaster risk management, and blue economy. The open session will admit Partners, collaborators, Observers and the media.